



WOMEN AGENCY AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL IN ABULHAWA'S *MORNING IN JENIN*: A FEMINIST STUDY

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Abstract

This study examines the representation of female agency and cultural survival in Abulhawa's celebrated Palestinian novel *Morning in Jenin* (2010) through the analytical framework of postcolonial feminist literary criticism. Against the historical backdrop of the 1948 Nakba and subsequent decades of military occupation, violence, and forced exile. The novel foregrounds the lives, sacrifices, and resilience of Palestinian women. While mainstream conflict narratives often reduce women in war zones to passive victims or mere patriotic symbols. Abulhawa presents her female protagonists most notably Dalia, Amal, and Huda as active historical agents, dynamic cultural carriers, and curators of collective memory. Portray on the theoretical contributions of Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Sara Ahmed, and Marianne Hirsch. This research paper demonstrates how Palestinian women navigate the dual constraints of colonial oppression and domestic patriarchy. To reframe routine acts of development, emotional labor, storytelling, and domestic preservation as "everyday resistance". The results of the research identify the ways in which female agency is manifested in Abulhawa's story. It is not only through fighting on the fronts and the traditional forms of protest that the women demonstrate their power. The study asserts that female characters maintain the continuity of Palestinian identity across generations, providing the essential foundation for cultural survival in the middle of historical effacement.

Keywords: *Cultural Survival, Female Agency, Feminist Literary Criticism, Memory, Postcolonial Feminism, Resistance, Nakba.*

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1. Introduction

Postcolonial literature frequently utilizes narrative as a primary arena for historical reclamation, collective memory, and identity formation. Under conditions of displacement and systemic occupation, literary texts serve as alternative archives that challenge official state histories and preserve marginalized lived experiences. This discourse, feminist literary criticism plays a pivotal role in the intersections of colonial power and patriarchal hierarchy. It reveals how gender structures both representation and control. Postcolonial women are often situated on the double periphery of colonial dominance and indigenous patriarchal traditions. Yet, their contribution to cultural continuity and social resilience remains profound.

The Palestinian experience is fundamentally defined by Al-Nakba (the Catastrophe) of 1948, which displaced over 700,000 Palestinians and altered the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. While conventional national literature has historically symbolized women as the passive, fertile embodiment of the lost motherland, Susan Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin* (2010) disrupts this essentialist allegorization. Almost four generations of the Abulheja family from their ancestral olive groves in Ein Hod to the density of the Jenin refugee camp and the Western diaspora. The novel centers female subjectivity in the face of ongoing psychological, political, and cultural trauma.

In "Mornings in Jenin," Abulhawa insists on the importance of remembering national traumatic experiences while also highlighting women's resilience in adversity. The events that occurred in Palestine, especially the mass murder and displacement of Palestinians, have affected many individuals. The socio-political landscape of Palestine presents a unique challenge to classical Western feminist paradigms. In conditions of ongoing military occupation, foreign containment, and territorial fragmentation, the boundaries between the private domestic realm and the public political arena dissolve entirely. A military raid, a home demolition, or an enforced curfew immediately transforms the home from a quiet sanctuary into an active line of defense. Consequently, women's domestic labor cannot be viewed merely as an extension of traditional gender roles; it emerges as a critical site of anti-colonial endurance.

The Palestinian struggle is frequently documented through geopolitical data, military conflicts, and male-centered political narratives. However, literature helps to understand the experience of people who are subject to it better. Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* reveals the experience of people caught in the thick of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More precisely, the author focuses on the Abulheja family and their five decades of struggles against oppression and displacement from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The novel unveils that women have resilience, strength, and internal power that enable them to stand up for their rights as human beings. Abulhawa indicates that resistance to the ongoing genocide is embedded in the daily life of people

who do not want to relinquish their cultural identity. Moreover, women are characterized as those who pass on family heritage to their children and grandchildren.

They are the guardians of history and national memory as well as the carriers of ancestral knowledge. In doing so, Abulhawa indicates that resistance is manifested and reinforced in familial relationships and social connections. Women are central to this process because they are both strong enough to endure hardship and capable of transforming cultural memories from generation to generation. This paper posits that Abulhawa redefines Palestinian female agency not through conventional Western metrics of individualistic autonomy. Public political assertion, but through relational survival, emotional fortitude, and generational memory-work with figures like Dalia, Amal, and Huda. The study demonstrates how Abulhawa's narrative counters Orientalist stereotypes of submissive Arab women. Female care work and narrative transmission as indispensable forms of anti-colonial resistance.

2. Literature Review

Palestinian resistance literature, as contextualized by Edward Said (1994) and Barbara Harlow (1987), functions as an indispensable mechanism against historical amnesia and geopolitical erasure. Said (1994) famously noted that the Palestinian condition is defined by a "permission to narrate" a continuous struggle to assert human presence, historic continuity, and moral clarity in the face of dominant geopolitical discourses that seek to reduce or erase indigenous history. Classic Palestinian literature by male authors such as Ghassan Kanafani (1969), Emile Habiby (1974), and Mahmoud Darwish (1973) laid the foundational framework for documents exile, dispossession, and armed or ideological resistance. Scholars of postcolonial and feminist literature investigate the position of women living under colonial oppression. They conclude that female people face double oppression, which is imposed on their native patriarchy and colonial rulers. Spivak (2010) argues that the voices of subaltern women are unheard throughout history. Her article suggests that colonial rulers and native patriarchy suppress women's voices.

However, as Miriam Cooke (1996) points out in her critical work on conflict and gender, nationalist war narratives historically categorized women into rigid, monolithic roles. The suffering mother of martyrs, the symbolic guardian of national honor, or the passive victim of external aggression. This allegorical reduction, while politically rallying, frequently erased the complex, lived realities of women and stripped them of individual agency within their own communities. Scholars of postcolonial and feminist literature have long discussed the unique position of women living under colonial power. Spivak (2010) points out that subaltern women are oppressed due to both colonizers and native patriarchy. Palestinian writing dominated the field for quite some time. It focuses mainly on themes of exile and martyrdom (Kanafani, 1999).

Feminist scholarship in Middle Eastern literature led thinkers such as Leila Ahmed (1992), Lila Abu-Lughod (1998, 2013), and Sahar Khalifeh (1976) who have worked extensively to dismantle these essentialist tropes. Khalifeh's landmark novels, particularly *Wild Thorns* (1976), explicitly exposed the dual burdens borne of Palestinian women under external military occupation and internal domestic patriarchy. In diasporic and Anglo-Arab literature, scholars like Lisa Suhair Majaj (2012) and Lindsey Moore (2015) argue that contemporary female writers. It builds transnational bridges, reframing personal trauma into universal human narratives while challenging post-9/11 Western stereotypes regarding Middle Eastern and Muslim women. Researchers who have been analyzing Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* mostly focused on its themes of trauma, memory, and exile. Many critics agreed that Abulhawa depicted memory as the mechanism of which Palestinians, in particular children, were able to overcome the horrors of war (Abulhawa, 2013). Several articles concerned the aftermath of the conflict and suggested that mourning in Jenin represented the colonized Palestinians' ability to move on despite the terrible circumstances.

Furthermore, Bashir Abu-Manneh (2016) traces the evolution of the Palestinian novel from early revolutionary realism to contemporary transnational aesthetics. Noting that recent writers increasingly privileged the domestic sphere, subjective grief, and human relationships over grand state-centric political ideologies. While critical reception of *Morning in Jenin* (2010) has widely celebrated its political impact, diasporic identity themes, and representation of intergenerational trauma. A distinct critical gap remains within current scholarships. Much of the existing literature treats the female characters primarily as allegorical symbols of national endurance or as passive vehicles through which male tragedy is understood.

In general, most writers attempted to relate the novel to the post colonial perspective and better understand the role of memory in overcoming the violent legacy of war. However, recent literary criticism of *Mornings in Jenin* failed to address the contribution of female agency to Palestinian memory culture in particular, as well as the role of women. Although women were presented as marginal figures in many of these articles, none of the scholars tried to specifically examine their role. In general, most researchers agreed that female characters in the novel were the guardians of cultural memory that contributed to the survival of Palestinian identity. However, hardly any critic tried to explore the ways in which women's control promoted cultural memory. This study directly addresses that gap in systematic investigation of female agency as a life. Daily practice specifically analyses how care labor, emotional work, and oral storytelling serve as deliberate political strategies for cultural survival.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative, interpretive research design centered on literary textual analysis and close reading.

3.1. Primary Source and Analytical Process

The text of Abulhawa's novel *Morning in Jenin* (2010).

Textual Selection

- Extracting narrative passages, character dialogues, internal monologues, and symbolic motifs directly related to female characters (primarily Dalia, Amal, and Huda).

Thematic Coding

- Organizing selected textual data into core analytical codes.
- Redefining agency through survival, domesticity as cultural architecture, gendered trauma and emotional labor, and intergenerational memory transmission.

Theoretical Synthesis

- Evaluating the coded data through postcolonial feminist concepts, care ethics, and memory studies to trace how private female experiences intersect with public political struggles.

Specifically, it chooses to follow the stories of three female protagonists, namely Dalia, Amal, and Huda, in order to understand their paths of development during the times of crisis. Particular attention is paid to the representation of such themes as the loss of home and family in the context of cultural sustainability. The domestic sphere and architecture, the gendered experience of trauma and endurance and post memory of every resistance. The analysis of female agency in the novel will be conducted using the close reading method.

There are three major female protagonists in the novel that are subject to analysis on Dalia, Amal, and Huda. Each of the women represents a different generation and has a unique perspective on the Palestinian conflict, and their stories demonstrate the impact of the struggle on family dynamics. The analysis will be focused on these female protagonists in order to identify how they exercise agency to preserve Palestinian culture and values in the face of adversity. Particular attention will be paid to the description of their attitudes and behaviors in response to crisis events, as well as the ways in which their personal development as agents of change influence the narrative structure of the story.

4. Theoretical Framework

To examine how female agency and cultural survival operate within *Morning in Jenin*, this study synthesizes Postcolonial Feminism and Trauma Studies.

- Postcolonial Feminist Lens
- Female agency and cultural survival

- Relational care ethics

Third World Feminist framework as postcolonial feminism theories proposed in transnational feminism perspectives to analyze the representation of female agency in *Mornings in Jenin*. This theoretical framework helps to address female agency from the perspectives of women living under double oppression of colonial and patriarchal power structures. *Sumud* is a Palestinian cultural concept of steadfastness and commitment to one's land and country despite all challenges. It is a manifestation of resilience in the face of occupation and can be regarded as a form of Palestinian feminism.

The emergence of female writers in Palestinian history enabled critics to re-examine the canons of resistance poetry and prose. Researchers suggest that female authors dedicated their creative efforts to depicting the home as a space of resistance and portraying women as subjects of Palestinian identity. Khalifeh and Abulhawa's novels, in particular, showcased women's contribution to maintaining Palestinian cultural memory. They described the domestic sphere as a place where resistance to colonial oppression was performed. Factors such as political status, immigration status, and economic opportunities affect women's capacity to negotiate their position in society. Transnational feminism acknowledges the role of colonial history in shaping the Palestinian identity and how it interacts with women's agency. This perspective allows the current study to investigate the relationship between female characters and their cultural identity, families, and communities in *Mornings in Jenin*.

This perspective is interesting in the context of Palestinian history, as it demonstrates in particular Palestinian women, resisted both the political and cultural aspects of colonization. Their resilience, as portrayed in the novels of Palestinian female authors, becomes the driving force of cultural survival. The choice of this approach justifies the fact that the research question puts emphasis on the need to understand how the literary device of the text contributes to the representation of female agency, rather than the message itself. Therefore, quantitative methods would not be significant in this case, because there is no need to quantify particular patterns. Instead, the analysis will be based on close reading to identify textual elements that contribute to the development of the female community as a theme in the novel.

In order to fully comprehend the meaning of the analyzed elements in the context of female agency in *Mornings in Jenin*, the interpretation will rely on feminist and postcolonial frameworks. Such theoretical foundations are relevant to the study of the relationship between colonialism, gender, and agency. The ways in which the Palestinian conflict interacts with these concepts to affect cultural sustainability. The findings of the research will demonstrate how the implementation of the close analysis helps understand the contribution of female agency to the maintenance of Palestinian cultural heritage.

4.1. Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (2003) critique of mainstream Western feminism warns against homogenizing "Third World women" as inherently power-deprived, uneducated victims. Grounded in local historical context, agency must be understood through the specific social and political forces acting upon women. Gayatri Spivak's (1988) interrogations of subaltern speech and Lila Abu-Lughod's (2013) critique of Western "salvation narratives". Furthermore this lens shows that Palestinian women exercise meaningful agency within their specific cultural, familial, and political realities rather than through Western individualist autonomy.

4.2. Everyday Resistance and Care Ethics

To draw on James C. Scott's (1985) concept of "infrapolitics" or hidden resistance, along with feminist care ethics formulated by Joan Tronto (1993) and Sara Ahmed (2004). This framework acknowledges that non-violent private actions such as cooking traditional meals, maintaining family cohesion, and offering emotional comfort are deeply political. In a context where physical spaces are systematically destroyed. The home becomes a vital site of political and cultural preservation.

In contexts of state-sanctioned destruction and forced displacement, survival itself becomes a counter-hegemonic act. When an occupying force attempts to dissolve a community's infrastructure, the deliberate act of maintaining life, sustaining social bonds, and rearing children directly counters the logic of elimination. Thus, care labor transitions from routine domestic duty into a foundational pillar of national self-preservation.

4.3. Trauma, Memory, and Postmemory

Cathy Caruth's (1996) trauma theory and Marianne Hirsch's (2008) concept of "postmemory" explain how historical trauma is inherited and processed across generations. Hirsch (2008) asserts that postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth. In *Morning in Jenin*, women function as primary conduits of postmemory, transforming traumatic ruptures into coherent narratives that ensure identity survives across temporal and geographical divides.

The loss of home and family explored through the analysis of dialogue and monologues, which will help identify the inner feelings and attitudes of female protagonists toward the conflict. Additionally, some of the most common and prominent imagery used in the novel will be reviewed in order to identify their contribution to the representation of female agency. Such major symbols as olive trees and embroidery will be reviewed as key elements of Palestinian cultural heritage. They are used by the author to highlight the importance of cultural sustainability in times of crisis. Moreover, the structure of the narrative analysis to identify the ways in which female protagonists pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generation in order to sustain cultural community. Particular attention will be drawn to the analysis of female responses to the loss of home

and family. The ways in which these responses demonstrate the extent of personal, communal, and cultural resilience in conflict.

5. Textual Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Constructing Female Agency: Survival, Silence, and Care

In *Morning in Jenin*, agency is rarely expressed through political grandstanding; instead, it is built into the quiet determination to survive. The trauma of forced expulsion from Ein Hod during the 1948 Nakba and the devastating abduction of her infant son Ismail by an Israeli soldier, Dalia (Amal's mother) experiences profound psychological grief. Yet, her agency manifests through relentless maternal care and domestic continuity within the harsh confines of the Jenin refugee camp. Though emotionally distant at times due to trauma, her ongoing physical labor keeps the family intact amidst chaos.

Furthermore, Abulhawa reframes silence traditionally misread in Western scholarship as absolute submission as a deliberate emotional buffer and protective strategy. Dalia's silence is an internal reservoir of grief and strength. It allows her to function as the family's anchor without collapsing under the weight of historical trauma. Her refusal to speak of her lost son is not an erasure of memory, but a boundary drawn to protect her remaining children from being consumed by loss.

For Amal, the primary narrator, agency takes a linguistic and reflective form. Born into a displaced world, Amal realizes that controlling her own story is an anti-colonial act: "I was born into a story I did not choose, but I would tell it nonetheless. To tell one's story is to assert that one exists, even when the world is built to deny that existence" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 138). She claims narrative authority over her existence. Her diasporic perspective allows her to translate micro-level familial pain into a macro-level historical record for a global audience, directly answering Said's call for claiming the "permission to narrate."

5.2. Women's Experiences of Cultural Preservation

The strong belief is the only positive outcome of the terrible experience that she went through with her family. Moreover, although the camp is presented by many as a home, Dalia cannot accept this notion because it would mean that the Palestinians will never return to their villages and cities. Instead, Dalia acts upon her beliefs to change the situation and make the camp just a temporary living solution for Palestinians. Dalia displays madness as the only way to protect herself from the unbearable pain following the Nakba. Her madness takes over as she realizes that there is nothing more she can do to return to Ein Hod and regain what was lost. However, it seems that the madness is not enough for the Palestinian woman, and she decides to use her strongest weapon to save her children: "Each stitch was a word, each pattern a map of a village that no longer existed on official paper, but lived on the chest of every woman who wore it" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 89). Through *tatreez*, Palestinian women physically wear their history, ensuring that

state-sanctioned spatial erasure cannot erase community heritage (Scott, 1985; Harlow, 1987). Even though the camp is presented to the Palestinians as a permanent solution to housing, Dalia cannot accept that reality and insists on trying to change it. Her love for her children is so strong that she is willing to kill them to spare them the grief of living in the camp. Thus, she keeps her children close and acts madly in an effort to protect them. The woman realizes that the only way to ensure that Palestinian culture survives is to have children that love their land, home, and people.

Abulhawa presents a different view of women defending Palestine and fighting for freedom through other means apart from direct combat. It is important for the readers to realize that female characters are also active fighters. Their strength may not always be visible on the battlefield, but it is there nonetheless. In fact, it is probably the reason why the Palestinian culture, values, and identity have survived to this day.

Abulhawa depicts female strength and perseverance as the ultimate force that ensures the survival of Palestinian traditions even when people are forcefully displaced from their homes.

The power of women is perhaps best demonstrated through Dalia's behavior following the Nakba. Her strong desire to return to Ein Hod illustrates the determination to regain what was lost despite any obstacles that may stand in the way of achieving this goal. Furthermore, it appears that the woman's mind and body are connected and serve the bigger purpose of ensuring that Palestinian culture survives even when homes and villages are destroyed. It is through the perseverance of women like Dalia that the rest of the characters in the book manage to carry on with their lives and hold on to Palestinian values.

Thus, Abulhawa enables the readers to realize that female strength is essential for maintaining the Palestinian identity. Her words serve as a constant reminder that even though women may not have the ability to fight the enemy directly, they can still play a critical role in defending Palestine. Such strength and perseverance are precisely the reasons why the female characters in the book represent a unique legacy of Palestinian culture.

5.3. The Domestic Sphere as Resistance

Abulhawa transforms the domestic space from a site of patriarchal containment into a resilient fortress of cultural preservation. When external landscapes are altered, renamed, or seized, domestic traditions become crucial anchors of identity. The domestic space serves as a living museum where the geography of the lost homeland is preserved through physical and sensory practices.

In conditions of territorial fragmentation and exile, the home ceases to be merely a private shelter or a site of patriarchal containment. It transforms into a vital archive of national identity and cultural architecture. When external landscapes are altered, renamed, or seized, domestic traditions become crucial anchors of historical continuity. Through

sensory and material practices such as baking traditional bread (*khubz*), using olive oil derived from remembered ancestral groves, and executing intricate *tatreez* (traditional Palestinian embroidery). Women recreate the spatial atmosphere of lost villages like Ein Hod within temporary refugee structures.

This domestic architecture transforms cramped, concrete refugee shelters into living museums. It preserves spatial and cultural heritage through domestic labor, and women construct a tangible link between displaced children and a homeland they have never physically seen. The home thus becomes a fortress of quiet defiance where cultural values, ancestral aesthetics, and collective belonging are guarded against total assimilation or historical oblivion.

5.4. Culinary Memory

The preparation of traditional Palestinian food inside refugee shelters serves as an embodied act of remembrance. The scents of olive oil, wild thyme, and freshly baked bread evoke the lost soil of Ein Hod, creating a sensory bridge between past freedom and present displacement: "In the smell of warm za'atar and baking bread, Ein Hod was resurrected in the middle of the camp... The kitchen was where my mother held onto the earth we had lost" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 64). This culinary practice represents an embodied act of remembrance that bridges the physical divide between past freedom and present displacement. (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Majaj, 2012). Food acts as a material vessel of history, connecting displaced children to soil they have never walked upon.

5.5. Storytelling and Oral History

Women function as active archivists. Through bedtime stories, shared mourning rituals, and informal conversations, mothers pass down family genealogies, ancestral land boundaries, and community histories to their children. It ensures that forced physical separation does not result in cultural erasure.

The physical structures of the refugee camp are cramped, concrete, and temporarily continuously humanized through female labor. To create (*tatreez*), maintain cleanliness, and host neighbors despite scarcity, characters like Dalia and Huda assert permanence in a space designed to symbolize temporariness.

Female characters serve as primary curators of collective memory, passing down family genealogies, ancestral land boundaries, and historical trauma from mother to daughter. Younger generations born in refugee camps or the Western diaspora (such as Amal and her daughter Sara) inherit and internalize their homeland's history through this intergenerational memory-work.

This intergenerational transmission aligns closely with Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory. The relationship that later generations bear to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before them. Amal, the novel's central narrator, bridges the physical homeland and the Western diaspora to convert her family's oral histories into

a written, universal narrative. Her daughter, Sara, though born and raised in the United States, inherits this postmemorial legacy, demonstrating that female storytelling successfully preserves national identity across temporal, physical, and geographical borders.

5.6. The Gendered Nature of Trauma and Resilience Trauma in *Morning in Jenin* is intensely gendered.

While male characters often experience trauma through direct physical violence, loss of livelihood, political imprisonment, or armed martyrdom, which at times leads to existential paralysis or fatalistic conflict. Trauma in the novel is uniquely gendered. While male characters frequently experience loss through direct physical violence, political disenfranchisement, or military conflict. Often leading to existential paralysis, rage, or female characters systematically absorb emotional shock and convert grief into relational resilience. Women navigate the dual burdens of external military occupation and internal domestic demands, transforming personal pain into the daily endurance required to sustain community life.

Women like Dalia (Amal's mother) and Huda exhibit a quiet, relentless fortitude that counters Orientalist stereotypes of submissive Arab women. Dalia's emotional silence and persistent manual labor inside the Jenin refugee camp reflect a calculated emotional buffer, allowing her family to function despite intense psychological trauma. In this environment, survival itself is an act of defiance; by ensuring the physical and emotional continuity of the lineage, female characters resist the sociopolitical logic of erasure. Ultimately, *Morning in Jenin* demonstrates that while physical landscapes may be occupied or altered, cultural survival is guaranteed through female agency, emotional labor, and the preservation of memory across generations.

5.7. Female characters routinely convert grief into relational endurance.

Aspect	Male Trauma and Response	Female Trauma and Resilience
Primary Arena	Public sphere, land ownership, political clash	Domestic sphere, family cohesion, emotional integrity
Manifestation	Political paralysis, armed struggle, existential rage	Relational care, daily sustenance, strategic endurance
Copy Strategies	Over conflict or psychological retreat	Emotional absorption, oral archival preservation
Impact on Identity	Loss of status, distribution of traditional patriarchy	Sustain community, identity across generation

Women absorb both their own grief and the emotional pain of their husbands, children, and broader community. When Hassan (Amal's father) retreats into his own internal world of loss, Dalia maintains the daily rhythm of the household: "My father lost his soul when he lost his land... He walked through the camp like a ghost who had forgotten his name" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 77). When war strikes Jenin repeatedly, it is the women who rebuild domestic life from the rubble. Amal's assertion that "Living, loving, even after everything, was its own form of defiance" encapsulates this postcolonial feminist ethos. Humans stay nurturing life, and maintaining capacity for love within violent surroundings is a profound act of resistance.

5.8. Women as Memory Bearers and Intergenerational Transmission

The lineage of agency moves directly from mother to daughter. Amal explicitly reflects: "I am the sum of the women who came before me, their strength echoing in my veins." Memory is not treated as a static burden, but as a living inheritance. Through intergenerational care, women ensure that their daughters inherit both the grief of the Nakba and the strength required to endure it.

Generation 1: Dalia
Preserves domestic stability & survival amidst physical Nakba.
Generation 2: Amal
Translates trauma into narrative, archives history for diaspora.
Generation 3: Sara
Inherits postmemory, reconnects diasporic present with ancestral past.

Amal's daughter, Sara, represents the diasporic future. Born and raised in the United States, Sara is initially disconnected from her mother's homeland. However, through Amal's storytelling, written records, and eventual return to the West Bank, Sara internalizes her heritage. Through this postmemorial inheritance, Sara reconnects with her roots. So that proves female narrative work successfully preserves national identity across temporal, physical, and geographical boundaries.

This intergenerational transmission aligns closely with Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory. The relationship that later generations bear to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before them. Amal, the novel's central narrator, bridges the physical homeland and the Western diaspora by converting her family's oral histories into a written, universal narrative. Her daughter, Sara, though born and raised in the United States, inherits this postmemorial legacy. Female storytelling successfully preserves national identity across temporal, physical, and geographical borders.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined Susan Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin* articulates a compelling vision of female agency and cultural survival amidst ongoing political displacement. To centre the lives of Palestinian women and their culture. The novel moves

beyond traditional nationalist tropes that position female figures as mere symbols of the motherland. Western Orientalist perspectives that mischaracterize them as passive victims. Abulhawa expands the definition of resistance to demonstrate the everyday acts of nurturous families, enduring loss, maintaining domestic spaces, and passing down oral histories. These are fundamental to the survival of a displaced culture. In environments designed to erase identity, the female body, voice, and home become vital sites of historic preservation and quiet defiance. Ultimately, *Morning in Jenin* proves that while geopolitical forces may fracture physical landscapes, the collective memory and endurance of women ensures the uninterrupted survival of Palestinian cultural identity. Therefore, the author's main characters resist the policies of Israel not only on a political level but also on a personal level, expressing their dedication to their homeland, their nation, and their cultural values.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Comparative Postcolonial Studies

Future research could conduct a comparative analysis between *Morning in Jenin* and other Middle Eastern or South Asian partition literature (e.g., works by Sahar Khalifeh, Bapsi Sidhwa, or Anita Desai) to examine cross-cultural intersections of gendered trauma and border displacement.

7.2. Empirical Reader-Response Studies

Scholars might explore how global audiences in Western versus non-Western settings interpret female agency and care labor in diasporic Palestinian literature.

7.3. Translational and Spatial Analyses

Investigation of spatial geography (refugee camps vs. Western diasporic cities) alters narrative voice and feminist agency would offer deeper insights into transnational postcolonial studies.

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