



الصدمة والنمو النفسي للذات في صباحات سوزان أبو الهوى في جنين

Trauma and Psychic Growth of the Self in Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*

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الملخص:

تتعمق هذه الدراسة بالتجربة المؤلمة التي وقع ضحيتها الفلسطينيون منذ اليوم الذي أعلنت فيه إسرائيل دولتها في عام 1948م، وكيف أثرت هذه الحياة المأساوية في نموهم النفسي الخاص بالذات والهوية. يدرس هذا البحث رواية سوزان أبي الهوى (صباحات جنين)، في ضوء مفهومين نفسيين: الأول لفرويد الخاص باللاوعي، والثاني لماك آدم وكوكس الخاص بالهوية السردية. من خلال هذه الرواية تنبش أبو الهوى ما أخفي عمداً في طيات التاريخ في محاولة لخلق نماذج جديدة من الكتابات المتخيلة التي تمتزج فيها الحقائق بالخيال. تعالج الرواية درامياً العوالم الداخلية للشخصيات الفلسطينية، والألم، والمشاعر، والرغبات المكبوتة. فالحضور المتكرر لهذا الألم يعد موجعاً، مؤدياً إلى انهيار الشخصيات والتسبب في مآسيها. تبين الدراسة أن عالم اللاوعي يعد ممثلاً بشكل جلي في مواقف الشخصيات وتصرفاتها وأحاسيسها. كما تبين الدراسة أن بعض الشخصيات نجحت في تجاوز الإحساس بالألم والمعاناة وديناميكية اللاوعي، في حين أصيب الآخرون بصدمات نفسية من جراء ذلك. فضلاً على ذلك ولخدمة وظيفة الفهم الذاتي، يعتمد الفلسطينيون على إستراتيجية سرد القصص. تستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية عاملاً تمكينياً يكتب من خلاله الفلسطينيون تاريخهم ولضمان وجودهم الذاتي. كما أن لهذه الإستراتيجية بعداً علاجياً في مواجهة النزوح والاعتراق والمنفى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سوزان أبي الهوى، النمو النفسي، الألم، اللاوعي، الهوية السردية.

Abstract:

This study delves deep into the traumatic experience that almost all Palestinians have fallen prey to since the day Israel declared statehood in 1948 and how such tragic life characterized their psychic growth of the self and identity. It considers Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* in the light of two psychological notions, that is, Freud's "the unconscious" and McAdams's and Cox's "narrative identity." Throughout the novel, Abulhawa unearths the unusual and less known depths in Palestinian history in an attempt to provide new versions of fictional writings. The novel dramatizes the Palestinian characters' inner world, their trauma and their repressed feelings and desires. The repeated incursion of trauma is considered harmful, giving rise to the characters' downfall and being the reason behind their tragedies. The study has shown that the world of the unconscious is clearly represented in the characters' attitudes, behaviors and feelings. It elucidates that some characters succeed in working through their traumas and the dynamics of the unconscious while the others are rendered to be psychologically traumatized. Furthermore, to serve a self-understanding function, Palestinians rely on the strategy of storytelling. Such a strategy is used as an empowering device by which Palestinians write their past and guarantee their self-existence. It can also be therapeutic that they use it as a remedy against the displacement and alienation they experience in their permanent exile.

Keywords: Susan Abulhawa, self, trauma, unconscious, narrative identity.

Introduction:

The concept of self is one of the most controversial concepts in the interdisciplinary studies. It can be tackled from a number of different perspectives and be evaluated by

using multiple standards. Constructing a healthy sense of selfhood is not mainly a specific task to be achieved at a certain stage of development. It is a "psychic structure" (Kohut 1971, p. xv), in which both the inside and the outside overlap to formulate one's sense

of the self as presented in his/her life story. Such unstable nature of self makes it unfixed and, thus, opens to change and development in interactional contexts. Kohut (1977) highlights the bipolar structure of the self, "[t]he rudiments of the nuclear self are laid down by simultaneously or consecutively occurring processes of selective inclusion and exclusion of psychic structure" (p. 183). Accordingly, to analyze a person's self, it is notable to encompass all dimensions of self-concept, that is, the conscious and the unconscious ones. However, the unconscious is considered to be "the core of our being" (Freud, 1938, p. 196), since the conscious mind reveals only a marginal side of one's temporary behaviors and feelings. It is the dynamics of the unconscious which drives a person to rush to do things as a result of what is going on in his/her inner world. This is clearly reflected in the story telling technique adopted by several Palestinian authors. Among them is Susan Abulhawa.

Abulhawa is a Palestinian- American writer and human activist, who focuses on the Palestinian struggle and history. In her fiction, she comments on the political, social and cultural aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through which she links a profound relationship between history, culture, self-concept and identity. She is the author of three well-known novels, that is, *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), *The Blue Between Sky and Water* (2015) and *Against the Loveless World* (2020). She also writes a poetry collection entitled *My Voice Sought the Wind* in which she discusses themes of love, loss, struggle and identity from her own experience and personal reflection.

Through her writings, Abulhawa tends to provide a vivid portrayal of the historical violence and the political conflict. The ramifications of these events are the cause of suffering for almost all Palestinians. She consciously represents Palestinian history through her characters to assert how the historically significant moments in the Palestinian- Israeli context give shape to individuals' subjectivities and have a profound impact on the social reality. She adeptly incorporates historical facts into fiction, reflecting on how the traumatic history shapes

Palestinians' lives and selves. Muhaidat et al. (2017) [change word] that "[r]etelling the traumatic past helps the traumatized to recover and reconnect with their inner selves, other people, and the whole world" (22). Abulhawa's writings highlight the symbolic relationship between literature, history and culture.

History thus plays an important role in Abulhawa's novel. To better understand Palestinian trauma, it is important to "understand the past in order to reclaim the present and the future" (Herman, 1992, p.1). Palestine has gone through brutal and unrelenting experience of "massacres, land confiscation, dispossession, deportation and assassination" (Hamdi, 2011, p. 22). Palestinian tragedy can be traced back to the 1897 Zionist conference in Basle, Switzerland. This event was followed by the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement in which Britain was awarded the mandate for Palestine and some other Arab countries. In 1917, Balfour Declaration was announced to give Israel the right to occupy cities in Palestine. This event which is known as Al Nakba (disaster) is considered the most tragic event in Palestinian history. The 1948 Nakba "involved the destruction of over 500 Palestinian towns and villages and the exodus of three-quarters of a million Palestinians through direct intimidation of fear" (Rolston, 2014, p. 42). Al Nakba event is followed by Al Naksa –setback- in 1967 in which Israel occupies all the land of Palestine. This Israeli colonialism, which has continued until today, has left Palestinian people in a state of instability in which they redefine their self-concepts and identities in relation to a diasporic experience that has left stranded all over the world in search of viable alternatives.

Having been through these traumatic events, Abulhawa's life and personality have progressed immensely. Born in 1970 in Kuwait to a refugee family, she was forced to spend some years in an orphanage in East Jerusalem before going to the United States to complete her university education. After experiencing the exilic condition, Abulhawa adopts a humanitarian objective in writing her works in an attempt to throw light on the traumatized condition of displacement and diaspora.

Through her characters, she uses the literary sub-genre called "bearing witness" which, according to Hamdi (2011) "[addresses] the need for a kind of literature that communicates to the present about a past that is unthinkable and which, in the case of the Palestinian narrative has been intentionally suppressed by the dominant narrative" (p. 23). She provides a new reading of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict in which she uses her novels as a vehicle to transmit specifically political or ideological messages.

Research Objectives

This study aims at investigating Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* to throw light on her traumatized characters to unveil the psychological cost of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Also, it attempts to probe into the unusual and less known gaps in the Palestinians' shattering experience to portray the psychological sufferings of the victims, and how such case affects the process of self-fashioning to a large extent. Moreover, it highlights the dynamics of the unconscious in the psychic growth of the characters' sense of self. Finally, this study identifies how Abulhawa's characters resort to the strategy of storytelling to find an authentic self and recover a narrative identity which gives meaning and purpose of living to their life.

The Significance of the Study

Through representing the trauma-filled lives of Abulhawa's characters, this study mirrors the bleak realities of the troubled Palestinian society and the disavowed moments of its history. It gives importance to hidden motives of the unconscious mind in determining the behaviors and reactions of the characters in their journey to fashion a sense of self and identity.

Limitations of the Study

This study limits its scope by dealing only with trauma and the psychic growth of the self through highlighting two notions, that is, the unconscious and narrative identity. It is limited to Susan Abulhawa's first-published novel *Mornings in Jenin*.

Definitions of Key Terms

Self: the totality of the individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes, conscious and unconscious, mental and psychical. Apart from its basic reference to personal identity, being, and experience, the term's used in psychology is wide-ranging (VanderBos, 2015, p. 951).

Trauma: any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behaviors (e.g., rape, war, industrial accidents) and often challenge an individual's view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place (VanderBos, 2015, p.1104).

Unconscious: the unconscious refers to mental elements (thoughts, memories) that have been repressed, forced out of the conscious by direct action of the mind. These elements contain material that is threatening in some ways (Robert, 1976, p.23).

Narrative Identity: the broad and ideally integrative story that a person begins to work on during emerging adulthood and continues to work on for much of the rest of life [...] Narrative identity is a *psychosocial construction*, a joint production through which a storytelling I works within a cultural, psycho-literary tradition that spells out the kinds of stories that can and should be told if a life is to be seen as good and meaningful (McAdams and Cox, 2010, p. 35, emphasis original).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is psychoanalytic criticism. It breeds a new method of reading and interpreting to literary texts by decoding and reinterpreting such symbolic codes and keys implied in the work of literature. It endeavors to show how the author expresses his/her hidden psyche or message through the literary language and fictional characters, intimating what exists at the unconscious or subconscious level to the stage of consciousness. Monte (1877) denotes

that "psychoanalytic theories assume the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate an individual's overt actions" (p. 8). Thus, the psychological interpretation makes it easy to uncover the intrinsic intuition of the writer, the dynamics of his/her sense of self as well as his/her personality and the deeper meanings or unconscious items within his/her literary texts. From a psychological angle, notions such as Freud's "the unconscious" and McAdams & Cox's "narrative identity" are being used to psychoanalyze Abulhawa's characters throughout the novel under study, unfolding Abulhawa's psyche as well.

Previous Studies

There are many studies that discuss Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. Of these studies, Zaiter and Kadri's study (2019) which discusses the quest for identity and nostalgia in the novel. It highlights the role of the Palestinian culture in constructing Palestinians' identity. By using the postcolonial theory, the researchers analyze the characters' psyche throughout the novel. This study also tries to signify how the Israeli narratives strive to dominate the literature. However, this study attempts to state the events and clarify the realities of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict without attacking Israelis. It concludes that Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* is considered to be an important work in Arab American literature because of its representation of how the Palestinian identity is shaped in the light of the traumatic history. A fragmented identity is constructed, narrating the hard feelings that the Palestinians are forced to experience as a result of their exile condition, whether it is in Palestine itself, or being refugees around the world.

Maghfiroh and Koiri (2020) provide a study of Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin* that deals with the theme of diasporic identity. It is limited to the portrayal of diasporic identity of the main female character, Amal, in the novel. Postcolonial approach is used to reveal the development of Amal's diasporic identity in her journey as "the other" in the US. The study shows that Amal's movement to several countries has a critical role in shaping her diasporic identity. Having been in Palestine and

then in America, her culture collides with the American culture, leading to a confused state. In such dilemma, Amal decides to conform to the American culture, establishing a new identity as an American. However, she finds herself in a perplexed condition since she is not completely accepted in her new adopted homeland. She experiences the feelings of nostalgia and longing for the homeland, considering her homeland as a utopian place to which she must return in order to have a real sense of the self.

Discussion

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Palestinian history and experience have been narrated from different perspectives to illustrate how the characters come to terms with heterogeneous experiences by which they are profoundly marked. This novel maps a category of writing about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, positioning violence, savagery and trauma as central in the construction of Palestinian characters' selves as well as in the formation of their identities. Throughout the novel, Abulhawa presents the reality with a metaphorical insight, emphasizing the connection between narrative and history: "historical discourses typically produce narrative interpretations of their subject matter" (White, 1999, p.3). The novel captures the trauma and pain of Abulheja family who undergoes collective historical tragedies from time to another. The repeated incursion of trauma in the characters' lives highlights the psychological impact of such endless conflict.

Abulheja family's story, through its four generations, offers a portrayal of the historical violence and displacement that Palestinians are forced to experience since the moment Israel had declared statehood in 1948. Being a member of the first generation, Yehya, Abu Hassan, has deep roots in Ein Hod where he has lived peacefully with his family, working in olive farming. However, years later, Yehya has to experience the trauma of being "a withering refugee in the unfamiliar dilapidation of exile" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 16). Zionists' attacks on Ein Hod introduce Abulheja family's trauma and displacement. The moment Yehya is forced

to leave his ancestral home and is tantalized by the injury of Darweesh, his son, which leaves him motionless, he begins to feel that "nothing had meaning" (ibid, p. 32). Living in Jenin refugee camp, he "aged tremendously in those confused months that stretched into years". Having been in agrarian works for more than sixty years, he becomes "a man defeated by the wait," to return to his land one day as well as "[d]efeated by the quiet nag of his hands wanting things to do" (ibid, p. 39). The hope of returning home is warped inside him day after day because of "the oppressive business of waiting and the offenses of temporary life" (ibid, p. 43). He becomes taciturn and home turns to be captured as an unconscious matter instead, that is, "a country within him" (ibid, p. 40) since the desire to return home is repressed. During such moments of descent and breakdown into the unconscious, the unconscious emotions motivate Yehya to make his way back to Ein Hod with complete indifference to Israeli soldiers' presence and the possibility to die in the way. It can be said that the inner exilic condition that Yehya experiences dominates his unconscious from then on and, consequently, verbalizes his impetuous behaviors and actions.

Although he returns to the refugee camp from his visit to Ein Hod with "vagabond appearance" (ibid, p. 41), Yehya "was so happy. He just unwrapped a bundle of figs, lemons, grapes, carobs, and olives in the middle of town as though he were bringing a million gold dinars. He couldn't get rid of that smile" (ibid, p. 41). His brief return to his ancestral home gratifies his unconscious to a large extent as he "came invested with euphoria" (ibid, p. 41). The unconscious desire to "die where he was supposed to die," (ibid, p. 43) moves Yehya again towards his homeland, although he "had known that when he again set foot outside the boundaries of that eternal 1948, he would be gone forever" (ibid, p. 43). This second visit puts an end to his "malady of a broken heart" (ibid, p. 43) as "he had been spotted on his first trip by one of the Jewish settlers, and when he returned, waiting soldiers had shot him for trespassing" (ibid, p. 43). His end reflects a behavior of a man traumatized by the

meaningless life he is thrown into as well as his helplessness. Being stripped of his objectives of life, he is plagued with the sense "nothingness" which is according to Christ's (1986) coping with trauma model is the first stage of trauma in which traumatized characters' experience "emptiness in their own lives - in self-hatred, in self-negation, and in being a victim" (p. 13). He prefers death over life as he is filled with an agonizing feeling of being strange. Living in the camp after losing his trees, home and land, Yehya takes two temporary visits to Ein Hod in an attempt to find meaning for his existence and get rid of the continuous state of fear and tragedy. His inability to work through the trauma causes deep damage to the structures of his self-fashioning and psychic growth which lay bare in his intentional acts to put an end to his life by his indifference to the possible danger he is likely to bring upon himself.

Shedding light on his son's self-fashioning, Hasan's journey for true selfhood is also haunted by the unconscious. From the beginning, his desire to complete his education is repressed by his father's, Yehya, refusal. In a state of panic, Hasan falls in dejection which dramatizes his unconscious world. However, in the shadow of the innocent friendship that is born between Hasan and Ari Perlstein whose family flees from Nazism to settle in Jerusalem, Hasan creates his utopian world. By a secret deal between Hasan's mother and Mrs. Perlstein, Hasan has a chance to complete his education since "he received superior tutoring from Mrs. Perlstein, who sent her eager young student home every week loaded with books, lessons, and homework" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 17). Through these private lessons, Hassan is able to look beyond his father's deprivation of continuing his formal schooling and, thus, comes over his internal conflict. At the psychological level, Hasan succeeds in working through his repressed unconscious desire instead of staying drowned in the painful impact of his father's decision.

The death of his desire, however, leaves a profound scar on his psychic growth as it transfers from the conscious to the unconscious world, "[a]nd it was for the same decision and subsequent regret and heartbreak

that Hasan would resolve, with determined hard labor and its pittance pay, that his children would receive an education" (ibid, p. 16). The troubles of Hasan are further worsened by the extraordinarily tragic situations, caused by Israel's declaration of establishing statehood in the country. Such circumstances open Hasan to a realm of loss, pain and prolonged trauma. Besides the killing, violence and displacing of the Palestinian people out of their homes, Hasan loses his father as well as his youngest son, Ismael. During his father's funeral procession, he "walked in silence," as if silence is an attribute of his unconscious world. Hasan is also tantalized by his son's missing that he feels "[a]shamed to return daily without Ismael" (ibid, p. 44). These traumatic events disrupt Hasan's previous ideas of his sense of self that:

He would rise before the sun, pray the first salat, and read, his free hand alternating between a cup of coffee and his pipe packed with honey apple tobacco. Then he would leave for his job before his family awoke, and from there, he would go to hills with his books, returning after his family was already sleeping. (ibid, p. 44)

Hassan's alienation as well as his habit of smoking the honey apple tobacco in spite of his lungs' problem shows his failure to work through the trauma and that he is being stuck in these traumatic events. Reading books stands as a solace for his traumatized self as he transfers his "passions, his losses, his heartaches, and his loves" through the words of "Abu-Hayyan, Khalil Gibran, al-Maarri, Rumi" (ibid, p. 53). Literature, thus, has a healing impact on Hasan as it alleviates his grief. Moreover, in naming his daughter Amal, Hasan symbolically presents his inner and repressed wills and dreams that, "[w]e name you Amal with a long vowel because the short vowel means just one hope, one wish [...] You are so much more than that. We put all of our hopes into you. Amal, with the long vowel, means hopes, dreams, lots of them" (ibid, pp. 61-2). Consequently, the trauma of the political conflict between Palestinians and Israelis transforms Hasan's sense of self, producing a new sense characterized by the failure to cope with the trauma mechanism.

Shedding light on dynamics of the transmission of trauma over generations, the third generation of Abulheja family, Yousef and Amal, fall preys to the traumatizing cycle of the prolonged Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Yousef, the first son of Hasan and Dalia, is portrayed as a traumatized conflict-hit character. He was born before Al-Nakba, being witnessed and experienced the Palestinian tragedy from the beginning. His early traumatic experience keeps haunting and affecting him in an ongoing process, re-conceptualizing his sense of the self evermore. He is five years old when he is first introduced to the existence of Israelis in his homeland. He "clung to his mother's thobe, peeking from behind Dalia's hips at the feasting light-skinned foreigners in helmets" (ibid, p. 28). He, furthermore, testifies the moments of the violent dispossessing from homeland. Living in a war-torn country erodes Yousef's stable sense of self and deforms his personal life in many respects.

Such terrifying childhood shapes Yousef's psychic growth of the self and life with indelible marks. Yousef restores the painful events inside his mind as to be emerged later in the form of flashbacks and unexpected reactions, giving voice to his traumatic wounds. That is, "[f]or Yousef, not yet ten, his jiddo's exploit was a seed that planted itself in his memories of the terrible eviction, and it would germinate at his core a character of defiance" (ibid, p. 41). He dredges up such painful memories which represent a story of a certain part of his life. The "terrible eviction" from Ein Hod to be lived in a refugee camp throws Yousef in a traumatizing world of his own. His grandfather's death doubles his pain that "[n]o one noticed the trauma in Yousef's young face during the funeral" (ibid, p. 44). For Yousef, "the sudden gone-forever of his grandfather made his heart curl around itself in sadness" (ibid, p. 44). Moreover, his mother's cool affection, that is, "she had neglected Yousef since Ismael had disappeared" (ibid, p. 45) interferes with his growth and affects his personality. Yousef's traumatic childhood seems to survive actively in his unconscious as he has a lot of terrible childhood memories

which always connect his present experiences with the complexities of his past.

The tumult of June, 1967 war distorts Yousef's perception of the self. When the war bursts, Yousef is a student at the university of Bethlehem. He is summoned by his father to return to Ein Hod and participate in the war. During Israel's attack, he is taken by Israelis to be returned after forty days naked to his village. These crises change Yousef's character profoundly, that is, he "was impassive and wanted little to do with food or talk. His eyes [...] seemed to see something eerie" (ibid, p. 74). Yousef's survival has a negative impact on him as the traumatic moments continue to disturb him every now and then. As a victim of trauma, the shock of facing such stressful situation repeatedly takes Yousef back to it. Yousef "has acquired a deliberate manner of speech and the war had consolidated an intensity to his character, which would one day take him deep into love and into history" (ibid, p. 74). He lives in a sense of desperation and alienation as trauma has an unconscious meaning, distempering the process of self-fashioning. Herman (1992) sheds the light on the drama of internal conflict that the traumatized characters are tantalized with:

Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. (p. 33)

The disturbing effects of trauma develop a state of complete helplessness and meaninglessness on Yousef. He starts to realize the world from fragmented perspectives, he says, "I am damaged, of no use to the people I love, I'll die if I stay here. But something in me remains afire. Something that refuses to break, insists on a fight" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 89). He has an ambivalent post-traumatic perception of the self, that is, he wants to live as well he wants

to die. However, Yousef endeavors to work through his trauma by working as a teacher in the UNRWA boy's school to compensate the turn that occurs in his life by which he is forced to leave his work as well as cut off his studying at Bethlehem. Besides, he "tripped his after-hours energy into the garage he had inherited from his father" (ibid, p. 90). Another strategy utilizes to overcome the impacts of traumatic experience is that Yousef "found refuge in the belly of solitude and braced his air with deliberation and thought [...] There, under the shelter of trees, Yousef read" (ibid, p. 90). Yousef breaks his bond to the outer world and locks himself in reading books without any perception of time. His way of responding to the trauma is similar to his father's, Hasan, as both find temporarily relief in reading books.

Furthermore, Yousef "turned everything inward [...] He cloistered the pain, letting it tangle with powerlessness" (ibid, p. 90). Silence is used by Yousef as "a fated exile yet also a home, a destination and a binding oath" (Felman and Laub, 1992, p. 58). Yousef uses silence as a defense mechanism to escape the trauma reality since Palestinians' everyday lives are defined by fear, oppression and torture, preventing any form of stable life and self-fashioning to exist. He is stuck in the unconscious where all his repressed feelings and thoughts are involved. Yousef "rarely joined the angry chanting of funeral marches. He did not celebrate martyrdom, nor did he show grief. A deep aching for life simmered inside him behind a shell of indifference" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 91). Yousef loses the conscious perception of the self as a result of his traumatic experience.

His decision to leave Ein Hod and join Fateh, the Palestinian revolutionary fighters, unfolds Yousef's unconscious voice since he prefers unknown destiny to live unbearable and miserable life in the refugee camp. He depicts his life as "I am like a caged bird here [...] It is unbearable to think of our future as nullified, condemned to an eternal refugee's life of subjugation and shackles" (ibid, p. 99). He escapes the scene, leaving his mother and daughter alone. After a period of time in which Yousef has spent fighting through the ranks of

the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), he is settled in Lebanon. He acts out of trauma by love and marriage. He gets married to his beloved, Fatima, and has his first child, Falasteen who reinvigorates the happiness in Yousef's life as he "saunters proudly around the camp holding his baby girl" (ibid, p. 150). Constructing a family, thus, helps Yousef to recuperate from trauma.

However, all these pleasant moments vanish with the brutal events committed to the Palestinian Shatila camp in 1982 in which Yousef loses his wife and daughter. Trauma hits Yousef with its full strength when he discovers that Israelis "ripped my Fatima's belly with a knife!... They killed my babies!" (ibid, p. 178). He is defeated by the loss of his family which makes the traumatic effect deeper. It seems to have traumatized him, leading him to have a traumatized self. He gets lost in time and lives along with the "frenzy of pain" which "dismantled him" (ibid, p. 179). The trauma reality damages Yousef's sense of the self, that he returns to Lebanon where he "had left his soul to rummage through Sabra and Shatila, where his wife and daughter lay in a mass grave beneath a garbage dump" (ibid, p. 183). His trauma does not come to an end as he is, later on, accused to be the terrorist who bombed the embassy in Beirut. Such accusation makes Yousef's life much more terrible and throws him in an endless solitude as he says "I am alone with my father's books, my bullet, Love and the memory of her [his wife], the past, and memories of a future" (ibid, p. 249). Hereby, Yousef fails to build a critical distance from his past, rather he inhabits himself in a world of memories which "[will] not go through with it [...] But it will go through him," (ibid, p. 249). This traumatic incident distorts Yousef's perception of the time as he oscillates between life and death. Yousef summarizes his miserable and displaced condition:

My gun and solitary bullet are in my pocket. I carry my death, the honorable thing, in my clothes as I, their terrorist, search for work in the dark realms of life. In Basra I am a laborer. In Kuwait, I haul stone. In Jordan I am nearly a beggar. Then, I am a school janitor. (ibid, p.249)

Unlike Yousef, Amal achieves working through her trauma and succeeds in getting rid of being trapped between traumatic reality and its re-entailment. Being born in a refugee camp, she comes across traumatic experience which leaves a stamp in her life as the trauma is always active in her unconscious. The events of 1967 record the beginning of Amal's traumatized life. She witnesses the war and its damaging effects which turn her life into a tragedy. During the attack, Amal's mother "hurried Huda and me into the hole in the kitchen [...] The hole was as deep as I was tall, and wide enough that Huda and I could crouch at its bottom" (ibid, p. 58). Amal and her best friend, Huda, come across the most devastating moments in their lives.

Having undergone such terrifying traumatic experience, Amal's personal trauma begins. The time after the invasion, she is shocked by the fact that her father and many other characters either have dead or disappeared. Everything in Jenin camp turns to dust. The typical tragic reaction that she has experienced as the war takes her father and leaves her mother completely broken and shattered is that she denies knowing her mother when she is questioned "Do you know this woman?" (ibid, p. 62) The answer "No" summarizes Amal's trauma in that moment in which "a beseeching resentment filled me. 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" (ibid, p. 62). This strange reaction comes to the stage as a result of Amal's unconscious feelings towards her mother, Dalia, who is used to treat Amal with drought of compassion, shedding light on the dynamics of the unconscious mind on an individual's behaviors. Rivkin and Ryan (1998) make the point clear:

The "unconscious" as he called it, is a repository of repressed desires, feelings, memories, and instinctual drives [...] such repression creates what might be called a second self, a stranger within, a place where all that cannot for one reason or another be expressed or realized in civil life takes up residence. (p. 119)

This reaction can be further reinterpreted as a way to escape the trauma reality or to seek a better destiny as Amal "shrank behind my disgraceful lie to remain in the protection of Sister Marianne [good nun]" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 63). In her way to deal with her trauma, Amal reflects war realities in the aftermath of the invasion, stating that she and others "had crossed some unmarked boundary beyond which there could be no return. The world we knew was gone. Somehow, we knew that" (ibid, p. 64). Trauma disconnects people from the normal life they are used to live in, distorting their perception of life as they lose the sense of safety in their lives.

However, Amal succeeds in working through her trauma. After her father's disappearance, her mother's living-death state, her brother's escaping and her abdomen's injury, Amal convinces and motivates herself that by completing her education she will be able to overcome her trauma. She studies hard to make her father's dream sees the light since "[t]here was nothing left for me but my father's dream" (ibid, p. 104). By the time, Amal "became known as a prodigious student and emerged from self-banishment to the laudatory eyes of adults in the camp" (ibid, p. 105). Simultaneously, Amal's character changes profoundly as the traumatic events which she has come across are also recognized for their damaging effects. They breach her attachments of love and friendship, shattering the construction of herself. Amal pushes her only friend, Huda, away, devoting her time to reading books and studying. She is also known in the camp for her indifference towards boys which is a sign of her "anguish of deficiency," (ibid, p. 105) because her abdomen's injury leaves an irreversible mark on her body.

Being in such traumatized cycle, Amal brings to light the overwhelming impacts of trauma which shape victim's way of living and thinking. She experiences what Caruth (1996) calls the "mute repetition of suffering" (p. 9), as she relives the traumatic events every moment. She manages dealing with her trauma, but she cannot get rid of its disturbing effects since her trauma remains active in her unconscious. She oscillates between the present experience and

the complexities of troubled history. She lives along with the prevailing thoughts of that there is something missing in her soul forever, adding fuel to her confused and complicated concept of life. Such presence of trauma leads to confusing view of life and death as death becomes part of Palestinians' everyday lives. The damaged thoughts of a traumatized person in which the barrier between life and death is blurred results on Amal's confused state when she faces her mother's death, "[m]y eyes vented quiet tears. I cried, not for this women's death, but for my mother, who had departed that body years before. I cried with a bittersweet relief that she was finally and completely rid of the whorehouse world that had deflowered her spirit" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 105). Thus, life and death in Amal's eyes are no more two sides of the same coin. Death becomes a way to rest, that is, death "was a merciful thing" (ibid, p. 61) for many traumatized Palestinians. Witnessing violent injury and massive death in everyday life, death has become a commonplace matter instead of its unpleasant connotation.

After her mother's death, Amal is now genuinely alone. She is persuaded to join an orphanage which "was an orphanage by night and a competitive academic institution by day" (ibid, p. 110). Such turn is added to Amal's traumatic experience as it re-defines her self-boundaries. In the orphanage, Amal goes between joy and grief. To cohabit with the orphanage's distressed life, Amal transpires two strategies. First, she makes friends, "[t]he friendships I forged in the orphanage are the substance of my fondest memories of adolescence" (ibid, p. 126). Although they are not strong and deep friendships, Amal finds solace on them. Being away from the people she is used to live with, the orphanage's society becomes her only world that she has to adapt to. The second strategy is writing letters which is used as "a way to conquer the isolation and boredom" (ibid, p. 132) of being lived in an orphanage. Moreover, "these letters would become the chronicles of times [...] They painted the colors of friendships born of mutual need for survival and kinship" (ibid, p. 132). Such factors have helped Amal to work through her trauma and succeed in her studies. She gets

the American scholarship which identifies a new direction in Amal's life. In America, Amal feels that sense of alienation and estrangement which doubles her trauma, "my first year in college was friendless. It was an isolated and busy year" (ibid, p. 137). Moreover, the world of the unconscious continues to overwhelm Amal's outlook on life, that is, "I was starting a new life. But like the scar beneath my hand, the past was still with me" (ibid, p. 137). Amal is traumatized by her past, the present and the repeated passing out of the traumatic events, shaping her life with an eternal suffering.

Yousef's call dispels the perception of drift and loss which outlines Amal's life in America. Yousef's appearance provides a sense of home to his sister, Amal. Knowing that Yousef gets married and settled in Lebanon, Amal makes her way to Beirut in an attempt to "return to my family, to myself" (ibid, p. 144). She gets married to Majid who is her brother's friend. Majid's love has to large extent cured Amal's trauma. Being traumatized by her abdomen's injury, Majid "gave my body the acceptance I had been unable to give it to myself [...] A scar of hatred soothed by Majid's kiss" (ibid, p. 162). Majid gives new meaning and purpose to Amal's life. However, the restless political situation in Lebanon leads Amal to leave the country and return to the United States to "renew my green card, and begin immigration proceedings for my husband" (ibid, p. 166). After leaving Lebanon, Amal is shocked by the tragic death of her husband to which she "was not filled with grief, anger, or even love. Nothing came over me. But everything rushed out" (ibid, p. 174). Such reaction highlights the fact that the trauma cannot be interpreted as soon as it happens, but it is comprehended after some time when the victim remembers it for the second time (Freud and Breuer, 1975). Amal is defeated by the loss of her husband that she "sat captive in a vacuum of thought, numb and rocking on the floor" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 174). She loses her connection to reality since the incident is powerful enough to break through her protective barrier of her conscious. She is drowned in her unconscious as she calls the moment of her husband's death every now and

then, shedding light on the abrupt nature of traumatic experience.

The traumatized memory hinders Amal from segregating not only between the past and the present but also between the self and the outer world. Her husband's words "remain in my mind, like ashes in an urn. The glory of love, like life, quite simply reduced to dust" (ibid, p. 175). As the traumatic experience makes people hopeless and powerless, Amal experiences a high sense of alienation and inner deadness which precludes her to see the beauty in life anymore. She "remained in the absolution of my inner darkness, but demons followed me there too, crowding the back alley of my days with a past too dense" (ibid, p. 187). The trauma has changed Amal's whole perspective on life by taking away the meaning, drama and the purpose of living. She becomes "a woman of few words and no friends" (ibid, p. 192). Amal also experiences life-death confusion through which she is more identified with those who are dead more than those who are alive, that is, "[t]houghts of Mama, Baba, and Yousef, and a deluge of longing for Majid's touch, would build up an oppressive weight that then would crumble over my heart" (ibid, p. 182). The repeated flashbacks represent the dynamics of the unconscious mind which is unintegrated and timeless.

Giving birth to her baby marks a temporarily new life to Amal and a reason for continuity to which "[t]his fragile infant had forced upon me [Amal] the will to live, and I resented her for that, for all I really wanted then was to die" (ibid, p. 180). Here, the traumatic effects appear in Amal's relationship with her only daughter, Sara, as Amal "feared touching Sara, lest I infect her with my destiny. Lest she warm my heart and unthaw the wrath and the ghosts and madness I feared lived inside me" (ibid, p. 182). Amal is considered to be "a distant mother" (ibid, p. 220), being unconsciously re-orientating her mother's, Dalia, legacy. Such confused mother-daughter relationship provides a glimpse of the bewildering world of trauma. Amal beholds the life as empty and meaningless. She formulates a troubled and traumatized self which seems to suffer from insatiable memories of past. By the

time, Amal hates and despises herself, using silence and isolation as symbols to represent her sufferings. To surpass the post-traumatic disruption, she decides to return to Palestine in an attempt to find a solution to her traumatic situation. However, she is shot by the snipers to write an end to her traumatized life-story.

Abulheja's family story can further be analyzed through the lenses of McAdams & Cox's narrative identity. Palestinians resort to the strategy of storytelling to find a true authentic self and recover an identity that is lost throughout the Israelis' political oppression, denial and repression. To find oneself, Palestinians use stories to restore the abandoned history and transmit it to future generations. This strategy empowers Palestinians with a voice and also the means to reconstruct their own histories. The stories' topics draw inspiration from everyday life in Palestine and convey the country's long history of sufferings through which Israel seeks to annihilate the Palestinian society and violate its norms. Storytelling, thus, becomes essentially an enabling device by which Palestinians rewrite their own pasts and guarantee their self-existence. It can also be therapeutic in the sense that Palestinians use it as a remedy against the displacement and alienation they experience in their permanent exile. Through the strategy of storytelling, Palestinians develop narrative identities which give meaning to their life-experience since in the process of constructing a narrative identity, "the person must envision his or her entire life [...] as a story that portrays a *meaningful sequence* of life events to *explain* how the person has developed into who he or she is now and may develop into who he or she may be in the future" (McAdams and Cox, 2010, p. 101, emphasis original). That is to say, Life story or narrative identity is, then constructed from autobiographical memory which is not merely a simple recollection and recounting of life events, but of those which are considered as self-defining events.

Yehya, the grandfather, as well as his generation use storytelling as a means to provide a snapshot of the social and historical context, reassessing Palestinian history by presenting divergent accounts of what really

happened. Stories are also used to compensate for their own frustrations in the refugee camp:

The old folks of Ein Hod would die refugees in the camp, bequeathing to their heirs the large iron keys to their ancestral homes, the crumbling land registers issued by the Ottomans, the deeds from the British mandate, their memories and love of the land, and the dauntless will not to leave the spirit of forty generations trapped beneath the subversion of thieves. (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 34)

Haj Salem, Yehya's companion and friend, also rewrites the past by the use of storytelling strategy. Haj Salem introduces to the second and third generation the Palestinian history, providing an opportunity to learn about the past of their occupied land. He "who passed history on to the camp's children" (ibid, p. 66). He is used to gather the children around him and, then, "he would weave dynamic accounts of life and past events with such intricate clarity that Palestine and all her villages, many long since razed by Israel, would come alive" (ibid, p. 66). Through his stories, he creates a way to travel beyond the constraints of time and place, "prodding our imaginations to live among our forefathers, watching past events unfold as if that very moment" (ibid, p. 66). He uses the "narrated exhumations of history," (ibid, p. 67) to accept the ambiguity of the present as well as to shore up self-understanding. It can be said that storytelling is used by the first generation as a survival tactic to redeem their own disempowerment in the refugee camp and to transmit history to future generations.

Ari Perlstein who is a figure from the second generation stands as a rewriter of the history. When Amal, her long-lost brother, David, and their children visit Ari's office, Ari "was a splendid storyteller," as he narrates the history in a way that "all sat spellbound by the tales" (ibid, p. 222). His stories offer a realm of truth for them. Storytelling, here, is used as a kind of counter-history to the Israelis criminal aggression against the Palestinian people as:

In Ari's office, we were three generations hauled together by the willful drag of a

foreclosed story swindled by fate but gathered in that moment to demand to be told. The story of one family in an obscure village, visited one day by a history that was not its own, and forever trapped by longing between roots and soil. (ibid, p. 222)

Storytelling allows a way to experience and relive in the past in an attempt to understand the self. During Ari's recounting of stories of Abulheja's family, Amal "was suddenly a child again" (ibid, p. 223). She "sat there, eyes closed, opening the gates to a wounding nostalgia and longing for my lost family, for my lost self" (ibid, p. 223). Ari's stories help Amal to meet her lost self and regain happy memories and even find positive meanings in the negative events. His stories also help the other visitors to know about their real origin and ancestors.

Shedding light on the third generation, Amal and David provide an example of the formation of the narrative identity. Being born in a refugee camp, Amal constructs her sense of home and belonging through the stories of Haj Salem, her father and her brother, Yousef. Such stories' accounts serve as "a flexible guide for the future and an historical archive for making sense of your past" (McAdams, 2006, p. 63). Amal knows about her grandfather, Yehya, and the story of his bravery from Yousef who "tell his sister Amal about their grandfather, whom she had never known" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 41). Through stories, Amal is able to live in the past and establish the boundaries of the self since "self is a perpetually rewritten story [...] in the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives we tell about our lives" (Bruner, 1994, p. 15). Amal develops a narrative sense of self to structure perceptual experience. At the centre of those narratives, Amal's narrative identity is constructed.

Amal's narrative identity is grounded in her autobiographical memories. In her country of adoption, Pennsylvania, Amal "[f]or a long time after, my senses could conjure from memory the sweet scents of spring that had bewitched the air" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 50). Such memories are essential to establish meaning and identity in Amal's life story. Even sad and traumatic memories which invade

Amal's consciousness from time to time present her self-definition, "I submitted to the memories of dense past and it filled me with a sadness that I wished were anger instead" (ibid, p. 207). She cannot get rid of the past as its part of her life story and is a key part of developing a coherent narrative identity. Thus, Amal's narrative identity concludes the sense of the self she forms through the stories and the autobiographical memories which is a presentation of her life story.

In David's visit, Amal uses the strategy of storytelling to reveal to David the history of their origin and family. She uses stories as a means to narrate and give voice to facts and views which have been suppressed with Israeli political and cultural domination. Here, stories have inherent rhetorical power as it is used as a mode of revealing truths that are told by the people who have experienced wars and many political conflicts. Amal, therefore, becomes an autobiographical author through which she begins to create stories to provide a meaningful life story and identity. Such autobiographical stories are mirrors to her life, giving an account of herself. They reflect her personality transformation. However, the act of self-narration makes a difference in Amal's relationship with her only daughter. Being ignored by her father and turned away from her, Amal finally "burned with the love I had denied myself and this perfect child resting in my arms. It occurred to me then that I had found home. She had always been there" (ibid, p. 232). The strategy of storytelling helps Amal to reconstruct her sense of home which is realized by the presence of her daughter. In the air of conversation, Amal defines herself and justifies her past, present and future actions. Even after death, Amal remains as "story," which is "reached far and wide" (ibid, p. 244). It can be said that autobiographical stories conceptualize the sense of self through the act of self-narration.

David, too, constitutes a narrative identity that defines the boundaries of his self. Through the stories of Amal and Ari, he is able to draw a picture of his real origin and discover the true history of Palestine and his family. Being thrown "into a gaping chasm

between truth and lies, Arab and Israeli, Muslim and Jew," (ibid, p. 200) David draws on the strategy of storytelling as both an enabling device to his self-definition as well as an antidote to his confused state. Through narrative resources, David connects his past, present and future to draw a coherent picture of his true self and identity.

Through storytelling, Sara is capable to encounter the history of her ancestors. As she has "still and quiet company of her rigid mother," Sara knows all details about her origin through her visit to Palestine and Ari's stories. The stories, here, are used as an enabling device to Sara's self-definition, "Sara face opened like a wound. Disbelieving, intrigued, hungry for the full story of her life" (ibid, p. 223). Sara, also, learns about the history from Huda, her mother's close friend. Sara said to her mother, "[y]ou have no idea how moving it is for me to be here, where you grew up. I can't wait to meet Huda and hear stories of you two" (ibid, p. 229). Sara feels excited in the discovery of her true origin and identity. Stories gives meaning to Sara's life since she knows nothing before her visit. Also, the strategy of storytelling helps in eliminating the gaps between Sara and her mother. Sara, from now on, "demanded something else. A story" (ibid, p. 235). Sara finds the maternal affection she misses out on in the air of the stories that she "lay her head in the nook of my [her mother] shoulder, wrapping her arms around me, as she had not done since she was too young to remember" (ibid, p. 232). Even after Amal's death, Sara remains thirsty to listen to the stories of her origin. During her mother's funeral, Sara meets Ari again and he promises her "I will tell you everything I remember" (ibid, p. 244). Such narrative accounts help Sara in coming across many secrets and hidden facts that are important to construct a true self and fixed identity. After her mother's death, Sara uses her Web site to narrate to the world the details of her mother's life journey as a Palestinian citizen. This web site characterizes the narration of Sara's mother own stories and her self-reflections, that is, "[h]er Web site, www.aprilblossoms.com, is where Sara records her memories of that month, the month from

which all things come and to which all return" (ibid, p. 243). April is the month when Amal died, leaving a rich number of stories to Sara to construct a coherent narrative identity. Thus, constructing and listening to stories as well as remembering autobiographical memories is at the core of narrative identity. It can be said that Palestinians develops a kind of intergenerational narrative identity as a result of the intergenerational transmission of trauma that even members who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects of the event generations later.

Conclusion

This study analyzes Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* with a psychological perspective. It traces the characters' psychic growth of the self, offering an interpretation of the social, political and economic situation of their country. The analysis indicates that Abulhawa gives a lot of reflections of her own personal experiences in the novel. Her choice for portraying the events of the Palestinian-Israeli prolonged conflict provides readers with many details of the conflict and its destruction as well as unearths the hidden facts and depths. She goes beyond the merely historical domains to give a clear picture of the traumatic effects of such conflicts and wars.

Throughout the novel, almost all Palestinians are shown as traumatized conflict-hit characters, highlighting their sufferings and their post-conflict lives. They become victims of such trauma which distort their perception of life, self and time. It also results in their loss of connection with the outer world. Trauma, thus, throws Abulhawa's characters to experience the dynamics of the unconscious mind. They find in the world of the unconscious a realm where they can unleash their repressed feelings and desires and write a meaning for their life. The unconscious voice becomes the motivator that controls their behaviors and actions. Diving in the unconscious, almost all the characters develop a traumatized, fragmented and alienated sense of self.

In the shadow of such traumatic experience, Palestinians negotiate their self-

existence through developing a narrative identity. By informing others about their life-stories, Abulhawa's characters attempt to restore the abandoned history and transmit it to future generations. The strategy of storytelling empowers Palestinians with a voice to convey the country's long history of sufferings through which Israelis seek to annihilate the Palestinian society and violate its norms. Moreover, Palestinians resort to the strategy of storytelling to find a true authentic self and recover an identity that is lost throughout the Israelis' political oppression, denial and repression. It comes out that Abulhawa's characters develop a kind of intergenerational narrative identity as a result of the intergenerational transmission of trauma that even members who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects of the event generations later.

Recommendations

The current study unravels that trauma affects the psychic growth of the self to a large extent through which some characters are able to work through trauma, while the others only act out and consequently transform to psychologically traumatized subjects. The significance of the unconscious mind emerges to identify character's reactions and behaviors. Living through memories and imagination, Abulhawa characters' construct stories which give meaning and purpose to their lives, developing narrative identities over time.

Future research could further examine the notion of the self from philosophical and sociological perspectives. Also, it could highlight the importance of the self in developing one's personality and identity. Furthermore, future research could discuss the cultural trauma and its connection to the formation of a collective identity. In the light of these studies, a lot of information is to be compiled that will help to provide scientific researches in the field of self-studies.

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