

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Amar Thelidji Laghouat
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



**Palestinian Cultural Memory and Trauma in
Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, and
Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes
on a Vanishing Landscape*.**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
the Degree of 'Magister' in Commonwealth Studies

Candidate:

Hadja Nakhla BEDERINA

Supervised by:

Dr. Fouad MAMI

Members of the Jury:

Dr. Nassima KAID	University of Laghouat	MCA	President
Dr. Fouad MAMI	University of Adrar	MCA	Supervisor
Dr. Salah KACI-MOHAMED	University of Algiers II	MCA	Examiner
Prof. Mohamed AFKIR	University of Laghouat	Professor	Examiner

Academic Year: 2016-2017

Dedication

To the memory of my late father,

*To my mother and siblings for their support and encouragement, especially
Sarrah,*

To my husband Nadhir for his consistent motivation,

To my friends especially Aicha,

To Palestinian people whose struggle for recognition continues,

Acknowledgment

I want to express my deepest gratitude and respect to my supervisor Dr. Fouad MAMI for providing me with valuable feedback, pieces of advices and guidance. Thank you.

I would like to thank all the members of the board of examination who have accepted to examine and evaluate the present dissertation.

I would like to express my thanks to all my teachers who have taught me since my childhood: my high school teachers, my undergraduate teachers, my graduate teachers and post graduate teachers, especially Professor Berrahal Fatiha for her guidance through all my academic career,

I would like to acknowledge all the people who helped me in many ways.

ABSTRACT:

Amid the decades of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many disturbing events affected the lives of millions of Palestinians and their ‘memory’. Cultural memory and trauma are both parts of ‘memory’ studies. This dissertation seeks to investigate the role of literature in representing Palestinian cultural memory and trauma. The chosen corpus for this study consists of Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) and Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008). This study sheds light on Abulhawa’s narration of the loss of Palestine. As a consequence of this loss, Palestinians developed a peculiar attachment to the land, and hence, the literary imagery of the landscape and trees becomes “*Lieux de memoire*” that acts as holder of Palestinian cultural memory. In accordance, fruitful trees, identified as active agents of memory, not only serve as holders of cultural memory but also serve as connectors between the past and the future of the rupture between Palestinians and their lands. Furthermore, the study explores the ways in which trauma is represented in the aforementioned works. Each writer offers to deal with it differently. Abulhawa focuses on the trauma caused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and posits three models of working through: either through dementia, resilience or silence. Shehadeh focuses on trauma triggered by the loss of the land and the irreversible changes conducted by the Israeli settlement through his portrayal of the confiscated lands as traumascapes.

Résumé

Parmi les décennies de l'interminable conflit Israélo-Palestinien, beaucoup d'évènements perturbateurs ont affecté les vies de millions de palestiniens aussi bien que leur mémoire. La mémoire culturelle et le traumatisme font tous les deux parties des études de mémoire. Cette thèse tente d'investiguer le rôle de la littérature dans la présentation de la mémoire culturelle Palestinienne ainsi que le traumatisme. Le corpus choisi pour cette étude consiste de *Les Matins de Jénine* (2010) de Susan Abulhawa et *Palestinian Walks : Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* (2008). Cette étude avance que, en conséquence de cette perte, les palestiniens ont développé un attachement particulier à leur terre, donc l'imagerie littéraire du paysage et des arbres devient un « Lieux de Mémoires » ce qui agit comme un détenteur de la mémoire culturelle palestinienne. Par conséquent, les arbres fructueux, identifiés comme des agents actifs de la mémoire, ne servent pas seulement comme détenteur de mémoire culturelle, mais servent aussi comme connecteur entre le passé et le futur de la rupture entre les palestiniens et leur terre. En outre, l'étude examine les façons dont le traumatisme a été présenté dans les œuvres susmentionnées. Chaque écrivain traite le traumatisme différemment. Abulhawa se concentre sur le traumatisme causé par le conflit Israélo-palestinien et présente trois modèles pour le surmonter : soit à travers démence, résilience, ou silence. Tandis que Shehadeh fait le point sur le traumatisme déclenché par la perte de la terre et le changement irréversible conduit par la colonisation israélienne à travers sa représentation de terre confisquée en tant que traumatismes.

ملخص:

وسط عقود من الصراع اللامتناهي بين الفلسطينيين والاسرائيليين ، تحصل العديد من الحوادث المؤلمة التي تؤثر على حياة الملايين من الفلسطينيين وتؤثر كذلك على ذاكرتهم . الذاكرة الثقافية والصدمة النفسية كليهما جزء من دراسة – الذاكرة- . هذه المذكرة تهدف إلى التحقيق في أثر الأدب في تمثيل الذاكرة الثقافية والصدمة النفسية لدى الفلسطينيين . الكتابات المختارة في هذه الدراسة هي رواية بينما ينام العالم (2010) للكاتبة سوزان ابو الهوى ، و كتاب سرحات فلسطينية (2008) لصاحبه رجا شحادة . هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء على السرد في عمل أبو الهوى حول خسارة فلسطين. نتيجة لهذه الخسارة تكون لدى الفلسطينيين ارتباط خاص بالأرض ، ولهذا الصورة الأدبية عن الأشجار والمناظر الطبيعية أصبحت – أماكن للذاكرة- التي تعمل كحامل وحافظ للذاكرة الثقافية الفلسطينية. لهذا السبب تعتبر الأشجار المثمرة كفاعل نشط للذاكرة ، فهي ليست تعمل فقط كحامل للذاكرة الثقافية ولكن أيضا تعمل كروابط للخرق بين الماضي والمستقبل بين الفلسطينيين وأراضيهم. إضافة إلى ذلك ، هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى استكشاف طرق وكيفيات تمثيل الصدمة النفسية من خلال العاملين المذكورين آنفاً حيث لكل كاتب طريقة معينة للتعامل معها. أبو الهوى تركز أكثر على الصدمة الناتجة عن الصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي و تطرح ثلاث طرق للتعامل مع هذه الصدمة النفسية : إما الجنون ، المرونة، أو الصمت . بينما يركز شحادة على الصدمة النفسية الناجمة عن خسارة الأرض وعن التغييرات الحتمية المفروضة من طرف الاستيطان الاسرائيلي من خلال تصويره للأراضي المصادرة كمناطق مسببة لهذه الصدمة.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	I
Acknowledgement.....	II
Abstract	III
Table of content.....	VI
General Introduction.....	01

Chapter One:

A Reading of the Loss of Palestine in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*

1. Introduction	09
2. Palestinian Literature	10
2.1. Postcoloniality of Palestinian Literature	15
3. 'Bearing Witness' through Palestinian Literature	17
4. Historical Agency in Abulhawa's narrative	19
5. The Loss of Palestine	21
5.1. Pre-1948 Palestine	21
5.2. Palestinian Nakba	27
5.3. Six Days War 1967	35
5.4. Sabra and Shatila Massacres 1982	40
5.5. Palestinian Intifadas 1987, 2000	42
5.6. Massacres at Jenin Refugee Camp 2002	47
6. Conclusion	50

Chapter Two:

Trees of Palestine: The Representation of Cultural Memory in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010)

2.1. Introduction	51
2.2. Trees and Landscape	53
2.3. Olive Trees: Palestinian Sites of Memory	56
2.3.1. Sites of Memory:	56
2.3.2. Cultural Memory:	61
2.3.3. The Olive Tree in Palestine:	70
2.4. Conclusion	76

Chapter Three:

Trauma in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010)

3.1. Introduction	77
3.2. Traumatic Elements in Susan Abulhawa's <i>Mornings in Jenin</i>	81
3.2.1. Through Dementia: Dalia	81
3.2.2. Through Armed Resistance: Youcef	86
3.2.3. Through Silence and Repression: Amal	92
3.3. Palestinian Vanishing Landscapes as Traumasces:	97
3.4. Conclusion	105
General Conclusion	106

Bibliography	109
---------------------------	------------

Appendices

Appendix 01: Abulheja's Family Tree.

Appendix 02: Susan Abulhawa' Biography

Appendix 03: Synopsis of *Mornings in Jenin*

Appendix 04: Raja Shehadeh's Biography

Appendix 05: Synopsis of *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has continued over the last fifty years now. The imaginative representation of this conflict had found various means ranging from literary productions, artistic exhibitions, and different genres such as memoirs, novels, films, and testimonies. Palestinian narratives seek to represent Palestinian cultural memory and the trauma caused by the Israeli Occupation. The conflict has been so far unresolved as each side of the conflict claims legitimacy. The origin of the conflict is more complicated than it might seem to be, involving not just the Palestinian side and the Israeli one but the British, the American, and the Arab side among others. The situation in Palestine affected the lives of different generations of Palestinians. The Israeli occupation tried to wipe out the existence of the Palestinians and erase their historical and cultural memory.

In the early twentieth century, the Zionist movement was formed as a result of anti-Semitism and Jewish persecution in Europe. One of the main aims of the Zionist movement was to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Britain, France and Russia agreed to divide the territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East between them in the Sykes-Picot agreement¹. The mandate over Palestine was assigned to Britain by the League of Nations. Through this mandate, Britain was allegedly helping the inhabitants and preparing them for independence. Moreover, it was stated that "the British mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under political, administrative and economic conditions that will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home."² Britain also sympathised with the Zionist scheme of establishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. This was confirmed in a letter addressed to Lord Rothschild in 1917, known

¹ Sykes-Picot agreement, also known as the Anglo-Franco-Russian agreement, is a secret agreement between the British and French that divides the former Ottoman Arab lands in the Middle East between the two countries after World War I, upon which Britain receives Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine while France receives Syria and Lebanon.

² Claude Faure, *Dictionary of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 58.

also as the Balfour Declaration. Israel was declared a state in May 1948 advocating the Zionist slogan of a “a country without people to a people without a country”³

In literature, Palestinian writers found a means to represent their history and preserve their cultural memory which is the sum of assumptions and prejudices shared by a culture or society. German Egyptologist Jan Assmann was the first to introduce the term “cultural memory” in his book entitled *Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis* (1992). Astrid Erll defines cultural memory as “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts”⁴ which covers all forms of cultural remembering, that is remembering the past either through narratives or intentional remembering.

This study will operate mainly from the historical background of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, and the representation of history, cultural memory and trauma in Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin*, and Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. Our corpus consists of a novel and a book. We do not aim to conduct a comparative study. However, we think that these two works are complementary in the way they offer a different perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Through Abulhawa’s narrative we intend to take a look at the psychological effects of the Israeli occupation, Shehadeh’s narrative offers an environmental perspective.

In the production of cultural memory, literature plays three roles. These roles are: (a) Literature as a medium of remembrance; it is through literature that narratives of collective memories are produced, this is achieved by recollecting the past not just recalling events and persons, but often recalling earlier texts and rewriting earlier histories not just through historical novels and autobiographies, but through other forms

³ Edward W Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Times Books, 1979), 9.

⁴ Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sara B Young, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 2.

as well. (b) Literature as an object of remembrance; Literature offers an important link between generations since literary works circulate characteristically at later points in time. Literature holds a 'memory of its own' through the intertextuality between old and new texts which permeates the constant production and reproduction of cultural memory alongside our reflection on that memory. And (c) Literature as a medium for observing the production of cultural memory; Literature might be considered as a 'mimesis' of memory since it not only makes remembrance observable through the representation of imaginative acts of recollection, but also helps create collective memory and cultural knowledge about the functioning of memory for individuals and groups⁵.

In accordance with the delineated background, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate how literature can be used to educate readers about Palestinian historical events as well as the representation of cultural memory in the form of the Palestinian attachment to the land of their ancestors. This attachment is evident in linking cultural memory to the literary imagery of trees and the landscape in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), and Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008). This study's main interest is in how imagery and symbolism transform the trees and landscape to be part of the Palestinian means of resistance of Israeli occupation and land appropriation. Another issue when tackling the representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is trauma. Palestinians have been facing an episode of successive defeats, (1948, 1956, 1967 and 1982). Trauma is represented differently. We intend to explore how trauma is represented in these narratives.

The main research question that the present dissertation investigates is:

⁵Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, "Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction", *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2 (2006): 111-115, doi:10.1080/13825570600753394.

- How are Palestinian cultural memory and trauma represented in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, and Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*?

In trying to answer this principal question, this research will address the following sub questions:

- How does Abulhawa shape her narrative to achieve the aim of bearing witness and conveying the history of the loss of Palestine?
- How are trees and landscape portrayed in Palestinian narratives? And to what extent can they be holders of Palestinian cultural memory?
- How is trauma represented in the selected narratives, and how does each writer deal with it?

The above-mentioned research questions all connected to memory studies instigated some arguments. The first argument is that Susan Abulhawa intends to narrate the loss of Palestine and thus preserve its memory in her novel *Mornings in Jenin*. Additionally, the second argument is that trees serve as holders of memory and their representation acts as a connector between the past and future of the rupture between Palestinians and their lands. We are interested in how imagery and symbolism transform the trees and landscape to be part of the Palestinian means of remembering, and constructing a collective memory in selected works. Furthermore, the third argument is that trauma is dealt with differently, either through, dementia, resilience, or silence as in *Mornings in Jenin*, or the transformation of Palestinian landscapes into traumascapes as in *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. These are the initial hypotheses upon which the present research is conducted.

This dissertation is an attempt at a close examination of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* as well as Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. We try to study the use of literature as a means of educating Western readers about the history of Palestine, through Abulhawa's use of historical agency in her novel. We attempt to look at these writings in terms of their role as holders of Palestinian cultural memory, and representatives of trauma. Memory studies that include cultural memory and trauma will be used in approaching the Israeli Palestinian conflict from a literary angle.

There is abundance of literature which is concerned with the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Edward W. Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1992) is a delicate representative of the Palestinian experience of dispossession, exile, and exclusion. In this book, Said attempts to answer questions such as "what is Palestine?", "what is Zionism and how it affected Palestinians?", "what are the possibilities for Palestinian self-determination?". He offers the necessary historical background of the conflict.

Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006) acts as a reminder of the injustices done to the Palestinians in 1948, he says "there is no denying that the ethnic cleansing of 1948 has been eradicated almost totally from the collective global memory and erased from the world's conscience."⁶ Pappé accounts for the Israeli plan to erase any proof of the massacres done to the Palestinians by pointing out to the forest that have been planted to conceal the remnants of Palestinian villages to reinforce the image they created about Palestine as being " 'empty' and 'arid' land before the

⁶ Ilan Pappé. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld (2006), 9.

arrival of Zionism”⁷ Arguably, Pappé’s book has been widely criticised for giving subjective and biased version of historical events.

Ahmad H. Sa’di’s article entitled “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a component of Palestinian Identity,” published in 2002, presents an explanation of the Nakba and its effects on the Palestinians. His article is formative for understanding the real nature of the impact of the Nakba on Palestinians; as a matter of fact, it is through the Nakba that Palestinians became intimately linked to the feelings of dispossession, dispersion and exile.

Carol B. Bardenstein’s essay entitled “Trees, Forests, and the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory” published in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (1999) represent a study of the significance of trees and forests to both the Palestinians and the Israelis. Bardenstein affirms that “Trees figure prominently and conspicuously as loaded and hyper-saturated cultural symbols in the construction of both Palestinian and Israeli collective memory.”⁸ She presents a survey of the use of trees as Palestinian cultural memory in diverse body of literature; in novels, poems and paintings. Besides, she differentiates between the use of fruitful trees by Palestinians in contrast to the use of coniferous and deciduous trees planted as forests by the Israelis. She concludes her essay by confirming that “With a wide range of very different kinds of acts of memory, trees have been suffused as sites of collective Palestinian and Israeli memory, in way that allow each respective group to ‘recognize itself through time,’”⁹

Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* and Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* have already been studied together in Samar H.

⁷ Ibid., 229.

⁸ Carol B. Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, And the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", in *Acts of Memory*, 1st ed. (Hanover: Dartmouth College, 1999), 148.

⁹ Ibid., 165.

AlJahdali's article entitled "Venturing into a Vanishing Space: the Chronotope in Representing Palestinian Postcoloniality" (2014). AlJahdali focused on ways of challenging Israeli Settler Colonialism through the study of the representation of the Chronotope of walking in Shehadeh's narrative as well as the chronotope of returning in Abulhawa's novel.¹⁰

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been extensively studied in various academic disciplines. While previous studies tackled the conflict from a psychological, historical, or political points of view as the main focus was put on the events that occurred in the territories over the last 60 years, and attempt to solve the conflict by trying to suggest some practical solutions to end the conflict, this study instead, aims to examine how the conflict affects Palestinian cultural memory and causes trauma. The salience of this dissertation is to offer an insight of the representation of cultural memory and trauma in fiction as well as non-fiction narratives and thus provides a more enveloping view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as it extends to envelope the significance of the landscape and trees in the Palestinian context.

This study will primarily be divided into three chapters according to the formulated research questions and hypotheses. The first chapter will focus on historical agency of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict employed by Susan Abulhawa in her novel. The second chapter will focus on cultural memory studies and their role and representation in Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. The third chapter deals with trauma in both works, it seeks to examine the ways in which writers present trauma and deal with it in both narratives.

¹⁰ Samar H. AlJahdali, "Venturing into A Vanishing Space: The Chronotope In Representing Palestinian Postcoloniality", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 2 (2014): 216-229, doi:10.1080/17449855.2014.883180.

Accordingly, the first chapter entitled: “A Reading of the Loss of Palestine in Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin*”, presents a reading of the loss of Palestine through a close reading of Susan Abulhawa’s novel *Mornings in Jenin*. We attempt to establish historical agency in relation to the Israeli Palestinian conflict as well as study the major events that marked the 60 years covered by the novel. The argument put forward here is that through her writing, Abulhawa undertakes the role of bearing witness to the conflict and correct the falsified history of Palestine and recover its lost parts. She does so by blending real events and setting with fictional characters. Our aim is to read Abulhawa’s novel as a form of realistic historical fiction. Therefore, the first chapter focuses on the narration of the loss of Palestine in the time span covered by the novel (from 1941 until 2002).

The second chapter, entitled: “Trees of Palestine: The Representation of Cultural Memory in Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* and Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin*” attempts to lay ground for the identification of ‘sites of memory’ that act as placeholders for the memories of particular groups and examine the extent to which trees are considered as active memory agents that effectively represent Palestinian Cultural memory.

The third chapter entitled: “Trauma in Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* (2010)” is devoted to the study of trauma and the analysis of its depiction in Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* and Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks*. Each writer’s portrayal of the trauma is different. Light will be shed on the way in which the writers convey the traumatic events and their impact on the human psyche. Susan Abulhawa’s novel presents a psychological perspective. While Raja Shehadeh’s book offers a different perspective, he focuses on the landscape and the trauma engendered by land dispossession.

Chapter One:

- **A Reading of the Loss of Palestine in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin***

“Facts do not all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain, and circulate them.”

Edward Said, “Permission to Narrate,” 1984

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a reading of the loss of Palestine through thinking along the narrative design of Susan Abulhawa's novel, *Mornings in Jenin*. We will study the major events that marked the sixty years setting covered by the novel. The point is that through her writing, Abulhawa undertakes to bear witness to the conflict and educate her readership about it. The aim of this chapter is to read Abulhawa's novel as a form of realistic historical fiction in which Abulhawa tries to present her fictional characters but within a real historical context and events that mark the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, this chapter will focus on the narration of the loss of Palestine in the time span covered by the novel (from 1941 until 2002).

For a better understanding of characters' actions and of our reading of the loss of Palestine, this chapter will start by introducing the novelist and her novel emphasizing the role of Palestinian literature in "bearing witness". Afterward, the major events of the last 60 years will be studied according to their representation in the novel; Pre-Nakba; Nakba 1948; Six-Day War 1967; Sabra and Shatila Massacres 1982; Palestinian Intifadas; and, Massacres at Jenin Refugee Camp 2002.

2. Palestinian Literature

In his article “Permission to Narrate”¹¹, Edward Said insists that writing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a Palestinian perspective is primordial. Accordingly, and apart from history books, novels offer the ability to do so while giving a human dimension and depth to the historical events represented. Instead of just reporting official records of what happened at certain events, novelists offer vivid portrayals of those conflicts. Rather than just reporting causalities and victim numbers, the victims are presented in their full human dimension. Correspondingly, these victims are given names, and most importantly, their backstories are told. Thus, readers are somehow allowed to be more involved with these characters.

Almost all Palestinian writings are concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Writers such as Ghassan Kanafani, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Emile Habibi, Mahmoud Darwish, and Sahar Khalifa to cite but a few, used different literary productions and languages be it novels, short stories, poems or memoirs, and written either in Arabic, Hebrew, or English, to write their people’s plight. The rationale of these writings lay in the necessity to educate the readers about the conflict’s complexity. In the Palestinian context, the historical, political, and literary are intertwined. In this sense, to be a Palestinian writer is to always be part of an attempt to assert a narrative of identity against other counter-narratives that seek to delegitimise Palestinians’ right for a life.

Palestinian writings are characterised by three features. Firstly, these writings are portrayals of the lives of ordinary Palestinian people just as they are without adornment and wishful thinking, exposed and bare, and devoid of optimism and pessimism. Secondly, they are anchored in the mundane every day, without expectations for a

¹¹ Edward Said, "Permission to Narrate", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, no. 3 (1984): 27-48.

possible future, as if they are not sure of this coming future. Instead, they are concerned with a day to day life. Thirdly, they are characterised by the absence of all certainty. Also, characters are accustomed to a sense of life where nothing is certain and all possibilities can happen, especially after the events of 1948, after which they lost their homes and homeland.¹²

Susan Abulhawa, a Palestinian-American novelist, and human rights activist, was born in Kuwait to Palestinian parents who became refugees after the Six-Day War of 1967. She founded “Playgrounds for Palestine”, a charity organization, dedicated to protect the right of Palestinian Children to play. Through her historical saga, *Mornings in Jenin*¹³, Susan Abulhawa chronicles the struggle of the Palestinian people in an attempt to narrate a comprehensive account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She tried to translate the struggle to those who are unfamiliar with it. Consequently, her novel was written in English. Through writing in English, Abulhawa directed her novel primarily to western readers.

Susan Abulhawa, in *Mornings in Jenin*, every chapter is headed by a date that chronicles every relevant incident in the Palestinian struggle, as she attempts to narrate the loss of Palestine through four generations of the Abulheja family. She presents to her readers the chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a Palestinian perspective. Nevertheless, she presents primarily the sufferings of the Palestinians, but at the same time, she presents the traumatizing experiences of the Israelis. One of the recurrent themes in the novel is her emphasis on common humanity. To put it differently, rather

¹² Faisal Darraj, "Transformations In Palestinian Literature", *Words Without Borders*, 2006, <http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/transformations-in-palestinian-literature>. (Accessed January, 4th 2016)

¹³ Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* was originally published in 2006 as *The Scar of David* by a small publishing press that went out of business. Luckily, it was translated to French as *les matins de Jénine*. From then on it was translated into twenty languages. Bloomsbury offered to release it in English. Accordingly, after slight editing, it was republished in 2010 with the new title *Mornings in Jenin*.

than presenting her Israeli characters as purely evil or just as an enemy figure, she always tries to give their backstory or even excuses. Thus, according to Abulhawa, emphasizing on common humanity, might be the only possible way to bring the conflict to a satisfactory end.

Abulhawa gives a vivid picture of the Palestinian Saga through fictional characters but within a real historical setting. Accordingly, she followed up the leads of Palestinian writer Ghada Karmi. Writer of *in Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story* (2002) and *Married to another Man: Israel's Dilemma in Palestine* (2007), Karmi insists on the necessity of narrating the plight of the Palestinians in a simple and coherent way to educate English-reading readers, especially western readers since they both write in English, about the history of Palestine and its loss. While Karmi chose memoirs to achieve her purpose in conveying the suffering of Palestinians, Abulhawa opted for fiction to do so. More specifically, Abulhawa uses storytelling as an effective strategy to dismantle the barriers between peoples and spread awareness about what is really happening in Palestine.

In an online article entitled "The Many Lives and Languages of a Palestinian Novel" Olivia Snaije interviewed Susan Abulhawa about her urge to write about Palestine in English, she replied that:

There is a new generation of writers who have lived most of their lives in the West and we are telling our story, finally, in our own voice and in Western languages. It has been Israel's narrative that has dominated literature until recently, [. . .] because they were mostly from Europe and spoke in the languages and nuances of western cultures. They also told the story that the West wanted to hear. It was easier to hear a story of a land without a people [. . .] The Palestinian narrative was in Arabic. It was unappealing, and it didn't reach the West in those early years. But our

voice is coming of age in Western literature now and I think there is a real interest among readers to hear our story¹⁴

Yet, looking at Abulhawa's motives for writing this novel, one realises that she is more concerned with the people in her narrative rather than politics. Indeed, she confesses "I didn't think about politics at all. It was just about the people in the story. It was about the land and the trees and what they would say if they could speak."¹⁵

While writing *Mornings in Jenin*, Susan Abulhawa was influenced by Ghassan Kanafani's short story 'A'id ila Hayfa (literally meaning "a returnee to Haifa" and translated as "*Returning to Haifa*")¹⁶. She narrates the lives of four generations of the Abulheja family¹⁷. Yehya Abulheja, the patriarch of the family, is an olive farmer and a landowner. The family lives idly in their village of Ein Hod near Haifa in north Palestine. But following the establishment of Israel in 1948, the family, as well as the other inhabitants of the village, are forced out of their homes by Israelis guerrilla. Thus, what happened in the year 1948 is referred to as the Nakba; or the Catastrophe; or The Palestinian Exodus; or the Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine; different appellations but the same meaning: the beginning of the loss of Palestine. Therefore, their journey of exile begins, after losing their home and their son Ismail, who was taken from his mother's arm during their exodus out of Ein Hod. Abulheja family finds refuge in the refugee camp in Jenin. Ghassan Kanafani's short story is about an imagined visit of a Palestinian refugee, Saeed S., and his wife Safiah to their former home in Al-Halissah neighborhood in Haifa, soon after the 1967 War. The visit is not only about seeing the house, which is now inhabited by a Jewish widow and Holocaust survivor, but is mainly to meet their son,

¹⁴ Olivia Snaije, "The Many Lives and Languages of a Palestinian Novel", *Publishing Perspectives*, 2012, <http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/03/the-many-lives-and-languages-of-a-palestinian-novel/#.VrlATxjhDIU>. (Accessed January, 4th 2016).

¹⁵ Olivia Snaije, "The Many Lives and Languages of a Palestinian Novel - Publishing Perspectives", *Publishing Perspectives*, 2012, <http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/03/the-many-lives-and-languages-of-a-palestinian-novel/#.VrlATxjhDIU>. (Accessed January, 4th 2016).

¹⁶ Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine's Children*, 1st ed. (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

¹⁷ The Abulheja family tree is provided in appendix. 1. for the sake of clarity.

Khaldoun, who was left behind when he was five months old during the great panic that surrounded their flight and was raised by the new occupants of the house. Through painful dialogues which Saeed and Safiah have with their “son,” who has been named Dov, raised as a Jew and has served in the army, they discover new meanings for the concept of identity and that any trace of their son Khaldoun is now replaced by the Jewish Dov. Abulheja’s son Ismael was taken away from his mother during the exodus of 1948 and was renamed David, and was raised by Holocaust survivor too. Unlike Kanafani’s Dov, Abulhawa’s David looks for his Palestinian origin once he knows he is Palestinian.

Abulheja’s story is told from Amal’s point of view. She is the daughter of Hassan Abulheja and Dalia, she was born in the refugee camp of Jenin. Amal is born to a mother devastated by the loss of her son in 1948 which will affect her greatly, but instead she creates a deep bond with her father who reads poetry for her in the early hours of the morning. In 1967, she experiences the atrocities of the war for the first time when she spends six days locked in a hole in the kitchen with her friend and a baby corpse. She loses her father first, then her brother Yousef decides to join the resistance, and her mother slips into dementia.

Abulhawa’s portrayal of this family is intense and sincere, readers follow their unfortunate journey out of their home and the subsequent tragedies; 1948, 1967, 1982 and 2002. Abulhawa insists on the fact that the story is fictional, but nevertheless, it was built on real circumstances, and actual events and places. She asserted that “*Mornings in Jenin* is a work of historical fiction, where fictional characters live through real history; and I encourage anyone to do their own research to verify the accuracy of the historic

events that form the backdrop for the novel.”¹⁸ In response to French philosopher and intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy, when he asked "is there no end to the demonization of Israel?" accusing Abulhawa's novel, among other things, to be anti-Semitic. He interrogates: “[I]sn't it distressing to think that a book like Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, a concentration of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish clichés masquerading as fiction, is a best seller there, praised by most of the major media?”¹⁹ Levy labelled *Mornings in Jenin* as an ‘anti-semitic’ narrative and accused Abulhawa of encouraging her readers to hate Israelis by casting a bad image of them. these accusations are clearly unfounded. Her only aim is to represent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in an understandable work for her western audience.

2.1. Postcoloniality of Palestinian literature

Notwithstanding the fact that the Palestinian context is ‘one of the most fruitful sites of contemporary postcolonial inquiry’²⁰, its problematic limitations *vis-à-vis* the postcolonial has stirred a concern shared by various critics. Anna Ball remarks that Palestine ‘remains largely ‘off-limits’ in the realm of the postcolonial.’²¹ In fact, Palestine confronts the postcolonial in the way that it corresponds to a situation where postcolonial formulation expands under occupation.

¹⁸ Susan Abulhawa, "The Antisemitism to Come? Hardly", *The Huffington Post*, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susan-abulhawa/bernardhenri-levy-a-new-k_b_799651.html. (Accessed January, 4th 2016).

¹⁹ Bernard-Henri Lévy, "The Antisemitism to Come", *The Huffington Post*, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernardhenri-levy/post_1373_b_791632.html. (Accessed on January, 4th 2016)

²⁰ Patrick Williams and Anna Ball, "Where Is Palestine?", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 2 (2014): 127-133, doi:10.1080/17449855.2014.883164.

²¹ Anna Ball, *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 4.

Patrick Williams deplores “the general absence of questions of Palestine from the postcolonial agenda”²² and advocates a chance to “reroute” and set the postcolonial free from its current impasse by maintaining attention to Palestinian production as a possible material for postcolonial debates: “As postcolonialists we are faced with, and not analysing [...] the worst example of colonialism in the modern world. Time to reroute”²³ The problematic limitation of the postcolonial in relation to the Palestinian context has stirred a concern shared by various critics. When Palestine is mentioned within postcolonial studies, it’s as an exception²⁴.

In an attempt to understand the dynamics of postcolonial classification, Joseph Massad asks the following questions; “How can one determine the coloniality and/or postcoloniality of these spaces or times?”; “How can all these people inhabit a colonial/postcolonial space in a world that declares itself living in a postcolonial time?”; and most importantly, “Can one determine the postcoloniality of Palestine/Israel without noting its coloniality for Palestinians?”²⁵ According to him, to describe Israel/Palestine as *postcolonial* is to overshadow its contemporary coloniality and to portray the Zionist settler colonialism wrongly as postcolonial. Massad explains how Zionist coloniality is made evasively postcolonial. The diachronic schema of colonialism followed by postcolonialism is made problematic in the case of Zionist settler colonialism. Nevertheless, Massad recognizes the effectiveness of postcolonial studies in reinforcing Palestinian claims by opening up “a discursive space where subaltern subject is rendered visible.”²⁶ But, for him, this benefit is cancelled by the menaces that Israel would be

²² Patrick Williams, "Outlines of a Better World: Rerouting Postcolonialism", in *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 86-97.

²³ Ibid., 91.

²⁴ Salah D Hassan, "Undertaking Partition: Palestine And Postcolonial Studies", *Journal X* 6, no. 1 (2001): 19-45.

²⁵ Joseph Andoni Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question* (London: Routledge, 2006), 312-313.

²⁶ Ibid., 95.

considered postcolonial and thus jeopardising the current coloniality of Palestine. Tackling the ambivalence of the term “postcolonial” in the Palestinian context, he concludes that this situation of “Postcolonial colony” challenges the postcolonial theory because the colonial power is oddly described as postcolonial.

Furthermore, major pitfalls of the term “postcolonial”, as Ella Shohat (1992) mentions, are the blurred spatial and temporal significations of postcoloniality. Shohat questions: “[i]f one formulates the “post” in the “post-colonial” in relation to Third World nationalists’ struggles of the fifties and sixties, then what time frame would apply [...] for Palestinian writers [...] who write contemporaneously with “post-colonial” writers? Should one suggest that they are “pre-postcolonial”²⁷

These critics’ efforts to caution against the depoliticising consequences of the application to the “postcolonial”, but by dismissing a “postcolonial” approach to Palestine studies, Massad and Shohat fail to notice the value of any literary output that seeks to exhibit the collective and cross-cultural impact of the various modern forms of colonialism and imperialism on artistic production across the globe. Between Shohat “pre-postcolonial” and Massad “postcolonial colony”; the rerouting of postcolonial can be the only way to negotiate the postcoloniality of the Palestinian narrative.

3. ‘Bearing Witness’ through Palestinian Literature

In her article entitled “Bearing witness in Palestinian resistance literature,” Tahrir Hamdi tries to examine how some Palestinian artists use the concept of bearing witness as a tool of resistance. She writes:

the concept of bearing witness not only serves as a means of recording a past tragedy but also involves a complex repertoire of strategies, including

²⁷ Ella Shohat, "Notes on the "Post-Colonial"", *Social Text*, no. 31/32, Third World and Colonial Issues (1992): 99-113, doi:10.2307/466220. 104.

interrogating the past, recreating it and, most importantly, forging resistance against the assassination of liberation itself.²⁸

In accordance with what Hamdi puts forward, Abulhawa tries in novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, to record the loss of Palestine through her narrative. In so doing, she attempts to narrate the tragic history of her people. She starts her narrative from a time before the conflict started in an attempt to show the life of Palestinians, their daily life and relation to the land and their relation to the Jews preceding the Nakba. She is 'bearing witness' to the Palestinian life through presenting the life of a typical Palestinian family, Abulheja, in a Palestinian village, Ein Hod. One of the strategies that Abulhawa employs is choosing a name of a real Palestinian village and a real family name even though she admits that her characters are fictitious.

Hamdi explains 'bearing witness' as being a sub-genre of literature that records a tragic past in order to assert its remembrance and preserve it from oblivion and consequently present it to present and future generations. This is especially relevant in the Palestinian context where the "Palestinian narrative has been intentionally suppressed by the dominant narrative"²⁹ thus, Palestinian artists feel the need to produce a narrative about their people's past and help preserve their history. Narrating the past is primordial in this genre since these past events influence and shape the current ones. That is precisely what Susan Abulhawa tries to achieve through her writing.

Furthermore, a writer is a witness in the first place, in trying to define it, Hamdi quotes the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, as follows: "the witness is any figure in whom the truth-telling urge and compulsion to identify with the oppressed become necessarily

²⁸ Tahrir Hamdi, "Bearing witness in Palestinian resistance literature", *Race & Class* 52, no. 3 (2011): 21-42, 21.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

integral with the art of writing itself”³⁰ In order to fulfil his/her role, the writer witness must capture the suffering of his/her people through his/her writing in order to pass it to his/her audience for mass witnessing.³¹ Correlatively, bearing witness is bridging the gap between memory and oblivion. To bear witness is to bring forth the concealed past events.

Hamdi insists that through bearing witness the Palestinian writer not only tells or merely reports what happened in the past but also interrogates it. Bearing witness to the Palestinian tragedy is first and foremost “a writing back into history of what has been deliberately erased.”³² Abulhawa’s narrative documents sixty years of Palestinian history. Here one should presume that Abulhawa is trying to educate her audience about what happened in Palestine through her rewriting of the Palestinian history.

Palestinian writings are necessarily informed by two major threats: the threat of a complete identity erasure and, a complete loss of land and history. In this sense, the Palestinian writer is continuously trying to document and rewrite what has been obliterated. Historical events influenced greatly the Palestinian literature. One can easily examine their impact on Palestinian writings. Through studying Abulhawa’s narrative closely, we shall examine the historical events and their portrayal in her novel.

4. Historical Agency in Abulhawa’s Narrative:

In addition to bearing witness, Abulhawa undertakes the task of educating her western audience about the Israeli Palestinian conflict. She endorses her double role as novelist/teacher to re-educate and correct the falsified and biased versions that western

³⁰ Ibid., 23.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 24.

readers might have received. In fact, “The author, [. . .] feels the urge to recount the Palestinian saga especially to American readers, who are mostly misinformed.”³³

She states in the “Author Note” to her novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, that it was Edward Said who motivated her to undertake this challenge. She writes: “the late Dr. Edward Said influenced the making of this book in no small way. He lamented once that the Palestinian narrative was lacking in literature, and I incorporated his disappointment into my resolve.”³⁴ Thus, in an attempt to establish historical agency in relation to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, Abulhawa aims to correct the falsified history of Palestine and recover its lost parts, by emphasising on the personal part as way to attract her readers. thereby, she aspires to show “a human face on the Palestinian problem and aims at offering a true-to-life account of what happened in Palestine over a half-century ago”³⁵.

Moreover, she declares: “Although the characters in this book are fictitious, Palestine is not, nor are the historical events and figures in this story.” She mobilises historical agency of this end. She admits: “To accurately render the settings and history, I relied on many written sources, which are cited as references and, in some instances, quoted in the text.” (p. 325) Basically, Abulhawa relies on historical accounts and miscellaneous records that form the basis of her narrative and employs what Hayden White, literary critic, refers to as “emplotting” which consists of making coherent plots of scattered events into new narratives.³⁶

Abulhawa tries to offer a narrative about Palestine in English since “Literary works accessible in a familiar language can offer plausible interpretation and

³³ Layla Al Maleh, *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives On Anglophone Arab Literature* ([Amsterdam]: Rodopi, 2009), 40.

³⁴ Susan Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), 327. (Subsequent parenthetical references refer to this edition.)

³⁵ Al Maleh, *Arab Voices in Diaspora* 40.

³⁶ Hayden White, “Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth,” in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1997), 392–396.

humanization of Arabs much better than journalism, historical reports or political memoirs.³⁷ Accordingly, it is not because of the lack of history books about her concern that Abulhawa writes this novel, but because she wants to offer a narrative that is more personalised to affect her readers. She states through her protagonist Amal that “It was he [Haj Salem] who gave me the names and stories of people I would encounter as miscellaneous victims of war in the history texts that I would read decades later.” (p. 78) As such, taking victims’ names from the mouth of the patriarch, she wanted to do the same thing for her readers: give them names and personal stories of Palestinian people. This technique is employed to affect readers and involve them personally with the characters of her narrative in the hope to foster “acceptance through understanding”³⁸.

Then, it can be said that is through relying on historical agency that the author manages to narrate the loss of Palestine. This is evident in how she develops her narration around important historical moments that mark the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

5. The Loss of Palestine

5.1. Pre-1948 Palestine

The history of Palestine is as diverse and disputed as the land itself. In his book entitled *The Question of Palestine*³⁹, Edward Said observes that the land is called by different names mainly due its long and contested history which can be traced back to biblical times. The origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam can be traced back to the land of Palestine. Thus, conflicts over the land can be traced throughout its history going from biblical times, through the Hellenic period, the Roman Empire, during the Crusades through which Christians tried to establish The Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Ottoman

³⁷ Al Maleh, *Arab Voices in Diaspora*, x.

³⁸ Ibid., 40.

³⁹ Edward W Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Times Books, 1979).

empire, the British Mandate and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Consequently, Said explains the fact that how people call the land, Palestine instead of Israel or Zion, can imply a political position.

Establishing a homeland for the Jews, from a Jewish perspective, was a necessity after enduring centuries of persecution all around the world and in Europe in particular. According to certain Jewish beliefs, no place was better for creating a national homeland than the Land of Zion which was promised to them in Genesis (15:18): "[. . .] the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, [. . .]". The Zionist⁴⁰ movement claimed the land as their own and elaborated plans to create their homeland in Palestine, at the expense of the Palestinians already inhabiting it. Thus, in 1897, during the first Zionist congress held in Basel, Switzerland, Theodor Herzl's proposal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine was accepted⁴¹. Edward Said explains how the popular myth of Palestine being unpopulated was used as a Zionist slogan. Israel Zangwill promoted the idea of Palestine as "a land without a people for a people without a land."⁴²

The story in *Mornings in Jenin* starts at a time preceding 1948. In her narrative, Abulhawa combines facts and fiction in order to portray the life of Palestinians before the Nakba and convey the Palestinian suffering after the events of 1948. She states: "although the characters in this book are fictitious, Palestine is not, nor are the historical events and

⁴⁰ The term was coined by Austrian Jew Nathan Birnbaum in 1893. In 1896 Theodor Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat (the Jewish State)* in which he advocated for the creation of a Jewish state. One year later, he founded the World Zionist Organisation to discuss the importance of establishing a homeland for the Jews. After several meetings, the World Zionist Organisation agreed to establish their Jewish state in Palestine in the coming years. The growing European Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust highlighted the urgency of accomplishing Herzl's plan, thus the creation of a secure homeland for the Jews was not just a mere dream of Jewish nationalism rather it became a necessity.

⁴¹ Claude Faure, *Dictionary of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), VIII.

⁴² Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 9.

figures in this story.” (p. 325) As a matter of facts, she tries position her narrative in a real historical and geographical dimension.

From the very beginning, Abulhawa introduces her readers to the small village of Ein Hod near Haifa and to Abulheja family which are the patriarchs of the actual ‘Ayn Hawd village. The village was founded by one of Saladin’s generals. Abulhawa confirms:

“[. . .] a restored drawing of the founders of Ein Hod, who had first settled there during the Byzantine empire. Legend had it that Saladin el Ayoub himself had granted the land to one of his generals as a reward for valor in battle. That general was my great-grandfather many times over, who had married three women and fathered most of the town.” (p. 263)

In the first chapter of her novel, she describes the state of mind of the people of Ein Hod as the year 1948 approaches:

Ein Hod was adjacent to three villages that formed an unconquered triangle inside the new state, so that the fate of Ein Hod’s people was joined with that of some twenty thousand other Palestinians who still clung to their homes. They repulsed attacks and called for a truce, wanting only to live on their land as they always had [. . .] Attachment to God, land and family was the core of their being and that is what they defended and sought to keep. (p. 27)

Ein Hod was the interest of many researchers and historians, Sharif Kanaana and Bassam Ka'bi, the authors of the memorial book entitled: *Destroyed Palestinian Villages* explain why they chose Ein Hod as the first village to be studied in their book. In the introduction, they highlight that: “Ein Houd[sic] remains a rare example, not only in the Palestinian ethnographic series but also in Arab-Israeli history, of an Arab village that was not physically destroyed during the five years after 1948. The village was transformed into a Jewish artists' colony.”⁴³ Likewise, Susan Slyomovics’ research on Ein Hod exposes how it was transformed into a Jewish artists’ colony. She provides the names of the current occupants of many houses and their former owners. She comments

⁴³ Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1998), xv.

on “the absurdity of the situation” when she observes that this whole situation “simultaneously demands mourning and seeks justice.”⁴⁴

In the same way, in *All That Remains* (1992) Walid Khalidi provides maps, pictures, and statistics about Ein Hod. He observes that inhabitants of Ein Hod “earned their living from livestock breeding and agriculture, which was based on grain and olives. Olive trees covered 845 dunums of the village lands in 1943; some of the olives harvested were processed in a manual olive press”.⁴⁵ Abulhawa describes Ein Hod as “a small village east of Haifa lived quietly on figs and olives, open frontiers and sunshine.” (p. 3)

This tranquil life is perturbed by Zionist plans. Many Palestinians, Yehya Abulheja included, were aware of their imminent threat. Ari Perlstein, Hassan Abulheja’s friend, warns him about the intention of the Jews, by telling him: “Hasan, they’re going to take land. They’ve launched a campaign across the world calling Palestine ‘a land without a people.’ They’re going to make it a Jewish homeland.” (p. 3)

This campaign meant that the Jews were determined to achieve what was promised to them in the Balfour Declaration. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that the conflict started with the Balfour Declaration. During the British Mandate Lord Arthur James Balfour, British secretary of state promised Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild that the British government will help Jews establish their homeland in Palestine. He declared:

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁵ Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

⁴⁶ Faure, *Dictionary of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 58.

Thus, according to the Balfour Declaration, the British Mandate will foster the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. And most importantly, it will protect the religious rights and political status of native, non-Jewish population. But the Zionist's plan was to proclaim all the territory of Palestine as theirs in order to establish a Jewish state composed exclusively of Jewish citizens.

The impact of this declaration according to Edward Said "radically altered the course of history, if not for the whole world, then certainly for the 700,000 Arabs and their descendants whose land was being pronounced upon"⁴⁷. The Zionist plan of establishing a homeland for the Jews was divided into two steps; first, expel the British; then, the Arabs of Palestine. Some Palestinians are mindful of this plan, like Yehya, who warns his wife saying:

"The country is being turned upside down by Zionist [. . .] Don't you hear the news every day? Zionists killing British and Palestinians every cursed day? They're getting rid of the British so they can get rid of us and everybody's too stupid to see it or do anything about it." (p. 16-17) While others think that it's unlikely to happen, like Hassan, who tells his Jewish friend, Ari, about the implausibility of his father's thought, he says that: "Father has been saying for years that this was going to happen, but it seemed so far-fetched," (p. 23)

After the hostilities between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and the inability of the British to contain the violence, the British High Commissioner of Palestine decided to terminate the mandate over Palestine in no longer than August 1948 and thus leaving the problem of Palestine for the United Nations to solve. The General Assembly passed the Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947 which recommended a partition plan for an Arab

⁴⁷ Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 17.

and a Jewish state: Jerusalem designated as an international zone, forty-five percent of the land of Palestine to an Arab state, and Fifty-Five percent of the land to a Jewish state.

The British Mandate for Palestine officially ended on May 14, 1948. Immediately after that David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, declared the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel on May 14.

After the end of the British mandate, Palestinians in general and inhabitants of Ein Hod in particular were anxious of the threat posed by the newly established Israeli state. Especially that their village “was adjacent to three villages that formed unconquered triangle inside the new state.” (p. 27) The menace of being attacked became imminent after the attack on the neighbouring village al-Tira. Abulhawa describes: “[P]umes of smoke rose from the adjacent village, al-Tira, and the curious and frightened residents of Ein Hod gathered in the square to *watch*.” (p. 25) Instead of rushing to help their neighbours, people of Ein Hod “watched” the atrocities and blamed Arab armies for not rescuing them. Abulhawa continues in her description: “but he [Yehya] did not go to help those in al-Tira. [. . .] like the Arab countries he cursed, Yehya did not come to the aid of his fallen brethren” (p. 27) Yehya did not try to help them, but further, “secretly, he thought Ein Hod would be spared if the villagers did not get involved. He thought the sincere offering of peace with the Jews would ensure the continuity of their lives.” (p. 26) Through this, Abulhawa is trying to shed light on the attitude of the inhabitants of Ein Hod *vis-à-vis* the inhabitants of al-Tira village: Ein Hod inhabitants show signs of extreme selfishness while they were expected to rush in the help of al-Tira inhabitants and show them solidarity. Ein Hod’s attitude is similar to that of the neighbouring Arab countries *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians, in which their behaviour can be summarised by the ideology of “*Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tous*.” Abullhawa explains:

They repulsed attacks and called for a truce, wanting only to live on their land as they always had. For they had endured many masters—Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Ottomans, British—and nationalism was inconsequential. Attachment to God, land, and family was the core of their being. (p. 27)

In fact, their allegiance was first and foremost to the land: as long as they were allowed to keep their land, it did not matter who governed them. This explains why they did not help their neighbours and called for a truce with the Israeli invaders.

5.2. Palestinian Nakba

Palestinians refer to May 14, 1948 as the Nakba⁴⁸, meaning disaster or catastrophe, because the creation of Israel meant “the disappearance of their country, and the dispossession, expulsion, and exile of hundreds of Palestinians.”⁴⁹ It is clear that the year of 1948 holds special meaning for the Palestinians, for it marks the creation of the state of Israel and the beginning of the displacement of Palestinians. Hence, “The contemporary history of the Palestinians turns on a key date: 1948. That year, a country and its people disappeared from maps and dictionaries.”⁵⁰ Abulhawa attempts to convey the suffering of the Palestinians in 1948 and afterwards.

In his article entitled “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a component of Palestinian Identity” Ahmad H. Sa’di explains the Nakba and its effects on the Palestinians. He notes that:

⁴⁸ Constantine Zurayk, a Palestinian historian and intellectual, was the first to call it Nakba in his book entitled *Ma’na Al-Nakba* (the meaning of disaster) written in Arabic and published in 1948, the translated version was published in 1956 and titled: *The Meaning of Disaster*.

⁴⁹ Faure, *Dictionary of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 326.

⁵⁰ Elias Sanbar, “Out of Place, Out of Time,” *Mediterranean Historical Reviews*, 16 (2001) 87-94. P 87 quoted in Ahmad H. Sa’di, “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as A Component of Palestinian Identity”, *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 175-198, 175.

al-Nakbah was the moment in history when the Palestinians's world order, which had been considered part of the "laws of nature", was violently and dramatically altered: their legal rights as having Personae – that is, as being legal subjects—were greatly diminished or obliterated altogether. Their cultural and physical environment underwent a dramatic transformation; and their existence as a national community ceased to be taken for granted”⁵¹

Sa'di's words are important for understanding the real nature of the impact of the Nakba on Palestinians: it is through the Nakba, that they became intimately linked to the feelings of dispossession, dispersion and exile. Furthermore, 1948 became a seminal moment in Palestinian history when “between 77 and 83 percent of the Palestinians who lived in the part of Palestine that later became Israel – i.e. 78 percent of Mandatory Palestine—were turned into refugees.”⁵²

Accordingly, more than 200 Palestinian villages had been attacked by the time of the official establishment of Israel, over 200,000 Palestinians had left their homes either voluntarily or forcibly, and “About 418 villages were erased, and out of twelve Palestinian or mixed towns, a Palestinian population continued to exist in only seven”⁵³. Attacks on these Palestinian villages were justified by the Israelis as a self-defence tactic, especially after the resistance they encountered from Palestinians who opposed their declaration of statehood. Besides, Israel used the biblical image of David versus Goliath⁵⁴ to win the sympathy of westerners and shape the media's view on the conflict. Consequently, the Israelis casted the image of a weak Jewish community in a hostile Arab environment: David, symbolizing the weak and vulnerable Israelites fighting Goliath, the strong warrior and leader of the Philistines. The threat of extermination by the

⁵¹ Ahmad H. Sa'di, "Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as A Component of Palestinian Identity", *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 175-198, 185.

⁵² Ibid., 175.

⁵³ Ibid., 184.

⁵⁴ David Versus Goliath in reference to the biblical story found in 1 Samuel 17. this narrative is used in the representation of conflicts with obvious power differential between competing sides. Usually, one is described as being righteous, good and vulnerable while the other side being strong, evil and invincible. Typically, the weak side always wins thanks to divine intervention. This narrative is especially used in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict giving the fact that the land of Palestine is biblical in nature.

Palestinians and their Arab allies was exhaustively used to justify not only Israel's establishment, but their actions against the Palestinian people as well. Thus, they were ruthlessly trying to secure a homeland for the Jews by building settlements on lands where people were already living. These villages were emptied from their original population and razed by the Israeli military forces in order to be replaced by the new Jewish settlements.

Furthermore, The Zionist myth of Palestine being "a land without people, for a people without a land" has been used as an excuse for Israeli occupation. Therefore, approximately 400 Palestinian villages were "destroyed *completely*, with their houses, garden-walls, and even cemeteries and tombstones, so that literally a stone does not remain standing, and visitors are passing and being told that 'it was all desert'"⁵⁵. Hence, this systematic destruction was a means of asserting the myth and a way to give it credibility.

Israeli officials maintained the version that the Palestinians fled from their homes voluntarily, without interference from their part. Menachem Begin declared: "Arabs throughout the country [. . .] were seized with limitless panic and started to flee for their lives. This mass flight soon developed into a maddened, uncontrollable stampede"⁵⁶.

As a matter of fact,

The tale Israeli historiography had concocted spoke of a massive 'voluntary transfer' of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who had decided temporarily to leave their homes and villages so as to make way for the invading Arab armies bent on destroying the fledgling Jewish state.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Emphasis in the original, Israel Shabak quoted in Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 14.

⁵⁶ Menachem Begin, *The Revolt* (New York: Nash Pub. Co., 1977), 164 quoted in Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 272.

⁵⁷ Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, xiv.

Thus, Israeli leaders promoted the myth that Palestinians either left their homes and villages voluntarily or they received orders of evacuating the villages from the Arab leaders as a tactic of war, and once they defeat the newly established Jewish state they shall return triumphantly.

Paradoxically, Palestinians who left their homes did so as a result of the Israeli strategy of intimidating and coercing villagers to flee for their lives and consequently empty the villages. One example of this forced departure is what happened in Ein Hod. The historical and the personal continue to go hand in hand in Abulhawa's narration. In describing the attack on Ein Hod, she writes:

In the shiver of that omen, the people of Ein Hod, individually and collectively, prayed for the rest of the day, putting their fate in the hands of Allah before laying down to sleeplessness. The next morning, July 24, Israel launched a massive artillery and aerial bombardment of the villages. The Associated Press reported that Israeli planes and infantry had violated the Palestinian truce by the unprovoked attack, and bombs rained as Dalia ran from shelter to shelter with terror-stricken Yousef and a screaming baby Ismael. (p. 28)

The novelist aims to give a detailed description of the displacement of 1948 in her attempt to narrate the Palestinian struggle. To achieve this aim and give credibility to her narrative, she uses the archival source from the Associated Press. She unfolds her fictional account relying on such well-substantiated documents in order to offer a fair historical account of the displacement that took place in 1948. After the people of Ein Hod realised that they are being attacked by "The same men who had received the offering of food now marched through, pointing guns at the people who had fed them." (p. 30) Through this scene, Abulhawa is blaming the Jewish immigrants for attacking their Palestinian neighbours, who welcomed them when they came from Europe fleeing the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Abulhawa continues in her meticulous description of the forced departure of the inhabitants, she writes: ““Gather the valuables. Assemble by the eastern water well. Move! This is only temporary. Go to the well,” ordered a voice from a loudspeaker like a hidden god, distributing destinies.” (p. 30) Loudspeakers were used because they affected greatly the villagers’ psychological state of mind, Ilan Pappé explains, “Certainly, loudspeakers were later used in villages about to be cleansed to warn the people of the terrible consequences if they did not leave voluntarily, to generate panic and encourage them to flee for their lives before the ground troops moved in.”⁵⁸ Further, in her description of the use of this “god-like-loudspeaker” Abulhawa continues ““Stop here,” said the loudspeaker god. “Bags here. Tomorrow you come collect them. Leave everything, jewellery and money. I shoot. Understand?” *Go. Stop. Understand? Return. Tomorrow. Safe.*” (p. 31. Emphasis in the original) All in all, loudspeakers were used to generate panic and encourage the villagers to follow orders and flee for their lives.

Palestinian historian, Nur Masalha, states that “History and historiography ought not necessarily be written, exclusively or mainly, by the victors.”⁵⁹ And indeed, some Palestinian scholars documented the geography and history of Palestine either before or after 1948. Palestinian historian Walid Khalidi maintained that Palestinians did not leave voluntarily but were forced to do so⁶⁰. Yet, it was until the emergence of Israel’s revisionist historians that this myth was shattered. In fact, after the declassification of the Israeli Defense Forces’ archives of the 1948 exodus, these Israeli revisionist historians such as Tom Segev, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé rejected the claims that Palestinians fled their homes and land on orders from Arab leaders. Instead, they affirmed that campaigns of ethnic cleansing took place in the 1948, including many cases of rape,

⁵⁸ Ibid., 271-272.

⁵⁹ Dominique Vidal, "The Expulsion of the Palestinians Re-Examined - Le Monde Diplomatique - English Edition", *Mondediplo.Com*, 1997, <http://mondediplo.com/1997/12/palestine>. (Accessed January 15th 2016.)

⁶⁰ Khalidi, *All That Remains*.

massacres, and expulsions resulting in the forced exile or displacement of more than 800,000 Palestinians.

In mitigating between sources on what really happened in 1948, we can distinguish two positions between Israeli historians. Both Morris and Pappé confirmed that an ethnic cleansing took place in 1948 and helped greatly in bringing the truth about the exodus. Nevertheless, they differ on how they perceive it. On the one hand, we have Morris, who does not see it as an immoral act but as a mere necessary step in the process of establishing the Israeli state. He explicitly expresses his opinion in saying: "In certain conditions, expulsion is not a war crime. I don't think that the expulsions of 1948 were war crimes. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs [. . .] There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing."⁶¹

On the other hand, we have Pappé, who blames the Israeli state for the dispossession of the Palestinians and considers it not only a war crime but a crime against humanity. He condemns Israel for its denial of the ethnic cleansing that took place in 1948, he states:

This, the most formative event in the modern history of the land of Palestine, has since been systematically denied, and is still today not recognised as an historical fact, let alone acknowledged as a crime that needs to be confronted politically as well as *morally*.⁶²

Pappé asserts that what happened during 1948 was a well-planned scheme to ethnically cleanse the indigenous population of Palestine. In *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), he lists the names of 500 Palestinian villages that were depopulated, destroyed then erased as part of Israel's acts of "Nakba memoricide"⁶³. Further, he

⁶¹ Haaretz.com, "Survival of The Fittest (Cont.)", 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/survival-of-the-fittest-cont-1.61341>. (Accessed January, 15th 2016.)

⁶² Emphasis added, Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, xiii.

⁶³ Ibid., 225.

provides a thorough documentation of Israel's "Plan Dalet"⁶⁴. He explains the planning, management and execution of David Ben-Gurion's plan which enabled the Israeli forces to eradicate the Palestinians not only from the territory given to the Jewish state by the UN, but extending it to an additional territory of 23 percent of the land allotted to the projected Palestinian state. In a similar way, Morris lists 369 Palestinian villages and towns ethnically cleansed in his book entitled *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949* (1987). The attack on the village of Deir Yassin remains an example of this strategy. Deir Yassin was attacked on April 9, 1948 and approximately 170 inhabitants were killed.⁶⁵ The villagers who were not killed were captured and loaded on trucks to be paraded in Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, "the Jewish leadership proudly announced a high number of victims so as to make Deir Yassin the epicentre of the catastrophe - a warning to all Palestinians that a similar fate awaited them if they refused to abandon their homes and take flight."⁶⁶

Their exodus was difficult psychologically and physically, they were forced out of their village, besides, "the guns behind them forbade a return home. For three days and two nights, they made their way up and down unforgiving hills, under the sun's glare and the unseen but sure watch of snipers." (p. 34)

Abulhawa's narration of the events of 1948 develops to a narration of loss. First the loss of their home, then the loss of Dalia's sisters and ultimately, the loss of Dalia and Hasan's baby Ismael. Ismael's loss was quick and unexpected, in only "One instant, six-month-old Ismael was at her chest, in her motherly arms. In the next, Ismael was gone."

⁶⁴ Plan Dalet, also known as plan D, launched in March and April 1948. It was a systemic plan for the expulsion of Palestinians from certain areas and the destruction of their villages. These offensive operations were taken by the Israelis for defensive reasons. Massacres, imprisonment and rape accompanied the mass expulsion. For Ben-Gurion "The cleansing of Palestine remains the prime objective of Plan Dalet" (for details concerning the Plan Dalet see Norman G Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 2003), 72.

⁶⁵ Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 90.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

(p. 32) Henceforth, Dalia is changed by this sudden exposure to the sense of loss of loved ones and plunges her into a state of acute pain and grief that would last until her death.

Abulhawa chooses her words carefully to lament and mourn that year. She writes:

In the sorrow of a history buried alive, the year 1948 in Palestine fell from the calendar into exile, ceasing to reckon the marching count of days, months, and years, instead becoming an infinite mist of one moment in history. The twelve months of that year rearranged themselves and swirled aimlessly in the heart of Palestine. The old folks of Ein Hod would die refugees in the camp, bequeathing to their heirs the large iron keys to their ancestral homes, the crumbling land registers issued by the Ottomans, the deeds from the British mandate, their memories and love of the land, and the dauntless will not to leave the spirit of forty generations trapped beneath the subversion of thieves. (p. 35)

Certainly, then, it is the loss of 1948 that changes the Palestinians and turn them into refugees. Abulhawa documents their exodus from Ein Hod to Jenin. It is during this journey that they realise their new status as refugees and the beginning of their exile. She writes: “a refugee camp sprang up in Jenin, where the villagers of Ein Hod could stand on the hills and look back at the homes to which they could never return.” (p. 34) Once in Jenin, they are not aware of their new refugee status. At first, they thought their stay in Jenin refugee camp was only a matter of time before they can go back to their homes. Gradually, they grow to realise that there was nothing temporary about their exile, Abulhawa explains: “he [Yehya] realized that his miserable tent in Jenin had turned into clay. The symbolic permanence of the shelter was too much to bear. He would rather have stayed in the cloth dwelling, its leaky top and muddy floor confirming only a temporary exile.” (p. 41)

In 1953, while still struggling in the refugee camp, olive harvest season approaches. The Abulheja's patriarch, Yehya, is overwhelmed by nostalgia for his land and trees. Consequently, he sneaks across the armistice line and returns back to his olive groves notwithstanding the imminent threat of death if someone saw him. After sixteen

days, Yehya returned to Jenin refugee camp, he was “ragged and dirty with a tangled beard and a radiant spirit” (p. 43) he brought fruits from his land and exhibited them proudly, “he just unwrapped a bundle of figs, lemons, grapes, carobs, and olives in the middle of town as though he were bringing a million gold dinars.” (p. 45) Yehya’s visit to Ein Hod was full of hope to the other refugees for it symbolised the promise of returning back to their villages where their homes and trees awaits for them. Unfortunately, and since Israel treated the refugees who tried to cross the armistice line back to their homes as illegal infiltrators, Yehya was shot by Israeli soldiers for trespassing on his second trip to Ein Hod. Indeed, refugees hoped of returning to the life they knew before the Nakba. However, they slowly realized that “they were slowly being erased from the world, from its history and from its future.” (p. 48)

Amal Abulheja is born in Jenin refugee camp in 1955. Hassan Abulheja named his daughter Amal for it embodies the hopes of returning back to Ein Hod. He tells her:

“We named you Amal with a long vowel because the short vowel means just one hope, one wish,” my father had once said. “You’re so much more than that. We put all of our hopes into you. Amal, with the long vowel, means hopes, dreams, lots of them.” Only six years old then, I grew with the belief that I alone held my father’s dreams, all of them. (p. 72)

The account given of her grandparents’ and her parents’ life differs greatly from her life. While the first one is described as idyllic: it contains the accounts of the mundane details of daily lives that correspond to those experienced by millions around the world, the second is characterised by a condition of statelessness, displacement and uncertainty in which the mundane daily life includes news of future wars, curfews, checkpoints, and military restrictions.

5.3. Six Days War 1967

The Nakba, or the catastrophe, which forms the first part of Abulhawa's novel, is followed by the Naksa, the disaster, which forms the second part of the novel in which Abulhawa narrates the Six Days War in 1967. The novelist illustrates the state of mind of the Palestinians before 1967, "before the war of 1967. Our wants were simple, but they could not have been more complicated. Always we thought about returning to Ein Hod. We thought it was paradise." (p. 174)

After its establishment, Israel became highly militarised as a consequence of the threats posed by the neighbouring Arab countries. In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was founded. The PLO was created with the intention of "righting the wrong done to their people and the dismantling of the "Zionist entity.""⁶⁷

Accordingly, after almost 20 years from their forced displacement and living in Jenin refugee camp, "Uncertainty shivered in the air. Some people were crying. Some displayed their joy with the trilling of zaghareet. Israel had just attacked Egypt. A loud radio announced, "The Arab armies are mobilizing to defend against Zionist aggression." (p. 64) Israel's attack on Egypt was perceived by Palestinians as a possibility of war between the Arab armies and Israel. Subsequently, it symbolised a possibility of returning back to Ein Hod. "Jordan, Syria, and Iraq are fighting alongside Egypt. This will all be over soon. Everything will be all right." (p. 68) In fact, on June, 5th 1967, Israel launched a simultaneous attack on the Egyptian military force mobilised in the Sinai Peninsula, as well as the Syrian and Jordanian forces. This attack resulted in Israel taking control over the Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, and the Golan Heights from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria respectively. In addition to the control over Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. Jenin was part

⁶⁷ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 303.

of the West Bank that was captured by Israeli troops after the later defeated the Jordanian troops. The fighting was over on June 10th.

Clearly, then, the war was named the Six Day War because in just six days Israel increased its territory by taking over new territories, extended its control over the Palestinians, and defeated the neighbouring Arab armies. In this war, Israel confirmed its presence as a powerful military force in the Middle East and annihilated the possibility of Palestine being liberated by the neighbouring Arab armies. The UN resolution 242 was passed, it concerned two major points: first, Israel should withdraw from the newly conquered territories; and second, Arab countries should recognise the existence of state of Israel.

Thus, the attack on Jenin refugee camp lasted for days, but its consequences lasted for more. Hassan Abulheja has been waiting for this war since their forced displacement in 1948. He has been actively preparing for it by buying rifles, Amal narrates:

Baba had long been hiding rifles in a hole dug in the kitchen floor, under the sink. He was back now, talking to the men. I knew the time had come to use those weapons. [. . .] So whenever he could get his hands on a weapon, Baba hid it in the hole in the kitchen floor. [. . .] That day I watched Baba open the secret hiding place and empty it of more than twenty rifles. He distributed the weapons to the fighters, whom I had until then only known as fathers, brothers, uncles, and husbands. (p. 65)

Hassan Abulheja is portrayed as a rational Palestinian: he is aware of the ramifications of fighting Israel, and he neither belongs to the old submissive generation nor the young violent generation. Instead he waits until the intervention of other Arab armies. Abulhawa tries to show the readiness of the refugees to fight the Israelis who took away their lands back in 1948, and again in 1967, “They [Israeli soldiers] had bombed and burned, killed and maimed, plundered and looted. Now they had come to claim the land.” (p. 71)

The Six Day war affected deeply the inhabitants of Jenin, especially Amal who passed the days in the 'Kitchen Hole' with her friend Huda and a baby girl. In her portrayal of the agony girls underwent in the 1967 war, Abulhawa adds:

Days passed, I think. The baby was inconsolable at times. Huda and I joined her, the two of us sobbing in terror with the child. The baby screamed until she could cry no more. We heard other screams. Beyond the tiled cover, 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. (p. 69)

Abulhawa gives a genuine portrayal of the development of life inside the Jenin refugee camp after the 1948 displacement. She recounts the life of Yehya's friend Haj Salem to describe how his life is no different from the other refugees in camp, she states:

But in our camp, his [Haj Salem's] story was everyone's story, a single tale of dispossession, of being stripped to the bones of one's humanity, of being dumped like rubbish into refugee camps unfit for rats. Of being left without rights, home, or nation while the world turned its back to watch or cheer the jubilation of the usurpers proclaiming a new state they called Israel. (p. 78)

The Abulheja family experiences the feeling of loss once more, this time, Hassan and his son Yousef are missing. Dalia spends her time waiting for the eventual return of her husband, "My mother kept waiting for him until the day she died, just as she waited to return home, just as she searched her mind for Ismael." (p. 88) However, Yousef returns to the camp after forty days, along with other imprisoned young boys that were taken during the war. These forty days become crucial in shaping the future of Yousef and his perception of the ongoing conflict. He experiences first-hand the violence of Israeli soldiers, particularly when a mother asks about her son that was taken with Yousef. He recalls his memories about the killing of this boy, he says "I watch life trickle from the bullet wound of a sixteen-year-old "example" and marvel how things weak, even words, will turn vicious and merciless to gain power, despite reason or history." (p. 101) He

describes the irrational way in which that boy was cold-bloodedly killed just to serve as an ‘example’ to terrify the other prisoners. Their daily exposure to the atrocities and injustices of the Israeli occupation affected severely the psyche of the Palestinians, Abulhawa explains: “Toughness found fertile soil in the hearts of Palestinians, and the grains of resistance embedded themselves in their skin. Endurance evolved as a hallmark of refugee society.” (p. 108)

Abulhawa skilfully exhibits the degrading quality of daily life under Israeli Occupation, she writes: “We all crawled from the pits of dispossession and tried to survive as best we could under Israeli occupation. Our greatest pleasures were moments of normalcy. A crush on a boy. A card game. Telling dirty jokes [. . .] Words of encouragement from a teacher.” (p. 164-165) Accordingly, life in the refugee camp was hard, what others qualify as normal moments, refugee camp inhabitants considered as ‘greatest pleasures’.

It is this war that marked the beginning of the occupation, Amal observes “The war of June 1967 would mark the end of life as I had known it and the beginning of a military occupation that would rule our lives.” (p. 80) From therein, the life of Palestinians became controlled by the Israeli occupation. Abulhawa paints an accurate picture of how Palestinians went about their daily lives in the shadow of uncertainty as a result of the occupation. Moreover, she shows the ramifications of living as refugees. Especially when she demonstrates the need for different documents that enable them to pass in and out of the refugee camp; “piles of pink, yellow, and green slips [. . .] the constant unfolding, inspection, and refolding” (p. 114) different colours for different passes; one for traveling to different areas; one for medical care; one for university students; and so on. The refugees are repeatedly subjugated to investigations, inspections, and checkpoints. The latter became a characteristic of life under the occupation. In

addition to the passes, Palestinians' life was marked with uncertainty "Growing up in a landscape of improvised dreams and abstract national longings, everything felt temporary to me. Nothing could be counted on to endure, neither parents nor siblings nor home. Not even one's body, vulnerable as it was to bullets." (p. 156)

Yousef leaves his sister Amal, and Palestine for Jordan, where he joins the resistance movement and becomes a member of the PLO. He is one of the 'heroes' that Abulhawa tells their story in one of her chapters entitled "Heroes" that recounts the Battle of Karameh in 1968. Israeli forces invaded Karameh to dismantle the PLO's base. Israel miscalculated the number of fighters and the fervour with which they fought, for the fighters: "learned to celebrate martyrdom. Only martyrdom offered freedom. Only in death were they at last invulnerable to Israel. Martyrdom became the ultimate defiance of Israeli occupation." (p. 108) For the first time, the invincible Israeli army was defeated by a 'lightly armed band of fighters'. Their temporary victory brought hope to Palestinians and inhabitants of Jenin in particular. Everyone in the camp celebrated in his own way, old men gathered in the coffee house, women baked sweets, and little girls gathered and danced enthusiastically believing that the victory in Karameh meant their return to Ein Hod.

5.4. The Sabra and Shatila Massacres 1982

Abulhawa gives a detailed description of the 1982 massacre that took place in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps ~~situated~~ in Lebanon. Accordingly, after long years of exile in the United States during which Amal distanced herself from her Palestinian self, she receives a phone call from her brother Yousef, after which she returns back to Shatila Refugee camp in Lebanon, where Yousef, his wife Fatima, and their daughter Falasteen

live. Shortly after her return, she meets and marries Majid. Then, in the summer of 1982, both she and Fatima are pregnant.

After their defeat in the Battle of Karameh in Jordan, the PLO moves its headquarters to Lebanon. Israel invades Lebanon to fight the developing Palestinian resistance movement, “Israel claimed it had been forced to invade for peace. “We are here for peace. This is a peacekeeping mission.”” (p. 219) Claiming the invasion was a necessity to maintain peace. Amal is constrained to go back to the United States due to the forthcoming Israeli invasion of Lebanon. While Yousef is involuntarily deported to Tunisia along with other PLO fighters “*Fedayeen*” as a repercussion of a cease fire treaty that was negotiated with the United States, Israel, and the PLO leaders. Whereas Amal’s husband, Yousef’s wife, and daughter stay in Lebanon.

Amal’s newly recovered serene life is shattered when she receives the news of her husband’s death. In fact, Majid’s apartment building was blown up by Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Amal defines the second week of September 1982 as “the point on which all my life’s turning points hinge at once.” (p. 233) Indeed, during that week she first loses her husband, and secondly, she learns about the massacre that happened in Sabra and Shatila camps, where she left her sister-in-law Fatima and her niece Falasteen. She describes the attack:

On September 16, in defiance of the cease-fire, Ariel Sharon’s army circled the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, where Fatima and Falasteen slept defencelessly without Yousef. Israeli soldiers set up checkpoints, barring the exit of refugees, and allowed their Lebanese Phalange allies into the camp. Israeli soldiers, perched on rooftops, watched through their binoculars during the day and at night lit the sky with flares to guide the path of the Phalange, who went from shelter to shelter in the refugee camps. (p. 223-224)

Abulhawa reports what happened during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and documents it relying on details from the historical archives. Likewise, she quotes the

journalist Robert Fisk's *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*, which she uses to convey what really happened in the camps and reveal the scale of violence that was perpetrated during the attack. Without a doubt, then, the fate of Yousef's wife Fatima, their daughter Falasteen, and their unborn child is discovered through Fisk's account. Actually, to revenge the death of their newly elected president, Bashir Gemayel, the Lebanese Phalangist Militia supported by IDF, planned and executed the killing of the refugees who stayed in the Sabra and Shatila camps after the forced exile of the PLO fighters⁶⁸.

Abulhawa, building on Fisk's description and later, on a picture taken by an Associated Press photographer who captures the image of a dead woman next to her lie the corpse of a little girl, stretches a picture of the suffering along with the historical fact. She narrates in the most disturbing details of finding Fatima's dead body with her womb cut open near her slaughtered daughter. Probably, Sabra and Shatila massacre became emblematic of the cruelty Israel and the Phalangist militia because the international coverage in the aftermath of the massacre exposed the savagery of the killings.

Once more, Yousef is confronted with the ruthlessness of the IDF. Apart from being a witness to their brutality when they killed the sixteen-year-old boy to serve as an 'example', this time their actions affect him personally as they kill his pregnant wife and daughter. Consequently, it was just a matter of time before Yousef reacts, especially that when he spoke with his sister she felt "at the base of his voice I heard the silent howl of wrath burgeoning in him, the raw substance of despair and rage concentrating into resolve. He vowed vengeance [. . .]" (p. 227). Eventually, we learn that Yousef is the man who planned and bombed the American embassy in Beirut to avenge the death of his family and punish the United States for not respecting the promise of keeping the women

⁶⁸ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 543.

and children safe after the departure of the fighters to Tunisia. As a matter of fact, Yousef “had left his soul to rummage through Sabra and Shatila, where his wife and daughter lay in a mass grave beneath a garbage dump, under the impunity of their killers, under the broken promises of superpowers and under the world’s indifference to spilled Arab blood. (p. 232)

Abulhawa attempts to explain the reasons that can lead a normal person to commit acts of violence against innocent people, to an extent, even try to excuse his radical action. Amal first reads about the incident in the newspaper, then it is confirmed when FBI agents take her for investigation and show her his pictures to check his identity. Amal questions: “How the memory and horrors of Sabra and Shatila were vanquished.” (p. 232)

5.5. Palestinian Intifadas 1987, 2000

The year 1987 was marked by the beginning of the Palestinian uprising which was known as the first Intifada. It started as a non-violent resistance to the Israeli laws; Palestinians started to boycott Israeli merchandise, and later, they refused to pay taxes for Israeli government without being allowed to vote; without being represented in ~~the~~ parliament; and most importantly, because the tax revenues were used to increase the punitive measures against Palestinians and were spent inside Israel and not in the West Bank, nor in Gaza. This civil disobedience aimed at showing the brutality of the Israeli occupation towards helpless Palestinians and their illegal settlements by which they defied UN resolutions. It was characterised by its spontaneity, and more specifically, by throwing rocks. In her depiction of the Intifada Abulhawa writes:

SOON, AN UPRISING CLIMBED from the ground to Palestinian hands, and the rocks they threw cracked the morbid glory of imperial victory. It was an intifada, a spontaneous combustion after twenty years of Israeli

occupation. It was a shaking off of oppression and it spread through the hearts of Palestinians everywhere. They took to the streets hurling sticks and stones. Israel responded by breaking their bones with “might, force and beatings,” following the command of Yitzak Rabin, prime minister of Israel. (p. 249)

Correspondingly, Israel used its customary punitive measures to stop and break this uprising even if that meant the imprisonment and torture of children. The use of rocks during the intifada was symbolic. Unlike weapons used against Israel, rocks did not constitute a serious threat to the Israeli tanks. Thus, Israel’s allegations of self-defence were not taken seriously by the international community. Undeniably, their reaction to the children throwing rocks including their policy of “break their bones” by which harsh measures were taken against these children, was over exaggerated.

Abulhawa reports what others said about the intifada, she quotes at length the passage in Norman Finkelstein’s *The Rise and Fall of Palestine* in which he describes Israel’s atrocities regarding children and teenagers. She resorts to his narrative in an attempt to support her account and uncover what really happened during the Palestinian uprising. He describes the way they are being arrested and how they are being tortured, one of these children is no other than Huda’s son, Amal’s best friend’s son, “The 19 August 1988 issue of *Hadashot* featured three photos of a blindfolded six-year-old in an army jeep.” (p. 250) Then, “Amal read these accounts, never knowing that the blindfolded six-year-old boy was Mansour, the youngest child of her friends Huda and Osama.” (p. 251) In here, Abulhawa gives the six-year-old boy in the newspaper a name, Mansour son of Huda and Osama, Amal’s friends from Jenin camp. Likewise, the reader is summoned to imagine the lives of these imprisoned and tortured children, just as Mansour, the other victims also have names and families. She continues describing what happened to him,

“The army held him for one week, the time it took Huda and Osama to raise the five hundred dollars’ ransom and determine Mansour’s location. No one ever knew what exactly happened to little Mansour over the course of that week, but when he was finally returned to his family, he looked no one in the eye. And he had lost the ability to speak.” (p. 251)

Mansour, as many other children who faced the same fate, was damaged by the whole process of detention and torture. Despite their mother’s warning when she begged them “Please don’t throw rocks, yumma,” (p. 253) Huda’s ten-year-old sons:

threw rocks at Israeli tanks anyway, because boys will be boys and the young shall never respect the fragile breath holding them to life. They did it not for the sake of freedom, for such a concept was too precarious. They did it out of peer pressure, for the nature of small boys that attracts them to the adventures and trials of men. They threw rocks under an umbrella of abstract politics, which they did not understand, because they were bored with nothing left to do after Israel closed their schools. (p. 253)

Rebelling against Huda’s cautioning and Israeli tanks, they continued to throw rocks due to the pressure they faced in their daily life. Their defiance “went on for two years during the intifada, ending when Jamal was shot at the age of twelve.” (p. 253) The death of Jamal affected significantly his twin brother Jamil, it triggered a change in his personality and more importantly, it elaborated his way of resistance, thus,

For Jamil, the loss of his twin brother came to define him. It pressurized into a temper that closed in on every tender spot, fossilizing his heart and squeezing bile from it. Anger drenched his vision. It coated his thoughts. It banished laughter, even lust, from his adolescence. (p. 254)

The intifada represents a crucial moment in Palestinian history, it not only helped forge the real image of the Israeli occupation and injustice towards the Palestinians but further, it helped revive the memory of Palestine among exiled Palestinians just like Amal. Abulhawa describes her situation:

She lost her way, lost some fundamental part of her makeup, but she knew not what it was, nor where or how to reclaim it. After a time of avoiding all news of Palestine, she now found herself reading everything there was to read about her homeland and her people. (p. 253)

Accordingly, Amal was avoiding the news of Palestine after she lost all her loved ones during Sabra and Shatila massacres. She did so to protect her daughter Sara. Abulhawa continues in her explanation of Amal's attitudes towards Palestine and her thoughts of it:

When Amal thought of Palestine, she thought of Huda. She thought of her uncle Darweesh, of Aunt Bahiya, Haj Salem, her cousins, and Jack O'Malley. And frequently she thought of that other possibility, Ismael, the brother that Yousef had sworn was still alive. A Jew named David. (p. 255)

Just like her heroine, Amal, that is precisely what Abulhawa is trying to achieve: linking Palestine with the names of its people going through wars rather linking it to historical events and wars affecting Palestinians.

In her narration of the loss of Palestine, Abulhawa tries to follow the order of the events that marked the time period which the novel covers. However, accounts of the Oslo Accords and the second Intifada are overlooked from Abulhawa's narrative, instead, she recounts the meeting of Amal with her brother David. Perhaps, by her suppression of these events she tried to condemn the failure of the peace process for it only worsened the state of the Palestinians, mainly the recognition of the state of Israel by the PLO; the ignorance of the refugee problem; and the loss of fundamental rights of Palestinians for the sake of the alleged "democracy". Alternatively, Abulhawa's text avoids diplomatic issues related to the conflict, rather, it focuses on its effects on the people. She portrays the displaced Palestinians and their endurance of daily hardships for over sixty years of displacement and life under Israeli occupation.

Through the narration of the reunion of Amal with her brother Ismael, now named David, the novelist attempts to reveal the human dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She further describes how the tragedy that befell the Jews during the Second

World War was the reason for the tragedy of another people, the Palestinians, she explains:

The irony, which sank its bitter fangs into my mind, was that Mama, the mother who gave birth to David, also survived a slaughter that claimed nearly her entire family. Only the latter occurred because of the former, underscoring for me the inescapable truth that Palestinians paid the price for the Jewish holocaust. Jews killed my mother's family because Germans had killed Jolanta's. (p. 255)

Accordingly, through this 'irony' Abulhawa tries to summarise the misfortune of the two peoples, the first enduring a holocaust only to perpetuate it years later on the second, through ethnic cleansing of the inhabitants of land and in order to claim as their own. As Edward Said summarises it best:

For in fact the Jewish victims of European anti-Semitism came to Palestine and created a new victim, the Palestinians, who today are nothing less than the victims of the victims. Hardly anything can mitigate the shattering historical truth that the creation of Israel meant the destruction of Palestine. The elevation of a new people to sovereignty in the Holy Land has meant the subjugation, dispossession, and oppression of another.⁶⁹

The process continues with taking Palestine and naming it Israel, abducting Ismael and naming him David instead, moreover, even the traditions and Palestinian cuisine are proclaimed Jewish. Abulhawa illustrates:

He [David] looked on in silence at the proof of what Israelis already know, that their history is contrived from the bones and traditions of Palestinians. The Europeans who came knew neither hummus nor falafel but later proclaimed them "authentic Jewish cuisine." They claimed the villas of Qatamon as "old Jewish homes." They had no old photographs or ancient drawings of their ancestry living on the land, loving it, and planting it. They arrived from foreign nations and uncovered coins in Palestine's earth from the Canaanites, the Romans, the Ottomans, then sold them as their own "ancient Jewish artifacts." They came to Jaffa and found oranges the size of watermelons and said, "Behold! The Jews are known for their oranges." But those oranges were the culmination of centuries of Palestinian farmers perfecting the art of citrus growing. (p. 263)

⁶⁹ Edward W Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 433.

Despite David being raised by a Jewish family and symbolising what the Israeli have done to her family, yet she still considers him her brother. She tells him: *“You and I are the remains of an unfulfilled legacy, heirs to a kingdom of stolen identities and ragged confusion.”* (p. 293)

5.6. Massacres at Jenin Refugee Camp 2002

In 2002, after the reconciliation of Amal with her Palestinian heritage she decides to visit Palestine with the remaining of her family members namely: her daughter Sara, her brother David, and her nephew Jacob. During her visit, she meets with her father’s friend Dr. Ari Perlstein.

She returns back to Jenin after almost thirty years. Through Amal’s eyes, Abulhawa examines the development that occurred in Jenin, she shows how the new generation was constantly preparing for Israeli attacks unlike the previous generation which waited aimlessly for other Arab armies to fight for them while themselves were playing lazy games. She illustrates the cycle of violence that the Israelis and Palestinians became entrapped in, she writes:

It was March 31, 2002. On March 20, a suicide bomber had killed seven Israelis in the Galilee, which was in retaliation for Israel’s killing of thirty-one Palestinians on March 12, which was in retaliation for the killing of eleven Israelis on March 11, which was in retaliation for Israel’s killing of forty Palestinians on March 8, and on and on. (p. 291-292)

Through this, Abulhawa tries to show the absurdity of the situation. There was no way out of violence as each act of violence initiates another one as a retaliation.

The massacre in Jenin Refugee Camp began on April, 3rd 2002. Abulhawa traces Amal’s Journey in the camp during the days preceding it. Her visit to Huda’s house, then to her uncle Darweesh’s house, and the long days she spent in Huda’s kitchen while the Israeli troops invaded the camp. During these days, she rebounds with her daughter. “The

terror raging around the walls of Huda's small shack pushed us together into the wonderful bonds of mother and daughter and friendship." (p. 302) She continues her narration of what happened in Jenin camp, her portrayal is so accurate, describing the chaos that befell the camp, the odour of the dead bodies was all over the air. Amal tries to find something to consolate her friend Huda, she tells her that the "world" will eventually know what is happening in Jenin, Israel's atrocities will be at last exposed, she contends: "The world cannot possibly let this go on," but her friend, Huda, answers coldly and without any wishful thinking: "The world?" Huda asked sarcastically, rhetorically, and uncharacteristically, deeply bitter. "Since when does 'the world' give a goddamn about us?" (p. 304) through Huda's word, the novelist aims to show how indifferent the world is *vis-à-vis* Israel's carnages in Palestine. Even while facing death Amal thinks that "This will end soon. *The world cannot possibly let this go on.* The devastation here is beyond comprehension. Israel cannot possibly cover this up. It will not happen. The world will know at last. Things will change." (p. 306)

Furthermore, she describes accurately her encounter with the Israeli soldier, the same encounter we read about in the Prelude. Despite being so close to death, and rather than being afraid she is serene, Amal confirms: "I feel an inexplicable serenity. Death, in its certainty, is exacting its due respect and repose before it takes my hand." (p. 305) Nevertheless, all she could feel besides serenity was sadness for the Israeli soldier, for he is being compelled to kill, she asserts: "I feel sad for him. Sad for the boy bound to the killer. I am sad for the youth betrayed by their leaders for symbols and flags and war and power." (p. 305-306)

Likewise, she questions, "But what is there to say? And would words shatter the immensity of life and death so close to one another?" (p. 306) even in her death, she confirms, "I am unbelievably happy. Euphoric because the snipers did not see her and we

are safe on the ground.” (p. 306) Amal died while protecting her daughter Sara, “AMAL WAS SHOT. [. . .] Amal died without knowing death. She died with the joy of having saved her daughter’s life.” (p. 311) accordingly, Amal died in Jenin refugee camp, the same camp she was born in decades ago. Abulhawa describes the state of the camp after the hostilities ended:

When the siege was lifted, reporters swarmed into the camp. Food and water followed and survivors set about their searches for each other, for their dead, their possessions, their will. Schoolbooks, unpaired shoes, utensils, the things of living scattered amid destroyed homes. (p. 313)

The state of the camp was chaotic, especially that “the world” Amal had hoped will rescue the Palestinians was drowned in indifference, because:

When Israel finally opened the camp, the UN never came. The American congressmen who tour suicide-bombing sites and express eternal allegiance to Israel never came. Jenin buried fifty-three bodies in a communal grave, Amal among them, but hundreds remained missing. (p. 317)

In addition, and in order to confirm the above statement she consolidates it:

The official report of the United Nations, prepared by men who never visited Jenin and spoke to neither victim nor victimizer, concluded that no massacre had taken place. The conclusion was echoed in U.S. headlines: “NO MASSACRE IN JENIN.” “ONLY MILITANTS KILLED IN JENIN, SAYS ISRAEL.” (p. 317)

And thus, Susan Abulhawa choose to end her narration of the loss of Palestine in *Mornings in Jenin* by portraying the misrepresentation of what is really happening in Palestinians, and the daily atrocities they are facing. Rather, she emphasised on the relationships between Palestinians and Israeli as the only way to solve this conflict.

6. Conclusion

Through her narration of the loss of Palestine, Susan Abulhawa portrays the tragedy of the Palestinians. She tries to offer a truthful representation of what is happening in Palestine by blending history and fiction, to educate her readers about Palestine and the plight of its people. The accounts she gives about Palestine is characterised by the accuracy of the narrated historical events. In this respect, she skilfully places her characters within particular historical events that shaped the last sixty years of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

In essence, the novel is an attempt to bear witness to tragedies that befell the Palestinians. In fact, the novel is divided into eight sections, each part represents a major event in the last sixty years. Thus, the novel portrays the life before the Nakba; then Nakba which is accorded generous space since it represents the event that changed the core of the Palestinian existence. Afterward, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank following the Six Days War (Naksa) 1967, followed by Sabra and Shatila Massacres 1982 that took place in Lebanon. Subsequently the Palestinian Intifada; and, last, the Massacres at Jenin Refugee Camp 2002. Indeed, through her narrative Abulhawa tried to narrate the loss of Palestine by presenting the events that lead to it. However, the novel ends with the hope that life goes on, despite death, mourning, and the loss of Palestine. Yet, the hopes are built on the common humanity of the different parts of the conflict, rather than politics to regain back Palestine.

Chapter Two:

- **Trees of Palestine: The Representation of Cultural Memory in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010)**

“If the olive trees knew the hands that planted them, their oil would become tears.”

Mahmoud Darwish

“I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol...at that very moment, I am robbed of the tree; instead there is a hollow space into which anger and pain flow”

Raja Shehadeh, *the third way: A Journal of life in the West Bank*, 1982.

1. Introduction

The Palestinian historical experience of displacement imposes upon Palestinian narratives a peculiar attachment to the land. This attachment is evident in linking cultural memory to the literary imagery borrowed from the surrounding landscape and trees. Drawing on memory studies, especially the works of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, we aim to lay ground for the identification of ‘sites of memory’ that act as placeholders for memories of particular groups and to show *in vivo*, if possible, that literature is used as a way to narrate and represent Palestinian cultural memory. The hypothesis put forward in this chapter is that trees serve as holders of memory and their representation acts as a connector between the past and future of the rupture between Palestinians and their lands. We are interested in how imagery and symbolism transform the trees and landscape to be a part of the Palestinian means of remembering, and constructing a collective memory in Raja Shehadeh’s *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*⁷⁰ as well as Susan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin*.

Far from being a passive figure in the representation of the Palestinian landscape, trees become active agents of memory that help Palestinian writers to establish the legitimacy of the Palestinian claims to the land despite the occupation’s attempts of memorycide (Pappé 2006), toponymicide (Masalha 1992) and spaciocide (Hanafi 2005) of the Palestinian presence. The figure of trees is significantly loaded as a cultural symbol in the construction of both Palestinian and Israeli collective memories. The difference is made between the uses of fruitful trees, especially olive trees, by Palestinians in contrast to the use of forests by the Israelis.

⁷⁰ The first edition published in 2007 was entitled: *Palestinian Walks: forays into a Vanishing Landscape*.

In his book, *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*, Raja Shehadeh, a Palestinian writer, activist and lawyer, tries to describe the changes that occurred in the Palestinian landscape. Set between 1970s and 2000s, Shehadeh's text is based on the accounts of seven walks or 'sarhat' (the plural of *sarha*) as he prefers to call. He elaborates: "A man going on a *sarha* wanders aimlessly, not restricted by time and place, going where his spirit takes him to nourish his soul and rejuvenate himself. But not any excursion would qualify as a *sarha*. Going on a *sarha* implies letting go."⁷¹ A *sarha* is the only means through which Raja Shehadeh believes he can appreciate the Palestinian landscape, more precisely, he praises the sense of freedom that these walks offer, he adds: "each *sarha* is in the form of a walk that I invite the reader to take with me." (p. 2)

It is noteworthy that *Palestinian Walks* is "the recipient of Britain's Orwell Prize for political writing in 2008, it is written in English and its audience is predominantly 'Western'"⁷². Although writing in the form of personal memoir, Robert Spencer in his article entitled: "Ecocriticism in The Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in *Raja Shehadeh's Palestinian Walks: Notes On a Vanishing Landscape*" advances that: "*Palestinian Walks* is, indisputably, a work of literature. These are imperfect recollections conveyed along the porous channels of the author's memory. Furthermore, the book is described from Shehadeh's openly subjective point of view."⁷³ It is not only the potential subjectivity of his writing that obliges us to tackle Shehadeh's book from a literary perspective, but because Shehadeh's writing "should also be seen and analysed as a literary text, one that calls its readers' attention to the relationship between the words on

⁷¹ Raja Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*, 2nd ed. (London: Profile, 2008). 2. (Subsequent parenthetical references refer to this edition.)

⁷² Robert Spencer, "Ecocriticism in The Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*", *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 33-54, doi:10.1080/13688790903490843, 40.

⁷³ Ibid.

the page and the land they appear to describe.”⁷⁴ In fact, Shehadeh gives a first-hand experience of the land, without any adornment or fictionalisation, he attempts to offers a genuine insight of the relationship that brings together an ordinary Palestinian man with Palestinian land. Furthermore, “*Palestinian Walks* charts the irrevocable changes inflicted on the landscape of the West Bank in parallel with the self-examinations and even personal crises in the life and mind of a peripatetic storyteller.”⁷⁵ It is clear that the changes of the surrounding landscape affect Raja Shehadeh deeply especially that he considered the Palestinian landscape as “something fixed, lasting and indomitable.”⁷⁶ Shehadeh is aware that the Palestinian landscape is a “vanishing landscape” as he advances in his book’s subtitle. This urges him to take “notes” of this vanishing landscape because of the tremendous changes conducted by the Israeli occupation.

Albeit concerned principally with the historical and personal aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Abulhawa’s novel *Mornings in Jenin* contains some elements that put forward the importance of the landscape and trees in asserting the Palestinian rootedness and attachment to the land.

2. Trees and Landscape

In her essay entitled “Trees, Forests, and the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory” published in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (1999), Carol B. Bardenstein presents a study of the significance of trees and forests to both the Palestinians and the Israelis. She affirms that “Trees figure prominently and conspicuously as loaded and hypersaturated cultural symbols in the construction of both

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 43.

Palestinian and Israeli collective memory.”⁷⁷ In the same respect, Irus Braverman, in her book entitled: *Planted Flags: Trees, Land and Law in Israel/Palestine* (2009), examines the landscape and trees in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Braverman realises the peculiarity of linking the imagery of landscape and trees to the conflict, she explains that “national wars are typically associated with soldiers, with blood, and with large flags blowing in the wind. They are not associated with trees or with greening the landscape”⁷⁸. Nevertheless, Braverman shows how specific trees are used by both sides of the conflict either to demonstrate a reconstruction of the biblical past for Israelis or resistance and steadfastness for Palestinians. Clearly, then, acts of planting and uprooting trees in the Israeli-Palestinian context are what Braverman calls “acts of war”. Furthermore, in her article entitled: ““The Tree is the Enemy Soldier”: A Sociolegal Making of War Landscapes in the Occupied West Bank” Braverman demonstrates how Israelis and Palestinians use specific trees to represent them; pine trees and olive trees respectively. Thus, the tree figure is effectively used as “the Enemy Soldier.”⁷⁹ In this respect, trees are used to represent both sides of the conflict: while pine trees represent the Israeli side, Olive trees represent the Palestinian side.

A landscape, in the first place, is a “cultural product”, in the sense that it is constantly shaped according to the cultural features of its inhabitants. In his book *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*, Raja Shehadeh, demonstrates how Palestine was described by “travellers”, he states that:

Palestine has been one of the countries most visited by pilgrims and travellers over the ages. The accounts I have read do not describe a land

⁷⁷ Carol B. Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, And the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", in *Acts of Memory*, 1st ed. (Hanover: Dartmouth College, 1999), 148.

⁷⁸ Irus Braverman, *Planted Flags* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

⁷⁹ Irus Braverman, "“The Tree Is the Enemy Soldier”: A Sociolegal Making of War Landscapes In The Occupied West Bank", *Law & Society Review* 42, no. 3 (2008): 449-482, doi:10.1111/j.1540-5893.2008.00348.x.

familiar to me but rather a land of these travellers' imaginations. Palestine has been constantly reinvented, with devastating consequences to its original inhabitants. Whether it was the cartographers preparing maps or travellers describing the landscape in the extensive travel literature, what mattered was not the land and its inhabitants as they actually were, but the confirmation of the viewer's or reader's religious or political beliefs. (p. xii-xv)

The Palestinian landscape changed significantly over the last sixty years due to the Israeli policies of afforestation and uprooting olive trees conducted by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). The importation of pine trees to the landscape of Palestine is an attempt from Israel to culturally mark the landscape. In fact, "A landscape, like a language, is the field of perpetual conflict and compromise between what is established by authority and what the vernacular insists upon preferring."⁸⁰ In this sense, as Braverman writes: "Trees in general, and olive and pine trees in particular, perform a pivotal role in both Zionist and Palestinian national narratives."⁸¹ Both pine and olive trees are used to express the legitimacy and rootedness of the Israelis and Palestinians: on the one hand, Israelis use the pine tree to legitimise their claims to the land that belonged to their ancestors. On the other hand, Palestinians use the olive tree to represent their claim and connection to the land.

We do not aim to conduct a comparative study between pine trees and olive trees and their symbolism to both sides of the conflict, instead, we will focus on the figure of the olive tree, and its role as a "site of memory".

3. Olive Trees: Palestinian Sites of Memory

3.1. Sites of Memory

⁸⁰ John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *Discovering The Vernacular Landscape* 1984, 148. Qtd., in Braverman, "'The Tree is the Enemy Soldier", 449.

⁸¹ Qtd., in Braverman, "The Tree is the Enemy Soldier", 450.

Memories are constructed by a group of people since an individual memory is “a part or an aspect of group memory” according to Maurice Halbwachs⁸². Consequently, instead of being a precise reproduction of the past, these memories which he terms: “*mémoire collective*” are implanted within social frameworks, and provide a version that serves the needs of a particular memory group. *Mémoire collective*, for Halbwachs, “does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past.”⁸³ Likewise, in his article “Invention, Memory, And Place”, Edward Said notes that “collective memory is not an inert and passive thing, but a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning.”⁸⁴ Therefore, it is not a simple process through which the past is genuinely reconstructed, but it adheres to the interests of the group in the present, so, it is continuously formed by the social contexts of the present.

Pierre Nora, a French cultural historian, introduced the concept of *Lieux de mémoire*. He explained that these sites of memory can be: “museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders”⁸⁵ accordingly, they are not necessarily concrete places or entities, rather, they are “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community”⁸⁶. We can distinguish three types of *Lieux de mémoire*; first, material sites of memory such as museums, archives, libraries, or buildings; Second, symbolic sites of memory such as anniversaries, festivals, or pilgrimages; Third,

⁸² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Trans. Lewis A Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 53.

⁸³ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 175.

⁸⁴ Edward W. Said, “Invention, Memory, And Place”, *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 175-192, 185.

⁸⁵ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Memoire”, *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24, 12.

⁸⁶ Pierre Nora and Lawrence D Kritzman, *Realms of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

functional sites of memory such as autobiographies. Sites of memory, then, can be either natural or manmade. According to Nora's insights natural landscapes, including trees, can be regarded as sites of memory. In this regard, Nora explains:

Our interests in lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn-- but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, because there are no longer milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory.⁸⁷

In the Palestinian context, this "break with the past" refers to the Nakba and its aftermath: Palestinians lost their land to European Jewish immigrants who proclaimed the land as their ancestral heritage, or as Said better explains "the loss of locality to the outsider". As a consequence of this loss, Nora clarifies: "there are no longer milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory." Furthermore, Said states that: "For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss of locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored"⁸⁸. Subsequently, "Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through imagination."⁸⁹ Thus, "There are lieux de mémoire" as a result of the rupture of the bond between the Palestinians and their land, and as a way to compensate the lost "milieux de mémoire". Accordingly, sites of memory are always associated with experiences of discontinuity, disruption or loss. Bardenstein argues that this rupture affects the way both Israeli and Palestinian collective memories are constructed.⁹⁰ In this sense, trees function as sites of memory for both groups, since they embody memories of belonging and rootedness.

⁸⁷ Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Memoire", 7.

⁸⁸ Edward W Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 77.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, And the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", 148.

Before the elaboration of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* as noted by Nora, Halbwachs referred to the relationship between collective memory and place: the latter gives form to the first on the one hand, and, on the other, collective memory marks certain places. He elaborates:

Place and group have each received the imprint of the other. Therefore, every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms, and its residence is but the juncture of all these terms. Each aspect, each detail, of this place has a meaning intelligent only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society, at least of what is most stable in it.⁹¹

Accordingly, place, for Halbwachs, instead of being a passive figure in the development of the memory of certain groups, actively forms their collective memory. A particular place, either real or imagined, becomes meaningful to a particular group because the latter gives meaning to that particular place which in turn plays an important role in the animation of the memories that this place is marked with. These “spatial images”, as Halbwachs explains, “play so important a role in the collective memory” of a certain group since “place and group have each received the imprint of the other.”⁹² Clearly then, there exists a strong relationship between a place and its inhabitants, as each imprints the other.

In this respect, Nora argues that far from being an inactive figure in the process of memory formation, place operates as a potent holder of memory. He maintains that *lieux de mémoire* “thrive only because of their capacity for change, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones”.⁹³

The relationship between memory and place, in the case of Palestine, is a complex one. Edward Said explains that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is “an extraordinarily rich

⁹¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 130.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 130.

⁹³ Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory*, 15.

and intense conflict of at least two memories, two sorts of historical invention, two sorts of geographical imagination.”⁹⁴ Two memory groups, the Israelis and Palestinians, have different perceptions of the same historical dates as well as geographical spaces: the year of 1948, for example, is remembered by the Palestinians as the Nakba year; it symbolises their loss of the land and dispossession. Yet, for Israelis, the same year is remembered as a victorious year during which they established a national homeland.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the geographical space that forms Palestine is referred to either as Israel by Israelis, or Palestine by Palestinians. In addition, the valleys, rivers, and towns are given Israeli Hebrew names instead of their original Palestinian Arabic names.

The geographical space of Palestine is disputed by two memory groups, namely, the Israelis and Palestinians. The Israelis are constantly trying to shape the confiscated Palestinian landscape according to their version of “a land without a people for a people without a land.”⁹⁶ In fact, “Land lies at the center of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict both its materiality and ideas about the land.”⁹⁷ Thus, the same landscape is subjected to two contrasting memories, each memory group tries to either enforce, in the case of Israelis, or to hang on, in the case of Palestinians, to his imagined conception of that landscape. Nasser Abufarha in his article entitled “Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange, and Olive Trees in Palestine” asserts that:

It is the ideas about the land and places that are key to understanding the conflict. These ideas encompass the space which land occupies in Palestinian cultural life: the way Palestinians relate to the land and places and how they embody belonging to their environment.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Said, “Invention, Memory, And Place”, 182-183.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 183.

⁹⁶ Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 9.

⁹⁷ Nasser Abufarha, “Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange, and Olive Trees in Palestine”, *Identities* 15, no. 3 (2008): 343-368, doi:10.1080/10702890802073274. 343.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

In addition, a central figure in the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the Israeli Joseph Weitz explains the schemes of the Israeli occupation:

In the days of yore, Israel was covered with forests [. . .] yet in the course of our Exile [. . .] people [. . .] succeeded in denuding her and left her deserted and naked, arid and sterile as she today appears under our gaze [. . .] And when the sons of Israel returned to their land [. . .] and they saw there were no longer trees in the land, they began to plant anew as though from the very beginning.⁹⁹

In her article entitled "Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: of Trees, Oranges and The Prickly-Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine" Carol Bardenstein tries to explain the scheme formulated by Josef Weitz, she writes:

In addition to its practical functions (preventing topsoil erosion, etc.), the JNF Afforestation Campaign has also been one of the most "literal" of symbolic assertions of Jewish rootedness and connection to the land, situated within secular political Zionism's larger master narrative of "making the desert bloom," "conquering the wilderness," and "naturalizing the Jew" through "return" to the land and cultivation of the soil.¹⁰⁰

Consequently, through the JNF programs, Israeli occupation sought to establish rootedness through planting pine trees that foreign to the Palestinian landscape. Shehadeh thinks that these pine trees "looked like intruders" in the Palestinian landscape, he examines their dark green color while olive trees are blue-green, he compares between the two types of trees, pine trees "grew tall and large, forcefully claiming the land where they struck root. Like the olive trees their roots remained close to the surface, knotted and smoothed like knuckles, scrambling for the same piece of ground, making it hard for them to coexist." (p. 45-46) Through his comparison, Shehadeh concludes that there is hardly no way for the coexistence of the two types, just like it is the way for the two different collective memories that each type represents.

⁹⁹ Weitz qtd., in Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, and The Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", 159.

¹⁰⁰ Carol Bardenstein, "Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: of Trees, Oranges and The Prickly-Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine", *Edebyat* 8 (1998): 1-36, 6.

One element of the landscape that is effectively used by both memory groups to impose their conception of the landscape is the figure of trees. Actually, due to their capacity to represent different memories to the opposing group, trees as sites of memory play an important role to both groups.

3.2. Cultural Memory

Over the last years, the term “cultural memory” emerged to describe the multifaceted ways in which societies remember their past using a variety of media. In Jan Assmann’s words “the concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose “cultivation” serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”¹⁰¹ It is through these constant mnemonic acts that memory is strengthened and reconstituted. In addition, he stresses that ‘cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity.’¹⁰² However, he differentiates between Halbwachs ‘collective memory’ and what he calls ‘cultural memory’ in that Halbwachs “was careful to keep his concept of collective memory apart from the realm of traditions, transmissions, and transferences”¹⁰³ that Assmann has included under cultural memory. He insists “I distinguish between the two forms as two different *modi memorandi*, or ways of remembering.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, he divides the concept of collective memory into ‘communicative’ memory and ‘cultural’ memory.

Still in this respect, Assmann elaborates that:

¹⁰¹ Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity", *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995): 125, doi:10.2307/488538. 132.

¹⁰² Assmann and Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity", 130.

¹⁰³ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", in *Cultural Memories: The Geographical Point of View*, 1st ed. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 15-27, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", 17.

Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these “figures of memory.”¹⁰⁵

Cultural memory, as Assmann puts it, has fixed points in the past. Accordingly, the memory of these past events is remembered either through ‘cultural formation’ or ‘institutional communication’. In this respect, the Nakba is the ‘fateful event’ that caused the loss of the Palestinian land, and trees, more specifically, olive trees, maintain the memory of this lost past, henceforth, they collectively articulate Assmann’s concept of cultural memory. The maintenance of these ‘figures of memory’ is necessary, since according to Assmann, it is “Through its cultural heritage [that] a society becomes visible to itself and to others.”¹⁰⁶

“The greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people” according to Edward Said, “has been over the right to a remembered presence, and with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality”¹⁰⁷ Undeniably, the occupation forces attempt to erase proof of the Palestinian presence in the land through its denial of the ethnic cleansing of 1948 in which hundreds of Palestinian villages were emptied, destroyed, and concealed either by building Jewish settlements or by planting pine forests all over them¹⁰⁸. Accordingly, Ilan Gur-Ze’ev and Ilan Pappé, in their article entitled: “Beyond the Destruction of the Other’s Collective Memory: Blueprints for a Palestinian/Israeli Dialogue” (2003), describe “the destruction of the collective memory of the Other, through the construction of one’s own”.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Israeli occupation attempts

¹⁰⁵ Jan Assmann and Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity", 129.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰⁷ Said, "Invention, Memory, And Place", 184.

¹⁰⁸ Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 133.

¹⁰⁹ I. Gur-Ze'ev and I. Pappé, "Beyond The Destruction of the Other's Collective Memory: Blueprints for a Palestinian/Israeli Dialogue", *Theory, Culture & Society* 20, no. 1 (2003): 93-108, 93 doi:10.1177/0263276403020001922.

to construct its own collective memory on the expense of the Palestinian one. Moreover, the writers elaborate:

The violence used in order to conquer the centers of power relations and dynamics aims at positioning more “effectively” one’s own narrative, interests, values, symbols, goals and criteria while at the same time securing those of the Other are marginalized, excluded or destroyed.¹¹⁰

In this respect, Israeli occupation uses violent means to keep the components of its collective memory secured while in the same time ensures the marginalisation of the Palestinian ones. In the same way, Ghazi Falah explains in his article entitled “The Transformation and De-Signification of Palestine’s Cultural Landscape”:

In the process of cultural landscape transformation, one party systematically attempted to eliminate the other’s attachment to their habitat. Places that were the *loci* for Palestinian culture and national identity, the vessels of collective memory of the region’s palimpsest-like cultural landscape, were obliterated in acts of de-signification.¹¹¹

Understandably, then, the Israeli occupation aimed to devastate Palestinian landscape, both physically and culturally. Physically altering it through reshaping the hills and by constructing various Israeli settlements, highways and roads, as Raja Shehadeh notices and tells the Israeli settler he encountered in one of his *sarhat*:

Let me tell you how things looked when this was truly a nature park. Before you came and spoiled it all. You could not see any new buildings, you did not hear any traffic. All you saw were deer leaping up the terraced hills, wild rabbits, foxes, jackals and carpets of flowers. Then it was a park. Preserved in more or less the same state it had been in for hundreds of years. (p. 195)

The writer accuses the Israeli occupation of damaging the flora, fauna and the natural scenery as well as that of these Palestinian landscapes. Similarly, Susan Abulhawa captures the image of the idyllic life before the Israeli occupation. She writes:

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ghazi Falah, qtd., Sa'di, "Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as A Component of Palestinian Identity", 184.

It was the picturesque backdrop of my parents' lives—miles of pasture carpeting valleys nestled amid waves of olive groves. Trees like beckoning grandparents, hundreds of years old, wrinkled and stooped with heavy arms that stretched to every direction, as if in prayer. Those who took that glorious land, which had glistened green beside the blue Mediterranean waters since before Moses, claimed that it had been a “desert” that they had “made bloom.” (p. 117)

In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2000), Edward Said describes the peculiarity of Palestinian exiles. He writes: “Perhaps this is the most extraordinary of exile’s fate: to have been exiled by exiles: to relive the actual process of uprooting at the hands of exiles.”¹¹² As a matter of fact, Jewish people who inhabited the land in biblical times experienced the disruption of the land bond. After approximately two millennia exile, they came back to reclaim the land and thus, exile the Palestinians who are inhabiting the land currently.

Through the act of planting forests of pines, Israelis are trying to restore the link to their imagined biblical land. This lost link is restored at the expense of the Palestinian one: since 1948, Palestinians underwent several attacks and expulsions from their villages. These attempts are part of the Zionist agenda of emptying the land and reclaiming it as theirs. As a result of these measures, Palestinians became exiles and subsequently, as Said writes, they are “cut off from their roots, their land, their past.”¹¹³ Resulting in the disruption of their land bond.

Henceforth, Palestinians became more concerned with the re-establishment of this disrupted bond. The figure of trees offered a concrete link to their ‘occupied’ land. Trees remained steadfast in the land of Palestine, olive trees in particular, and persisted as a symbol of Palestinian presence in the land before the arrival of the Jewish settlers and the establishment of settlements, Israeli watch posts, and the separation barrier that was

¹¹² Edward W Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 141.

¹¹³ Ibid., 140.

constructed to isolate the West Bank, and to separate Palestinian villagers from their ancestral lands.

This rupture between the past and present, as well as the loss of the place in which this bond was nurtured, represent the shift from *milieux de mémoire* to *lieux de mémoire* according to Pierre Nora. Jan Assmann's wife, Aleida Assmann, explains that in order to maintain those *lieux de mémoire*, "the shattered fragments of a lost or destroyed way of life are used to authenticate stories that in turn become reference points for a new cultural memory"¹¹⁴ Therefore, trees serve as a material link that connects the past with the conception a group have about that past and offer a symbol for what Aleida Assmann calls "new cultural memory." In other words, the olive tree offers a symbol that connects the lost past to the present as well as a symbol of resistance and steadfastness.

Aleida Assmann, in her book entitled: *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (2011), designates three tasks of functional cultural memory; First, functional cultural memory can serve to legitimise the power of particular groups or rulers. Second, it can function as a counter memory, opposing the official memory of regimes or rulers and delegitimising their power. Third, functional memory serves to depict a distinct collective identity by consolidating references to a shared history.

As it will be exhibited, in the collective memory of Palestinians, as well as Israelis, trees play an important role as cultural symbols that function as a tool to sustain or undermine claims of rootedness. The different types of trees used by the two groups help to distinguish and consolidate their respective collective memories. Consequently, and still with regards to Israel/Palestine, trees are not regarded as a passive figure in the landscape, instead, they form a part of what Aleida Assmann calls "functional cultural

¹¹⁴ Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 292.

memory” since they effectively accomplish the tasks of legitimisation, delegitimisation, and distinction.

Palestinian writers Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Loghud, in their book entitled *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, contend that “Palestinian memory is, by dint of its preservation and social production under the conditions of its silencing by the thundering story of Zionism, dissident memory, counter memory. It contributes to a counter-history”¹¹⁵. In other words, in order to oppose the memory promoted by Zionism about the establishment of Israel, Palestinians used academic, literary and artistic fields to represent the Palestinian history and oppose the Israeli distorted version. These representations are regarded as “counter memory”. Accordingly, Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Loghud argue that “Palestinian memory is, at its heart, political,”¹¹⁶ for the reason that it aims to review the ways in which the past is remembered in order to implement the political change necessary for the future.

While official memory promoted by the state of Israel is concerned with the attempt to legitimise their presence, counter memory is more concerned with delegitimising this official memory. Correspondingly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only a conflict over the land and legitimacy of each group to this land, it is in fact also a conflict over memory.

Given the above, Palestinian memory can be recovered partially through the figures of trees. Trees serve as an evidence of the Palestinian presence in Palestine before the Nakba, consequently, they play an important role in negating the Zionist slogan of “a people without a land to a land without a people.” This slogan as Edward Said explains,

¹¹⁵ Ahmad H Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, And The Claims of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 6.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

was used to fulfil the Zionist's wish "to cancel and transcend an actual reality—a group of resident Arabs—by means of a future wish—that the land be empty for development by a more deserving power"¹¹⁷. The process of emptying the land was achieved by two means; first, the people were driven out of their lands; second, the process was accomplished by uprooting the remaining Palestinian trees as an attempt to conceal the former presence of Palestinians. Thus, trees act as a testimony of the presence of Palestinian that the Zionists sought to erase in order to accomplish their objective of establishing a homeland for the Jews. Accordingly, the remaining Palestinian trees, especially olive trees, bear witness to the obliterated Palestinian memory and expose the reality referred to by Said. Despite the processes of emptying the land, uprooting the trees and replanting other type of trees. Therefore, the figure of the olive tree is "designated as a proxy Palestinian witness, aligned with and testifying to Palestinian collective memory."¹¹⁸

Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish in his poem entitled "Diary of a Palestinian Wound" illustrates Israeli attempts to negate Palestinian presence in the land by using archaeology, he writes:

The archaeologist is busy analyzing stones,
Searching for his eyes in the rubble of legends
In order to certify
That I am merely a passer-by on the road,
Without eyes or words in the scripture of civilization!
But I go on slowly planting my trees,
Singing about my love!¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 9.

¹¹⁸ Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, And The Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", 156.

¹¹⁹ Barbara M Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 92.

Accordingly, it is through the act of planting that Darwish seeks to confront the Israeli claims of belonging to the land, and despite the appropriation of the land by the Israelis, the Palestinian continues in his act of planting and nurturing the tree: his care and 'love' demonstrates the deep bond existing between Palestinians and their land. In the same respect, Barbara Parmenter asserts that "Palestinians regard it [use of archaeology] as an attempt to establish Israel's roots while at the same time denying the link between Palestinians and their homeland."¹²⁰ It is the persistence of this link per se that serves to preserve the Palestinian landscape and, more importantly, Palestinian memory.

In the same way Darweesh introduces the use of archaeology in his poem, both Abulhawa and Shehadeh try to illustrate this authentic and ancient attachment to the land. Shehadeh notes that: "in Palestine every wadi, spring, hillock, escarpment and cliff has a name, usually with a particular meaning. Some of the names are Arabic, others Canaanite or Aramaic, evidence of how ancient the land is and how it has been continuously inhabited over many centuries." (p. xviii) Whereas Abulhawa referred to summoning the example of "Old Lady" an ancient olive tree in Jerusalem. She writes that "Old Lady was a fifteen-hundred-year-old olive tree with serpentine arms that twisted into the air [...] Fruit dangled from hundreds of knobby little twigs on an enormous misshapen trunk" (p. 62) Abulhawa emphasises on the old age of the tree, first by naming it 'old lady', second by describing its enormous trunk is and third by clearly stating it: "Old Lady [. . .] was here long before any of us, and she'll be here long after we're gone." (p. 62) Both writers try to express they belonging to the land by mobilizing element of the landscape. Shehadeh leans on the ancient names of different parts of Palestine, while Abulhawa leans on the old age of an olive tree and the hope that it shall live long after they are gone to carry their cultural memory.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

In his book entitled *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Ilan Pappé examines “The true mission of the JNF” which is centered around how to “conceal these visible remnants of Palestine not only by the trees it has planted over them, but also by the narratives it has created to deny their existence.”¹²¹ Actually, in their attempt to legitimise their claims to the land, the newly established state of Israel financed massive archaeological excavations, in fact, archaeologists, as well as biblical experts, were asked to look for the ancient Hebrew sites in Palestine. Accordingly, the construction of the newly established state depended on these discoveries: maps were redrawn with new names for cities and roads¹²². This renaming was done by a special Naming Committee who sought to “hebraize Palestine’s geography” in order to geographically secure the Israeli official narrative.

Pappé notices how despite Israeli efforts to cover the preceding Arab presence in the land through planting pine trees over the bulldozed villages and fields, the pine trees failed to adapt to the new environment and “in the middle of their broken trunks, olive trees had popped up in defiance of the alien flora planted over them fifty-six years ago”¹²³ Similarly, Pappé observes how fruitful trees grow wildly in and around Israeli settlement, he explains that

[T]hese fruit trees were planted and nurtured by human hands. Wherever almond and fig trees, olive groves or clusters of cactuses are found, there once stood a Palestinian village: still blossoming afresh each year, these trees are all that remain.¹²⁴

The remaining Palestinian trees articulate a counter memory that challenges the official memory promoted by Israeli occupation and undermine it. In the same time, these trees serve as the relying point between the past and the present and more importantly

¹²¹ Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 228.

¹²² Ibid., 226.

¹²³ Ibid., 228.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

they embody the possibility of a return to their land. The peculiarity of the trees relies in their function as “relics” which Carol Bardenstein explains: “relics of a receding past being brought back in attempts to revise the collective memory-in-the-making, as it unfolds into the present and future”¹²⁵ in this sense, the olive tree is regarded as a ‘relic’ used by Palestinian in different literary productions as a proof of their former presence and most importantly their legitimacy to the land.

3.3. The Olive Tree in Palestine

In Palestinian narratives “trees are portrayed as embodying the bond between Palestine and Palestinians.”¹²⁶ Consequently, Trees are active as sites of memory because they symbolise this disrupted bond between land and people. Carol B. Bardenstein explains:

It is with the dislocation of Palestinians from Palestine in the context of this conflict, however, and in the face of the disruption of an immediate bond between land and people (which previously might have been taken for granted) that trees are taken up so conspicuously and extensively as sites of Palestinian collective memory.”¹²⁷

Trees produce different meanings for different memory groups. Braverman acknowledges that “The pines, it so happens, are indicators of (Jewish Israeli) state control over territory, while fruit trees, and especially olive groves, signify a local (Palestinian) and agrarian presence.”¹²⁸ In accordance with this, it becomes evident that for Israelis, Pine trees, as well as cypress and eucalyptus symbolise the return of the Jewish diaspora to the biblical land of their ancestors. On the contrast, Palestinians associate these same trees with their experiences of dispossession and exile.

¹²⁵ Bardenstein, "Trees, Forests, And the Shaping of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory", 151.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 149-150.

¹²⁸ Braverman, "The Tree is the Enemy Soldier", 462-263.

In addition, For Palestinians, fruit trees such as orange trees, cacti, palms and olive trees, in specific, represent Palestinian rootedness and attachment to the land. While for Israelis, these trees, especially olive trees, threaten the existence of Israel and compromise their Zionist project based initially on the narrative of a “land without a people for a people without a land”. Therefore, these trees represent the figure of “enemy soldier” according to an Israeli chief inspector charged of uprooting olive trees in the West Bank who stated in an interview with Irus Braverman that: “The [olive] tree is not only a symbol of the Arab’s occupation [...] The tree *is* the enemy soldier.”¹²⁹

Furthermore, “the theme of trees bearing witness” according to Bardenstein is widely used in literary representations. She further explains: “In view of its longevity, it is not surprising that the olive tree is most frequently singled out for this role.” Indeed, the imagery of olive trees is used in literature and other artistic productions as well, because “it is presumed that the olive tree will survive the tragedies, outlive both perpetrators and victims, and remain to tell the tale, and as such is the most appropriate repository for Palestinian memory.”¹³⁰ Consequently, trees are indeed sites of memory, however, their significance changes according to the perspective of each memory group.

The olive tree holds special significance to the Palestinians. Historically speaking, the presence of the olive tree in Palestine dates as far back as 8000 B.C. in fact, “Palestinians draw connections between their ancient presence in Palestine and that of the ancient olive tree rooted in the land of Palestine.”¹³¹ Besides than being a cultural symbol, olive trees constitute an important source of income for Palestinians who rely on its harvest for a living.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 464.

¹³⁰ Carol Bardenstein, “Threads of Memory and Discourses Of Rootedness: Of Trees, Oranges And The Prickly-Pear Cactus In Israel/Palestine”, *Edebyat* 8 (1998): 1-36, 28.

¹³¹ Abufarha, “Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange, and Olive Trees in Palestine”, 353.

Nasser Abufarha illustrates the peculiarity of the olive tree for Palestinians. He explains:

The olive tree possesses distinct signifiers in Palestinian thought to enable it to emerge as a dominant symbol of nationhood. These qualities are its dominance in the landscape of Palestine; its history of ancient presence in Palestine; the old age of the tree itself, which exemplifies the old Palestinian existence in Palestine and connects Palestinians to the lives of past generations in their family tree as the olive trees are passed through the generations; and the communal life of the olive trees create around their maintenance, harvest, and celebration. These qualities and associations made the olive tree emerge as a dominant Palestinian national symbol.¹³²

Clearly then, the olive tree emerged as a cultural symbol as a result of certain qualities that Abufarha enlists. Firstly, the dominance of olive trees in the landscape of Palestine (1), Palestinians grow olive trees to sustain their living, along with other trees, as Raja Shehadeh describes: “There was a time, I’m told, when the hills around Ramallah were one large cultivated garden with a house by every spring. Olive trees dotted their slopes and grapevines draped the terrace walls.” (p. 3) Palestinians relied heavily on their olive production for a living before their dispossession, and even after they were forced to leave their land olive trees were still part of the landscape. if olive trees continued to thrive on the hills of Palestine, it is because they are draught resistant and require little care. Shehadeh notes that: “In the course of a few years all the grapes that had made the hills around Ramallah green in spring and throughout the summer were gone. *Only the hardy olive trees remained*, seemingly eternal, planted in the midst of terraces that now had nothing else growing on them.” (p. 25. Emphasis added) The remaining olive trees that Shehadeh spots on the hills are proof of the steadfastness of the Palestinian trees, and Palestinians as well. But Raja Shehadeh is worried about the imminent threat that pine trees will soon outnumber olive trees, he notices that pine trees “were growing between

¹³² Ibid., 355-356.

the olive trees on the facing hill. All it took was for one tree to establish roots. Then when it seeded, its cones would open, spreading seeds from terrace to terrace, multiplying the pines at the expense of those trees that had been there long before them.” (p. 45) Thus, pine trees took so little time and effort to thrive in the hills of Palestine, exactly like Israeli settlers who took possession of the land and appropriated it a short period of time.

Secondly, its ancient presence in Palestine (2), in fact, some of the oldest olive trees in the world are in Palestine, Shehadeh remarks the old age of an olive tree he saw in one of his *Sarhas*, he writes: “And when I looked up at the next level, I saw another beautiful garden, graced by a fabulous *olive tree many centuries old*, whose shallow roots were like thick arteries clinging together, clasping the ground firmly.” (p. 9. Emphasis added.) This old olive tree is just an example of other trees scattered all over Palestine.

Thirdly, old age of the trees (3), which makes these trees a cultural heritage passed on from generation to generation. An olive tree takes up to fifteen years to fully mature and it is planted by old farmers even if they know that they will not benefit from the trees nor their fruit, nevertheless, they plant them for the next generation as a way to payback the previous generation who planted trees for them (the current generation performing the planting process). Susan Abulhawa describes how the newly exiled inhabitants of Ein Hod “divided the goods and ate them with ceremonial savor, letting the olives roll in a dance with their tongues before taking the sacrament. Those *fruits of forty generations* of toil went down like the elixir of Palestine, like the nectar of her centuries.” (p. 45. Emphasis added.) they celebrate the return of Yehya, who brought with him the olives of ‘forty generations’ which they forcefully left behind.

Lastly, communal life of the olive trees (4), mainly its harvest which represents a communal affair in which everybody becomes involved. Abufarha asserts that “The olive

harvest is a communal affair. The whole family, extended family, and friends gather and help each other in the harvest.”¹³³ The olive harvest is an occasion to gather all Palestinians around one task that of picking olives. Susan Abulhawa depicts the importance of the Olive harvest for the Abulheja family, like any other typical Palestinian family, she writes: “Today they prayed outdoors and with particular reverence because it was the start of the olive harvest. Best to climb the rocky hills with a clean conscience on such an important occasion.” (p. 3) Thus, it is through rituals such as olive harvests that Palestinians receive the award of their hard work and care for the trees. They took care of the land, and in turn, the land takes care of them. Unlike the newly arrived Jewish settlers, Palestinian farmers have a long experience with olive planting, Yehya observes that: “Those people don’t know a damn thing about olives. They’re lily-skinned foreigners with no attachment to the land. If they had a sense of the land then the land would compel in them a love for the olives.” (p. 46) In addition to the lack of experience, these Jewish settlers, had no basic knowledge about cultivating olive trees in contrast to “lifetime” expertise of Yehya. Abulhawa writes:

The truth that an olive branch flowers only once and if it isn’t pruned back it will produce buds that become new slender sprigs by winter. The truth that an olive’s worst biological enemy is a small lacy-winged fly and that sheep are good to keep around because they supply the soil with needed nitrogen. Yehya’s hands knew those facts from a lifetime devoted to trees and their earth. (p. 46)

In the epigraph of this chapter “the exemplary icon of Palestinian melancholy, the olive tree”¹³⁴ is used by Shehadeh to describe the symbolism of the olive tree, he states: “I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol of the *samidin*, of our struggle, of our loss.”¹³⁵ Because of its

¹³³ Abufarha, “Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange, and Olive Trees in Palestine”, 354.

¹³⁴ Lindsey Moore, “Ruins, Rifts and The Remainder: Palestinian Memoirs by Edward Said and Raja Shehadeh”, *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 1 (2013): 28-45, doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.803296. 38.

¹³⁵ Raja Shehadeh, *The Third Way: a Journal of Life in the West Bank*, London: Quartet, 1982, 87.

resistance to the harsh environmental conditions and its longevity, the olive tree became a symbol for Palestinian steadfastness and struggle for returning one day to their beloved trees. But, like many Palestinians realise this loss may be permanent, Shehadeh is also conscious of loss and hopelessness, he continues his description: “And at that very moment, I am robbed of the tree; instead there is a hollow space into which anger and pain flow.”¹³⁶

Through the reading of both *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* by Raja Shehadeh and *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa, we noticed that both writers tried to convey their thoughts and raise awareness regarding the loss of Palestine, its original landscape and the uprooting of trees, especially olive trees, and expose the schemes of Israel which seeks to obliterate the Palestinian memory.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 87.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we sought to analyse the role of trees in the construction of Palestinian cultural memory. We tried to show that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not limited to a struggle over the land, but a struggle articulated through the land, and more precisely, through trees. Firstly, we tried to establish the theoretical basis needed to introduce the figure of trees as *lieux de mémoire* by explaining concepts of collective memory, sites of memory and eventually cultural memory according to Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann respectively. Secondly, we tried to offer a study about the olive tree and its representation in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. Through this study, specific trees were identified as holders of Palestinian cultural memory since they symbolise the link between Palestinians and their land by giving this link a material form, they articulate rootedness and represent steadfastness as well. In addition, trees are used as a counter memory that seeks to oppose the official Israeli narrative aiming at obliterating the former Palestinian presence in the land and consequently annihilating any hope for a possible return of the Palestinians to their lands.

Chapter Three:

- **Trauma in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010)**

“In the Palestinian case, trauma persists and repeats in reality, [. . .] What sort of “working-through’ is possible when trauma is mundane, material, quotidian, repeated and eminently repeatable?”

Lindsey Moore and Ahmad Qabaha, "Chronic Trauma, (Post)Colonial Chronotopes and Palestinian Lives", in *Postcolonial Traumas*, 2015.

1. Introduction

Palestinian trauma is multiply layered¹³⁷. The novels under discussion in this chapter posits trauma in certain social and historical contexts that enable readers to comprehend the interaction between characters' individual experience and environment. This chapter seeks to study the representation of trauma in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* as well as Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*.

Susan Abulhawa's novel presents a psychological perspective of how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects Palestinian lives. We shall examine how certain characters deal with and through traumatic experiences. The three characters we are interested in are Dalia, Youcef, and Amal: each one suffered from three or more traumatic events and the response of each one is different; either through dementia; resilience; or silence. Similarly, Raja Shehadeh's novel offers a perspective on the trauma engendered by losing the land. Upon visiting places he used to visit in his *sarhas* and realising they are taken by occupation, these places become traumatic for him: the abandoned houses, barren valleys, roadblocks, and the separation wall all affect him deeply.

¹³⁷ Lindsey Moore and Ahmad Qabaha, "Chronic Trauma, (Post)Colonial Chronotopes And Palestinian Lives: Omar Robert Hamilton'S Though I Know The River Is Dry/Ma'A Anni A'Rif Anna Al- Nahr Qad Jaf", in *Postcolonial Traumas*, 1st ed. (Basingstoke: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2015): 14-29, 19.

Trauma, derived from the Greek word *trôma* which means literally a “wound”, occurs when persons confront horrific events that remain un-grasped by their consciousness. This experience resists immersion into either collective or personal stories. Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud in their article entitled: “On the Physical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication” explain that “any experience which calls up distressing affects, such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain may operate as a trauma of this kind”¹³⁸. In this sense, any horrific experience a person undergoes may cause trauma. As a matter of fact, contemporary trauma theory, drawing from Freud’s notion of traumatic experience describes trauma as an event that cannot be grasped by consciousness.

Cathy Caruth, pioneer trauma theorist, defines trauma as “not a single or systematizable [*sic*] concept but rather an ongoing set of clinical and conceptual discoveries”¹³⁹ She further explains that “it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality that is not otherwise available”¹⁴⁰ In the same respect, Lindsey Moore and Ahmad Qabaha, writers of the article entitled: “Chronic Trauma, (Post)Colonial Chronotopes and Palestinian Lives”, write that: “Trauma, classically conceived, arises from a catastrophic event that is not grasped by the conscious mind, is unrelated to prior knowledge, is not describable and leaves no traces.”¹⁴¹ Moreover, Caruth contends that “the texts of psychoanalysis, of literature, and of literary theory both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic

¹³⁸ Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, “On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena”, *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 37 (1893): 6.

¹³⁹ Cathy Caruth, *Listening to Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), xiv.

¹⁴⁰ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁴¹ Moore and Qabaha, “Chronic Trauma”, 18.

experience”¹⁴² in other words, she argues that literature, fictional or figural, permeates the representation of the unspeakable and unrepresentable.

In a similar way, trauma theorist Geoffrey Hartman, asserts that: “‘the unclaimed experience’ [of trauma] can only be reclaimed by literary knowledge”¹⁴³ Accordingly, he offers a theory which allows an effective combination of words and trauma. He explains that the use of words allows the consciousness to grasp the traumatic event, and thus allows a shift of this traumatic event from the unconscious to the conscious mind, to put it differently: words can represent trauma and consequently heal traumatised persons.

The German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno expresses the impossibility of combining together suffering and aesthetics, he states that: “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.”¹⁴⁴ For him, “the aesthetic principle of stylization [. . .] make an unthinkable fate appear to have had some meaning: it is transfigured, something of its horror is removed. This alone does an injustice to the victims”¹⁴⁵ He explains how the mere fact of trying to represent suffering in art and literature “contains, however remotely, the power to elicit *enjoyment* out of it”¹⁴⁶ and it is this ‘enjoyment’ *per se* that renders any representation unethical. Despite this, Adorno acknowledges the role of art and literature in representing traumatic events, and the Holocaust especially when he admits that: “it is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it.”¹⁴⁷ Accordingly, Adorno approves the use of art to represent life, including traumatic events

¹⁴² Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 4.

¹⁴³ Hartman qtd in Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 641.

¹⁴⁴ Theodor W Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), 34.

¹⁴⁵ Theodor Adorno and Francis McDonagh, "Re-View: on Commitment" [Continued]», *Performing Arts Journal* 3, no. 3 (1979): 58, doi:10.2307/3245104, 61.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., emphasis added.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Still in this regard, Dominick LaCapra argues that: “literature in its very excess can somehow get at trauma in a manner unavailable to theory”¹⁴⁸ it can be understood that the shortcomings of theory are encompassed by literature which can effectively represent trauma.

In his “Introduction: Trauma and Crisis”, Petar Ramadanovic, tries to explain the link between trauma and literature. He elaborates that:

What makes literature into the privileged, but not the only, site of trauma is the fact that literature as an art form can contain and present an aspect of experience which was not experienced or processed fully. Literature, in other words, because of its sensible and representational character, because of its figurative language, is a channel and a medium for a transmission of trauma which does not need to be apprehended in order to be present in a text or, to use Felman's and Dori Laub's term, in order to be witnessed. What is thus also presented through a text is a certain truth about history that is not otherwise available.¹⁴⁹

Accordingly, literature plays an important role in providing a reliable mode for writing and representing accounts of traumatic events. Literature is crucial in representing traumas as it assures a double function; firstly, it enables bearing witness to trauma, second, it allows a working-through for trauma. Literature helps in bringing personal narratives about traumatic experiences to the public, through this process more people are made aware of other people's traumas and consequently, they bear witness to it. Moreover, working through is made possible because throughout the narrative, events are retold and sometimes they are chronologically ordered and it is this order *per se* that offers a better perspective to these traumatic events and permits a working through.

2. Traumatic Elements in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*:

¹⁴⁸ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 183.

¹⁴⁹ Petar Ramadanovic, "Introduction: Trauma And Crisis", *Pmc.lath.Virginia.Edu*, 2001, <http://pmc.lath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.101/11.2introduction.txt>. (Accessed September, 4th 2016).

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Susan Abulhawa tries to stretch a historical account of what happened in Palestine over the last sixty years. In doing so, she makes clear that trauma is omnipresent in the everyday Palestinian life, and thus only confirms what Lindsey Moore and Ahmad Qabaha stated in the epigraph used in this chapter that: “In the Palestinian case, trauma persists and repeats in reality, [. . .] trauma is mundane, material, quotidian, repeated and eminently repeatable?”¹⁵⁰ to put it differently, Palestinians have been trapped in cyclic trauma since 1948. The history of 1948 that Abulhawa tries to bring to the fore in her narrative constitutes the origin of the different traumas that her characters experience.

Victims of historical trauma which is caused by wars, genocide, and mass killings generally suffer from physical, mental and emotional pain: these victims find it hard to come to terms with shocking events. The three characters under investigation in this chapter present different responses to the traumas they suffered from. In what follows, we attempt to take a closer look at the actions and reactions of each one of them.

2.1. Through Dementia: Dalia

Susan Abulhawa presents her readers with the character Dalia, the mother of the protagonist Amal, born to Bedouin parents, Dalia marries Hasan Abulheja. She undergoes a series of traumatic events that resulted in the loss of her mind, and eventually dementia.

The first traumatic event happened when she was still a young girl, her father decided to punish her in the village square because she stole the horse of Darweesh Abulheja. He punished her by burning the palm of her hand and at the same time not allowing her to scream. Abulhawa recounts the scene:

¹⁵⁰ Moore and Qabaha, "Chronic Trauma", 19.

Disgraced, Dalia's father vowed to crush his youngest daughter's insolence once and for all. To restore his honor, he tied Dalia to a chair in the center of town and put a hot iron to the hand she was forced to admit had been the one that had stolen the horse. (p. 15)

As if physical pain and public humiliation were not enough, Dalia was threatened by her father "and if you scream, I'll burn the other hand" (p. 15) and effectively "Dalia made no sound as the burning metal seared the skin of her right palm" (p. 15) this resulted in an unconscious reaction she developed, clenching her teeth, Abulhawa explains at length the psychological process Dalia went through:

Dalia pulled the pain inward, the mean odor of burned flesh scorching the life at her core. Her complicity with nature, the intimacy of her hair with the wind, the jangling of her coin ankle bracelets the sweet aroma of her sweat when she toiled, the gypsy colors of her—all of it that day became an ash heap in the center of town beneath the deep blue sky. Had she screamed, perhaps the fire would not have reached so deeply into her. But she did not. She spied a rabbit and transfixed them both in an impossible stare. She gripped the torture in her hand and held it there with a clench of her jaw as tears streaked her face. For the rest of her life, Dalia would have the unconscious habit of rubbing the tips of the fingers of her right hand back and forth on their palm while she gritted her teeth, giving the impression that she held something in her grip that was living and trying to get out. (p. 15)

Accordingly, this event marked severely her psyche. Abulhawa explains that if she has been able to channel the pain she felt that moment through cries, it would have made a difference in her demeanor for her entire life.

The second and third traumatic events happened simultaneously in 1948. Israeli soldiers attacked Ein Hod. Abulhawa narrates: "The village was laid to ruin and Dalia lost all but two sisters that day [. . .] He [Hasan] found Dalia frozen in the awesome silence of the aftermath" (p. 28-29) not only had she lost her siblings, but she, along with the other inhabitants of Ein Hod, had been forced out of their village. Still more, her younger son was kidnapped. The author describes the briskness of this action: "In an instant. One instant, six-month-old Ismael was at her chest, in her motherly arms. In the next, Ismael

was gone” (p. 32) this double loss of her home as well as her son affected her deeply, the first signs of dementia were expressed, she plays the tragic moment over and over in her head, with no clue for what happened to her son nor who perpetuated the macabre act. She “spent the last of her energy on tears, replaying that instant, over and over and over.” (p. 33) According to Cathy Caruth “the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event”¹⁵¹ In this respect, trauma victims are unable to confront the traumatic moment. This results in repeated hallucinations, thoughts or dreams that continue to haunt the victims long after the traumatic event takes place. Thus, being a victim of trauma, Dalia’s response to this event is having repetitive thoughts about it. Abulhawa explains this repeated thoughts of Dalia, she writes:

One instant, six-month-old Ismael was at her chest, in her motherly arms. In the next, Ismael was gone. An instant can crush a brain and change the course of life, the course of history. It was an infinitesimal flash of time that Dalia would revisit in her mind, over and over for many years, searching for some clue, some hint of what might have happened to her son. Even after she became lost in an eclipsed reality, she would search the fleeing crowd in her mind for Ismael. (p. 32)

From that moment, Dalia revisits the event in the form of repeated thoughts and flashbacks in a desperate attempt to find some clue about what happened to her son. Wendy O'Brien in her article entitled: “Telling Time: Literature, Temporality and Trauma” explains that:

Because trauma repeats and returns even when it is supposedly over, aftermath writing as a hauntedness that haunts, has a double character of untimeliness. It is both an exploration of survival as the experience of untimeliness – that is, of a baffling experience of time as, conjointly, the

¹⁵¹ Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 4-5.

separation of the past and present and their continuing correspondence (e.g., in the form of flashback)¹⁵²

Correspondingly, these flashbacks constitute the only thing that links the victim to the traumatic event. In other words, as she clarifies: "Events become suspended in time or perhaps more accurately out of time." Which means that "one's basic cognitive and emotional capacities are gone, or radically altered, as well."¹⁵³ Therefore, Dalia is never fully able to recover from this trauma.

In 1955, Dalia gives birth to a daughter named Amal, the experience of having a child changes her to some extent. The author describes the change that occurred after Amal's birth:

Until this birth, Dalia still wore a cloak of bereavement for Ismael, sheathing herself in black grief that reached to her wrists and ankles [. . .] She traded her tired black scarf for the vibrant new white one made of real silk. The birth of a new child was said to have restored a glimpse, however brief, of the spirited gypsy she had once been. (p. 51)

Through this passage, Abulhawa tries to describe the change brought up by the birth of the new child. For a while, Abulhawa allows her readers to believe that Dalia is cured from the previous traumatic events: the new baby seems to replace the lost one, besides she invests her time and energy to look for the needs of her daughter.

The war of 1967 constitutes Dalia's fourth traumatic event. Amal, her daughter describes the condition in which she found her mother:

I saw Mama in the treatment tent and rushed toward her, aching for another embrace. She sat motionless in a corner, just as I had seen her sitting on the ground when I had stood up in the kitchen hole. I stopped. Her spacious empty eyes did not see me standing before her. She seems to see nothing "mama." I touched her lightly but she did not respond. I put my face in front of hers, but her eyes looked through me. (p. 73)

¹⁵² Chambers, quoted in Wendy O'Brien, "Telling Time: Literature, Temporality and Trauma", *Analecta Husserliana*, 2007, 209-221, doi:10.1007/1-4020-5331-2_15, 211.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 212.

Dalia is in a state of shock,

The war changed us, Mama most of all. It withered Mama. Her essential fiber unraveled, leaving her body a mere shell that often filled with hallucination [. . .] I watched her eyes grow more vacant, betraying a mind that would henceforth slowly forfeit its charge of reality. (p. 86)

Amal, remembers her mother:

she still had moments of lucidity then, though with a softer disposition, her austerity perhaps conquered by delirium. I saw her that day in the fullness of motherhood, with all the wounds of her shattered life and broken mind momentarily healed [. . .] she had already begun to lose her mind. (p. 86-87)

This shows how Dalia gradually started to lose her mind and eventually fell into dementia. Rebecca Bitenc, in her article entitled "Representations of Dementia in Narrative Fiction" explains that "dementia, which entails the loss of memory, language and arguably one's identity, affects the sufferer's sense of self and his or her relationship to others."¹⁵⁴ In fact, Dalia "sank into dementia not long after the war in sixty-seven." (p. 274) Following which she started to lose her 'mind', since it is common that "a person with dementia completely loses self-awareness."¹⁵⁵ Abulhawa documents the gradual changes of Dalia, she writes: "Mama had plunged far into the abyss of her mind, defecting even from her own body, leaving it to the epidemic of misfortune, and it became necessary for her to wear a diaper." (p. 124) Henceforth, Dalia's dementia did not affect her only, but it affected her family and friends more, particularly her daughter Amal. Still in this respect, Bitenc affirms that:

[O]ften it is depicted as 'worse than death' because of its progressive neurodegenerative nature. People with dementia are forced to witness the decline of their own mental faculties, the loss of language and of memory -

¹⁵⁴ Rebecca Bitenc, "Representations of Dementia in Narrative Fiction", *Academia.Edu*, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/11086597/Representations_of_Dementia_in_Narrative_Fiction. 4 (Accessed September 6th, 2016)

¹⁵⁵ Bitenc, "Representations of Dementia in Narrative Fiction", 1.

all that is intimately bound up with their personal identity and that supposedly defines what it is to be human.¹⁵⁶

Surely, then, dementia felt worse than death for it stripped Dalia from her dignity when she was not being able to take care of her own hygiene. In the same way, Amal admits that at her mother's funeral she "cried, not for this woman's death, but for my mother, who had departed that body years before." (p. 127) Nevertheless, Amal chooses to honor the memory of her mother and remembers her as "the colorful, daring, and vivacious Bedouin girl whose fire had been tamped with a hot iron and whose wits had been doused with the ashes of too much death and too many wars." (p. 119) This particular passage can be read as representing the impact that too many traumatic events can cause. The shift from the vivacious girl that Dalia was once to the old woman who needs assistance even in the smallest most simple tasks is revealing.

2.2. Through Resilience: Youcef

Youcef Abulheja is the brother of the protagonist, he introduces himself as "I am an Arab son. Born of Dalia and Hasan. My grandfather is Yehya Abulheja and my grandmother is Basima. I am the husband of Fatima, father of two." (p. 241) He experienced the exodus of 1948 at a very young age. The loss of their house in Ein Hod, as well as his brother and the subsequent change he witnessed in his family's livelihood deeply affected him.

During the war of 1967, he has been captured by the Israeli forces. After forty days of imprisonment and torture, he returned to the refugee camp. Abulhawa describes how this dreadful experience has changed him, she writes "Yousef had only been gone forty days, but he looked ten years older. His body had become slight, and seeing him like that put an awful pain in my heart." (p. 88) Later we learn that during these forty days,

¹⁵⁶ Bitenc, "Representations of Dementia in Narrative Fiction", 1.

Yousef witnessed injustice. He saw Israelis soldiers kill a sixteen years old boy for the mere sake of giving an example and terrify other detainees, he recalls: "I watch life trickle from the bullet wound of a sixteen-year-old "example" and marvel how things weak, even words, will turn vicious and merciless to gain power, despite reason or history." (p. 101) This experience metamorphosed him.

Interestingly it was during these days that he discovered the existence of his brother Ismael who has been turned now to a Jewish soldier named David. Abulhawa describes the astonishing physical resemblance between the two brothers, she writes: "Peering beneath the rim of his helmet, David approached the Palestinian [Yousef] and the two men became yoked in the same angles of their jaws, the same dimples on their chins, the same fullness in their lips." (p. 105) Yousef recalls their encounter during which he wondered: "*How did you become a Jew, Ismael?*" (p. 105) In an answer to Yousef's questioning, David beat his brother mercilessly until he rendered him impotent "I fear I may be impotent. From when he beat my genitals, I think there is permanent damage." (p. 106) This event affects Yousef on two scales: first he realizes that his lost brother is still alive but he is an Israeli soldier, and second, the possibility of being impotent.

Before 1967, the life of refugees in Jenin was simple and mundane, but the war of 1967 altered that and brought them to life under occupation. The treatment they endured and the violence changed most of them. Youcef, as one of many other young men in Palestine, was beaten and searched constantly at checkpoints. Abulhawa demonstrates how the changed situation affected Yousef:

Within six months, Yousef had endured torture and random beatings that had marked nearly every part of his body. He had been forced to strip before women and his students, had been made to kiss the feet of a soldier who had threatened to beat a small boy if Yousef did not kneel. Most men

had endured such treatment. Most were broken. And most had returned from the humiliation with violent tempers aimed at their wives or sisters or children. (p. 108)

Unlike the other men who became violent and aimed this violent attitude towards their wives and children, Yousef instead turned everything inward just as his mother, and his sister. Youcef “turned everything inward, as Dalia had done. He cloistered the pain, letting it tangle with powerlessness.” (p. 108) Ultimately, Yousef decides to leave the refugee camp and to join the armed resistance. He writes a long letter to his sister trying to explain the motives of his decision:

They’ve taken everything, Amal. And still they take more. I can’t sit by and watch helplessly any longer. Please, little sis, forgive me for leaving. I’m going to fight. It’s my only choice. They have scripted lives for us that are but extended death sentences, a living death. I won’t live their script. (p. 120. Emphasis in original)

He continues to justify his decision “*It is unbearable to think of our future as nullified, condemned to an eternal refugee’s life of subjugation and shackles.*” (p. 120) He is aware that there is no future for him if he stays in the camp. He further informs her that: “*The resistance is forming and eventually we will take back what is rightfully ours. You were born a refugee, but I promise I will die, if I must, so you do not die a refugee.*” (p. 120) In here, he clearly admits that the only possible way to change their destiny is through armed resistance.

Up to this point, all the traumatic events that Youcef underwent culminated in him leaving Jenin and joining the armed resistance. Consequently, he becomes an active member of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) which will allow him to fight back the Israeli occupation.

After many years, Youcef marries Fatima and the two settle in Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. For a while, they are portrayed as having a calm and ordinary life.

Abulhawa gives the image of a serene life, especially after his sister Amal joins them and marries doctor Majid. These brief moments are soon shattered by the political situation in Lebanon at that time.¹⁵⁷ Youcef, along with the other men from the PLO left their families in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and went to Tunisia as the agreement stated, and reassured by the promise of the American protection.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre took place in September 1982. It is the most significant event for both Youcef and Amal. It affected them beyond repair. Abulhawa gives a detailed description of the telephone call Youcef made after he learned what happened to his family “Yousef called me, screaming. *Screaming*. Even through the telephone wires, there was enough agony in his voice to break the sky” (p. 226) Abulhawa continues with her emotional narration of this horrific event: “They ripped my Fatima’s belly with a knife! . . . They killed my babies!” He screamed more. “They killed my babies, Amal. Oh God! Oh God . . .” (p. 227) she tried to convey the agony Yousef felt when he discovered the loss of his wife and children. Desperate Yousef: “cried with no measure of control, gripped in a seizure of pain. [. . .] He vowed vengeance, swore to cut their throats like pigs.” (p. 227) Abulhawa reveals the assumptions that Amal had made upon that call when she realises that “Yousef was irreparably undone. They killed my sweet brother in absentia when they murdered Fatima. And his heart now beat with the force of his rage.” (p. 227)

Indeed, this experience changed Yousef dramatically, he shouts: “THEY SLAUGHTERED MY WIFE AND MY CHILDREN LIKE LAMBS!” (p. 227) In this sentence, Abulhawa wrote it in block letters to both articulate how stigmatized Youcef is and to attract the attention of her readers. When used with an exclamation mark at the

¹⁵⁷ Israel invaded Lebanon to fight the developing Palestinian resistance movement after the PLO established its headquarters in Lebanon. For more details, see Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage, 2001)

end, capital letters permeate to give the impression of a louder and shouting pronunciation, in addition they are also considered as a form of emphasis.

After this traumatic event, Yousef swore to avenge his wife and children. Even after explanation and giving a full image of the atrocities he underwent, Abulhawa wants to emphasise on the fact that he was an ordinary young boy driven to resistance because of the harsh reality of living under Israeli occupation. She gives a long and detailed review of his radical metamorphosis:

My brother was a boy who walked the hills of Tulkarem and drank from the water springs in Qalquilia. He played soccer with the abandon of youth on the plains of Haifa and fed from the bosom of an ancient lineage in the land of his forefathers. We played backgammon, he and I. He was a man with a smile that melted many a Mediterranean heart. Truly, it was the most beautiful smile I have ever seen. He was denied, imprisoned, tortured, humiliated, and exiled for the wish to possess himself and inherit the heritage bequeathed to him by history. His own heart he devoted to one woman only, for whom his grief shook the earth and spilled the blood of those who stood on it. (p. 239)

Yousef becomes detached from reality, and loses all interest in life, from the moment his wife and children were mercilessly killed his only concern after the massacre. He affirms: "I seek vengeance, nothing more. Nothing less. And I shall have it. And you shall see no mercy." (p. 241)

Abulhawa describes a suicide attack of the U.S. embassy that occurred in 1983. She reports: "A man had driven a truck loaded with explosives into the U.S. embassy in Lebanon, killing sixty-three people and wounding scores more [. . .] Terrorists hit the U.S. embassy" (p. 234) The identity of the man who attacked the U. S. embassy is revealed when CIA agents questioned Amal about Yousef and declared: "We think he's the terrorist who bombed the embassy in Beirut." (p. 236)

Abulhawa, as a writer who writes primarily to spread awareness about the plight of the Palestinian people tried to excuse the act Yousef committed through giving a

detailed description of his life in which he endured a series of injustices, daily humiliation as well as pain and suffering at the hands of the Israeli Occupation.

Actually, Yousef loses his humanity and seeks revenge only for a while. He becomes prone to violence due to the degree of violence he suffered from. Even if Youcef falls in the trap of wanting to seek revenge for the death of his family and works to achieve it when he volunteered to drive the truck loaded with bombs. However, he cannot because he knows he will have to live with the burdens of his human consciousness. To put it differently, Youcef has an elaborated sense of right and wrong. He is resentful towards Americans for having neglected their promise to protect women and children who stayed at Shatila camp. For a moment, he is convinced that only violence can be deployed to right this perceived wrong. But luckily, Youcef realizes that two wrongs do not make a right and stops. Youcef's resilience prevents him from falling into the revenge trap and leads him to realise that revenge and by extension violence cannot be the way out. He defies Israelis' attempts to crash Palestinians' spirits and to trap them in the vicious circle of violence.

His temper changed gradually: from the calm young boy to the angry man. But instead of choosing to perpetuate the pain caused by the traumatic events he experienced, Youcef opts for resilience.

Nevertheless, it is until the very last pages of the novel that Abulhawa reveals that Youcef didn't commit the attack. She describes how in the last moment he refrained from killing innocent people for revenge in order not to ruin Fatima's memory "I'll live this pain but I'll not cause it. I'll eat my fury and let it burn my entrails, but death shall not be my legacy." (p. 321) This realisation at the end of the novel portrays how important

resilience is in the Palestinian context to surpass atrocities of living under Israeli occupation.

2.3. Through Silence and Repression: Amal

Amal Abulheja, the protagonist, was born in Jenin Refugee Camp in 1955. She is portrayed as close to her father and having an idyllic life. At the age of 12, Amal witnessed the Six-Day War of 1967, which resulted in the loss of her father. This war was traumatic for Amal for many reasons, mainly the experience of being trapped in a 'kitchen hole' that "was as deep as I was tall, and wide enough that Huda and I could crouch at its bottom [. . .] It was dark in that kitchen hole." (p. 67) Being trapped in a tiny and dark space for days with a dead corpse of a baby girl agitated Amal, the terror was at its highest, Abulhawa tried to give a raw description of the atrocities that both Amal and her friend Huda endured during their stay in that kitchen hole. Amal expresses her fear to her friend when she admits: "Huda, I think this is Judgment Day. It's just like it says in the Quran." And her friend answers her with "Oh God. Let's say the Shehadeh and pray for forgiveness." (p. 69) This shows the amount of terror the girls experienced and their assumption that death is imminent. To add more to the scene, an explosion causes the death of their baby cousin and submerges the girls in a deep state of shock. Abulhawa describes the horrific scene:

A loud explosion blew off the tile cover. Suddenly there was light and we were covered with dust and debris. My ears rang with the blast. I was screaming and crying, but I could not hear myself. The two of us were crouched over the baby, our arms covering our heads. I peeked at Huda and saw her suspended in mid-scream, a mute screech of absolute terror. Her hair was matted, white with dust and wet with blood, and her face was covered with filth. Blood dripped down her temple. My heart thrashed with such potency that I could hear it. *Ba-boom, ba-boom*. The blast closed my ears to all sounds except the rhythm of my heart's vigor and the gurgle of terror. It was a dense consuming silence, like the calm at the center of a hurricane or the hush of sound underwater. (p. 69)

In this passage, the writer attempts to capture the aftermath of the explosion through the eyes of twelve-year-old Amal and the terror she experiences.

After the attacks on the Refugee Camp ended, the girls were rescued by a Red Crescent nun, and taken to Bethlehem, where:

No one spoke much, as if to speak was to affirm reality. To remain silent was to accommodate the possibility that it all was merely a nightmare. The silence reached up to the cathedral ceiling and cluttered there, echoing sadness and unseen mayhem, as if too many souls were rising at once. We were existing somewhere between life and death, with neither accepting us fully. (p. 75)

Accordingly, silence is the initial response. Everyone in the cathedral prefers to keep silent in order to avoid a confrontation of what they had lived in the previous days. Henceforth, this traumatic event is repressed, and according to Sigmund Freud a repressed traumatic event continues to haunt the consciousness of the person until a second traumatic event occurs and triggers the first one. In other words, Amal chooses silence as well, her conscious become saturated with repressed traumatic events awaiting to be triggered.

In addition to the trauma she witnessed, Amal finds herself lonely with no one to console her, she admits: "I had found Mama with a broken mind. Baba and my brother Yousef were still missing." (p. 76) Luckily, with her friend Huda, they "started to talk about what we had lived through. Eventually, we cried." (p. 81) The act of crying contributes in relieving the pressure of the trauma they experienced. Moreover, it also represents a sort of confrontation of what they have just lived through, a form of mourning to express the trauma and heal it.

Shortly after this painful experience, Amal is shot in the abdomen by an Israeli soldier; her mother is losing her mind; her father is still missing; and Yousef decides to leave. Amal confesses: "all I could feel was betrayed and abandoned. With Yousef's

departure, I was now truly alone.” (p. 121) Amal is both physically and psychologically wounded. The scar from the bullet wound physically disfigured her abdomen, which decreased her self-esteem, she states: “I fingered the rutted flesh of my abdomen, a reminder that I was damaged goods no boy would want. The loss of muscle made me limp for some time afterward, augmenting my sense of defectiveness.” (p. 125) As a defense mechanism, Amal channeled her energy into her scholastic related activities. One of the reasons she accepted the scholarship in Jerusalem was because “unavoidable marriage awaited me in the traditional culture of Jenin’s refugee camp. My awful scar, my disfigured body, made me dread marriage, which would surely bring a new flavor of rejection and abandonment.” (p. 159) She continues to feel this way until she returns to Shatila Refugee camp, where she reunites with her brother and marries Dr. Majid, who “gave my body the acceptance I had been unable to give it myself.” (p. 206)

After a series of traumatic events and sad moments of loneliness, Amal’s life eventually takes a positive turn. She found her brother, she is happily married, works as a teacher, and she is expecting a child. This brief idyllic life is soon shattered by the political situation in Lebanon, Amal is forced to leave her family behind and return to Philadelphia. Amal’s husband died in an air strike that bombed their building in Beirut in 1982. Amal states:

THAT WEEK IN SEPTEMBER, starting with Yousef ’s telephone call, is the mantelpiece of my life. It is my center of gravity. It is the point on which all of my life’s turning points hinge at once. It is the deafening crescendo of a twothousand-year-old lineage. It is the seat of a demonic God. (p. 223)

Once more, Abulhawa uses block letters to emphasise the importance of that particular September. Shortly after, her sister-in-law and niece died in Shatila. It is admitted that the loss of a loved person is one of the most traumatic experiences any human being can suffer from. Amal represses these painful experiences, and instead she

keeps repeating “*Whatever you feel, keep it inside.*” (p. 228. Emphasis in original). This repression can be seen in the light of trauma studies as the victim’s excessive melancholy which prevents him/her from fully verbalizing this traumatic experience and articulate it to others. Thus, she deliberately prohibits herself from mourning, she describes: “My eyes turned to glass, my heart to ice, and no breath left my body without first being stripped of its sound. I held it all in, gripped it with my fingernails. Imprisoned it all in an inexpressible clench of my jaws.” (p. 228) Abulhawa illustrates Amal’s efforts to keep her feelings inside and how she denies herself from externalising them either through cries or tears, reminding us of her mother Dalia.

According to Breuer and Freud, the irreparable loss of a loved person can cause trauma¹⁵⁸. Mourning properly, Freud insists, is mandatory for a smooth return to normal life. He elaborates in “The Economics of Pain” that by mourning he designates a special reaction that occurs in response “to a loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on”¹⁵⁹ Amal didn’t mourn the death of her husband, nor of her family and the friends she lost in the Sabra and Shattila Massacres. Instead, she turned everything inward. She describes: “I shut down. My defenses pricked anyone who dared to come near me including Sara” (p. 231) and explains her behavior towards her daughter: “I had already been dismantled by the loss of everyone my heart had ever embraced and I would not allow the vulgar breath of my fate to spoil her promising life.” (p. 246) Amal prefers to distance herself from everyone, even her own daughter, and justifies this “Not for selfishness, but for the fear that the soot of her life might smudge the purity of her child.” (p. 255)

¹⁵⁸ Breuer and Freud, “On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena”, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Sigmund Freud et al., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), “Mourning and Melancholia”, 252.

It is noteworthy to take a closer look at Amal's reaction to September eleven attacks (9/11). As a matter of fact, upon Amal's husband death, in 1982, she repressed her feelings and didn't mourn his death properly. Yet, after the attacks of 9/11, she locked herself in her room while she mourned the death of the complete strangers that were the victims of 9/11. Sara, her daughter, found her mother's behaviour very strange. But later, when Amal explains to her that: "[Y]our father was killed the same way. Israel bombed our apartment building the night before he was going to leave Beirut to join us." (p. 300) This particular reaction can be explained in the light of Freud's concept of "deferred action" referring to the return of a traumatic event in a delayed action to consciousness. As pointed out earlier, a repressed traumatic event awaits in the conscious to be triggered by a minor traumatic event, therefore, the second one triggers the first and unleashes the appropriate reaction. The reaction of the person in this case is not to the recent event but is mainly caused by the earlier one. Furthermore, Amal's delayed mourning can also be seen as a result of the lack of social support. Humans are social creatures. Amal was alone when she lost her husband, and shortly after her sister-in-law and niece, consequently, she did not mourn their death properly because there was no adequate social support to console her during the grief process. In the aftermath of 9/11, Amal's isolation was broken down because she could identify herself with women who lost their loved ones in the falling towers. This delayed bereavement was made possible because it was until 2001 that Amal found the social support she needed to cope with her traumatic loss of loved ones and consequently she was able to move on. Amal explains:

I grieved three thousand times. Then I grieved for myself, a lonely woman without the honor given to the wives of the fallen. The reverence for their loss, for their children's loss. It was eloquent and grand [. . .] But on September eleventh, I faced the last moments of your father's life. I saw him in every person who tried to jump and everybody they pulled from the rubble. And I saw myself as I was never allowed to be, consoled, understood, and loved. (p. 300)

It is until 2001, that Amal was able to grieve and mourn the loss of her husband. This coming to terms with the long repressed traumatic events constitutes a step towards healing. Accordingly, in 2002, she returned to Jenin Refugee Camp. During this trip she attempts to get back to her origins. In addition, the time she spends with her childhood friend Huda and the opening up to her daughter heals Amal from her traumatic experiences. Sadly, she dies shortly after healing.

With the character of Amal, Abulhawa perhaps tried to represent Palestinian life, full of traumatic events that cannot be healed through silence and repression but only through sharing and opening up with the world surrounding them.

3. Palestinian Vanishing Landscapes as Traumascape:

Palestinian author, lawyer and human rights activist Raja Shehadeh offers a vivid portrayal of the changing Palestinian landscape in his book entitled *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. The book is composed of seven chapters, each one narrating a *sarha*, an Arabic term for a long meditative walk in the wilderness, set in a particular time and place. Unlike Susan Abulhawa, writer of *Mornings in Jenin*, who focused on narrating the historical and personal side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Shehadeh instead focused on its geographical side.

The author wonders in the beginning of his narrative: “would it really be possible to implement these plans? Could our hills, unchanged for centuries, become home within a matter of a few years for around 100,000 Jewish settlers who claim a divine right to them, who ultimately want to drive us away?” (p. 32) he writes the book in an attempt to answer this wondering and subsequently to document the increasing isolation of the Palestinians in their own land. In his book, “Shehadeh asserts his right to walk in an occupation context that thwarts quotidian routine. He conceives of walking as a critical

cartographic practice that bears witness to an increasingly untenable Palestinian presence.”¹⁶⁰ The changes happening to Palestinian landscape are irreversible as noticed by the author. He observes that: “it was as though the tectonic movements that had occurred over thousands of years were now happening in a matter of months, entirely redrawing the map. The Palestine I knew, the land I had thought of as mine, was quickly being transformed before my eyes.” (p. 173) Shehadeh witnesses the rapid changes occurring in the land he considers his own which rightfully belonged to him. As a matter of fact, Shehadeh, besides from being a writer, he is a lawyer who specialises in land cases. In the second *sarha* entitled “The Albina Case” he describes one of the first cases he represented: he was the lawyer of a Palestinian Christian whose land has been confiscated for a new Israeli settlement project. All his attempts to get back the land of his client were ineffective because whenever the client’s ownership of the land has been proven, a new overarching directive was particularly issued to overrule his ownership and confirm the superiority of the Israeli state. He bitterly states that:

For many years I managed to hold on to the hope that the settlements would not be permanent. I had meticulously documented the illegal process by which they came to be established, every step of the way. I felt that as long as I understood, as long as the process by which all this had come about was not mysterious and the legal tricks used were exposed, I could not be confused and defeated and Israel could not get away with it. Knowledge is power. (p. 122)

Shehadeh believes that “knowledge is power”, and according to him, as long as he develops his knowledge about land laws and Israeli policies he could have some power in defending his clients. According to Michel Foucault power and knowledge always overlap one another. Foucault explains that:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge [. . .]; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the

¹⁶⁰ Lindsey Moore, "Ruins, Rifts and The Remainder: Palestinian Memoirs By Edward Said And Raja Shehadeh", *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 1 (2013): 28-45, doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.803296, 37.

correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations”¹⁶¹

In this light, Shehadeh realises that his beliefs are erroneous because the only valid knowledge is the one approved by the power i.e. the Israeli courts, and that any other knowledge that might challenge their authority is simply nullified. Shehadeh confesses: “I had to keep up with the Israeli legal manoeuvres and expose them to the world.” (p. 122) Put this way, Shehadeh has aspired to challenge the illegitimacy of the Israeli settlement through their own judiciary system, without violence and solemnly through legal methods. Nevertheless, the Israeli court always subsides with the right of the establishment project. Every case starts with the assumption that essentially the land is gone, with the privilege that if the landownership is proven then the only possible outcome of the trial was that Shehadeh’s client should accept whatever monetary payout he was offered. As a lawyer, Shehadeh’s efforts to resist the expansion of the Israeli settlements were in vain. He admits: “Now the new political developments had made me redundant, unable to make any practical use of my legal knowledge and expertise to stop Israeli violations of the law.” (p. 118) Accordingly, the intensive growth of the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories transformed not only the Palestinian livelihoods but the landscape as well.

The loss of the land, the sense of powerlessness to alter the decisions of the Israeli courts of law and the inability to halt the Israeli settlements are traumatic to Shehadeh. These combined feelings result in the transformation of the landscapes into what Maria Tumarkin, an Australian cultural historian, calls ‘traumascapes’. She puts forward that some places are: “marked by traumatic legacies of violence, suffering and loss”¹⁶² she elaborates: “Because trauma is contained not in an event as such but in the way this event

¹⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). 27

¹⁶² Maria M Tumarkin, *Traumascapes* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005), 12.

is experienced, traumascapes become much more than physical settings of tragedies: they emerge as spaces where events are experienced and re-experienced across time” (p. 12) in this light, we can contend that what renders the landscapes traumatic for Shehadeh is the fact that they are ‘vanishing’.

“As our Palestinian world shrinks” he observes “that of the Israelis expands, with more settlements being built, destroying forever the wadis and cliffs, flattening hills and transforming the precious land which many Palestinians will never know.” (p. xvii-xviii) He considers the changes set in motion by the Israeli settlement as destructive for the natural landscape as well as the history of these particular places. On a *sarha* he entitled: “Monasteries in the Desert”, he walks near an abandoned monastery he notes: “The wilderness behind Jerusalem is now mainly settled [. . .] the transformation is permanent. Whatever the resolution of this intractable political conflict, this area will never return to being the wilderness it once was.” (p. 154) perhaps, Raja Shehadeh’s uttermost concern is the vanishing natural landscape rather than liberation.

Change happens, Shehadeh is aware of that. Moreover, the Israeli settler whom he encounters in one of his walks emphasis on that. The settler reminds Shehadeh that modernisation is to be blamed for intruding into pristine Palestinian landscapes, the settler insists that does not just happen in the Occupied Territories, but also all over the world. What the settler fails to understand, however, is that modernization is only for the benefit of Israeli settlers, whereas all that Palestinians get is a shrinking of their world as more barriers, roads and highways are built. Shehadeh longs for “the stability of geography and the continuity of land” as referred to by Edward Said, who further develops:

[T]hese have completely disappeared from my life and the life of all Palestinians. If we are not stopped at borders, or herded into new camps, or denied reentry and residence, or barred from travel from one place to another, more of our land is taken, our lives are interfered with arbitrarily, our voices are prevented from

reaching each other, our identity is confined to frightened little islands in an inhospitable environment of superior military force sanitized by the clinical jargon of pure administration [. . .] Continuity for them, the dominant population; discontinuity for us, the dispossessed and dispersed.¹⁶³

Discontinuity, dispossession and dispersion affect not only Shehadeh, but all Palestinians. In addition to this, Shehadeh is frustrated by the possibility that soon he can no longer enjoy walks, as it becomes harder with time. He is no longer allowed to roam freely as he used to do, and now he is constantly harassed by Israeli soldiers. The loss of such a simple right, Shehadeh attempts to highlight, is much more significant than it might seem. It represents a much greater loss: the estrangement of the Palestinian people and the deprivation of their land.

“Ever since I learned of the plans to transform our hills being prepared by successive Israeli governments, who supported the policy of establishing settlements in the Occupied Territories,” Shehadeh confesses: “I have felt like one who is told that he has contracted a terminal disease.” (p. xvi) He compares the Israeli settlement to an incurable cancer which eats through the landscapes of Palestine with irreparable consequences. He continues: “Now when I walk in the hills I cannot but be conscious that the time when I will be able to do so is running out.” (p. xvi) This statement clearly shows that this situation fosters a sense of ephemerality for Shehadeh, who is no longer allowed to wander at ease in the land, but rather feels like an intruder in his own land. This thought is per se what traumatizes him. In fact, “Shehadeh’s work is almost preternaturally aware of space. Colonial power for Shehadeh is inseparable from confinement: from the policing and surveillance of space as well as the forcible restriction of movement.”¹⁶⁴ Shehadeh’s intention is to portray how “the Palestinians are enclosed,

¹⁶³ Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, qtd., in Spencer, "Ecocriticism in The Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*", 53.

¹⁶⁴ Spencer, "Ecocriticism in The Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*", 41.

observed and fragmented, and their movements policed and impeded. from the past and present.”¹⁶⁵ this is evident in various moment in his narrative. For example, the scene where he describes how to escape from settlement guards he writes:

The path continued in a north-westerly easy climb beyond the ploughed field into other fields planted with olives that had not been pruned, forcing us to stoop and push our way through their woody branches. Perhaps it was safer to be in this field, concealed by the trees from the watchful eyes of the settlement guards. (p. 166)

He is concealed by the trees; elements of the landscape collaborate to provide hiding place for him. Despite choosing strategic places form establishing their settlements, The Israelis cannot the complicity of the Palestinian landscape with its inhabitants.

Shehadeh documented the changes of the vanishing landscape that he observed during his several walks. In addition, he noticed the development the Israeli settlers conducted and their attempts to conceal Palestinian landmarks, he writes:

I realized that the beautiful Dome of the Rock, for many centuries the symbol of ancient Jerusalem, was no longer visible. It was concealed by new construction. This was by design. Not only had Israeli city planners obstructed the view of this familiar landmark – they had also constructed a wide highway along the western periphery of Arab East Jerusalem, restricting its growth and separating it from the rest of the city. Highways are more effective geographic barriers than walls in keeping neighbourhoods apart. Walls can always be demolished. But once built, roads become a cruel reality that it is more difficult to change. (p. 104)

Not only the Dome of Rock was concealed by the new buildings, the newly established roads and highways functioned as effective barriers, separating entire Palestinian communities. He consolidates his observations when he encounters a young Palestinian man, elaborating:

Adel, who lived in the village and had to commute daily to Ramallah, where he worked, pointed to the road which we could see below and said: 'Look at this graphic example of discrimination.' He told me that his family owned olive groves

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.

on the other side of the road but could not pick the olives because of the danger of crossing a busy highway without a pedestrian crossing. (p. 84)

In addition to Shehadeh who is traumatized for not being able to walk freely, this young Palestinian 's trauma stems from the fact of not being able to tend to their olive grove across the road. He relates trauma to a physical space, i. e. the road, because it embodies loss of the land, as well as the supremacy of Israel and therefore the Palestinian powerlessness.

The idea Shehadeh entertained throughout his narrative is that the Israeli policies including building settlements and expanding roads and highways have destroyed the Palestinian landscape. The latter becoming increasingly restricted to Palestinians. He fights a losing battle when he tries ferociously to challenge the Israeli settlements in their own courts, but eventually he realizes the bitterness of the defeat and hopelessness when he acknowledges:

I knew I would be able to find ways of dealing with the trauma of defeat. Somehow despite the problems and fears I would continue to walk and to write. At my age my father had successfully survived two catastrophic defeats. I was more fortunate. So far, I have had to deal with only one. (p. 155)

Accordingly, it is through his writing, Raja Shehadeh tried to mourn the loss of space and the vanishing landscape, also accept that Palestinians have been defeated. He realizes that his efforts have been in vain since the land changed and continues to be changed.

Furthermore, Shehadeh criticizes the Oslo Agreement, which he regards as surrender and defeat. As a matter of fact, the Agreement did not challenge the Israeli projects of settlements but instead encircled Palestinian towns and villages and did not allow them to expand meanwhile allowing the Israeli appropriation of surrounding areas

for future expansion projects. The outcome of agreement eventually caused a shrinking of the space within which Palestinians already live in. He admits:

I had perceived my life as an ongoing narrative organically linked to the forward march of the Palestinian people towards liberation and freedom from the yoke of occupation. But now I knew this was nothing but a grand delusion. There was no connection outside my own mind between my knowledge and reality. It was only my way of feeling I was part of the rest of struggling society, a way of enduring hardships by claiming and holding on to the belief that there was a higher meaning to the suffering – that it wasn't in vain; it wasn't without purpose. As long as I was gaining a better understanding of the grand plan within which all this misery was taking place, my efforts had a point. I was not just a sufferer. I was an interpreter and challenger acting in solidarity with others. But the Oslo Agreements buried my truth. (p. 123)

At the end of his narrative, Shehadeh gradually comes to terms with anger and grief, emphasizes that he is 'not just a sufferer' and assumes his role as 'an interpreter and challenger', in the way he interprets the changes occurring in the landscape and challenges their erasure by keeping a detailed written record of the landscape as proof for next generations. Finally, he chooses to enjoy whatever time he has left in walking in the hills before they vanish and most importantly while he still can do that.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we tried to look at how Susan Abulhawa and Raja Shehadeh present different types of Palestinian traumas and how they deal with it through their writings. Both writers tried to illustrate the traumatic experiences Palestinians endure, albeit differently, as each offered a particular perspective. Abulhawa investigated the psychological and personal side, whereas Shehadeh focused on the vanishing landscapes.

While Abulhawa focused on the experience of her characters as well as their responses and defenses to the traumatic experiences they underwent, Shehadeh instead focused on the traumatic experience engendered by the changes in the surrounding environment. Through their narration, both Abulhawa and Shehadeh, tried to engage their readers with what is happening in Palestine as they attempt to represent the different aspects of trauma in the daily Palestinian lives.

The writers presented a brutal reality of the Israeli Occupation that promises neither a recovery from trauma nor a way out as Shehadeh realises that the change perpetuated to the landscape is irreversible, while the traumas of Abulhawa's different characters result in the death of each one of them as if to accentuate the fact that Palestinian trauma is an incurable one and above all is chronic.

The refusal of closure in both narratives is a strategy used by both writers to acknowledge the limitation of their narratives in representing and dealing with Palestinian trauma. Nevertheless, they emphasise on the importance of continually try to represent it.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In accordance with the thesis statement, the first task of this research was to look at how Abulhawa managed to use her novel to inform her western readers about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, Abulhawa tried to portray the tragedy of Palestinians by offering a realistic version of what is happening in Palestine. Her technique consisted of blending the historical events and fictional elements to effectively engage her readers with her narrative. She carefully structured her narrative around seminal historical moments in Palestinian history. Through her narration of the loss of Palestine Abulhawa offered to educate western audiences about the history of Palestine. A Palestinian writer, as we introduced in the first chapter, must bear witness to the plight of his/ her people. We presumed that Abulhawa is 'bearing witness' to Palestinian life through her genuine narration of the life of 'Abulheja', a typical Palestinian family, in a Palestinian village, Ein Hod, Jenin Refugee Camp, and later Shatila Refugee Camp. The author manages to narrate the loss of Palestine by relying on the historical agency of the conflict. Thereby, the novel portrays the life before the Nakba; then Nakba which changed the core of the Palestinian life, then, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank following the Six Days War in 1967; as well as Sabra and Shatila Massacres in 1982; afterward the Palestinian Intifada; and, last, the Massacres at Jenin Refugee Camp 2002. Accordingly, it can be seen that Abulhawa's narrative offer a complete view and fully narrates the loss of Palestine not just historically but personally as well.

The second hypothesis we posited was that trees serve as holders of memory and their representation act as a connector between the past and future of the rupture between Palestinians and their lands. Thus, in the second chapter we aimed to study the role of trees and landscape in the construction of Palestinian cultural memory. In fact, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not just a struggle over the land, but a struggle articulated through the land, and more precisely, through trees and was our concern consisted of explaining

and showing it. We started by establishing a theoretical basis first. We relied on the works of various scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, among others, to introduce and explain concepts primordial to our study. Thus, concepts of collective memory, sites of memory and ultimately cultural memory were explained. This permeated us to introduce the figure of trees as *lieux de mémoire*. Moreover, we tried to offer a study about the olive tree and its representation in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008) and Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010).

Through this study, specific trees were identified as holders of Palestinian cultural memory since they symbolise the link between Palestinians and their land by giving this link a material form, they articulate rootedness and represent steadfastness as well. In addition, trees are used as a counter memory that seeks to oppose the official Israeli narrative aiming at obliterating the former Palestinian presence in the land and consequently annihilating any hope for a possible return of the Palestinians to their lands.

In our third chapter, we presumed that trauma is dealt with differently, either through, dementia, resilience, or silence as in *Mornings in Jenin*, or the transformation of Palestinian landscapes into traumascapes as in *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*. Therefore, we attempted to examine how Susan Abulhawa and Raja Shehadeh presented different types of Palestinian traumas and the way in which each one dealt with it through his/her writings. Our aim was not to compare the two narratives, instead, we considered them as complementary. Indeed, both writers tried to show the traumatic experiences a Palestinian can endure, although in different ways, as each focused on a particular standpoint. Abulhawa investigated the psychological and personal side, whereas Shehadeh focused on the disappearing Palestinian landscapes.

We realise through Shehadeh's depiction that the Palestinian landscape is being permanently damaged by Israeli Occupation projects of settlements, highways or roads. Moreover, through the representation of different traumas that affect her characters, Abulhawa tried to shed light on the fact that in the Palestinian context, trauma is chronic and incurable as each one of her traumatised characters dies.

Finally, throughout the dissertation we tried to shed light on different aspects peculiar to the Palestinian literature. The results of the research lead to the conclusions that, indeed, Palestinian history can be accessible to readers in the form of novels such as Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. Moreover, trees and the landscape provide a fertile ground on which scholars might explore the conflict in terms of ecocriticism. Afterwards, the everydayness of trauma is captured through psychological reactions or through traumascapes in the vanishing landscape of Palestine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Primary Sources:

Abulhawa, Susan. *Mornings in Jenin*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2010.

Shehadeh, Raja. *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscapes*. London: Profile, 2008.

Secondary Sources:

Abufarha, Nasser. "Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange and Olive Trees in Palestine". *Identities* 15, no. 3 (2008): 343-368. doi:10.1080/10702890802073274.

Adorno, Theodor and Francis McDonagh. "Re-View: on Commitment" [Continued]. *Performing Arts Journal* 3, no. 3 (1979): 58. doi:10.2307/3245104.

Adorno, Theodor W. *Prisms*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983.

AlJahdali, Samar H. "Venturing into A Vanishing Space: The Chronotope in Representing Palestinian Postcoloniality". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 2 (2014): 216-229. doi:10.1080/17449855.2014.883180.

Al Maleh, Layla. *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspective on Anglophone Arab Literature*. 1st ed. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

Assman, Aleida. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Assman, Jan. "Communicative and Cultural Memory". In *Cultural Memories: The Geographical Point of View*, 1st ed. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011.

Assmann, Jan and John Czaplicka. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity". *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995): 125. doi:10.2307/488538.

Ball, Anna. *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Bardenstein, Carol B. "Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: Of Trees, Oranges and The Prickly-Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine". *Edebyat* 8 (1998): 1-36.

Bardenstein, Carol B. "Trees, Forests, and the Sharing of Palestinian and Israeli Collective Memory". In *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, 148-168. Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe and Leo Spitzer, 1st ed. Hanover: Dartmouth College University, 1999.

- Braverman, Irus. "The Tree Is the Enemy Soldier: a Sociolegal Making of War Landscapes in the Occupied West Bank". *Law & Society Review* 42, no. 3 (2008): 449-482. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5893.2008.00348.x.
- Braverman, Irus. *Planted Flags*. 1st ed. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Breuer, Josef and Sigmund Freud. "On the Physical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena". *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 37 (1893).
- Caruth, Cathy. *Listening to Trauma*. 1st ed. Baltimore: John Hopkins university press, 2014.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience*. 1st ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Erll, Astrid and Ann Rigney. "Literature and The Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction". *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2 (2006): 111-115. doi: 10.1080/13825570600753394.
- Erll, Astrid, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B Young. *Cultural Memory Studies*. 1st ed. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.
- Faure, Claude. *Dictionary of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. 1st ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.
- Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. 1st ed. London: Verso, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage, 1995.
- Freud, Sigmund, James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, and Alan Tyson. *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 1st ed. London: The Hogarth Press, 1958.
- Gur-Ze'ev, Ilan and Ilan Pappé. "Beyond the Destruction of the Other's Collective Memory". *Theory, Culture & Society* 20, no. 1 (2003): 93-108. doi:10.1177/0263276403020001922.
- Halbwachs, Maurice and Lewis A. Coser. *On Collective Memory*. 1st ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hamdi, Tahrir. "Bearing Witness in Palestinian Resistance Literature". *Race & Class* 52, no. 3 (2011): 21-42. doi:10.1177/0306396810390158.
- Kanafani, Ghassan. *Palestine's Children*. 1st ed. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.
- Karmi, Ghada. *In Search of Fatima*. 1st ed. London: Verso, 2009.
- Karmi, Ghada. *Married to Another Man: Israel's Dilemma in Palestine*. 1st ed. London: Pluto Press, 2007.

- Khalidi, Walid. *All That Remains*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. 1st ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Massad, Joseph Andoni. *The Persistence of The Palestinian Question*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Moore, Lindsey and Ahmad Qabaha. "Chronic Trauma, (Post)Colonial Chronotopes and Palestinian Lives". In *Postcolonial Traumas*, 14-29. Abigail Ward, 1st ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Moore, Lindsey. "Ruins, Rifts and The Remainder: Palestinian Memoirs by Edward Said and Raja Shehadeh". *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 1 (2013): 28-45. doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.803296.
- Morris, Benny. *Righteous Victims: A History of The Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*. 1st ed. New York: vintage, 2001.
- Nora, Pierre and Lawrence D Kritzman. *Realms of Memory*. 1st ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire". *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24. doi:10.2307/2928520.
- O'Brien, Wendy. "Telling Time: Literature, Temporality and Trauma". *Analecta Husserliana*, 2007, 209-221. doi:10.1007/1-4020-5331-2_15.
- Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oneworld, 2006.
- Parmenter, Barbara M. *Giving Voice to Stones*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.
- Sa'di, Ahmad H. "Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah As a Component of Palestinian Identity". *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 175-198. doi:10.1353/is.2002.0016.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf, 1993.
- Said, Edward W. "Invention, Memory, And Place". *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 175-192. doi:10.1086/448963.
- Said, Edward W. "Permission to Narrate". *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, no. 3 (1984): 27-48. doi:10.2307/2536688.
- Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Said, Edward W. *The Question of Palestine*. 1st ed. New York: Times Books, 1979.

- Salah D, Hassan. "Undertaking Partition: Palestine And Postcolonial Studies". *Journal X6* 1 (2001): 19-45.
- Shehadeh, Raja. *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in The West Bank*. 1st ed. London: quartet, 1982.
- Shohat, Ella. "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'". *Social Text*, no. 31/32, Third World and Colonial Issues (1992): 99-113. doi:10.2307/466220.
- Slymovics, Susan. *The Object of Memory*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
- Spencer, Robert. "Ecocriticism in The Colonial Present: The Politics of Dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's Palestinian Walks: Notes on A Vanishing Landscape". *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 33-54. doi:10.1080/13688790903490843.
- Tumarkin, Maria M. *Traumasces*. 1st ed. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005.
- White, Hayden. "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth". In *Postmodern History Reader*, 392-396. Keith Jenkins, 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Williams, Patrick. "Outlines of A Better World: Rerouting Postcolonialism". In *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for The New Millennium*, 86-97. Janet Wilson, Cristina Azandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh, 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Williams, Patrick and Anna Ball. "Where Is Palestine?". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 2 (2014): 127-133. doi:10.1080/17449855.2014.883164.

Webography:

- Abulhawa, Susan. "The Antisemitism to Come? Hardly". *Huffington Post*, 2011.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susan-abulhawa/bernardhenri-levy-a-new-k_b_799651.html. (accessed on January, 4th 2016)
- Bitenc, Rebecca. "Representations of Dementia in Narrative Fiction". *Academia.Edu*, 2016.
https://www.academia.edu/11086597/Representations_of_Dementia_in_Narrative_Fiction. (Accessed September 6th 2016.)
- Darraj, Faisal. "Transformations in Palestinian Literature". *Words Without Borders*, 2017.
<http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/transformations-in-palestinian-literature>. (accessed on January, 4th 2016)

Lévy, Bernard-Henri. "The Antisemitism to Come". *The Huffington Post*, 2011.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernardhenri-levy/post_1373_b_791632.html.

(accessed on January, 4th 2016)

Morris, Benny. "Politics by Other Means". *New Republic*, 2004.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/61715/politics-other-means-0>. (accessed January, 6th

2016)

Ramadanovic, Petar. "Introduction: Trauma and Crisis". *Pmc.Iath.Virginia.Edu*, 2001.

<http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.101/11.2introduction.txt>. (Accessed on

September, 4th 2016)

Snaije, Olivia. "The Many Lives and Languages of a Palestinian Novel". *Publishing*

Perspectives, 2017. [http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/03/the-many-lives-and-](http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/03/the-many-lives-and-languages-of-a-palestinian-novel/#.VrlATxjhDIU)

[languages-of-a-palestinian-novel/#.VrlATxjhDIU](http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/03/the-many-lives-and-languages-of-a-palestinian-novel/#.VrlATxjhDIU). (accessed January, 4th 2016)

"Survival of The Fittest (Cont.)". *Haaretz.Com*, 2015. [http://www.haaretz.com/survival-](http://www.haaretz.com/survival-of-the-fittest-cont-1.61341)

[of-the-fittest-cont-1.61341](http://www.haaretz.com/survival-of-the-fittest-cont-1.61341). (accessed January, 15th 2016)

Vidal, Dominique. "The Expulsion of the Palestinians Re-Examined". *Le Monde*

Diplomatique, 1997. <http://mondediplo.com/1997/12/palestine>. (Accessed January

15th 2016)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 01: Abulheja's Family Tree

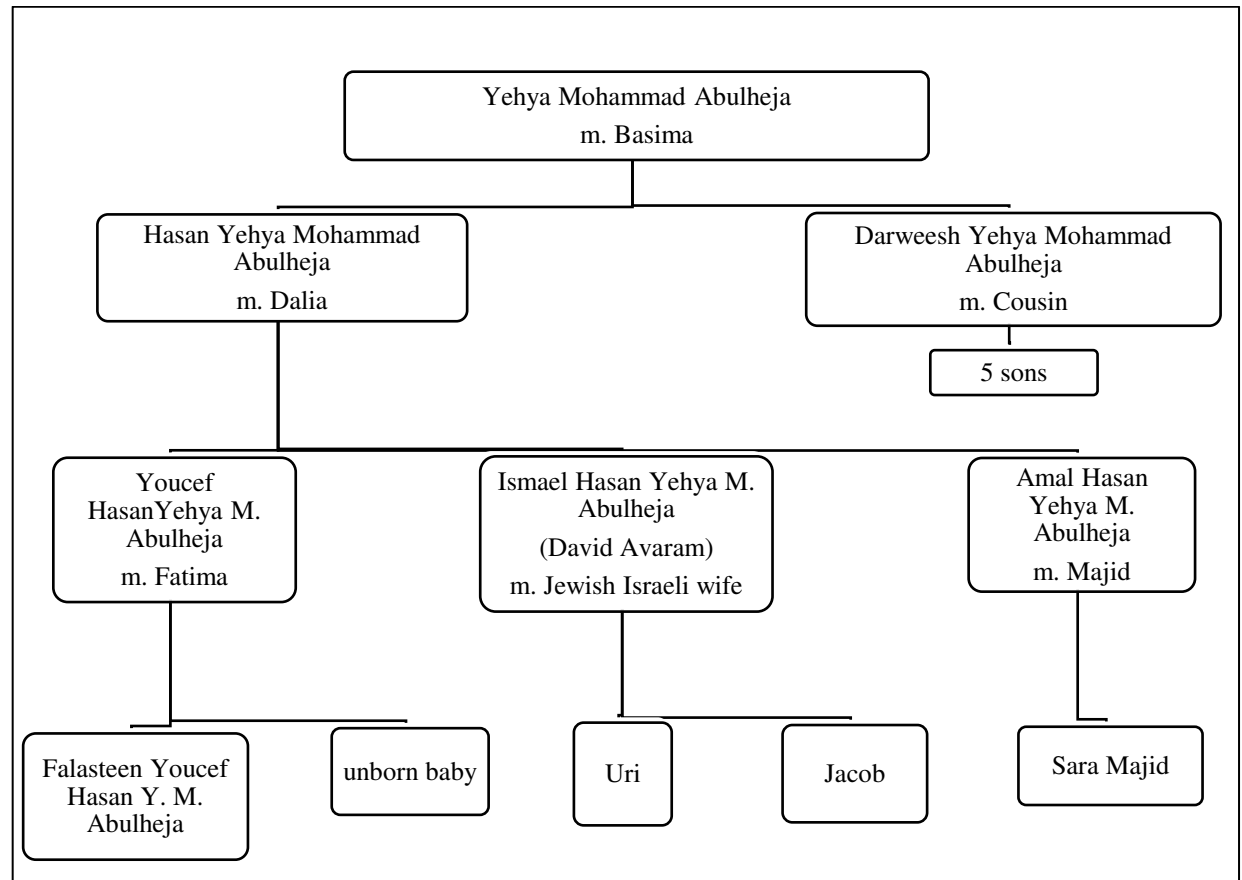


Fig. 1. Abulheja Family Tree. (Susan Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin*, 2010: xii)

Appendix 02: Susan Abulhawa's Biography

Palestinian American Susan Abulhawa is a novelist and a science writer for medical journals. Abulhawa is no stranger to the indignities of dispossession. She was born in 1970 in Kuwait to refugees of the Six Day War of 1967, when her family's land was seized and Israel captured what remained of Palestine, including Jerusalem. At the age of 10, she returned to occupied East Jerusalem where she



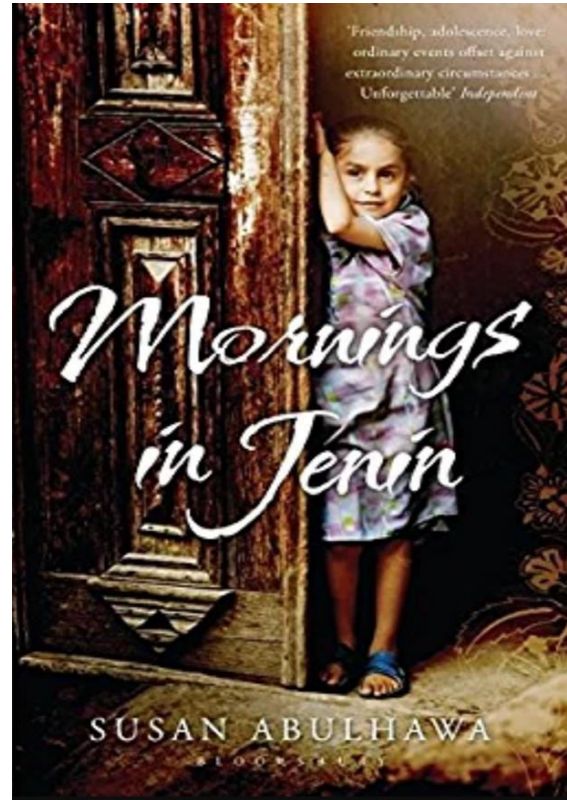
lived at an all-girls orphanage. She moved to the USA as a teenager. She graduated from Pfeiffer University in North Carolina and received her Master's degree in Neuroscience from the University of South Carolina and established a career in medical science. In July 2001, Susan Abulhawa founded Playgrounds for Palestine, a children's organisation dedicated to upholding The Right to Play for Palestinian children in Palestine and in Palestinian refugee camps elsewhere. She was inspired to write her first novel *Mornings in Jenin* after returning to Palestine for visits in 2001 and 2002. She currently lives in Pennsylvania with her daughter.

Abulhawa's published works include: *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), *The Blue Between Sky and Water* (2015), *Shattered Illusions*, an anthology (Amal Press, 2002), *Seeking Palestine: New Palestinian Writing on Exile and Home* anthology (2012), "My Voice

Sought The Wind”, poetry collection (Just World Books, November 2013) and This Is Not A Border: Reportage & Reflection from the Palestine Festival of Literature.

Appendix 03: Synopsis of *Mornings in Jenin*

Mornings in Jenin follows four generations of the Abulheja family through upheaval and violence in their homeland. The family has deep roots in Ein Hod, a tranquil village of olive farmers. When Israel declares statehood in 1948, the peace of Ein Hod is shattered forever: The entire community is forced to move to a refugee camp in Jenin. As the young mother Dalia Abulheja guides her sons through the caravan of chaos, an Israeli soldier snatches

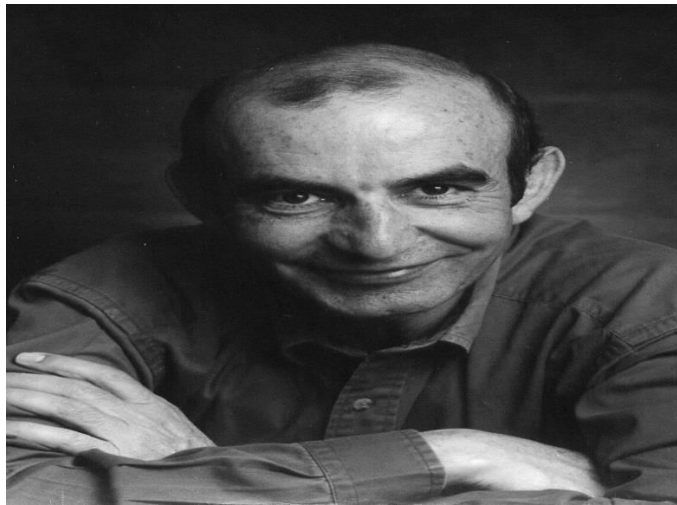


her baby, Ismael, from her arms. The soldier brings the Palestinian child home to his wife, a Holocaust survivor, founding a family based on a lie: Baby Ismael grows up as David, an Israeli who will unwittingly fight against his own people in wars to come.

In Jenin, the Abulheja family welcomes a daughter, Amal, who loves nothing more than listening to her doting father, Hasan, read Arabic verses. But in the war of 1967, Hasan disappears, Dalia loses her wits, and young Amal barely survives a week hiding in a bomb shelter. Amal must leave Jenin behind in order to fulfill her lost father's wishes for her education. As Israeli-Palestinian tensions reach a crescendo in 1982, Amal loses almost everyone she loves in the Lebanon War. She must raise her newborn daughter, Sara, by herself in America, forever scarred by the loss of her homeland, her

family, and her love. Only a visit from her lost brother Ismael now a Jewish named David, can shake Amal from her stoicism, inspiring a return trip to the Middle East with her daughter. Together, Amal and Sara rediscover a shattered homeland that may never be the same. *Mornings in Jenin* unveils the humanity behind one of the most intractable political conflicts of our time, revealing the universal desire for a homeland, community, and safety.

Appendix 04: Raja Shehadeh's Biography

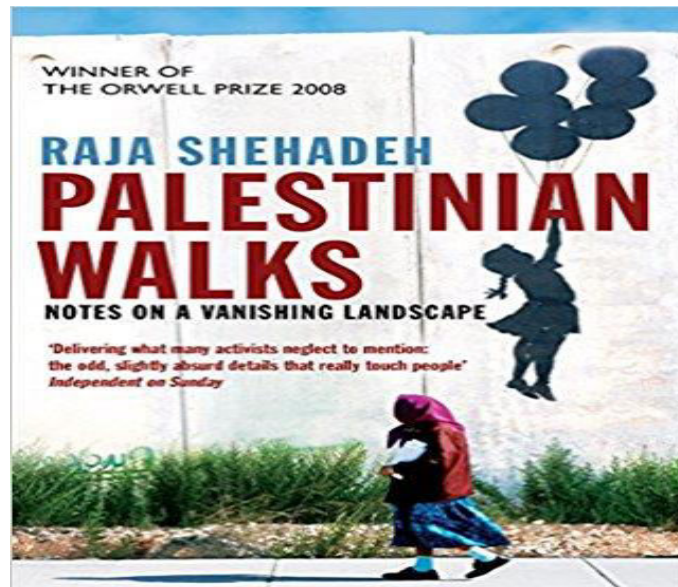


Raja Shehadeh, born on July 6th, 1951, is a Palestinian lawyer and writer who lives in Ramallah. He is a founder of the pioneering, nonpartisan human rights organization Al-Haq, an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, and the author of several books about international law, human rights, and the Middle East.

In 2008, he won the Orwell Prize, Britain's pre-eminent award for political writing, for his book *Palestinian Walks*. Shehadeh was critical of the Palestinian National Authority for having imported on its return the prejudices of the Palestinian diaspora. He himself resigned his work as an advisor in dissent from the PLO during the Madrid peace negotiations and considers the continuing hostility of the Palestinian diaspora for failing to come to terms with the realities of Palestinians who have endured the occupation for decades.

Shehadeh's published works include: *Strangers in the House* (2002), *When the Bulbul Stopped Singing* (2003), *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* (2007), 2nd edition published as *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* (2008), *A Rift in Time: Travels with My Ottoman Uncle* (2010), *Occupation Diaries* (2012), *Where the Line is Drawn: Crossing Boundaries in Occupied Palestine* (2017)

Appendix 05: Synopsis of *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*



Palestinian Walks tells about the seven walks the author took on the hills of Palestine from 1978 to 2007. It is structured as seven walks through occupied Palestine spread over a period of 27 years. On each walk Shehadeh takes on the hills, he is gradually more restricted and he risks life on several encounters with the Israeli soldiers.

The book explains a great deal about the development of the conflict itself. Illustrating how the Israeli settlers are taking advantage of the nomad lifestyle, by confiscating any land vacated by Bedouins that are headed for the hills or the plains for the summer and winter. Arabs do not see land as something to be divided into plots and owned (privately), so that is another thing Israeli settlers have picked up. The author uses these detailed walks to give the reader an appreciation of what it feels like to live in the Palestinian landscape and to enable the reader to get underneath the skin of people watching their country being stolen, year by year, due to the brute force of the occupying power, Israel.

