

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Tlemcen



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**The Portrayal of Palestinian Exile, Diaspora, and  
Displacement in ABULHAWA's *the Blue  
Between Sky and Water 2015***

Dissertation submitted to the department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's Degree Literature and Civilization

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**2021 -2022**

## **Dedications**

This work is dedicated to all the Palestinians.

## **Acknowledgements**

I acknowledge this work to the Almighty ALLAH for having enabled me to complete this study, and for lightening my path and proving me with sufficient power to finally reach my goal.

My heartfelt appreciation and gratitude go to my supervisor, Dr. BELMERABET Fatiha, who is both a great doctor and a wonderful person. The achievement of this dissertation would not have been possible without her encouragement, guidance, and advice, which carried me through all stages of writing it.

A debt of gratitude is also owed to Mr. AMEUR-SAID Zakarya for his time and efforts in reviewing this work and providing me with pieces of valuable advice.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the board of examiners who accepted to read and reflect up on my work, and devoted their time and knowledge to evaluate the efficacy and credibility of this research, Pr. SERIR Ilhem and Dr. FERKACHE Sarra.

Last but not least; a bunch of thanks go also to all our teachers and the English department staff.

## **Abstract**

The consequences of the Nakba are not limited only to the number of massacres committed or the villages destroyed, but also include several Palestinians who were forcibly displaced and ended up in exile and scattered in refugee camps and other parts of the world. Furthermore, Palestinians in exile are a marginalized group, who do not receive much attention or consideration of their suffering and the challenges they face. The portrayal of exile and the Palestinian Diaspora is rarely accurate unless the writer recognises realities of exile in exile and has gone through a similar experience. Thus, this research aims to shed light on such works that this topic has taken a large part of its content. *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, by the Palestinian-American writer Susan Abulhawa, is considered one of the most important works in Arab American literature. It is a novel that illustrates the real Palestinian experiences of their life in exile and deals with the topic of the Palestinian Diaspora and their displacement. The novel is a multi-generational saga of a Palestinian family who had been forcibly displaced from their homeland during the Nakba. It deals with two parallel stories; one takes place at refugee camps in Gaza revealing the difficult daily life of Palestinian refugees. And the other occurs in America conveying the suffering and the challenges faced by the exiled Palestinians in alien countries. The main purpose of this research is to study how Abulhawa depicts Palestinian exile, diaspora, and their displacement through the novel. The historical literary approach has been applied to suit the demands of the study. Hence, this work has been divided into two parts that complement each other. The first chapter is an introduction and a historical and theoretical background that helps the reader understand the second chapter, which is the core of this work; and reveals the portrayal of the Palestinian exile and diaspora in the novel *The Between Sky and Water*.

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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction**

At the end of the 1940s, Palestine witnessed the implementation of the Zionist-Crusader project to establish a national homeland for the Jews on the land of Palestine. The years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel on May 15th, 1948, were years of preparation, training, and organization for the Jews; yet, they were lost years for the Arabs in Palestine due to their ignorance of the Zionist project. However, May 15th, 1948, does not only represent the establishment of the Israeli State on the largest part of the lands of historic Palestine; but a disaster that befell the Palestinians known as the Nakba.

The Palestinian Nakba is considered the process of ethnic cleansing, destruction, and expulsion of the Palestinian people and the replacement of another people in its place; in military plans implemented by the Zionist movement, with countries colluding with it. Thus, the events of the Palestinian Nakba, and the subsequent displacement, express a great tragedy for the Palestinian people.

The Nakba, in its own sense, is a catastrophe that has befallen the Palestinians and radically changed their lives. Following the Nakba, the Palestinian society was dispersed among various places; the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the neighboring Arab countries, and the Western countries. In addition to the Palestinians who remained within the lands were subjected to the control of the Israeli occupation. Therefore, the Palestinian Nakba was the main reason behind the Palestinian refugee dilemma; consequently, the Palestinian diaspora and exile.

It is worth noting that the suffering of Palestinians is not limited only to the events of the 1948 War, but extends even beyond that. The forced displacement of thousands of Palestinians made them live as refugees around the world, constituting what is known as the Palestinian diaspora. Moreover, today millions of Palestinians are exiled from their lands, facing all kinds of suffering and challenges in exile. Only those who have lived in exile can realize the pure truth of the suffering and challenges facing an exiled person. Therefore, many Palestinian writers try to transmit some of the real pictures of Palestinian exile and diaspora through their literary works.

The Palestinian Nakba and its accompanying events, including the processes of ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and the Palestinian diaspora are the central themes of many Palestinian literary works. Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian-American writer who uses her literary works, such as *Mornings in Jenin*, *the Blue Between Sky and Water*, and others, to represent the events of the Nakba and the lives of Palestinians before and after it.

*The Blue Between Sky and Water* is one of her most well-known works on the subject of Palestine, and it is one of her greatest books on Palestinian exile, displacement, and diaspora. It was first published in 2015 and has since been translated into many languages. In her novel, Abulhawa tells the story of the Palestinian Baraka family who were forcibly displaced from their village during the Nakba, and wound up in refugee camps with other Palestinian families, and then follows the family's journey through four generations.

Despite the multitude of literary works that deal with the theme of the Nakba, there are few works that transact with the subject of the Nakba in terms of its effects on Palestinians as individuals from the first generation to the present generation. Hence, the problematic issue:

What are the effects of the 1948 war, which is called the Nakba of Palestine in shaping the Palestinian society?

The following research questions are offered to address this issue:

- What are the political and historical developments that led to the Palestinian Nakba?
- How are the Palestinian exile, diaspora, and displacement depicted in Abulhawa's *The Blue Between Sky and Water*?

The primary aim of this research is to scrutinize how the Palestinian cause, through its various aspects, is depicted in literary works. Thus, we would like to elucidate that Abulhawa in her novel, and through the Baraka family, she succeeds in portraying the real challenges and suffering of being a refugee and scattered in

different places. Besides, Abulhawa manages to shed light on the dilemmas faced by Palestinians in exile; as well as, in refugee camps.

The choice of this topic “The Portrayal of Palestinian Exile, Diaspora, and Displacement in Susan Abulhawa's *the Blue Between Sky and Water*, in particular, is due to scientific reasons and personal motives. First, this research aims to identify the most important difficulties faced by the Palestinian people, and to convey the changes that affected their lives after the Nakba until today; as well as, their suffering and the challenges they face in exile. Furthermore, the personal inclination to know everything related to the Palestinian cause as it is a fundamental issue for every Muslim, and the desire to view the Palestinian cause from a literary side.

After reviewing the primary source, which is the novel, and secondary sources such as books, scientific articles, and websites, this research runs under the literary-historical approach; to better analyze the connection between the content of the literary work and certain historical events.

It is worth noting to mention some of the obstacles or limitations that we encountered during the preparation of this study, including the multiplicity of sources and the difference in content between Arab sources that convey the pure truth and Israeli or Western sources that transmit a distorted truth. Besides, the lack of documents concerning particular titles hindered our writing process.

The current dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled ‘The historical and theoretical background of the Study’. The first chapter examines the events and causes that led to the Palestinian Nakba and the effects it had on Palestine in general, and on Palestinians, in particular. The first chapter also provides a theoretical background to the study by presenting some essential concepts and terms. Thus, this chapter serves as an introduction to help the reader understand the second chapter.

Chapter Two is entitled ‘The Portrayal of Palestinian Exile, Diaspora, and displacement in the novel’. This chapter provides an idea about the concept of the Palestinian diaspora and the suffering of Palestinians in exile. As well as, it

provides a background of the novel by mentioning the biography of the novelist and the summary of the novel. Then, it provides the literary analysis of the novel by introducing the Baraka family as a reflection of Palestinian exile and diaspora. Hence, the second chapter constitutes the practical core of the study.

# Chapter One: Historical and Theoretical Background

## **Chapter One: Historical and Theoretical Background**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

Palestine with its geographic location, which is considered the heart of the Arab world, and its crucial historical position, has witnessed many historical events throughout the ages. Undoubtedly, the most difficult, harshest, and most present in the Palestinian memory is the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, which left scattered and exiled Palestinians living in different parts of the world. This chapter is a historical introduction to the most critical events that preceded and paved the way for the 1948 Nakba. As well as, this chapter provides a simple introduction to some of the most important definitions and a literary introduction relating to this study.

## **1.2 The Historical Background of the Study**

In an attempt to facilitate an understanding of the main issues of the current study, this part provides a historical overview of the most important events around which the selected novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water* revolves.

### **1.2.1 Palestine under the Ottoman Rule**

Palestine is a country with an ancient history that has embraced many ancient civilizations, and a country with a significant religious status. Throughout its long history, Palestine has been under the rule of many authorities and states; each authority or state has its own story of beginning, development and end.

In 1517, Palestine became under Ottoman rule when the Ottoman Sultan, Selim I, defeated the Mamlūk armies at the Battle of Marj Dābiq .Thus, he was able to annex Palestine to the Ottoman Empire. (Britannica, (n.d.)). Until the end of First World War in 1917, Palestine remained under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the Ottomans preserved the Islamic identity of Palestine, as they paid particular attention to the landmarks of Jerusalem, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

### **1.2.2 The Birth of the Zionist Movement**

The term Zionism appeared for the first time by the Austrian writer Nathan Birnbaum in 1885. It is derived from the word Mount Zion, one of the hills in Jerusalem. The term gained more popularity when the Zionist journalist Theodore Herzl, who is considered the father of the Zionist movement, published his book

'*The Jewish State*' in 1896. In his book, Pappé (2006) says, 'After all, it was Herzl who had sanctified Palestine by defining Jewish nationalism as Zionism, irrevocably connected to settling Palestine (Zion).' (P. 51)

Zionism is a nationalist, political ideology that called for the creation of a Jewish state, and now supports the continued existence of Israel as such a state ... The Zionist movement started in the late 19th century, amidst growing European anti-Semitism<sup>1</sup> (Palestine Remix, (n.d.), para. 2).

In 1897, the First Zionist Congress was held in Basel, in which the Zionists announced the establishment of the World Zionist Organization and their goal of establishing a national homeland for the Jews in the land of Palestine. As well as, Herzl was selected as the head of the Zionist movement. The presidency of the movement sought to obtain international legitimacy and international support.

The first goal of the Zionist movement was and is still to seize the largest possible area of the land of Palestine with the expulsion of the Arabs from it, and the settlement of Jews instead.

### **1.2.3 Palestine after the First World War I**

In Europe, the First World War had broken out between the Allied forces led by the United Kingdom, and the Central Powers led by Germany, and alliances expanded with the widening of the war and the entry of many countries into it on the side of one of the two parties.

The Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers during this war. Meanwhile, the Arabs participated in the war alongside the allies in exchange for gaining their independence. Sharif Hussein Bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, dreamed of establishing a great Arab State. And Britain was keen to attract the Arabs to its side, so it entered into secret negotiations with him. Britain promised to give him a major Arab state,

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<sup>1</sup>Is a term used to describe the 'hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group' (Merriam-Webster, (n.d.)).

so he entered the war on its side, declaring what was known as the Arab revolt against the Ottomans in June 1916. According to Pappe (2006),

When Britain declared war on Turkey, it offered an alliance to the Sharif. In return for any assistance to Britain, the 'Arab nation', represented by the Sharif, would be protected by British forces against the Turks, and support, in principle, would be provided for the Hashemite right to rule Mecca. (p. 65)

Despite Britain's promises to the Arabs, behind the scenes, Britain had conducted secret agreements and negotiations with France and Russia dealing with the division of Ottoman possessions, including Arab lands as shown in appendix 'A'. However, Britain and France concluded a secret agreement known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement<sup>2</sup>; named for the British delegate Mark Sykes and the French delegate Francois Georges-Picot. Pappe (2006) states,

At first these developments did not seem to touch the fate of Palestine, but with the Balfour Declaration, the third aspect of the colonial strategy for Palestine, the connection was all too obvious. It took some time before the Hashemites and Palestinians learned of the promise made by the British government to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine. (P. 67)

With the end of the First World War, the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire put the fate of the Arab Mashreq<sup>3</sup> between the hands of Britain and France. 'The Hashemites realized that they had been deceived even before the war was over.' (Pappe, 2006, p. 66). Thus, Britain and France began counting and dividing the properties of the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine. In 1917, the British forces arrived in Palestine and expelled the last Turkish soldiers, and bring Palestine out of the Ottoman rule to the British occupation.

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<sup>2</sup> Also called Asia Minor Agreement, (May 1916), secret convention made during World War I between Great Britain and France, with the assent of imperial Russia, for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement led to the division of Turkish-held Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine into various French- and British-administered areas. (Britannica, (n.d.), Sykes-Picot Agreement, para. 1)

<sup>3</sup> East in Arabic

On the eighth and the ninth of December 1917, the Ottoman army withdrew from Palestine in front of the advance of the British forces; marking the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of a new and completely different era for Palestine under the British Mandate.

Initially, Palestine was put under the British military government, known as Occupied Enemy Territory Administration South, or simply OETA-S. 'In July 1922 the Council of the League of Nations approved the mandate instrument for Palestine, including its preamble incorporating the Balfour Declaration and stressing the Jewish historical connection with Palestine' (Britannica,(n.d.), Palestine, The British mandate, para. 1)

### **1.2.3.1 The Balfour Declaration**

After Britain affirmed its interest in establishing the Zionist state on Palestinian territories, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917. In Regan's words (2017):

In late 1917 the foreign secretary, Lord Arthur James Balfour, on behalf of the British government, sent a letter via Lord Walter Rothschild to the Zionist Federation, declaring support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The policy expressed in the letter dated 2 November 1917 became known as the 'Balfour Declaration'. The adoption of this policy was to have far-reaching consequences for the future of the Palestinian people and the whole of the Near East. (P. 10)

The Balfour Declaration, which is originally a letter consisting of 117 words (See Appendix B), is considered the birth certificate of what is known today as the State of Israel; and paved the way for the Nakba of Palestine. It is worth noting that Balfour was not the one who formulated the famous promise that was associated with his name, but was written by a Zionist committee composed of Nahum Sokolow, Herbert Samuel, Chaim Weizmann, and others.

On the one hand, the Balfour Declaration expressed its sympathy with the Jewish-Zionist aspirations to establish a national home for the Jews on the land of Palestine

and that the United Kingdom would do its best to facilitate this project. On the other hand, Britain had colonial and strategic interests in planting this Zionist entity in the heart of the Arab region. In an interview by Aljazeera with Avi Shlaim, an Israeli historian and professor at the University of Oxford, about the factors that led Britain to issue the Balfour declaration, he explains:

The Balfour Declaration was inspired by British imperial considerations and self-interest. In 1917, Britain was engaged in a very tough war, and it wasn't winning the war, so it desperately needed an ally – and in order to gain the support of the Zionists, it should issue a statement in support of a Jewish national home in Palestine. (Para. 5)

Britain's urgent desire to issue the Balfour Declaration was behind significant reasons, the most important of which was gaining the support of influential Zionist figures from around the world along with the allies, in addition to the importance of Palestine's location for Britain to protect its influence in the Suez Canal. In her book, El-Eini (2006) points out,

Palestine, with its potential as a key Mediterranean naval base, its geographical position east of the Suez Canal, and its inherent religious value as the Holy Land, formed a land-bridge for Britain in the Middle East, as her rule spread from Egypt, across to Trans-Jordan, and on to the oil-rich region of the Persian Gulf. The route to British India was also secured.' (P.13)

The Balfour Declaration was the culmination of a long period of Zionist efforts to establish a national home. As Pappé (2006) explains, 'In November 1917, the Zionist movement was rewarded with the Balfour Declaration. This document promised a benevolent British attitude towards the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine'. (P. 68).

The Israeli historian Avi Shlaim says, ' Britain had no moral or political or legal right to promise the land that belongs to the Arabs to another people, so the Balfour Declaration was both immoral and illegal' (Al Jazeera English, 2016, 14:34). As Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser described the Balfour Declaration, 'The one who does not own promised to the one who does not deserve, and then the

two, the one who does not own and the one who does not deserve, were able, by force and deceit, to deprive the rightful owner of his right to what he owns and what he deserves.’<sup>4</sup> (The researcher’s translation)

#### **1.2.4 Palestine under the British Mandate**

The Balfour Declaration was not the only catastrophe that befell the Palestinian people. However, it was followed, a few years later, by the issuance of the British Mandate Instrument over Palestine in 1922; especially since that instrument was formulated by Zionist figures to serve Zionist interests. In other words, the primary purpose of issuing the British Mandate Instrument for Palestine was to put the Balfour Declaration into effect.

The establishment of the League of Nations in 1920, Britain was instead granted a Mandate for Palestine on 25 April 1920 at the San Remo Conference... Palestine had been under a British Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA) since its conquest, and was made a Civil Administration on 1 July 1920 under the first High Commissioner (who was also given the rank of Commander-in-Chief), Sir Herbert Louis Samuel (1920–25). On 24 July 1922, the Mandate was approved by the League of Nations (El-Eini, 2006, p.13)

The British Mandate Instrument contained 28 articles; in which Britain affirmed its commitment to set the proper political and economic conditions that would ensure the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine; as stated in the Balfour Declaration. Although the Arabs expressed their rejection of the Zionist project under the auspices of Britain, stressing their insistence on the right of the Arabs to their land, all the demands of the Arabs were ignored; especially the right to self-determination. By contrast, Britain stripped them of their rights and considered them guests of the occupying state.

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لقد أعطى من لا يملك وعدا لمن لا يستحق، ثم استطاع الاثنان: من لا يملك ومن لا يستحق، بالقوة والخديعة، أن يسلبا صاحب الحق حقه فيما يملكه وما يستحقه

#### **1.2.4.1 Britain's Role in Serving the Zionist Project**

The Zionists made great efforts to seize the land of Palestine and establish the state of Israel in the Palestinian territories; with the expulsion of the Arabs from it, and the settlement of the Jews instead. However, these efforts would not have succeeded without European support, especially from Britain, which is the official sponsor of the Zionist movement. Thus, the English and the Jews made joint efforts to achieve the interests of each of them; the interests of Britain in the Middle East, and the dreams of the Zionists of a national home in Palestine. According to Pappé (2006), 'To the end of his life, Herzl believed that Zionism could not succeed without the blessing of a European power. We can see now that he was correct, and that he chose the right ally in Britain' (P. 50)

Since Britain's first task was to put the Balfour Declaration into effect, it was necessary to open Jewish immigration to the land of Palestine, and prepare for the establishment of the State of Israel. What distinguishes the British Mandate period is the escalation of Jewish immigration from worldwide; especially European Jews, to Palestine. Britain provided all means and facilities for the immigration of Jews to Palestine while ensuring their protection. The journalist David Hearst says,

Britain provided the muscle under which they could simply emigrate. They could not have immigrated were it not for the British presence, because the crucial battle in the early stages was simply getting Jews into Palestine and acquiring land. They could not do that without the British government's sponsorship. (Aljazeera, 2013, 22:05)

Since the issuance of the Mandate Deed, Britain had not stopped bringing Jews and settling them in the land of Palestine as initial steps to prepare for the state of Israel. In 1925, the British government issued a report to the Council of the League of Nations, describing the achievements it made during these few years. Including facilitating the immigration of 33,801 Jews and granting them Palestinian citizenship, giving the Jewish town of Tel Aviv local independence, and establishing thirteen new Jewish settlements. In addition to other achievements, Britain contributed to enabling the Jews to seize the lands of the Arabs of Palestine

by forcing them to give up their lands. Further, the British government ignored the rights of the Palestinian farmers while it facilitated all the means for the Jews to seize Palestinians' lands.

In 1929, the Jewish Agency organized a meeting of Jews to pray at Al-Buraq Wall in Jerusalem and demanded the rebuilding of the Temple. As a result, clashes erupted between Arabs and Jews; called the Al-Buraq Revolution, launched by a Palestinian farmer, Farhan Al-Saadi. Thousands of Palestinians participated in the Al-Buraq Revolution, expressing their strong disaffection at the Jews' assault on Islamic sanctities. In response to the Al-Buraq revolt, Britain arrested Palestinians and applied the death sentence to three Palestinians.

During the ten years of the British Mandate, the illegal immigration of Jews towards Palestine increased, and their ownership of Palestinian lands expanded. Palestinians became increasingly concerned about the danger of establishing the state of Israel. So they went out in demonstrations and organized protests in opposition to the illegal immigration of Jews, and against Britain's pro-Zionist policy. 'By 1933, protests against Jewish immigration were becoming ever more frequent in Palestine. Women took part side by side with men. The British authorities cracked down on demonstrations and arrested thousands, many were killed and wounded'. (Aljazeera English, 2013, 36: 15)

The increase in anti-Semitism in Europe led many Jews again to leave their countries... From 1932 on, with the Nazi victory in Germany and the intensification of persecution in Austria and Czechoslovakia, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased dramatically. Between 1932 and 1939, Palestine absorbed 247,000 newcomers, 46 percent of Jewish emigration from Europe.' (CJPME, 2013, para. 7)

During this severe period for Palestinians, which witnessed the continuation of Jewish immigration, Palestinians lost their lands, while the British government ignored the rights and demands of the Arabs of Palestine, and relied on an arbitrary and unjust policy against Palestinians. These reasons led to more intense anger and

resentment among Palestinians. Hence, it was necessary to bring about a change in the approach of resistance against the British and the Jews.

The martyr Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who brought about this change; He focused on the organized armed struggle against the British and the Jewish Zionists. So he established secret groups specialized for training, engagement, and spying on the occupation, or even the purchase of weapons, all of which were funded by the Palestinian population. On November 15, 1935, the Mujahid Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam launched the first spark of the great Palestinian revolt. After the British forces found out about him, they surrounded him in Ya'bad an area in Jenin. People came to offer aid and were well-armed and not frightened of the danger of confrontation with the British forces. Izz al-Din and his companions were asked to surrender, but he replied, "We do not surrender; we are in the position of jihad for the sake of God." An unequal battle erupted between the occupation forces and Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his companions... This revolution was known as the "Qassam Revolution," and the confrontation resulted in the martyrdom of Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his companions.

#### **1.2.4.2 The Palestinian Revolution (1936 -1939)**

After the martyrdom of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam in late 1935, the political atmosphere in Palestine intensified with the increase in Zionist immigration since 1933, the Zionists' control over economic affairs and more Palestinian lands, and the inequality between Jews and Arabs. The martyrdom of the leader Izz al-Din al-Qassam has been considered one of the most important reasons for the start of the Great Palestinian Revolution. 'His resistance inspired many Palestinians. By 1936, an Arab rebellion erupted against British imperialism and Zionist settler-colonialism.' (Palestine Remix, (n.d.), para. 7)

The Great Palestinian Revolution, which was launched on April 20, 1936, is considered one of the most significant popular revolutions carried out by Palestinians against the English colonialists and Jewish immigrants to Palestine during the British occupation of Palestine.

The Great Palestinian Rebellion, or the Great Arab Revolt, as this uprising came to be known, lasted for three years and can be generally divided into three phases. The first phase lasted from the spring of 1936 to July 1937. With tensions throughout Palestine running high since the fall of 1935, the revolt was ignited in mid-April 1936 when followers of Qassam attacked a convoy of trucks between Nablus and Tulkarm, killing two Jewish drivers. (Palestinian Journeys, (n.d.), para. 3)

The following day, the Irgun killed two Palestinian workers in Petah Tikva, and fatal riots erupted in Tel Aviv and Jaffa. An Arab National Committee was created in Nablus, and a strike was declared on April 19. Other cities' national committees echoed the strike call, and on 25 April, the Arab Higher Committee (Lajna) (AHC) was founded, led by Haj Amin al-Husseini, to organize and promote a countrywide general strike, which began on 8 May.

Simultaneously with the military operations and repressive measures, the British government sent a commission of inquiry headed by Lord Peel to study the core reasons for the revolution. In October 1936, with the pressure of British policy and Arab heads of state, as well as the effects of a six-month national strike on Palestinians, the strike committee called off the strike and endorsed the Peel Committee. The Peel Commission issued its findings in July 1937, recommending the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab nations as shown in Appendix 'C'. Disturbed by this denial of their wants and demands, Palestinians relaunched their armed resistance with renewed intensity, ushering in the second phase of the revolt.

The Palestinian rebels made significant gains during this second phase, which lasted from July 1937 to the fall of 1938. Large swaths of the hilly Palestinian interior, including the Old City of Jerusalem for a time, fell completely under rebel control. To replace the British Mandate structures they sought to demolish, the rebels established institutions, most notably courts and a postal service. Meanwhile, the British imposed even harsher measures in an attempt to quell the revolt. The AHC and all Palestinian political parties were declared illegal, political and community leaders were arrested, and several prominent public figures were exiled.

The military aspects of counterinsurgency were stepped up, with British tanks, planes, and heavy artillery deployed across Palestine.

The British also used collective punishment, relegating thousands of Palestinians, destroying residential quarters, closing schools, and fining and forcing villages to house British troops and police. With British assistance, Zionist military institutions took advantage of the situation to strengthen their capacities. By early 1939, the British government had subsidized, uniformed, and armed members of the Jewish Settlement Police (approximately 14,000) as a thinly disguised front for the Haganah, and so-called Special Night Squads comprised of Jewish and British members launched "special operations" against Palestinian villages.

The rebellion's third phase lasted roughly from the fall of 1938 to the summer of 1939. The British appointed yet another commission of inquiry, this time led by Sir John Woodhead, to look into the technical aspects of partition. The Woodhead Commission report, released in November 1938, concluded that partition was not feasible, signaling a British retreat from the Peel recommendation. At the same time, the British launched an all-out offensive: more Palestinians were killed in 1939, more were executed (by hanging), and nearly twice as many were detained as in 1938. Such brutality put enormous pressure on the rebels, exacerbating schisms between the AHC's exiled political leadership in Damascus and local leadership on the ground, between rebel bands and village populations expected to support and supply them, and, ultimately, between Palestinians who remained committed to the revolt and those willing to compromise with the British.

In 1939, Britain held a conference in London, in which it announced that it had fulfilled its promise to the Jews to establish a national home in Palestine. It also proposed limiting Jewish immigration, that is, no more than 75,000 Jews would be allowed to enter the country within the next five years . 'By 1939, the British had smashed the rebellion. The Palestinians found themselves fighting two enemies: British colonial forces and Zionist militia groups.' (Palestine Remix, (n.d.), para. 8).

The combined impact of Britain's military and diplomatic efforts put an end to the rebellion in late summer 1939. Over the course of the three-year revolt, approximately 5,000 Palestinians were killed and nearly 15,000 were injured. The Palestinian leadership had been exiled, assassinated, imprisoned, and forced to oppose one another.

### **1.2.5 The Impact of World War II on Palestine**

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, illegal immigration of Jews increased dramatically.'The Holocaust had a major impact on the situation in Palestine. During the Second World War (1939-45), the British restricted the entry into Palestine of European Jews escaping Nazi persecution' (National Army Museum. (n.d.), para. 3).

Many Jews had fought for the Allies during WWII, honing their military skills as a result. After the war ended in 1945, these abilities were put to use in terrorist acts. The new Labour government in the United Kingdom had given Jews hope that they would be granted more rights in the area. In the aftermath of the Holocaust in Europe, many people around the world sympathized with the plight of Jews at the expense of Palestinian Arabs.

After the Second World War, 250,000 Jewish refugees were stranded in displaced persons camps in Europe. Despite the pressure of world opinion - in particular the repeated requests of US President Harry Truman - the British refused to lift the ban on immigration and admit 100,000 Jews to Palestine'.(National Army Museum. (n.d.), para. 5). However, the ambitions of the Zionists exceeded the number set by Britain. So, 'They launched a series of terrorist attacks on British authorities to drive them out.' (Palestine Remix, (n.d.), para. 10)

After the Zionists felt that Britain was no longer serving their interests, especially after restricting the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestinian territories, the Zionist movement claimed to shift its alliance with the United States of America instead of Britain. In 1945, US President Harry Truman approved the immigration

of 200,000 Jews to the Palestinian territories after the Zionist movement helped finance his election campaign.

As Zionist attacks on the British and Arabs escalated, the British decided to hand over their responsibility for Palestine to the newly founded United Nations.’(Palestine Remix, (n.d.), para. 13). ‘In September 1946, the British called a conference of Jewish and Arab leaders in London. When this ended in deadlock in February 1947, the Government announced it had decided to refer the problem to the United Nations. (National Army Museum, (n.d.), para. 9)

In November 1947, the United Nations recommended partitioning Palestine and establishing separate Arab and Jewish states (See Appendix D). On 15 May 1948, Britain relinquished her mandate on May 15, 1948. The British Army left Palestine, leaving the Jews and Arabs to fight it out in the ensuing war. The campaign had claimed the lives of approximately 750 British military and police personnel.

After the partition resolution was issued in 1947, Britain did not find a reason to stay in Palestine. Thus, Britain decided on May 15, 1948, after fulfilling its promises to the Zionists, to end thirty years of the British Mandate over Palestine. During this period, the Zionists achieved the ownership of more than 50 per cent of the Palestinian lands. With the beginning of 1945, the Jewish Agency was controlling Palestine administratively and militarily, and the Haganah army reached about 35,000, in addition to Irgun and Lehi gangs. Britain handed over most of the vital facilities, ports, and airports to the Jews before to withdraw from Palestine. Immediately after Britain’s exit from Palestine, the Jewish National Council announced the establishment of a Jewish state under the name “The State of Israel” and it appointed David Ben-Gurion as its prime minister, while Chaim Weizmann was appointed as its president, and Tel Aviv its capital.

### **1.2.6 The Arab Israeli War of 1948 and the Palestinian Nakba**

After the United Nations proposed a 'Partition Plan,' the land would be divided into two states, Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine, with Jerusalem remaining a U.N.-controlled international zone. Although the Arab states walked out in protest, the

partition plan was approved by 33 countries, 13 countries voted against it, and ten countries completely abstained from voting. The Zionists began to strengthen their army; in addition to displacing Palestinians from their lands, which resulted in the 1948 war. This war was one of the most central stations of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which ended with the 1948 Nakba and the Jews' seizure of most of the Palestinian lands.

#### **1.2.6.1 The 1948 War**

- **Zionist Military Situation**

During the British Mandate period, the Zionists formed groups of armed terrorist gangs, obtaining weapons from Britain under on the pretext that the Jews were a minority and required weapons to defend themselves. Some gangs, such as the Haganah, were specially trained by Britain and participated in WWII, gaining experience and military power. Prior to the start of the war, the Zionist military situation was strong and well-organized. The Israeli army was formed from the Haganah, which had approximately 45,300 members, including 2200 Palmah members. When the war broke out, the Haganah grew to around 107 thousand fighters in the first week of June 1948, in addition to the Stern and Irgun gangs.

- **Arab Military Situation**

After Britain crushed the Palestinian revolution, only 2,500 revolutionaries and 4,000 Palestinian volunteers remained. They were called the Arab Liberation Army, led by Fawzi al-Qawuqji and aimed to resist the Zionist gangs' plans. The events developed after that with the Arab army joining the war to protect Arab Palestine. However, The Arab army that entered Palestine consisted of about 14.000 fighters from Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and later on, the Saudi and Sudanese armies joined the war alongside the Arab army. The Arab army was distinguished by its small numbers compared to the Israeli army, in addition to its weak armament and the absence of organization and leadership. Thus, these reasons later contributed to changing the outcome of the war.

- **The Arab Defeat**

On 14 May 1948, Britain relinquished its mandate over Palestine following a UN resolution from the previous year that called for the partitioning of the territory between the Arabs and the Jews. Britain had emerged from the Second World war exhausted and war-weary and lacking the funds to maintain control of its colonial possessions. (Aljazeera, 2003, The Arab-Israeli wars, 1948: First Arab-Israeli war, paras, 1-3)

The partition plan was accepted by the Zionist settlers who declared Israel as an independent state. Many settlers were refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe, along with others who had fought against Germany in the Second World War. All Arab countries, including Palestine, rejected the plan and declared their determination to destroy any creation of Israel in the heart of Arab land. Faced by unanimous opposition, Britain refused to implement it and set 15 May as the date for ending its mandate. On the same day regular troops from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq entered Palestine in support of the local Palestinian Arabs. (Aljazeera, 2003, The Arab-Israeli wars, 1948: First Arab-Israeli war, paras, 4-6)

The Israelis proved to be the stronger force, fighting for the survival of their new state against a poorly coordinated Arab front. The advancing Trans-Jordanian Arab Legion managed to link up with the Egyptians near Bethlehem, but the Israeli counter-offensive led to the invasion's demise. Fighting between Arabs and Israelis lasted until January 1949, when an armistice agreement was finally reached in July of that year. However, individual armistice agreements between Israel and the four Arab countries ended the war.

The war between Israel and the Arabs resumed again after the month-long armistice. During the armistice period, the Zionist gangs enhanced their financial and military capabilities, and later were able to outperform and defeat the Arab armies. 'The lack of coordination between Arab armies, conflicting orders, secret treacherous deals, limited supplies and ammunition, and more... All that led to the defeat of the Arab armies.' (PalestineQA, 2012, 2:55). Consequently, the Arab-

Israeli War is considered one of the most prominent stations of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as it ended with the Nakba of Palestine, the Zionists' seizure of more than 75 per cent of Palestine's lands, and the displacement of one million Palestinians. According to Sa'di and Abu-Lughod (2007):

The 1948 War that led to the creation of the State of Israel also resulted in the devastation of Palestinian society. At least 80 percent of the Palestinians who lived in the major part of Palestine upon which Israel was established— more than 77 percent of Palestine's territory—became refugees...For Palestinians, the 1948 War led indeed to a "catastrophe." A society disintegrated, a people dispersed, and a complex and historically changing but taken for granted communal life was ended violently... After 1948, the lives of the Palestinians at the individual, community, and national level were dramatically and irreversibly changed. (P. 3)

#### **1.2.6.2 Al- Nakba**

Nakba, the catastrophe (or the disaster) in Arabic; the term Nakba has been associated with the 1948 events in Palestine when more than half of Palestinians were expelled from their homes and lands in Palestine. The term Nakba describes the Palestinian tragedy that has occurred and is still happening. The Palestinian Nakba 1948 was one of the features of a new Arab era that arose after the First World War. Among the main consequences of the Nakba is the official occupation of Palestine by Israel, followed by the establishment of the Israeli state on the occupied territories of Palestine through the expulsion of more than half of the population of historic Palestine and the destruction of Palestinian heritage, social and political institutions. The term was first used by the Syrian historian and thinker Constantine Zureik in his little book "The meaning of Nakba"<sup>5</sup>. In his book, Zureik (1948/ 1956) explains:

The defeat of the Arabs in Palestine is no simple setback or light, passing evil. It is a disaster in every sense of the word and one of the harshest of the trials and

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<sup>5</sup> معنى النكبة 1948

tribulations with which the Arabs have been afflicted throughout their long history -a history marked by numerous trials and tribulations. (P. 2)

The term Nakba refers to the Palestinian tragic events that occurred in 1948, including the mass exodus, the forced displacement of thousands of indigenous people, and the inhuman massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces; they ethnically cleansed<sup>6</sup> Palestine. However, the Zionists were not satisfied with that only, as they destroyed the cultural heritage, vandalized public and private properties and assaulted the religious sanctities, and more.

The 1948 War that led to the creation of the State of Israel also resulted in the devastation of Palestinian society. At least 80 percent of the Palestinians who lived in the major part of Palestine upon which Israel was established— more than 77 percent of Palestine’s territory—became refugees... For Palestinians, the 1948 War led indeed to a “catastrophe.” A society disintegrated, a people dispersed, and a complex and historically changing but taken for granted communal life was ended violently. The Nakba has thus become, both in Palestinian memory and history... After 1948, the lives of the Palestinians at the individual, community, and national level were dramatically and irreversibly changed.(Sa’di & Abu-Lughod, 2007, p. 3)

- **The Ethnic Cleansing**

To create the state of Israel, Zionist forces attacked major Palestinian cities and destroyed more than 530 Palestinian villages. In 1948, approximately 13,000 Palestinians were killed and more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes, becoming refugees. This was the climax of Zionist ethnic cleansing. (Aljazeera, 2015, Ethnic cleansing of Palestine, para. 1).

Ethnic cleansing actually began a month before the start of the 1948 war, when the Zionist terrorist gangs committed a massacre in Deir Yassin village on April 9, 1948, later known as Deir Yassin massacre (See Appendix E). It is considered one

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<sup>6</sup>“Rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area... a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.” (United Nations definition of Ethnic Cleansing)

of the most heinous massacres committed by the Zionist gangs. This massacre is the case for the rest of the massacres that the Zionists would commit against the Palestinians with the aim of ethnically cleansing Palestine. The Deir Yassin massacre occurred on April 9, 1948, when Jewish gangs slaughtered Palestinians. At least 100 Palestinians, mostly women and children, were killed in the nearby village of Deir Yassin. Despite signing a non-aggression pact with the Jews, the massacre occurred. Members of the Jewish Irgun and Stern militias murdered villagers. After hearing about Deir Yassin, many Palestinians fled their homes.

The massacres perpetrated by the Jewish gangs were increasing day by day. During 1948, the Zionist gangs were dedicated to committing massacres and genocides in Palestinian villages and cities. Palestinians were finding themselves between two options; either to leave or to be killed. When they chose to resist and preserve their lands, they were killed in the most horrifically way. Although these series of criminal operations committed by the Zionist gangs were taking place in front of the United Nations, America, Britain and the whole world, no measures were taken to defend the Arabs and save them from killing and abuse. According to Pappé (2006):

From the end of April until the end of July, a grim scene was repeated in almost every village. Armed Israeli soldiers surrounded each village on three sides, and put the villagers to flight through the fourth side. In many cases, if the people refused to leave, they were forced onto lorries, and driven away to the West Bank. In some villages, there were Arab volunteers who resisted by force, and when these villages were conquered they were immediately blown up and destroyed. By May, the day the Jewish state was declared, villages had already been wiped out. (Pp. 135-136)

The countryside, the rural heart of Palestine, with its colourful and picturesque villages, was ruined. Half of the villages had been destroyed, flattened by Israeli bulldozers which had been at work since August 1948 when the government had decided either to turn them into cultivated land or to build new Jewish settlements on their remains... Urban Palestine was similarly crushed. The Palestinian

neighborhood in mixed towns were destroyed, apart from a few quarters that were left empty, to be populated later by Jewish immigrants from Arab countries. The non-mixed towns experienced two very different fates. The people of Lydda, Ramleh and Majdal were evicted by force, suffering massacres and humiliation in the process. Shafamru and Nazareth, on the other hand, remained intact, but were hopelessly overpopulated by streams of refugees fleeing from nearby villages.’ (Pappe, 2006, p. 138)

The land was available to the Zionists, and with all of Western society's support, they were able to commit the most heinous massacres against Palestinians. During the events of the Palestinian Nakba in 1948, armed Zionist gangs carried out numerous massacres in various villages and cities, killing thousands of Palestinian civilians. Zionist gangs would enter Palestinian villages and commit the most heinous forms of murder and abuse against them, whether they were old or young, men or women.

Rape of women was also common, as was murder and mass executions. Many Palestinian villages witnessed massacres such as al-Tantura, Beit Daras, Ramleh, Haifa and Jaffa, Lod, and others. Today, Israel has seized the majority of historic Palestine's lands, killing and expelling its original inhabitants, the Arab Palestinians, and displacing them until these vacated lands became available to Zionists to establish their alleged state and rebuild it with Jews.

- **The Nakba in Numbers**

The primary goal of Zionists was to uproot Palestinians from their lands and ethnically cleanse the land so that it would later be available for the establishment of their state. What resulted after the 1948 war was indeed a disaster for Palestinians. Where the statistics indicate that between 1947 and 1949, 750,000 and one million Palestinians were displaced from Palestine and became exiled and scattered in the countries of the world, and they were also deprived of the right to return to their homeland Palestine (See Appendix F). ‘Zionist forces had taken more than 78 percent of historic Palestine, ethnically cleansed and destroyed about 530

villages and cities, and killed about 15,000 Palestinians in a series of mass atrocities, including more than 70 massacres.' (Aljazeera, 2017, The Nakba did not start or end in 1948, para. 4)

After the 1948 war, Palestine was erased from the map, the Palestinian people dispersed, and the land was divided. The Israeli historian Pappé (2006) describes the situation after the 1948 war, saying:

Palestine now became a new geo-political entity, or rather three entities. Two, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were ill-defined, the first fully annexed to Jordan, but without the population's consent or enthusiasm; the second in limbo under military rule, its inhabitants prevented from entering Egypt proper. The third entity was Israel, bent on Judaizing every part of Palestine, and building a new living organism, the Jewish community of Israel. (P. 140)

The Nakba is the most significant event in the history of Palestine; it is a key to understand the Palestinian cause. For the Palestinian, the Nakba is not just an event that happened in the past, the Nakba is still going on. In his essay 'Out of Place, Out of Time', Elias Sanbar, a Palestinian historian, poet and essayist, says:

The contemporary history of the Palestinians turns on a key date: 1948. That year, a country and its people disappeared from both maps and dictionaries. The short war which raged from November 1947 to 15 May 1948 and terminated in the proclamation of the State of Israel, far from being a straightforward colonial occupation of one country by another, resulted in the replacement of one people by a community of 600,000 settlers transported to Palestine during the British Mandate. A universe disappeared, and of the 1,400,000 Palestinians in the country prior to the Nakba – 'the Catastrophe' – just 150,000 individuals were listed as being present during the first census carried out by the new Israeli state. (2001, p. 87)

The fact that Israel was founded at the expense of the land's indigenous Palestinian population is a great Nakba (catastrophe), and the myth that Zionist Jews would live in "a land without a people for a people without a land" has been debunked by the fact that in

1948, more than 750,000 Palestinians out of a total population of 1.4 million were uprooted from their lands and homes to make way for the Jewish state.

When a country's population is relocated by more than half, the consequences are disastrous. Palestinians now constitute one of the world's longest and greatest refugee crises. Not only are Palestinian refugees denied the right to return to their homes, which is guaranteed by international law, but they are also subjected to new kinds of displacement and dispossession today.

### **1.3 The Theoretical Background of the Study**

the current part exhibits a brief overview of Postcolonial Literature and Arab American Literature. This part also highlights some of the literary and psychological meanings of the main themes represented in the selected novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water*.

#### **1.3.1 Postcolonial Literature**

When we talk about postcolonial literature, we invoke a political term that became popular at the end of the twentieth century. Postcolonial literature revolves around the idea of one country's colonization of another; as well as, imperialism. It deals with the countries' crises, whether during the colonial period or after their independence, i.e., the past and the present effects of colonialism on these countries, including conflicts, political, economic or cultural crises. When talking about this type of literature, it is essential first to define what colonialism and imperialism are. In her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Elleke Boehmer says,

... Imperialism can be taken to refer to the authority assumed by a state over another territory—authority expressed in pageantry and symbolism, as well as in military and economic power. It is a term associated in particular with the expansion of the European nation state in the nineteenth century. Colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force. (2005, p. 2)

A good way to start any definition of postcolonial literature is to think about the origins of the term postcolonialism and how it has been used in literary criticism,

from roughly the late 1980s to present times... A possible working definition for postcolonialism is that it involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies and at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire. (Ato Quayson, 2020, What is postcolonial Literature?, paras. 1)

Postcolonialism frequently includes discussions of slavery, migration, suppression and resistance, difference, race, gender, and place, as well as responses to imperial European discourses such as history, philosophy, anthropology, and linguistics. The term refers to conditions that existed during imperialism and colonialism, as well as those that existed after colonialism's historical end.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that postcolonial literature is the literary product that discusses the issue of colonialism in a country. 'This suggests that postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literatures by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well as from the various minority diasporas that live in the west.' (Ato Quayson, 2020, What is postcolonial Literature?, para. 4). Again, Elleke Boeemer (2005) defines Postcolonial literature:

Postcolonial literature is generally defined as that which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship. It is writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives. As well as a change in power, decolonization demanded—and still demands—symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings. Postcolonial literature forms part of that process of overhaul. To give expression to colonized experience, postcolonial writers sought to undercut thematically and formally the discourses which supported colonization—the myths of power, the race classifications, the imagery of subordination. Postcolonial writing, therefore, is deeply marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and division under empire. (P. 3)

Postcolonial literature discusses the experience of colonialism and its effects on the colonized countries, both in the past and the present. The author can also describe colonial life or how life would change after these countries gained

independence. Diaspora, identity, nostalgia, displacement, exile, and other ideas are among the themes or insights frequently raised in postcolonial literature.

### **1.3.2 Arab American Literature**

Arab American literature is ethnic American literature that includes literary works by authors of Arab descent who reside in the United States, i.e., Arab American literature is the literary product by Arab American writers. This type of literature appeared when the migration of Arabs from the Ottoman Empire to North America started. 'Arab American literature mirrors the patterns of Arab American history, which scholars have traditionally divided into three phases, based on the three distinct waves of Arab immigrants who came to the US.' (Ludescher, 2006, p. 93). Each phase is distinguished by different styles, themes, point of view and ideas.

Arab American literature through these phases is characterized, on the one hand, by struggles to assimilate and embrace Arab identity in American society, and on the other hand, by a sense of detachment from the Arab culture of subsequent generations born and raised in the United States of America. However, the subsequent generations also contained the theme of homecoming; Finding an intermediate identity that includes aspects of Arab identity and the culture of American society. (Majaj, 2008)

As for Palestinian writers; and here we are talking about Palestinian Americans in particular, they played a major role in the development of Arab American literature today, through their writings, whether novels, poetry or short stories. For Palestinians, The Nakba left thousands of Palestinian refugees scattered around the world, where they experienced the meaning of displacement, exile, and diaspora.

Palestinian writers and artists in the diaspora dealt with themes of exile, the reality of the pressures and hardships of homelessness, nostalgia, and anticipation: longing for the lost homeland and anticipation of return to it. Palestinian authors portrayed the tragedy that befell their people, reflecting in their poetry, stories, and novels the pains of the Nakba: homelessness and loss, psychological torture, feelings of exile and alienation. (Palestinians Journeys, (n.d.), Meanings of the Nakba, para. 12)

### 1.3.3 Exile

Exile has been an essential part of the history of civilizations, as it was a typical kind of punishment for crimes and political or religious infractions. According to the Cambridge dictionary, Exile is the condition of someone being sent or kept away from their own country, village, etc., especially for political reasons.

#### 1.3.3.1 Edward Said and the Concept of Exile

Edward Said is a Palestinian-American thinker and critic, who has written many books on literary criticism and post-colonial issues. He is 'political activist, and literary critic who examined literature in light of social and cultural politics and was an outspoken proponent of the political rights of the Palestinian people and the creation of an independent Palestinian state.'(Britannica, (n.d.), Edward Said, para, 1).

Palestine formed a crucial presence in the formation of the personality of the thinker and critic Edward Said. Edward Said lived the experience of exile, which contributed to the formation of his perceptions and attitudes towards the concept of exile.

The concept of exile constituted a fundamental turning point in the life and interest of Edward Said and his intellectual and critical output. Exile is different for Edward Said, he does not only address the comprehensive and well-known definition of exile, whose meaning was reduced to diaspora, expulsion, displacement and dispossession. However, Edward Said gives a special definition of exile centered on his own experience as a Palestinian thinker who lived the experience of exile. In his book *'Reflection on Exile and Other Essays'*, Edward said says:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are

permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (2001, p. 137)

Although exile is the product of a specific historical condition and the effect of a profound experience of loss and the rupture of identity; the concept of exile goes beyond that for Edward Said. Exile is about loss, and the idea of no return. It is the uprooting of a person from his roots, his land and even community. Exile is a persistent feeling of instability in any place and the inability to integrate with his origins if a person returns to his original homeland, and therefore exile is about loss.

### **1.3.3.2 The Presence of Exile in Literature**

As far as literature is concerned, 'exile is frequently encountered as a topic of literary texts. In literature, exile is narrated through different levels of fiction and reality, individual and collective experience. It is the duality between fiction and non-fiction, individual and collective perspective that represent the nature of exile. The narration of exile includes the (re)interpretation of the past through memory and imagination, which represents the true nature of the literary text. On the other hand, writing about exile includes narration of individual experience related to similar perspectives: the exile writer speaks not only for himself, but in the name of all those that surround him, and those that are left behind... Although it represents experience or – to quote Joseph Brodsky again – a metaphysical state based on the concept of displacement and unbelonging, the understanding of exile varies depending on its causes and consequences.' (Kiš, 2018, pp. 315-316)

### **1.3.3.3 The Experience of Exile**

'The experience of exile is the most prevalent phenomena in the modern world. It includes voluntary and involuntary displacement. The importance of exile had increased on unprecedented scale and created many diasporic communities. The Arab community is one of them.' (Abu El Hassan Ali, 2021, p. 2). The experience of Arabs in exile is no different from that of others when it comes to the difficulties they encounter in exile.

The exile has a feeling of estrangement and uprootedness. His search for his roots and heritage are his main quests. The exiles who find themselves torn between their homeland and the host land have a sense of separation and uprooting. The experience of exile involves uprootedness and transplantation, so the in-between state that the exile suffers makes him swing between the past and the future... exiles often share emotional ties with their motherlands; some prefer to maintain their religious, ethnic, and cultural identities in the adopted home and others try to adapt to the new home. (Abu El Hassan Ali, 2021, pp. 2-4).

Exile creates a lot of hardships and disturbances when it comes to uprooting a person from his land, leaving behind his memories, his childhood, his home and even community. However, it becomes more complicated when the exiled person tries to find an alternative home, finding himself between the difficulty of adapting to the new homeland, a culture different from his own, and the nostalgia for his homeland and past.

- **Nostalgia**

'*Nostalgia* is from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition thus, a painful yearning *to* return home. Coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in the late seventeenth century.' (Davis, 1979, p.1). Nostalgia is the longing for the past and the failure to adapt to a new environment or a changing time. Accordingly, 'Zwingmann conceives of the nostalgic experience as essentially a normal psychological reaction triggered by fear of actual or impending change.' (Davis, 1979, p. 10)

- **Homesickness**

Homesickness is a common reaction to the separation of individuals from their homelands. It is often the result of the failure to adapt to the new environment in the host country and feelings of nostalgia and return to homeland. It is a very common experience among individuals in exile, especially those who have been forcibly expelled from their countries.

- **The Issue of Culture**

One of the issues that stand as a difficult obstacle for refugees is the issue of culture. The refugee, of course, when he leaves his homeland, takes with him his own culture, language, and way of life. However, once the refugee reaches the host country, he encounters a new culture, new language, and a totally different life, i.e., culture shock. People in Exile get influenced by their contact with the host country's culture, as a way of adapting to the new environment.

This cultural affinity that occurs to the exile when he begins to adapt to the new culture and the features of the new culture appear on him, creates what is called acculturation. Thus, acculturation is a 'cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture' (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Acculturation).

The Canadian psychologist John Widdup Berry proposed a theory of acculturation known as Berry's model of acculturation 'that categorizes individual adaptation strategies along two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the retention or rejection of an individual's native culture (i.e. "Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics?"). The second dimension concerns the adoption or rejection of the host culture. ("Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with the larger society?") From these two questions four acculturation strategies' (Maricopa Community Colleges, (n.d.), Berry's Model of Acculturation, para. 2)

First, assimilation occurs when individuals completely reject their original culture, religion, or identity and assimilate themselves into the dominant or the host culture. Second, Separation occurs when individuals preserve their original culture and separate themselves from the host culture. Third, Integration happens when individuals adapt to the new or host culture and norms while they preserve their original culture. Finally, Marginalization occurs when individuals neglect both their original culture and the host culture.

- **America as a Host Country**

America is one of the countries with the highest number of Palestinian refugees; it is a host country for Palestinians, particularly those fleeing the 1948 Nakba. However, Palestinian refugees face significant challenges in assimilating into American society. The most difficult of these challenges is the difference in language, customs, traditions, culture, and, in some cases, racial discrimination. According to the policies of American presidents, America as a host country had different policies in accepting Palestinian refugees.

### **1.3.4 Displacement**

Displacement is a key notion and theme that we come across in postcolonial and modern literatures alike. As a critical notion, it aims to interpret the crisis of identity engendered by colonialism...Displacement essentially gives birth to a series of problematics. On one hand one cannot forget the people, culture, landscapes, and language of the abandoned place and on the other they find it difficult, due to variety of reasons, to disassociate themselves from the new place, country, and language that they chose to adopt or were forced to adopt.... Either one has to accept and learn to live with the fluidity of identities with their emotional tortures and cultural shocks or they have to perennially bear the agonies stemming from the unmanageable nostalgia of things left, places lost, and language abandoned. (Nayyar, 2017, paras. 1-7)

After reading the article entitled 'Displacement & its Consequences in the Postcolonial Literature' written by the Assistant Professor Aroop Saha, it is obvious that the concept displacement has an essential place in literature, especially Postcolonial literature. In his article, Saha says:

In the postcolonial literature, displacement, which is also known as migration, has turned into one of the burning issues because of its intensive and prolonged psychological, physical and cultural impacts on human beings. The postcolonial writers from various corners of the world are vividly representing this issue of displacement in their writings...the

post-colonial writers are representing the experiences, struggles and future through their writings from both the individual perspective and the national perspective. Post-colonial writers have addressed and analyzed this issue of displacement from critical aspects and predicted its controversial consequences in their writings like novels, stories, poems, essays etc. (2015, pp. 317 -318)

Palestinian writers are among those writers who try to describe their experience when they have been displaced from their lands in Palestine, especially during the 1948 Catastrophe , through their writings.

### **1.3.5 Diaspora**

It is not clear that there is a comprehensive definition of the term diaspora, since the meaning of diaspora has changed with time. Until quite recently the term was referring to the Jews as they were scattered around the world; yet, today the term diaspora refers to many dispersed communities, for example, the Palestinian community that was dispersed after the Nakba in 1948.

Diaspora is often referred to as the dispersal of human groups around the world when they were forced to abandon their original homelands. 'Definitions of "diasporas" also include not only first-generation emigrants, but also foreign-born children of these individuals, as long as they maintain some link to their parent's home country. These links – whether cultural, linguistic, historical, religious or affective – are what distinguish diaspora groups from other communities.' (Migration Data Portal, 2020, Diasporas, para. 2).

## **1.4 Conclusion**

The Nakba is a watershed moment in Palestinian history and an unforgettable event in Palestinian memory. The Nakba is the ongoing ethnic cleansing of a completely defenseless people by Zionists in full view of the international community. Indeed, the Zionist project to establish the State of Israel on the lands of historic Palestine was successful, but only by using force to kill, exile, and displace the indigenous

Palestinians. Following 1948, the Palestinian people were displaced, dispersed, and exiled all over the world.

# Chapter Two: The Portrayal of Palestinian Exile, Diaspora and Displacement in the Novel

## **Chapter Two: The Portrayal of Palestinian Exile, Diaspora and Displacement in the Novel**

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## **2.1 Introduction**

Countless Palestinians who were forcibly displaced during the 1948 Nakba live in exile worldwide. They constitute what is known as the Palestinian diaspora. Accordingly, a group of writers and poets have been trying to convey the Palestinian experience through their literary works. *The Blue Between Sky and Water* is one of those literary works that share insights about Palestinian exile, displacement, and diaspora. This chapter delves into the issue of Palestinian exile, displacement, and diaspora. Furthermore, it addresses the suffering of exiled Palestinians as depicted in the novel ‘*The Blue Between Sky and Water*’

## **2.2 The Nakba and Social Transformations**

As years have passed by since the Nakba, the international community has been unable to return Palestinian refugees to their homes, and continue their displacement and denial of their rights. In essence, the Palestinian Nakba refers to the sudden collapse of Palestinian society under the Zionist military attacks and the displacement and dispersal of Palestinians in the Arab and Western world.

Thus, the Nakba carried the meaning of stopping the natural development of the Palestinian people, distorting and displacing them and transforming them from an independent and free people to a persecuted and disaffected one in their near and far exiles, turning them mostly into individuals without identities and without ties, suddenly becoming refugees and they must develop another society in the diaspora.

Although part of the Nakba indicates the defeat of the Arab armies, it does not focus on that only. Rather, the term Al-Nakba is based, in its dimensions, on the social collapse and the fragmentation of the dominant social strata before the Nakba, including the owners of the land, real estate, property, and families, who were either displaced from the coast to the interior, or to Arab or Western countries outside Palestine, which led to the disintegration of the of Palestinian society.

The Palestinians were dispersed and scattered in all corners of the world. Taking the depth of the tragedy becomes clear through the separation caused by the Nakba between the families: the brother and his brother, the husband and his wife, and the

son and his family. Consequently, forced migration represented the pinnacle of tragedy in the life of the Palestinian people, who found themselves displaced and expelled from their land and homeland; emphasizing that the Palestinians did not leave their land voluntarily, but forcibly, under the showers of bullets, the sound of bombs, and the bombing of homes; thus, People went out barefoot in search of shelter and safety.

With the Nakba in 1948, Palestinian society was torn, scattered and its institutions destroyed. The Zionist settlement project destroyed the structure of Palestinian society, and on its ruins, the Zionist settler community arose. There is no doubt that the Palestinian suffers in one way or another wherever he or she lives.

### **2.3 Palestinian Refugees' Sufferance in Exile**

In ancient times, exile was considered one of the most severe punishments, as it meant years of wandering and loss and bitterness in the present and future of man. The exiled person is in constant conflict with the new environment, as he is far from his family and homeland, and from everything he is familiar with. During the past decades, exile has become a collective punishment for entire groups and peoples, as a result of wars and terrible genocides.

Exile is an actual situation in which many Palestinians have found themselves, especially after the 1948 Nakba; a state of constant instability. The displaced Palestinians live in harsh conditions, trapped in half attachment and half separation. They are not completely inside the new environment or the old environment, longing for the past on the one hand, and trying to integrate with the host country on the other hand.

The difficulty of the lives of exiled Palestinians lies not only in being forced to live far from their homeland; yet, in the many things that remind them that they are exiled and expelled from their lands. There are many sufferings that an exiled can tell about the feeling that he is living an abnormal life in every way.

Exile is the word that sums up the modern life of Palestinians, but it is an exile of a particular kind. They live it in two different cases; there are Palestinians who are

exiled inside their homeland Palestine, and Palestinians who are exiled outside the lands of historic Palestine; in the Arab countries, Europe and America. According to Saloul (2012):

In the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem the Palestinians live under conditions of siege, enduring a blockade of towns, crippling economic measures, land confiscations, and military attacks on civilian areas. Under different yet equally appalling circumstances, the Palestinians inside Israel live as second-class citizens, who face sociopolitical discriminations and restrictions on their cultural and economic opportunities. Neither has there been much improvement in the fate of Palestinians in the diaspora outside historic Palestine. (Pp. 1-2)

It is essential to emphasize that people are forced to live in exile, that is they are forced to leave their native country against their will. At the same time, an individual's exile is accompanied by a dramatic change in his or her socio-cultural environment. In this way, exile becomes a watershed moment in an individual's life, altering everything because the individual is forced to begin a new life in a new environment. Many exiled people are unable to adapt to their new environment and suffer from significant psychological problems in such circumstances.

For Palestinians in the exile, dispossession of their land meant that they have been living in 'ghorba', living away from homeland with emotions of homesickness, separation and isolation . (Lindholm Schulz, 1999, p. 20).

The life of Palestinians in exile is not without its difficulties. The Palestinians living in Gaza are in a complete siege, where life is almost non-existent, especially in the refugee camps. As for the Palestinians who are exiled outside the lands of historic Palestine, they are between the difficulty of integrating into the host country, nostalgia and homesickness.

## **2.4 The Palestinian Diaspora**

People usually migrate from one country to another for economic and educational reasons or in search for better living conditions. However, it is different for the Palestinian Diaspora; Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their lands due to

the establishment of the State of Israel. Currently, the Palestinian Diaspora is represented in refugee camps in Gaza, Arab and Western countries.

An absurdity that is on the ground is that the birth of the Israel state and the end of the Jewish Diaspora marks the tragedy and new Diaspora of the Palestinians. This is a creation of a state on the expense of another nation; this is how the Palestinians see it. To the Palestinian, the birth of Israel is remembered as the catastrophe, al-Nakba, to mark the suffering caused by dispersal, exile, and denial that made the Palestinians a “refugee nation” (Siddiq, 1995, p.87).

During the Nakba, more than half of the Palestinian people were displaced to neighboring countries; these groups constitute the lists of Palestinian refugees. The increase in the suffering of Palestinian refugees and the economic and social hardships urged many refugees to head to Europe and America searching for better living conditions. They formed gatherings that became known as the Palestinian community in the diaspora.

After the Nakba of 1948, the Palestinian community changed radically; the community was a single entity, it became a displaced living in diaspora as a Palestinian refugees. However, those who have remained within the borders of historic Palestine were not in better condition, the society was dispersed between Gaza, Jerusalem, and the West Bank; they live in a state of diaspora even within Palestine.

The Palestinian Diaspora can be defined as all Palestinians who were forcibly displaced from their lands during the years 1948 and 1967. These displaced Palestinians are called refugees, as they settled in different regions of the world; this led to the emergence of a transnational Palestinian community that is part of the diaspora, especially those who migrated to Europe and North America (Zaidan, 2011)

The Palestinian Diaspora includes those who were dispersed from their homeland in 1948 and 1967, as well as those who live outside of Palestinian borders. Some scholars, such as Schulz and Hammer (2003), have argued that Palestinian refugees

living in the West Bank and Gaza who were expelled from their homes in 1948 but remained within the country's borders are also considered members of the Palestinian Diaspora.

Similarly, Palestinians living within Israel's borders are part of the Diaspora because they were subject to "internal displacement" and became a minority in the new state of Israel. This inner Diaspora has strong feelings that should not be overlooked, and it has shaped various expressions of Palestinian national and cultural identity.

Estimates indicate that nearly 50% of Palestinians live outside of Palestine. Among them, 5.59 million live in Arab countries (44.0% of total) and about 700,000 (5.5%) live throughout the world. Meanwhile, 4.88 million (38.4%) live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 1.53 million (12.1%) live within the green line and hold Israeli citizenship. The majority of Palestinians outside of Palestine are refugees exiled in the 1948 *Nakba*. (Labidi, 2018, *The Palestinian Diaspora and the State Building Process*, para. 6)

In general, millions of Palestinians live outside of Palestine, settling in various countries around the world. They are known collectively as the Palestinian diaspora. Today's Palestinian diaspora are the descendants of Palestinians who were displaced between 1948 and 1967.

## **2.5 Biography of the Novelist Susan Abulhawa**

Literature is important in the Palestinian people's resistance to Zionist occupation and in conveying their cause and experiences as Palestinians. As a result, the Palestinian writer resists with his pen, defending and proving Palestinian identity, particularly after the 1948 catastrophe, and preserving Palestinian culture. There have been many great Palestinian writers in the literary scene, including Ghassan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, Edward Said, and even women writers like Susan Abulhawa.

Susan Abulhawa was 'Born in 1970 to refugees of the 1967 War, Abulhawa is no stranger to the indignities of dispossession. She was born in Kuwait, moved to the

United States as an infant, returned to Kuwait at the age of 5 and found herself in occupied East Jerusalem at the age of 10. In Jerusalem, Abulhawa spent 3 years living at an all-girls school and orphanage before leaving to come to the US. "Conditions were difficult. But those were some of my happiest childhood years," Abulhawa says. "My family is originally from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, so my time at the school helped me discover my roots and really get to know the streets of Jerusalem in a way that most Palestinian refugees are prevented from doing." (IMEU, 2015, Susan Abulhawa, para. 1)

Abulhawa returned to the U.S. as a teenager. She graduated from Pfeiffer University in North Carolina and received her Master's degree in Neuroscience from the University of South Carolina. Well on her way to a career in medicine, she was inspired to write *Mornings in Jenin* after returning to Palestine for visits in 2001 and 2002. (IMEU, 2015, Susan Abulhawa, para. 2)

Abulhawa visited the Jenin refugee camp in the immediate aftermath of the April massacre, which occurred during a massive Israeli military assault. Abulhawa was deeply moved by both experiences and resolved to tell the world what she saw. The end result was far from what Abulhawa had envisioned when she first put pen to paper. "I started with a humanitarian goal," she explains. "I wanted the rest of the world to know what happened in Jenin." But as I wrote, the characters began to come to life and fill out, and being true to these characters and telling their story honestly became the only focus."

Her writings reveal her personal connection to Palestinian historical events as well as the current state of Palestine. Abulhawa attempts to convey the truth that the world has always sought to obliterate: the reality of Israeli occupation based on ethnic cleansing, as well as Palestinian struggle and suffering. Her novels are distinguished by the fact that she allows her own personality and story to shine through the characters. It is also interesting to consider the role of women in her novels and the message she conveys through those roles.

As a Palestinian writer who carries the Palestinian cause with her, Abulhawa tries to demonstrate that the conflict between Palestine and Israel is not a conflict, because a conflict occurs when two equal parties disagree about something. However, it is settler colonialism that is based on ethnic cleansing and apartheid. (Qantara.de, 2017)

In an interview with her, Susan Abulhawa stresses the importance of literature as a kind of weapon to confront and resist the Zionist occupation, and as a proof of Palestinian identity, as she says,

Yet literature is a facet of society and when you belong to a people whose very existence is denied, to whom the world says "you're not real, you do not exist", writing your story and creating your art becomes an act of decolonisation. What Palestinian art and Palestinian literature does in this sort of political context is to assert our presence, our existence, our humanity and our ancient history, all of which belong to us. (Qantra.de, 2017, Literature is a facet of society, para. 7)

- **Activism**

Abulhawa is also an activist, having founded Playgrounds for Palestine, an organization that builds playgrounds for children in refugee camps and other parts of Palestine. Abulhawa is also a signatory to the boycott campaign against Israel, which includes a cultural boycott. She considers the BDS movement to be one of the most effective means of promoting Palestinian rights and achieving justice in the face of Israel's ongoing ethnic cleansing.

- **Works**

Susan Abulhawa wrote many great novels that have been successful and have received interest among readers. Along with her novel *'The Blue Between Sky and Water'* published by Bloomsbury in 2015, Abulhawa wrote also her most famous novel *'Mornings in Jenin'* also published by Bloomsbury in 2010, and her latest novel *'Against the Loveless World'* (Atria Books, 2020). In addition to her works of Anthology like *Shattered Illusions*, anthology (Amal Press, 2002), *Searching Jenin*, anthology (Cune Press, 2003), *Seeking Palestine: New Palestinian Writing on Exile*

and Home anthology (2012). 'Abulhawa is also the author of *My Voice Sought in the Wind*, a poetry collection.' (Beyond the Single Story, 2017, Susan Abulhawa, para. 6)

- **Awards**

Susan Abulhawa got many awards like The Leeway Foundation Edna Andrade award for fiction and creative non-fiction, Best Books Award for Historic Fiction, MEMO Palestine Book Award, Barbara Deming Memorial Fund Award, Aspen Words Award Finalist, Arab American Museum Award for Fiction. (People Pill, 2021)

- ***The Blue Between Sky and Water***

Internationally bestselling author Susan Abulhawa's powerful new novel explores the legacy of dispossession across continents and generations. With devastatingly clear-eyed vision of political and personal trauma, *The Blue Between Sky and Water* is the story of flawed yet profoundly courageous women, of separation and heartache, endurance and renewal. (APL, (n.d.), Susan Abulhawa, para. 7)

In her novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, a Palestinian family is exiled after the war in 1948. It depicts what it was like for Palestinians to live in Palestine before the occupation and then in the Gaza Strip during the occupation, with strong and powerful women helping to keep the family together in difficult times. One of these characters is a niece who grows up in foster care in the United States looking for her true home before returning to Palestine. This is similar to Abulhawa's story, as she moved around a lot as a child and lived in an orphanage during her time in East Jerusalem. Abulhawa would also return to Palestine after spending many years in the United States.

Susan Abulhawa's gripping and deeply moving novel tells the story of Palestine after "history arrived". In 1948, the formation of the State of Israel and the subsequent wars wrenched this ancient land apart, sending some Palestinians fleeing for the illusory safety of crowded refugee camps in Gaza and scattering

many others into exile. (Orford, 2015, *The Blue Between Sky and Water* by Susan Abulhawa, book review, para. 1)

In her novel, Susan Abulhawa depicts the plight of Palestinian refugees in exile. It is the story of one of the Palestinian families who witnessed the ugliness of the Zionist occupation and were forcibly displaced from their homes, leaving behind their homes full of stories and memories. Using her creative style and poetic language, Abulhawa tells the story of the Baraka family from Beit Daras, who were displaced and scattered between refugee camps in Gaza and America. It is a story about love, pain, suffering, dispossession, as well as resistance, bravery, and hope.

## **2.6 Summary of the Novel**

The narrative begins in the little Palestinian town of Beit Daras, not far from Gaza, just before the 1948 Nakba. It tells the story of four generations of the Baraka family. The Baraka family comprises of the widow Um Mamdouh, also known as the "mad woman" in Beit Daras, and her three children. Nazmiyeh, the eldest daughter, is a beautiful, powerful, and a responsible young lady who tends for her family. Mariam, her younger sister with mismatched eyes, enjoys reading and writing. Mamdouh, her brother, works as an assistant to the beekeeper of the village.

Nazmiyeh was possibly the prettiest girl in Beit Daras and had a strong personality, but she was also the sassiest and most foul-mouthed. She felt a feeling of duty because she was the one who looked after the family, especially her younger sister Mariam. Despite the news of Zionist gangs' crimes against Palestinians, Nazmiyeh's marriage to Atiyeh, her first love, was one of the happiest days for the Baraka family. However, these good times would not last long, as the Nakba occurred in 1948 and reached the village.

When the State of Israel was declared, the Zionist gangs were committing the most heinous massacres in Palestinian villages. The Zionist occupation forces stormed the village of Beit Daras and set it on fire, families were violently displaced, leaving their homes, lands and belongings behind. While men

remained to resist and defend the village, women went out with their children, traveling miles to Gaza.

While the families were fleeing from Beit Daras under the Israeli bombardment, Nazmiyeh lost her little sister Mariam and when she returned to look for her in Beit Daras, she was caught and raped by the Zionists while they killed Mariam in front of her. Only Mamdouh, Nazmiyeh, and her husband Atiyeh survived and made it to the Gaza refugee camps.

Amidst the harsh living conditions and feelings of loss and nostalgia in the Gaza refugee camps, refugee families attempted to adjust to their new circumstances and rebuild themselves, while dreaming of returning to Beit Daras. Nazmiyeh along with her husband Atiyeh built their big family. Mamdouh, on the other hand, resumed his exile journey to America. Years later, Mamdouh lost his only son, Mhammad, in a traffic accident, and his wife Yasmine died of cancer. Mamdouh now has nothing to link him with America, so he decides to return to Gaza with his only granddaughter Nur, yet, he dies before going back to Gaza.

In America, Nur grows up between orphanages and care homes after her Spanish mother abandoned her and her caring grandfather passed away. Nur loses everything that links her to her original identity, as her grandfather, who always told her about Palestine, no longer exists. Being alone in an alien country, Nur seeks to forge her own path, against all difficulties. She falls in love with a married doctor from Gaza; thus, she decides to follow him to Gaza, and at the same time with the aim to serve her people there as well.

When Gaza was aggressively bombed by the Israeli forces, Nazmiyeh daughter's Alwan loses her husband during the bombing, and her son Khalid falls into a coma-like condition. By chance, Nur happens to get a glimpse of Nazmiyeh and Alwan in an interview; and without knowing that they are her remaining family, she feels an urgent need to travel to Gaza and provide assistance to Khalid as being a psychologist.

Nur comes in Gaza and meets her great-aunt Nazmiyeh, who recognizes Nur as Mamdouh's grandchild because of her mismatched eyes, which resemble Mariam's. Despite the hardships of living in Gaza and the unfamiliar customs, traditions, and culture, Nur discovers something in Gaza that soothes her wounded spirit. Nur was reunited with her family and reconnected with her origins in Gaza.

*The Blue Between Sky and Water* is an intergenerational narrative of a Palestinian family who has been through numerous hardships, including displacement, uprooting, dispossession, and dispersal. It elucidates the exile experience and the human need for family and hometown.

## **2.7 Textual Analysis of the Novel**

*The Blue Between Sky and Water* is one of the famous novels by the Palestinian-American writer Susan Abulhawa. The novel deals with the theme of the Nakba and its effects on Palestinian society. In the novel, Abulhawa spotlights the lives of Palestinians after the 1948 Nakba; its effects on them, and how their lives radically changed after that. She conveys to the readers the full image of how Palestinians were displaced from their lands, how families were scattered, and the lives of exiled Palestinians, whether inside Palestine or outside its borders.

The events center around the Baraka family, who, along with other families, were forced to flee the village of Beit Daras in 1948. The story begins with a description of the life of the Palestinians; especially in the farming village of Beit Daras before the 1948 Nakba, where the Baraka family lived together a happy life, before they had to leave Beit Daras and live as refugees. The writer *Abulhawa* describes these times as the happiest times of the Baraka family, as the following lines indicate:

Those were perhaps the happiest days of the Baraka's lives together. Um Mamdouh was respected, Mamdouh was happy in his job keeping bees, and Nazmiyeh became dreamy, looking prettier than ever. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 21).

These happy times did not last for the Baraka family, nor for the rest of Palestinians. When the establishment of the State of Israel was announced, the Nakba befell the Palestinians like a catastrophe. Suddenly the Palestinians found themselves forced to leave their lands. They were forcibly displaced, leaving behind their homes, lands, and properties, carrying with them their great tragedy. In the novel, the fictional Baraka family is one example of all the Palestinian families who were forcibly displaced, and the village of Beit Daras is one of the hundreds of Palestinian villages that were destroyed during the Nakba.

The events of the Nakba, especially the process of destroying Palestinian villages by the Israeli forces and seizing lands so that the Palestinians would not return; as well as, the issue of forced displacement that occurred during the 1948 Nakba are strongly portrayed by Abulhawa in the novel, as she describes that:

Chaos reigned, perpetuated by more explosions, gratuitous now that Beit Daras was fully consumed by the fog of death and defeat. The villagers who had stayed behind either had been killed or were already fleeing toward Gaza, and the rest were taken prisoner, never to be seen again. Palestinians escaping from other villages converged on one of several main paths to Gaza that passed Beit Daras. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 31).

Overnight, Palestinians found themselves living a refugee situation, moving from one place to another. They left behind their past, their memories, and their possessions. In the novel, Abulhawa focuses on describing the events of the Nakba in the village of Beit Daras and how Baraka family was forcibly expelled along with the rest of the families. The displacement of Palestinians was the first link in the series of sufferings of Palestinians in exile.

Nazmiyeh, the protagonist in the novel, was still a new bride when she was displaced from her home, along with her family, and the rest of Palestinians in Beit Daras. Nazmiyeh had witnessed the massacres committed by the Zionist gangs in her village; the Zionists had raped her and killed her sister, Mariam, in front of her. At that moment, Palestine was also being raped by the Israeli occupation.

Nazmiyeh, after she was enjoying her happy times as a new bride in Beit Daras with her family, became a refugee in the refugee camps in Gaza after losing half of her family; that became victims to the ethnic cleansing by the Zionist gangs. Thus, the fictional character Nazmiyeh is a picture of all the Palestinians who were displaced from their lands during the 1948 Nakba.

It is not possible to talk about or describe the Nakba without mentioning the forced displacement. The forced displacement of Palestinians during the Nakba reshaped the segment of Palestinian society, the effects of which are still evident on Palestinian society to this day. Therefore, we find that the novelist talked about forced displacement in detail, describing the Baraka family as a fictional model for the Palestinian families that were displaced from their villages after the Zionists seized them.

Forced displacement is one of the most crucial features of the Nakba, along with the massacres of the Zionist occupation, of course. The novelist has focused on the issue of displacement that occurred to Palestinians during the Nakba; because displacement is the expulsion of the indigenous people and replacing them with the outsiders that do not belong to the land and claim it to be theirs. The reality of the village of Beit Daras is the reality of all the displaced Palestinian villages. In addition, the 1948 exodus created the issue of the Palestinian refugees and the Palestinian diaspora.

### **2.7.1 Baraka Family as a Reflection of the Palestinian Diaspora**

Life in the refugee camps was never easy for Palestinians, especially during the first months in refugee camps after they were displaced. Life was almost impossible for all the Palestinian refugees. The camps were overcrowded with refugees, Baraka family, like all refugees, had to live with the current situation. In the novel, the following lines describe the condition of the refugee camps in Gaza:

The Refugees moved about, beset by confusion for days. Sufficient tents were not distributed for weeks and people slept on the earth, with stones and insects and animals. Bodies accustomed to hard work and pious habits still awoke

before sunrise, only to be met with the sluggishness of dormant fate that carved up their days into repeating lines and rows. They lined up five times a day for salat. They lined up twice a day for bread and soup. They lined up for communal toilets. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 41).

With the difficult social and economic conditions, many Palestinians set out to other areas, whether to Arab countries or Western countries in search for a better life. After the 1948 Nakba, there was no longer a specific place for Palestinians; just as it is indicated in the novel:

Suddenly homeless refugees after Israel took everything, Palestinians were ripe for both pity and exploitation throughout the Arab world, where the brightest Palestinian minds bore fruit for other nations, and once proud farmers chased the call of bread, becoming desperate workers far from their lands. My great-khalo Mamdouh was swept up in that stream of cheap labor that kept carrying him farther and farther away. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 48).

When Nazmiyeh received a call from her brother Mamdouh, who had traveled to Kuwait to work some time ago, he informed her about his decision to travel to America; because there were more job opportunities and a better life. One of Nazmiyeh's sons had already married and moved to Saudi Arabia; at that point, Nazmiyeh felt that her family was dispersing to different places. This was indeed the same case for Palestine; at a time when Palestine was dispersing, the Zionists were settling Palestine and building their state. As Nazmiyeh thinks:

Rather than returning and regrouping, family were leaving and dispersing. She thought Palestine was scattering farther away at the same time that Israel was moving closer. They confiscated the hills and assembled Jewish-only settler colonies on the most fertile soil. They uprooted indigenous songs, and planted lies in the ground to grow a new story. (Abulhawa, *The Blue between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 59).

Nazmiyeh lost half of her family when the Israeli occupation forces raided the village of Beit Daras. She was forcibly displaced to refugee camps in Gaza, then the

Zionists imprisoned her first son, Mazen, and her other son moved to Saudi Arabia, and now her brother Mamdouh decides to leave for North Carolina, America.

Nazmiyeh, who misses home even while living in Gaza, misses the period before the Nakba, when she was happy with her family. This is the collective memory that Palestinians share. Losing a home is irreparable; people create it in their imagination as a compensatory strategy that helps mitigate the loss. In fact, Nazmiyeh, the fictional character in the novel, is an image of all the tragedies that befell the Palestinians after the 1948 Nakba.

In the novel, Abulhawa spotlights the issue of the Palestinian diaspora by mentioning Nazmiyeh's family, which was scattered in various places. For Nazmiyeh who has witnessed their homeland being lost to the outsiders who do not belong to the land, and now her country is shattering into pieces. From the refugee camps of Gaza, 'the Palestinian Diaspora has been dispersed across the world.' (Zaidan, 2012, p. 21)

As mentioned earlier, the issue of the Palestinian Diaspora is well portrayed by the novelist. As she describes the case of Baraka family, which was dispersed after the 1948 war; in fact, she refers to many Palestinian families who were forcibly displaced and became homeless, and then dispersed. Consequently, these Palestinian groups constitute what is known as the Palestinian Diaspora.

### **2.7.2 The Portrayal of Exile in the Novel**

Moreover, the issue of exile is effectively portrayed in the novel through Mamdouh and his family's experience in America.

Mamdouh moved to America with his wife Yasmine, and there he formed his small family with their only son, Mhammad. Mamdouh found in America the decent life for which he immigrated, but exile in America made him miss something that America could not give him; despite all the financial gains that Mamdouh obtained there. In exile, when Mamdouh obtained the good living, he lost his son Mhammad. As the following lines in the novel indicate:

Exile in America offered a professional career and financial gains that my great-khalo Mamdouh could have only dreamed about anywhere else. “It’s a great country,” he told Yasmine, who was not entirely convinced. But he believed it, even though exile made him a foreigner, permanently out of place, everywhere. Exile took his son, first by extricating the homeland from his heart and trashing the Arabic on his tongue, then by taking his life in a car accident. His only consolation then was that his Yasmine had been spared the pain. (Abulhawa, *The Blue between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 67).

In exile, especially in America, Mamdouh and his family were faced with a new culture and customs completely different from those they had been raised on, in Palestine.

Mamdouh and Yasmine managed to integrate into the American society while preserving their Arabic language, culture and norms. They both represent the concept of integration in Berry's Model of Acculturation, i.e., they preserved their Arabic identity, yet, they opened themselves to the other society.

As for Mhammad, their son, he assimilated into the American society and culture while he neglected his Arabic heritage. Mhammad shunned his Arab name in favor of 'Mike,' a Western moniker. Mhammad, who denied his Arab ancestry, married a Spanish woman who shared none of his religious or cultural beliefs.

Through his dialogue with his mother Yasmine, who was trying to convince him of his Arab identity and to give his future daughter an Arabic name, Mhammad rejected everything that links him to his Arab origins, including the Arabic name.

“Mama, you know I like to be called Mike.”

“Mhammad is your name because I’m your mother and that’s what I named you. Where did we go wrong? You deny your identity and marry a woman who looks down on us like we’re filth. Straighten up, boy!”(Abulhawa, *The Blue between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 67).

The fictional character Mhammad, therefore, represents another type of characters in exile, who rejects his original identity and embraces the identity and culture of the host country.

In exile, people often find themselves facing a culture different from their own, and this is one of the challenges of exile. This is where the differences in exiles' reactions to the host country's culture emerge. While some people keep their roots and integrate into the host country's society, others reject their roots and adapt into the host country's culture.

Abulhawa, being born in exile, she had raised the issue of acculturation in the novel because she herself has experienced such a challenge. Thus, in the novel, there is a great reference to some challenges in exile, including the issue of culture.

### **2.7.3 The Character of 'Nur' as a Representative of Exile**

Nur, the protagonist of the novel, is the granddaughter of Mamdouh and was born and raised in America; thus, she is an essential character who strongly personifies exile. After she lost her father, Mhammad, in a traffic accident, her grandfather, Mamdouh, sponsored her; who was very keen to teach her everything about Palestine so that she would not lose her ties to her homeland. As it is explained in the novel:

Her grandfather wanted to tell her that story and a thousand more from Beit Daras, again and again, and her curiosity pleased him. He wanted her to know and never forget the place that burned in his heart. He also insisted that they only speak in Arabic. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 65).

Mamdouh, like the rest of the Palestinians living in exile, has always had strong recollections of their country. They recall their childhood experiences in their homeland to soothe themselves and to combat feelings of melancholy and nostalgia. They continue to tell their children and grandchildren stories about Palestine so that future generations would be connected to their country and original identity. 'The maintenance of Palestinian identity and attachment to the homeland has remained

central to the generation that experienced al Nakba (al Nakba generation), and the generations born into exile.' (Zaidan, 2012, p. 11)

Abulhawa's work is colored by a pang of longing for a lost home, as she has often emphasized this problem in her books since she has personally experienced such anguish in her life, which she is downpouring in her works via various characters in various scenarios.

Importantly, Nur represents the category of Palestinians who were born in exile; who have not visited Palestine before, but are familiar with Palestine from their grandparents' stories. 'Generations who were born in exile have become familiar to their lost homes and towns through vivid descriptions of memories behind by their parents and grandparents. For members of these generations their relationship to, and familiarity with, the homeland has been passed on for the most part through "acts of memory"' (Khalidi, 1997, p. 153).

While Nur was living with her grandfather's care, she would not feel alienated, or the fact that she was a Palestinian in exile. For Nur, her grandfather Mamdouh was not only her family; but her homeland. However, before Mamdouh could return to Gaza with Nur, he died in America.

For Nur, the death of her grandfather Mamdouh means the disappearance of the ties that link her to Palestine. As is the case with Palestinians born in exile, 'they consider that family means homeland and family represents the ties and the attachment they have to the country of their ancestors.' (Zaidan, 2012, p. 39)

The condition of Nur after the death of her grandfather is very similar to that of the Palestinians who were displaced from their land during the 1948 Nakba. For Nur, her grandfather Mamdouh was the homeland; after the homeland disappeared, Nur became without a place, living in a state of instability and insecurity in orphanages. In this way, Palestinians were exiled to various places, living in a state of instability.

Nur, who was born and raised in America and had lost everything that connected her to or reminded her of her Palestinian-Arab identity, belonged to the category of Palestinians who, although being Palestinians by birth, are separated from their homeland, culture, and legacy due to displacement. As the following lines in the novel explains:

History took us away from our rightful destiny. But with Nur, life hurled her so far that nothing around her resembled anything Palestinian, not even the dislocated lives of exiles. So it was ironic that her life reflected the most basic truth of what it means to be Palestinian, dispossessed, disinherited, and exiled. That to be alone in the world without a family or a clan or land or country means that one must live at the mercy of others. There are those who might take pity and those who will exploit and harm. One lives by the whims of the host, rarely treated with the dignity of a person, nearly always put in place. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 84).

The fictional character Nur is a reflection of many Palestinians living in exile, being displaced, disinherited, and living away from their families and homeland. Abulhawa herself is an excellent example of such individuals, but Palestine still exists in the hearts of many others, and they are always willing to serve their homeland.

#### **2.7.4 Nur's Experience of Exile**

Nur embodies what it means to be born in exile, apart from one's family and nation. Despite the fact that Nur's grandfather Mamdouh died when she was a child, and his image began to fade in Nur's memory, Nur's persistent sense of insecurity in exile did not disappear; rather, it grew with her over time. Nur no longer felt stable or comfortable in exile, and she was continually losing something she did not recognize, as she herself describes her feeling in the novel:

“That’s kinda how I feel, Nzinga. Like there’s nothing holding me together. Like I’m just made up of a bunch of pieces from different places and it’s all taped together and is gonna rip apart if I move too hard or talk too loud or something,” Nur said. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 96).

Nur's own experience in exile and the feeling of being shattered into pieces is, in fact, the experience of everyone who has lived in exile. As Edward Said says in his essay, *Reflection on Exile*:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. (2001, p. 137)

The tragedy of exile is not only limited to the fact that the exiled was forced to live outside his homeland, but goes beyond that. Those living in exile are forced to live with their memories. The exiled one lives in two worlds, in which he does not see a real world; the world imposed on him far from his homeland, and another world far from him. Like Nur, she sees herself as made of different pieces from different places. She doesn't realize what she deeply misses or what makes her feel that way.

Although Nur gained the conditions of a decent life in America, in terms of education, health, and security, there has been always that missing piece for her. As Abulhawa explains in the novel:

Nur had everything we wanted. We thought all Americans did. But for all the security and freedom and opportunity she had; for all the learning and good grades; for all the ways she excelled, Nur was the most devastated person we knew. There was no place in the world for her to be. She could be tolerated, maybe even accepted, as long as she was good. But when she wasn't, she was sent away, abandoned. So she was always trying to be good, submissive, and she panicked when someone got upset with her. Life burrowed holes and tunnels in her. It filled her with an immense silence that grew teeth and claws that cut her from the inside. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 93).

The missing piece for Nur, according to her own sense, was family and the sense of security and stability. The stories that the grandfather Mamdouh used to tell Nur about Palestine and their family in Beit Daras and Gaza still have a place in Nur's memory. When Nur fell in love with a married doctor from Gaza, whom she later

abandoned, she decided to follow him to Gaza, and also to serve her people there; to help Nazmiyeh's grandson Khalid.

In Gaza, Nur met her family for the first time, her aunt Nazmiyeh, who recognized her through her mismatched eyes, like those of Mariam. She finally would meet what she had been searching for throughout her years in America. She was able to find her roots and origins. Despite the difficult life in Gaza, Nur decided to stay in Gaza surrounded by her family, who filled her with warmth and love that she had always missed. As the following lines in the novel explain:

Nur came every day and stayed longer than she needed to. She thought she was keeping a promise. Doing something good. Helping. She was, of course, but only by coincidence. She came to bathe in the cramped bustle of family and neighbors. She came to watch life up close, to rub her soul raw with the rhythms of our families. The warm mist of our lives condensed on the cold dry surface of Nur and she sopped it all up. That's why she came, for the dew of family caught on her skin. (Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, 2015, p. 166).

As for Palestinians, 'The loss of their homeland, partially in 1948 and completely in 1967, led to the dispersal of the Palestinian people, including the separation of family members. This geographical separation in many families involves more than four countries in the Arab world, North America, Latin America, Australia, and Europe. Despite this geographical dispersal, or maybe because of it, the emotional bonds between Palestinian family members remain strong and Palestinians are significantly connected to their families.' (Zaidan, 2012, p. 39)

The novel is about the story of the exiled Palestinians who were expelled from their lands during the 1948 Nakba. They left their lands, leaving behind their homes, possessions, and memories. The Baraka family is a fine example of all the Palestinian families that have been dispersed into various places.

In the novel, there are many topics raised by the writer, including the issue of displacement and the Palestinian Diaspora. However, the exile took a large part of the novel, so we find references to many issues related to exile; including all the

forms of suffering such as the constant feeling of alienation, in addition to the challenges faced by the exiled people. Abulhawa herself was born to a refugee family who were displaced from Palestine during the 1967 war; no doubt, she is very familiar with the experience and challenges of exile. Thus, the Palestinian exile is portrayed so realistically in the novel, that the reader can understand the exile and the suffering of the exiled Palestinians. 'It is through Nur's heart-breaking story that Abulhawa tells of the invisible psychic scars of exiled Palestinians who are torn from family and ancestral home.' (Orford, 2015, para. 4)

With her great narrative technique and poetic style, Abulhawa described the incidents and the characters in the novel very realistically. She was able to move between the events of the novel while maintaining the reader's interest and enthusiasm. Margie Orford comments on her narrative technique and characterization of women characters:

Abulhawa's prose is luminous; her control of a complex weaving of narrative voices – young and old, male and female, magical and real – is masterful. The novel provides an intimate close-up of the women of Gaza and of the everyday heroism amid relentless loss. There are men in this novel, of course, beloved husbands, exiled fathers, jailed sons, but it is the sustaining power of sisters, mothers, wives and daughters that carries the narrative. (2015, para. 3)

*The Blue Between Sky and Water* is a story about the Palestinian diaspora, the reality of displacement, and the exiled Palestinians. It is a multigenerational story about the Baraka family. Nazmiyeh, the eldest daughter, lived through the Nakba and observed all of the horrible events that the Palestinians experienced, such as displacement, exile, and life in refugee camps. Nur, the granddaughter of Nazmiyeh's brother, on the other hand, has endured the experience of exile and the meaning of instability distant from her hometown. The work has several references to exile, the Palestinian diaspora, and displacement.

The Palestinian-American novelist Susan Abulhawa wrote her novel from the heart of suffering, and made her creativity in describing all the mixed and intense feelings, explaining the story of the exodus and the Nakba of loss and exile, images

of terrorism, the misery and sorrows of refugees, refugee camps and their conditions.

Forced displacement, mass deportation, and the description of the conditions of Palestinians after the Nakba are among the issues addressed by the author, especially when she addressed presenting the Nakba and its occurrences, as well as the ramifications for Palestine in general. The Palestinian-American novelist Abulhawa realizes the depth of the tragedy, so she worked in her creativity to draw a map of her land and her homeland through her novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water*.

The novelist did not neglect a single spot, regardless of its size or importance, in an attempt to stand in the face of the Israeli practices that seek to impose the policy of ignorance and Judaization, and to cut the roots of the Palestinians to their land, as she attempts to establish the features of the homeland and Palestinian identity so that the memory remains alive.

The modern Palestinian experience is cruel and unforgiving; no Palestinian can escape its grip, or a writer can avoid it. It is an unforgettable experience. Whether the Palestinians are in the territories occupied in 1948, the West Bank and Gaza, or in the diaspora, they are obliged, by virtue of their Palestinian identity, to live a life governed by events and circumstances stemming from the loss of their homeland.

In fact, the theme of the Nakba takes up a large part of Palestinian literary works due to the significance of the event; it is a turning point in the history of Palestine. Hence, the Palestinian Nakba carries with it many positions that can turn into a tragic vision on the one hand, and a heroic vision on the other hand of the positions of resistance, hope, and belief in the victory of justice in the end.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The Baraka family is a picture of the Palestinian families who were enjoying a quiet and happy life together before the tragedy of the 1945 Nakba. They were forcibly displaced from their lands, leaving behind their homes possessions, and taking with them their memories. On the one hand, the protagonist Nazmiyeh is the image of all

Palestinians who were displaced from their lands and witnessed their families being scattered into various places. On the Other hand, the second protagonist Nur represents the Palestinian exile, and the reality of Palestinians' life in exile; full of challenges and suffering. *The Blue Between Sky and Water* is a realistic novel in every sense, carrying many facts and themes between its lines.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

The date of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1948, known as the "Nakba" day for Palestinians, was nothing but a translation of the many years that preceded it of Zionist and British planning to expel Palestinians from their land and establish the Israeli state on it. Besides, the Israeli occupation is still one of the cruellest occupations known to the Palestinians, particularly as it seeks to ethnically cleanse Palestine from every Palestinian Arab.

The idea of ethnic cleansing emerged with the rise of Zionism, which transformed it into a strategy utilized by Zionists during the 1948 war to commit the most horrific massacres against the Palestinians, and to terrorize and push them to flee from their lands.

For many years, Palestinians have been subjected to persecution, torture, displacement, and the looting of their lands. As well as, the ongoing Jewish immigration to their homeland; which was organized by the Zionist movement and supported by Britain, in order to establish a Jewish State on the territory of Palestine.

When we talk about the Nakba, we refer to the terrible disaster that befell the Palestinians, leaving them ejected from their homeland, exiled, and scattered around the world. In other terms, the Nakba is the collapse of Palestinian society.

Although the Nakba has not ended yet, Palestinians are still subjected to forced displacement, demolition of their homes, and confiscation of their lands. The Palestinian people still suffer from the diaspora and the challenges of exile, especially for the exiles outside the borders of Palestine.

It is not easy to convey the suffering of Palestinians, whether in the refugee camps, the occupied territories, or even the difficulties facing the Palestinians in exile. Here lies the importance of literature, as it is the mirror of society. It presents people's lives and experiences; thus, people always need to express and describe their feelings, struggles, and sufferings. In this Context, The Palestinian-American

novelist Susan Abulhawa, in her novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, demonstrates the reality of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Using *The Blue Between Sky and Water* as a case study, this research has endeavoured to promote the successful portrayal of Palestinian exile and diaspora. Born into a refugee family, the Palestinian-American writer Susan Abulhawa is familiar with the reality of exile and the challenges and suffering faced by anyone in exile. She has endeavoured to portray the lives of Palestinian families before and after the Nakba in a very realistic way. In her brilliant and realistic narrative style, Abulhawa deals with two parallel stories; the suffering of Palestinians in the refugee camps in Gaza and the challenges of exile in America.

The Palestinian Baraka family in the novel *The Blue Between Sky and Water* is a picture of all Palestinians. The fictional character Nazmiyeh who witnessed the Nakba and was forcibly displaced from her village while losing half of her family, then settled in refugee camps in Gaza and then witnessed the disintegration of her remaining family and scattered in other countries, is, in fact, a reflection of Palestinian families after the 1948 Nakba. On the other hand, the fictional character Nur represents exile, in general, and the Palestinian experience in exile in particular. Nur, who lost her roots at an early age, finds herself in a foreign country the challenges of exile.

The Nakba has become a key event in the history of Palestine. It carries with it many positions that serve a literary theme: the massacres committed, endless uprooting of the roots, the humiliation suffered by the Palestinian refugees continues to increase in the rest of the world, and their miserable condition as a people without a homeland.

Last but not least, no one can live another person's experiences and feel everything they are going through. Therefore, the best possible alternative to get closer to the truth is to look at Palestinian literary works. Therefore, literature comes as a mirror that reflects the lives of others, their experiences and feelings. In this context, I suggest the complete literary works of the same writer, Suzan Abulhawa,

Ghassan Al-Kanafani and many Palestinian writers who have taken it upon themselves to convey the truth with their pens.

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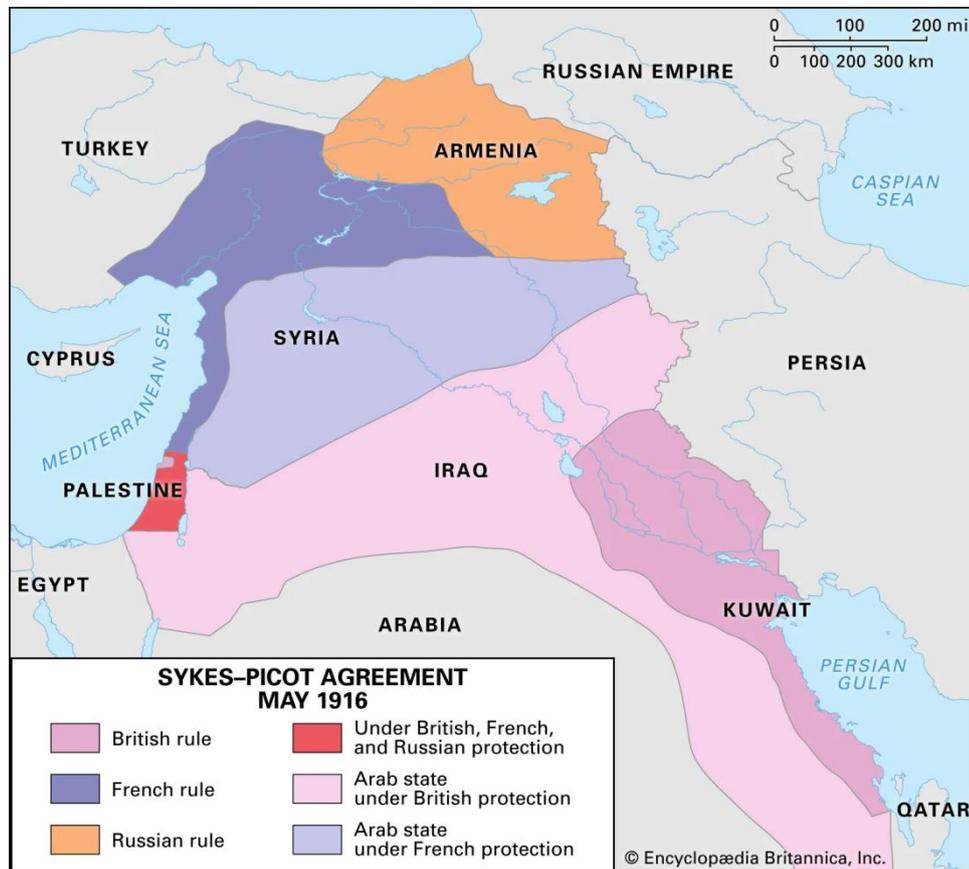
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## List of Appendices

### Appendix A

Map of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.



Retrieved June 12, 2022 from

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement/images-videos>

## Appendix B

The original letter from Balfour to Rothschild.

Foreign Office,

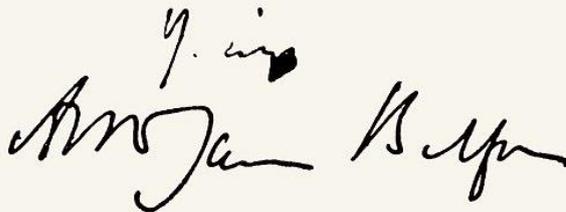
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

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

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

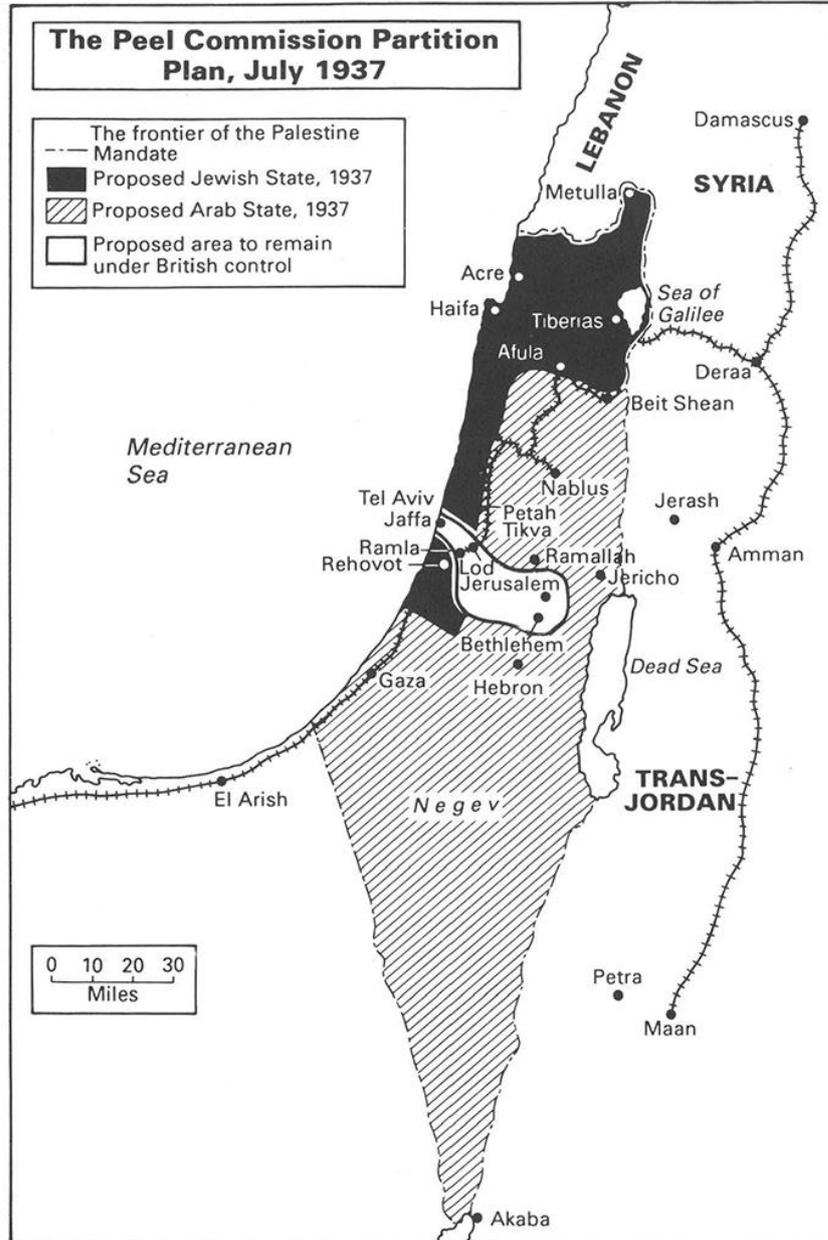
A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "A. J. Balfour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "J".

Retrieved June 12, 2022 from

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour\\_Declaration#/media/File:Balfour\\_declaration\\_unmarked.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration#/media/File:Balfour_declaration_unmarked.jpg)

# Appendix C

## The Peel Commission Partition Plan, July 1937.



Retrieved June 12, 2022 from

<https://www.manchesterhive.com/view/9781526123688/9781526123688.00010.xml>



## Appendix E

Deir Yassin Massacre.



Retrieved June 12, 2022 from

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/remembering-the-massacre-at-deir-yassin-74-years-later/>

## Appendix F

Palestinians expelled from their homes.



Retrieved June 12, 2022 from

<https://www.leftvoice.org/seven-decades-after-the-nakba-palestinians-continue-to-experience-displacement-and-dispossession/>

## Summary:

Palestinians in exile are an important part of the Palestinian diaspora community. They are a marginalized group, who do not receive much attention or consideration of their suffering and the challenges they face. The portrayal of exile and the Palestinian Diaspora is rarely accurate unless the writer recognises the realities of life in exile. This research aims to shed light on such works as *The Blue Between Sky and Water* by Susan Abulhawa. The novel is a multi-generational saga of a Palestinian family who had been forcibly displaced from their homeland during the Nakba. The main purpose of this research is to study how Abulhawa depicts the Palestinian exile, diaspora, and displacement through the novel.

**Keywords :** Palestine, Nakba, Palestinian Exile, Palestinian Diaspora, Displacement, Refugees.

## Résumé :

Les Palestiniens en exil constituent une partie importante de la communauté de la diaspora palestinienne. Il s'agit d'un groupe marginalisé, qui ne reçoit pas beaucoup d'attention ou de considération pour sa souffrance et les défis auxquels il est confronté. La représentation de l'exil et de la diaspora palestinienne est rarement exacte à moins que l'auteur ne reconnaisse les réalités de la vie en exil. Cette recherche vise à faire la lumière sur des œuvres telles que *Le bleu entre ciel et eau* de Susan Abulhawa. Le roman est une saga multigénérationnelle d'une famille palestinienne qui avait été déplacée de force de sa patrie pendant la Nakba. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'étudier comment Abulhawa dépeint l'exil palestinien, la diaspora et le déplacement à travers le roman.

**Mots clés :** Palestine, Nakba, Exil palestinien, Diaspora palestinienne, Déplacement, Réfugiés.

## ملخص:

يشكل الفلسطينيون في المنفى جزءاً مهماً من مجتمع الشتات الفلسطيني. إنهم فئة مهمشة لا تحظى بالكثير من الاهتمام أو الاعتبار لمعاناتهم والتحديات التي يواجهونها. نادرًا ما يكون تصوير المنفى والشتات الفلسطيني دقيقًا ما لم يدرك الكاتب واقع الحياة في المنفى. يهدف هذا البحث إلى إلقاء الضوء على أعمال مثل "الأزرق بين السماء والماء" لسوزان أبو الهوى. الرواية هي قصة متعددة الأجيال لعائلة فلسطينية نزحت قسرًا عن وطنها خلال النكبة. الغرض الأساسي من هذا البحث هو دراسة كيف يصور أبو الهوى المنفى والشتات والتهجير الفلسطيني من خلال الرواية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** فلسطين ، النكبة ، المنفى الفلسطيني ، الشتات الفلسطيني ، التهجير ، اللاجئين.