

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**  
**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**  
**UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF – M'SILA**

**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

N°: .....  
**CIVILIZATION**



**DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**OPTION: LITERATURE AND**

**The Quest for Identity and Nostalgia in Susan  
Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*.**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of  
the Requirements for a Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

**Candidates:**

**Mrs. Samira ZAITER**

**Ms. Fatima Zahra KADRI**

**Supervisor:**

**Dr. Houria MIHOUBI**

**2018/2019**

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**2018/2019**

## **Dedication**

To my precious parents

To my beloved fiancée who has been a source of support and encouragement

To my sisters and brothers

To my soul mate Karima Ben Salem

And all of my friends

Fatima Zahra

## **Dedication**

To my parents, my husband and my beloved daughters.

Samira.

## **Acknowledgements**

Our sincere gratitude is to Allah who lightened our path and provided us with sufficient power to finally reach our goal. We would like to express our appreciation to our marvelous supervisor **Mrs.Mihoubi Houria**, who gave us the golden opportunity to do this touching work on this topic.as we would like to thank **Mr. Guemide** and **Ms. Benia** for their pieces of advice. Finally, special thanks to all of our teachers and the English department staff.

## Abstract

*Morning in Jenin*, for the Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa, is considered as one of the most important works in Arab American literature. That proclaims for internationalizing the Palestinian cause and correcting the concepts. The main purpose of this dissertation is to study how Abulhawa depicts identity and nostalgia in the novel. It sheds light on the role of the Palestinian culture in shaping identity and the reaction of the writer against the Israeli narrative that dominates literature. Post-colonialism is the main approach that is applied to analyze the characters 'psyche. Therefore, the study spots light on Palestinian American literature considering *Mornings in Jenin* as a clear representation of the Palestinian identity.

**Key words:** homeland, nostalgia, memory, personal identity, Palestinians, diaspora.

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**Declaration**

## Introduction

Palestinian-Israeli conflict started from 1948 by Israel declaring “itself” as an independent state in the supposedly Palestinian land. Palestine was the answer to the question of an Israeli state. The Nakba is the opening page in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict book that had totally changed the Palestinian's lives and history as the latter were living peacefully before this unpredictable coming of colonization.

Susan Abulhawa, the Palestinian refugee writer, spots light on this historical conflict in her novel *Mornings in Jenin*. The writer, in her novel that tackles four generations of Abulhija's family in their homeland Palestine, wants to portray the amount of love for the family, for the land, and for God as well, and the sacrifice that they may give to this three sacred things. Abulhawa starts her novel speaking about the harmonious life that people were living before the 1948; the peaceful, happy and calm life at that period of time.

*Mornings in Jenin* is a reaction against the Jewish literature that distorts the international sight towards Palestine. The rarity of Palestinian literature written in English prevents the world to know about the Palestinian cause that was presented to the world through the Jewish narrative that has long dominated literature. Nostalgia for homeland in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* is the discussed topic in this dissertation and it is an important supporting point for the English-Palestinian literature that discusses how the subaltern<sup>1</sup> rewrites his history and searches for his identity. The work was an orientalist reaction against the colonial distortion of the Palestinian history.

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<sup>1</sup> A member of a group that is socially, politically and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland.

To believe in a religion and to be part of it means that you believe in everything this religion comes with and speaks about. This is the situation of being a Muslim. Since our religion mentions the Palestinian case as one of its priorities, we grew up believing in this human case. Algerians, particularly, are known by their support, spiritual link, and their deep love to Palestinians and their land and charity with their case. The main thing that provokes us to work on this thesis is to portray the real image of Palestinian suffering through the intellectual resistance in Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*.

The themes of identity and nostalgia are the main focus in the exploration of *Mornings in Jenin*. To start with, Leilla Bellour, an Algerian university teacher at Ouergla University, analyses *Mornings in Jenin* within the historical and journalistic perspective. Thus, the writer depicts the situation of being refugee looking for a lost homeland under the psychological and physical shock made by Israel colonization. She maintains that Abulhawa's meeting with the Palestinian Edward Said was one of the motivations that led her to write her masterpiece *Mornings in Jenin* in addition to the domination of the Jewish literature in comparison with the Palestinian one (07). Bellour, then, includes Joe Cleary's quote about the importance of literature capturing the Palestinian history; "a basic aim of Palestinian writing is to offer a Palestinian counter-narrative to the more established Israeli version"(08).

The strong feeling of nostalgia and missing homeland is mainly because of the strong love, and attachment to the land. Bellour states that the core existence of Palestinians is their affection to God, land, and family (08). The author, Susan, inserts quotes from newspapers and daily life events that speak about the Palestinians' struggle against Israel (10). Amal, the protagonist, who was born in a refugee camp in Jenin, and, as any Palestinian, was taught by her father to love the land since she is

part of it, “Palestine belongs to you, as you belong to it” (Abulhawa, 28). The latter that is Amal inherited nostalgia for a land she never knew before and influenced by her fellow people who live in Jenin as refugees missing their land (10). Bellour maintains that Amal goes through harsh cultural and psychological displacement. Furthermore, she passes through many traumatic events led her to feel exiled from both land and culture, the thing that makes her eager to belong i.e. search for her identity (11).

Likewise, Aymen M Abu-Shomar emphasizes the amount of suffering Palestinians go through and the inhuman practices Israel does against civilians. Skimming the novel, Abu-Shomar realizes the diasporic identity of the main character in the novel. The writer asserts that the interminable feeling of being exiled causes psychological crisis (127). Abu-Shomar claims that Abulhawa challenged the diasporic cultural and ideological identity, her traumatic situation, and her dislocation to fight and rewrite the history of Palestine while living in the United States crossing all the borders (128). The quest for identity is mentioned as a main theme. Thus, Amal suffers from exile, traumatic experience, and cultural dislocation, in addition to the feelings of El Gorba. He also asserts those crises are able to shape and reshape the identity (129).

Another writer, Abdurrahman Al-Ma’amri, examines the changes and transformations Amal goes through and the manifestation of personal and national identity. For him, personal identity depends mainly on memory as the author opens the novel by telling how well life was before the coming of the Israeli (El Nakba). Yehya’s strong attachment to land unconsciously led him to return to the village as if he is going to celebrate a feast there, pushed by unforgettable memories there. (34) Whereas, national identity is triggered by customs and rituals of everyday life. Thus,

the stories and poems transformed to Amal by her father strengthened her spirit for national identity.

Hence the primary focus of this dissertation is to examine how the subaltern rewrites his history and his constant and fruitless search for his identity. We would like to demonstrate that Abulhawa in her novel, and through Amal's mouth, succeeds in portraying the real feelings of suffering and being a refugee, especially in one's own country. Besides, Abulhawa manages to transmit the dilemmas Amal faced during her constant search for identity journey.

In order to meet the aims of the thesis, the following research questions are asked:

- 1- How does the writer portray the Palestinian struggle for identity?
- 2- In what way is nostalgia demonstrated in the novel?
- 3- How does the protagonist, Amal, represent exile and homeland at the same time?

It is known that the emergence of the post- colonial theory started with *Black Skin, White Masks* of Frantz Fanon, further supported by Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Orientalism is the theory upon which the novel selected for the thesis is going to be discussed. In addition, John Lock's theory of memory and personal identity is going to be used in analyzing Abulhawa's portrayal of nostalgia and identity.

The current research is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter contains multiple interpretations of the post-colonial theory. It also deals with orientalism and the theory of memory and personal identity. The chapter plays a role of a background to the second chapter through which it will be conducted.

Indeed, the second chapter represents the core of the study. It reflects the theory of post colonialism by Frantz Fanon, and Orientalism by Edward Said who influenced the Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa to write her novel *Mornings in Jenin*. The latter is a representation of the suffering of a Palestinian girl, Amal, searching for her identity, and struggling with her feelings of nostalgia and diaspora.

The finding of this study will redound to the benefit of any literary research considering that post-colonial theory is considered one of the most important theories of literature nowadays. The post-colonial theory's great demand justifies the need for more investigation about its modern version. This modern investigation starts with Abulhawa's narrative representing a new kind of defensive literature against the colonial literature; that is, the Arabic American literature against the Israeli one.

## **Chapter I: Theoretical and Historical Background of the Study**

### **Introduction**

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the first phase of our research. It illustrates how the Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa, through her novel *Mornings in Jenin* defends the Palestinian cause. Post-colonial theory is the appropriate theory for the study because the work under the study is about an already colonized people who are the Palestinians. Moreover, the chapter exhibits a brief overview of Orientalism in addition to the theory of memory and personal identity combined with the literary works and contributions of the influential scholars of each theory among them Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and John Locke. This chapter also highlights the scientific, literary, and psychological meanings of the two main terms identity and nostalgia. Susan Abulhawa will also be presented as an important figure in post-colonial theory.

### **I.1. Post-Colonial Theory**

At the end of the twentieth century, the world witnessed hungry imperial movements targeting large parts of Africa, Asia, and Australia. These parts of the world were at their zenith of exploitation. But by the end of the century, colonialism starts demising and liberating millions of people. Obviously, any kind of colonialism would make an impact beyond. Literally speaking, the west was and is represented in the western writings as masculine, democratic, rational, moral, dynamic, and progressive (Smekal, Peter, 06). Their first coming (colonization) is in order to civilize people in the colonized areas; whereas, their counterpart is presented by *them* as voiceless, female, sensual, despotic, irrational, and backward (qtd in Smekal, 06). In his book *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon illustrates this relation; “this world

divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species” (30).

As a reaction to this, post colonialism is set out by intellectuals from the colonized nations. Those people learned in western schools and universities then revolted against the falsification of their history (Smekal, 06). Modern literary critics assert that post-colonial theory is a cultural and literary study that represents the subaltern's resistance against the colonizer. In their book, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, Bill Ashcroft, G.Griffits, and Helen Tiffin define the term as follows:

Post-colonialism/Post colonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire , the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing response to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post- independence nations and communities(187).

Briefly, post colonialism deals with effects of colonization on cultures and societies. It is about the influence of the colonizer on the colonized lifestyle and way of thinking also.

Further, post colonialism deals with the cleaning of the self from the other's badge. Peter Smekal elaborates that the emergence of post-colonial theory –for the majority – goes back to the book of the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said *Orientalism*. The theory, he asserts, encompasses a wide range of development in

history, sociology, and literature. Post-colonial theory is summarized as complex area of writing and research. "It forms one of the mainsprings of renewed (post structural and anti-Eurocentric) criticism of the key western concepts of progress and development" (qtd in Smekal 07).

Interestingly, Frantz Fanon book *the Wretched of the Earth* is considered as an influential post-colonial text because it sheds light on the struggle between the superior and the inferior, between the West and the East, the white and the black, and between the known and the other. Jeanne Willette asserts that the theory has different stations that bring it to light and she mentions the *Wretched of the Earth* as one of those stations in addition to the other book of Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). In short, the theory could be a writing and reading strategy by which the Third World's writers correct their history and the Image of their people in the eyes of the west and internationally.

### **I.1.1. Frantz Fanon: The Pioneering Figure of Post Colonialism**

Frantz fanon was born in French colony of Martinique in 20 July 1925 in a family of eight children. He was one of the middle class children for working parents (Blacke, 46). In his teens, Frantz interests changed from sports, clubs, and friends into reading and discovering new things especially about literature and philosophy. He was capable enough to attend the School Cher lycee in Fort-de-France which was not available for all, especially blacks. Soon after, Frantz was sent with his brother to another secondary school at Le Francois. But, after a period of time there was a war that forbids leaving Martinique. Moreover, Fanon volunteered for the French army during the Second World War. Then, he studied medicine and psychiatry from 1945-

1950. Three years after he was applied for the chef de service at Blida-Joinville Hospital in Blida-Algeria (French colony).

Moreover, Fanon was already interested in the North African Syndrome that he writes about the North African issues of colonialism and inhuman practices. Today's Frantz Fanon is the medicine, the psychiatrist, the influential writer and the father of anti-violence revolution and decolonization.

Besides, Blacke mentions in her book a precise plot about fanon's literary work as follows:

Frantz Fanon's published work consists of a total of four disquisitions apart from articles in the *L'Esprit* and the FLN newspaper. His first book, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, was published in 1952, followed by *L'An Cinq, de la Révolution Algérienne* in 1959. His third and possibly most prestigious literary work, *Les Damnés de la Terre*, was published shortly before his death in 1961. His fourth book, *Pour la Révolution Africaine*, was published in 1964... (49).

In his four books, Fanon discusses the effects of racism, oppression, dehumanization, and the violent acts practiced by the colonizer on the colonized people. Thus, he explains and exhibits the amount of suffering and the psychological oppression people were living in from both sides.

### **1.2.1. Edward Said and the Concept of Orientalism**

Since the nineteenth century, Western writers portrayed the colonized nations as primitive, backward, and uncivilized. They also believed that it is the white man's

burden to bring civilization, known as "La Mission Civilatrice" to legitimate their colonization. Consequently, post-colonial literature emerged mainly as a result to the negative image given to the colonized people through discourse. In fact, Orientalism is one clear manifestation of the false representation as white western men studied the Orient from their own perspectives that come up with a highly hurting description of the cultures they are investigating.

According to Merriem Webster online dictionary the term Orientalism means "scholarship, learning or study in Asian subjects or language". In other words, Orientalism is the studies made by the western white men about the Middle East and its people, their language, traditions and cultures. In the same course, Edward Said, the Palestinian writer, opposed the way in which studies are done, a way that underestimates the East. For him, orientalism is something greater that led him to devote a book entitled "*Orientalism* 1978" just to speak about what orientalism is. Said defines orientalism as "the corporate institutions for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, describing it, teaching it, selling it, ruling over it, in short Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" ( Said, 3)

As far as literature is concerned, Europeans are eurocentric white men who tried to put themselves in the center whereas the Middle East people in the periphery. As such, they tried to speak negatively about the Orient and its cultures; likewise do Orientalism, as "it is a term applied to the Orient as discovered and observed, in a sense, invented by Europe and the west" (Praveen V, 48). The term refers to "discourse by the West about the East, in all fields such as literary, sociological, and so on, which have no counter point in the East"(Praveen V,48). In other words, Orientalism is the overall picture shaped by the west. More importantly, Edward Said

believed that the western writers especially the British and the French have adapted a misleading methodology in portraying what the Orient is. For them "the Orient is strange, fantastic, bizarre while the Occident was rational, sensible and familiar."(Praveen V, 48)

As stated earlier, the ambivalent representation to the Orient increased the gap between the Orient and the Occident. The "Self" exists if the "Other" is given importance, more importantly, this differentiation brought about what is known as "the binary opposition". In fact, Orientalism contributed further to the rise of this dichotomy "where the Orient is everything that the Occident is not" (Praveen, 48). Orientalism created certain stereotypes that underestimates the Middle East as its male are characterized by being coward, lazy, and uncivilized while the female gender are shown as a mere sexual target.

Additionally, Said is hardly impressed with the western efforts to speak about the East. He agrees with Foucault saying that "knowledge is not innocent it is always operated by power" (qtd in Praveen V, 48). As such, what has been portrayed about the Orient is an occidental point of view as it possesses power, knowledge and discourse. For Said, the idea of Orientalism can be simplified as "there are westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate, the latter must be dominated" (Said,36). Thus, the Orient has been considered as a passive agent subjected by another active Occident. In this regard Said asserts: "Knowledge gives power; more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasing profitable dialectic of information and control" (36).

Finally, Edward Said's Orientalism revolutionized post-colonial theory and literature as it corrected the false representations of the Orient and redirected the indigenous writer's attention towards representing themselves by themselves.

Consequently, a remarkable number of writers were influenced by his thoughts and pushed to produce works in order not to be voiced by others

### **I.3. John Locke's Theory of Identity**

The highly influential philosopher and physician, the father of Empiricism, champions of the revolutionaries, and the founder of liberalism, John Locke; whose writings about political philosophy, epistemology, and education helped finding modern western philosophy.

The great philosopher was born on August 29, 1632, in Wrington, Somerset, England. He was the son of the West Country lawyer who supported parliament during the Second World War. Both of his parents are puritans. He received education in Westminster school in London because of his father's connections. There, he was called the king's scholar, the thing that facilitates his attendance to the Christ church Oxford in 1652. After his graduation, Locke became a tutor. In 1674, he graduated with a bachelor's of medicine. Later, he became close to Lord Ashley who became earl of Shaftsbury, and then he became his secretary of presentation (Michael Ayers).

Further, influenced by Shaftsbury, Locke's political thoughts and his career were veiled with mystery. His revolutionary ideas concerning natural rights of man and the social contract were presented in his two treatises of government, the thing that later formed American and French revolutions. Locke was forced to leave England with his master. In exile, he composed "An essay concerning human understanding". The essay was published after his return to England in 1688 after the departure of King James II. The Whigs raised the power to start a new age in English government moving power from throne to parliament.

Moreover, Locke added to his essay and two treatises a new work after his return to England. The work includes a Letter concerning Toleration, the

reasonableness of Christianity and some thoughts concerning education. He remained connected to governmental work. After long health suffering, Locke died on October 28, 1704 in Essex; leaving behind a huge impact and change on the western philosophy because of his theories such as the separation of church and state, religious freedom, and liberty.

### **I.3.1. Memory and Personal Identity**

John Locke's theory of memory and personal identity stands as an influential contribution to philosophy and its history in past and present days. Identity for Locke is relative to a sortal, it is not absolute (Dan Kanfman, 241). Scientists say that personal identity is located somewhere in the body, so where is it really located? In hands, eyes, legs, or may be on head or knees? Most of people will totally agree that it is located in the brain taking into account the existence of one's soul that may have religious dimensions.

Who am I? This question is asked by John Locke and its answer is the definition of personal identity. The latter seems to consist not in bodily survival; i.e. a person could be put in another person's body and still be the same person. John Locke said that personal identity is made up of sameness of consciousness (Malika maam). To this context, he suggests that feeling and valuing the same sort of things highlights the main essences of personal identity which are values, inclinations, and temper that will surely stay even after a person's physical death.

Rather than bodily continuity, Lock focused on memory that connects the parts of our lives together even person's memories are replaced in another one's body. He says that if you cannot remember [as a conscious person] your own actions and past memories then you are literally a different person. Thus, memory has a strong relationship with the person's identity.

### **I.4.1. Identity**

While speaking about identity, the first question that comes to mind is "who am I?" that is "who really am I?" the problematic here is to know what is meant by identity in order to have a clear idea about the meaning of personal identity. And to know the latter's definition it is needed to state the "the aspects of a person it refers to and precisely in what sense these are important." Personal identity contributions varied between the physical such as (tall, the color of the skin or the hair) and membership in social categories like beliefs, goals, desires, and principles (Fearon, James D. 23). Personal identity consist of desires that we experience and memories we have which are beyond our control; or membership in a social category that we cannot escape even if we would like to. These components interconnect with each other to make us have our personal identity.

To start with, a person would look in the dictionary searching for a word's meaning. The concept of identity is "The characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is." It also means "The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality."

#### **I.4.1.1. Identity Crisis for Erik Erikson**

Identity crisis is originated in the work of Erik Erikson stages of psychosocial development. Erikson believes that identity overtime shifts, and grows as people experience new things, and face obstacles (Kendra Cherry). It occurs in the age of adolescence where the child is expected to develop ego identity before adulthood. If the child failed developing the ego identity, identity crisis happens. Among its symptoms social withdrawal and negative behaviors such as being criminal or drug

addict. More importantly, identity foreclosure can lead to an identity crisis. Children should be preserved from this kind of crisis by helping them developing themselves and their ego in order not to face hard times searching their identity during adulthood (Alley Dog).

The concept of identity over time is fixed by awareness of the past. It has a strong relation with the concept of memory i.e. They go hand in hand. The first Impression that a person may have when the term identity crisis is uttered is John Locke who mentions the interconnection between the two terms in his theory of memory and personal identity.

#### **I.4.1.2. Types of Identity**

What does personal identity mean? To investigate the meaning behind the question's answer, it is necessary to distinguish between two ideal classes of identities, role and type:

Role identities refer to labels applied to people who are expected or obligated to perform some set of actions, behaviors, routines, or functions in particular situations. For example, taxi driver, toll collector, mother, father, president, professor, businessman, student. Type identities refer to labels applied to persons who share or are thought to share some characteristic or characteristics, in appearance, behavioral traits, beliefs, attitudes, values, skills (e.g. language), knowledge, opinions, experience, historical commonalities (like region or place of birth), and so on. There is a presumption that the characteristics are more than transitory, although a type identity such as "teenager" may not be permanent (Fearon, 17).

Personal identity is defined depending on John Locke's theory of memory and personal identity where he emphasized on the terms' relationship with one another (Jessica Gorden-Roth). Locke's theory emphasized that:" memory and identity are connected: Both are bound to historical contexts and have to be seen as constructions, intended and developed for particular purposes" (qtd in Al-Mamari, 33). Moreover, while speaking about identity, the first question that comes to mind is "who am I?" I.e. "who really am I?" the problematic here is to know what is meant by identity in order to have a clear idea about the meaning of personal identity. And to know the latter's definition it is needed to state the "the aspects of a person it refers to and precisely in what sense these are important." Personal identity contributions varied between the physical such as (tall, the color of the skin or the hair) and membership in social categories like beliefs, goals, desires, and principles (Fearon, James D. 23). Personal identity consist of desires that we experience and memories we have which are beyond our control; or membership in a social category that we cannot escape even if we would like to. These components interconnect with each other to make us have our personal identity.

National identity is discussed applying the theory of the German philosopher Johan Gottfried Herder. He asserts that "a nation constituted through its language and culture. He emphasized the significance of the practices, customs and rituals of everyday life, and of the stories, folk beliefs and myths in terms of which people make sense of their lives" (qtd in Al-Mamari 33-34). American and Russian are national identities included in the whole of type identity (Fearon, James D. 17).

The two identities consist of different components. Thus, the main component of the personal identity is memory while the national's constructions are customs and rituals

of everyday life. Consequently, the two facades of an identity are in fact interrelated in a way they complete each other.

#### **I.4.2. Nostalgia**

Human being during their process of development, moving from childhood onward, experience many standpoints, special occasions, an incident, a taste or even a picture that might become memories stuck in the mind to whom individuals would unconsciously allocate a great nostalgia. Yet, what is meant by this word? More importantly, how can nostalgia be considered as a literary device?

As attempt to give a clear definition to the term nostalgia, Merriam Webster on line dictionary said it is "1- the state of being home sick; homesickness. 2- a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition." However, for many people nostalgia in meant to be an old passionate experience which is left behind and never returns. In this regard, Boym defines nostalgia as:" a longing for home that no longer exists or has never existed"(xiii). To be condition of nostalgia, an imaginary home is a sufficient solution to cope with the situation.

As far as the 17th century, nostalgia was considered as an illness that affected people who have been displaced from their home lands. Johannes Hofer, a medical student, heard about their story and examined thoroughly those people's conditions who were afflicted with fever and the so called "wasting disease" (Mda & Vladislavic, 18). His close analysis to the illness ended up with the newly identified disease named nostalgia:

Nostalgia, Greek in origin and in deed composed of two sounds, the one of which *Nostos*, return to the native land; the other, *Aglos*, signifies suffering or grief; so that thus for it is possible from the force of the sound Nostalgia to define the sad mood originating from the desire for the return to one's Restorative nostalgia stresses *Nostos* (home) and attempts as trans historical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective thrives on *Algia* (the longing itself) and delays the home coming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. These distinctions are not absolute binaries, and one can surely make a more refined mapping of the grey areas on the outskirts of imaginary homeland. (13)

#### **I.4.2.1. Types of Nostalgia**

Many scholars have defined nostalgia in a way they agree on that the word turns around one truth, home sickness. Svetlana Boym in her great social work entitled *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), classified two types of nostalgia which are "restorative" and "reflective" nostalgia. Taking into consideration that the word nostalgia is a made up word, Boym states:

Restorative nostalgia stresses *Nostos* (home) and attempts as trans-historical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective thrives on *Algia* (the longing itself) and delays the home coming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. These distinctions are not absolute binaries, and one can surely make a more refined mapping of the grey areas on the outskirts of imaginary homeland (13).

In fact, in order to determine the type of nostalgia as restorative or reflective depends mainly on the way in which individuals perceive the past, that is "restorative nostalgia, involving a desire to rebuild the lost home, views the past with an eye towards recreating it- a desire to relive those special moments" (McDonald,6 ).

Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, depends on the memories and the emotions evoked at the moment of remembering. Unlike restorative nostalgia, it holds true that the past is past and never be experienced again; rather it keeps memories and sentiments and makes them as a source of pleasure (McDonald,6 ).

As far as literature is concerned, nostalgia tends to be one of the important themes as it serves to negotiate certain events in the past and their impact in the present events and characters. It is not always about sadness or sickness, but also about the good emotions triggered by remembering the past. The online website "Literary Device" clarifies its tied relationship with the Romantic Movement in English literature as it focuses on the pain and pleasure of remembering the past. "It is used in poems, novels, and plays to evoke feelings of sadness or pleasure a character experience when recalling the past"(Literary Device, 3). Furthermore, nostalgia in this way is a good agent to bridge the gap between the reader and the writer and more importantly to enable the readers feel the amount of pain or happiness the writer wants to convey.

To convey the idea that nostalgia is no longer considered as previously stated a mental illness, but rather it is the way in which individuals react to a past event. Accordingly, our expectation about what those memories can do for us decides whether nostalgia is good or bad one as our attitude towards the past is the fact that makes all the difference.

## **I.5. the Historical Context of *Mornings in Jenin***

As an attempt to facilitate the task of grasping the main issues of the present study, a historical overview around which most events of the selected novel *Mornings in Jenin* are turning around must be given more clarification. The Israeli Palestinian conflict is not a newly emerged conflict.

One hundred years ago, this regional conflict began between two different people for one territory. The conflict has its roots in the end of the 1800s, when the Jews start migrating to the area that is known as Palestine. At the end of the century, an ideological and political movement called Zionism<sup>2</sup> appeared in the Eastern of Europe to establish a state for Jews. Palestine was the best place to establish such a state after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, of which Palestine was a part. After the British control of the land the former declared its support for the Zionist cause (Andresen, 04). The support comes out of its greed about the Suez Canal. Jews at that period constituted 8 percent of the population of Palestine. The Balfour act<sup>3</sup> was signed in 1917, and Palestine was put under the British mandate in 1922; which facilitates the control of Palestine by Jews later. Because of the horrible situation Jewish people went through, their suffering and persecution in Europe. Soon after, Jewish immigration to Palestine starts increasing. Britain afforded lands and militia for the coming population after the Holocaust<sup>4</sup> (Anderson 04). Steinmoen mentioned that during the late 1930s Palestinian started to revolt against Israel and Britain; thus, they organized some strikes and failed violent military operations (07).

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<sup>2</sup> A movement for the reestablishment of and the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. It was established as political organization in 1897 by Teodor Herzl, and was later led by Chaim Weizmann.

<sup>3</sup> In 1917 the British Prime Minister Balfour promised British support for a national homeland for Jews in Palestine.

<sup>4</sup> It is the mass murder of Jews under the German Nazi regime during the period 1941-1945.

The United Nations, in 1947, suggested a partition plan which divided the land into two sections, 55 percent would be for Israelis and 44 percent for Palestinians and the remaining one percent would remain under international control (Anderson, 04). The thing that did neither fit the Jewish demands nor the Palestinian rights to have their control on their whole land.

The year 1948 was the turning point in the history of the Palestinian Israeli conflict. In this year, Israel declared itself as an independent state. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1948, the Arab-Israeli war took place. This war is called by Palestinians as al-Nakba i.e. the catastrophe. By the end of the year 1949, Israel acquired 78 percent of the Palestinian land (Anderson, 04).

After numerous and different conflicts between Arabs (Jordan, Egypt, Syria) and Israel the first intifada<sup>5</sup> started in Gaza in 1987 armed by stones. This intifada increased the world sympathy and strengthened the Palestinian identity (Steinmoen, 07). Palestinian's demand was to have independent state consist of Gaza, west Bank, and east Jerusalem. The second intifada or uprising that was in the 2000s where Palestinians did suicide attacks targeted Israeli civilians (Anderson, 05). In 2002, Israelis after building the separation wall of the west bank, they imposed a blockade of the entire area afraid from the religious radical party's power Hamas<sup>6</sup>. In 2005, Abu Mazen<sup>7</sup> became the leader of the Palestinian nation authority, but after gaining the majority of votes, Hamas<sup>8</sup> started a war with the Fatah. The internal conflict between

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<sup>5</sup> It is the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip. It lasted from 1987 to 1993, and the second began in 2000.

<sup>6</sup> A Palestinian Islamic movement founded in 1987 with the aim of establishing a Palestinian state incorporating present day Israel and the West Bank.

<sup>7</sup> Mohamed Abbas, a Palestinian president.

<sup>8</sup> A Palestinian political and military organization founded in 1958 by Yasser Arafat and others to bring about the establishment of a Palestinian state.

these two parties which are supposed to fight against Israel does not come to an end, the same as the war against Israel. Violence becomes the daily Palestinian routine especially for those who live in Gaza, West Bank, and Jerusalem. This historical conflict is implicated in complex international relationships between Arabs and the US, Great Britain, France, and Russia. Each one looking for its benefits from this conflict that Palestinians are the only victims in it.

The studied novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, begins in 1946 to 2001. The main events that the writer speaks about and tackles are the Arab-Israeli War, where more than 500 Palestinian villages were destroyed and more than 750,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their homes; the Six-Day war, the Lebanese war in 1982 and the first intifada (Anderson, 06). All of those events mentioned by Abulhawa resulted in uncountable number of victims, and millions of refugees living in camps in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza strip, west bank and Jenin.

The battle of Jenin, or the massacre, or what is referred to internationally as a war crime took place in 2002. In this war Israeli soldiers attacked the camp of refugees in Jenin pushed by, as they say, the hope to find some Palestinian warriors for the sake of killing them. But they had the opportunity to erase the Palestinian civilians with the wanted ones at once.

Today, most Palestinian refugees live in West Bank, Gaza strip and the neighboring Arab states of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. There are more than 10 million Palestinians, 3 three-quarters of whom are displaced. More than half are displaced outside the borders of their

historical homeland, while a further quarter of a million are displaced inside Israel, having had their original property expropriated (qtd in Al-Ma'amari, 33) .

### **I.6.1. Susan Abulhawa the Novelist and Humanitarian**

One of the most highly regarded Palestinian writers is Susann Abulhawa. As refugees of the six day war of 1967, her parents fled to Kuwait where she was born in 1970. She and her family have witnessed displacement and dislocation because of the occupation of the Palestinian territory by the Israeli forces. She spent three years in Dar al Tifli<sup>9</sup> orphanage in Jerusalem before migrating to USA at the age of 13 (Dr.Sheikh, 02). Being raised in Kuwait, Palestine and USA, Susan finished graduate studies in Carolina in biomedical science and medical science. However Abulhawa's real passion is literature, her debut novel *Mornings in Jenin*, Bloomsbury Press 2010, is a bestselling novel that has been translated to 28 languages and her second novel *The Blue between Sky and Water* has likewise been translated to 26 languages. In 2001, she founded the play grounds for Palestine an NGO that builds play grounds for Palestinian children in the occupied territories and in refugee camp elsewhere.

As a Palestinian writer, Abulhawa tried to prove to the world the reality of the Israeli oppression to Palestinians. She is hardly convinced that the situation can be named "conflict" as conflict is generally between equal sides, but rather it is settler colonialism and apartheid. Her novel *Mornings in Jenin* is in a way or another an intellectual weapon, an opportunity to show the truth of the Israeli as apartheid. Additionally, many famous international journals have appreciated her novel. The

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<sup>9</sup> It was founded in Jerusalem, on the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1948, by the late Ms. Hind Al-Husseini. It is a charitable organization formed to serve Palestinian orphans and needy children, providing them with good care, accommodation, education and entertainment.

Independent says that" Abulhawa's writing shines...friendship, adolescence, love: ordinary events, offset against extraordinary circumstances, make the story live" (qtd in Dr. Sheikh, 03). The Daily Mail views it as "one of the most thought –provoking books... written with passion and honesty and poetry"(qtd in Dr. sheikh,03).

*Mornings in Jenin* is largely inspired by Abulhawa's life. It speaks about four generations and their cohesion with the land. Their story started simply with early life and olive harvest to reach its climax in the days of Nakba to the present days struggle. As stated by Susan Abulhawa in an interview, *Mornings in Jenin's* title comes from those mornings that the family used to spend together, when the protagonist, Amal, was talking to her father about the great love between them; the mornings when the refugees set together in the Jenin refugee camp to hear the news being delivered by Amal's father. The novel was written just after the massacres of Jenin 2002, Abulhawa said that after the news were displayed in the international media, she felt like going there to see the aftermaths and come up with an international eye witness. When she returned to USA, she started writing about what she saw. However, the writing expanded to become a novel without any previously planned intention to produce a novel.

In the same line of thought, Abulhawa asserts that literature is a way to bring freedom and struggle for it. She says:" writing your story and creating your art becomes an act of decolonization" as such Palestinian literature and art asserts the Palestinians presence, existence, humanity, and above all their ancient history to which they belong (Qantara Magazine, 01).

## **I.6.2. Susan Abulhawa the Intellectual Militant of Palestine**

As a Palestinian, regardless to her job, Abulhawa is always manifesting a tireless desire to contribute to the Palestinian struggle. She is often invited to participate in international poetry or literary festivals. In USA, Abulhawa took part in many seminars and conferences. She participated in the conferences organized by the Washington Report on the Middle East Affairs magazine in which Susan Abulhawa made presentations under the titles of Israel beyond Apartheid (2016) and Israeli's Influence: Good or Bad for America (2019) in which She examined the nature of the Israeli presence in the world and their claim to be the only democracy in the Middle East versus its reality as apartheid nation.

Furthermore, Susan Abulhawa is a powerful Palestinian voice that audiences may listen to her presentations all over the world except in her own country. In November 2018, while traveling to partake in the Kalimate Palestinian Literature Festival, Abulhawa was disallowed entry at Tal Aviv's Ben-Gurion Airport by the Israeli authorities (Abulhawa, workers world, 03). She was detained and asked several questions for hours. Her reaction was very strong and she was criticized by the Israeli authorities of being vulgar; to them she responded:" the true vulgarity is that several million European and other foreigners live in Palestine now while the indigenous population lives either in exile or under the cruel boots of the Israeli occupation"(Abulhawa, 03). As such, she stated clearly that the Israeli Authorities stole their lives, lands, and happiness and coined certain stereotypes about Palestinians as being "viewed as helpless, hungry, and needy ... less human, somehow, as savages, terrorists"(Abulhawa, 05)

Susan Abulhawa is such an active Palestinian American author that she sacrifices a lot of her time and effort to bring about the real nature of Israel worldwide. She always asserts that Israel has denied her to go to her home land but her voice will not ever stop talking about her beloved country; she said: "my heart doesn't ever leave Palestine"(01).

After having explored *Mornings in Jenin* through the theoretical and historical frameworks of the concepts of identity and nostalgia; in addition to the main theories of the influential theorists whom the analysis of the studied novel is built up on their perspectives. We will now, in the conclusion, build on our analysis of the novel concerning the suffering of the protagonist of the novel Amal. How were she and her family being repeatedly homeless and forced to leave their hometowns? How they were obliged to abandon their Palestinian identity struggling the heavy feelings of nostalgia.

## **Chapter II: The Palestinian Diasporic Identity, Nostalgia and the Quest for the Self in *Mornings in Jenin***

### **Introduction**

This chapter gives a nuanced analysis of the main characters and events that are involved in Amal's life, the protagonist of the novel. It first sheds light on Amal's search for her lost identity and the heavy feelings of nostalgia she suffers from away from her home and country. In this chapter, the question of how does the writer Susan Abulhawa represent the subaltern's identity and nostalgia will be answered under the post-colonial theory's light and the orientalist point of view in addition to the psychological analysis of the characters' psyche. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to analyze the successful portrayal of the Palestinians' struggle looking for their identity and hindering the flow of nostalgic emotions towards home and returning back to their Palestine.

### **II.1. Quest for Identity in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin***

*Mornings in Jenin* is an Arab American work written by the Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa to mainly spotlight on the quest for identity throughout the novel with an exilic voice that represents millions of Palestinian's situation symbolized by Amal. The latter, suffered from having a diasporic identity because of traumatic experiences and displacement. Abulhawa in her book seeks not just to show the external conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, or narrate some "real" events. She, in fact, aims to convey the reality that there is a ruthless inner war of identity drains the psychological, physical, and the spiritual energy of the characters from both sides especially the Palestinian one. That is, she depicts the identity crisis that they were living in. the themes of "love, beauty, ...; inner conflict of dispossessions; and, most

importantly, the human voice ...;” Abu Shomar says that this diasporic combination gives the novel a special place in literature community because it prevails realities about the Palestinian phase(135).

More interestingly, the end of the novel, Abulhawa tries to go beyond the moment, beyond war, and beyond hate where she mentions the Israeli soldiers’ human state. Amal noticed that the soldier also was in a state of inner conflict standing between faithfulness to his work (the Israeli cause) or latent human virtues (Abu Shomar 128). Amal describes the appearance of the soldier in a precise way and portrays his hard situation of getting ready to kill; she says:” He blinks hard. And a solitary drop of sweat travels from his smooth skin, still too young to need a regular shave. The power he holds over life is a staggering burden for so young man” (Abulhawa09).

Home is fragile and temporary for characters in the novel since they are always forced to flee from their homes and sometimes lands (like Amal); so that, identity is also distorted. It is difficult to create a sense of belonging, in this uprooted and uncertain way of life. Here, the writer wants the reader to pay attention to the importance of land in shaping one’s identity and feelings of belonging as Hasan says to his daughter Amal: “we come from the land, give our love and labor to her, and she nurtures us in return. When we die, we return to the land. In a way, she owns us. Palestine owns us and we belong to her” (Abulhawa54). Substantially, the writer wants to convey with Hasan’ words that the land is again the main responsible of giving one’s identity, and the transformation of this reality to next generations should succeed (it succeeded in fact thanks to him, his father Yehya and haj Salem, and Amal later to her daughter Sara).

The most important theme in the novel is identity. Some characters like Yehya, haj Salem, Hassan, Darwish, Dalia and others from Ein Hod know their identity and they were always proud of being Palestinians. They suffered mainly from the harsh feelings of nostalgia for their past days than being lost refugees in Jenin. Abulhawa describes the amount of happiness that those conscious people (of their identity) felt of when Yehya gets back from his visit to Ein Hod full news satisfaction, news about his forbidden land, and fruits from his trees in his village: “the air filled with crossing sounds and people were drunk on the fruits of trees that had continued in time and penetrated the cloud of exile” (qtd in Abu-Shomar 131). However, for Amal, the fact of belonging is something very difficult all over her life. Her brother Ismael, or the Jewish David, also lives a hard psychological state because of his doubts and fear of his Arabic origins that later become a truth when his Jewish father on his deathbed tells him his Arabic roots and identity. Here David starts an identical war standing between two opposite identities, two old enemies, two religions, and two languages.

### **II.1.1. Amal’s Palestinian Identity versus the Other “Amy”**

Amal Hassan Abulhija, the girl who was born in the refugee camp of Jenin, goes through traumatic experiences from her early childhood. These events contributed in building her personality within a small family and later her identity in huge and conflicted world. Sigmund Freud, in his psychoanalytic theory asserts on the fact that the development on the human psyche is associated with traumas he faced in his life particularly in his early childhood. In this context, Abu-Shomar argues that Amal suffers from diaspora conditions such as displacement, victimization, and crossing of borders, the thing that causes her distorted identity. Her journey of building herself outside the camp of Jenin is in fact her journey of diaspora. Amal’s

first steps towards the orphanage Dar El Tifl do not really contribute in losing her identity. It gives her many good memories that later wake the Palestinian girl up to get back to home and to be Amal (130).

#### **II.1.1.1.Amy and Amal's Roots**

Her visit to the United States after winning a scholarship was an escape from her reality to another. The Palestinian Amal escapes from her belonging for years of her study in El Ghorba. In her first period there, Amal the Palestinian, feels errant “feeling of inadequacy marked my first months in America” (Abulhawa135). As time passes, she becomes the American “Amy” who has no past, roots, or an inherited oriental identity. Amy consciously forgets about her real identity and practiced illusion professionally. As Abulhawa says, Amal is caught between two diverging roads of liberal western culture and education and the conservative oriental Arab lifestyle. Amy is now the new free girl who is living on the western standards that permit the “Ay-rab” female to express her femininity by having sexual relationships outside the bondage of marriage. Amal’s mind, goes over her Palestinian identity to give herself the right of being the American Amy (Abu-Shomar132). According to John Locke: “Memory is a key constituent of our idea of a person and the identity” (qtd in Al-Ma’amari 34). Hence, ghosts of memories start appearing in Amy’s capital and liberal world. While she was trying to have another identity and to be another person in another world; Amal gets up unconsciously in Amy’s mind when she looks to the mirror to see Dalia’s silent sight, she always closes her eyes in the middle of the American parties to smell the soil of Palestine (Jenin):

The divide could not have been greater, nor could it be bridged.

That’s how it was. Palestine would just rise up from my bones into

the center of my new life, unannounced. In class, at a bar, strolling through the city. Without warning, the weeping willows of Rittenhouse Square would turn into Jenin's fig trees reaching down to offer me the fruit. It was a persistent pull, living in the cells of my body, calling me to myself. Then it would slouch back into latency (Abulhawa139).

Striving to impose her new self against the real (past) one Amal says:” I metamorphosed into an unclassified Arab-western hybrid, uprooted and unknown” (Abulhawa 138). She finds herself between binary oppositions of two worlds; she was still lost between two choices either to continue as Amy or to return as Amal, the Palestinian girl.

Repeatedly, Amal experiences a new feeling, and goes through another struggle of identity. After the news from her brother Youcef, Amal the Palestinian, travels to Lebanon to meet the remaining of her family Youcef and his wife Fatima, her friend. She does not know what was waiting for her, or why did she come back; “Furthermore, I had nothing, no one, to go back to”. In contrast with Amy, Amal finds herself and her childhood in her brother's arms” (Abulhawa 149). She experiences the romance and passion of the oriental Arab love with doctor Majid (Abu-Shomar 131). Her love story, her settlement in Sabra and Shatila's refugee camp in Lebanon, and her work as a teacher gives Amal the opportunity to find herself, her own dream, and mainly gives her acceptance to her “lost-new” identity. After a short marriage that makes the life dream of Amal to have love and own family real, the war starts again. The pregnant wife of doctor Majid is obliged again, by circumstances, to flee her home directly to her first exile America. She experiences a new identity crisis when

her brother Youcef tells her in a phone call about the death of Majid and the pregnant Fatima and his daughter Palestine in the war (Abu-Shomar131). She lives on the memories of her beloved husband that empowered her to raise their love fruit Sara in almost the same way Dalia, Amal's mother, raises her.

Diaspora, memories, and lost identity are the main themes in Abulhawa's novel *Mornings in Jenin*. Ditto, they are the main psychological states Amal, the mother, suffers from exile the same as Amal the teenager student. The reaction of Amal when she had the call from her lost brother Ismael, who was kidnapped by an Israeli soldier Moshe as a gift for his wife Julanta to be called David, is not expected from the calm, cold and close American lady. It is, in fact, the reaction of Amal, the Palestinian warm sister. Contrasted feelings are quarrelling in her soul after meeting her fifty three years old brother as David Abram (Abu-Shomar131). Amal, in an attempt to protect her daughter Sara from her mother's ghosts of the past, does not tell her a lot about it. She prefers to be the American Amy in her daughter's eyes with Palestinian origins. These roots succeed at the end in bringing Amal to Palestine again accompanied with nineteen years old Sara. This journey that was the last for Amal emphasized her real identity and belonging to Jenin and Palestine.

Amal in her journey recalls her past memories in a nostalgic and dramatic way with her brother David, her father's friend Ari, her friend Huda, the orphanage, and Jenin. She closes the last chapter of her life defending her child from the gunshot of an Israeli soldier (Abu-Shomar 131).

### **II.1.2. National Interest within International Disinterest**

The Arab American literature is characterized by certain themes that differentiates it from other genres: "experiences of displacement, exile, and

dispossession caused by the political shifts and military conflicts across the Arab world from the mid-twentieth to the early twenty first century,”( Conrey17). Susan Abulhawa writes her *Mornings in Jenin* to put the Palestinian voice in English literature. The novel follows a Palestinian family through four generations, and depicts the struggle of creating a sense of belonging away from home. Storytelling serves an important role in the creation of Palestinian Identity. Abulhawa has received praise for offering new insight into the situation for Palestinian, both in home and exile (Hell Marie02). Ernest Keen writes that sharing stories with others is inevitable and necessary (qtd in Anderson, 18). In this context, Abulhawa starts her novel memories of past days from the life of her grandfather Yehya, who later becomes a storyteller in the refugee camp of Jenin with his friend Haj Salem. The two, Darwish, Hassan, Dalia, and even Amal depend on the inherited way of transforming identity to generations; that is, stories from the past which they think that these realities are the main evidence of their existence there one day. Hell Marie says that as her grandfather Yehya and her brother Youcef, Amal’s question all over the story is about their right to return to the land occupied by Zionists who give themselves the right to call it as theirs (33).

Within an international disinterest, homelessness of Palestinians is a normal situation of some numbers of refugees who are living to be later numbers in the victims’ lists if they are lucky enough not to be buried alive. The international legal systems do not recognize Palestinians as citizens of any state because they do not have passports. That thing increases the discomfort and anger within the Palestinian communities. In the footsteps of Mahmoud Darwish’s declaration of identity “Identity Card” and “Passport”, Abulhawa fills her narrative (the studied novel) with tropes of identity cards and checkpoints. The latter are described in the novel as a humiliating

routine. Refugees were obliged to wait long time to have the permission to pass or to be beaten and refused depending on the Israeli soldiers 'mood (Tesi di Laurea, 55). Palestinian-ness was neglected and simplified by Israelis so that it means nothing but some colored papers are not valid internationally (56). Abulhawa is one of the rising Palestinian narrators who gives voice to identities that have historically been silenced and misrepresented. The Palestinian cause generally suffered from international humiliation and falsification. The scene of the death of Fatima, Amal's friend is portrayed by a war photographer as a daily normal work routine as any other event like it. All of this is with the American sympathy towards Israel (121). After the attacks on Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, Ariel Sharon<sup>4</sup> becomes the prime minister of the Jewish state (his gift):" The American press described him as "a portly old warrior" and a "tough veteran of Israel's many wars." The forty-third president of the United States of America, George W. Bush, referred to him as a "man of peace" (Abulhawa 182).

Shortly, Abulhawa announces her rejection to the distortion of realities of her Palestinian history. Thus she portrays the real Palestinian story of identity. In her narrative, she addresses people from all over the world accompanied with newspapers' articles, sums of refugees and victims, poetic pieces, and real events to confirm the Palestinian possession of Palestine and unveil reality of the Palestinian cause.

### **II.1.3. Representation of the Other and the Self**

The juxtaposition of two states for a land is set around the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the novel that represents a clear image of "self" and "other". Palestinian characters consider themselves as victims and the "other" for them is an oppressor.

This understanding of that difference contributes to give a sense of belonging to Palestinians as well as to Israelis. The “other” is always mentioned throughout the novel if not physically then it is mentioned in the daily discourse. The negative stereotype is presented from the first chapter of the novel through the narrative of Yehya as he refers to Israelis by using negative description “son-of-a dog Zionist” and “lily-skinned foreigners with no attachment to the land”( Abulhawa,07,46). The image of non-belonging is strengthened through the novel for Israelis (Mette 16). Terkenli mentions that;” humans define themselves relative to the other(...)Individuals define and redefine their life worlds as home by assigning the unfamiliar or the foreign to “them”, the other, whoever they may be, and by creating distance between the two sides”(326). Amal grows up in a community that makes huge borders between “us” and “them” (Mette 66). David’s violence towards his brother Youcef in the checkpoint illustrates the rejection of Arabs by Israelis “who the fuck are you, Arab?” addressing Youcef like this “Arab” creates the “other”. The moment of Moshe’s confession to David cuts everything in the novel into two contradictory of good or bad, friend or enemy, Palestinian or Israeli, the “self” or the “other”( Mette pp.18-20).

However, Abulhawa away from the conflict between the “self” and the “other” maintains a sense of ethical humanism towards Israelis characters such as David and the soldier who killed Amal at the end of the novel in the refugee camp right where she was born in Jenin. Thanks to her double vision of realities informed by her hyphenated-identity, she depicts the Jewish characters in sympathetic way with human sight; “Nowhere in the story has she lost the touch of humanity” (Abu-Shomar 134). The language that Abulhawa uses while writing and portraying the Israeli characters is humanity. Away from political struggle, ideological conflict, and

religious differences, Abulhawa represents the “other” in humanistic way especially while speaking about Jolanta’s motherhood for her brother Ismael (David):

Jolanta gave her blessing for David to do whatever his heart commanded. Be he Jew or Gentile, Jolanta loved that boy. God only knows how much. That love had saved her once upon a time. Jolanta had done what neither Dalia nor Amal could do: she had transformed the energy of her pain into expressions of love, and David was the sole beneficiary (Abulhawa 257).

Accordingly, the representation of the “self” and the “other” in the novel is like the representation of the difference between Palestine and Israel; and, home and exile. Even the portrayal of this relationship is humanistic and deeply ethical, Abulhawa depicts realities from the very beginning of the story and tries not to be subjective while representing the “other” and the main evident of this is Amal’s remarks about the hard situation of the Israeli soldier who is about to kill her.

### **II.2.1.Nostalgia as homesickness**

*Mornings in Jenin* is considered among the highly appreciated novels which speak out the true story of a violated land and people of Palestine. It depicts the real Palestinian struggle as it gives an image about the change over time from the happy and peaceful life to a never ending suffering, pain and above all death and war. Amidst the hatred and loss, fear and pain there are always great feelings that evoke nostalgia. Lot of emotions coined with love when remembering a distant ideal past. A clear manifestation of nostalgia is felt when reading the right first lines in chapter I:

IN A DISTANT TIME, before history marched over the hills and shattered present and future, before wind grabbed the land at one corner and shook it of its name and character, before Amal was born, a small village east of Haifa lived quietly on figs and olives, open frontiers and sunshine (Abulhawa, 11)

In these lines, the past is presented with a heartbroken present situation, with a tendency to speak about how perfect life was before the change occurred, to use Svetlana Boym words, "with a yearning for a different time" (XV) when people lived peacefully and made good harvest of olives on open frontiers and sunshine. More importantly, the previous passage summarizes the whole novel, in a sense, it compares between the present and the past. Once more, the past is regarded to be the heaven on earth that every Palestinian dreams of where every small detail was fine till the arrival of the "wind" that grabbed the land and shook it. Actually, it is ironically used to refer to the Israeli who stole the Palestinian land under the traditional Zionist slogan "a land without a people, for a people without a land".

After being displaced to a refugee camp, Yahya, Amal's grandfather, could not escape from his past. In fact, he keeps talking about the past and the land that he is accustomed to cultivate. He always asserts "that terrain is in my blood!" "I know every tree and every bird the soldiers do not."(40); these few words can effectively transmit to the reader how huge are the amount of love and the sense of nostalgia in the small heart of Yahya.

Driven by his nostalgia to the vanished life before the Jews settled on Palestine, Yahya dares to return home. Through this return journey, Amal's grandfather breaks the first rule of Boym definition of nostalgia, "a longing for home

that no longer exists or has never existed." (xiii). Accordingly, people yearn for a place or time that no longer exists; yet, going back home is impossible in this case. So, as a solution speaking about the past can minimize the setbacks of the oppressing nostalgia. However, the case for the old patriarch Yahya is absolutely dissimilar, he accomplished his return journey:

For days he had roamed his fields, greeting his carob and fig trees with the excitement of a man reuniting with his family . . . He came back from his sixteen days in the paradise of realized nostalgia . . .the people lifted him to heights of esteem befitting the only man among them who had outwitted a ruthless military and had done what five great nations could not effectuate. He had returned. However brief and uncertain his return may have been, he had done it. (41)

In this passage, yahya's return is described as "reuniting with family" and "paradise of realized nostalgia". Despite its short time, he proved he can relive the past and reduce the feelings of nostalgia. But, he is now more convinced that his land and life are lost forever and can never be regained.

Drawing the link to the earlier discussed types of nostalgia in chapter one, restorative and reflective nostalgia; the most dominant type of nostalgia in *Mornings in Jenin* is restorative. That is true for the case of Yahya and his constant desire to go back home to re-experience the old days. In fact, he shows a restorative nostalgia marked by his return journey that unfortunately led him to lose not only his dream but also his own life.

Following the same steps of her grandfather, Amal is pushed by her restorative nostalgia to search for home. One of the clear instances of Amal's nostalgia is when she remembers her family:

Walking downtown once, I thought I saw my mother, the gust of the ghost breezing through my reflection in a store window. I paused, staring at my mother's daughter. Dalia, Um Youcef, had bequeathed to me the constitution that could not breathe while holding hands with the past. She could isolate each present moment while existing in an eternal past, I needed physical distance to remove myself. I thought at that moment that no other soul understand me as she might. (138)

The presence of family members is important for an immigrant as it reduces the effects of old memories and oppressing nostalgia. Furthermore, in Philadelphia, Amal felt the difference among her and her home mates. Unlike her, they always make calls for their parents whereas she makes none, she remains "unperturbed" together with "sweet nostalgia and longing for old friends" (139). Amal is so homesick that "Palestine would just rise up from my bones into the center of my new life" (139)

Moreover, Amal's nostalgia has motivated her to fetch for the past and the old days when she was a child. Amal finds resolve in her visit to Jenin in 2002 where she met her childhood friend Huda. She has responded to her yearning to the past through her best friend eyes in an attempt to find her lost home:

Huda's beautiful eyes shone from a face engraved by decades of weather and by the loss of her child. In her eyes, our shared yesterdays tarried with the taller, denser Jenin of the present. The

continuity of our friendship was stored in those eyes, and I searched them to find the sense of home, which I had expected to feel in Jenin but did not. Had I change that much? How unnatural it felt to pick up strands of a past I had abandoned long ago (230).

Amal thought that her restorative nostalgia will be realized by getting back to Jenin. Yet, she did not. She further described the return as "unnatural". In fact, her nostalgia has not been evoked by inner force, but rather by inherited memories of a lost past that she never lived personally. Moreover, Amal broadens her imagination more and more by creating imaginative homes and pictures in her mind due mainly to those memories and stories but this image is harshly changed:

It was a taller Jenin than the one I had left nearly thirty years earlier. Shack built over shack. Stone instead of adobe. "Vertical growth" is the technical term. One square mile of United Nations subsidies where forty-five thousand residents, four generations of refugees, lived, vertically packed. (228)

The image of home that Amal had in her mind is destroyed when she arrives at Jenin. The real situation is loaded with horrors and risks all the day long as "young men, washed clean dreams, ran in the alleyways with riffles strapped to their bodies. They were preparing for the inevitable ... coming storm" (228). Like her grandfather, Amal is still desperate in her research adventure as a home seeker.

In a similar vein, Dr. Ari Perlstein could not escape the case of being nostalgically home sick. Dr. Ari, the "self-hating Jew" as he is described in the novel, still yearns to the past and the old days. His nostalgia is directly manifested when he heard his old friend's name "Hasan":

"Ya ellahi!" he whispered in Arabic until he was upon me, his trembling, age-spotted hands impatiently brushing away tears from his magnified eyes. "Is Hasan there?" he asked, his voice breathless, exhausted by the sudden desperation of the stolen past, by the great urge to know, to see his old friend (222)

Dr. Ari, the boy with only one friend, had a great friendship with Hasan, their friendship is considered to be eternal. Dr. Ari tried to run away from the oppressed memories of the Nazi bigotry. His loss of such a faithful friend caused him to suffer from loneliness and thus from home sickness.

Susan Abulhawa, the author of the novel, herself, in fact, is stimulated by her nostalgia to homeland to produce *Mornings in Jenin*. Abulhawa's nostalgia is shown, on the one hand, in her tendency to romanticize the past by talking about her old memories especially in the orphanage part which is autobiographical. On the other hand, her urgent desire to feel her Palestinian identity pushed her to use some Arabic words, more specifically the Palestinian dialect. As a result, Abulhawa seized the opportunity to use such words as " Ibni, habibti, Jeddo..." and many more Arabic words to reassert the Palestinian identity all over the world.

### **II.2.2.The Portrayal of Amal's Tragedy**

*Mornings in Jenin* is considered to be a tragedy in addition to being the story of a violated land and the Palestinian struggle for survival. In fact, all the Palestinian sufferance is voiced through the story characters among who is the central character Amal. She is highly uprooted from her soil and the portrayal of this character is something subjective for the author Susan Abulhawa. Through this character, Abulhawa shed lights on her experience of being displaced and orphan," my

childhood was quite unstable and uprooted, owing mostly to family circumstances. I have mostly felt my way through life." (Abulhawa). This alienation and aloofness resonates exactly the depth of pain and tragedy in Amal's character.

Right at the beginning of the story, Amal's family has witnessed displacement and forced to live in a refugee camp in Jenin. There in Jenin refugee camp, Amal is born and she grows up with time passing to be her father's beloved daughter. Hasan embraced her with care, tenderness, and taught her poetry. He always keeps saying: "I love you as big as the ocean and all its fishes. As big as the sky and all its birds. As big as the earth and all her trees"(52). From this extract it is clear how tough is the relationship between Amal and her father that costs her to suffer a lot, later on, when she lost her father in the 1967 war. Amal cannot believe that her father is dead:" I had just one wish now, to see Baba again." (62)

In Jenin's refugee camp, Amal has seen the war of 1967. An Arab Israeli war broke out and resulted in a lot of massacres in Jenin. Amal was just a little child, unprotected and so terrified, she hide herself with her friend Huda and a small baby in the kitchen hole. She was suffering from fear. However, how can that little child hold that amount of pain and fear?

Days passed, I think the baby was inconsolable at timed. Huda and I joined her, the two of us sobbing in terror with the child... children wailed uncomprehendingly. Women, as helpless as their children, cried and prayed loudly, as if trying to catch God's attention through the chaos. We heard destruction and blasts of fire. We heard chants. The odor of burning flesh, fermenting garbage, and scorched foliage mixed with the smell of our own excrement in the dust. (59)

As the passage demonstrates, all people are in an urgent need to find shelter, but poor little Amal, her little mind could not grasp this situation as she said: "Huda, I think this is Judgment Day, it is just like it says in the Quran"(59).

The results of the war are enormous as more Palestinian land is stolen and more people are dead. It has taken away Amal's father, Hassan, and made her mother devoid of any emotions before she die. Amal wanted her mother to compensate for her loss, but no reaction. In contrary, Amal now is more worried and feels loneliness: "I saw Mama in the treatment tent and rushed toward her, aching for another embrace. She sat motionless in a corner . . . "Mama." I touched her lightly, but she did not respond. I put my face in front of hers, but her eyes looked through me" (62). She becomes more persuaded that she is alone and weak, losing parents' love is so harmful, let alone being an orphan at this sensitive stage of a person's life.

Amal's tragedy is enormous, if it's not the reality; the whole novel portrays this so clearly, starting by her departure to Jerusalem and later on to USA in order to continue her studying. She felt herself deeply uprooted and remote. First, she lost her parents and then her childhood friend Huda when she left Jenin. Moreover, her immigration to USA has just worsened the situation, despite being an occasion to receive a good education there. In USA, Amal studied hard and worked to earn her life:

So, in Philadelphia, while my housemates made frantic calls to their parents, the landlord, the health department, and insurance companies, I was unperturbed. While they acted as if their world had come to a shitty end, I felt a sweet nostalgia and longing for old friends. (139)

As her mother always kept advising her "*whatever you feel, keep it inside*" (49), Amal tried to hide her pain and just carry on her life.

In 1981, Amal received a sudden call. It was her brother Yousef and his wife saying that they were searching for her for a long time. After 13 years of separation, they met again in Lebanon, Shatila's Refugee Camp. In the same camp, Amal met her beloved husband Majid. Unluckily, the war broke out again in 1982 and the Israeli launched an attack in Lebanon. Destiny was against her happiness, Amal was so affected upon hearing the incident in Philadelphia that Majid was killed and Fatima, her niece Falesteen and her brother's unborn child were murdered also, as Yousef said: "they slaughtered my wife and my children like lambs!"(179). Unconsciously, Amal found herself walking to no specific target, the news were too shocking that made her say her husband's words "*I love you eternally. What we have made of forever.*" (175). In fact, the effects of this harsh event are marked in Amal's personality change as she became "a woman of few words and no friends" (192) and her life moved towards loneliness: "My life savored of ash and I lived with the perpetual silence of a song that has no voice. In my bitterness and fear, I felt as alone as loneliness dares to be" (192).

Amal is such a strong character that she converts the worst to the best. Amidst all these sad moments, she delivered her daughter Sara, the candle that will light the rest of her life:

At last, my child lay wrapped in my arms, like a flower bud. I settled my being in the rhythm of her jaw sucking at my breast, while she spooned life over my hardened heart, like moss cushioning a stone. But I kept my distance, going only through the

mechanics of caring for a newborn. This fragile infant had forced upon me the will to live, and I resented her for that, for all I really wanted then was to die (180).

The tragedy that Amal goes through expresses the indignities and sufferance of the Palestinian refugees, friendship and love. Amal's story leads to the empathy with the Palestinians as it transmits exactly the intensity of harsh circumstances of war, poverty, orphanage and above all exile and homelessness.

## Conclusion

Literature is known as the mirror of society. It presents the lives of people like a photographer. Thus, people are always in need to express, discuss, show, and describe their feelings, perceptions, life events and realities. Some of literature is used in transforming and depicting realities from another angle, sometimes a wrong one. In this context, Arab American literature appears as a reaction to the falsified literature presented by Israelis about Palestine and the Palestinian cause. Susan Abulhawa in her novel *Morning in Jenin* represents the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. She rewrites the story with a Palestinian narrative. This novelist and political activist influenced by Edward Said's oriental thoughts and Frantz Fanon's anti-racist views writes her revolutionary *Mornings in Jenin* as a subaltern's voice from exile.

Using *Mornings in Jenin* as a case study, this research has aimed at promoting the successful portrayal of the fragmented identity of Palestinian in exile and in Palestine itself; the fact of being refugee and the hard feelings of nostalgia to homeland. As a post-colonialist and an orientalist writer, Abulhawa well defended the Palestinian cause all over her novel. The theme of humanism is highly present in her narrative. On one hand, the writer portrays the quest for identity and the suffering her protagonist of the novel, Amal, goes through in addition to her nostalgia that every Palestinian living refugee camps or exile. On the other hand, the writer never tries to attack Israelis other than stating events and clarifying realities

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## ملخص

الرواية المدروسة صباحات في جنين او بينما ينام العالم للكاتبة الفلسطينية سوزان ابوالهوى تعد واحدة من اهم الاعمال في الادب العربي الامريكي التي نادى من اجل تدويل القضية الفلسطينية و تصحيح المفاهيم.الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الاطروحة هو دراسة كيفية تمثيل الكاتبة للهوية و الحنين في هذه الرواية .كما تسلط الضوء على دورالثقافة الفلسطينية في تثبيت الهوية و رد فعل الكاتبة على السرد الاسرائيلي الذي طغى على الادب العالمي.ما بعد الاستعمارية هي النظرية المتبعة لتحليل شخصيات العمل.اضافة الى ذلك سوف تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الادب الفلسطيني الامريكي باعتبار رواية بينما ينام العالم تجسيد ظاهر للهوية الفلسطينية.

## **Declaration**

We hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by ourselves only. Except for ideas and passages that are properly cited in the text, this writing is all our own work. The work has not been previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. It respects the scientific standards for the scientific research.

**Signed**

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