



The Role of Rocks in Defining the Characters in Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* (2019)

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Abstract: The current study looks at the metaphors for rocks in Isabella Hammad's novel *The Parisian* (2019). It seeks to demonstrate how Isabella Hammad employs rock analogies to describe and provide an understanding into her characters, Midhat, Jamil, and Fatima. Midhat, who studied abroad, has a hyphenated identity and is portrayed as a compromise—less resistant, delicate, and adaptable. The inverse of the properties of the rocks/stones. The other characters who have not fled Palestine, such as Fatima and Jamil, are portrayed as more strong, resilient, and unstoppable. Their characteristics are described as rocks or stones. Hammad compares Midhat's personality and qualities to those of other characters, such as Fatima and Jamil, using rock and stone metaphors. The work is examined through the prism of postcolonialism, specifically Edward Said's views on Orientalism. Hammad describes the characters using metaphors such as rocks and stones. According to the investigation, Jamil and Fatima's traits reflect those of stones and rocks. Midhat, on the other hand, has certain features that are diametrically opposed to those of stones and rocks. Hammad deliberately portrays Midhat in this manner to highlight the contrast between Palestinians who abandon their territory and indigenous who remain on their land, participate in revolts, and protect their homeland. To the researcher's knowledge, there have been few studies that evaluate and discuss Isabella Hammad's literary works, particularly her novel *The Parisian* (2019).

Keywords: Hammad, Identity, Isabella, Palestine Literature, Rocks, Isabella Hammad, *The Parisian*

1. Introduction

The continuing political issues that occur in Palestine and the conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians have been the focus of many critics, scholars, and authors. These issues and conflicts have been told from different perspectives and points of view. Palestinians are victims who are tortured in their own homeland and, simultaneously, are also victims of the stereotypical images that have been circulated, which present them as violent and aggressive people. These stereotypical images of the Palestinians have been enhanced by the common stereotypical images of Arabs by the rest of the world. This may have helped denigrate the real image of a nation and its people living under occupation. Edward Said (1978) explored these stereotypical images in his work *Orientalism*. Said (1978) discusses how the West (*Occident*) perceives the 'Orient,' a term that also happened to be created by the West (p. 13). The West has circulated the stereotypical images they created about the Arabs since 11 September 2001. They were labelled 'violent' and 'terrorists.' On the other hand, the West portrayed itself as 'rational' (Gana 2008, pp. 19 & 20). These writers try to join, according to Salhi & Netton (2006), the two cultures, the Western and the Eastern.

Hassan (2011) discusses the impact of Said's ideology on Arab writers, especially those who are immigrants, and the role they have played in transforming and delivering the true image of Arabs to the world. Gana (2008) also added that Arab writers adopted the mission to write against the image of the Arabs and their stereotypes. Al-Maleh (2009) commented on the same point, stating that Arab writers in the diaspora discuss the issues related to Arabs in the West and East that are caused by the West. As a consequence, authors and writers started to produce writings that present actual narratives about Arabs and, in the current case, Palestinians. One writer who has focused on representing Palestinians in her writings is Isabella Hammad. Hammad uses rocks as metaphors to represent Palestinian characters in her novel *The Parisian* (2019). In a recent interview, Hammad stated that, throughout history, Palestinians have been silenced and suppressed both nationally and internationally. Hammad also adds that there is still much caution about Palestine and that people in the West are still subjective about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. paragraph (Riaz 2021).

Hammad also states in the interview that she is trying to introduce the real Palestine to the world. She does this by using rock-and-stone metaphors to give full insight into the identity of her characters in the novel. One of the characters, Midhat,

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who leaves Nablus to study in France, has a hyphenated identity. He is represented in the novel as a compromise, less resistant, fragile, and more malleable than the other characters. On the other hand, other characters who have not left Palestine, such as Fatima and Jamil, are represented as more solid, more resistant, and inexorable. Hammad tries to represent Midhat's personality and characteristics by comparing him to other characters, such as Fatima and Jamil, through rock metaphors. To the researcher's knowledge, there has been a shortage of studies that analyse and tackle Hammad's literary works, especially with regard to his novel *The Parisian* (2019). The significance of the current study is that it discusses the way rock metaphors are used, which in itself has its own importance in Palestinian history. The significance also lies in the way the writer uses rocks and stones to define Midhat by comparing him to the other characters in the novel, notably Jamil and Fatima. Hammad also tries to show how Midhat's characteristics are so different from how rocks and stones are characterised, while Jamil and Fatima have the same characteristics as stones and rocks. These characteristics are given to the characters based on whether they leave Palestine, or stay, and get exposed to the conflicts there.

Like Hammad, many writers and authors such as Kanafani, Darwish, and Mansour have tried to represent the factual issues happening in Palestine. These writers try to reflect on the trauma of occupation and its impact on the Palestinians. In an article titled *Cultures of Resistance in Palestine and Beyond: On the Politics of Art, Aesthetics, and Affect*, Salih and Richter-Devroe (2011) present the revolutionary period between the 1960s and 1970s. This period has been presented in Kanafani's literature, Darwish's poems, and Mansour's paintings as well. They highlight what these authors call the 'classical' forms of Palestinian art. Salih and Richter-Devroe (2011) declare that these authors try to reflect the issues that Palestinians face in their own land, their suffering, and the trauma of their exile when they were forced to move to other lands. This shows how politics is presented in art and its relationship to it.

Although much literature has been produced on topics related to Palestine, the credit for introducing this type of literature to the modern world goes to Kanafani. Kanafani was the first to coin the concept of 'resistance literature' in 1968. Arab writers, especially Palestinians, have reached the point that they need to reflect their resistance to the occupation of Palestine in their literature (Mir 2013). One of the main genres of literature that appeared to reflect the Palestinian situation and the suffering of its people is poetry. This type of poetry is called 'Poetry of Resistance', which was produced by Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al Qasim. They tried to 'articulate a conscious identity out of the oppression they experienced since 1948' (Mir 2013, p. 110). They also highlighted the concepts of 'history, nationalism, and the role of literature in the liberation struggle' (Mir 2013, p. 110). Al-Asad (1957) reviewed the literary works that emerged in Palestine from the 19th century until the end of the 1950s. He states that these works included love poetry, historical and religious essays, educational textbooks, and translations (p. 128). They also focused more on the translation of novels, short stories, and literary criticism, from Arabic to other languages, and vice versa, to enhance the communication between the East and the West. Their focus on poetry was more successful than fiction in the twentieth century compared to the other Arabs (Mir 2013). According to Jabra (1971), their poetry and fiction then reflected 'national resistance' and mainly about the themes of 'freedom, anxiety, protest, struggle, social progress, individual salvation, rebellion [and] heroism' (p. 19). They aimed to inspire the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel.

Palestinians in the diaspora also wrote about the same themes under the title of resistance. Fawaz Turki (1972) is a Palestinian living in Lebanon. Turki (1972) differentiates between the perspective of the writers who stayed in Palestine and those who were forced to leave it. As an example, he discusses the life of a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon from a psychological point of view. He states that what he witnessed "ravaged the law and the order of the reality that we saw around us. It defeated some of us. It reduced, distorted, and alienated others" (pp. 8-9). He describes himself as a refugee who was 'robbed of [his] sense of purpose and sense of worth as a human being' (p. 15).

Ahmed (1989) declared that Kanafani was the first to introduce Palestinian literature to the modern era. This resulted from the fact that Kanafani himself had experienced the life of Palestinians from the British mandate of 1920 to the June War of 1967. In a book titled *The Rhetoric of Violence: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Contemporary Palestinian Literature and Film*, Abdel-Malek (2005) states that there are many literary works and autobiographies written and produced by Palestinians, and other Arab writers that deal with Israeli Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Abdel-Malek (2005) added that Najib Mahfuz, an Egyptian novelist, does not have one single literary work that does not mention this conflict and has at least one Israeli or Palestinian character in it. Kamal (2005) continues by saying that the Palestinian literature contains many works that present encounters between Arabs and Jews. Some of these works are written from the perspectives of the Jews, and some are written from the perspective of the Palestinians and even other Arab writers (Abdel-Malek, 2005). According to Abdel-Malek (2005), the literary works that are presented or told from the perspective of Jews or any writer who is empathetic to the Israeli occupation of Palestine present the Palestinians as violent and resistant (Abdel-Malek, 2005). This can be linked to the stereotypical images that are already known about Arabs. The Palestinian resistance was and is still thought of by the world as violence and reflects terrorism rather than thinking of this resistance as a kind of defence and protection of their land.

The resistance of Palestinians began from the Intifada, during which Farag (2016) presents an overview, linking it to literary studies. After Nakba, the Palestinians felt uneasy, exiled, and occupied because they were all these things as a result of the occupation and colonisation of their lands. The first Intifada started in 1987 and is

considered 'a place of pride in modern Palestinian consciousness' (Frag 2016, p. 137). It was considered the beginning of the Palestinian resistance to Israeli authority over their lands. It started with violent strikes, public demonstrations, and confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians. However, these confrontations were between heavily armed Israelis and Palestinian youth with their bare rocks and stones. Although the arsenal of each party is not balanced, the Israelis are still vulnerable, leading to the beating and physical abuse of the Palestinians by the Israelis (Frag, 2016).

All this violence towards the Palestinians awakened these writers and authors. As a result, studies of this conflict and its consequences on natives and their land began to increase. Added to that is the increase in the literary studies that emerged, reflecting the suffering of these Palestinians in their own home country. According to Frag (2016), the tensions created between Israelis and Palestinians were the reason for the increase in research that reflected these tensions. The focus of the research is more on children and their role in the Intifada and in the Resistance Movement (Frag 2016). The Palestinian literary and artistic production was the reason for the spread of awareness of the conflicts in Palestine (Frag, 2016). This spread of awareness is part of the resistance movement, and since resistance can take many forms, one path of resistance is through research and literature. One of the writers who helped spread this awareness is Kanafani. In his literary works, Kanafani also reflected on the issues that resulted from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ahmed (1974) states that the short stories of Kanafani link the readers to the history of Palestine and their suffering in their own lands. Kanafani describes the natives of Palestine as helpless against the occupation, and the only thing they can do is to resist and not surrender to the governmental decisions. Khalifeh (1941), a fiction writer, reflects on the effect of the occupation on the Palestinians in *Wild Thorns* and their land after 1967. In her novel, according to Mahdi (2022), Khalifeh explores 'the difficulties of self-identification and self-displacement in the homeland' and 'how the political and social factors associated with colonial rule prevent people from forming their sense of identity' (p. 2).

Israelis, on the other hand, tried to spread the idea that Palestinians have no right to resist and defend themselves since they are perceived and labelled by Israelis as terrorists. According to Mahmoud (2016), Israeli propaganda that presents Palestinian resistance has become synonymous with violence and terrorism instead of showing the resistance for what it truly is - people fighting for their own lands. Zionist colonialization has been rejected and resisted since the 1920s and 1930s. People have also revolted against the Jews and their conflict with other Arab countries such as Egypt. Ahmed (1974) stated that Arabs fought against Zionist colonisation during the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, the Jewish occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip in 1956 was a result of the conflict between Israelis and Egyptians when the coloniser Israel was attacked by guerrilla groups called the *Fedayeen*. Meanwhile, Israel has also started many attacks on Palestinians. In this case, the resistance could be seen from two sides by the world. The Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and the resistance of Israel to letting go of the land they occupied. These two faces of the conflict were constantly debated in the mentality of people. According to Foucault, '[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault 1978, pp. 95-96).

On the same issue, Mahmoud (2016) declares that the loss of human rights in Palestine and the Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians were and are still reflected in literary studies in different literary genres, such as novels, novellas, poetry, theatrical performances, cartoons, and films. These voices are part of resisting the conflict in Palestine, such as the voices of Kanafani, Elmusa, al-Ali and Abu Assad, and also non-Palestinians like the Egyptian-Italian novelist Randa Ghazy and others. Michael (2007) discusses the poems of Darwish and how they reflect their and other Palestinian feelings of being exiled from their own homeland before 1970 due to the Israeli regime.

Mahmoud (2016) lists how Israel not only controlled the people of Palestine by arresting them for no logical reason, torturing them inside their prisons claiming that they are terrorists and even victimising and arresting their children; however, it has also manipulated Palestine's natural resources. O'Byrne talks about the Israeli government, which practices the torture of Palestinians and labels them terrorists (O'Byrne cited in Mahmoud 2016). Matta and Rojas (2016) justify the adopted terror by Palestinians because for them it is the only way they could combat the regime of Israel. This terror by Palestinians 'was governed by dual-arena strategic logic' (Matta and Rojas 2016, p. 66). Suicide-adopted terror was the most effective means in the conflict with Israel, especially during the second, or Al-Aqsa, Intifada of Hamas' paramilitary wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, which included the Fateh-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (Matta and Rojas 2016). Only this was able to threaten the Israeli government.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The current study aims to

- Explore the metaphors of rocks and stones in Isabella Hammad's novel *The Parisian* (2019).
- Show how Isabella Hammad uses the metaphors of rocks and stones to define and give insight into her characters; Midhat, Jamil, and Fatima.
- Show how Midhat, who studied abroad, has a hyphenated identity and is represented as a compromise, less resistant, fragile, and malleable. The opposite of the qualities of the rocks/stones.
- depict how the characters who have not left Palestine, such as Fatima and Jamil, are represented as more solid, more resistant and inexorable. They are described as rocks or stones.

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Studies on the Use of Symbols and Metaphors in Palestinian Literature

Aesthetics and the natural world have been used as symbols by many writers when reflecting the suffering of Palestinians in their resistance to the Israeli occupation. Some of these themes of continuity and change in the lands of Palestine have been investigated by Wagstaff and Bowman (1999). In fact, Wagstaff and Bowman (1999) state that land is a direct reflection and repetition of the people living within it. He goes even further with the idea declaring that land is closely tied to the identity of people who dwell upon it. He adds: "Identity terms come into usage at the instant one comes to feel for some reason that they stand in for a being or an entity one has to fight to defend" (Wagstaff and Bowman 1999, p. 55). Such is the case with Palestine and the Palestinian people.

A study by Awad and Zuhair (2017) titled 'Hideous Hydropolitics in Darraj's *A Curious Land*' presents the role of water as an aesthetic element in the novel and how it is used as a 'contextual symbol in literature.' Awad and Zuhair (2017) explore how Darraj has presented water as a means to transfer certain themes and ideas related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Water, according to Yousef and Zuhair, explains the attacks on Israel on Palestine and the Arab regions, and at the same time, it has significant connotations for the Palestinians as rejuvenation, resistance, and rootedness.

2.2. Studies on the Use of Rocks and Stones as a Symbol of Resistance in Palestinian Literature

Other studies have investigated other aesthetic elements, including rocks and stones. An example is the research of Adams (2016) that investigates how the word 'stone' can be used to symbolise 'death' or 'the absence of life.' However, when it comes to Palestinian literature, the words 'rock' and 'stone' take on a whole new symbolic, yet very significant meaning, since it has been the Palestinian weapon of choice since the first Intifada. Palestinian children and youth carry stones and rocks against the weapons and machines of the Israelis. This has led many writers to produce literary works that feature children as heroes along with literature that reflects the throwing of stones by the occupied.

Going back to Kanafani, the one who first presented Palestinian literature to the modern world, he wrote a collection of short stories that are set between 1936 and 1967 titled *Palestine's Children*. Each story has a child character that the whole story revolves around. The child in each story is a victim of Israeli authority and mistreatment. The stories reflect the role of these children in resisting the Israeli abuse that is inflicted on these children and their families. The narratives show how these young children are struggling and finding their path of resistance to a better future without the Israeli occupation of their own home country (Ahmed 1974, pp. 12 - 13). From the previous example, it is easy to notice how Palestinian children and how they suffer from being mistreated, how they are detached from their families, and how they are forced to resist this by participating in stone-throwing have been presented to the world through literature.

Pressman (2015) explores stone-throwing during the Intifada as a main tactic against the Israelis, stating that it could be considered unarmed violence. Pressman (2015) continues by saying that Israelis and Palestinians differed in perceiving and framing stone-throwing. This difference is in the way stone throwing occurred and is perceived to occur not just among Palestinians and Israelis, but also among other critics, scholars, and even the general public. Some considered it a natural response for unarmed people, who were overpowered by the power of Israeli weapons and violence, to pick up stones and fight back. It was their only choice and method to defend themselves and their land. As an example, Pearlman (2012), in *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement*, discusses how throwing stones by Palestinians is a natural response in which their intention is not to harm others or cause any injury. Instead, it is used to defend themselves. Pearlman (2012) differentiates between violent and non-violent acts, saying that "violent protest entails the exertion of physical force for the purpose of damaging, abusing, killing, or destroying. Non-violent protest does not involve physical force" (p. 3). From what Pearlman presents, it could be noticed that by stating the words 'for the purpose of,' Pearlman meant that the Palestinians imposing the Intifada 'was not without shows of physical force' (p. 3). Some critics have related the word "violence" to different cultures, saying that the definition of the word varies according to each culture. Ralph (2012) and Tilly (1978) argue that the term violence could refer to different acts, which may vary according to the culture and even to the people related to this culture.

The Al-Intifada was specifically related and linked to stones, especially thrown by children. According to Kimmerling and Migdal (1994), the weapons and machines of Israelis were threatened and attacked by the stones of the children. Hasian and Flores (1997) also add that even Yaser Arafat threatened the occupiers with stones, saying that as long as Palestine is occupied, the act of stone-throwing will continue. The most powerful and effective weapons, as David A. McDonald (2013) declares that the stones and slings used by the Palestinians during the *Intifada* were the stone and sling. The Intifada was a movement of young people of old age and children, but was called the 'Children of the Stone Movement' (p. 120).

Other examples of literary studies that have analysed how Palestinian literature tackles stone-throwing and how it was and is still the act of both adults and children to defend themselves against the occupier can be discussed. According to Harlow (1989), several poems were written that include variations on the image of children confronting the amassed military apparatus of the Israeli Defence Forces (pp: 33-34). Elad-Bouskila (1999) states that the motif of stone appears often as a symbol and slogan of the intifada that embodies its many characteristics (p. 106). Swedenburg (1995) also declares that children are praised by popular songs (p. 173).

Hunter (1991) adds that Stones would symbolise the revolt (p. 60). Hunter discusses how the stone is a metaphor for resistance in Palestinian literature.

Nawal Al-Sheikh (2021) states that Darwish uses many natural metaphors and symbols to reflect and express Palestine's political issues, such as the sea, mountains, rocks, and trees. Månsson (2003) explores metaphors of natural elements that are used in Arab culture and Arabic literature and how they strongly reflect the atmosphere or conditions to which they refer. As an example, Månsson (2003) declares that Yasser Arafat used some phrases to describe the revolution in Palestine, which contain 'the rock', "Oh mount! Winds cannot rock you," "That player is a rock in the defensive area," or "The warrior was a rock from which all waves of invaders broke" (p. 113). Månsson (2003) also continued that Darwish and the rock 'represent the stable and enduring ideal of perseverance' in Palestine in his poem *Awaiting Those Returning*, published in 1966. Darwish 'stubbornly resists the dangerous temptation to abandon hope of the loved ones' return and patiently waits on the rock' (p. 113).

As can be seen in the previous examples, rocks or stones are significant metaphors in Palestinian literature that are always linked to children, adults, weapons, throwing, defence, and resistance. On the other hand, some described stone-throwing as violent, such as Rabin (1988), who described stone-throwing as an act of terrorism. The Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, called it 'violent agitation' and 'a war against the existence of Israel' (Hunter 1991, pp. 85-86; Kaufman 1991, p. 19). The last examples are related to the unreal image of the Palestinians that has been circulated from the perspective of the Israelis.

2.3. Studies on Isabella Hammad and the Parisian

Several studies have been conducted on Hammad's *The Parisian*. Starting with the study of Chadi and Belhamidi (2021), they explore the relationship between the West and the East in *The Parisian* and the complexities of the relationship. They also highlight the stereotypes and images of Arabs. Abdel-Rahman (2021) discusses mapping spaces, identities, and ideologies in Hammad's *The Parisian* (2019).

Another study was conducted by Awajan & Nofal (2023), who, through the lens of postcolonialism and especially Edward Said's views, explored the binary oppositions of the east/west in Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian*. They also use a corpus linguistics (CL) approach using Antconc corpus software Antconc. In addition, Pataki (2023) explores the physical journey that Midhat takes how places and spaces affect his relationships and how he perceives home, belonging and self.

Going through the previous studies, it could be noticed that the study fills in the gap in introducing a recent novel and analysing it from a different perspective, from the lens of postcolonialism. It tries to show that Hammad has used the metaphors of rocks and stones in her novel *The Parisian*. to represent the Palestinians and their characteristics in relation to how far they are from their land.

3. Methodology

The novel *The Parisian* by Isabella Hammd is analyzed through the lens of postcolonialism, with a focus on Edward Said's (1978) views on *Orientalism, the colonizer, and the colonized*. The essence of postcolonial literature serves as "an enterprise which seeks emancipation from all types of subjugation defined in terms of gender, race, and class" (Rai, 2005). According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007), postcolonialism "deals with the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies" (p. 166). Palestinians are renowned around the world as fierce and resistant because they are simply protecting themselves and their territories. *Orientalism*, by Edward Said (1978), delves into these stereotyped notions. Said (1978) describes how the West (Occident) views the Arabs (Orient), a term coined by the West (p. 13). According to Mahdi (2022), the term resistance is considered 'the key component in postcolonial literature', which 'transforms that literature into a weapon in the service of decolonization, one that counters colonial enculturation and externalises native struggle, a cultural and political struggle. Postcolonial works address the consequences of colonisation" (p. 1). Studying literary works via a postcolonial lens provides a full assessment of these texts and of the "social and political environment," as well as reflecting the "resistance to oppression by representing a cohesive national culture" (p. 2). Under postcolonialism, alienation has become "a fragile mode of existence, characterized by dislocation and homelessness, which is terminologically manifested as the "third space" or "hyphenated existence" (Raddatz, p. 1).

4. Analysis

Hammad uses the metaphors of rocks and stones in her novel *The Parisian*. Hammad tries to represent the Palestinians and their characteristics in relation to the distance they are from their lands. Characters who stay in Palestine and do not leave their land are like rocks and stones that Palestinians use to defend their land. These characters, such as Jamil and Fatima, are represented as solid, courageous, more resistant, and inexorable. On the other hand, Midhat is presented as a hyphenated identity who leaves Nablus to study in France. As a Palestinian native who has lived outside his home for many years, Midhat is represented as a compromise, less resistant, fragile, and malleable. His personality is not as solid as the other characters due to the fact that he was for years. The novel is analysed through the lens of postcolonialism in a way that shows how these characters are represented by discussing certain quotations from the novel and exploring the metaphors of the rocks and stones used within.

Hammad's novel *The Parisian* opens with Midhat, a young man of 19 years. He is on a ship travelling from Alexandria, Egypt, to Marseille, France, where he plans to study medicine. After returning to Nablus years later,

the revolts start. According to Cresswell (2019), Hammad's *The Parisian* is a novel about the 'outbreak of the Arab revolt of 1936', which is also known as the Great Revolt (p. 3). The reader is introduced to the beginning of the conflicts in Palestine through the Arab groups in France/ Paris, their dialogues foreshadowing what Midhat is exposed to when he returns home. However, from these conversations, the reader can easily assume that Midhat has nothing to do with politics and has no feelings in one way or the other as to what is happening in Nablus or Palestine. According to Abdel-Rahman (2021), these meetings of the Arab Palestinians reflect 'heroism, resistance, and the communal spirit,' which in itself reflects the Nabulsi society in particular and the Palestinian society at large were in need at that critical time of their history (p. 116). Abdel-Rahman (2021) adds that such meetings enhance people's identities and origins when this identity is at stake.

The following response of Midhat shows how irresponsible he is and how he has no idea of what is really happening in Nablus/Palestine. Bassem says, "You know? They have killed us. They are killing us. Like the Armenians. Who have they killed?" said Midhat. "You didn't read the paper today?" said Yusef Mansour, ... "Midhat, you have to start reading the paper" (Hammad, 2019, pp. 160-161). From the previous quote, Midhat is advised to read the newspaper to know more about what is happening in his home and what his people are suffering from and exposed to. This image of an irresponsible and careless Midhat is printed in the minds of the readers before even going back to Nablus. In this case, the reader expects nothing from Midhat when he returns to Palestine.

This scene is reflected in a conversation between a group of youth with Midhat. The words and response of Midhat also show how Midhat is unaware of what is happening, even when he goes back to Nablus. In this case, Jamil is the one who kicks his leg under the table, which resembles what Yusef says to Midhat in the previous example. But the difference here is that Midhat is no longer in France, he is in Palestine, which means that he is supposed to be aware of the circumstances around him, instead of just reading about it in the papers. Midhat's unawareness could be seen in the following quote, also:

They work with the poor, Burhan said.
 'Are you an authority on the subject?'
 'Basil, come on,' said Qais Karak.
 'Really? Like farm work?' said Midhat.
 Jamil kicked Midhat under the table.

(Hammad, 2019, p. 203)

The remark of Midhat demonstrates that he is a foreigner rather than a native. This can be supported by two points. The first point is that Midhat spent his days in Montpellier thinking about and chasing Jeannette, and years passed without him finishing his studies. She even rejects his proposal at the end, forcing him to leave Montpellier for Paris (Hammad, 2019, pp. 121–134). This does not help him forget Jeannette; he continues to ponder and hallucinate about her even after he returns to Palestine. The second argument concerns Midhat's clothes and appearance in Nablus. People in Nablus refer to him as 'the Parisian' because of his attire, demeanor, and attitude. Midhat is portrayed here as an Arab Palestinian whose thoughts are limited to ladies and love, with no regard for other significant concerns, such as the political talks initiated in front of him by Arabs residing in Paris. Midhat also sees Jeannette's face in every woman he meets and sleeps with. According to Potgieter (2020), Hammad purposely portrays Midhat as an Arab who is limited and drawn to shallow and superficial thinking, as evidenced by his hallucinations of Jeannette and his interest in women.

Midhat finds a girl in Nablus, whom he starts admiring. The same thing that happened to Jeanette happens to the new girl, Fatima; he keeps following her and watching her house all the time and refuses to marry someone else. He proposes to Fatima three times and is rejected by her father for the same reason that Fatima wants him for, because he is 'different.' She is happy with how he looks and the fact that he is from France. She says: 'I like that he was in France...' He is very refined. I like the way he looks" (Hammad, 2019, p. 303). However, it will not be until after marriage that she finds out the true meaning of the word 'different'. Looking back at what Potgieter (2020) says about Midhat's situation, while Midhat's hallucination of Jeanette continues even after he goes back to Nablus, it only adds to his hallucination of Fatima Hammad, the girl he now wishes to marry, which only shows his superficial thinking.

People around him, especially his friend and cousin Jamil, are annoyed by his behaviour and attitude. Midhat is seen as passive to everything around him, which makes him different from his contemporaries. His passiveness can be seen in many of the things he says, such as: "We are not strong enough to threaten anyone. The Europeans will always have better armies. If you are violent and you are also the weakest party, I don't think that works well" (Hammad, 2019, p. 250). This is his answer when he heard the men with his father say that Palestine needs "to fight for independence on her own" (Hammad, 2019, p. 250). His weakness and fragility deprive him of being positive; instead, he sees everyone as weak as himself.

Now, back to Fatima and how Midhat spends his days watching and thinking of her and how his target is just to marry her. On the contrary, people around him are thinking about how to gain their independence and the agreements that are happening that have a vital impact on the whole region. After the first rejection by Fatima's father, Teta, his grandmother, takes him to meet the Samaritan high priest in the mountains to make him a charm

that would help him marry Fatima (Hammad, 2019). This scene shows Midhat with a vulnerable personality being led by his Teta, although he is against going to the Samaritan high priest. This is supported by the words: "Midhat's laugh echoed and appeared much jollier than he felt. It was warm here; the sun heated the stone" (Hammad, 2019, pp. 219-220). The stone that is heated by the sun here may represent Midhat himself in a way that is controlled by his Teta and his thoughts of marrying Fatima.

Hammad's representation of Midhat has not changed even after he goes back to Nablus. His superficial thinking and behaviour continue and are seen by the people around him in Nablus. He is seen as fragile and malleable through his responses to the conflicts and issues that happen in Nablus. This behaviour has given him the nickname 'al Barisi' or 'the Parisian' among the people surrounding him. Potgieter (2020) states that Midhat has acquired this nickname because of the style and colour of the clothes he wears and because of the unserious, careless, and cold way he responds to the conflicts happening in Nablus and the issues that the community in Nablus suffers from.

Another scene where Midhat is seen as careless and passive is when he meets Pere Antoine, the French priest. When Hammad was asked about the role of the priest in the novel, she answered that he studies in Nablus and could resemble Dr. Molineau in France (Riaz 2021). Midhat's meetings with the priest could mean that he believes in his views. This is supported by the metaphor of the rock in the same scene. The word rock is mentioned in the time Midhat met Pere Antoine, the French priest; 'He was lifting his habit to climb over the rocks, and as he stepped at last onto the main track, he opened the bag' (Hammad, 2019, p. 240). This may mean that some foreigners can be helped by some natives to spy on the country and may be enhanced by them. Such natives may help these foreigners, in this case the priest, to sit on a rock like 'a gigantic molar' (Hammad, 2019, p. 273). As if Midhat is the other 'smaller rock in front for one's foot to rest on', which is there for Pere Antoine to rely on (Hammad, 2019, p. 273). This may indicate that such natives help foreigners in studying and spying on the Arabs/Oriens. Cresswel (2019) comments on the idea that some Arabs "cooperate with European powers" and Jews (p. 5). Midhat improves his relationship with Antoine because he is French. This could also be a point where Hammad presents Midhat as a Palestinian, who has no concern of what is happening around him as if he lives in another world, the world of the French that he still fancies. Partly because of his love for France and especially Paris, according to Cresswel (2019), Midhat improves a good relationship with the priest. Potgieter (2020) comments on the way Hammad presents the priest in the novel to criticise his relationship with Midhat (p. 3). Cresswel declares that because of his contacts with the townspeople, British authorities recruit the priest Antoine as a spy (Cresswel, 2019).

The scene of the policeman checking Midhat at Nabi Musa shows how weak and vulnerable Midhat is. The scene itself shows the difference between Midhat and his cousin Jamil. They both go to Nebi Musa but are separated by the crowds of people. When the policeman allows Midhat to leave, he calls a taxi and jumps in quickly, asking the driver to take him back to Nablus, leaving Jamil behind. While trying to cross the crowded streets on the way back to Nablus, Midhat sees Jamil 'dropped into a pool of bodies' (Hammad, 2019, p. 298). Midhat asks the driver to move forward as if he had not seen Jamil. When he got home, his mother and Teta scolded him for leaving Jamil behind, not knowing that he left him in a pool of blood. (Hammad, 2019). On that day, Jamil had a black eye and his lip was cut, and then his Teta and Jamil's mother realised the condition Jamil was in when Midhat left him (Hammad, 2019, p. 300).

Cresswel (2019) discusses Midhat's encounter with the crowds of pilgrims, saying that when Midhat hears some of the pilgrims shouting, "Palestine is our land! Jews are our dogs!! So he changes to fear and repulsion at the sight of physical violence (Hammad, 2019, p. 355). Cresswel (2019) declares that throughout the rest of the novel, Hammad shows Midhat retreating into 'domesticity and self-absorption,' while his cousin becomes a fighter and defender of his land (pp. 6-7).

After a couple of days when Midhat asks Jamil what happened, he tries to show him how careless and cowardly he was, saying to Midhat: 'You didn't ask! You didn't even ask? He criticised how he is always living in his own world, the world of 'The Parisian', just wandering with his 'coloured ties'. Then he continues saying: 'You didn't even ask me, you just left' (Hammad, 2019, 355). He then continues saying, "You should just look outside yourself a bit. The country is going crazy. We have starving people... Do you even listen to what people talk about?" (Hammad, 2019, 355). From the previous quotations, it could easily be noticed how Midhat is still living in his own fantasy world of his Parisian life in Palestine. He is totally detached from the surroundings, the conditions, and the conflicts happening in Nablus. He has no responsibility for his father, his Teta, nor his cousin, who is his best friend. Cresswel (2019) points out that Hammad has presented his protagonist as a 'kind of amiable fop'. He is the protagonist of a plot without having any role in it (Cresswel 2019, p. 7). Cresswel (2019) continues that Midhat is never known who he is and even what he wants or his intentions. Midhat does not really release his thoughts or ideas (Cresswel 2019, p. 7).

All these points are related to the fact that Midhat is detached from the whole plot, as if he is living in his own fancy life, away from what is happening in Nablus, the British-Palestinian and Israeli- Palestinian conflicts. This is also, in a way, part of his fragile and malleable personality. He is also detached from not only the plot but also his own life. Potgieter (2000) discusses how Midhat 'slips haphazardly in and out of his own life' away from the Palestinian and Israeli issues in a complex, tangled historical period (Hammad, 2019, p. 3).

The reader could compare Midhat's behaviour and lifestyle with Jamil's behaviour and lifestyle. The difference could be linked to their relationships to rocks and stones and to the land. Midhat's absence from Nablus and Palestine had weakened his personality and affected his strength and harshness, and this could be related to his distance from his own land and the rocks. On the other hand, Jamil, who is Midhat's cousin, is represented as harsh, solid, and courageous. His harshness could be related to his attachment to the land and the rocks. Hammad presents Jamil as a revolutionary who has political views and actions. Potgieter declares in his review that there is a huge difference between Jamil and Midhat's personalities, which affects their close relationship and friendship (Hammad, 2019, p. 2). This could be related to what Bowman says about the land reflecting the people living on it. Bowman (1999) argues that the identity of the people is linked to the place where they live. This is why people defend their land and are willing to die for it.

This cannot be applied to Midhat because he is still dreaming of going back to France and Jeanette. At each stage, we can see him expressing his desire to go back. This occurs many times throughout the novel after he goes back to Nablus. One of the times when Midhat thinks of going back to France is in his conversation with Haj Taher. Midhat asked him, 'Why can't I go back to France?' He threatened to deprive Midhat of his inheritance (Hammad, 2019, p. 192). Midhat expresses his desire again after his marriage when he discovers that he does not inherit anything from his father except a small-sided house (Hammad, 2019).

Such an insistence on going back to France and following an illusion, which is his love of Jeanette, is also part of how he perceives the West. He looks at the countries and people there. El-Enany (2006) states that since the 19th century, Arabs have looked up to Westerners, especially the Europeans, due to their enlightenment and how they are more developed than Arabic regions in certain fields. These Arabs perceive the westerners as superior to them and the west as Paradise. Midhat resembles such Arabs and the way they view the West and Westerners. This is clear in the way that he is attached to France and Jeanette.

Hammad (2019) tries to show how Midhat is different from Jamil in his personality, behaviour, and even in his attitude towards the conflicts happening in the region during the time when the novel is set. Jamil is a member of the Nablus Strike Committees in other towns, while Midhat is just a Parisian living in his own fantasies, who can never be a fighter from Jamil's point of view. This difference could also be seen between Midhat and Fatima. This was not done unintentionally by Hammad. The study tries to show that Hammad represents how different Midhat is from Jamil and Fatima because Jamil and Fatima stayed in Palestine and their personalities and attitudes toward Palestine and what is happening in the country are acquired and learnt unintentionally from the surrounding atmosphere. This is so different from Midhat, who travels abroad for many years and returns to Palestine with a different style of life and appearance. Potgieter (2000) states that Hammad presents both Fatima and Jamil in such a way as to cause the reader to compare them to Midhat and how they both think and behave in such conflicts. Potgieter (2000) agrees, stating that Hammad intentionally represented both characters, Fatima and Jamil, to shed the light on the way Midhat behaves and thinks in such circumstances (p. 2).

In the previous quote, Fatima is illustrated as a woman who can hold up and face whatever she is exposed to. Despite her strong personality, Fatima does not really care how Midhat looks and how he dresses. Actually, she kind of likes that he is called the Parisian and the idea that 'he was in France' (Hammad, 2019, p. 303). Fatima is also presented as courageous, unlike Midhat, who left Jamil in a pool of blood in Nebi Musa. This is seen when she goes alone to Nebi Musa and insists on seeing the pilgrimages. Here, as a woman, she is seen to be more courageous than Midhat. Another scene that shows Fatima's strong personality and courage is mostly seen when Midhat is taken to the hospital for mental illness. Fatima is the one who takes him out. She was the only one who was able to bring Midhat out of the hospital.

After Midhat leaves the hospital, Hammad stresses the comparison between Midhat and Jamil and Fatima. The characteristics of Jamil and Midhat are highlighted throughout the novel, and how they are all revolts, but Midhat, on the other hand, has never held a gun (Hammad, 2019, p. 489). Midhat becomes unaware of what happens around him at the end of the novel. He first accuses himself of killing Laurent, saying, 'I killed him, I killed Laurent'. Then he continues to say, "For nothing. I killed him for nothing" (Hammad, 2019, p. 473). Laurent confessed to loving Jeanette to Midhat in France and he felt jealous of him (Hammad, 2019, p. 68). This shows how he is still living in his own fancy world. Another situation that shows how Midhat is unaware of the world around him is because it makes sense that Midhat is in the hospital "while Nablus was in revolt" (Hammad, 2019, p. 505). From the previous examples, Midhat is presented as a Parisian in Nablus who was to be out of step with the times, locked in an old colonial formula where subjects imitated masters' (Hammad, 2019, p. 505).

5. Conclusions

The previous discussion presented how Hammad compares Midhat, who leaves Palestine and spends his time in France, to the characters Fatima and Jamil, who stay in Palestine and are exposed to the conflicts happening in Nablus. These conflicts can be linked to the resistance of Palestinians, which began in the form of Al-Intifada (Farag 2016). After Nakba, the Palestinians felt unhappy, exiled, and occupied by the Israelis. It was the beginning of resistance to the Israeli occupation by the Palestinians.

In this context, Midhat, in this case, is presented as vulnerable and weak, who is still living in France in his own mind, even after leaving it for Palestine. The characteristics of Midhat are completely different from the qualities of rocks and stones. On the other hand, Fatima and Jamil, both of whom stay in Palestine, are shown to

be strong, courageous, and tough. The characteristics of Fatima and Hammad are the same as the qualities of the rocks and stones. The metaphors of rocks and stones are used by Hammad to describe the characters. From the analysis, the Jamil and Fatima characteristics resemble the characteristics of stones and rocks. However, the characteristics of Midhat are quite different and, in fact, the complete opposite of the characteristics of stones and rocks. Hammad intentionally presents Midhat as she does to show the difference between the Palestinians who leave their land and between the natives who stick to their land and participate in the revolts and in defending their country.

6. Recommendations and Further Research

Further research should be conducted on Palestinian literature, with particular attention to the use of metaphors and the presentation of resistance in these works. By delving deeper into these specific aspects, future studies can uncover the richness of Palestinian literary traditions and offer more nuanced insights into the themes and narratives prevalent in this body of work. Such research will enhance our understanding of the cultural and political nuances inherent in Palestinian literature, enriching the discourse around these topics.

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