PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Ain Temouchent - Belhadj Bouchaib

Faculty of Letters, Languages and Social Sciences

Department of Letters and English Language

Narratives of Displacement and Identity: A Comparative Study of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's Visual Media

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation

Submitted by:

Ms. Souad BENADDANE

Supervised by:

Ms. Fatima YAHIA

Board of Examiners

President:	Dr. Assya BELAHMER LOUAZANI	MA	University of Ain Temouchent
Supervisor:	Ms. Fatima YAHIA	MAA	University of Ain Temouchent
Examiner:	Mrs. Zahera HASSAIENE	MAA	University of Ain Temouchent

Academic Year: 2024/2025

Dedications

This work is a labour from the depths of my heart, I dedicate it to:

My father, who taught me the true meaning of hard work and dedication, I live with your lessons in every step of my life, may Allah have mercy on your soul.

My mother, who always pushed me to greatness and shaped me into the woman I am today, I carry your strength in everything I do.

My dear brothers, thank you for your unconditional support and for the countless car rides to and from university.

My girls, for reminding me that I am not alone and for being my anchor through every storm.

And to the Palestinian people, whose resilience reminds the world that dignity and hope can never be silenced.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I express my deepest gratitude to Allah, the Most Merciful, for granting me the strength and faith to complete this dissertation.

To my esteemed supervisor, Ms. Fatima YAHIA, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude. This work would not have been possible without her expert guidance, insightful feedback and steadful belief in my potential.

I would also like to thank the jury members, Dr. Assya BELAHMER LOUAZANI and Mrs. Zahera HASSAIENE, for offering their time, expertise and thoughtful critiques.

My sincere appreciation also goes to Dr. Dalal BELARBI for her guidance illuminating my path at this research's critical junctures.

Finally, thank you to those who supported me, seen and unseen throughout this academic journey.

Abstract

This dissertation offers a comparative analysis of Palestinian displacement and identity through the examination of Susan Abulhawa's novel *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) and 22 selected videos by content creator Bisan Owda. Therefore, theoretical frameworks, including Achille Mbembé's necropolitics, Marianne Hirsch's postmemory, and Homi Bhabha's third space, are used. The study examines how both fictional and visual narratives convey the inherited and lived experiences of displacement. It concludes that while *Mornings in Jenin* provides emotional resonance and a broader historical perspective, Bisan Owda's visual media exposes the technological and bureaucratic structures that enact necropolitical control. These narratives demonstrate that Palestinian identity is dynamic, constantly shaped, reimagined and restructured. This interdisciplinary analysis calls for greater recognition of contemporary Palestinian voices within academic discourse.

Keywords: Bisan Owda, Identity, *Mornings in Jenin*, Necropolitics, Palestinian Displacement, Postmemory, Third Space.

ملخص

تقدم هذه الأطروحة تحليلاً مقارنًا للتهجير والهوية الفلسطينية من خلال رواية سوزان أبو الهوى "بينما ينام العالم" و22 مقطع فيديو مختارًا من قبل صانعة المحتوى بيسان عودة باستخدام نظريات "سياسة الموت" لأخيل مبمبي و "ما بعد الذاكرة" لماريان هيرش، و "الفضاء الثالث" لهومي بابا. تبحث الدراسة في كيفية نقل كل من السرديات الخيالية والبصرية للتجارب الموروثة والمعاشة للتهجير. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أنه في حين أن رواية "بينما ينام العالم" توفر صدىً عاطفيًا ومنظورًا تاريخيًا أوسع، تكشف وسائط بيسان عودة المرئية عن الهياكل التكنولوجية والبيروقراطية التي تُنفذ السيطرة النيْكروبوليتيكية. تُظهر هذه السرديات أن الهوية الفلسطينية ديناميكية، تتشكل باستمرار، ويعاد تشكيلها وتصورها وإعادة هيكلتها. كما يدعو هذا التحليل المتعدد التخصصات إلى إدراج الأصوات الفلسطينية المعاصرة في الخطاب الأكاديمي.

كلمات مفتاحية: التهجير الفلسطيني، بيسان عودة، الهوية، بينما ينام العالم، سياسة الموت ،ما بعد الذاكرة، الفضاء الثالث.

Epigraph

We have on this earth what makes life worth living

the aroma of bread at dawn

a woman's opinion of men

the works of Aeschylus

the beginnings of love

grass on a stone

mothers who live on a flute's sigh

and the invaders' fear of memories

-*Mahmoud Darweesh,* "On This Earth,"
Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

FBI : Federal Bureau of Investigation

ICE : Immigration and Customs Enforcement

IVF : In Vitro Fertilisation

OPT : Occupied Palestinian Territories

PA : Palestinian Authority

PLO : Palestine Liberation Organisation

PM : Prime Minister

UN : United Nations

UNEF : United Nations Emergency Forces

U.S. : United States of America

USSR : Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WW1 : World War I

WW2 : World War II

General Introduction

Throughout history, humans used storytelling as a means to document their reality and preserve their history. Stories help in shaping a collective memory and forming a sense of a shared identity in any given community. Storytelling includes various forms, varying from oral traditions that have passed down myths and folklore to transmit morals and values to upcoming generations. The invention of writing expanded the capacity to record events and allowed societies to navigate their history in forms such as epics and historical accounts. Contemporary visual media complemented the previous oral and written forms and ensured that cultural identities were not lost to time. The power and the legacy of storytelling lies in its ability to connect people despite their geographical, temporal and cultural differences by capturing universal experiences whether positive or negative and relating them to specific cultural and historical contexts.

One of the most long-lasting atrocities in modern history is the experience of displacement endured by the Palestinians, which is rooted in the Exodus of 1948, known worldwide as The Nakba when over 700.000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes as a result of attempting to establish the state of Israel. The Nakba is not the sole Palestinian historical event that witnessed the mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Following the events of October 7th, 2023, over one million Palestinians were forced to evacuate to southern Gaza, where they sought shelter in tents, schools and hospitals, leaving them in an “open-air prison” facing unbearable life conditions. For the Palestinians, displacement extends beyond the mere physical loss of home; it is an attempt to erase an entire culture and history, which resulted in a multi-generational trauma the Palestinians are still enduring.

Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation has long included both armed and cultural, intellectual activism, as Ibrahim Tuqan says in his renowned poem and anthem "My Homeland": "The pen and the sword are our symbols". Genres such as prison literature and Intifada literature play a crucial role in Palestinian resistance by preserving collective identity and memory while also challenging colonial narratives. Mahmoud Darweesh, in his poem "Identity Card", grapples with his Palestinian Arab identity and asserts, "Record! I Am an Arab!". Figures like Ghassan Kanafani and Edward Said positioned cultural production as integral to resistance and exposed Western Zionist narratives for their attempts to erase Palestinian culture.

In the digital age where everyone has the luxury of stating their opinions, the mediatisation of conflict has amplified asymmetries in narrative control, with the Israeli occupation weaponising social media platforms, influencer networks and algorithmic bias to reinforce its narrative of being victimised. As a result, Palestinian journalists and content creators strategically adopted grassroots documentation and digital storytelling to subvert such distortions. Following the escalations of violence after the events of October 7th, 2023, figures including Al-Jazeera's journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh and photojournalist Motaz Azaiza emerged as vital counter-narrative figures who risked their lives to broadcast unfiltered evidence of the Israeli occupation's atrocities. Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa and journalist Bisan Owda, who serve as a case study for this dissertation, exemplify how contemporary Palestinian cultural producers merge testimonial immediacy with decolonial critique to resist Israeli oppression and reclaim their agency.

Susan Abulhawa, a Palestinian scientist, writer and activist, is renowned for her literary contributions that shed light on the Palestinian cause; her debut novel *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) originally written in English is a historical fiction which tackles the suffering of multiple

Palestinian generations of Abulheja family under the Israeli occupation especially after the Exodus of 1948. Abulhawa is a daughter of Palestinian refugees displaced due to the Nakba of 1948. In addition, she says that her life and the protagonist's life "Amal Abulheja" are separate. However, the chapter on "The Orphanage" is autobiographical, as she lived in a girls' orphanage in Jerusalem for three years.

Bisan Owda is a Palestinian journalist and content creator; she produced "Hakawatya", a series where she revived the traditions of Arabic storytelling by tackling Palestinian culture and heritage. After the Palestinian-Israeli war escalations in 2021, she started sharing videos on her Instagram account "wizard_bisan1" to provide updates about the ongoing war. Owda gained global recognition along with other Palestinian content creators after October 7th, 2023, due to her regular updates about the war. She was renowned for challenging the false narratives perpetuated by mainstream Western media.

Social media users even started referring to her as the modern Anne Frank as she provided a raw, unfiltered image of what Palestinians go through. Owda also shares vlogs on AJ+, a YouTube channel owned by Al Jazeera Network, as a part of a series entitled "I Am Bisan, and I Am Still Alive", a title referring to the opening line in her videos. The series garnered significant attention, culminating in its' nomination for the 45th News and Documentary Emmy Awards for Outstanding Hard News Feature Story: Short Form[1].

[1] The News and Documentary Emmy Awards for Outstanding Hard News Feature Story: Short Form recognises excellence in journalistic storytelling. It honours short-form hard news segments—typically under 10 minutes—that demonstrate in-depth reporting on urgent, significant, and often complex issues.

However, Creative Community of Peace, a nonprofit organisation which advocates for pro-Israel positions, issued a public appeal to withdraw Owda's nomination, claiming that she is affiliated with a terrorist organisation. The awards committee rejected these attempts to withdraw Owda's nomination, and the documentary not only retained the nomination but also secured the award, which proved its journalistic and narrative impact.

Throughout my life, I have lived in many places, and while that helped me meet many people and learn a lot more about my culture, I never felt a strong sense of belonging to any place, not even to what can be called my hometown. My little attachment was because of the friendships I formed there and not towards the place itself. Though it is not fair for me to compare my situation to that of the Palestinians, I know a little about the feeling of not finding yourself anywhere and having your identity moulded by circumstances that you cannot control. I have always been fond of politics and history; therefore, historical fiction is a significant interest of mine. I was always interested in the Palestinian case. That interest was more fuelled after the events of October 7th, 2023, which raised a lot of questionable debates about fundamental human rights, making me eager to research and raise awareness about the case with the bit of power I have.

In this MA dissertation, "Narratives of Displacement and Identity: A Comparative Study of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's Visual Media," I aim to examine manifestations and themes of displacement and identity in different mediums, including

historical fiction and contemporary digital media, to explore how each constructs and conveys narratives of forced displacement and identity fragmentation.

In order to guide this research, the following research questions are developed:

1. How do Susan Abulhawa and Bisan Owda represent the experiences of Palestinian displacement in their distinct narrative platforms?

2. In what ways do *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's Visual Media construct and negotiate Palestinian identity amidst the trauma of displacement?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

1. For the first question, it is hypothesised that displacement in *Mornings in Jenin* is a core theme, as it is noticeable in Amal's character's arc; her displacement starts before her birth and the trauma of The Nakba is inherited by her, which is manifested in her relationships and her motherhood. The historical fictional nature of *Mornings in Jenin* shapes a historicist vision of displacement. Unlike Bisan Owda's nature of visual media, which portrays displacement as an occurring bodily experience, Owda is placed as the testimony and the subject of the occurring displacement. In Owda's visual storytelling, displacement is not only portrayed but also performed. This captures the rawness of the Palestinian experience of displacement and collapses the distance between the subject and the viewer.

2. For the second question, it is hypothesised that *Mornings in Jenin* constructs Palestinian identity through the lens of heritage and memory. It illustrates how Palestinian identity is preserved through generations, which also acknowledges its fluidity. At the same time, Bisan Owda represents Palestinian identity as more of a personal declaration, as she is the subject and witness to the tragedy of displacement. Her identity narrative allows her viewers

to connect with her as a journalist and activist, and as a young Palestinian woman living under the siege.

This research work is structured into three chapters. The first chapter sets the foundation for the dissertation to be built on; it is divided into three sections: The first section provides a historical context containing the relevant historical events related to the selected works, it dives into the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from being a part of the Ottoman Empire to the events of October 7th, 2023. The second section introduces the main theories and concepts related to displacement and its' influence on one's identity, especially in the Palestinian context. The third section provides a literature review and explores previous literature on narratives of displacement and identity in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's visual media. The following chapters are analytical and attempt to test the research hypotheses mentioned earlier. The second chapter of this dissertation dives deep into manifestations of displacement in *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's visual media. Also, a comparative analysis highlights the resemblances and differences in portraying displacement across literature and contemporary visual media, including historical fiction and real-time visual documentation. The third and final chapter interrogates how the trauma of displacement shapes Amal Abulheja, the protagonist of *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's identities and explores how their experiences of forced dislocation refigure their conceptions of selfhood and belonging.

This study adopts an interdisciplinary methodology. It combines a corpus-based textual analysis of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) with a mediated discourse analysis of curated digital media produced by Palestinian journalist Bisan Owda.

Bisan Owda's visual media are selected according to the following criteria:

1. **First-Person Narratives:** Videos that contain first-person narratives explicitly conveyed by Bisan Owda. Therefore, third-party accounts, collective storytelling or content mediated by external narrators are excluded. The chosen videos are sourced from Owda's personal Instagram account @wizard_bisan1, as this account most authentically reflects her unfiltered self-expression.
2. **Temporal Relevance**: Videos posted before October 7th, 2023, are excluded as they are irrelevant to the selected historical event.
3. **Relevance to the Topic:** Videos that display more manifestations of displacement and identity are prioritised. Videos that are heavily edited, like reportages, are excluded, and videos with repeated content are also excluded.

This research's overall methodological framework and structural conventions adhere to the seventh edition of *the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*

Chapter One: Contextualising Palestinian Displacement (1516-2023): from History to Theory

Introduction

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is considered to be one of the most complex and enduring conflicts, especially since it is still persistent in the present time. Just like every historical event, it is difficult to see the truth amidst the chaos of war. Based on this concern, this chapter's first section highlights the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and key historical events relevant to the selected works starting from Palestine during the Ottoman rule, which witnessed a peaceful co-living between communities of different religions and also the rise of the new movement of Zionism. It also tackles war escalations following the massive Jewish immigration waves, resulting in a 'Nakba' for the Palestinians. Furthermore, it tackles war escalations following the Nakba of 1948, including the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Lebanese Civil War and the Intifada until the events of October 7th, 2023. The following section provides a theoretical foundation and discusses the concept of displacement and its influence on identity in post-colonial studies. Finally, the third section examines the previous body of literature on concepts of displacement and identity in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's visual media.

I. 1. The Ongoing Catastrophe from the Nakba to October 7th, 2023

The history of Palestine from the late Ottoman Empire to the present is a legacy of shifting sovereignties, collective aspirations and enduring conflict shaped by colonialism, nationalism and global geopolitics. Starting from the Ottoman rule (1516-1917), where Palestine existed as a region within a vast empire, the land underwent a profound transformation

during the British mandate (1920-1948), a period marked by rising Zionist immigration, Arab nationalist movements and British policies that even fuelled the upcoming conflict. The Nakba of 1948, which witnessed the mass displacement of Palestinians during the attempt of Israel's establishment of state and initiated a cycle of oppression and resistance that continues to form the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. The region endured successive wars, military occupation, and popular uprisings in the following decades. It stalled peace efforts, all of which have contributed to ongoing realities of settlement, expansion, blockades, and a deeply fragmented Palestinian political landscape. The events of October 7th, 2023, brought renewed attention to the ongoing displacement and collective trauma experienced by the Palestinian people. This section traces the historical evolution of Palestine, beginning with its status as a region under the Ottoman Empire, leading to its current position as a centre of complex political and humanitarian challenges.

I. 1. 1. Palestine pre-1948

Before 1948, Palestine underwent significant changes that shaped the conflict witnessed in the present time. Under Ottoman rule, Palestine was home to diverse communities of Muslims, Christians and Jews living under a shared imperial system. After WW1, British control replaced Ottoman rule, and their mandate (1920-1948) saw rising tensions between Jewish immigrants, supported by the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and Palestinian Arabs seeking independence. British policies and increased Jewish land purchases altered the population and sparked protests, including the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt. By 1947, as the UN proposed splitting Palestine into separate states, the region was on the edge of a significant crisis. This section explores the historical framework of Palestine pre-1948 and how it led to the foundation of the Nakba of 1948.

I. 1. 1. 1. Ottoman Rule and the Rise of Early Zionism

Jerusalem was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire on December 29th, 1516, by Sultan Salim I after defeating the Mamluks at the Battle of Marj Dabak (Al-Sinwar 43). As Jerusalem is a sacred city to all Abrahamic religions, the Ottomans adopted the millet system, which allowed Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities to manage their internal affairs. This latter ensured a peaceful co-living between different communities. At the time, Eastern Europe witnessed violence against Jewish communities. For instance, Russia witnessed "pogroms", anti-Jewish riots that took place in the shape of property destruction and massacres, especially after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 (King). The latter was blamed on Jews, which resulted in hatred against them. Therefore, they were forced to flee away from Eastern Europe.

'Aliyah', meaning ascent in Hebrew, refers to the Jewish immigration waves to Palestine from the late 19th century onward due to plenty of reasons, including a 'strong tie' to the land of Palestine or what they call the land of Israel 'Eretz-Israel' which they regarded as a fulfilment of a biblical prophecy as they claimed to have a historical right to the land more than any other ethnicity (Rydelnik). Zionism emerged as a nationalist movement and allegedly as a response to the widespread anti-Semitism in Europe. "Its emergence as a mass political movement was triggered by the outbursts of anti-Semitism to which ideologies had given rise" (Morris 14). Therefore, Zionists saw that the best solution to protect themselves was to have a haven that gathered all the Jews away from persecution.

The Ottoman Empire was suspicious and cautious of Zionism, fearing that it would disturb its balance. Therefore, the Ottoman authorities restricted land sales to Jews in addition to the length of their stay in Palestine. In a 'peaceful' attempt to reach Jewish autonomy in

Palestine, Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, met with Ottoman officials in 1896 to propose financial aid in exchange for providing a Jewish state in Palestine. Sultan Abdul Hamid II rejected this proposal but still allowed restricted Jewish immigration to the Ottoman territories.

World War I witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire as British forces advanced in the Middle East and ultimately defeated the Ottoman Empire. It is worth mentioning here that during the war, Hussein Bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca and Lieutenant Colonel Sir Henry McMahone, British high commissioner in Egypt, exchanged letters known as 'The McMahone-Hussein Correspondences'. These letters promised the recognition of an independent Arabic region with unknown borders in exchange for a revolt against the Ottoman empire (Tell). Also, in 1916, Britain and France signed a secret treaty known as 'The Sykes-Picot Agreement', where they agreed to partition the Ottoman Empire's properties (Oxford Reference).

I. 1. 1. 2. The British Mandate and Rise of Palestinian Resistance

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WW1, Britain was granted a mandate by the League of Nations to administer Palestine officially in 1922. The issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which supports a Jewish state in Palestine, facilitated the settlement of the Jews in Palestine, and the tragedy of WW2 reinforced the Jewish claim for a purely Jewish state achievable through self-sufficiency. Also, the Holocaust was a strong alibi for the attempt to establish the state of Israel under the excuse of protection against anti-Semitism and persecution.

The Palestinians and the Arabs felt betrayed and revolted against British colonial rule, which did not support Arab independence, as stated in the McMahon-Hussein Correspondences, and it became clear that the British favoured the Jewish land purchases. It implicitly tried to clear the space for the Jews to settle in (Shlaim). In response, the Arab higher

committee led by Mohamed Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, called for a general strike to protest against the unjust British policies and Jewish immigration and to demand the establishment of a national government under majority Arab rule. This marks the start of the first phase of the "Arab Revolt", also known as "the Great Revolt" or "The Palestinian Revolt". The general strike lasted six months, from April to October 1936, through mass protests and tax refusals. The British authorities responded to this letter by sending a peel commission, suggesting the partition of Palestine in 1937, which lead to the frustration among Palestinians and a shift to armed resistance.

Army of the Holy War and local guerilla groups attacked British forces and Jewish settlements, to which the British responded by mass punishments, house demolitions and exile of many political figures such as al-Husseini, who left for Iraq and eventually attempted to ally with Nazi and Fascist regimes.

Al-Husseini's most interesting encounter was that of Hitler as he offered to support his anti-Jewish ideology in hopes of recognising Palestinian nationalism. Mattar writes about this matter: "In his 95-minute conversation with Hitler on November 28th, 1941, the Mufti stressed the need for a statement to the Arabs in which Germany would disavow imperial interests in the Arab world and would support Arab independence, especially the independence and unity of Palestine, Syria, and Iraq" (102). It is worth mentioning that Zionists took advantage of al Husseini's encounter with Hitler[2] and claimed that al Husseini was the evil mastermind behind the Holocaust (Holocaust Encyclopedia). While no historical evidence directly connects Haj Amin al-Husseini to the execution of the Holocaust, assertions about his influence persist in

[2] See Appendix 2 Page 104

certain political narratives. A notable contemporary example is the Israeli occupation's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial claim in 2015 (in an attempt to link Palestinians to the Holocaust) that al-Husseini played a role in encouraging Adolf Hitler to adopt genocidal policies against European Jews during WW2 (L'Express).

By 1938, the Palestinian revolt started to weaken due to internal divisions and a lack of unified leadership, and it was ultimately crushed in 1939 with the issuance of the White Paper that limited Jewish immigration and promised a future independent Palestinian state; this angered Zionists who were hopeful of achieving Jewish autonomy, especially during the rise of Nazism in WW2.

I. 1. 2. The Catastrophe of 1948 and the Arab-Israeli Wars

The Nakba, or the Catastrophe, is a major tragic event in the history of Palestine. It witnessed the mass displacement and ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and marked the beginning of an ongoing struggle for Palestinian self-determination. Regarding the mass Displacement of Palestinians, Zionist historian Benny Morris writes:

> Moreover, transfer was seen as a highly moral solution. The Zionist leaders felt that the Jews' need for a country with empty spaces able to absorb future immigrants morally outweighed the rights of the indigenous Arabs who were no different than their brothers across the Jordan or Litani and could relocate there with relative ease if the transfer was well compensated and well organised. The Arab states principally Transjordan, Syria, and Iraq had vast uninhabited areas and required additional inhabitants for their development. In any event, separation was preferable to an intermingling, which could only end in a bloodbath. (140)

Although this Displacement is claimed as a spontaneous outcome of war, archival evidence reveals that the expulsion of Palestinians was rooted in Zionist ideological imperatives. Central to this ideology is the concept of transfer, the deliberate removal of Palestinians to create a demographically Jewish state, and it is nothing more than a euphemism for ethnic cleansing.

In 1947, the UN proposed splitting Palestine into a 56% Jewish state and a 43% Arabic state and setting Jerusalem as an international city for both Muslims and Jews, administered by the UN (Winder). While Zionist leaders welcomed this suggestion, Palestinian and Arab leaders viewed it as an unfair decision as it seemed to be favouring the Jewish minority over the Arab population. In November of the same year, Jewish militant groups launched operations to expel Arabic populations from villages and towns to secure land before British withdrawal beyond the partition plan set by the UN. The period between March and May 1948 witnessed tragic ethnic cleansing operations, including the Deir Yassin Massacre on April 9th, 1948, where over 100 Palestinians, including women and children, were killed by the Zionist militia (Al Jazeera).

On May 14th, 1948. David Ben-Gurion declared the Israeli occupation as an official state, which led to neighbouring Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon) interfering in Palestine and starting the 1948 Arab-Israeli war; this was also where the Arab League was formed. However, despite having a common enemy, these countries fought together not for the sake of a unified Palestine but for their interests and to expand their borders. Avi Shlaim, in his book *The Iron Wall*, which discusses the Israeli occupation's politics towards the Arab world, states that the Arab leaders' true intentions were "hidden behind the fig leaf of securing Palestine for the Palestinians" (36). In addition to that, he states that Israeli occupation's leaders were fully aware of the Arabs' lack of unity and used it to their advantage to exploit them.

The first phase of the Arab-Israeli war ended with a 4-week ceasefire agreement from the UN. This decision worked well in favour of the Zionists as they took the opportunity to import weapons from Czechoslovakia despite the arms embargo set by the UN and to plan their comeback in the second phase of the war. As soon as the ceasefire ended, the Israeli occupation's troops launched heavy attacks on the Lydda and Ramle towns, which are located in central Palestine between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, "Jaffa". The Lydda-Ramle massacre resulted in the murder of an estimated 250-500 civilians and the forced expulsions of over 50.000 Palestinians, including those who were forced to march in extreme heat to the West Bank in what is known as "The Lydda Death March", many Palestinians died in the march due to exhaustion and dehydration. Those who were lagging or attempted to return were shot by the Israeli occupation's soldiers (Kramer).

The Israeli occupation continued its operations until March 1949 and invaded other Palestinian regions, including Nazareth and the Negev, and went as far as trying to invade the northern Sinai area, but retreated due to foreign pressure. The first Arab-Israeli War ended with armistice agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, with Egypt claiming the Gaza Strip and Jordan annexing the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The relations between the Israeli occupation and Arab countries remained hostile despite the signing of armistice agreements. On July 26th, 1956, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, which was previously administered by the Suez Canal Company, owned by France and Britain. The Suez Canal was considered a key shortcut to Asia. Therefore, an international crisis arose after Nasser's decision; Avi Shlaim stated that Israeli occupation prearranged the invasion of Sinai to allow the Anglo-French intervention as peacekeepers and recapture the Suez Canal (183).

On October 29th, 1956, the Israeli occupation invaded Sinai and quickly advanced towards the canal. A week later, Britain and France gave Egypt an ultimatum to either accept temporary Anglo-French control to allow ships to pass or else military force would be used, which Egypt refused, leading to Britain and France launching airstrikes on Egyptian positions and landing near Port Said on October 31st. Due to pressures from Western powers, including US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who threatened to sell British bonds, Britain, France and the Israeli occupation were forced to withdraw from Egyptian territories. The Suez Canal remained nationalised, and a United Nations Emergency Force was stationed in the Sinai.

Egyptian President Gamal Abd Nasser's decision towards British and French threats was a victory for all Arab nations to withstand foreign domination. In May 1967, the USSR falsely alarmed Egypt that the Israeli occupation was massing troops to attack Syrian territories (Elbahtimy), leading to Nasser's expulsion of the UN Emergency Forces from Gaza and Sinai and Egyptian troops taking over the UNEF positions and advancing past the Straits of Tiran, a move which the Israeli occupation regarded as a declaration of war, leading the Israeli occupation to launch Operation Focus and destroy 90% of Egypt's air force on June 5th, 1967. Within a week, the Israeli occupation gained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. It caused massive destruction among Arabic troops, and more than 300.000 Palestinians were displaced from the West Bank and Gaza (Thomas J.).

The Arab League Summit of 1967 was an immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War; it took place in Khartoum city, the capital of Sudan, from August 29th to September 1st, 1967. The summit included the infamous Three No's Declaration: "No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no negotiations with Israel"; in addition, to Arab states pledging financial support to Egypt, Jordan and Syria as they suffered severe military losses in the war. (Palquest)

The Six-Day War shattered the credibility of Pan-Arabism and Arab leaders, especially Gamal Abdel Nasser, as he resigned shortly after the war, and Arabs considered Pan-Arabism a false messiah and shifted to Islamism. The Six-Day War sparked many opinions; Ilan Pappé, in his essay "Myths of the Six-Day War", drawing on Patrick Wolfe's argument that settler-colonialism is a structure, not an event noted that "Israel advanced into the war went knowingly and well-prepared, to war in 1967, and had contemplated long before the war the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip". In his words, the 1967 war and its aftermath should be considered as a direct continuation to the Nakba of 1948. Avi Shlaim also has an interesting take on the Khartoum summit as he states that while Arab states were publicly rejecting peace with the Israeli occupation, they were signalling flexibility privately; he speaks on the Jordanian King Hussein:

> The king responded that his search for a permanent settlement began long before this meeting and that he aspired to devote the rest of his life to achieving it. He admitted that at Khartoum, things were said that should not have been said, but he added that at the end of the conference, the countries directly involved were charged with working toward a political settlement (263).

Similarly, the façade of Arab unity belied profound internal fractures. Syria's refusal to attend the Khartoum summit and its explicit endorsement of armed resistance contrasted with the absence of key leaders, including King Hasan II of Morocco and King Idris of Libya, alongside Algerian President Houari Boumediene's initial threat of non-participation, a stance later tempered by Algeria's delegation of Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika. In addition, behind-the-scenes instances, particularly Jordan's King Hussein and Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser's proposition of a demilitarised Palestinian state, revealed a willingness among some leaders to explore political solutions despite the public rejectionist rhetoric. These

contradictions, ranging from public solidarity and private pragmatism to outright refusal to engage, highlighted the difficulty of maintaining a united Arab front in addressing post-war realities (Kanani).

I. 1. 3. The Sabra and Shatila Massacre 1982

The Sabra and Shatila Massacre is another key historical event relevant to understanding the selected corpus, particularly *Mornings in Jenin.* The massacre took place on the 16th-18th of September 1982, during the Lebanese Civil War, in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. An event which culminated in this massacre was the assassination of the Maronite Lebanese Forces leader Bashir Gemayel, which was falsely blamed on the PLO (Aude). As revenge, the Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia stormed the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and murdered over 3,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. In addition, many civilians were raped, tortured and buried in mass graves.

The Israeli occupation forces, led by the Israeli occupation's then-defence minister Ariel Sharon, was accused of being involved in the massacre as it allowed the Phalangist militia to enter the refugee camps and ignored reports of atrocities, simply saying they stood back and watched it happen. As a result, Sharon resigned from his position as a defence minister. The UN resolution 37/123 condemned this horrendous act and defined it as a "genocide" (Aude). However, no Israeli occupation or Phalangist leader faced trial as Sharon became a prime minister in 2001 and Elie Hobeika, leader of the Phalangist militia became a politician until his assassination in 2002 (IMEU).

I. 1. 4. The Intifadas

The Intifada (انتفاضة) meaning the revolt, or the best way to describe it, is the shaking off after a long period of oppression. It refers to periods of Palestinian revolt and protest against Israeli occupation, especially in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

On December 8th, 1987, an Israeli occupation truck collided with two Palestinian vans that carried workers in Jabalia refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, leading to the death of four Palestinians and the injury of seven. The Palestinians believed that the "accident" was deliberate. Therefore, the families of the dead attacked an Israeli occupation police station the very next day to take revenge for their killing, leading to an eruption among the Palestinians as they went out on a series of non-violent protests, adopting tactics like boycotting, withholding taxes and overall acts of civil disobedience which became known as the "First Intifada" (Knipp). It holds such a legacy as images of Palestinian youth throwing rocks at heavily armed Israeli occupation soldiers and vehicles emerged and gained global attention, and they became symbols of Palestinian resistance.

Another defining feature of the first Intifada is the emergence of Hamas, founded in December 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian cleric and prominent activist in Gaza. Hamas diverged sharply from its parent organisation's 'The Muslim Brotherhood' focus on incremental social reform. Instead, it adopted a Palestinian nationalist aspiration with a militant Islamist framework. Hamas positions itself as a counterweight to the secular PLO as it rejects the PLO's diplomatic engagements with the Israeli occupation and its secular-nationalist orientation, calling instead for an Islamic state across all of historic Palestine, as stated in its 1988 founding document. Hamas also coupled its militant agenda with socio-religious infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and charitable networks, addressing poverty and

poor governance under the PLO. Therefore, it won the loyalty of marginalised communities, leading to its rise to political power and its eventual election in 2006 (AlJazeera).

The first Intifada lasted for nearly six years until September 1993 when the Oslo Accords, a series of agreements between Israeli occupation's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat were issued; the agreements recognised the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people and Israeli occupation 's right to exist, in addition to establishing the PA to administer Gaza and the West Bank (Al Jazeera). These agreements did not satisfy Palestinians, especially Hamas. It is worth mentioning that the Oslo Accords strengthened the PLO's position, and Hamas saw the PLO's recognition of the Israeli occupation as a betrayal of Islamic principles; this latter is among the main reasons for the eruption of the Second Intifada (Office of The Historian).

The Second Intifada, also known as the Aqsa Intifada, was immediately provoked after the visit of Ariel Sharon, opposition leader, to the Temple Mount alongside hundreds of the Israeli occupation's riot police, an act which the Palestinians regarded as a provocative act which hinted at the Israeli occupation's domination of East Jerusalem. The very next day, the Palestinians protested to demonstrate their anger towards the overall situation. The Israeli occupation forces responded to this latter with heavy use of live ammunition; a remembered incident that occurred during the Second Intifada is the killing of Muhammad al-Durrah by the Israeli occupation forces' gunfire, a 12-year-old boy who was crouching behind his father, helplessly crying, the image of his motionless body remains an image of Palestinian victimhood.

Unlike the First Intifada, the protests of the Second Intifada were much more violent; the Intifada of El Aqsa witnessed the presence of multiple factions, such as Hamas and Fatah,

which deployed developed military tactics unlike the First Intifada, including shootings and rocket attacks. As a response, the Israeli occupation launched Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, which reoccupied the West Bank, imposed curfews and built the West Bank separation barrier; over 3000 Palestinians were killed during the second Intifada in addition to political men such as Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi. (ECF)

After the second Intifada, Palestinians shifted their support from Fatah to Hamas due to failures of the Oslo Accords, which promised Palestinian self-governance and statehood, in addition to accusations of Fatah's PA's corruption with elites enriching themselves while poverty and unemployment soared. Also, Mahmoud Abbas, leader of the PA after the death of Yasser Arafat, was seen as weak and perceived as prioritising Israeli occupation's security over Palestinian rights. (Al Jazeera)

I. 1. 5. Events of October 7th, 2023

On October 7th, 2023, at 6:30 a.m., Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, an attack that took the Israeli occupation by surprise and caused the most damage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since 1948. The attack was rooted in many causes, including the blockade imposed by the Israeli occupation and Egypt, which created a humanitarian crisis with 80% aid dependency, increasing the Israeli occupation's settlements in the West Bank in addition to the escalation of the Israeli occupation's settlers' violence towards the Palestinians and repeated Israeli raids on al-Aqsa mosque and unfair evictions in Sheikh Jarrah. (WHO EMRO)

Hamas, alongside other Palestinian militant groups, launched a massive barrage of rockets of over 3000 missiles targeting Tel Aviv, Ashkelon, Beersheba and parts of Jerusalem. While the missile attack was taking place, Hamas militants broke into the Israeli occupation's border using bulldozers, paragliders, boats, motorcycles and vehicles, storming military

outposts and overrunning several Israeli occupation forces bases near the Gaza border. As a response, the Israeli occupation launched massive airstrikes on Gaza, claiming to be targeting Hamas “headquarters” located in hospitals, schools and places of worship in addition to blocking all humanitarian aid, water, fuel and electricity to Gaza. (Al Jazeera)

The events of October 7th, 2023 brought renewed global attention to the Palestinian cause, reigniting international debate regarding the ongoing conflict. While public opinion remains deeply divided over questions of victimhood and responsibility, the extensive documentation of the atrocities and human rights violations committed by Israeli occupation forces has played a significant role in altering the perspectives of many individuals who had previously been influenced by dominant narratives in mainstream Western media. A notable example of this shift can be seen in the case of British journalist Piers Morgan who has long been regarded as having a pro-Israeli stance. Speaking at the 22nd Arab Media Summit, he publicly acknowledged a transformation in his views and emphasised that the scale and intensity of Israel's bombardments in Gaza had crossed a moral and ethical line which prompted him to reevaluate his position on the conflict. (Dubai Press Club)

2. Contextualising Displacement in Theory

Displacement and identity are intertwined concepts; it is impossible to speak about displacement without acknowledging how it scars the individual and collective identity. Displacement is a broader term that expresses the forced movement of people from their homes due to natural disasters, war and persecution. Exile is a related term to displacement, but not as broad; it refers to the scenario of the forced migration of people with no right to return. On the other hand, identity is regarded in different fields as fluid rather than static because it is constantly reshaped mainly for socio-political reasons. Establishing a theoretical foundation is

crucial to understanding and conducting a thorough analysis. Therefore, this section is dedicated to exploring key concepts related to displacement and identity in fields including post-colonial studies, diaspora studies and memory studies.

I. 2. 1. Necropolitics

Necropolitics is a concept developed by Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembé; it refers to how political powers decide the life and death of people. It is regarded as an extension of Michel Foucault's concept of 'Biopolitics', which explores the functioning of governmental powers through managing the population's lives and bodies. The difference between the two concepts is that while biopolitics is concerned with governments' optimising and governing life through regulating welfare, health and reproduction, Necropolitics extends it to governments governing death and deciding who dies through strategies such as colonialism and racial capitalism.

Achile Mbembé, in his book *Necropolitics* (2019), states that sovereignty is defined by the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die (67). Therefore, he argues that to be sovereign is to be able to control mortality; sovereignty equals the right to kill (70). According to Mbembé, regimes create hierarchies where certain groups are constantly exposed to danger or death creating 'death-worlds' which are "new and unique form[s] of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to the conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the living dead" (92); simply saying, death-worlds are spaces where marginalised groups are neither alive nor dead, they are stripped from their rights and reduced to their mere biological existence.

The state of exception is a related term to Necropolitics. Philosopher Giorgio Agamben coined it in his book *State of Exception* (2005), and it refers to a situation where sovereign

authorities suspend legal and moral norms to address a crisis; in a state of exception, citizens are reduced to bare life, and they are stripped away from their rights. “the state of exception tends increasingly to appear as the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” (2). In Agamben’s words, the state of exception is no longer a temporary solution; it has become the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics.

Mbembé regards colonialism as a form of Necropolitics and colonised zones as “death-worlds”. In *Necropolitics*, he argues that late modern colonial occupation distincts itself from early modern occupation through its combining of the disciplinary, the biopolitical, and the necropolitical. Furthermore, he identifies the Israeli occupation of Palestine as the most accomplished form of necropower as it combines three modalities of power: disciplinary power, biopower and necropolitical power. According to Mbembé, the Israeli occupation utilises disciplinary power meaning the regimentation of daily life through surveillance, bureaucratic restrictions and spatial segregation like checkpoints, curfews and permit systems to regulate Palestinian movement and daily life, biopower by controlling access to resources essential for survival including employment, healthcare, education and economic infrastructure and, necropolitical power which manifests in overt violence like targeted killings, military raid and structural violence like blockade-induced starvations and medical shortages. Therefore, Palestinians are systematically murdered, and if not, they are constantly exposed to death by being pushed to areas of exception where they are stripped of their rights and reduced to a living death. For Mbembé, the Israeli occupation’s violence is framed as existential warfare, which is rooted in “missing bones, which are constantly being unearthed”, referring to the unhealed historical trauma *The Holocaust* that is weaponised to justify the Israeli occupation’s security. (80-81)

I. 2. 2. Displacement and Exile

Displacement is the involuntary and forced moving of individuals from their homes and communities due to circumstances, including war. It can be temporary or permanent. Exile, on the other hand, mainly refers to the forced removal from one's homeland as a punishment or due to political pressures, and it mainly occurs beyond the borders; it is also framed to be permanent. exile and displacement are foundational concepts in post-colonial studies; they are also simultaneously related and distinct. Not all displacement is exile, but exile is a form of displacement.

Edward Said, being a Palestinian, speaks of exile as a personal experience; in his memoir *Out of Place*, he speaks of his feelings of alienation: "There was always something wrong with how I was invented and meant to fit in …At other times I seemed to myself to be nearly devoid of any character at all, timid, uncertain, without will. However, the overriding sensation I had was of always being out of place" (3). In this haunting self-interrogation, the "invented" self reflects his identity that was moulded by circumstances he had no say in, particularly, the cultural and colonial impositions that fractured his identity.

Edward Said was born in Jerusalem, educated in Cairo, and then in the U.S. He is neither entirely Arab nor Western, and the same applies to his name, "Edward Said". Despite this being a personal declaration, it mirrors the Palestinian collective wounded by displacement and exile. In his book *The Question of Palestine,* he positions Palestinian existence as a form of resilience and defiance "Until today, it is a striking fact that merely to mention the Palestinians or Palestine in Israel, or to a convinced Zionist, is to name the unnameable, so powerfully does our bare existence serve to accuse Israel of what it did to us" (45), Said states that to exist as a

Palestinian is to impose a threat on the Israeli occupation and to "name the unnameable", meaning to be a witness to the attempts of ethnic erasure committed by the Israeli occupation.

Furthermore, the concept of exile is most explored in Said's essay "Reflections on Exile", "It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home" (173). Said insists that the trauma of exile is unhealable and rejects the romanticisation of one's exile that is preached in art and literature, stating that it is nothing more than an attempt to overcome the sorrow of being far away from home. Said also urges exiles to avoid sentimentalising the past and to interrogate their experiences with rigour and honesty "provided that the exile refuses to sit on the sidelines nursing a wound, there are things to be learned: he or she must cultivate a scrupulous (not indulgent or sulky) subjectivity" (184). exile is not just the loss of the physical home, it is a rupture from a stable sense of self. For the Palestinians, exile is not abstract, it is embodied in refugee camps and erased villages. It is possible to say that exile is a metaphor, a symbol for the Palestinian condition, people suspended between memory and erasure.

I. 2. 3. Diasporic Consciousness

Diasporic consciousness is a term born from the interplay of displacement, identity, and memory, and it tackles the lived experiences of communities wounded by migration, colonialism, and conflict. In *Global Diasporas: An Introduction,* Robin Cohen frames diasporic consciousness as the binding glue between diasporic communities, collective identity and awareness shaped by the shared experiences of displacement, adaptation and transnational belonging. Before delving into the term diasporic consciousness, it is crucial to understand the term "diaspora" thoroughly, from its literal meaning to its phases of use and typologies.

The term “diaspora” is derived from the Greek word dia speiro, meaning “to sow over”. According to Cohen, from the 1960s to the 1970s, the term “Diaspora” was first capitalised and singular, referring only to the Babylonian Exile of the Jews. Over time, the use of the term was broadened to groups who experienced the same tragedy of mass displacement, which creates a “central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor”, including the Palestinian people. From the 1980s onwards, diaspora became a metaphor for any scattered group, even those not displaced in a traumatic, violent manner.

This latter caused scholars, particularly those who are influenced by postmodernist ideas, to argue that the classical definition of diaspora is too rigid as it focuses on two fixed pillars: homeland and ethnic identity, suggesting that identities are fluid, flexible and shaped by society, for instance, a person could be connected to multiple homelands or none, and even online communities could form “digital homelands” without the need of a physical homeland. This latter pushed for an era of consolidation from the 2000s to the present, allowing for a more flexible definition of diaspora that acknowledges complex identities, including dual citizens and global nomads, while still recognising the importance of its core elements. (1-2)

William Safran recognises six main features of diaspora, which include dispersion from a homeland to multiple foreign regions, collective memory of a homeland, feeling unwelcomed and alienated from the host society, the idea of an idealised homeland, the commitment to rebuild the homeland and an identity that is deeply connected with the homeland. While Cohen acknowledged Safran’s efforts in the field of diaspora studies, he argued that the list was too narrow and that the following aspects were dismissed in his list: diasporas often form due to traumatic events such as slavery and genocide, diaspora can also form due to voluntary reasons like labour, trade and imperialism (British settlers in colonies, for instance), diaspora is not always hostile as it can enrich cultures through creativity and innovation, diaspora members

feel a sort of connection co-ethnic communities worldwide and finally, some diasporas close ties to a physical homeland but still keep their identity through culture, religion or shared beliefs.

Based on this latter, Cohen (17) extended the scope of Safran and set nine main features of diaspora, including:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;

2. alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;

3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements;

4. an idealisation of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;

5. the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland;

6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate;

7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;

8. a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement, even where home has become more vestigial and

9. the possibility of a distinctive, creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

Cohen's revision of Safran's features of diaspora allowed him to distinguish different types of diasporas. The first type is called "victim diaspora," referring to groups displaced due to traumatic events, including persecution, genocide or forced Exile. This type is characterised by collective suffering and a longing for a return. The second type is called "labour diaspora", which refers to communities formed due to voluntary or coerced migration for economic opportunities, such as indentured labour. The third type, called "imperial diaspora" includes populations that migrate to establish or maintain colonial empires and often involve settlers who retain ties to their imperial homeland. The fourth type, "trade diaspora," involves groups dispersed to expand commercial networks or trade routes, often maintaining economic and cultural ties across regions. The fifth type, called "deterritorialised diaspora," includes communities with no fixed homeland united by a shared culture, religion, or identity. This category also acknowledges hybrid and transnational identities shaped by globalisation.

Identity fragmentation is a profound consequence of displacement and diaspora; it emerges when individuals or communities straddle multiple cultural worlds, resulting in them belonging fully to none. This splintering in selfhood is inherent in diasporic experiences such as forced Exile (as in Cohen's victim diasporas), voluntary labour migration or deterritorialised identities. Displacement ruptures singular notions of belonging, stranding individuals between the mythical pull of an ancestral homeland and the reality of integration in host societies. Such fragmentation is not merely a state of loss; it becomes a fertile soil for reinvention. Diasporic

identities fracture but multiply by blending inherited traditions with new influences. This tension between rupture and creativity lies at the heart of diaspora studies, a tension that theorists like Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha dissect with nuance. Hall's view of identity as a process of becoming and Bhabha's notion of the third space offer compelling frameworks to understand how fragmented identities, born of displacement, evolve into dynamic sites of cultural innovation and resistance.

Stuart Hall, in his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", argues that identity is not "an already accomplished fact" (222); it is never complete and always in process. Identity is not something an individual is born with or a true self hidden within the individual; It is constantly being created through culture, history, and how we represent ourselves. Hall proceeds by positioning cultural identity between two views: The first one is an essentialist view, which sees identity as based on shared history (slavery, colonialism…) and a common culture like "This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of 'Caribbean ness', of the black experience" (223). Hall emphasises the importance of discovering and "excavating" this "oneness".

Similarly, Frantz Fanon argues, "Colonialisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (qtd. in Hall 224). This stance holds excellent strength as it fuelled the emergence of anti-colonial movements, including Negritude and Pan-Africanism; Fanon regards this rediscovery of identity as a "passionate research... directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some wonderful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others" (qtd. In Hall 223).

Hall questions whether identity revolves around rediscovery or production. “Is it only a matter of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed? Alternatively, it is quite a different practice - not the rediscovery but the production of identity. Not an identity grounded in the archaeology, but in the re-telling of the past?” (224). He presents the second constructionist view, which regards identity as a fluid concept shaped by power, history and cultural mixing. Indeed, while shared trauma (slavery, for example) unites people, differences like tribal origins, languages and local histories also matter (228). Like Fanon’s observation, Edward Said argues that within the knowledge of the West, the “Other” had their history distorted and portrayed as inferior (225). This latter shows in the colonised believing the coloniser’s claim of Africa being a dark continent, which caused a rupture from their past. Enslaved Africans alike were stripped of their languages, religions and cultures, making them lose their ties to their past.

This rupture, however, forced new identities to form; for example, enslaved Africans merged their traditions with Christianity, resulting in new religions like Haitian Voodoo or Rastafarianism (227). For Hall, identity is all about context and where a person positions themselves “Identities are the name we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (225). Identity is like a river; while it has a source (a common culture), it keeps changing as it flows by mixing with other cultures and creating new identities.

Homi K. Bhabha, the renowned post-colonial scholar, revolutionised the understanding of cultural identity through his concept of the third space. Fetson Kalua, in his article “Homi Bhabha’s Third Space and African Identity”, reviews the concept of the third space tackled in Bhabha’s book *The Location of Culture*. Bhabha draws from Victor Turner’s concept of liminality, which emerged from his anthropological study of the Ndembu people of Central

Africa and their rituals that involve initiates shedding their former identities and entering a transitional "in-between" phase (limen) where social hierarchies dissolve, identities become ambiguous, and symbols acquire multiple meanings (23-24). Bhabha adapts Turner's framework into postcolonialism and reimagines this liminality into the concept of the "third space", a conceptual zone where cultural identities are negotiated through hybridity and ambivalence; it rejects fixed binaries (coloniser/colonised, self/other) and instead emphasises enunciation which is the act of articulating identity in a dynamic context (24-25). The third space is fundamentally defined by its destabilising ambiguity. Bhabha describes it as a "realm of the beyond" (1), a "contested space" where fixed meaning collapses.

This disorientation is captured in his assertion that the third space produces "a disturbance of direction" (2), dissolving rigid binaries like past/present or coloniser/colonised. Turner's earlier work also showcases this, noting that in such spaces, "things cease to signify other things, for everything is" (157). Cultural certainties are suspended here, creating a fertile ground for new meanings.

Hybridity is central to the third space, where identities and discourses intermingle to forge new cultural forms. Bhabha writes that it is "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (2). This hybridity arises from the "slippage of signification" (235), a process where colonial and Indigenous narratives collide, enabling marginalised voices to rearticulate power.

As Kalua writes, Bhabha's third space "exceeds dualistic frameworks," allowing for "heterogenous spaces where [people] negotiate narratives of their existences" (24). Finally, Bhabha emphasises the role of the third space in destabilising colonial authority as it allows

marginalised groups to “deft systematic erasure” (Kalua 29). Turner’s ritual studies similarly highlight liminality’s “transformative nature,” which “exults in arbitrariness” (24). By occupying this space, subaltern voices “negotiate narratives” (24) that challenge dominant power structures.

I. 2. 4. Postmemory and Generational Trauma

Marianne Hirsch, a scholar in memory studies, introduced her concept of “Postmemory” in her essay “The Generation of Postmemory.” Focusing on the children of Holocaust survivors as a case study, she assures that her theory is transportable and applicable to similar cases, including slavery, apartheid, Exile, and occupation.

At its core, Postmemory refers to “the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they ‘remember’ only using the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up” (107). These memories are not personally experienced. However, an individual could feel the emotions these memories (particularly those of tragic events such as war) come with as they are transmitted through mediums such as storytelling and photographs and even behaviours that the generation that experienced these memories acquire as an aftermath of these events.

Therefore, these memories are deeply internalised despite not being experienced. Hirsch writes, “Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus not mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation” (107); this process is what allows the traumatic experiences a particular generation experienced to shape the identity, consciousness and the overall sense of self of the next generation born after the events. Indeed, one might wonder. How could a memory belong to someone who did not live it? Hirsch acknowledges

that this contradiction is intrinsic to the structure of post-memory; for Hirsch, “it is a f of traumatic recall but (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove” (106). Therefore, it is a form of a 'received history'; though it is distinct from eyewitness memory, it is powerful.

The significance of the family as a site of transmission is one of Hirsch’s most crucial arguments in her essay; she claims that postmemory often circulates in intimate spaces where trauma is not only verbally transmitted but also through nonverbal and noncognitive acts of transfer, such as sighs, silences, nightmares and emotional disturbances (112). She proceeds by drawing on Eva Hoffman, who insists that survivors did not remain entirely silent but also communicated trauma in “the language of family—a form of expression that is both more direct and more ruthless than social and public speech” (qtd. in 112).

This form of affective transfer gives the next generation a sense, or rather a burden, of responsibility and a desire to repair what has been broken. In this dynamic, the child becomes the bearer of a history’s burden and a witness to the pain he did not experience but cannot escape. Hirsch writes that “to grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories… is to risk having one’s own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation” (107).

In “The Generation of Postmemory”, Hirsch distinguishes between familial postmemory situated in direct family lineage and affiliative postmemory that extends beyond biological descent to include those who adopt others’ traumatic past through acts of imagination, empathy or cultural connection (115). Hirsch refers to Edward Said in his distinction of affiliative (horizontal) and filial (vertical) relationships to argue that memory transmission is not confined to kinship or family lineage but can be produced and reproduced

through shared generational structures, cultural idioms, and visual narratives (115). To sum up, while familial postmemory is intergenerational, affiliative postmemory is transgenerational; a person could connect to others' traumatic histories through shared cultural, political, or ethical frameworks.

I. 3. Literature Review

For the Palestinian, displacement is an ongoing experience, and as it is ongoing in the Palestinian reality, it is also depicted in Palestinian writings. Abulhawa, in her seminal novel *Mornings in Jenin*, portrays the different experiences of displaced and traumatised individuals due to war. In addition, young Palestinian content creators made an immense effort to portray the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and defeat Western stereotypes, especially after the events of October 7th, 2023, where Western mainstream media criminalised Hamas and justified the Israeli occupation forces' crimes towards Palestinian civilians.

As *Mornings in Jenin* offers a vast platform to explore the psychological effects of displacement, Scholars have explored the themes of identity and displacement in the novel. However, despite the existing literature on identity and displacement in *Mornings in Jenin*, there is a significant lack of research on Bisan Owda's visual media.

This section will tackle the existing research on *Mornings in Jenin* while defining the gap regarding Bisan Owda's visual media to further strengthen the research's integrity and its' foundation for a proper analysis in the following chapters.

I. 3. 1. Trauma and Identity in *Mornings in Jenin*

Benattia and Boumakhlouf's analysis of *Mornings in Jenin* centres on the relationship between post-war trauma and Palestinian identity. They argue that the trauma of forced

displacement/exile disrupts individual and collective notions of self. Dalia, for instance, who had her son Ismael kidnapped by the Israeli occupation forces, suffers hallucinations of her lost son, which portrays the psychological scars of oppression. The authors also emphasise the flexibility of identity and the reconstruction of identity through narrative techniques such as intergenerational dialogue, silence and memory.

Payel Pal's article argues that nostalgia in *Mornings in Jenin* is not a longing for the past but a dynamic force for resilience and political resistance. Pal affirms that Abulhawa reimagines nostalgia as a tool for social cohesion. Diasporic Palestinian characters like Amal, for instance, gain strength from cultural memory, including shared rituals and symbols of Palestine, which fuels the characters' refusal to accept dispossession and their insistence on reclaiming their rightful connection to Palestine.

The central idea in Aimatul Ayu Maghfiroh's work is the construction of Amal's diasporic identity. The author argues that Amal's identity is shaped by her negotiation of cultural duality, particularly her Palestinian Identity as Amal and her American Identity as Amy. This duality results in a crisis of belonging, which is only resolved through self-awareness as Amal slowly learns to adapt to her hybrid Identity. To sum up, diaspora is both a space of loss and redefinition, and Amal's diasporic experience is a journey of cultural negotiation.

Similarly, Rezk argues that nostalgia emerges as a dual force: a painful longing for lost homelands and a resilient mechanism to preserve cultural Identity and hope. Ayman M. Abu-Shomar also tackles the subject of diasporic Identity by examining the interplay between love, trauma and diaspora. He positions love as a sustaining force that coexists with trauma and allows characters to resist oppression without surrendering their humanity.

Omayma Abdelfattah Rezk's analysis of the novel focuses on the traumatic experience of displacement alongside Khaled Hosseini's *Sea Prayer*; she highlights that both authors highlight how refugees are caught between host countries and inaccessible homelands; therefore, they are in a state of "in-betweenness" where the chances of an identity crisis taking place are very high.

I. 3. 2. Exploring research of Bisan Owda's visual media

Though research on Palestinian content creators, particularly Bisan Owda, remains limited, some studies have been conducted regarding this topic. The events of October 7th, 2023, gained global attention, and as social media offers space to multiple narratives, it is more trusted than biased traditional media. Therefore, it is possible to say that the Hamas-Israel war was "mediatised". Diabes tackles this notion of the mediatisation of war by discussing the Israeli occupation's framing strategies, "Hasbara", and that is through weaponising social media with graphic ads and paid campaigns for the sake of victimising itself and justifying its crimes committed against Palestinian civilians.

Despite the widespread Western narratives and the risk of censorship, Palestinian citizen journalists, including Bisan Owda, played a massive role in raising awareness of the Palestinian narrative and challenging the widespread stereotypes about Palestinians. Garfias positions Palestinian content creators as not only documenters but also witnesses as they are also victims of Zionist oppression; she argues that Palestinian content creators share vulnerable scenes such as injured children who serve as "ideal victims" as a form of resistance and to expose the Israeli occupation's war crimes. Furthermore, Hamdan applies a discourse analysis on a selected variation of posts by Palestinian content creators, including Bisan Owda. She finds that personal

storytelling is a strong point in Palestinian non-professional journalists' content, especially in Bisan Owda's videos, as she uses direct, emotional videos.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to contextualise Palestinian displacement through a dual lens of historical analysis and theoretical inquiry, establishing a foundation for understanding its enduring impact on Identity, resistance and collective memory; this chapter highlighted how colonial legacies, geopolitical betrayals, and systemic violence have perpetuated cycles of dispossession, the 1948 Nakba emerged as a profound rupture not only as a historical event but an ongoing condition that resurfaces through wars, occupations and uprisings. The Intifadas and the events of October 7th, 2023, illustrate how displacement remains a lived reality, compounded by the Israeli occupation's necropolitical regime that weaponises space, resources and mortality to enforce Palestinian expendability.

Theoretical frameworks such as Mbembé's Necropolitics and Bhabha's third space provide critical tools to dissect displacement's structural and psychological dimensions. Necropolitics elucidates the Israeli occupation's triad of disciplinary, biopolitical and overly violent strategies to reduce Palestinians to bare life. At the same time, the third space reveals how diasporic and occupied communities negotiate hybrid identities amid erasure. Edward Said's reflections on Exile and Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory further illuminate the intergenerational transmission of trauma where unhealed wounds of displacement frame collective consciousness across generations.

The literature review highlights the centrality of displacement in Palestinian narratives, especially in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, where trauma and resilience are interwoven through intergenerational storytelling. However, the gap in scholarly engagement with Bisan

Owda's visual media highlights the urgency of analysing non-literary forms of resistance and storytelling. It sheds light on the dissertation's contribution to bridging literature with visual media.

This chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how Susan Abulhawa and Bisan Owda construct displacement and Identity in their distinct platforms while emphasising the imperative to centre Palestinian voices in academic discourse.

Chapter Two: Tracing Displacement in the Voices of Amal in *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's Visual Media

Introduction

Displacement is often defined as the physical expulsion from one's homeland; according to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, it is "the situation in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live." For Merriam-Webster, to displace is "to remove from the usual or proper place" or "to expel or force to flee from home to homeland." These definitions are unfair in describing the traumatic experience of displacement and position it as a mere physical act.

Angelika Bammer, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, views displacement through the same lens as postcolonialists. For her, displacement is "the separation of people from their native culture, through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles or expatriates) or the colonising imposition of a foreign culture" (XI). This duality is evident in the Palestinian context where displacement is both a material reality and a structural regime of cultural annihilation. Hanan Ashrawi coined the term "ongoing Nakba" to describe the continuous experience of displacement that Palestinians have been enduring since 1948; she states: "The Nakba did not end with the creation of Israel at the expense of its people and their rights".

This chapter interrogates how Susan Abulhawa and Bisan Owda represent the layered dimensions of displacement through their distinct narrative platforms. This analysis positions *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) and Owda's visual media as complementary critiques of displacement as a necropolitical practice. The chapter demonstrates how Necropolitics operates on dual axes: the corporeal violence of bombardment and the slow violence of erasure.

II. 1. Historical Displacement in *Mornings in Jenin*

Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad Sa'di, in their seminal essay collection *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (2007), highlight the scarcity of Palestinian scholarly engagement with the events of the Nakba of 1948, a gap that reflects both the systemic erasure of Palestinian narratives from dominant historiography and the delayed academic reckoning with the Nakba's enduring legacy (9). Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) confronts this historiographical silence by portraying a fictional narrative of the Nakba's trauma. While the novel's literary form diverges from conventional historical discourse, its detailed portrayal of displacement, fragmentation and survival offers a critical counter-narrative to the epistemic violence of erasure. This section interrogates how *Mornings in Jenin* rearticulates the necropolitical framework, unmasking the systemic strategies deployed by colonial regimes to dehumanise Palestinians and consolidate power through their disposability.

II. 1. 1. Necropolitical Erasure in 1948

The first chapters in *Mornings in Jenin* tackle the life of the Palestinian family of Abulheja before the war and before Amal is born. The grandfather, Yehya Abulheja, tends to his olive and fig trees, and his wife, Basima, is a nurturing, caring mother to their sons, Hasan and Darweesh. Their son Hasan falls in love with a rebellious and beautiful Bedouin girl named Dalia, who gives him two sons: Yousef and Ismael. However, this peaceful atmosphere changed after the escalation of Jewish immigrants during the British mandate and especially after the Second World War, leading to the appearance of Zionist gangs who sought to expel the British and the Arabs from Palestine, all for the sake of a pure Jewish "Eretz-Israel".

In *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (1987), Benny Morris traces the ideological underpinnings of Palestinian displacement that framed the presence of Arabs in Palestine as an obstacle to ethnonational sovereignty, stating that:

> The idea of a "voluntary" or "compulsory" transfer of all or the bulk of the Arabs inhabiting the Jewish State areas had been in the air since the mid-1930s. All schemes for establishing a Jewish State in Palestine, including the Peel Commission recommendations of July 1937, came up against the significant problem of the existence of an Arab minority (24).

Mornings in Jenin dramatises this dehumanising logic of necropolitical ideology through the character of "Moshe", an Israeli occupation soldier whose actions and worldview mirror the historical realities Morris documents. He is driven by a messianic belief that he is enacting a divine mission to reclaim Palestine; Moshe's zealotry is political and spiritual. His marriage to Jolanta, a Holocaust survivor turned infertile by the sexual violence she endured under Nazi persecution, introduces a layer of psychological depth. Jolanta's infertility becomes a massive motivation for Moshe's determination to create a pure Jewish homeland free of Palestinians. In a haunting scene, Moshe attends a feast hosted by Yehya Abulheja, a Palestinian patriarch, and watches Dalia, Yehya's daughter-in-law, tend to her children. His bitter internal monologue, where he wondered how God could deny his lovely wife the gift of motherhood and give it to Arabs who already have numerous healthy children (Abulhawa 40), exposes the moral bankruptcy of his ideology.

The necropolitical strategy that targets reproductive life is evident in real-life Gaza. According to the UN, the Israel occupation carried out genocidal acts through the destruction of Gaza's main IVF clinic and blocking aid including medication that ensured safe pregnancies,

deliveries and neonatal care, an incident which Israeli occupation's PM Benjamin Netnayahu denied despite the availability of evidence (France 24).

Furthermore, Moshe's resentment toward Palestinian fertility reflects broader settler-colonial anxiety where Indigenous reproduction threatens the demographic goals of the ethnostate; he rationalises their expulsion as a form of corrective violence by framing Palestinian motherhood as "excessive". Meanwhile, Jolanta's trauma is weaponised to justify this erasure; her suffering becomes a rhetorical tool to position Jews as the sole deserving claimants to both land and family.

This historical contention finds a striking literary refraction in the novel, where the dialogue between Hasan Abulheja and his Jewish friend Ari Perlstein mirrors the dissonance between Zionist rhetoric and material exclusion. When Hasan interrogates Ari about Zionist ambitions for a Jewish state, he responds with contradictory assurances: "I am a Jew, I mean, I think it is wrong… They're determined that this land will become a Jewish state. But I think if the Arabs just accept it, it'll all be fine and we can live together". Here, Ari simultaneously critiques Zionist expansionism and implies that Palestinians must surrender their rights to avoid conflict.

Hasan immediately recognises the hypocrisy, sarcastically asking whether "these immigrants" would let Palestinians stay on their land (Abulhawa 29); this exchange reflects Morris's historical argument: Zionist leaders framed Palestinian presence as a "problem" requiring removal, even as they publicly claimed coexistence was possible if Palestinians submitted to displacement. Abulhawa uses this dialogue to critique the same contradictions Morris identifies: the gap between Zionist ideals of sharing the land and the reality of excluding Palestinians.

After continuous bombings and massacres of Palestinians in different areas, the villagers of Ein Hod were fearful for their lives, yet they still clung to their land. After all, they "endured many masters—Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Ottomans, British" (Abulhawa 32). Yehya Abulheja, the grandfather, thought of hosting a feast for the Israeli occupation's soldiers as he thought they would spare them by making a friendly gesture. Despite the truce announced, the Israeli occupation launched a heavy attack that "laid the village [of Ein Hod] to ruins" (Abulhawa 33) and forced villagers to leave their homes, marching in extreme heat while taking orders from an Israeli occupation soldier speaking from a loudspeaker.

Abulhawa's depiction of the Israeli occupation soldier as a "loudspeaker god" (34) during the expulsion of Ein Hod's villagers encapsulates Achille Mbembé's necropolitical framework, wherein colonial power (exemplified here by the Israeli occupation) asserts sovereignty through the regulation of bodily autonomy and the imposition of psychological terror. The term "god" evokes a panoptic, omnipotent authority whose disembodied voices, "Go to the well" (34) and "Stop here" (35), operate as a tool of necropolitical control. This invisible yet omnipresent force reduces the villagers to a bare life, stripped of agency and perpetually surveilled.

The execution of Darweesh's horse "Fatooma" represents the necropolitical, cultural, and existential erasure. The Israeli occupation soldier specifically targeted the horse's unique white streak and shot it. This white streak is not only a physical trait; it is also a symbol of Palestinian distinctiveness, and its destruction signifies the aim to erase Palestinian cultural heritage. In addition, the soldier's order to leave the horse, only to kill it moments later, reveals a necropolitical performance. The horse is not confiscated for military use; therefore, this act is not utilitarian but somewhat ritualistic, as it only aims to assert absolute dominance by planting fear in the Palestinians. Also, the soldier's casual brutality and his choice to shoot Darweesh in

his chest along with his horse at almost the same efficiency suggests that in the soldier's eyes, Darweesh's value is no greater than that of his horse and exposes the colonial logic which dehumanises the colonised and reduces them to the status of "subhuman" or "savage human" to justify their extermination.

II. 1. 2. The Jenin Refugee Camp as a Necropolitical Death-World

As Achille Mbembé argues, space is "the raw material of sovereignty and of the violence it bears within it" (79). It is a terrain where power manifests through the demarcation of boundaries, the enforcement of displacement, and the production of expendable lives. Similarly, Giorgio Agamben defines death camps as "the place in which the most absolute *conditio inhumana* ever to appear on Earth was realised." (qtd. in Mbembé 67) Indeed, the death camps that are seen in Palestine are places where humans are stripped of all fundamental rights, dignity and legal protections; individuals there are reduced to their biological existence and instead treated as disposable bodies.

After the Nakba, Ein Hod villagers settled in the Jenin refugee camp, where Amal was born, a one-square-mile patch of earth "excised from time and imprisoned in that endless year of 1948" (Abulhawa 265). The Jenin refugee camp is a testament to attempts of systemic erasure of an entire people; despite the enduring displacement, the camp is also a zone of collective resistance where the longing for return persists.

The Jenin refugee camp operates under a necropolitical regime where Israel's occupation enacts control over Palestinian mortality. The camp's conditions, as remembered by Amal, the stenches of "burning flesh" (68), "open sewers" (158) and the omnipresence of soldiers all reflect a deliberate infrastructure of neglect. Residents exist in a death world where invasions of human rights laws are justified and normalised.

Mbembé in *Necropolitics* (2019) writes:

> Terror and atrocities are justified by the desire to eradicate the corruption of which still-existing tyrannies are allegedly guilty. In appearance, terror and atrocities thus form a part of an immense therapeutic liturgy… Whatever their discursive foundations, they are politically expressed through attritional wars during which thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands, of victims, are massacred, and hundreds of thousands of survivors are either displaced, confined, or interned in camps (47).

Here, Mbembé states that when powerful groups or regimes want to justify committing violence (like terror or massacres), they often claim that they are doing it as a means of societal purification, to cleanse society of corruption or evil caused by existing oppressive systems. This results in dire implications, including the unfolding of war that results in the massacre of countless individuals and the displacement of survivors, who are reduced to their biological existence for their bodies to be controlled and managed. Under these conditions, power does not solely revolve around controlling people's minds; it instead becomes hyper-focused on controlling bodies and reducing humans to disposable objects in a system that prioritises profit or power over life.

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Amal returns to the Jenin refugee camp with her daughter Sara, driven by her daughter's request and desire to connect more to her homeland; when she arrives at the camp, she reflects on the conflict's relentless tit-for-tat brutality and the unending cycle of violence: "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" (263). Coincidentally, she remarks how the camp is villainised in media and bitterly notes how Jenin is reduced to sensationalist labels, as it was labelled as: "DEN OF TERROR." "NESTING GROUND OF TERRORISTS." "TERRORISM BREEDING GROUND" (263).

The camp itself is a symbol of Palestinian experience of displacement and is subjected to dehumanisation in global media; these labels are less neutral labels than political tools, erasing the humanity of its residents to legitimise their upcoming collective punishment. Amal proceeds by describing the atmosphere in the camp: kids playing nervously with an over-awareness of their environment, old men are not to be seen anywhere though that was a core memory of the camp in her childhood and young men running with their rifles as if they were "preparing for the inevitable" (263).

Amal describes the atmosphere in the camp as suffused with dread, the constant threat of violence corrodes children's innocence, and their inevitable fate stretches like a shadow; this is a tactic acknowledgement that the Israeli occupation's military incursion is not a matter of *if* but *when*. The rhetoric of terror, as Amal implies, primes the world to be prepared and to view such invasions as justified, even necessary, absolving the Israeli occupation of accountability for the carnage to come. That carnage arrived on April 2nd, 2002, when Israeli occupation tanks bulldozed into Jenin. In the chaos, Amal is fatally shot by an Israeli occupation soldier while shielding Sara.

The aftermath of the Jenin Refugee Camp Massacre in *Mornings in Jenin* is portrayed through a sense of abandonment and international neglect, especially by institutions and governments that claim to uphold human right as demonstrated, "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" (282). The absence of international observers and the silence of U.S. politicians, who prioritise solidarity with the Israeli occupation over investigating atrocities, compound the camp's isolation. The United Nations' subsequent report "prepared by men who never visited Jenin and spoke to neither victim nor victimiser" concludes that "no massacre had taken place" (293), a verdict parroted by U.S. media headlines like "NO MASSACRE IN JENIN" and "ONLY MILITANTS KILLED IN JENIN, SAYS ISRAEL" (293). These declarations that are devoid of firsthand investigation imply institutional complicity in erasing Palestinian suffering.

Abulhawa's critique mirrors real-world condemnation of the 2002 UN inquiry, which the Israeli occupation blocked from accessing Jenin, forcing reliance on satellite imagery and second-hand accounts. While the report acknowledged 52 Palestinian deaths, it rejected evidence of a massacre, parroting the Israeli occupation's claim that most casualties were "militants". The findings were critiqued for being "seriously flawed" for ignoring witness testimonies and physical evidence of war crimes, including the Israeli occupation's use of Caterpillar D9 bulldozers to demolish homes with civilians trapped inside (Human Rights Watch). The novel amplifies these injustices, framing the bulldozers as weapons of destruction and metaphors for the systemic erasure of lives, histories and truth. The novel exposes how dehumanising rhetoric and geopolitical alliances conspire to normalise violence against Palestinians by pairing Amal's death with the cold, bureaucratic language of the UN report.

II. 1. 3. Amal's Social Death in the Diaspora

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) examines the internalisation of subjugation as a defining feature of systemic oppression. Freire observes:

> Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalisation of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (63).

This dialectic of internalised oppression is evident in Amal's journey in the United States after securing a scholarship to the University of Philadelphia. Though her migration liberates her from the horrors of militarised oppression, it does not emancipate her from the psychological and structural residues of oppression. To assimilate, Amal discards her given name, adopting Amy as her label in the U.S. This act of self-reinvention, however, is not an assertion of agency but an attempt to evade the stigma attached to her identity within a Western hegemon, although Amal in America is free from overt warfare, she is still trapped in an implicit necropolitical system.

Amal's arrival in America inaugurates a process of necropolitical alienation, wherein her self-perception becomes entangled with systemic structures of racial and cultural erasure. Upon encountering her host family, she immediately internalises her status as an outsider and frames herself as an alien as her foreignness is recognisable by her brown skin and accent (154). This self-othering crystallises with her encounter with Lisa, who embodies the privileged, carefree American life in which her world is described as "pastel colored, emotionally cushioned, financially solid, and politically inconsequential" (154) which Amal admires but cannot access. Therefore, Amal starts viewing whiteness and Americanness as superior, which only reinforces her sense of inferiority. This sense of inferiority deepens when Elana Rivers mocks her with slurs like "Ay-rab" or "rag head". Similarly, when Milton Dobbs misnames her

"Omar" (155), he isolates Amal, and she feels forced to suppress her Palestinian identity to survive in a society that demands assimilation.

To survive, Amal adopts Amy as her new label and internalises American norms: "I drank alcohol and dated several men— acts that would have earned me repudiation in Jenin." (157); her engagement in culturally taboo acts and her severance from Palestinian ties which is highlighted in her not writing to any of her acquaintances in Palestine reflects a self-erasure necessitated by survival in a dominant culture, which hints at necropolitics' logic: the U.S. as a hegemonic power, imposes norms that demand the suppression of her Palestinian identity. Therefore, her assimilation is not a liberation but rather a cultural death.

Similarly, Amal notes how she assimilates to capitalistic values. "Strangely, the details of capitalism came easily to me. I felt no pressure when others scrambled at deadlines. Behind my icy eyes was a scorn at the utter unimportance of their bottom lines, the damaging rush to the next material benefit. I performed my job meticulously and easily." (221), Capitalism here functions as a necropolitical force, assimilating displaced individuals into its machinery, profiting from them as productive bodies yet hollowing out their cultural essence. Her performance is a survival tactic, yet it showcases a living death; though she thrives economically, she becomes a spectral version of herself, estranged from her roots and critical consciousness. The "utter unimportance of their bottom lines" reflects her awareness of the system's dehumanising priorities. However, her compliance with the same system that dehumanises her reveals the coercive power of necropolitical structures.

When Amal arrives in Philadelphia, she describes the cityscape:

> I gazed at the cityscape. Ribbons of concrete and asphalt stretched and looped under more cars than I had ever seen. Row homes, factories, and warehouses

> overlooked the interstate, and smog blurred the clustered skyline of downtown Philadelphia... It smelled like the irretrievable loss of white madonna lilies growing in the limesinks of Palestine, the bereavement of my country's camphires, which would burst forth each spring into fragrant flames of white and yellow clusters, delicate and fiery (154-55).

The necropolitical management of space is evident here in Amal's sensory dislocation. Philadelphia's "ribbons of concrete and asphalt" and "smog-blurred skyline" contrast starkly with Palestine's "white madonna lilies" and fragments of camphires. The lifelessness imposed on her exile, while the loss of natural beauty mirrors her severed connection to home. Necropolitics is applied here by subjecting marginalised bodies to spaces of alienation.

Similarly, she also states: "In Philadelphia I wandered among the contrasts of wealth and poverty, a desperate smile plastered on my face. I found no commonality with the men and women who walked with purpose and self-possession, nor with the human beings asleep on the city sidewalks" (156). The juxtaposition of "wealth and poverty" in Philadelphia highlights how economic hierarchies intersect with necropolitical exclusion. Amal feels no "commonality" with either the self-assured Americans or the unhoused, existing in a liminal space where she is neither fully integrated nor entirely abandoned, which reflects necropolitics' ability to suspend lives in states or precarity.

During the Sabra and Shatila Massacre, Amal's brother Youssef leaves his pregnant wife Fatima and their daughter Falasteen as a fighter with the PLO. However, his family falls victim to the massacre in the cruellest way which has a psychological toll on him. Upon learning the fate of his family, he calls Amal, wailing: "THEY SLAUGHTERED MY WIFE AND MY CHILDREN LIKE LAMBS!" (205). During his last call with Amal in January 1983, he says,

"Yasser Arafat is a coward who leads his people to slaughter with the rope of American lies." Yousef also tells her that he left the PLO and returned to Lebanon. In the chapter entitled Yousef, The Avenger his internal monologue upon the murder of his family was tackled as he is filled with rage and sorrow, and he is willing to take reveng: "I seek vengeance, nothing more. Nothing less. And I shall have it. And you shall see no mercy" (219).

On April 18th, 1983, Amal read the news of a man who had "driven a truck loaded with explosives into the U.S. embassy in Lebanon, killing sixty-three people and wounding scores more" (212). A while later, on the same day, Amal finds her house surrounded by FBI and CIA agents who eventually break into her house and take her in for a thorough investigation due to her kinship with her brother Youssef, who was the committer of this act. During the investigation, Youssef is only labelled as "terrorist" (a slang that is mainly targeted towards Arabs), disregarding the occupation that shaped his desire to commit such an act. Amal is also reduced to only her Arabic surname and kinship with Youssef; her statelessness amplifies this dehumanisation, and she becomes a disposable body upon which the state enacts its' necropolitical sovereignty. As mentioned, Amal's journey in America is marked by her invisibility and the rejection of her Palestinian identity. However, in this instance, she is hyper-visible, and her Palestinian identity is criminalised.

A recent instance of necropolitical violence against marginalised communities outside active conflict zones is the detention of Mahmoud Khalil, a prominent pro-Palestine protest leader and recent Columbia University graduate. On March 8th, 2025, Khalil was arrested by ICE agents from his residential apartment building in New York City. He was reportedly accused of involvement in "pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic, anti-American activity". (The Guardian)

Similarly, The FBI and CIA's abrupt invasion of Amal's house, their prolonged interrogation and the public surveillance that follows exemplify how racial capitalism weaponises kinship and identity to enforce subjugation. The FBI's actions transcend mere investigation; they are a performative assertion of dominance over marginalised lives. The agents' relentless pursuit of Amal, even after her release, reveals Mbembé's necropower's use of surveillance as a means to assert dominance; surveillance here functions as a tool of terror, designed to discipline and immobilise, her body becomes a mere site of necropolitical control (a body deemed unworthy of privacy, safety or redemption) which mirrors the broader devaluation of Palestinian life under occupation where systemic violence is justified through racialised narratives of threat.

II. 2. Real-Time Displacement in Bisan Owda's Visual Media

For Bisan Owda, displacement is real and ever-present. It is seen in cracked streets, heard in shattered windows, and shown in the strong spirit of the Palestinian people. This section interrogates the manifestations of necropolitical violence within Bisan Owda's selected visual media to investigate her representation of the Palestinian experience of displacement.

II. 2. 1. Forced Evacuations: Spatial Control as Necropolitics

In Owda's videos, what is most noticeable is a pattern of being forced to evacuate to a *safe* place that turns out to be unsafe. Two videos recorded on October 9th, 2023 and shared via her Instagram account @wizard_bisan1 the following day showcase the beginning of this pattern. In the first clip, Owda is seen rushing towards a car, clutching a backpack and scanning her surroundings anxiously. She explains that Israeli occupation authorities had ordered evacuations in Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighbourhood and central districts, which were designated as safe zones only 24 hours earlier, yet now they are declared military targets "they

[the Israeli occupation] told us from Al Rimal neighbourhood, and the centre of Gaza and the middle of Gaza…yesterday they said it's safe and they told people to evacuate to this place…there are no safe places in Gaza". (*My Neighborhood* 00:00:05)

In a video posted on October 16th, 2023, Owda describes Al-Shifa Hospital (her shelter after the bombing of her house) as follows:

> This is the Shifa hospital, the shelter thousands of people are taking. More than a hundred thousand people are sleeping here in the corridors, in the buildings, in the parking, on the streets, in the garden, everywhere, and they're sleeping without any roof, without a mattress, without anything, they're just collecting some pieces of carton and sleeping on them, and one of these people is me (*The Humanitarian Conditions* (00:00:12).

Owda's description of Al-Shifa Hospital reveals how Gaza's civilian spaces, including hospitals, which are protected under international law, become a crowded necropolis where the living are stripped of dignity and reduced to mere biological existence. The sheer scale of displacement (sleeping in corridors, parking lots and gardens) illustrates the collapse of public infrastructure under prolonged blockade and bombardment, a condition engineered by state power to exhaust and dehumanise.

By the second video, filmed after her arrival to Al-Shifa hospital which became her refuge following the destruction of her neighbourhood, Owda critiques the absurdity of these directives "they also told us that the Shifa hospital is the only safe place but it's not actually, a lot of the buildings were bombed around the hospital" (*Thousands of People* 00:00:42), while she and her family managed to escape, she emphasises that evacuation orders often fail to reach civilians in time, leaving countless families trapped in bombardment zones (00:00:21). Indeed,

in a video posted on October 13th, 2023, Owda witnesses bombings of thirty ambulances in front of Al-Shifa hospital gate and reflects on what she said before about Al-Shifa hospital not being a safe place, exclaiming "they [the Israeli occupation] are playing with us and on us" (*We Are Dying* 00:00:39), this mirrors the necropolitical logic of using emergency laws in states of exception to strip marginalised individuals of their rights and create a perverse calculus: obedience to evacuation orders offers no guarantee of safety and defiance guarantees death.

The cycle of displacement experienced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation, as documented by Bisan Owda through her Instagram videos provides a harrowing lens through which to analyse the concept of necropower; According to Mbembé's reading of the contemporary occupation in Gaza and the West Bank, necropower is showcased in many characteristics as mentioned before, including territorial fragmentation: isolating areas via blockades and expanding Israeli occupation settlements, in order to paralyse Palestinian movement and enforce systemic segregations. In one of her videos documented on November 10th, 2023 and posted via her Instagram account on November 13th, 2023, Owda is seen looking exhausted, carrying a heavy backpack loaded with her personal supplies, in addition to her holding more supplies in her right hand and filming with the other, she states that she has been walking for two hours under the sun, trying to evacuate to the south (*Details of 2023 Nakba* 00:00:14), this forced evacuation reflects the necropolitical logic by creating conditions where mere survival becomes a struggle, the act of walking for hours under militarised surveillance transforms the body itself into a site of resistance and subjugation as movement is stripped of autonomy.

As Mbembé writes: "High ground [the sky in this case] offers strategic advantages not found in the valleys (better vision and self-protection, a panoptic fortification enabling the gaze to be directed in multiple directions)" (81), like the watchtowers the loudspeaker god gives his

orders from in *Mornings in Jenin*, surveillance is also highly showcased in Bisan Owda's contemporary visual media, unmanned planes/drones are always present in contemporary Gaza. In one of Owda's videos posted on April 30th, 2024, entitled *24/7 for 17 Years.. "Zananeh"*, she is seen sitting in a car. At the same time, a loud buzzing sound can be heard. Owda then opens the door, and the buzzing sound gets louder; throughout the entire video, there is a text overlay that reads, "Sometimes, I can't even hear my voice, and there are no closed places other than cars where I can mute the "Zananeh" a bit". The Zananeh is an Arabic (Palestinian dialect) word for an unmanned plane or a drone derived from the Arabic root z-n-n, meaning buzzing. The drone's constant buzzing, as captured in Owda's video, is a sonic manifestation of occupation weaponising the auditory landscape to induce psychological terror.

Owda, in a video recorded on January 27th, 2025, and posted on her Instagram account on January 29th, 2025, documents her eventual return to Northern Gaza,

> Waiting in line with thousands of people, thousands of vehicles, waiting because the line is just advancing slowly because of checkpoints and Israeli occupation forces' searching of vehicles… you need to know that we've been trying to cross to the north of the Gaza Strip for three days; today is the third day of being here; it was delayed (crossing to the north), but in the end… it happened". (*Getting Back to The North* (00:00:12)

Here, the checkpoint acts as a symbol of necropolitical sovereignty; it is a chokehold, regulating not only movement but time itself; these checkpoint lines also reveal the necropolitical logic of segregation inherent to necropower, the Israeli occupation forces' scrutiny of vehicles and bodies mirrors colonial practices of portioning space along ethnic lines, ensuring that Palestinian mobility remains contingent on Israeli occupation military approval, the Israeli

occupation forces' arbitrary searches and delays weaponises time, rendering Palestinian lives expendable and interchangeable, while reinforcing a hierarchy of human value.

Mbembé's argument regarding oppressors justifying massacres as a societal purification manifests in real-life contemporary Gaza. In an article published on November 16th, 2023, by the Guardian, it was stated that the Israeli occupation forces troops on November 9th, 2023, claimed to have found a Hamas operational tunnel shaft and a vehicle containing a large number of weapons under the Al-Shifa hospital complex. Also, according to The Guardian, the Israeli occupation forces advanced further into the territory surrounding Al-Shifa hospital and accused Hamas of hiding evidence that would confirm that the organisation had used the hospital as a command-and-control centre.

In a video recorded on November 3rd, 2023, Owda is shown tearfully documenting chaotic scenes of people rushing between ambulances and carrying the injured. She reports that the Israeli occupation forces bombed the entrance of Al-Shifa Hospital, adding that she was at the entrance less than five minutes before the attack and if it was not for God's destiny, that would have been her. A second video titled *Last Day in Gaza, 10-11-2023*, posted on November 10th, 2023, includes her account of renewed strikes at Al-Shifa Hospital. At 00:00:48, Owda asserts, "People who did not evacuate were killed inside the hospital", showcasing how non-evacuation becomes a death sentence and exposing the violent paradox of humanitarian sites being transformed into targets within asymmetrical warfare's spatial logic.

II. 2. 2. Humanitarian Deprivation: Weaponising Basic Needs

In a March 2019 report to the Human Rights Council, UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk accused the Israeli occupation of violating international law by exploiting natural resources in the OPT, aggravating environmental degradation and human rights abuses. Lynk

stated: “For nearly five million Palestinians living under occupation, the degradation of their water supply, the exploitation of their natural resources and the defacing of their environment, are symptomatic of the lack of any meaningful control they have over their daily lives”. Key findings from the report include: Gaza’s blockade has caused a humanitarian crisis, over 96% of Gaza’s coastal aquifer (the primary water source) is contaminated and unfit for human consumption due to the Israeli occupation’s 12-year blockade, over-extraction, sewage/seawater infiltration, and infrastructure collapse from recurrent conflicts and Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank face restricted access to water resources as the Israeli occupation exploits the minerals and the natural wealth of the Dead Sea, denying Palestinians access to these resources. (OHCHR)

Bisan Owda’s visual narratives from contemporary Gaza repeatedly illustrate how Necropolitics function through the systemic deprivation of basic humanitarian needs; in her video entitled *The humanitarian conditions in Al-Shifa Hospital*, where she describes the claustrophobic environment of the hospital that became a shelter to thousands of refugees, the conditions Owda documented are exercised intentionally; the transformation of Al-Shifa hospital from a critical healthcare institution into an overcrowded shelter annihilated Gaza’s capacity to sustain life, taking apart both immediate survival mechanisms and long-term health cohesion.

In the same video, Owda articulates a fear of winter’s arrival while sheltering in Al-Shifa Hospital; she describes the absence of necessities including food, water, hygiene kits, and shelter while emphasising the looming threat of seasonal rains: “Last night, it rained… we don’t have anything to survive this… we’re cold… we don’t have rooms… we don’t have anything to deal with these problems” (00:00:55) Owda’s fear materialises in a video posted on

November 19th, 2023, where she shows heavy rains falling in Gaza, exposing the fragility of tents housing hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians.

Filming herself huddled, sobbing in a flimsy shelter, she states: “It’s raining, hundreds of thousands of people are in tents, they don’t have any place to go, they are in the streets, I’m one of them, it’s cold, it’s windy, it’s raining”. (*It’s Raining!!* 00:00:04). Here, the necropolitical assault intensifies with environmental conditions, displaced families already stripped of durable housing face a new layer of suffering. Though a natural phenomenon, the rain becomes a tool of punishment and systemic cruelty. Without durable housing, heating systems or dry clothing, marginalised individuals become exposed to severe illnesses. Therefore, this exposure is not merely a consequence of war but a foreseeable outcome of policies that deny materials for dignified shelter.

Another instance of humanitarian deprivation shows in a video posted on October 31st, 2023, where Owda vlogs her journey where she secures her daily meal that she has once a day, the video opens with Owda navigating a desolate urban landscape, passing shuttered bakeries closed under Israeli occupation forces threats (00:00:35). Here, the occupying power targets bakeries to enforce hunger as a condition of existence by severing access to bread which is a dietary staple. When Owda encounters a civilian baker making Saj bread on the street, he refuses to sell her bread unless she brings him flour as it is not available (00:01:05), the unavailability of an essential resource like flour is engineered through blockades and import restrictions.

The demand for individuals to procure their flour privatises survival and replaces communal solidarity with individualism, after an exhausting walk, Owda manages to acquire three sheets of Saj bread from another baker and proceeds her search for canned food as meat

and vegetables are not available, Owda enters a gutted supermarket with shelves empty except food requiring cooking gas that Gaza lacks, by the end of the video, Owda finally assembles her meal, Saj bread and a tuna can (00:03:25), she proceeds by stating that such a meal is not always available, even if it is, it requires hours of perilous travel. Owda's acknowledgement of the meal's rarity and the exhaustion required to secure it showcases a systemic deprivation of food; hunger here is not only mobilised to stave individuals but to deplete time, erode agency and extinguish hope.

Another instance of humanitarian deprivation is showcased in Owda's documentation of water deprivation in Gaza; in a video posted on April 15th, 2024, Owda films children transferring water they got from humanitarian trucks in repurposed cooking oil bottles and small buckets back to their tents. In the video, Owda notes that the availability of humanitarian aid trucks does not mean that the refugees are sufficiently provided with basic needs, as these trucks only come once or twice a week, refugees have no containers to transfer water. Therefore, they cannot have enough, and with the rising temperatures, water needs increase, yet aid quantities remain static. Aid trucks arriving weekly but unable to reach camps due to sand traps reflect institutional indifference; the absence of infrastructure (water pipes, for example) forces refugees into exhausting tasks where survival becomes a daily gamble.

II. 2. 3. Infrastructural Annihilation: Erasure of Place

By January 2024, an estimated 60% of Gaza's water and sanitation systems had been damaged/destroyed by the Israeli occupation's military operations, according to Human Rights Watch. By August 2024, this figure surged to 84,6% (World Bank/Ipsos). Such infrastructural eradication confirms Mbembé's necropolitical notion of "borderisation", referring to the process of transforming borders by oppressive regimes into tools of control to enforce

hierarchies of human value, to decide who may live freely and who is disposable, trapped or erased one of the ways borderisation is achieved is by high-altitude bombings of necessary infrastructure (99) Nowhere is this necropolitical logic more visible than in Gaza, where borderisation manifests not only through physical barriers but also through the deliberate annihilation of life-sustaining infrastructure.

The infrastructural annihilation of contemporary Gaza is evident in Bisan Owda's media; in a video posted on April 20th, 2024, she films the pollution of the coastline of Rafah, where refugees have their tents set meters from it; in the video, the coastline appears grey due to high pollution (There are no means of life 00:00:10), Owda proceeds to explain that this pollution stems from destroyed infrastructure from prolonged bombardment, which has obliterated Gaza's water treatment systems and overcrowded tent camps with no waste management infrastructure, that forces refugees to dump trash and sewage directly into the sea. (00:00:19) The video showcases a paradox: refugees reside mere meters from the sea that could provide them with unlimited water supply, yet it remains. Necropolitics is applied here not by direct bloodshed but by ecological weaponisation, particularly by transforming the sea into a toxic border, which allows refugees to be prone to many diseases and, therefore, lets them die slowly.

Owda also documents another instance of infrastructural annihilation, which does not necessarily put the Palestinians' lives at risk, but it is considered a threat to their heritage and memory. In a video dated November 29th, 2023, Owda reports the bombing of the Central Archives of Gaza, which is a study centre that contains documents that tackle the Palestinian archive from over 100 years ago. According to Al Jazeera, the centre is considered unusable as the building was destroyed. Owda notes that the bombing was incidental as an attempt to erase and strip the Palestinians of their past (*It's getting Darker* 00:00:32). The destruction of

millennia-old records represents a form of borderisation that extends beyond territorial demarcations to cultural and historical borders, this act attempts to eradicate knowledge systems that anchor a community's identity, to allow the legitimisation of dispossession and to reinforce the idea that Palestinians are unworthy of preserving their past, reducing their existence to a perpetual present of displacement and fragmentation.

According to the UN, approximately 92% of all residential buildings in Gaza (around 436,000 homes) have been damaged or destroyed since October 7th, 2023; the resulting debris amounts to nearly 500 million tonnes, which would take decades to remove under current siege conditions. So, Owda films, in a video posted on January 28th, 2024 herself walking on the rubble of residential homes in Northern Gaza. In the video, there is no intact building in sight. She states that she could see people's clothing and belongings (*Forever.*. 00:00:31), which indicates a sign of forced displacement. She also states that even if this genocide ends, people would have nowhere to go; it would take decades to rebuild their homes again (00:00:46).

The deliberate destruction of an entire city's residential buildings under siege conditions that block access to construction equipment and materials does not have any other explication other than it is a deliberate necropolitical strategy to make Gaza geographically uninhabitable and demographically displaceable, the tonnes of debris that are impossible to clear under siege conditions ensure that displacement is transformed from temporary suffering to a permanent exile, this spatial genocide denies the Palestinians their right to return, and legitimising their statelessness as a norm. Also, the blockade on reconstruction materials weaponises humanitarian deprivation to enforce a permanent state of exception where Palestinians are neither fully alive nor dead; the persistence of the rubble sits as a daily reminder of loss and entrapment of populations in geographies of abandonment.

Conclusion

This chapter compared Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's visual media narratives, employing Achille Mbembé's theory of Necropolitics to investigate representations of Palestinian displacement. Through this analysis, both works emerge as critical lenses exposing the institutionalised necropolitical mechanisms deployed by the Israeli occupation forces to enforce a perpetual state of dehumanisation and control over Palestinian lives. While their approaches differ in form and focus, they complement each other and collectively showcase the spatial and temporal dimensions of necropolitical violence.

Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* provides a broader vision of necropolitical violence ranging from the Nakba of 1948 to the Jenin Refugee Camp Massacre of 2002 and even amid exile. The novel intertwines personal and political histories and positions its fictional narrative in real-world events to showcase the intimate consequences of Necropolitics on individual lives. Furthermore, the novel's literary form demands explicit, textured descriptions of violence to highlight necropower's psychological and physical brutality and render it visible to the reader.

On the other hand, Bisan Owda's visual media provides an immediate account of necropolitical violence following October 7th, 2023. Owda's videos adopt a documentary tone that prioritises immediacy over explicitness. She captures Necropolitics through fragmented, real-time updates as both subject and witness. Unlike *Mornings in Jenin*, Owda showcases more implicit, developed and technological necropolitical strategies. Although her visuals are less overtly graphic than the novel's literary depictions, the rawness of visuals, paired with Owda's narration, exposes the systemic, industrialised nature of necropolitical violence. These narratives offer complementary insights. While *Mornings in Jenin* humanises Necropolitics

through emotional depth and intergenerational scope, Owda's visuals map its bureaucratic machinery in real-time.

Displacement does not merely uproot individuals from land; it fragments memory, distorts belonging, and forces identity into a constant negotiation state. For Palestinians, identity becomes inseparable from loss and survival, continually shaped by inherited trauma and the need to assert presence in spaces designed to erase them.

Chapter Three: Identity Amid Displacement – Amal in *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda's Testimonies

Introduction

Per the precedent chapter that focuses on the tragedies of displacement through a necropolitical lens and examines how Palestinian lives are subjected to systems of control that govern exposure to death, suffering and dispossession, it becomes clear that displacement is not only a physical removal from land. Being both a physical and psychological rupture, displacement fractures and reconfigures identity, leaving irremovable marks on those who endure it. For Palestinians, their Nakba is not limited to the tragedy of 1948; it is an ongoing reality that spans generations, weaving trauma, resilience and resistance into the fabric of collective and individual identity.

This chapter shifts the focus from the external structures of domination to the internal landscapes of those who endure them. It analyses the identity formation of two Palestinian women, including Amal Abulheja, the fictional protagonist of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda, a contemporary figure whose video diaries chronicle the ongoing Gaza conflict intensified by the events of October 7th, 2023. Both characters embody the enduring struggle to navigate belonging, memory and survival in the shadow of dispossession despite being separated by time, medium and circumstance.

III. 1. Negotiating Amal's Selfhood in *Mornings in Jenin*

In *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), Amal's life is structured by loss, resilience and cultural duality. Her identity is perpetually negotiated amid the ruptures of displacement rooted in her

family's expulsion in the Nakba of 1948, her exile in America and her eventual return to Jenin. This section examines how Amal's sense of self is fractured and reconstituted through trauma, intergenerational trauma and the tension between assimilation and resistance.

III. 1. 1. Paternal Imprints: Dalia and Hasan's Legacy

Amal Abulheja's identity in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* is moulded by the contrasting legacies of her parents, Dalia and Hasan, whose divergent responses to historical trauma and displacement forge the psychological and cultural contours of her selfhood. Dalia's psychological fragmentation due to the abduction of her infant son Ismael during the 1948 Nakba manifests in profound emotional withdrawal and stoicism. This emotional absence is transferred to Amal, especially evident in her relationship with her daughter, Sara. Conversely, Hasan's paternal influence emerges as a counterbalance characterised by intellectual fortitude; his emphasis on education as a mechanism of resistance against erasure instils in Amal a foundation of resilience and scholarly aspiration, which becomes a source of strength for Amal, helping her endure exile and cultural alienation later in her life. This section examines the dual parental influences that helped shape Amal's identity formation, focusing on how Dalia's trauma-induced reticence and Hasan's intellectual idealism collectively moulded her negotiation of belonging, selfhood and motherhood.

III. 1. 1. 1. Dalia's Role in Amal's Becoming

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Dalia is set as a complex figure whose emotional detachment from her daughter Amal must be understood not as resentment or personal temperament but as a psychological consequence of unprocessed trauma and forced Displacement. Amal's recollection of her mother is laden with a sense of emotional absence; she recalls while reflecting on her childhood: "I SPENT MUCH TIME in my youth trying to imagine Mama as

Dalia. …The mother I knew was a stout woman, imposing and severe, who soldiered all day at cleaning, cooking, baking, and embroidering thobes" (Abulhawa 55), this quote portrays a woman who performs maternal duties but is devoid of warmth or demonstrative affection. However, throughout the novel, Dalia's repressed affection surfaces through moments of affection, proving that her emotional detachment stems not from an absence of love but from deep psychological trauma. Dalia's early characterisation must be examined, particularly in the chapter "The No-Good Bedouin Girl"; the title reflects the societal scorn directed at Dalia, who defied social norms from a young age.

Dalia was not the traditional, proper Arab girl. She often forgot to submit for the traditional coverings of the hijab (20) and repeatedly steered talk in the village; her mother's disapproval manifested in beatings that were encouraged by women of the village, and her nonconformity reached a symbolic peak when her father burned her palm with hot metal before the entire village as an act of public shaming intended for her to admit to stealing Darweesh's horse Ganoosh and to suppress her spirited nature. As Abulhawa writes, "To the villagers, Dalia was like a wild gypsy, born of Bedouin poetry and colours instead of flesh and blood. Some thought the child had an aspect of the devil and convinced Dalia's mother to bring a sheikh to read Quranic verses over her" (21). Ironically, this wildness captivated Hasan, who eventually defied his mother's wishes and married her. This youthful vibrancy, however, is extinguished by the trauma of war and loss.

The beginning of Dalia's emotional decline coincides with the Zionist invasions of 1947-48. On July 24th, 1948, Israeli occupation forces bombed the Palestinian village of Ein Hod, killing most of Dalia's extended family and sparing only two sisters. Her father, who once burned the palm of her hand, lay charred in the aftermath. Dalia became physically and psychologically paralysed. In a harrowing scene, she falls to her knees, frozen, eyes wide and

unresponsive to Hasan's repeated calls as he tries to lead her to safety (Abulhawa 33-34). This was her first instance of emotional shutting down and the beginning of her emotional absence.

The trauma deepens during the forced expulsion from Ein Hod. While fleeing, Dalia clutches her infant son Ismael to her chest, following her husband, who walks ahead. In a moment of disorientation, the child slips from her arms and vanishes, causing Dalia to fall into a state of hysteria, screaming, "Ibni! Ibni!" (My son! My son!) in anguish (36). This loss becomes the defining trauma of her life. Abulhawa captures its devastating impact with the line, "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" (36). From this moment onward, Dalia is no longer the free-spirited girl once described with poetic exuberance. She becomes emotionally diminished, haunted by loss, and burdened by guilt.

When Amal is born, Dalia regains a small amount of her liveliness:

> She traded her tired black scarf for the vibrant new white one made of real silk. The birth of a new child was said even to have restored a glimpse, however brief, of the spirited gypsy she had once been. Though Dalia's spirit had long since been smothered, she could see its reincarnation in little Amal, like a whirlwind of life taking form in her daughter (Abulhawa 52).

The reader could guess that Amal would grow and turn out like her mother: "The girl had an aspect of sorcery as if she had materialised from the charms of alchemy and Bedouin poetry" (52). Amal was an inquisitive, playful child, just like her mother; she was not a traditional, proper girl; village women always advised Amal's mother to beat her so that she can grow out

of her demonic behaviour (56). However, her mother showed her love by not taking the women's advice and defending her daughter.

Dalia teaches Amal the art of birthing women and instructs her, "Don't be weak and don't get sick." Stern as steel. "Whatever you feel, keep it inside." (55) This quote exposes Dalia's hardened worldview as her insistence on emotional restraint showcases that suppressing feelings was more a survival strategy than just a lesson because to her, vulnerability equated to danger, and control over one's emotions was a form of resilience. To the reader, it becomes clear that this emotional suppression was her coping mechanism.

Dalia's emotional absence deepens significantly after the trauma of the Six-Day War, during which her husband, Hasan, disappears (later presumed killed) and her son, Yousef, is kidnapped. In an act of desperate protection, Dalia hides Amal in a hole in the kitchen as the Israeli occupation forces invade. Once the Israeli occupation forces withdraws, medical aid finally arrives, and Amal is taken to the hospital for examination and treatment. Upon arrival, Amal sees her mother sitting silently, her eyes wide open and unresponsive.

According to Hirsch, second-generation stories showcase the reality of proximity to survivors, particularly through manifestations including parental depression, dissociation and unresolved grief. (112) Amal's misunderstanding towards her mother shows as she claims that she does not relate to her when she is asked about her: "I hated Mama for being in shock, whatever that was, for not being the one to put her arms around me, for always having been different from the other mothers" (72). This admission of Amal is packed with resentment, confusion and unmet emotional needs. It showcases the complex dynamic between a grieving parent and a child who cannot yet comprehend the depths of loss or the manifestations of

psychological trauma, “whatever that was,” highlighting Amal’s emotional and cognitive disconnection from her mother’s suffering.

As a child, Amal lacks the psychological tools to understand what shock truly means. Therefore, she does not interpret her mother’s emotional distance as a sign of collapse but as a sign of rejection. Furthermore, the passage reflects a desperate longing for comfort, safety, and physical affection in a moment of chaos in addition to a growing awareness of Amal’s social and emotional alienation as she compares her mother unfavourably to others. This moment starts a longer emotional estrangement between mother and daughter. Only later in life, when Amal confronts grief and identity loss, can she begin to reassess her mother’s behaviour through a lens of empathy and understanding.

III. 1. 1. 2. Hasan’s Role in Amal’s Becoming

Amal sought love from her father, Hasan, whose warmth compensated for Dalia’s emotional detachment and soothed Amal’s profound longing for acceptance and belonging. If Dalia’s influence taught Amal to arm herself against loss, Hasan’s quiet rituals of predawn poetry and sunlit embraces taught her to feel, crave beauty, worship knowledge, and anchor her identity in something beyond survival.

Hasan’s intellectual awakening began due to his exposure to a hybrid zone where cultures and histories overlap, particularly through his childhood friendship with Ari Perlstein, a Jewish child of Holocaust survivors. The boys formed a strong bond amid the political divides that fractured their world. They found refuge in each other’s company, away from the political debates that consumed their elders. Their shared disinterest in politics blossomed into a mutual reverence for learning, planting in Hasan a lifelong belief in education as an act of resilience and an escape from chaos.

This intellectual awakening, however, clashed with the expectations of his father, Yehya, a farmer deeply connected to his land; Yehya viewed formal education beyond the eighth grade as a betrayal of tradition and a threat to his son's future, which he envisioned as inheriting and tending for the family's fields, a legacy that he viewed as both sacred and practical. After the Nakba, when the Abulheja family's fields were seized, Yehya's defiance softened into regret. The education he would have dismissed became a revelation, and he saw how knowledge might armour his son against a world intent on erasing their legacy.

Determined to break this cycle, Hasan raised his youngest and only daughter, Amal, with a radical departure from the past and emphasised on learning as a postmemorial transmission of cultural identity. Where Yehya had feared education as a threat, Hasan nurtured it as a birthright. He instilled in Amal curiosity and a near-sacred devotion to learning (a reflection of his hard-won ideals). To the young Amal, her father was less a man than a mythic figure. His rare appearances magnified his aura; she associated him with the sun and viewed it as his property, shooing other children from its rays as though they were trespassing on his domain. "That's my father's sun, get away!" (52). The sun is the source of light and energy on Earth. In literature, it symbolises enlightenment, hope and renewal (Amuletha). Therefore, Amal not only associated her father with a God-like figure but also as a source of life, warmth and authority.

One morning, when Amal was five years old, an instance transformed her mythic perception of her father. She awoke before dawn, distressed after wetting her clothes, and hurried to clean herself in the only private room available. To her horror, Hasan was waiting outside when Amal emerged. Fearful of his disappointment, she braced for punishment. Instead, Hasan responded with silent compassion. Without uttering a word, he helped her change into clean pyjamas, lifted her into his arms, and carried her to the family's small terrace. In the

predawn darkness, lit only by a candle, Hasan sat with Amal in his lap; for the first time, he read for her magical Arabic poetry verses, marking the beginning of an endeared, cherished ritual.

The imagery of the sun reoccurs with the daily rituals of Amal and her father; reading Arabic poetry at dawn emerges as a cornerstone of Amal's cultural and emotional inheritance; this act transforms the family's small terrace from a space perched on displacement to a sanctuary where language resists erasure. Amal admits, "I did not always understand what they wrote" (61), but the act transcends literal meaning. Poetry's hypnotic and lyrical cadences become a sensory conduit for heritage as this shared intimacy blends Palestinian literary heritage with personal tenderness.

Hasan's deliberate shaping of Amal's identity extends to her name. At six years old, he clarifies to her: "We named you Amal with a long vowel because the short vowel means just one hope, one wish… 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" (71). The emphasis on the elongation of the vowel here is both a grammatical defiance and a metaphor for expansiveness. Hasan linguistically rejects reductionism as he refuses to confine Amal to a singular destiny or identity. Just as the sun's rays are boundless, Amal's name is a conduit for inherited resilience; it is expansive, sustaining and unconfinable. Therefore, Amal's name is a revolution, a refusal to let trauma define her limits. Hasan's choice reflects his hard-won belief that education and hope, like vowels, can stretch beyond what history has tried to shorten.

"The land and everything on it can be taken away, but no one can take away your knowledge or the degrees you earn." (60) is one of the principles Hasan installed in Amal; in the context of Palestinian displacement, education becomes the only form of property immune

to theft, an individual's knowledge about his ancestors, origins and land amid an environment where everything gets stolen. Education becomes a political act of resistance. This lesson transforms knowledge into a weapon against erasure. Amal "became" Jenin's best student (60). Her academic excellence here stems from her longing for her father's affection. When she memorises and recites poetic verses, she showcases her intellect and proves herself worthy of his love. In these instances, it might seem that Amal's identity is entangled by her performance, and her self-worth is tied to external validation. However, that changes in later instances.

Amal's massive love for her father transforms into one of her most enormous sorrows and motivators. Hasan's death (physical disappearance) amplifies the symbolic weight of the dawn rituals they once had. Even without his company, Amal clings to their shared practice of reading at dawn as "a daily commemoration" (74); even as her memory of his physical features fades, she holds on to sensory memories of him like the "vaguely personified scent of honey apple tobacco" (120). Indeed, young Amal was academically successful for her father's approval; her identity and self-worth were tied to his validation. However, after his death, Amal clings to education as a fixed point of control; here, she does not seek her father's affection, but she unconsciously adopts his defiance against systemic oppression.

Even as her body outgrows his lap, even when he dies, and even decades later in Philadelphia, Amal's relationship with knowledge evolves but remains rooted in Hasan's influence. The poems and lessons he shared resurface as talismans against despair. Their rhythms connect her to a lineage of resistance and tenderness, illustrating how Hasan's values outlive his physical presence.

Hasan's dawn rituals, his choice of the name "Amal" and the poetic traditions he shares all become relics to preserve cultural identity. Although he dies early in her life, the sensory

memory of the sun, his tobacco and his linguistic legacy keep him alive in Amal's psyche as a postmemorial presence which is emotionally real and continuously formative. Moreover, the very act of learning, of clinging to literature and language even in her diaspora helps Amal navigate the third space of diasporic identity particularly, through the choice of her name, which indicates a refusal of being singularly defined by trauma or exile.

III. 1. 2. Hybrid Amal in the Exile

In "Reflections of Exile", Edward Said compares exile to death, but without death's ultimate mercy as it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family and geography (181). Similarly, Frantz Fanon, in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), interrogates the ontological destabilisation wrought by colonialism, arguing that a pervasive area of inadequacy fractures the colonised subject's consciousness. He asserts: "In the Weltanschauung [worldview] of a colonised people, there is an impurity, a flaw that outlaws any ontological explanation" (109-110). Here, Fanon delineates the epistemic violence of colonialism, which renders the colonised incapable of constructing a coherent selfhood outside the dehumanising frameworks imposed by the oppressor.

Homi Bhabha's theory of the Third Space offers a framework through which Amal's hybridity in exile can be examined. The third space is a site of negotiation where meanings, identities and cultures are constantly in flux; in this space, mimicry emerges from a paradoxical imperative within colonial logic which demands the assimilation of the colonised subject to the practices of the coloniser yet remain labelled as derivative, incomplete and "Other" (Bhabha 86), in addition to being a necropolitical system, America also functions as a third space of identity negotiation. This negotiation begins upon Amal's arrival at Philadelphia International Airport, where sensory and linguistic disorientation underscores her fractured sense of

belonging. When she is unfamiliar with the “Es-ka-lay-tor” (154) , the daughter of her host family questions whether she ever saw an escalator in her life as a mockery. This tiny word mirrors Amal’s struggle to navigate this foreign culture. Similarly, when she tells her American host family “Thank you” (154), to her it feels like a devoid expression in comparison to Arabic expressions of thankfulness and gratitude: “May Allah bless the hands that give me this gift”; “May God extend your life”; “May the next meal you cook for us be in celebration of your son’s wedding”, these Arabic expressions are full of poetic specificity and by contrast the American “Thank you” feels sterile and empty which Amal felt the need to assimilate to, further amplifying Amal’s liminality.

Amal’s adoption of the name “Amy” pinpoints a critical moment of mimicry within this third space. The name “Amal” that is given by her father, full of hopes and aspirations, is replaced by “Amy”, as she describes, is a name “drained of meaning”, her duality is furthermore reflected in her conflicted gratitude for America’s peace where there is “No soldiers… No barbed wire or zones off-limits to Palestinians.”. Indeed, the absence of overt conflict grants her temporary peace. However, this peace is predicated on silencing her memory. Amal’s mimicry of American norms, including casual dating and drinking, functions as a strategy of assimilation within the third space, not as a genuine transformation.

For Amal, it is a way to drown out the echoes of war and to overwrite the warscape with the mundanity of American life. However, the trauma persists, unspoken but omnipresent, manifesting in her refusal to write to her Palestinian acquaintances: “I did not write to Huda, nor Muna or the Colombian sisters. Nor to Ammo Darweesh, Lamya, Khalto Bahiya, or Haj Salem” This listing of names, each invoking a specific relationship underscores the scale of her disconnection. Therefore, Amal enacts a double erasure by severing these ties: She suppresses her memory and the living witnesses to herself.

According to Bhabha, the notion of transcending history or achieving complete rupture with the past is illusory, especially in the *fin de siècle* where dialectical tensions, including the past and present, dissolve (1); in the same way, Amal's memory haunts her despite her relentless attempts to erase her past. As Amal attempts to adopt American norms, she cannot help but feel shame and betrayal towards her family; in one instance, she recalls:

> Walking downtown once, I thought I saw my mother, the gust of a ghost breezing through my reflection in a store window. I paused, staring at my mother's daughter. Dalia, Um Yousef, had bequeathed to me the constitution that could not breathe while holding hands with the past. She could isolate each present moment while existing in an eternal past, but I needed physical distance to remove myself. I thought at that moment that no other soul could understand me as she might (158).

Here, the spectral image of her mother as a ghost intruding on her American presence symbolises the inescapable weight of intergenerational suffering, a legacy that Amal cannot sever despite her physical distance from Palestine. Amal's shame and alienation do not stem only from lived experience but also from the affective proximity to her mother's trauma, which stifles her ability to breathe in a new cultural context.

Amal's motherhood is a fraught replication of her mother's emotional absence, which is reflected through the prism of her own inherited trauma. On the day of Sara's birth, Amal experienced survivor's guilt as her labour occurred directly after hearing the devastation of her brother Yousef upon learning the fate of his pregnant wife, his unborn child and daughter, "Why should my baby be born while hers was torn from her womb?" (205). At the moment of her

birth, Amal expresses resentment toward her daughter for being the sole reason for her desire to live when all she wanted was to die upon witnessing all these atrocities (207).

Her relationship with her daughter Sara epitomises the tension between postmemory's burden and the yearning for the connection:

> I watched my child with curiosity and nourished her body for the sake of duty. I held my emotions in a tight fist and hard jaw. However, Sara's scent was irresistible, an intoxicating, wordless promise that weakened me. So, at times, I sneaked over my heart's fortress to inhale her baby smell into the deep parts of myself that still craved love. And I would lose myself in the rhythm of her suckling jaw, the warmth of her helplessness, the insistence of her endless needs. (209)

This passage reveals a maternal bond defined by detachment and obligation rather than emotional intimacy. Amal's motherhood is a mechanised caregiving performance, revealing her fear of vulnerability. Her "tight fist and hard jaw" symbolise the emotional suppression she enforces to protect herself and Sara from the weight of their shared history.

Amal's maternal love persists even in the face of the trauma she endured, the walls she built around her heart fracture in the presence of her daughter Sara; just like Dalia, her love is buried under layers of grief and fear:

> Only Sara was a threat to my hardness... The warm ember, forever aglow deep within. From the shadows of a heart more afraid of love than of death, I watched time stretch her bones and unfold her lovely skin over a young woman's body (221).

Here, the ember's glow represents the inalienable humanity Amal retains despite her attempts to numb herself. For Amal, love is not only an emotion but a portal to loss; she subconsciously associates love with loss, and the more she loves, the worse she grieves, and that is not only due to her personal experiences with loss but also her witnessing the decline of her mother upon the kidnapping of her infant son and Yousef's devastation upon learning about the slaughter of his family.

Amal Abulheja spent thirty years in exile, avoiding Jenin and burying her past memories, but when her daughter Sara asked her to accompany her to Palestine (254), she was obliged to confront her past. Though every instinct told Amal to retreat, to protect herself from the ghosts of home, she could not deny Sara the chance to reclaim what exile had stolen. In the end, it was not politics or guilt that drove Amal back to Jenin, it was love for her land that she could not erase from her memory and her daughter whom she could not deny her wish to connect with her homeland.

When Amal and her daughter visited her childhood friend Huda in Jenin, they witnessed the Jenin Refugee Camp Massacre while hiding in Huda's house, Amal's emotional armour that was forged through years of survival begins to crack under the pressure of physical danger "The scream of bulldozers, like an orgy of dragons" (270) that forced her into her primal state of vulnerability. When Sara asks her about her father, Majid, Amal says that she is afraid of what she might feel; her decades-long silence about Majid's death reflects the suffocating weight of unprocessed trauma.

By vocalising the reality of Majid's death, Amal interrupts the cycle of trauma. She invites her daughter into the deepest floors of her soul and proceeds to talk to her about why she shut down during the 9/11 attacks: "But on September 11, I faced the last moments of your

father's life. I saw him in every person who tried to jump and every body they pulled from the rubble. And I saw myself as I was never allowed to be, consoled, understood, and loved." (271). Amal here draws a connection between her husband's death in an Israeli occupation bombing of the al-Tamaria building in Beirut and the events of 9/11. At the same time, the victims of the Sabra and Shatila Massacre were dismissed, and victims of 9/11 were globally remembered. By making this link, Amal reclaims Majid's humanity by associating him with victims deemed worthy of collective mourning.

Prior to this exchange, Sara inherited only fragments of her father's memory, including his absence and her mother's emotional distance; these fragments haunted her as disconnected, unexplainable traces of a past she could not fully grasp. Amal's confession transforms these fragments into a coherent narrative, particularly by linking Majid's death (an event she did not witness) to the events of 9/11 (a witnessed aftermath). Sara now understands the legacy of her mother. She realises that 9/11 triggered her unprocessed trauma, and by shutting down after the events of 9/11, she was not mourning strangers but reliving Majid's death.

In this exchange, Sara's apology, "Oh, Mom. I'm so sorry. I had no idea. I was so insensitive", meets Amal's admission "I wasn't a very good mother. I should have told you. We should have talked like this years ago", their words that are heavy with regret fracture their walls that long partitioned their shared history into isolated grief. Sara's guilt here over her ignorance and Amal's regret over her emotional absence collide to reinterpret the past; the unspoken traumas that were once manifested in emotional absence are now transformed into a narrative that is no longer defined by inherited trauma but reborn through mutual accountability.

III. 2. Owda's Identity Amid Displacement

Bisan Owda's work as a Palestinian journalist and storyteller from Gaza exists at the intersection of personal narrative and collective memory. This section considers the forces that shape her identity not as a fixed truth but as a mosaic of survival, testimony and the intangible weight of inheritance. Her storyteller role occupies a contested space where resilience intertwines with fragmentation, and belonging is whispered and contested.

III. 2. 1. Owda's Collective Identity

Abu Khoti writes: "al-Nakba in collective memory became part of cultural identity through processes of recreation and integration. These processes took part in reformulating the perception of identity from individual self-unity and completeness to collaboration among members of the collective to preserve a traumatic past attempting to stand in the face of injustice and alienation" (qtd. in Awad 364). This quote showcases that the Nakba is not limited to being only a historical event. However, it is continuously recreated and integrated into Palestinian identity. This process transforms individual experiences of loss into a collective narrative, binding generations through shared memory. This captures Hirsch's postmemory, which explains how trauma can be transmitted affectively across generations and become formative For the Palestinians, the Nakba's ongoing nature subverts this trauma into a strong sense of nationalism.

Similarly, Julie Peteet in "Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps" states: "While all identity is performative to some extent, Palestinian identity was patently and tangibly more than ever about doing or performing rather than simply being. In an atmosphere of denial and displacement, expressions of national identity taking shape in exile were patched together from past life in Palestine and the realities of everyday life in exile" (168). Peteet's

observation highlights how Palestinian identity in displacement became an active, performative project "patched together" from postmemorial relics rather than a static inherited condition. For the Palestinian refugee, identity is not only about being Palestinian, but it is more about performing Palestinianness in third spaces of suspension between return and permanence, past and present, including refugee camps.

Owda showcases a strong sense of nationalism in many of her videos, even amid the oppression implemented upon her. In a video posted on April 3rd, 2024, Owda films herself finding a Poppy Anemone flower in a small green space amid the rubble; she proceeds by talking to her viewers, saying: "you need to know that I'm from a village called Beit Hanoun [House of Anemone], this village is very famous for Hanoun [Anemone], that's why it's my favourite flower".

The Poppy Anemone flower is considered a national symbol of Palestine, inherited after the Nakba of 1948; it represents the Palestinian flag by its red petals, black centre and a white ring around the blossom. It represents martyrdom as the red petals symbolise the blood of those who sacrificed their lives for the land, and it also represents resilience as it blooms after harsh winters; the symbol of the anemone flower, however, was culturally appropriated by the Israeli occupation as it was voted as the national flower of Israel in 2013 (Slifkin).

Bhabha, drawing on Gellner's insights, argues that while nationalism often constructs itself through arbitrary cultural symbols that gain meaning through time, its foundational purpose is far from arbitrary; it is rooted in a profound human need for communal belonging (qtd. in 142) . The Anemone flower's existence as a Palestinian and an Israeli-culturally appropriated symbol showcases a third space of enunciation where conflicting claims intersect and cultural meaning is negotiated. In a context where explicit expressions of Palestinian

identity, such as displaying the national flag, are criminalised, the Anemone emerges as a subversive alternative that asserts resistance. Owda reclaims the flower as a symbol of Palestinian resilience and transforms its symbolism from a subject of individual nostalgia into a collective act of cultural defiance. This shift not only challenges dominant narratives but also elevates the anemone to a shared relic of nationhood. Furthermore, the use of the Anemone flower is not only aesthetic, but it is a postmemorial relic of her village, Beit Hanoun. This confirms Hirsch's argument that "Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (107). Owda's reliance on cultural symbols, including the Anemone flower, gives form not necessarily to her inherited trauma only, but also to her lived trauma of displacement.

Another instance of collective Palestinian identity is evident in Bisan Owda's video posted on January 29th, 2025, documenting her emotional return to Beit Hanoun after 15 months of Displacement following the events of October 7th, 2023, her journey that was undertaken after a nine-day ceasefire and three days of moving amid slow-moving crowds at the Israeli occupation's checkpoints, culminates in a moment of triumph as she finally crosses into the north. Owda, from the start of the video, visually embraces her national and collective identity by wearing the Keffiyeh, a symbol of Palestinian rootedness and resilience. Furthermore, Owda's joyful declaration, "Gaza is worth the wait" (*Getting Back to The North* 00:00:25), transforms her moment of return into a broader act of defiance and communal resilience. By choosing to wear the Keffiyeh en route to a region dominated by Israeli occupation forces watchtowers, she portrays a form of symbolic resistance. She includes herself with generations of Palestinians who have experienced Displacement and return.

In the same video, Owda shows optimism that is cautious as she states that she will not believe that she is in Gaza until she puts her feet on the land again (00:00:58). Despite this being

a personal declaration, it also reveals a collective Palestinian scepticism that is shaped by unrealised and repeated promises of statehood and self-determination particularly the 1993 Oslo Accords which were once seen as a historic step toward peace and Palestinian sovereignty, instead solidified the Israeli occupation's control and exposed Western governments' role in perpetuating unmet promises.

According to McDonough, the human nose houses hundreds of odour receptors that connect to key brain areas involved in learning, emotion and memory. In the case of Owda's arrival in Northern Gaza, her tearful yet joyful statement, "It's starting to smell like Gaza" (*This is the Israeli-International Checkpoint* 00:01:03), reflects a postmemorial rupture where past and present collide through the olfactory sense. For Owda, the smell of Gaza reactivates a sense of belonging and identity that has been disrupted by displacement and violence. In this moment, smell becomes a relic of pre-trauma life. Moreover, the scent also participates in a collective postmemory. Owda's statement strongly resonates with a wider displaced Palestinian audience who may recognise this sensory signature of Gaza but can no longer access it directly. In this way, Owda becomes a conduit for postmemory transmission; she not only experiences it herself but also offers it as a testimony to others whose connections to place are similarly disrupted.

As Owda walks through the city, she witnesses the area being destroyed. However, despite the visible devastation of the landscape, she frames the return as an act of perseverance and communal agency: "We are walking back to our land.. and they can't do anything to prevent us", her emotional culmination "Al hamdulilah we're back, we're back, we're back… Wallah we made it to Gaza" (00:02:42) foregrounds the collective nature of her experience, the repetition of "we" marks a significant rhetorical shift: her return is both personal and symbolic of a people's enduring connection to place. Through her narrative, Owda constructs a collective

identity that resists erasure and is grounded in postmemorial inheritance, symbolic representation, and national belonging.

Another significant manifestation of Palestinian resilience shows when Owda steps into her home in Beit Hanoun, now reduced to rubble. Silent but wearing a resilient smile, she films herself navigating the shattered remnants of what was once her house. Her journey through the debris leads her to the ruins of her balcony, where she unfurls the Palestinian flag; the caption of this video reads as follows: “I am back, I am home, It’s burnt, my room for 20 years vanished, and it’s severely damaged, but it is still standing and despite everything, promise we will rebuild.”

According to Hirsch, efforts to preserve visual records of historical events are crucial because traditional history often prioritises cold facts over the raw human emotions and lived experiences of those who endured these events. These visual testimonies fill gaps left by written records, showing how people felt and what happened. (105) Owda’s uncharacteristic silence during the video speaks volumes; her silence filming sharpens the gravity of loss and serves a strategic documentary purpose to direct focus on the physical evidence of destruction, including charred infrastructure and collapsed ceilings, forcing viewers to confront the reality of occupation-driven violence. Also, this silence critiques the limitations of language in representing systemic trauma, while her presence within the frame transforms her body into a political instrument.

By anchoring the Palestinian flag to the ruins, Owda declares that destruction cannot sever ties to land or heritage. Also, Owda’s “promise we will rebuild”, is not a personal declaration as she positions herself with the Palestinian collective; it is a collective pledge echoing across generations of Palestinians who have rebuilt homes, schools and communities

despite recurring cycles of destruction, this promise also rejects the normalisation of loss, it is a moral covenant with ancestors and future generations.

III. 2. 2. Owda: The Storyteller

In “The Generation of Postmemory”, Marianne Hirsch argues that photography has played a significant role in shaping how later generations grasp the Holocaust, although they did not experience it themselves. She highlights photography’s strength is its perceived authenticity and ability to create an immersive immediacy. It allows viewers to feel as though they are “witnessing” history, making photographs uniquely effective for conveying atrocities that seem -unimaginable or incomprehensible (107-108). Building on this idea, Bisan Owda’s use of modern audiovisual media, which combines visuals, sound and narrative, offers an even more layered form of documentation than photographies; Owda’s audiovisual storytelling does not only resist historical erasure but also ensures that memories and cultural heritage are preserved with urgency and depth for future generations.

Owda’s identity as Hakawatya is central to her persona, both online and in her creative work; it is present on her Instagram bio and frequently displayed on shirts she wears in her videos. This label transcends a mere title; it represents her mission to preserve Palestinian culture through the ancient Arab tradition of oral storytelling. Before October 7th, 2023, Owda’s social media presence thrived as a vibrant archive of Palestinian heritage. Adopting the mannerisms of classical Hakawatis, she would cheerfully carry a chair into the frame to sit surrounded by her online audience and open her videos in Arabic with the signature line: “To all admirers of stories and tales all around the world. This is Hakawatya, and today we have a new story from Gaza”, her content celebrated Gaza’s daily life, folklore and resilience.

However, the violent escalations following the events of October 7th, 2023, caused a shift in Owda's narrative practice; displaced and deprived of her filming equipment, she reformulated her methods while maintaining her role as a chronicler of Palestinian survival. Her storytelling shifted from structured documentation to fragmented, real-time testimony and physical presence in bombed neighbourhoods. In a video posted on October 15th, 2023 (delivered unusually in Arabic, diverging from her post-October 7th shift to English), she resurrected her Hakawatya persona under profoundly altered circumstances. The once-cheerful opening line is now uttered with solemn resolve: "I am still alive, still narrating, and transmitting all that's happening here because I feel like that's my role. I feel like perhaps tomorrow, I will be martyred, and the only thing that will last from me is the tiny bit of information and stories I'm narrating." (00:00:12, my trans.)

In discussing his use of the English language, particularly in *Things Fall Apart*, renowned African writer Chinua Achebe recognises its colonial origins yet advocates for its repurposing; he crafts a distinct "new English" infused with cultural linguistic elements, capable of expressing cultural narratives. This act functions as both a resistance to colonialism's legacy and a strategic embrace of English's global reach to amplify marginalised voices. Similarly, Owda's return to Arabic in this video signals a reclamation of cultural intimacy and ancestral belonging; she recenters her identity as a Palestinian narrator rooted in her community's linguistic and oral traditions; this shift proves that her stories are not just about Palestinians, but for Palestinians. Furthermore, Owda's post-displacement storytelling sheds its performative polish and instead becomes raw testimony; the recital of her opening line here carries a haunting duality; it is both a mantra of persistence and a dirge for the world she once documented. The shift in her tone reflects the weight of witnessing a genocide with bare eyes and of changing from a cultural educator into a living archive of Palestinian survival.

III. 2. 3. Owda's Fragmented Psyche

Renée Greene's architectural metaphor of the stairwell as a transitional space between "upper and lower cases" (qtd. in Bhabha 3) resonates powerfully with the Palestinian experience of displacement. For the Palestinians, the forced removal from their homes (the upper case of rooted identity) into refugee camps is like a descent into a liminal stairwell, a space suspended between erasure and reinvention, trapping them in an unresolved in-between. This liminality fractures individual identity, destabilising self-perception even as collective narratives of nationalism emerge. Bisan Owda's visual media vividly captures this tension, documenting how displacement traps individuals in a liminal void, severing ties to a stable identity; Owda's visuals expose the camp not as a temporary threshold but as a site of perpetual estrangement, where the self dissolves within architectures of displacement.

In a video posted on October 16th, 2023, Owda, in a visibly distressed state, recounts a night of acute psychological unravelling. She describes waking at 2:30 a.m., overwhelmed by hallucinations of white phosphorus bombs, which led her to scream and frantically cover her face with a wet cloth so that she could breathe. Here, the collective memory of history, particularly the Israeli occupation's documented use of white phosphorus in Gaza, merges with the ever-present threat of recurrence, which creates a postmemory of the present where anticipation of trauma becomes unrecognisable from lived experience.

At the same time, Owda is not only displaced from her geographical homeland but also from her mind and body; she exists in a mental third space constructed through contradiction, anxiety and the pressure of the unspeakable; her hallucination positions her between waking and dreaming, past attacks and present anticipation. Her breakdown is not a mere PTSD episode; it reflects an identity torn by repetitive trauma. It represents how much external

violence of the occupation is internalised to the point where the boundaries between memory, imagination and present are no longer clear. Her body reacts instinctively (she screams, covers her face, and prepares to die), all in the absence of an actual bomb; this disconnection between reality and perception signals the fragmentation of subjectivity. This instance highlights how the colonised subject is not only politically dominated but psychologically destabilised, caught in a ceaseless loop of fear, dislocation and survival.

Similarly, in a video posted on October 23rd, 2023, Bhabha's third space is highly showcased. Here, Owda explains that her greatest fear is not death but surviving the ongoing war and confronting the devastating aftermath: destroyed cities, lost loved ones and annihilation of their homeland. Her greatest dread is the psychological and existential burden of rebuilding a life in a world stripped of everything familiar. She questions how one could endure such trauma and find motivation to live again after years of suffering and loss. Owda's fear here is deeply existential; for her, survival does not equate to continuity but to rupture, and her home is no longer a place of safety or belonging but a site of trauma and memory. Therefore, her identity here is in a liminal space, separated from the past and present. Owda does not merely fear loss, but she fears survival in a space where identity must be reconstructed with shattered elements. In Owda's case, her identity is hybridised through not necessarily cultural assimilation but survival in ruin.

In another video posted on December 29th, 2023, Owda reflects on her uncertain future after surviving 80 days of genocide, Displacement and relentless violence. She questions where she can go when her loved ones are either killed or displaced when the houses and neighbourhoods she once knew are lying in ruins. Owda proceeds by stating that life in Gaza will never be the same after the genocide; it will be impossible. Although she is grateful to have endured hunger, bombings and massacres, she struggles with the paradox of survival: Why feel

happiness for staying alive when the future ahead is so bleak? Torn between conflicting emotions, she reflects: “I’m lucky and unlucky, happy and sad. I know what I should do, and I don’t know what I should do.”

Owda’s paradoxical reflections epitomise the space of contradiction and ambivalence; one might perceive Owda’s post-survival state as a collapse into confusion. However, it is a mode of resistance that reveals the complexity of living through trauma and displacement. Her feelings are not black or white; they are instead a hybrid consciousness under extreme violence. The hybridity is especially potent in how she perceives the paradox of surviving genocide while being estranged from the land she still physically inhabits. For Owda, Gaza is an unhomely place, it is a place that belongs to her and alienates her at once. This unhomeliness reflects the ways colonial histories invade the private and emotional spaces of the subject, producing a psychic splitting that is foundational identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the fragmented, negotiated and resilient identities of Amal Abulheja in *Mornings in Jenin* and Bisan Owda in her visual testimonies, revealing how Palestinian selfhood is continuously shaped and reshaped by intergenerational trauma, exile and resistance. Despite their differing contexts and forms, both narratives illuminate the profound psychological and cultural impacts of Displacement.

Amal’s identity is depicted as a long arc of negotiation, moulded by parental legacies, trauma and exile. Her mother’s emotional detachment, which is born from loss and unprocessed grief, leaves Amal with an inherited tendency toward emotional suppression. On the other hand, Hasan arms her with a foundation of intellectual fortitude and ancestral knowledge to combat erasure. However, Amal’s Displacement in America deepens the rupture within her sense of

self, thrusting her into a façade of conformity that distances her from her roots and silences the echoes of her history. However, identity can be reconstituted through storytelling, vulnerability, and intergenerational healing, showcased through the enduring pull of memory and her final emotional reconciliation with her daughter.

Bisan Owda's identity, by contrast, is not shaped through a linear narrative but instead captured in moments of crisis, testimony, and survival. Her videos reflect a collective identity rooted in symbolism, resistance and postmemory, through symbols including the anemone flower, the Keffiyeh, the Palestinian flag and the scent of Gaza. Owda collapses the personal and the national, transforming her individual experience into a communal archive of resilience. As a Hakawatya, she preserves cultural memory while bearing witness to unfolding violence, yet beneath her role as a narrator lies a fragmented psyche, fractured by Displacement, survivor's guilt and the existential burden of living amid ruin. Her identity emerges not from resolution but from enduring contradiction: grief and gratitude, belonging and estrangement.

General Conclusion

The Nakba, often narrowly remembered as the catastrophic displacement of Palestinians in 1948, is not confined to history but remains an ongoing reality mirroring the displacement of Palestinians; though separated by time, a shared architecture of violence binds those events, one rooted in apartheid, occupation and the deliberate fragmentation of Palestinian life.

This dissertation offers one of the first comparative studies that bridge literary narrative and contemporary visual media to examine the Palestinian experience of displacement. Through the analysis of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and a selection of 22 videos from Bisan Owda's visual media (October 2023-January 2025), this research has traced how both mediums uniquely articulate themes of displacement and identity. Drawing on Achille Mbembé's theory of necropolitics, Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory and Homi Bhabha's notion of the Third Space, this study has demonstrated the strengths and distinctive capabilities of each medium in conveying an intimate and politically charged vision of Palestinian life under occupation and exile.

The research began by contextualising Palestinian displacement not simply as a historical rupture rooted in the Nakba of 1948 but as a recurring and evolving condition perpetuated through wars, occupations and geopolitical betrayals. From the Nakba to the Jenin Refugee Camp Massacre, from the Intifadas to the ongoing Gaza siege, displacement emerged as both a physical and psychological phenomenon governed by a necropolitical regime that weaponises space, resources and life itself to enforce Palestinian expendability. Theories of Necropolitics, Postmemory and Hybridity offered critical tools to interrogate how Palestinians are forced to negotiate identity within structures of domination, silence and erasure.

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Amal's life is split between two worlds. Her mother's emotional detachment due to her unprocessed collective grief stemming from the Nakba, instils in Amal a learned inhibition of emotional expression, replicating intergenerational patterns of unarticulated grief. However, her father's insistence on Palestinian cultural memory and intellectual rigour functions as a counter-strategy against historical erasure. Amal's migration to America fuels the need for performative assimilation in exchange for the erasure of her heritage. However, her eventual reconciliation with her daughter Sara shows the possibility of healing through intergenerational storytelling. The novel uses textured narration and emotional depth to render necropolitical violence visible and human through its fictional lens.

Conversely, Bisan Owda's media offers a raw, real-time account of displacement. Her identity unfolds not through linear development but through fragmented moments of witness, resilience and breakdown. Through symbolic acts, including clutching an anemone flower, wearing the keffiyeh and planting a flag in ruins, Owda constructs a collective identity rooted in post-memory and resistance. As a Hakawatya, she preserves cultural heritage even as she navigates her psychological disintegration. Her storytelling, stripped of performative polish, becomes an urgent form of historical preservation under siege. Her media reveals contemporary necropolitics' bureaucratic and technological sophistication, capturing its industrialised machinery.

Ultimately, the study affirms that Palestinian identity is not merely inherited or imposed; it is continuously performed, remembered, mourned, and reimagined in the face of historical trauma and the ongoing erasure that started since the Nakba. In both words and images, the Palestinian self resists obliteration by insisting on presence, memory and the promise to rebuild.

Beyond testing research hypotheses, this dissertation argues for the academic recognition of Palestinian content creators as valuable contributors to the discourse on displacement, identity and resistance. Both *Mornings in Jenin* and the digital narratives produced by Palestinian content creators, including Bisan Owda, provide rich material for literary and cultural analysis. These narratives offer a multi layered portrayal of Palestinian identity that transcends traditional boundaries of genre, form and temporality, affirming the importance of integrating diverse narrative media into future scholarly work on the Palestinian condition.

Building on the findings of this dissertation, future research could further explore the role of digital storytelling in constructing contemporary Palestinian narratives by engaging more with the works of Bisan Owda across social media platforms beyond Instagram, particularly YouTube and her documentary series with AJ+. Also, expanding the scope to include other prominent Palestinian content creators, such as Motaz Azaiza and Plestia Alaqad, could offer a broader perspective on how visual and textual media contribute to articulating identity, resistance, and collective identity. Moreover, analysing not only videos but also social media posts, captions, and photographs through diverse theoretical lenses, such as theories of visual communications, could provide deeper insights into how digital narratives function as testimony and activism. Interdisciplinary research would further validate the cultural and academic significance of these evolving narrative forms in Palestinian discourse.

Works Cited

Abu-Shomar, Ayman M. “Diasporic Reconciliations of Politics, Love and Trauma: Susan Abulhawa’s Quest for Identity in Mornings in Jenin.” *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 6.2 (2015): 127–136. Web. 18 Mar. 2025. <journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/alls/article/view/1375>.

Abulhawa, Susan. *Mornings in Jenin*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2010. Print.

Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.

Al Jazeera. “Israel-Hamas War in Maps and Charts: Live Tracker.” *Al Jazeera*. N.p., 3 Feb. 2025. Web. <www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>.

---. “The Nakba Did Not Start or End in 1948.” *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 23 May 2017. Web. <www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/23/the-nakba-did-not-start-or-end-in-1948>.

---. “What Were the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians?” *www.aljazeera.com*. N.p., 13 Sept. 2023. Web. <www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/13/what-were-oslo-accords-israel-palestinians>.

Al-Sinwar, Zakaria Ibrahim. “Jerusalem in the Ottoman Rule (1516-1917 AD).” *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education* 6.1 (2019): 43–51. Web. <www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijhsse/v6-i1/5.pdf>.

Allpoetry. “My Homeland by Ibrahim Tukan.” *Allpoetry.com*. N.p., 2025. Web. 2025. <allpoetry.com/My-Homeland>.

Aude, Signoles. “Sabra and Chatila | Sciences Po Violence de Masse et Résistance - Réseau de Recherche.” *www.sciencespo.fr*. N.p., 29 Apr. 2019. Web. <www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/sabra-and-chatila.html>.

Awad, Ward. “The Jewish Other and Palestinian Identity: The Naksa Redefining the Meaning of the Nakba.” *June 1967 in Personal Stories of Palestinians and Israelis* 15 (2022): 363–392.

Bammer, Angelika. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Print.

Benattia, Nassima, and Samah Boumakhlouf. “Plotting the Palestinian Nakba: Family and Identity Displacement in Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin.” N.p., 2020. Web. <num.univ-msila.dz/DWE/public/attachements/2020/09/28/final-thesis-benattia-boumakhloupdf-mwcbxdeh1601327776.pdf>.

Best, Antony. *International History of the Twentieth Century*. London Routledge, 2007. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross Macdonald School Resource Services Library, 2012. Print.

Cambridge Dictionary. “Displacement | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *dictionary.cambridge.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. <dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/displacement>.

Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. S.L.: Routledge, 2022. Print.

Darweesh, Mahmoud. *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems*. Trans. Munir Akash et al. University of California Press, 2003. Print.

Diabes, Wardeh KB, and Llaria Poggiolini. “The Palestinian-Israeli Narrative after October 7, 2023: Public Diplomacy and Social Media.” N.p., 2024. Print.

Dubai Press Club. “Piers Morgan Session at the Arab Media Summit.” *YouTube*. N.p., 1 June 2025. Web. 17 June 2025. <www.youtube.com/watch?v=i74Frb1-IPc>.

Easthope, Antony. “Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity, or Derrida versus Lacan.” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* 4.1/2 (1998): 145–151. Web. <www.jstor.org/stable/41273996>.

ECF Database. “Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada, 2000–2005?).” *ecf.org.il*. N.p., n.d. Web. <ecf.org.il/issues/issue/230>.

Elbahtimy, Hassan. “Did the Soviet Union Deliberately Instigate the 1967 War in the Middle East? | Wilson Center.” *www.wilsoncenter.org*. N.p., 5 June 2017. Web. <www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/did-the-soviet-union-deliberately-instigate-the-1967-war-the-middle-east>.

Fanon, Frantz . *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Plutopress, 1952. Print. Not cited in your work.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1970. Web. <envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf>.

Garfias, Beatriz Avelar, and Torbjörn Rolandsson. "Resistance beyond Borders: Eye-Witness Accounts from Young Palestinian Journalists and Global Perception of the Current Palestinian Genocide through Social Media." N.p., 2024. Print.

Hall, Stuart. *Essential Essays (Two-Volume Set) : Foundations of Cultural Studies and Identity and Diaspora.* Duke University Press, 2018. Print.

Hamdan, Youssra. "Wartime Influencers: Palestinian Citizen Journalism on Instagram during the War on Gaza 2023-2024." N.p., 2023. Web. <studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/47707>.

Hawaleshka, Danylo. "History Illustrated: The Story of Hamas and Its Fight for Palestine." *www.aljazeera.com*. N.p., 11 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2023/10/11/history-illustrated-the-story-of-hamas-and-its-fight-for-palestine>.

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory : Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2012. Print.

Holocaust Encyclopedia. “Hajj Amin Al-Husayni: Wartime Propagandist.” *encyclopedia.ushmm.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. <encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hajj-amin-al-husayni-wartime-propagandist>.

Human Rights Watch. “Jenin: IDF Military Operations.” *www.hrw.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. <www.hrw.org/reports/2002/israel3/israel0502-05.htm>.

IMEU. “The Sabra & Shatila Massacre | IMEU.” *imeu.org*. N.p., 8 July 2024. Web. <imeu.org/article/the-sabra-shatila-massacre>.

Jafarnia, Niku. “Gaza’s Water Infrastructure Desperately Needs to Be Rebuilt.” *Human Rights Watch*. N.p., 13 Feb. 2025. Web. <www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/13/gazas-water-infrastructure-desperately-needs-be-rebuilt>.

Kalua, Fetson. “Homi Bhabha’s Third Space and African Identity.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21.1 (2009): 23–32. Web. <www.jstor.org/stable/40647476>.

King, Richard D. “Pogroms in Imperial Russia | EBSCO.” *EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | www.ebsco.com*. N.p., 2023. Web. <www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/pogroms-imperial-russia>.

Knipp, Kersten. “War of Stones.” *dw.com*. Deutsche Welle, 8 Dec. 2012. Web. 28 Mar. 2025. <www.dw.com/en/problems-unresolved-25-years-after-intifada/a-16436294>.

Kramer, Martin. *What Happened at Lydda*. 2014. Web. <scholar.harvard.edu/files/martinkramer/files/what_happened_at_lydda_kramer.pdf>.

L'Express. "Netanyahu: 'Hitler Ne Voulait Pas Exterminer Les Juifs.'" *L'Express*. N.p., 21 Oct. 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2025. <www.lexpress.fr/monde/proche-moyen-orient/israel-netanyahou-accuse-un-religieux-palestinien-d-avoir-fomente-l-holocauste_1727907.html>.

Maghfiroh, Aimatul Ayu. "View of the Portrayal of Amal's Diasporic Identity in Susan Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin." *Unesa.ac.id*. N.p., 2025. Web. 18 Mar. 2025. <ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/litera-kultura/article/view/33365/30359>.

Mattar, Philip. *The Mufti of Jerusalem*. Columbia University Press, 1992. Print.

Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. Print.

McDonough, Molly. "The Connections between Smell, Memory, and Health | Harvard Medicine Magazine." *Harvard Medicine*. N.p., Apr. 2024. Web. <magazine.hms.harvard.edu/articles/connections-between-smell-memory-and-health>.

Merriam-Webster. "Definition of Displace." *Merriam-webster.com*. N.p., 2019. Web. <www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/displace>.

Morris, Benny. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999*. New York: Knopf, 1999. Print.

---. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*. Cambridge Etc.: Cambridge U.P, 1987. Print.

Office of The Historian. "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process." *Office of the Historian*. N.p., 2000. Web. <history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>.

Owda, Bisan (wizard_bisan1). “4:30 Pm 3-11-2023 قصف عند بوابة مستشفى الشفاء!” *Instagram* 3 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CzMBjcpsTX-/>.

---. “24/7 for 17 Years.. ‘Zananeh.’” *Instagram* 30 Apr. 2024. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C6Yk3pJsVIy/>.

---. “29/11/2023.. It’s Getting Darker.” *Instagram* 29 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C0PdsY_riMp/>.

---. “As Simple as This, If We Lived after the War, How Can We Face All These Traumas?” *Instagram* 16 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CycswstsqDr/>.

---. “Can We Face This Alone?” *Instagram* 23 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CyvcOpMM1iG/>.

---. “Details of 2023 Nakba.” *Instagram* 13 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CzlklmfM4ql/>.

---. “Finally.. A Green Area!!” *Instagram* 3 Apr. 2024. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C5TpUALMBwx/>.

---. “في غ/زة ممكن نضل يوم كامل مندور عرغيف خبز وعلبة تونا!” *Instagram* 9 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/Cza0HBnI-ki/>.

---. “Getting back to the North, a 30 Hours of Waiting in Lines before Reaching the Checkpoint!” *Instagram* 29 Jan. 2025. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/DFZgPyAI0nN/>.

---. “I Am Back, I Am at Home.. It’s Burnt, My Room for 20 Years Vanished, and It’s Severely Damaged, but It Is Still Standing and despite Everything, وعد بنعمرها.. Promise We Will Rebuild.” *Instagram* 31 Jan. 2025. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/DFf90c6uEXC/>.

---. “It’s Impossible to Go Back Again to Our Lives!” *Instagram* 29 Dec. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C1bijqWIKFo/>.

---. “It’s Raining!!, We Don’t Know Any Place to Go!!” *Instagram* 19 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/Cz1clVSse5n/>.

---. “Last Day in Gaza, 10-11-2023.” *Instagram* 11 Nov. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CzgmS1iMIUl/>.

---. “My Neighborhood Was Demolished Tonight, We Left to a Safer Place, We Are Alive. انا من سكان حي الرمال، انمسح حيي السكني مسح الليلة وانا بخلي منزلي ع مكان آمن أكثر ولو قليلًا.” *Instagram* 10 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/reel/CyOCDfksbek/>.

---. “شو بستنا العالم!!!! شو بتستنو احنا بنموت!! We Are Dying!! We Are Dying Please, Please Do Something.” *Instagram* 13 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CyV-mYLMMS_/>.

---. “The Humanitarian Conditions at Shifaa Hospital Are Getting Worse Every Day in Gaza!” *Instagram* 16 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CydcsiJs8RW/>.

---. “The UN: There Is No Safe Places in Gaza.” *Instagram* 28 Jan. 2024. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C2pomVxMCvq/>.

---. “There Are No Means of Life, and Pathogens Are Spread Everywhere!” *Instagram* 6 Apr. 2024. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C5-qta9rwSh/>.

---. “This Is in Arabic to Remind Myself of the Beautiful Gaza I Keep in My Mind and My Heart!” *Instagram* 15 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CybNYE_skp3/>.

---. “This Is the Israeli- International Checkpoint Checkpoint between the South and North Gaza.” *Instagram* 29 Jan. 2025. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/DFaVG8KM3zY/>.

---. “Thousands of People Left Their Homes to the Hospital, Because It Is Safer! آلاف النازحين في مستشفى الشفا بعد قصف حي الرمال وأنا منهم.” *Instagram* 10 Oct. 2023. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/CyONVofMjJr/>.

---. “Water, It’s Only Water! This Is Not Too Much to Ask For!” *Instagram* 15 Apr. 2024. Web. <www.instagram.com/p/C5yYRk0sheG/>.

Oxford Reference. “Sykes–Picot Agreement.” *Oxford Reference*. Oxford University Press, 2025. Web. 14 Mar. 2025. <www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100546581>.

Palquest. “Fourth Arab Summit: Resolutions - 1 September 1967 (Historical Text).” *Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question – Palquest*. N.p., 2025. Web. <www.palquest.org/en/historictext/9615/fourth-arab-summit-resolutions?__cf_chl_tk=Dnoacmk2TdxgZuGjkQvv0FCpAMW6bHOQlWGaimF3aGU-1750443405-1.0.1.1-6ZdiaPPoKao7FsEhybjuiqkMhHt1WkCSS4riCM5_zPI>.

Pal, Payel. “Nostalgia, Identity, and Homeland: Reading the Narratives of the Diaspora in Susan Abulhawa’s Fiction.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 57.1 (2021): 47–59. Web. 10 Apr. 2021.

Pappé, Ilan. “Myths of the Six-Day War.” *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*. N.p., 9 May 2017. Web. <www.thecairoreview.com/essays/myths-of-the-six-day-war/>.

Peteet, Julie. *Landscape of Hope and Despair Palestinian Refugee Camps*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. Print.

PLO Department of Culture and Information. “May 13, 2015 - Dr. Ashrawi: ‘the Nakba Did Not End with the Creation of Israel; Rather, It Is an Ongoing Process That Seeks to Displace Palestine and Replace It with “Greater Israel” at the Expense of Its People and Their Rights.’” *Dci.plo.ps*. N.p., 2015. Web. <www.dci.plo.ps/en/article/3287/May-13>.

Rydelnik, Michael . “Is the Modern State of Israel the Fulfillment of Prophecy? - Chosen People Ministries.” *Chosen People*. N.p., Apr. 2021. Web. <chosenpeople.com/is-the-modern-state-of-israel-2/>.

Sa’di, Ahmad H, and Lila Abu-Lughod. *Nakba : Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Print.

Sackett. *Mornings in Jenin by Susan Abulhawa Reading Group Guide*. 2012. Web. 2025. <www.sackett.net/AbulhawaJeninGuide.pdf>.

Safran, William, Ajaya Sahoo, and Brij V Lal. *Transnational Migrations*. Routledge, 2013. Print.

Said, Edward W. *Out of Place: A Memoir*. London: Granta, 1999. Print.

---. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. London Granta Books, 2013. Print.

---. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. Print.

Shlaim, Avi. *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. New York, Ny Norton, 2014. Print.

Shlaim, Avi. "Britain and the Nakba: A History of Betrayal." *Middle East Eye*. N.p., 10 May 2023. Web. <www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/nakba-britain-history-betrayal>.

Slifkin, Natan. "Poppies and Cultural Appropriation." *Rationalistjudaism.com*. Rationalist Judaism, 11 Nov. 2024. Web. 18 May 2025. <www.rationalistjudaism.com/p/poppies-and-cultural-appropriation>.

Tell, Tariq. "Husayn-McMahon Correspondence." *1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia*. N.p., 9 July 2024. Web. <encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/husayn-mcmahon-correspondence/>.

Tharwat Abdo Oulwan, Eman, Shireen Youssef Mansour, and Shokry Megahed. "Displacement as a Traumatic Experience in Susan Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin (2010) and Khaled Hosseini's Sea Prayer (2018)." *Occasional Papers* 76.1 (2021): n. pag. Print.

The Guardian. "Who Is Mahmoud Khalil? The Detained Columbia Graduate Praised as Steady Negotiator." *The Guardian*. The Guardian, 12 Mar. 2025. Web. <www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/12/who-is-mahmoud-khalil-arrest-palestinian-activist-columbia>.

Third World Resurgence. "Identity Card by Mahmoud Darweesh." *www.twn.my*. TWN, 2016. Web. <www.twn.my/title2/resurgence/2016/310-311/poetry1.htm>.

Thomas J., Renna. “Six-Day War | EBSCO.” *EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | www.ebsco.com*. N.p., 2023. Web. 14 Mar. 2025. <www.ebsco.com/research-starters/military-history-and-science/six-day-war>.

United Nations. “Gaza: Destruction of Vital Lifting Gear Halts Search for Thousands Buried under Rubble.” *UN News*. N.p., 22 Apr. 2025. Web. 18 May 2025. <news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162491>.

---. “Israel’s Exploitation of Palestinian Resources Is Human Rights Violation, Says UN Expert.” *OHCHR*. N.p., 18 Mar. 2019. Web. <www.ohchr.org/en/news/2019/03/israels-exploitation-palestinian-resources-human-rights-violation-says-un-expert>.

Van Rooyen, Theunis Johann. *Hitler in Discussion with the Mufti in Late-1941*. 2021. Print.

WHO EMRO. “Gaza Hostilities 2023 - 2025 - Emergency Situation Reports.” *World Health Organization - Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean*. N.p., n.d. Web. <www.emro.who.int/opt/information-resources/emergency-situation-reports.html>.

Winder, Alex. “UN Partition Plan, 29 November 1947.” *Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question – palquest*. N.p., n.d. Web. <www.palquest.org/en/highlight/159/un-partition-plan-29-november-1947>.

24, France. “Israel Attack on Gaza IVF Clinic a ‘Genocidal Act’: UN Probe.” *France 24*. FRANCE 24, 13 Mar. 2025. Web. <www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250313-israel-attack-on-gaza-ivf-clinic-a-genocidal-act-un-probe>.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Synopsis of *Mornings in Jenin* (Sackett)

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 [attempts a] 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 an Israeli named David—Amal's long-lost brother, on a quest for his true identity—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 2: The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini meeting Nazi German Leader Adolf Hitler in Berlin on November 28th, 1941 (ResearchGate)

Hitler and al-Husseini, November 28, 1941.