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University of Ain Temouchent - Belhadj Bouchaib



Faculty of Letters, Languages and Social Sciences
Department of Letters and English Language

**Nostalgia and the Alienated Self in Mourid
Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah***

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

Submitted by:

Ms. Nadera FEKIH

Supervised by:

Mrs. Hasna KERSANI

Board of Examiners

President:	Ms. Fatima YAHIA	MAA	University of Ain Temouchent
Supervisor:	Mrs. Hasna KERSANI	MAA	University of Ain Temouchent
Examiner:	Dr. Assia BENFODDA	MCA	University of Ain Temouchent

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Dedication

To my parents, who showered me with love and endless care

To my very dear ones, my brother Mohammed, my sisters Halima, Assia, and Khadidja

*To my nephew Anes Lahcene and my nieces Meriam, Alaa, Bouchra, Rajaa, and my
little cupcake Asmaa*

*To my besties Chaimaa and Kaouther, and a special welcome to Kaouther's son,
Mohammed Iyad*

*To Palestinians, the unyielding spirits who persevered for their nation, and continue to
do so*

To Riko and all my loved ones

-Thank You

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Epigraph

*It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.
It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine;
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.*

The West Wind, by John Masefield

Abstract

The present study examines the concepts of nostalgia and the alienated self within the Palestinian experience, particularly in Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*. Using an interdisciplinary analytical approach, this work aims to analyse how nostalgia functions and demonstrates that it is more than just longing for the past. Instead, nostalgia is a way for people to cope with feelings of loss and disconnection. Additionally, this study seeks to illustrate the unique experience of alienation as experienced by the writer. The research looks into how the Nakba of 1948 and the Six-Day War of 1967 fractured families and created a diaspora characterized by loss of identity. It also emphasizes the darker side of what Palestinian people have endured, between memories and current realities, and the large gap between what returning exiles hope for and what they unexpectedly face.

Keywords: Alienation, Identity, *I Saw Ramallah*, Mourid Barghouti, Nakba, Nostalgia, Palestinians, Six-Day War.

Résumé

La présente étude examine les concepts de nostalgie et de soi aliéné dans l'expérience palestinienne, en particulier dans J'ai vu Ramallah de Mourid Barghouti. En adoptant une approche analytique interdisciplinaire, ce travail vise à analyser le fonctionnement de la nostalgie et à démontrer qu'elle est plus qu'une simple nostalgie du passé ; c'est un moyen pour les gens de faire face aux sentiments de perte et de déconnexion. De plus, cette étude cherche à illustrer l'expérience unique de l'aliénation. La recherche examine comment la Nakba de 1948 et la guerre des Six Jours de 1967 ont fracturé des familles et créé une diaspora caractérisée par la perte d'identité. Elle met également l'accent sur le côté sombre de ce que le peuple palestinien a enduré entre les souvenirs et les réalités actuelles et le grand écart entre ce que les exilés de retour espèrent et ce à quoi ils sont confrontés de manière inattendue.

Mots-clés : Aliénation, Guerre des Six Jours, Identité, J'ai Vu Ramallah, Mourid Barghouti, Nakba, Nostalgie, Palestiniens.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة مفهومي الحنين والذات المغتربة في التجربة الفلسطينية، لا سيما في رواية مريد البرغوثي "رأيت رام الله". باستخدام نهج تحليلي متعدد التخصصات، يهدف هذا العمل إلى تحليل كيفية عمل الحنين وإثبات أنه أكثر من مجرد شوق إلى الماضي، بل هو وسيلة للناس للتعامل مع مشاعر الفقد والانفصال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح تجربة الاغتراب الفريدة. يبحث البحث في كيفية تفكك العائلات نتيجة نكبة عام 1948 وحرب الأيام الستة عام 1967، وخلق شتات يتميز بفقدان الهوية. كما يسلط الضوء على الجانب المظلم لما تحمله الشعب الفلسطيني بين الذكريات والواقع الحالي، والفجوة الكبيرة بين ما يأمله المنفيون العائدون وما يواجهونه بشكل غير متوقع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاغتراب، الحنين إلى الماضي، الفلسطينيون، النكبة، الهوية، حرب الأيام الستة، مريد البرغوثي.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA: Bachelor of Arts.

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organisation.

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly.

Glossary

Abu Muhammad: it refers to ‘the father of’, a nickname used by Arabs, which is usually followed by the eldest son or sometimes a symbolic name.

Calcutta: ‘or Kolkata’, a city in India.

Dar Ra’d: it is the name of Mourid’s house. Dar means house, and Ra’d is supposed to be one of his ancestors.

Deir Ghassanah: a Palestinian village located in the West Bank, and it is a part of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

Diaspora: a large group of people with a shared homeland or heritage who have spread and settled in various parts of the world. The global community that is formed when a population is scattered from its original homeland but maintains a shared cultural identity and connection to that homeland. Like, the Indian Diaspora includes millions of people of Indian origin living in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean, who maintain cultural ties to India.

Displacement: The forced or voluntary movement of people from their home country or region, when people are uprooted from their homes, often due to conflict, disaster, or persecution, and cannot safely return.

Falasha: Ethiopian Jewish community.

Fayruz: (Real name Nouhad Haddad) is a celebrated Lebanese musician.

Gamal ’Abd al-Nasser: was the previous president of Egypt and one of the prominent figures in the Middle East in the twentieth century. The six-day war, which occurred during his presidency, ended in defeat.

Heimweh: is a German word for homesickness, composed of Heim (home) and Weh (pain).

Intilal: it is an Arabic word that means occupation.

Khawaja: a slang word used to refer to a foreigner, especially a European.

Ramallah: is a city in the West Bank (of the Jordan River).

Six-Day War: it started from Monday, the 5th, till the 10th of June in 1967 between the occupying state of Israel and Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. It led to the occupation of Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.

Umm Mourid: is an Arabic nickname that refers to ‘the mother of’ and here signifies the mother of Mourid.

Zionist: one who supports Zionism, a movement that promotes Jews to return and rebuild their independent state.

General Introduction

In a world preoccupied with material pursuits and appearances, little attention is given to the profound value of simplicity and being with your own people. After all, home is not just a physical space, it is a place where you feel safe and accepted, a space filled with family, love, and a deep sense of belonging. In the world of literature, home is often treated as a sacred and undeniable entity that must never be overlooked. Numerous writers address this profound subject, and among them is the Palestinian writer and poet, Mourid Barghouti, in his eloquent memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*.

I Saw Ramallah is fundamentally concerned with the discrepancy between the memory of home and its present reality. Mourid Barghouti conveys a feeling more intricate than homesickness. The writer articulates a deep nostalgia for an unrecoverable past that ultimately induces a powerful sense of self-alienation since he finds himself unable to fully reconnect with the place, the people, or the person he once was. The current investigation of nostalgia and the alienated self in Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah* seeks to add new insights to this field of research. This study aims to ponder on Barghouti's unique exploration of these particular concepts of nostalgia and self-alienation.

It is important to note that, in the distant past, around the 17th century, nostalgia was considered a brain disease that primarily affected soldiers who had left their country to fight in wars. During this time, medical professionals closely related this concept to homesickness until the end of the 20th century, when scholars started to distinguish between the two concepts. Homesickness, a feeling of yearning, occurs when a person is away from their physical space, but it can fade once they return. Nostalgia encompasses more than just emotional associations with a particular place, time, or thing.

According to psychologists and sociologists, nostalgia is neither inherently positive nor negative; instead, its impact depends on how individuals cope with it. For example, the nostalgia

of displaced individuals, such as Mourid Barghouti and many other Palestinians, fills them with sadness for the loss of their homeland and a longing to see their cities thrive, rather than being stuck in the past, which highlights the manipulations of the occupation that prevent Palestinian involvement and undermine Palestinian identity.

The problem of alienation is both social and psychological. Melvin Seeman identified five dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement; each one is associated with a particular side, either with the self or society. In the memoir *I Saw Ramallah*, the protagonist's thirty years of exile from his native land and seventeen years of separation from his wife, Radwa Ashour, and son Tamim inevitably lead to feelings of alienation.

In essence, this research attempts to highlight the tragic situation experienced by the Palestinians, who are far from their homeland, by examining how a deep-seated sense of alienation compounds their physical displacement. To conduct this research, the investigation of the selected memoir adopts an interdisciplinary approach. This later may probably reflect how the study of nostalgia has shifted from medical to psychological and social fields, and similarly, alienation now encompasses both social and psychological perspectives. In addition to using modernism to investigate the sample memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*.

To fulfill these work requirements, three research questions were needed:

- 1) How does Mourid Barghouti explore the complexities of nostalgia in *I Saw Ramallah* to articulate the psychological experience of dislocation?
- 2) What symbolic significance do specific locations and landscapes hold in the memoir?
- 3) How can the individual preserve his identity in the face of political conflicts?

From the above research questions, it is hypothesised that:

- 1) Complexities and frequent feelings of estrangement allow the emergence of nostalgia, which

creates a sense of loss and longing, joy, and sadness at the same time.

2) Ramallah, the bridge, and Deir Ghassanah seek to present conflict between the past and the new.

3) The idea of return portrays the rich history and culture of Palestinians and their connections attempt to show their resistance against the occupation's oppression and revive the Palestinians' identity.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical framework mainly focused on theories and the debate surrounding the causes of nostalgia, and then moves to its definition and various types. The second part of the first chapter addresses the problem of alienation from different perspectives, then differentiates between immigration and exile. I also explore the complexities of identity and belonging in the context of political conflict. Finally, I identify the non-fiction literary genre of memoirs and distinguish between a memoir and an autobiography.

In the second chapter, I examined how Mourid Barghouti extensively employed modernist techniques in his book *I Saw Ramallah*. We delved into Mourid's inner thoughts and stream of consciousness, highlighting the conflict between the old and the new through a nonlinear process, as well as the use of various approaches such as symbolism, irony, and a lyrical use of language, which distinguished the book by giving it a highly evocative quality.

The last chapter is dedicated to applying the concept of nostalgia and the alienated self in Mourid Barghouti's work. It describes how the exile Mourid Barghouti longs and yearns for a place that was once familiar to him. The chapter also explores how painful it is to feel alienated and explains that the cause of this is the occupation. Finally, for this dissertation, the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* is followed.

Chapter One:

Theoretical Framework

1. 1. Introduction

It is quite common for the human soul to be intrinsically attached to its native country. To explore this deep connection, this chapter examines nostalgia, the link that keeps people connected to their homeland when they are away. It delves into the concept of nostalgia as a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon that has been extensively studied across both the disciplines of psychology and sociology, subsequently moving on to provide a comprehensive explanation of its definition and various types.

The chapter then shifts to alienation, another condition experienced by outsiders. I delve into the complexities of identity and belonging, especially in the context of political conflicts. Another subtitle is added to differentiate between immigration and exile. The third section defines memoir as a contemporary literary genre and distinguishes it from related non-fiction genres such as autobiography.

1. 2. Conceiving Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a deep-rooted concept lasted from different generations and has been tackled from various angles throughout the ages. In the 17th century. The term ‘nostalgia’ was generated by the Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer in his dissertation: *Dissertatio Medica de Nostalgia, Oder Heimweh (Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia, or Homesickness)* in 1688 to describe the negative psychological and physical symptoms observed in Swiss mercenaries serving abroad.

He considered nostalgia a neurological or medical disorder, marked by symptoms such as obsessive thoughts of home, frequent crying, anxiety, irregular heartbeat, loss of appetite, insomnia, and a feeling of suffocation. Hofer was the first to define this concept as a disease and set up the word nostalgia from two sounds by combining the Greek words: nostos (return to the native land) and algos (pain) (McCann 165- 166).

In his dissertation, *Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia, or Homesickness*, Hofer characterized nostalgia not just as a sentimental longing but as a specific, identifiable “brain physical harm” or “disease.” He linked the condition to “the quiet continuous vibration of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which impressed traces of ideas of the Fatherland still cling” (qtd. in Routledge 4).

Years later, around 1732, the German-Swiss physician J. J. Scheuchzer supported the idea that nostalgia is a disease. However, he believed it came from “a sharp differential in atmospheric pressure causing excessive body pressurization, which in turn drove blood from the heart to the brain, thereby producing the observed affliction of sentiment” (qtd. in Davis 2). Scheuchzer used this theory to explain the apparent prevalence of nostalgia, especially among Swiss soldiers who had left their mountainous homeland to fight for duty.

Some military doctors, dissatisfied with both theories, proposed an alternative explanation: that the incessant ringing of Alpine cowbells caused auditory and brain damage, leading to nostalgia. (Zwingmann 19-21). It is worth noting that nostalgia is not unique to one nationality, the Swiss soldiers, but can affect others to a much greater extent. In his book, *The Migratory Impulse Vs. Love of Home*, Linus Ward Kline argues that animals, too, can feel nostalgic about their love of home, a sentiment not exclusive to humans. At the same time, the understanding of nostalgia as a neurological condition remained prevalent till the end of the 19th century.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the reception of nostalgia shifted from a disease to a psychiatric disorder, whereas many Psychologists affirm that it is similar to depression, including symptoms of anxiety, sadness, and fever (Batcho; Havlena and Holak). Yet Clay Routledge did not centralize nostalgia as a yearning for home or just a negative feeling, arguing that:

Nostalgia was not simply an unpleasant emotional state akin to depression. It was also a pleasurable feeling. That is, scholars began to appreciate that nostalgia involves pleasant memories of the past. Thus, reflecting on or idealizing past experiences and states can generate positive feelings in the present. However, because one cannot return to the past, nostalgia also includes a sense of loss and longing. Furthermore, the memory itself may involve experiences that had both negative and positive elements. (6)

This phenomenon, which can affect anyone, can manifest in various forms, such as a lover who is deeply longing for their beloved, a refugee who is intensely yearning for their native country, or an adult who is nostalgically reminiscing about their favourite classical music. As time passes, it's no longer perceived as a problem, but rather as warm and happy memories that are tinged with a subtle hint of sadness, making them all the more precious and bittersweet.

By the end of the century, contemporary researchers started to distinguish between nostalgia and homesickness as two different concepts. For instance, a yearning for happy moments, childhood, and past times is more associated with nostalgia, whereas homesickness is a more limited yearning for homeland (Routledge 5).

However, Fred Davis adopted a different stance on this subject, claiming that regardless of having a specific context for this case, one thing is certain: this emotional state has a big impact on our feelings. Nevertheless, seeking to have a word that is closely related, he further notes that “there is perhaps no word that better evokes the odd mix of present discontents, of yearning, of joy clouded with sadness, and of small paradises lost. That is, no word other than nostalgia itself” (29).

1. 2. 1. Definition of Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a soulful feeling that happens when you tend to remember past times or places. It is omnipresent in human experiences; thus, it is purely stuck with the heart and memory that cannot be ignored once it emerges. According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, nostalgia is “a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition.”

Gizela Horvath, a PhD Professor inspired by Svetlana Boym's terminology, defined nostalgia as a misleading concept, although it is derived from (nostos) (home), but its core is associated with time, while it appears that its focus is on the past, but is rather on the present that orients people to the future.

1. 2. 2. Types of Nostalgia

Personal nostalgia is associated with the man's own past by recalling his memories to find those moments arranged just like a bookshelf in well-organized form; a section for this and a section for that, and it seems to happen, and he finds his childhood toys and drawings there, a soft smile shapes in his face with bleary eyes.

Researchers have examined autobiographical memory, which is closely tied to personal nostalgia. While autobiographical memories may sometimes involve negative or distressing experiences, they remain fundamentally connected to an individual's past and identity. These memories form a vital part of how people perceive and understand their life journey, offering insights into their personal history and sense of self (Marchegiani and Phau 83).

Historical nostalgia is associated with the individual feelings towards a specific time or an era that they did not even witness. This theory presents the situation of how people are attached to times they never experienced before: “[h]istorical cues include: historical incidents, romance, role models, aspirational/idealized characters, long ago settings, and sometimes exaggerated tone” (qtd.

in Marchegiani and Phau 82).

According to Svetlana Boym, historical nostalgia overlaps with collective memory; a group of people closely attached to a shared past by taking it as a means to shape the present. This latter teaches people how to maintain a high economy, political strength to have a developed country, being inspired by a shared past which was truly an exceptional period of time, that pushes them to follow the same path.

Restorative nostalgia delves into the word *nostos* (native country) to focus on building the same image of a lost home. This type of nostalgia is more related to preserving the “absolute truth” (Boym xviii). The Romanian linguist Andreea Deciu Ritivoi says that this category of nostalgia takes advantage of ‘nationalism’ and ‘political conservatism’ as a pretext to intensively hold on to the idea of return and rebuild the past. From analysing chase and show perspective on nostalgia, Andreea claimed that the ‘deficiency’ felt in the present drove people to think of reviving the past (32-33).

Reflective nostalgia grows from *algia* (the pain of longing). This type often uses irony and desperation regarding the idea of returning home, sometimes rejecting it in favour of experiencing something new; it explores new places and better conditions. It appreciates both longing and belonging but also welcomes change and development, while restorative nostalgia embraces symbols. This type of nostalgia focuses on details (Boym).

1. 3. Alien and Alienation

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica define alienation as “...the state of feeling estranged or separated from one’s milieu, work, or self.” From this definition, it is clear that alienation is a multifaceted concept that cannot be defined from a single perspective; it is rather viewed from different aspects (psychological, social, and religious), thus it is both an ‘internal and external phenomenon’.

Initially, alienation was primarily understood as an internal phenomenon, a disconnect within the individual's soul. This perspective is clearly illustrated by the religious views of the French theologian John Calvin, who posited that alienation arises when the soul is unattached from God. According to this theological view, this profound inner feeling of disconnection and detachment is what manifests in the lived experience of man. Therefore, this internal split was seen as the source of man's sense of estrangement

Second, alienation can be an external phenomenon; this condition is associated with man and his surroundings. According to Durkheim, people face many challenges and changes, but when they cannot deal with their environment or achieve their goals, they may experience feelings of alienation. He emphasised the importance of belonging, a strong connection to society that makes people feel comfortable and secure.

Durkheim also prioritised what transpires inside the human rather than their social dealings. Based on the points discussed, it is highly noticeable that the external world is both affected and tied to the man's inner process. Thus, when the problem of alienation arises, it will be directly presented through his acts, and when he cannot adapt to the rules of society, he will feel alienated (Abdelalim 42-44).

Melvin Seeman the American social psychologist claimed that alienation is a problem that have been studied in antique works of sociology yet it is a matter to investigate in modern times. In his article "On the Meaning of Alienation" he identifies five dimensions of alienation. First, powerlessness: this type of alienation is considered more as a social- psychological rather than a sociological perspective. It is generated from Marx's viewpoint when people were obliged to keep working in places they did not choose in capitalist system. Powerlessness is concerned with the disability of making controls of the results the individual was expecting (784-785).

Second, meaninglessness: the lack of understanding of life's requirements and system that

leaves people unable to cope with its challenges where they find themselves uncertain about every step they take, this condition differed from powerlessness because:

[The] second version of alienation is logically independent of the first, for, under some circumstances, expectancies for personal control of events may not coincide with the understanding of these events, as in the popular depiction of the alienation of the intellectual. Still, there are obvious connections between these two forms of alienation: in some important degree, the view that one lives in an intelligible world may be a prerequisite to expectancies for control; and the unintelligibility of complex affairs is presumably conducive to the development of high expectancies for external control (that is, high powerlessness). (Seeman 786-787)

Despite their apparent distinction, they still have some connections. The two forms of alienation arise from a discrepancy between our internal expectations and external reality. One form emerges when the world fails to meet our hopes, leading to feelings of frustration or despair. Conversely, the other form can arise even when the world conforms to expectations, if that conformity feels hollow or prevents the authentic exercise of self, ultimately manifesting two sides of the same fundamental division between the self and its environment.

Normlessness, or as it is called, anomie¹ it shows how social norms have a big impact on daily life. Thus, people will act in an unwanted manner because they have no standards to stand on when these norms break down or become inefficient. From this, individuals start feeling emptiness and lose control over their affairs. According to Merton, this circumstance often emerges when people run after wealth and richness or want to have a big success, but there are no accessible means to do so. Thence the individual tends to transgress these social norms and adopts

¹ Also known as “anomy; in societies or individuals, a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals” (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

nonstandard behaviours (Seeman 787-788).

Isolation, this kind of alienation is merely associated with the individual himself, over social or emotional isolation. The problem is represented when the choices of a person become detached from social norms; he does not support the common standards. Moreover, it is claimed that the third variation (normlessness) and isolation exist simultaneously; in which Merton's concept of 'innovator' in normlessness and 'rebel' in isolation reveals that the innovator marginalises the norms while the rebel looks for new rules (Seeman 788-789).

Self-estrangement is the profound experience of being self-alienated, where an individual feels detached from their own desires, instincts, and sense of identity. They become a spectator of their own life, finding themselves performing actions and making choices not out of genuine will but to meet external expectations and gain the approval of society. This internal division leads to a deep and persistent state of dissatisfaction, as their life no longer feels like their own. (Seeman 789-790).

1. 3. 1. The Complexities of Identity and Belonging in the Face of Political Conflicts

Identity is the mirror that reflects ourselves; it portrays the belonging and the existence of human beings. However, in the face of political conflicts or colonisation, both identity and belonging will be adversely affected. In which the occupier will make sure to eradicate everything related to the country. For instance, colonialism in India focused on marginalizing the position of Indian Muslims, especially historians; Muzaffar Assadi illustrates the colonizer's persecution, saying that:

Although the work of Muslim historians like Ziauddin Barani, Abul Fazl, Al-Beruni, Ibn Batuta, and Sheriyar who recognized the existence of diverse social structures in India, was translated by colonialism, they incidentally never became the main narratives in the colonial history or discourse on these various social structures. It's possible to label this as "willful amnesia". Instead, it created a narrative about the plunder, destruction, conquest, genocide, and forced conversion by Muslim rules in

India using memoirs, letters, historical narratives, commentaries, and other sources. Muzaffar Assadi vividly details how the enemy strategically seeks to tarnish the image of Indian Muslims. By crafting and spreading misleading claims against them. This deliberate smear campaign aims to distort perceptions and foster mistrust, painting a distorted picture of a vibrant community.

When inhabitants flee their countries in search of peace and stability, their identity is also affected by displacement. Their primary focus is adapting to the new region, as returning home under the current dire circumstances would be a mistake. For instance, displacement for Syrian refugees makes them reconsider the basis of home and identity, whereas they work on building their true image of home in the host country (Karamehić-Oates 3-4).

1. 3. 2. Immigration Vs. Exile

Immigration and exile are two different circumstances in which a person may leave their native country: the first is by choice, and the other is by force. In both cases, however, the individual experiences the same feeling of being a stranger. “Immigration is an ontological crisis because you are forced to negotiate the conditions of your selfhood under perpetually changing existential circumstances” (qtd. in Karamehić-Oates 1).

Even though immigration is a personal choice but it still has some difficulties for the immigrant he always encounters investigations for his actions, and he might suffer from violence or racism just because you are an outsider. The same issues occur to the exile, whereas the exiled is the most affected. On one hand, the obstacles that the two face in the host country, besides the pain of longing for home and being unable to go home what make every day abroad extremely intolerable.

1. 4. Memoir: A Contemporary Literary Genre

The world of literature is vast, some of fiction and some of non-fiction, among these

genres, there is what is called memoirs. Memoir is a literary genre that enables authors to transmit their personal experiences and their impression on a particular matter. Unlike narrating, this type of literature emphasises the sentimental and psychological field in addition to the use of memory, making the audience directly attached to his 'inner world'. Since both memoirs and autobiographies are associated with writing about the author's life, they are different categories (Edwards).

1. 4. 1. The Difference Between Memoir and Autobiography

Memoir plays a significant role in literature, like any other non-fictional works, such as autobiography. These two literary genres are seemingly connected, yet there are some differences. In autobiographies, the intention is on the personality of the author, whereas in memoirs, it deals with the conditions he is connected to. Moreover, memoirs serve to portray the author's thoughts on a certain event, and sometimes he might become biased intentionally or unintentionally due to personal relationships, which makes historians tend to check their reliability (Khakimova 61-62).

Chronologically, memoir came before autobiography; however, critics of autobiography viewed memoirs as inferior because they focus on the external world rather than the self. Whereas memoirs can even replace autobiographies because the former makes us aware of the lack encountered in autobiographical writings (Rak 320-321).

1. 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explore the origins of nostalgia and how scholars have perceived it over time. Initially viewed as a brain disease, then redefined as a psychiatric disorder, nostalgia is now understood as a bittersweet emotion. In modern times, it is important to note that nostalgia and homesickness are regarded as distinct concepts, in contrast to how past researchers approached

them.

Along with Svetlana Boym and other experts' analyses, I came across four types of nostalgia: personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, restorative nostalgia, and reflective nostalgia. Because I intended to deal with the alienated self in this project, there was a reference to the concept of alienation from different perspectives (religious, social, and psychological).

since identity plays a crucial role in an individual's life, I attempt to review the literature to illustrate the complexities of preserving their identity under these political conflicts. Lastly, in an attempt to make the reader aware of the work I will tackle in the next chapter, I have introduced the memoir literature with a brief distinction between it and autobiography.

Chapter Two: Modernist
Techniques in Mourid
Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*

2. 1. Introduction

Modernism is a significant era, and its techniques were crucial in conveying the author's true intentions. This chapter will establish how Mourid Barghouti carefully employs these techniques in *I Saw Ramallah*. First, I identified Mourid's literary context to understand how his works depart from traditional techniques. In this chapter, Mourid Barghouti's inner thoughts and stream of consciousness are revealed through a non-linear narrative, which highlights the clash between the past and the present, illustrating how modernism allows the reader to grasp the author's intentions.

As a second step, I engaged in self-reflection to grasp Mourid's concerns and how displacement affected his communication with his people after a long time. I also noted the importance of highlighting his use of lyrical language, a prominent feature of Barghouti's work, as well as his fundamental technique of symbolism.

2. 2. Mourid Literary Context

Mourid Barghouti is a Palestinian poet and writer who was exiled for many years out of Palestine; his first exile began when he was studying in Cairo, Egypt, in 1967. These years of exile have had a great impact on his writings, and this is audible in the poems he has written as well as his memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*.

I Saw Ramallah (1997) is a masterful work that employs several key modernist techniques to convey the fragmented, complex, and deeply personal experience of exile and displacement. While the book is a memoir (a genre often associated with straightforward narrative), Barghouti's approach is anything but linear. The book is an emotional reflection on memory, identity, it offers a profound look at the emotional and physical disorientation of displacement and it is considered as a masterpiece of modern Arabic literature.

I Was Born There, I Was Born Here (2011): A sequel to *I Saw Ramallah*, this book continues his reflections on returning to Palestine as he brings his son to the West Bank for the first time. The book continues to explore themes of identity, memory, and struggle to connect with a homeland that has been profoundly altered by decades of conflict.

Mourid is widely respected and known for his beautiful poetry. His attraction to literature began at an early age while he was a student at Ramallah secondary school. When he was in the third grade, he won the first prize in a poetry competition at Ramallah secondary school.

Barghouti wrote many poems in Arabic that were published in many countries, such as Amman, Beirut, and Cairo. But his most significant and widely celebrated poems that have been translated into English, which are the most internationally recognised, include:

“A Small Sun” (2003): that was his first poetry book translated to English; it was originally written in Arabic, and it features Barghouti’s ability to transform everyday experiences and observation into profound reflections on identity, exile, and belonging. The poems focus on the small human details that make up a life lived in displacement.

“Midnight and Other Poems” (2008) is a key collection of poetry by Barghouti, that translated into English by his wife. The book included his long poem “Midnight,” a powerful, meditative piece that moves through a stream of consciousness, its rich montage of memories, emotion, and images of his homeland. The poem explored the exile, loss, and everyday realities of Palestinian life.

Mourid Barghouti published 12 poetry collections in Arabic, in addition to two memoirs, one of which is titled *I Saw Ramallah*, which was a powerful work that showcases his exceptional poetic talent. Barghouti’s writing is celebrated not only for its beautiful language but also for his ability to transform the

painful experience of Palestinian exile into art. He is recognised as the voice of many Palestinian people.

2. 3. Stream of Consciousness and Inner Thoughts

It is one of the modernist techniques that was applied in Barghouti's writing. It merely reveals the character's inner feelings and mental struggles; it facilitates the reader's perception of someone's internal attributes and enables the reader to feel them it and thence the reader can understand the reasons behind the character's acts (PapersOwl). Barghouti's memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*, is a recent work that was released in 1997 and has transgressed the traditional rules and the usual writing limitations.

Barghouti is beset by questions all the time; he mourns the condition of his late brother's children and their circumstances, living far from the warmth of family. He says, "I think of Ghassan and Ghada and Ghadeer. Mounif's children who are still displaced. Displaced by his absence from them and their absence from here. Will they accept my care for them after him? Is there a place in their lives for an uncle who writes poetry? (45). After Mounif's death, his children have to adapt to the pain of loss and the harshness of displacement that prevents these children from being close to any family member.

Rana Abdul Munim Khan and Amina Aleem, in their work "Rewriting the Palestinian Narrative in Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*" conveyed how Barghouti is wondering and asking the world's intellectuals they react against the occupation's deeds and be aware of it, and why Palestinians have to share their country, wondering if it is something normal (43). In his memoir, he is questioning the world: "Is there any other country in the world that so perplexes you with its names?" (13).

2. 3. 1. Non-Linear Narrative

In William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*, the author used a nonchronological narrative that aims to convey the same events at different times. Mourid Barghouti has applied this technique too, where he classified several shared struggles, for instance, the exile's memory tape emerged when he was looking to "the Occupied Territory" (Barghouti 5) before passing the bridge and suddenly returning to the end of 1979, where there was another Occupied Territory:

Towards the end of 1979 I was at a conference of the Union of Arab Writers in Damascus. Our hosts took us to visit the city of Qunaytera. A convoy of cars took us on the short journey and we saw the destruction visited by the Israelis on the city. We stood by the barbed wire behind which flew the Israeli flag. I stretched my hand across the wire and took hold of a shrub growing wild on the occupied side of the Golan. I shook the shrub and said to Hussein Muruwwa, who stood next to me: "Here is the Occupied Territory, Abu Nizar; I can hold it with my hand!" (5)

By employing a non-linear narrative that shifts between the present and past, the author successfully maintains consistency and harmony, thereby enabling readers to form connections with their internal and external worlds at any point in time and space.

2. 3. 2. The Clash Between the Past and the New

Barghouti's meditation process begins when he meets his people and his homeland. After thirty years of exile, he stayed in Abu Hazim's house. A funny incident occurred while they were having breakfast; Abu Hazim asked Anis if he would like to drink tea in a cup or a glass, causing Fadwa, Abu Hazim, and Mourid to break into laughter, while Anis and Husam looked puzzled, as there was nothing funny about it.

They were actually laughing because they remembered the incident of the historic tea set, like the author had described it. Mourid won a prize in the middle school, but Abu Hazim carried the box

to Mourid's house because it was too heavy, and it was raining heavily outside, yet the poor man kept being served tea in the regular cups. It just so happened that he was around when Umm Mourid (see glossary) had guests over, and they were served tea in the fancy cups. But Abu Hazim jokingly refused, saying that he prefers the usual ones. It seemed that the past presented itself once again to offer them a bit of humour.

Barghouti says, "Last time I was a boy. This time I am a father; the father of a boy who is as old as I was the last time I passed through here. Last time I passed through here I was leaving my country to go to a distant university. Now, I have left my son behind at that same university" (13). These words present how surprising life can be, to put both a father and his son, Tamim, who was born in exile, to live the same situation.

2. 4. Self-Reflection

There is no doubt that a man who lives in exile will be affected for sure, and a poet is worse. A feeling of contradiction and obscurity has been chasing him since he arrived in his homeland. The exile returnee talks about how his experience of return differed from the others; he did not cry, the others did, he did not kiss the earth, and he was not sad.

His heavy thoughts and memories made him live unexpected moments in the waiting room, which is the deads' scene. Entered his grandmother, the great poet, then his father, followed by Mounif and Ghassan Kanafani, then Naji al- 'Ali. Mourid described the scene as if he were a stranger in a place he should not be at "Their faces swam around me as though they were icons of Andre Rublyev, glimmering in dark temples in the thirteenth century. The ... room was not dark, neither was the emptiness outside his room. Faces, fantasies, voices appear and disappear" (19).

2. 4. 1. Loss of Connection to Community

Barghouti is known for his love for his homeland and his people, but after he was able to

return, he could no longer communicate. The moment when he was headed by a Taxi to Ramallah, he was surprised at how difficult it was to communicate with his people. “In the car I am mute. Or am I chattering my life? Have I been struck by my life as a man is struck by a fever?—you think him asleep and silent while his whole body is telling stories.

These are my people. Why do I not talk with them?” (Barghouti 28).

Reflecting on this quote brought a profound realisation: the deep and often subtle impact of estrangement on transforming one’s behaviour. After all, thirty years is far more than just a fleeting moment; it is a significant stretch of a lifetime, enough time to fundamentally reshape a person. Mourid feels almost like a stranger looking back at the self he had left behind so long ago.

2. 4. 2. lyrical use of language

Although Mourid’s work in this time was in prose, the Poet’s spirit is still evident in his narrative style through the use of aesthetic language. “Displacements are always multiple. Displacements that collect around you and close the circle. You run, but the circle surrounds you. When it happens, you become a stranger *in* your places and *to* your places at the same time” (Barghouti 131).

Despite their suffering, the exile returnee did not engage his writing for sadness or blame; instead, he utilizes repetition, irony, and metaphors to create a light and humorous atmosphere. For instance, Mourid tells us about the strong relationship between his maternal uncle, Abu Fakhri, and his wife:

Khalti Umm Fakhri was a remarkably small woman. You noticed particularly when she walked next to him. When they crossed the bridge together coming back from Amman the Israeli soldier finished Abu Fakhri’s papers first. When he did not move and the soldier tried to move him along, he said he would wait for his wife, pointing

at Umm Fakhri. The Israeli looked at the giant Abu Fakhri, then at his wife. He asked in broken Arabic: “How many year you with madame?”

“Fifty years, Khawaja^

The Israeli smiled: “Donkey!”

“You see, Umm Fakhri—he knows me!” (77)

One sign of disrespect toward the soldier is when Abu Fakhri goes about his usual way, joking around and indirectly expressing his love for his wife through their fifty-year marriage.

2. 5. Symbolism in Barghouti’s Writing

Symbolism serves as a powerful device that breathes life into the narrative, allowing each symbol to embody a particular event or story. Take, for example, the bridge in *I Saw Ramallah*. Rather than representing a hopeful return, this bridge takes on a poignant role, symbolizing departure—a tangible reminder of the distance and separation that define the protagonist's journey. It stands as a silent sentinel to the heartache of leaving behind a homeland, capturing the essence of loss and longing in its very structure.

Some travelled to another country, some as regular travellers, and others to study abroad. They had all the same goal, which is to return to their homeland, yet they find themselves banned from coming back. “How was this piece of dark wood able to distance a whole nation from its dreams? To prevent entire generations from taking their coffee in homes that were theirs? How did it deliver us to all this patience and all that death? How was it able to scatter us among exiles, and tents, and political parties, and frightened whispers?” (Barghouti 9).

Mourid spent thirty years to be able to cross this bridge. His older brother, Mounif, died before he could take even a step toward it, never having been allowed to return. Although it is just a bridge, they could never agree on a single name for it; each of them named it based on what

it represented to them.

The flag presents the sovereignty of a country, the occupation flag appearing in every place, even in Palestinian areas, as if the occupation wants to confirm one thing “We are the masters here”” (Barghouti 141). The returnee described how the occupation tends to thoroughly eradicate everything associated with the Palestinian Authority, and it reminds them of their existence in one way or another.

The pillow represents judgment and punishment of the individual; it reminds him of the harsh reality and his inevitable loss. Mourid Barghouti referred to it, arguing that “The pillow is our white cotton court of law, smooth to the touch, cruel of sentence. When it has received our heads, crowded with joy and contentment or loss and shame, the pillow becomes a conscience. The pillow is our daily Day of judgement. A personal Day of judgement for each one of us” (180).

According to the two lecturers of English at the Pakistani University, Rana Abdul Munim Khan and Amina Aleem, olives, almonds, and figs are symbols of the Palestinian economy, culture, and identity, in addition to olive oil, which symbolises the thriving condition before being occupied, and it refers to the Palestinians’ friendly and generous reception of guests.

They emphasised Lara El-Jazairi's statements in her report, *The Road to Olive Farming: Challenges to Developing the Economy of Olive Oil in the West Bank*. “The olive trees root and anchor us in our land, provide a sense of belonging, home and hope. Investing in olive oil is investing in our future” (47).

The hotel is a symbol of temporality; no one can turn a hotel into their home. It is a place either for the travellers or for people like Mourid. It is merely a place he knows he will depart. The hotel also symbolizes connection, for it enables the scattered family members to meet even for a short time. “In the hotel there is no neighbor to watch what you do all the time. There are no traps of

social obligation. It is the place where you can glory in laziness” (Barghouti 92). In this quote, the author expresses his appreciation for the positive sides the hotel provides, emphasizing acting freely.

2. 6. Conclusion

The chapter explores the enduring power of modernist techniques in portraying the character's internal conflicts and constraints. It highlights how the character becomes someone who is at peace with talking to himself—a person who reflects on the dead and frequently reminds us of their sacrifices whenever the opportunity arises.

Questions came from a consciousness that why the Palestinians, specifically, among all the people in the world, need to give up their land for the Jews. The non-linear narrative helps to jump and link events without affecting the memoir's harmony because Mourid recounted various aspects like the conferences he used to attend, family rare meetings that usually were in hotels, it was temporary, but it is enough to make you feel the warmth of family, even if just a little, and to live some beautiful moments with them.

The feeling of estrangement, which often leads to emotional discomfort and disconnection, prompts individuals to act in ways they dislike or find uncomfortable. As you develop a habit, it can grow on you unnoticed. For example, Mourid, who had been living in exile for thirty long years, found it extremely difficult to engage in conversations with others, especially when he met Palestinians for the first time, as he struggled to reconnect with his roots and cultural identity.

Despite the harsh reality of diaspora and separation yet the book still holds a sense of humour, metaphors, and ironical terms; these refer to Abu Fakhri, Mourid’s uncle, a giant man, and his wife; she is a noticeably short woman, a fact that becomes especially apparent when she stands next to her husband. Moreover, it is worth noting that Mourid has carefully utilised symbolism in his narrative, so instead of delivering a message instantly, this technique allows meanings to emerge naturally, and the

readers will be able to interpret the content easily.

Chapter Three: Nostalgia and
the Alienated Self in Mourid
Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*

3. 1. Introduction

Mourid Barghouti's powerful memoir, *I Saw Ramallah (Ra'aytu Ram Allah)*, 1997, was further translated into English by the Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif with a foreword by the Palestinian-American theorist Edward W. Said. Through a poetic prose narrative, Barghouti succeeds assertively without resorting to any emotional appeal to make a clear image of nostalgia for the displaced and the alienated self that yearns to belong.

In this chapter, I address three main titles. First, I explain why nostalgia is more relevant to this narrative than the concept of homesickness and discuss how nostalgia arises from the experiences of returning. Next, I examine the alienated self-experienced by Palestinians as a result of the occupation's actions. Finally, I explore the resistance against the enemy, which underscores the dignity of every citizen.

3. 2. The Difference Between Homesickness and Nostalgia

Homesickness is a profound and often debilitating negative emotion that typically emerges when an individual is physically or emotionally distant from their home and familiar surroundings. The concept was first mentioned in the Bible, Psalm 137: "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yeah wept when we remembered Zion."

Other forms of homesickness were presented in the epic poem when Homer spoke about Ulysses, who was suffering from the pain of homesickness. In addition to the condition attributed by the physician Johannes Hofer when the young man was dying in his bed until he was sent home, he got better directly. Homesickness and nostalgia were seen as different concepts, yet some authors argued that they are the same (qtd. in Van Tilburg 35- 36).

The case of Mourid Barghouti cannot be associated with homesickness but rather with a nostalgic feeling because the pain of longing remained even after his return to Ramallah (see

glossary) because the places, the people he left thirty years ago is no longer the same. he said, “But I do know that the stranger can never go back on what he was. Even if he returns. It is over. A person gets ‘displacement’ as he gets asthma, and there is no cure for either. And a poet is worse off, because poetry itself is an estrangement” (4). It is the realization of an irrecoverable past, whereas man has to deal with the situation in one way or another.

3. 2. 1. Nostalgia of the Displaced

Nostalgia is a crucial phenomenon in this memoir; it is highly present through the exiled Mourid Barghouti, yet he is not the only one. Edward Said, in the foreword he provided, confirms the point by saying, “(about 3.5 million) are refugees from the 1948 territories and therefore cannot return under the present circumstances” (ix). Many Palestinians are suffering from displacement, and Mourid just took the mission to transmit their pain of longing and their dispersion in countries into a message.

Yearning for a home that no longer exists, Ramallah, the West Bank, or wherever the displaced used to live, these are physical locations; what matters most is what these places have brought to them. For Barghouti, he said when he was crossing the bridge, “Here I am, crossing the Jordan River. I hear the creak of the wood under my feet. On my left shoulder a small bag. I walk westward in a normal manner—or rather, a manner that appears normal. Behind me the world, ahead of me my world” (1).

Moreover, it is worth noting that longing is not associated with the past only, where Mourid is sad for his village, as the occupation impeded its development and movements; he resentfully illustrated this by saying:

The occupation forced us to remain with the old. That is its crime. It did not deprive us of the clay ovens of yesterday, but of the mystery of what we would invent

tomorrow. I did not come here to reclaim al-Abrash's camel. I used to long for the past in Deir Ghassanah as a child long[ing] for precious, lost things. But when I saw that the past was still there, squatting in the sunshine in the village square, like a dog forgotten by its owners—or like a toy dog—I wanted to take hold of it, to kick it forward, to its coming days, to a better future, to tell it: “Run.” (70)

Another reason evoked feelings of sorrow when he saw Deir Ghassanah (see glossary), remained in the old format like the city; Ramallah. Especially that the Palestinians always wish to see their cities and villages embody modernity. Yet it's a different matter for the settlements, elegant roads, and buildings that make you understand the devious intentions of the occupation.

Nostalgia plays a crucial role in shaping a collective identity, as explained by Davis, who notes that reflecting on the past contributes to a phenomenon known as "identity continuity" (qtd. in Hussaini). This sense of nostalgia serves as a reminder for individuals who have experienced displacement to maintain their sense of identity, regardless of their current location.

3. 2. 2. The Returnee's Expectations Vs. the Reality of the Homeland

Mourid Barghouti was permitted to come back to his country, Palestine, after thirty years of exile. He obtained the reunion permit after a long struggle, happy for his return and sad for his brother Mounif, who mysteriously left the world in exile before he could even cast a single glance at his homeland.

In his way, he was surprised to find that the green spaces he used to tell his Egyptian friends about had turned into barren fields. “I used to tell my Egyptian friends at university that Palestine was green and covered with trees and shrubs and wild flowers. What are these hills? Bare and chalky. ... I wanted to ask the driver if the road had been like this for many years, but I did not. I had a lump in my throat and a feeling of being let down” (Barghouti 28).

He also describes the condition of the Jordan River, which was once full of water but became almost dry under occupation, as if nature itself was conspiring against it. Gayatri C. Spivak discussed a similar scenario during the British colonization of India, where Calcutta's canals, which had functioned well, fell into disrepair and became stagnant due to the colonizer's negligence. (qtd. in Khan and Aleem 42-43).

Many things the exile met in this return, whereas he could not live any moments of happiness yet. "You try to coax joy to your heart as you would coax chickens to their barley. Why is it that your joy has to be coaxed and persuaded? That it will not simply manifest itself strong and clear? ... Joy needs training and experience." (Barghouti 34- 35). The returnee could not feel the joy he expected, especially when he saw his city drained and exhausted after many years of resistance.

3. 3. The Impact of the Nakba 1948 and the Six-Day War 1967

The Jews occupied Palestine in 1917 due to the British authorization. They believe that to be the owners there, in 1897, the American author John Lawson Stoddard encouraged the Jews in his travelogue to possess their ancestral land by saying: "You are a people without a country; there is a country without a people. Be united. Fulfill the dreams of your old poets and patriarchs. Go back, go back to the land of Abraham."

For Iqbal comes to reply later by questioning the French and the British authorizations as well as the occupation ideologies in the book *Zarb-e-Kaleem*: "If the Jews have a right to the land of Palestine, /Why have not Arabs a right to Spain?" (Parray 16). People before were living in peace like any other nation without any discrimination because they were the natives (Khan and Aleem 41).

The Nakba, or as it is called, 'catastrophe' it represents the huge segregation of

Palestinians; they left their houses and properties because of the tension that happened in 1948 between the Arabs and the occupying state of Israel due to the unfair decision of the UNGA in 1947 that allowed the division of Palestine into two states: Arab and Jewish.

Thereafter, the Jewish military forces started to attack the Palestinians, and the situation quickly deteriorated for the worse, which forced more than half of the citizens to be displaced (unispal). Another reason for this ceaseless dispossession is the events of the Six-Day War (see glossary), which lasted from 5 to the 11th of June in 1967, where the West Bank and Gaza became parts of the Zionist (see glossary). Barghouti always tends to link this date with trouncing, saying that:

Do I have a problem with '67? Yes, I have a problem. The defeat of June is not over. ... on June 9, I sat in front of the television in my flat in Zamalek, watching Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser speak as the whole nation hung on his lips that night, trying to understand something of what had happened, was still happening, at the front. The owner of the flat, a blonde and extremely large woman whom I called Madame Sosostriis, sat next to me, and we heard him say: "We have suffered a setback," Then he declared that he would step down completely and finally, relinquishing all his official posts. I jumped out of my seat, to the door, to the street, and found myself one of millions of people who jumped at that same moment into the darkness of the streets and the darkness of the future. (174-175)

It was Mourid last year at university in Egypt. His dream of hanging the BA certificate in front of his mother has been postponed to an unknown time. Especially since the tensions are rising and reaching solutions has become difficult. This situation changed the destiny of each Palestinian who is far from his country to be far for a long time.

3. 3. 1. Family Separation and Diaspora

The occupation did not settle for dominating the land only in fact the individual still struggles with abuse what results to family separation and diaspora as for Mourid and his wife Radwa Ashour, they set apart for seventeen years the mother and her son Tamim in Cairo; she was a professor of English at Ain Shams University and the father was living in another continent where he was a member of PLO in Budapest (Said vii). He also “taught in Cairo, Kuwait, and Budapest where he was also exiled from Egypt for seventeen years for political reasons” (Alsaleh 2).

Radwa and Mourid always think how they can meet one another as their baby Tamim could not recognize his father due to his frequent leavings ‘When I was deported from Egypt[,] he was five months old; when Radwa brought him with her to meet me in a furnished flat in Budapest[,] he was thirteen months old and called me ‘Uncle.’ I laugh and try to correct him. “I’m not ‘Uncle,’ Tamim, I’m ‘Daddy.’” He calls me “Uncle Daddy” (Barghouti 130).

It is worth noting that diaspora is not something to be taken lightly; no one is spared from it, neither ordinary citizens nor intellectuals like Mahmood Darweish, Edward Said, etc. They are all forced to change their places repeatedly; the enemy has banished the Palestinians from their rights, their works, which made their displacement permanent (Khan and Aleem 37). Barghouti illustrated the pain of living in diaspora in a few verses when he talked about his mother:

Can the earth contain

The cruelty of a mother making her coffee alone

On a Diaspora morning?

She wants to go to a planet away from the earth

Where all directions lead to the harbor of the bosom,

The gulf of two arms

That receive and know no farewells.

She wants airplanes to come back only.

Airports to be for those returning,

The planes to land and never leave again. (Barghouti 1-10)

These lines express the mother's heartfelt yearning for the reunion of her family and loved ones. They reflect her deep desire to see everyone gathered together, united in love and harmony, without the pain of separation and distance. His mother hopes that no one will ever be apart from one another again.

3. 3. 2. Adaptation to Time, Not to Places

After the conflicts, the Palestinian was put in complicated circumstances where everyone tends to temporary solutions because this is the only way left to save themselves until things become clear. The occupied finds himself in places he did not know her people; however, life plays by its own rules, and life teaches us to adapt to the situation in one way or another. For instance, Mourid did not love teaching at all, but he thought in Kuwait so he could manage his affairs.

When the occupation disagrees on the place of your residence, it simply means you have to move to another place. Mourid mentioned how he adapted frequent leaving by saying, "Since the Jews of the twentieth century remembered their Holy Book, I have been afflicted by a Bedouin traveling, and I am not a Bedouin. I have never been able to collect my own library. I have moved between houses and furnished apartments, and become used to the passing and the temporary" (91).

3. 4. Self-Alienation

The problem of alienation is strongly exhibited in Barghouti's narrative because the occupation switched the conception of home and the Palestinians' habits. Due to the development of literary works and their discussions of the effects of wars, Sumit Chakrabarti argued that the

individual is more affected by wars than the space she went further to refer to the problem of exile, where she utilizes the case of Theodor Adorno².

The author discusses how Adorno chose a life of isolation, fleeing from a war-torn place before ultimately being exiled from his country. She also highlights the significant difference in the experiences of exile between Adorno and Mourid. Unlike Adorno, Mourid remained emotionally connected to his homeland (Chakrabarti 120).

Mourid, the political exile, feels that he does not fully know his native country, confusions keep chasing him all the time, and he feels resentment against the ‘Ihtilal’ (see glossary) of what he has done to the land of civilizations. “I am the person coming from the continents of others, from their languages and their borders. ...Here I am walking toward the land of poem. A visitor? A refugee? A citizen? A guest? I do not know. Is this a political moment? Or an emotional one? Or social? A practical moment? A surreal one? A moment of the body? Or of the mind?” (Barghouti 11).

3. 4. 1. Resistance to Alienation

Despite the repressive attempts to eradicate everything that reflects Palestine, the country and its people keep resisting. Barghouti’s narrative expresses the deep attachment of man towards his homeland that cannot be breached; he did not refer to resistance to his own self, yet to all the Palestinians, whether is an exiled or not. Songs are also means of resistance, such as Fayruz’s “*O wooden bridge...*” (Barghouti 11). Where Barghouti testifies how this song is deeply rooted in every age group, and he wonders if people really need someone else to make their voice heard.

Rana Abdul Munim Khan and Amina Aleem argued that Barghouti’s work serves to present both the history and culture of Palestine, praising the inclusion of Palestinian moments in his narrative to depict their history from their own perspective (45). Endurance is also presented in return;

² A German philosopher and the author of the book called *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. He wrote it after being affected of war and exile.

Palestinians keep trying until to get the permission to enter. Barghouti asked:

“Was I wrong to come here, Abu Muhammad?”

“On the contrary. Anyone who can come back and live here should come back immediately. Should we leave it for the Falasha and the Russians and the Brooklyn Jews? Should we leave it to the settlers? Everyone should come back from abroad who can. With a permit, a reunion order, a job—anything. Build in your villages if you can. Build Palestinian settlements in Palestine. How can you ask if it was wrong? Come, my friend—come!” (142)

In a conversation with Abu Muhammad (see glossary), one of his longtime neighbours in Dar Ra’d (see glossary). They discussed the importance of returning to their homes to resist enemy encroachment. They emphasized the need to prevent the enemy from ever feeling as if they are the rightful owners of the land.

Susan Abulhawa also referred in her narrative to the power of resistance against the occupied when Mazen faced the occupation’ soldier and he boldly confronted him “Your bullet cannot touch my humanity! It cannot touch my soul! It cannot rip my roots from the soil of this land covet! We will not let you steal our land” (62-63). The Palestinian people did not yield to colonial oppression but rather engaged in a prolonged struggle marked by numerous sacrifices.

3.5. Conclusion

From the elements discussed in this chapter, it has been clarified that the nostalgia of a person affected by war is different from other cases that a man can pass through because war did not destroy only physical possessions, but it also shatters psychological values. The exile Mourid Barghouti carefully preserved his memories of places and times that awaken his feelings of nostalgia. Nostalgia emerged from the first walk on the Jordan bridge; the one who passed it last time was a boy, and now

he is a father.

In this chapter, we partnered with Mourid moments. We have heard the creak of wood under his feet, we felt sad for Mounif's odd death, and we also felt Abu Hazim's warm hug. In the return stage, there was a sort of anger and resentment towards the occupation that intended to keep the places and the cities in which they were under the Palestinian authority, with the old where the settlements are another thing; elegant and modern, emphasising the manipulation and the willingness of the occupation.

When exile is spoken of, a sense of alienation is evoked; self-alienation is a serious problem, especially because of the frequent displacement the occupied lives in forcefully, which further confuses identity and belonging. Despite everything, the sense of resistance is highly marked, the one's attachment to his land makes him endure either with blood or with thoughts like: Mourid Barghouti, Mahmoud Darweish, Ghassan Kanafani, Susan Abulhawa, Edward Said, and many other intellectuals Palestine has brought.

General Conclusion

In *I Saw Ramallah*, Mourid Barghouti portrays repressed nostalgia and the pain of injustice, echoing the overwhelming emotions of many Palestinians exiled from their homes. The occupation prevents a better future and leads Palestinians to long for change and a desire to move forward with the times, rather than holding onto the past.

Throughout his literary exploration, nostalgia evolves from a passive emotion into an active, intellectual process of self-reflection. This transformation enables a person in exile to construct a new identity, showing that they can maintain a connection to themselves and their community, even in the absence of a home to return to.

The memoir also sheds light on the alienated self, feelings of loss and deprivation of places, and memories to which their hearts are attached. His estrangement is not only linked to people but also to objects. He shares an incident where he bought a fig with a dollar in exile, jokingly adding, 'if my grandmother Umm Atta had heard this, she would have sent me to Bethlehem,' and Bethlehem is a mental hospital.

The research highlights that Barghouti's writing serves not just as an expression of enduring loss but also as a significant act of resistance against alienation. It delves into the rich history of the Palestinian people and their resources, while also drawing connections to notable intellectual figures like Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish.

Mourid's book was not devoid of modernist techniques that helped the reader to interpret meanings, using methods like stream of consciousness and inner thoughts, symbolism, and a non-linear narrative that facilitates jumping between dates and reveals similar events. The spirit of the poet was present by using lyrical language and irony as well as humour because Barghouti, from the beginning of his book he did not want to play the role of the victim but to convey the reality.

Throughout the analyses, the findings clearly support the initial hypotheses that say that

the complexities and frequent feelings of estrangement allow the emergence of nostalgia. Second, Ramallah, the bridge, and Deir Ghassanah seek to present conflict between the past and the new. Third, the idea of return portrays the rich history and culture of Palestinians and their connections, attempting to show their resistance against the occupation's oppression.

As with any other research work, this dissertation has some limitations that are look forward to refining in future research. We seek to elaborate the concept of nostalgia and alienation deeper in relation to other contemporary modern and postmodern writers. In particular, we aim to study the novel of Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, through a deep analysis of how human endeavours to find meaning in a chaotic and ephemeral world using art and memory.

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