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Department of Letters and English Language

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كلية الآداب واللغات  
قسم الأدب واللغة الإنجليزية



Option: Literature

**Counter-narratives in Arab Diasporic Literature:  
The Case of *The Hakawati* (2008) by Rabih Alameddine and *The Parisian* (2019) by Isabella Hammad.**

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**The Board of Examiners**

Chairwoman: Miss BOUREGAA Meryem (MA/A) University of 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Supervisor: Dr. LOUATI Hayat (MA/B) University of 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Examiner: Miss MOUMENE Soumia (MA/A) University of 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Submitted by:

Supervised by:

KHOUALED Roumayssa

Dr. LOUATI Hayat

TAIBA Lina

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## **Dedication**

In the name of Allah, most merciful, most compassionate

First, I want to thank Allah for giving me the strength to finish this work.

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful father "**Hawasse**" Thank you for everything you have done for me and for the countless sacrifices you have made to ensure my success. You have been a source of strength, guidance, and love throughout my life. I am forever grateful for your presence in my life.

I dedicated this work to the greatest mother of all "**Aida**" the one who has always been there for me with unconditional love and unwavering support. You have been an inspiration and a guiding light in my life. Thank you for being the best mother ever.

I dedicate this thesis to my brother "**Amine**" my only brother and his wife.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my friends and family, who believed in me.

To this special name, I dedicate this work.

**Khoualed Roumayssa**

## Dedication

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate"

In strength and weakness.

In light and darkness.

In joy and sadness, I find you, my sweetheart.

I dedicate this work to you, my dear mom, "**Aicha**" the one and only without whose support I wouldn't be the person who I am

To the father "**Abdeslem**" who gave me birth, and the one who's been patient, and supporting me emotionally and financially throughout my academic career. To my sibling **Zeyneb**, and to **Nore El Yakine** the best companion ever.

Without forgetting my relatives

Halima, Sabiha, Mounira, Nora, Roua, Yacine, Ghada;

Unlimited love.

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines counter-narratives in Arab diasporic literature. Through a close analysis of Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* (2008), and Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* (2019). These novels explore how Arab diasporic writers use counter-narratives to challenge the dominant narrative. Drawing upon Postcolonial theory, this study explores how Arab diasporic literature engages with themes of resistance, identity, and power through these counter-narratives. It also considers the implications of using counter-narratives to disrupt the dominant Narrative and Arab diasporic identities. These novels provide an important counter-narrative to the traditional Western narrative of Arabs. They demonstrate the complexity and diversity of the Arab diaspora, allowing for a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the people and their experiences. This contributes to a more inclusive and representative narrative of the Arab diaspora, which is essential for a better understanding of their culture. The outcomes indicate that these novels challenge the traditional Western narrative of Arabs by providing a more complex and nuanced representation of the Arab diaspora. They provide a counter-narrative that is more inclusive and diverse, which allows for a better understanding of the Arab diaspora and its unique experiences.

**Keywords:** Counter-narrative, Arab Diasporic Literature, *The Hakawati*, *The Parisian*, Postcolonial theory, identity, dominant Narrative.

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## Introduction

Arab diasporic literature offers an important counter-narrative to the dominant Western narrative of Arab culture and the Middle East. Through stories of identity, displacement, and cultural hybridity, Arab diasporic literature explores how Arab culture interacts with the West. By reading and engaging with these stories, readers can gain a better understanding of the complexities of Arab culture and its place in the world.

Counter narrative is a tool to challenge ideologies that are widespread throughout society. Moreover, if authors want to deliver their message, they need to use logical and factual arguments and have a goal throughout where they send a particular message with the strongest arguments. In other words, it is a tool provides a new perspective on how one should look at the world. In addition, it is a way of reframing the discussion or debate in order to bring to attention alternative perspectives or solutions that may not have been previously considered. Counter-narrative is used to challenge dominant ideas and ideologies and to push for social change. In order to be effective, a counter-narrative must be written in a way that is convincing and persuasive. It must include evidence and facts to support its claims and it must be tailored to the context and audience it is being presented to. By presenting an alternative perspective, a counter-narrative can help to open people's eyes on the consequences of the current policies or decisions and can be used to inform and inspire action.

Rabih Alameddine is considered one of the most prominent authors that use counter-narrative, especially in his novel, *The Hakawati* (2008). It tackles themes like family, identity, and cultural heritage, as well as the power of storytelling. Through this narrative, Alameddine examines the complexities of life in the Middle East and its impact on his characters. The novel often combines elements from mythology, folklore, and history to explore these themes.



Isabella Hammad's novel *The Parisian* (2019) is somewhat similar to Alameddine's in its introduction of multiple stories within other stories. The novel tackles themes of colonialism, identity, and displacement as it follows the story of a Palestinian man named Midhat Kamal and his family. Through Midhat's experiences, the author examines the effects of colonialism on the Middle East and how it shaped the lives of those who lived during that time. Both authors use counter-narrative, a literary form in which they challenge commonly accepted ideas, as a tool to explore social issues and provide alternative perspectives.

The aim of counter-narrative is to explore how Arab diasporic literature has challenged dominant Western narrative structures by illuminating the experiences of Arab diasporic people and their perspectives on identity, gender, and other topics. Although, this topic has become increasingly prominent in recent years as Arab diasporic literature has gained more attention and recognition. This topic has become a subject of interest to many Arab writers like Idris Ali, Ken Plummer, Mary Romero, and Abigail J. Stewart, and many others for being a controversial topic surrounding all aspects of life. In order to highlight the significance of this research, it is important to refer to some of the major scholarly works that have already dealt with this topic.

Idris Ali, a Nubian author explores his complex identity as a result of his dual cultural background in his novel *Dangola of Nubia* (1993). He reflects on the combination of his Nubian and Arab-Egyptian heritage. This is evident in his writing, which is composed in the Arab-Egyptian language, however it reflects both cultures. The novel registers a Nubian counter-narrative to Arab-Egyptian nationalism. This novel discusses racial identity and language in the context of Afro-Nubian culture. This writer raises several interesting issues. In relation to the discussion of Africa and the black African diaspora, the experiences of diasporic groups in North America have been marginalized, and it has received little attention

(Abbas 144-166). Idris Ali has written works of both fiction and criticism in his novel. He uses a mixture of fact and fiction to explore themes of identity, race, and culture in his work. He also incorporates elements of literary criticism into his work, making it an engaging and thought-provoking reading.

Counter-narrative involves a variety of different related disciplines, including sociology (Plummer), women's studies (Romero and Stewart 1999), and more. The stories of those people and groups whose knowledge and histories are "marginalized, excluded, oppressed or lost in the presentation of official narratives" are what they are described as stories. Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews have coined the technique in their book *Considering Counter-Narratives: narrating, Resisting, and Creating Meaning* (2004). The stories of females that individuals tell and live typically provide resistance to central masculine cultural narratives, either directly or indirectly. They evolve the framework of counter-narrative and they have determined their expansion in an applied manner (Battah and Ahmed 1480). According to Thomas Maschio, a counter-narrative is distinguished by an "individual emotional accent basic and effective logic" (91). Arguing that "anger, fear, and self-absorbedness" are the emotional signs that counter the narrative. Maschio states that this story of counter-narrative provides readers with significant dimensions concerning emotional scrutiny and reveals ways to understand a particular character in a given space (Battah and Ahmed 1481). Feminists, sociologists, and anthropologists use the framework of counter-narrative to distinguish between the innovative and its offshoots, the core and the genuineness of other cultures to be comprehended in a variety of positioning (Battah and Ahmed 1481). In other words, the extract provides an illustration of counter-narrative, and that some specialists that already dealt with this concept in their narratives so they want to deliver the meaning of the counter-narrative and to denote that are created to oppose the dominant narrative.

This study aims at exploring how counter-narrative is employed in Arab diasporic literature, specifically focusing on Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* (2008) and Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* (2019). Through a close analysis of these two works, this research demonstrates how these authors use counter-narrative as a tool to challenge existing dominant discourses and create a more nuanced understanding of Arab identity. Thus the research question of this study seeks to explore how Rabih Alameddine's novel *The Hakawati* and Isabella Hammad's novel *The Parisian* use counter-narrative to examine the experience of Arab diasporic people. It aims to understand how these authors have employed this technique to highlight the stories of marginalized people. Specifically, how do Alameddine and Hammad use counter-narrative to illustrate the experience of Arab diasporic people in their works?

Postcolonial theory is the methodological approach used to examine the effects of colonization on the literature of the Arab diaspora. This is evident in the two literary works which explore the experiences of Arab immigrants in the West and the impact of colonialism on their lives. Postcolonial theory is the method used to analyze these works in terms of their representation of Arab diasporic identity. This theory examines the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized people and how these dynamics are reflected in the texts. It also looks at the ways in which the authors use language and culture to create and explore narratives of identity. This research examines how Arab diasporic literature can be used as a counter-narrative to colonialism, and how these two literary works are examples of this. The conceptual framework proposed in this study suggests that Arab diasporic literature can be used to explore and challenge the effects of colonization. This literature can be used as an alternative to the traditional narrative of colonialism, which often focuses on the power dynamics and oppression experienced by colonized peoples. Through this literature, authors can create narratives of identity that challenge the power dynamics of colonialism.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter, which is entitled “Anglophone Arab Diasporic Literature”, is the theoretical part that tackles the key concepts. In addition, it explains the conceptual framework of the work to supply readers with a general glimpse into the significance of terms in which those concepts have a relationship with the study.

The second and third chapters are devoted to the analysis of the selected works. The second chapter analyzes Rabih Alameddine’s *The Hakawati* through a postcolonial perspective, in which it consists of three sections: an examination of ideas and thoughts of the narrator linking them with counter-narrative, and an investigation of the structure and style of the novel. It also examines how the novel engages with postcolonial theory.

The third chapter is an analytical one; it studies *The Parisian* through a postcolonial perspective, focusing on counter-Narrative and the impact of colonialism on *The Parisian*. It contains three sections: an examination of ideas and thoughts of the narrator linking them with counter-narratives, and an examination of how events can shape counter-narrative and the motivation behind the author's writing.

To conclude, counter-narratives play a decisive role in the Arab diaspora by challenging prevailing stereotypes and misconceptions about Arab communities. These narratives offer alternative perspectives that promote understanding and recognition of the diverse experiences and contributions of individuals within the Arab Diaspora. By amplifying these counter-narratives, individuals can foster a more inclusive comprehension of Arab culture, including identity, and history.

## **Chapter One: Anglophone Arab Diasporic Literature**

Anglophone Arab diasporic literature is unique that it speaks to the experiences of refugees as they negotiate their identities in a new society and grapple with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and language. It explores the complexities of diasporic experiences, as well as the universal themes of identity, belonging, and displacement. It is a powerful and vibrant form of literature that doesn't only offers insight into the lives of Arabs immigrants and refugees, but also celebrates the beauty of their culture and language. This literature provides an important counter-narrative to the mainstream narrative of Arab immigrants and refugees which is often distorted and misrepresented in the media, through its unique focus on the experiences of those Arabs. This literature helps to challenge the dominant narrative and provides a better understanding of the diasporic experience.

In her work *Arab voices in diaspora: Critical Perspective on Anglophone Arab Literature*, Leila Al Maleh states that Anglophone Arab literature is the body of literature written in English by Arab authors in the diaspora. It deals with previously neglected literary works that are now receiving increasing attention, not only from Middle Eastern universities but also from everyone interested in postcolonial studies that are known today as the new literature (Al Maleh 1).

Arab authors have been using English as a medium of literary expression. A fact that lead to a significant Anglophone Arab literary revival in the last few decades which is awaiting the full recognition of hyphenated Arab-American and Arab-British authors. These authors wanted to make their voices heard. Telling their own stories and experiences, they aimed to create a place for themselves in the Western world using English as a lingua franca (2).

The first chapter aims at clarifying the major significant terminologies. It starts by giving the definition of Anglophone Arab diasporic literature, then, it offers an understanding of the word diaspora, then it goes deep to understand the origins and development of Arab-American literature and British literature in Arab diasporic literature, then it tackles the main characteristics of Arab diaspora: diaspora, memory, and migration, this study demonstrates the relationship between memory and home in Arab diasporic literature. Then it goes on to introduce the concept of Orientalism. After that, it moves to understand the terms narrative and counter-narrative. Following this, the chapter discusses Arab counter-narrative trends before discussing double consciousness and racialization. Finally, this chapter concludes by giving a theoretical framework of the two approaches on which this study relies, the analytical approach and the postcolonial approach. Therefore, this chapter serves as a theoretical basis for the elaboration on the key concepts and notions involved in the analysis of the selected works.

## **I.1. Arab Diasporic Literature: An Overview**

Arab diasporic literature is a form of literature created by authors of Arab descent in countries outside of their homeland. It often covers issues of identity, home, displacement, and the experience of living in the diaspora. It is a widely acclaimed form of literature that has received numerous awards and recognition.

### **I.1.1. Identifying the Word Diaspora**

Diaspora is an umbrella term, that is to say, it has no definitive definition. It is defined by many scholars but the concept generally refers to someone who migrates to another country and lives far from their homeland in isolation, from their families. In his work entitled *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, Kevin Kenny states that “this concept traced back to ancient Greek scholars” (Kenny 1). It helps to understand the world generated by

migration. The term is inclusive of the American and African Diasporas as well; however, since the 1980s, it has ballooned even further. Because of this, it is also used to describe groups that have migrated against their will and who are still attached to their native countries and share a variety of worldviews (1).

The concept is best explained by many scholars in Rogers Brubaker *Double Consciousness, Belonging and Radicalization* (2005), diaspora is made up of three primary components: "*dispersion*," "*homeland*," and "*boundary maintenance*" (5). Kevin Kenny points out that "in all its various uses, the term has something to do with scattering and dispersal" (2). The term diaspora has been used in a very specific sense, referring principally to the dispersal and exile of the Jews. Yossi Shain's *Double Consciousness, Belonging and Radicalization* (1994) has usefully elaborated on the concept of diaspora, remarking that the US Diasporas encompass "all hyphenated or ethnic Americans who attempt to influence American Policy toward their homeland" (83). In other words, the concept has been expanded and diasporic writers all agree on the same idea of diaspora to impact American policy.

In its inaugural issue, the journal *Diaspora* "equated diaspora with population dispersal in general and urged that a concept previously defined to the Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and African cases extended to cover a much wider 'semantic domain' that included such terms as immigrant, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, and ethnic community" (Kenny10). This quote illustrates the meaning of the concept by identifying the different races that can be witnessed by diasporic groups living in America.

### **I.1.2. Arab-American, Arab-British Literature: Origins and Developments**

Arab American Literature draws on the cultural experiences of people of Arab descent living in the United States. It often explores themes of identity, family, and home. Meanwhile, Arab British Literature explores the experiences of people of Arab descent living

in the United Kingdom. It often examines themes of cultural displacement, displacement from the homeland, and the search for identity in a new place.

Although there has been Arab-American literature in the United States for more than a century, it has only recently started to be acknowledged as a distinct ethnic voice in American literature. Yet, the number of publications by Arab-American writers has dramatically increased during the previous 20 years. This literary renaissance is a reflection of the Arab-American community's rising inventiveness as well as the evolving historical, social, and political conditions that have elevated Arab Americans to the forefront and given them new platforms for expression (Majaj 1).

The history of Arab American literature began in the late 1800s, when Arab immigrants from the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire, particularly from what is now modern-day Lebanon, first started to come to North America in substantial numbers. The initial (mainly Christian) migrants arrived mostly as temporary residents, not immigrants. They established colonies in cities like New York and Boston with the intention of returning home one day. This is obvious in their journals, which were frequently sectarian, political, and focused on Middle Eastern events (Majaj 1).

These authors created the so-called Mahjar (émigré) school of Arab-American writing, which was produced by authors who wrote in Arabic and in English. They actively attempted to create philosophical meeting spots between Arab and American ideas and contexts even as they referenced poetic forebears of both East and West, from Al-Mutanabbi, Al-Farid, and al-Maari to Homer, Virgil, Milton, Emerson, and Thoreau. Despite having had a great influence on Arabic literature, these writers were also aware of their role as bridges between the East and the West (Majaj 4).



After World War II, many Arabs immigrated to Britain, resulting in a large body of literature that is mostly unknown outside of scholarly circles. This writing covers a range of topics such as the immigrant experience, the lives of minority groups, and how cultural misunderstanding and stereotypes shape their lives (Hassan 1).

Arab American and British literature offers unique and diverse perspectives on culture, identity, and the human experience, as seen in the case studies of Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* and Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati*. Through their works, both authors explore themes of belonging and alienation and the complexities of identity in a world of shifting cultural norms.

Rabih Alameddine is a Lebanese -American author who has written numerous novels and short stories that explore the complexities of the Middle Eastern experience. On other hand, Isabella Hammad is a British-Palestinian author whose debut novel, *The Parisian*, explores the complexities of identity, colonialism, and belonging in the Middle East. Both authors draw on their cultural and personal experiences to create powerful stories that explore the nuances of Arab identity.

Two anthologies of Arab American literature were published in the 1980s, and the following decade saw the emergence of several individual authors, including Elmaz Abinader, the daughter of Lebanese immigrants who is a creative writer, poet, playwright, actress, and political activist. In *In the Country of My Dreams* (1999), her collection of poems examined her birthplace concerning the American landscape

Others include Mehta Kahf, a Syrian-American professor of comparative literature at the University of Arkansas, whose poetry collection, *E-mails from Scheherazade*, was a Paterson Poetry Prize finalist; Khaled Mattawa, a Libyan-American professor of English and

creative writing at California State University, Northridge, who has published more than three poetry collections; and Suheir Hammad, a Palestinian- American poet (Abdul-Jabbar 38).

### **I.1.3. Diaspora, Memory, Migration**

Most of the following characteristics, if not all, give a general glimpse into diasporic literature. First of all, the forced migration of novelists from one place of origin to another in search of jobs or to produce more literary novels and short stories, or they migrate because they want to escape from the bad reality in which the atmosphere of conflicts and wars prevails (“Diasporas”).

Memory is also considered a feature of Arab diasporic literature, especially when turning to the literary works of Alameddine and Hammad in which the writers tackle this issue in their writings. The case with *The Hakawati*, for instance, depicts the flashbacks of memories through the protagonist Osama al-Kharrat who remembers the destruction of Beirut and how it is rebuilt further, the novel *The Parisian* signals the same characteristics through the protagonist Midhat Kamal who narrates his experience in Nablus before and after colonialism.

As Al Maleh points out:

The irony of Anglophone Arab Literature is that it did not gain attention or attain recognition until the world woke up one day to the horror of the infamous 9/11 and asked itself who those ‘Arabs’ really were. The additional irony is that Anglophone Arab writers are perhaps the furthest away from paradigmatic Arabs, themselves being the progeny of cultural espousal, hybridity, and diasporic experiences (1).

These writings simply occurred to be useful in recent years, as they seemed to fulfill the demands of a readership anxious to learn about Arab culture and intellectual

makeup in a way that wasn't primarily academic (1). English Arab literature was initially produced at the turn of the 20th century when the first Arabs immigrate to the United States had to cope with language and culture of the host country (2). The first Anglophone Arab poetry collection, *Myrtle and Myrrh* (1905), the first play, *Wajdah* (1909), the first novel *The Book of Khalid* (1911), and the first Arab English autobiography, Rihbany, Abraham Mitrie *A Far Journey* (1914) were all written in America (Al Maleh 2).

In this regard, Wail Hassan points out in his article on Khalil Gibran that novelists produce a collection of Anglophone Arab poetry in (1914), in comparison to few other writers, so on a duration of forty eight years Khalil Gibran achieved high success for Anglophone Arab writer (2).

#### **I.1.4.The Relationship between Home and Memory in Arab Diasporic Literature**

Memory establishes a connection between origins, legacy, and history. Minority Arab populations in the West encounter harsh stereotyping and misrepresentation of their own cultures. Many Arabs have moved away from their homeland for many reasons, people at that period were forced to leave their birthplaces for a better life, most of them were refugees, and they were encountering questions like Where are you from? They were familiar with such a question which assures them that they do not belong; they are foreigners.

These minorities face a lot of racialization, sexualization, abuse, and gendered inequity, the West treats minorities badly based on their physical appearance, especially people of color, whether be them Asian, African ...etc. They were extremely racist. According to Carol Fadda-Conrey, most Arabs were immigrants with ancestral homeland nostalgia, a feeling that was destabilized by expanding representations of those homelands beyond the celebratory focus on ethnic and cultural traditions to include narratives of the historical relationships of conflict, dispossession, and exile (28).

Contemporary Arab American Literature handled the issue of inherited memories of ancestral homeland, which is prominently represented in various contemporary Arab American literary texts (28). Fadda-Conrey analysis of Arab American literature reveals how the issue of inherited memories of ancestral homeland is a prominent theme, and how these memories are represented in various contemporary Arab American literary texts.

Arab Americans were suffering because they were separated from their homelands; however, they did not forget their heritage, which is instilled in them. Lawrence Joseph's poem "Sand nigger" captures most effectively the revision of nostalgic and fragmented deployments of an absent Arab homeland with the presence of domestic immigrant space (Fadda-Conrey31). This poem, which is widely regarded as a seminal work of Arab American literature, explores the ways in which physical relics from an Arab homeland, in this case, Lebanon, within the boundaries of the narrator's "house of Detroit" influence his growing consciousness as a small boy as well as his negotiation of Arab American heritage and identity as an adult. Within the space of his childhood home, the narrator recalls pieces of food, language, history, and religion (Fadda-Conrey32):

“Lebanon is everywhere  
 In the house: in the kitchen  
 Of steaming pots, leg of Lamb  
 In the oven, plates of Kousa,  
 Huswee rolled in cabbage,  
 Dishes of olives, tomatoes, onions, roasted chicken, and sweets;

Lebanon of mountains and sea,  
 Of pine and almond trees,  
 Of cedars in the service  
 Of Solomon, Lebanon  
 Of Babylonians, Phoenicians, Arabs, Turks

And Byzantines, of the one-eyed Monk, saint Maron  
 In whose rite I Am baptized” (lines 15-21-33)

This poem is a beautiful and moving tribute to Lebanon, highlighting its culture, history, and people. It paints a vivid picture of Lebanon's cuisine, natural landmarks, and religious heritage. It is a reminder of the deep love and appreciation for a country that is facing difficult times. This poem serves as a counter-narrative to the often-troubling news of conflict in Lebanon. It celebrates the country's culture, history, and people, emphasizing a sense of hope and resilience in the midst of difficulty. By providing an alternative, positive view of Lebanon, the poem serves to counteract negative and one-sided portrayals of the country.

Jameel Ahmed Al Ghaberi claims that the post 9/11 Arab-American fiction has carried within it the complex relationship between Arab Americans and their homelands, at the same time Arab-American novels are tools that deflect the demonization of this community when it is spotted:

Arab American novels are mostly counter narrative yet, they construct fluid and porous perceptions of home even though they resort in times of tragedy to imagine and idealize home through memories of the past. They also reflect different realities imposed upon them in a post 9/11 America hyper-visibility and otherness".(Younes 1)

This quote demonstrates how Arab American novels use counter-narratives to challenge the oppressive and reductive perceptions of Arab Americans in post-9/11 America. Through these novels, Arab Americans can reclaim their sense of home and identity, often through memories of the past. The novels also provide a space for Arab Americans to reflect on the realities of their experiences and feel seen and heard.

### **I.1.5. Understanding the Concept of Orientalism**

Edward Said substantially coined the term Orientalism and is a major figure in the field of postcolonial studies. According to Said, Orientalism is a:

Representations of the East as exotic, feminine, weak, and vulnerable reflect and define how the West views itself as rational, masculine, and powerful. This essentialization permeates all categories of behavior - language, history, customs, and religion - and creates a severe dichotomy between two geographic entities (Said qtd. in Osborne 1).

Said's concept of Orientalism highlights the power of the Western world to create and maintain a false narrative about the East. These representations, whether intentional or not, create a false sense of superiority in the West and lead to a distorted view of the East. This dichotomy between East and West is harmful and has driven a wedge between the two regions for centuries.

### **I.1.6. Understanding the Concept of Narrative and Counter-narrative**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a narrative is defined as "a telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator" ("Narrative"). It is also the art of telling stories about a friend, a family member, or perhaps an incident that the narrator encounters in his day. It may be a factual narrative in which the authors recount real events. Biographies and memories are the best examples of factual narratives, while fictional narratives or stories are based on fictional events in which the authors use imagination and characters that do not exist. On the other hand, one can define the concept of counter-narrative as an alternative or contradictory narrative ("counter-narrative"). Tuck and Silverman describe counter-narrative as a message which provides an optimistic alternative to extremist propaganda or is used to deconstruct or undermine extremist narratives (6).

### **I.1.7.The Emergence of Arab American Counter-narrative Trend**

The Middle East-focused foreign policy of the United States had a negative impact on racial prejudice and white supremacy. White American fiction portrayed the 9/11 tragedy from a Western perspective. The worldview that portrayed Arab figures as exotic and savage benefited these racist views. Arab American authors had a responsibility to influence white supremacists' literary trends and combat harmful perceptions about their own people (Younes 26). The primary goal is to re-introduce the Eastern culture and to show the true nature of Islam in order to ease the stress of Islamophobia at that time. Arab American writers were under pressure to oppose white narratives and develop a positive image of Arabs and Muslims while also supporting their home countries in the Middle East. In order to counter these Western gazes on these cultures, these counter-narratives, in Edward Said's words, have "great deconstructive power" against the cultural clash of the West (Younes 27).

The Arab American authors want to draw attention to how challenging it is to preserve identity clarity while straddling two societies. Arab American writers found an outlet in literature, so their writings reflect the sense of disappointment and anxiety from the external circumstances of their host land. Like many writers, Arab American writers reflect "binary opposition, pertaining to their experience of hybridity and identity"(Kaid 64).The Arab characters in Arab Anglophone fiction of the post-9/11 period live in confusion and uncertainty of their geographical space; at the same time, they are stuck in between two cultural patterns (Kaid 64). In an attempt to strike a balance between the two identities that reflect the opposing cultural paradigms of the East and West, they express the existential impasse. In other words, the people who migrate from their country of origin to the Western world try to be open-minded to a new culture and integrate into society without losing their identity, although the two sides express opposing ideas that may lead to the existence of borders between the East and West (Kaid 64).

The literature written by Arab Americans is currently popular; however, only in the last five or six decades that Middle Eastern Americans have produced any literature (Salaita, 3). The portrayal of their motherlands as being full of cultural and religious sentiments and carrying hopes from their host country was the first output of Arab American literature. In actuality, Arab American literature was seen as a link between East and West cultures. In the “Clash of Civilizations” Arab American fiction portrays the boundaries between the binary relationship between East and West and the potential of keeping a stable identity in-between the two worlds (Younes 25).

According to Lissa Majaj, this quote highlights the setting of Anglophone Arab writers, this literary tendency "Partially reflects the altering historical, social, and political settings that have brought Anglophone Arab writers to the forefront, providing both new venues and new voices «for these writers' voices, their fresh urgencies of expression, and their burgeoning creativity” (Majaj 62). The quote illustrates that the historical, social, and political contexts help Anglophone Arab writers to enrich their writings and to be more creative (Majaj 62).

### **I.1.8. Understanding the Concept of Double Consciousness and Racialization of Arabs**

According to The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Double consciousness is a term that was coined by Du Bois which is linked to race and social philosophy (Pittman). It refers to a source of internal twoness; that was originally thought to be experienced by African-Americans as a result of their racialized oppression and devaluation in a white-dominated society (Pittman).

This term then describes the multiple thoughts that a person has about his/her identity, thus making it difficult to have one single identity. In addition to that, “the spiritual nature (African) and the materialistic commercial world (American) that was the double



consciousness of black folk,” which is “viewed as two distinctive oppositional personalities (African and American) within a single body” (qtd.in Mocombe 17). This quote clarifies the meaning of double consciousness; the African American is someone who incorporates two opposing entities within a single body.

On the other hand, the term racism is generally defined as the distinction between people into different groups according to their physical features and behavioral aspects, yet the term was elaborated more during the 17th century and gained several meanings in the Western world (Smedley). Race is used to describe the social categorization and distinction of individuals based on basic, culturally, and physically derived traits. Race is a social reality even if it is manufactured and prone to change (Haseman 11).

In the 1980s, Michael Omi and Howard Winant used the term “racialization” to describe the expansion of racial meaning to previously racially undeclared relationships, social practices, or groups in their work. They claim that the process of racialization is ideological and historically particular (Haseman 8). Racialization can be used as an example to comprehend Jewish and Irish identities (Haseman 8). The concept of racialization connects research on immigration and race. It is crucial to realize that when immigrants arrive in the United States, they are assimilating into a culture that places a strong emphasis on race and was largely built along racial lines (Haseman 8).

## I.2. Theoretical Framework

This study investigates counter-narratives in two novels written by Anglo-Arab authors in the wake of 9/11. The literary works of Alameddine and Hammad concentrate on the postcolonial approach thus, the study aims to analyze critically the events that have a relation to civil wars and colonized countries. Contemporary Arab nations face a number of important issues, including misuse of religious discourse, terrorism, feminism, class struggle, political right, and democracy, as well as the fragmentation of Arab society.

Since the 1970s, Postcolonial Studies have gained prominence. Some date its rise in the Western academy to Edward Said's influential critique of Western Orient constructions in his 1978 book *Orientalism*. The term "postcolonial" (sometimes hyphenated) has gained increasing currency in academia since the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in 1989. Since then, the use of cognate terms "Commonwealth" and "Third World" to describe Europe's former colonies' literature has become rare ("About Postcolonial Studies – Postcolonial Studies").

Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and the definition of the term "postcolonial," in a very general sense, it is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. The European empire held sway over more than 85% of the globe up until WWI. After gradually gaining control over a number of centuries. The sheer extent and duration of the European empire and its disintegration after WWII have led to widespread interest in postcolonial literature and criticism ("About Postcolonial Studies – Postcolonial Studies").

The Postcolonial theory is relevant to both novels of *The Hakawati* and *The Parisian*, since the production of works synchronized with the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Another reason is that both writers deal with the wars that broke out in their homelands due to

colonialism and their impact on the characters. Also, it examines the power dynamics between the colonizers and colonized countries. *The Hakawati* represents the effects of colonization on Lebanon, while *The Parisian* examines the effects of colonization on Palestine. Both novels present counter-narratives that aim to challenge the narrative of the colonizers, providing an alternate perspective and understanding. Postcolonial theory is useful in examining and understanding the effects of colonization on these nations as represented by these authors.

The use of counter-narratives in diasporic literature can be seen as a way of challenging and subverting colonial discourses. Both Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* and Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* draw attention to the experiences of diasporic individuals and the complexities of their identities in a postcolonial world. They explore the various ways in which cultural and social differences intersect, creating a nuanced understanding of the impact of colonialism on individuals and communities.

## Chapter 2: Exploring Postcolonial-narrative in Alameddine's *The Hakawati*

This chapter aims at demonstrating the Western narratives in Alameddine's work by establishing a counter-narrative to challenge the dominant narrative. It highlights how these narratives can be shaped by Orientalist stereotypes and storytelling traditions. In the opening part of this chapter, the first section discusses the Orientalist stereotypical images by providing examples of Alameddine's literary work. In addition, it shows the countering thought. The second section explores the art of storytelling and its relevance in Rabih Alameddine's novel *The Hakawati*. It analyzes the narrator's style and purpose in the novel and looks at the importance of characters in storytelling. Also, it examines how the novel engages with postcolonial theory, its use of hybrid identities, and its use of music to express identity and create counter-narratives. Finally, it explores how these elements come together to shape a counter-narrative in the novel.

Rabih Alameddine is of Druze heritage; he was born in 1959 to Lebanese Druze parents in Amman, Jordan, and is sometimes believed to be an atheist or nonreligious person. He was raised in Kuwait, Lebanon, and England before attending UCLA to receive his engineering degree. In 1982 he attended the University of San Francisco to earn his MBA. He is a prolific author who often investigates situations of displacement and liminality between Lebanon and America in his works, such as *An Unnecessary Woman* (2012) *I, the Divine* (2001), *Koolaid's* (1998), *The Hakawati* (2008), and the collection of short stories "The Perv". He received the Dos Passos Prize in 2019 (Pazargadi). The research focuses on two main books. The first tells the story of an emir who lives far in a beautiful city in Lebanon and has 12 daughters. The emir's only wish is to have a son that bears the name of his clan. The second story is about a young man named Osama El Kharrat who travels from Los Angeles to Beirut after a long time to visit his dying father, Elvis. On Eid al-Adha, on the street, he meets

their relatives and they share special moments mixed with joy, sadness, and nostalgic feeling. The narrator portrays their life through what is narrated in the novel.

### **II.1. The Portrayal of the Orientalist Stereotypes**

Edward Said introduced the term 'Orientalism'. By Orientalism, Said states that it is a set of stereotypes, deceptions, myths, and fantasies which the Occident (the West) has imposed in order to dominate the Orient. According to Said. As a school of thought, Orientalism was also a product of the West (Shabanirad and Marandi 22). It was "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience,"(Said 1). The excerpt denotes that Europeans have a different perception of the Orient that is influenced by their history and culture (22). Edward Said asserts that the Orientalists 'create' the Orient in his work. In the process, he contributes to the development of several stereotypical images, according to which the Orient (the East, the 'other'), a sort of surrogate for the West or the 'self,' is seen as being irrational, backward, despotic, inferior, depraved, aberrant, and sexually feminine (23).

In the same context, Western societies believe that most people from Eastern countries are impressed by their way of dressing, and imitate their cultural ideas, tradition, and attitudes. Take the example of a woman in the Middle East, who takes off her headscarf to show their beauty, but this idea is inspired by Western discourses of Hijeb which are supported by their media and governments, and which assume Muslim women's oppression, sometimes without referencing the experiences of Muslim women themselves. The term "hijab" has been associated with religious fanaticism that uses female bodies as tools of dominance and control. Muslim women are challenging this political narrative in both thought and practice (Musa et al. 1051). This conventional Western view of Muslim women who wear the hijab has been highlighted by Randa Abdel Fatah. Through her Muslim protagonist, who

is a minority living in the West and fights the culture that associates the headscarf with oppression, she rejected the beliefs of the East (Musa et al. 1051).

*The Hakawati* demonstrates the Orientalist stereotype by showing the Arab female character ,Fatima, “covering her hair with a scarf of sheer red silk and a gold chain around her forehead. Wore her heavy robe, which concealed everything underneath” (Alameddine 78). This example showcases the character adherence to traditional Arab customs and modesty and it also portrays the Arab female character as someone who upholds cultural traditions and depicting the modesty and appearance; the example illustrates the idea that Arab women are defined by their adherence to specific clothing and that their identities are not essentially hidden or concealed. Furthermore, Alameddine is inspired to write a counter-narrative to challenge existing stereotypes about the Middle East and give voice to those who have been sidelined or ignored by mainstream narratives. The writer wants to denote that there is more than war and violence, but also there is ethics, charm, and humanity in the region.

The character Fatima is a strong and independent woman who defies the traditional gender roles of her society. She is also a skilled *Hakawati* and her stories challenge the conventions and beliefs of her community. Fatima's character shapes the narrative by providing a different perspective on Arab culture and tradition. Through her stories, she challenges the patriarchal structures and exposes the flaws and limitations of certain cultural practices. She also offers an alternative way of understanding history and identity that is based solely on religion or nationality.

Fatima's character also counter-narrates the stereotypes and prejudices often associated with Arab women. She is not submissive or oppressed, but rather a powerful and intelligent figure. The character serves as a representation of the diversity and complexity of Arab women, defying the monolithic stereotypes often perpetuated by Western media. Overall, Fatima's characters in *The Hakawati* contributes to the narratives by offering a

subversive and unique perspective on Arab culture and identity, while also countering the stereotypical portrayal of Arab women. In addition to that, Baybars is Osama's cousin and childhood friend. He is depicted as a gay man who has struggled with his identity but ultimately he finds love, care and support. Baybars character challenges the stereotype that homosexuality is considered as taboo in Arab society.

The counter-narrative to the Orientalist stereotype is that the Middle East is a diverse and complex place, with a rich history and culture. Middle Easterners are not a monolithic group, and their experiences and perspectives are shaped by a variety of factors, including geography, religion, and politics. This counter-narrative seeks to challenge the simplistic reductionist assumptions of the Orientalist stereotype and to promote a more nuanced and respectful understanding of the region and its people.

## **II.2. The Tradition of Storytelling and Mixed Characters**

Storytelling is a skill that is highly useful for the narrators, as it allows them to communicate their stories engagingly to their audience. This art form was commonly used in the past to communicate stories before writing was invented. It took many forms, including poetry, songs, and more. The main goal of this storytelling tradition is to entertain, inform, and uphold cultural values and traditions. It is a practice that is found in all societies and has been around for a long time. This form of storytelling was often used to pass down wisdom from one generation to another, as well as to teach lessons to younger generations. It was also used to celebrate special occasions, such as births, weddings, and funerals. Additionally, it was a way for people to discuss difficult topics without fear of retribution. Through this form of storytelling, generations were able to discuss truths, share wisdom, and provide comfort during times of grief and joy alike.

*The Hakawati* is a novel that is composed of stories that are told through narration. *The Hakawati* is unique in that it combines the structure and storytelling of a novel with the ease of short stories. This means that each story can be enjoyed on its own, and contributes to the overall narrative of the novel. This creates an immersive experience for the reader. This innovative style of storytelling allows readers to become fully immersed in each story and its place within the broader narrative, providing a unique reading experience.

*Hakawati* is derived from the Arabic words "*haki*" and "*hekaye*", which mean, "to speak" and "story", respectively. Storytellers would use this device to tell a tale, and the audience would become invested in the story and find an escape from their own lives. They would be able to express their emotions, such as rage, happiness, grief, and angst without judgment. The stories would offer a chance to experience a world full of adventure and heroism (Chaudhary).

Storytelling has been around since ancient times and it was used as a form of entertainment and to pass down knowledge. It is an effective way of teaching values and morals, and it allows one to connect with their culture and history. According to Alameddine:

A *Hakawati* is a teller of tales, myths, and fables. A storyteller and entertainer. A troubadour of sorts, someone who earns his keep by beguiling an audience with yarns. Like the word "*hekayah*" story, fable, news, *Hakawati* is derived from the Lebanese word "*haki*", which means talk or conversation. This suggests that in Lebanese the mere act of talking is storytelling. (Alameddine)

This quote emphasizes the importance of storytelling in Lebanese culture, suggesting that it is not only a way to entertain an audience, but also a way to transmit news, history, and culture. This quote highlights the significance of storytelling in Lebanese culture, as it is seen as an



essential part of the conversation. Storytelling is seen as an integral part of the culture, as it is a way to connect people to their history and culture, as well as to each other. It is also seen as an art form, as it can be used to entertain, persuade, and educate. This quote reflects the value placed on storytelling as a way to share experiences, values, and ideas across generations.

The narrator describes an event from the past in detail, using vivid and poetic language, metaphors, and exaggeration. Storytelling is a form of language that is used to make a story more believable and engaging. Authors create stories by incorporating characters and events that capture the human experience (Alameddine 124). In other words, Storytellers do not just recite facts; they enable the audience to experience the narrative as if they were there. Storytellers use vivid descriptions, dialogue, and other techniques to make the audience feel connected to the characters and events in the narrative. They can also use music and other elements to create a sense of emotion and atmosphere that helps the audience to engage with the story.

According to Glatch: "Your characters write your plot; your plot doesn't write your characters" (Glatch). This statement is emphasizing the importance of creating well-rounded characters with their motivations, personalities, and goals. This makes it easier to create a believable and engaging story, as the characters will naturally make decisions and take actions that will lead to interesting plot twists and turns. It is important to ensure that the plot does not dictate the character's actions, but instead, the characters should be driving the plot forward.

According to Glatch:

Equally important to the art of storytelling are the characters that populate your work. Every event that takes place in your story is defined by your characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions. Although

some plot, points are outside of their control; your characters' responses to conflict make a story worth reading (Glatch).

This quote highlights the importance of characters in storytelling and how they are essential to creating an engaging narrative. Glatch emphasizes that characters are the main driving force behind a story, as it is their thoughts, feelings, and actions that shape the story and create conflict, tension, and suspense. Without characters, a story would be lifeless and without purpose.

Connecting with the characters of a story helps readers understand why they do certain things and allows them to relate to their flaws. Creating an emotional bond between readers and characters makes the narrative more thrilling, as readers experience danger and uncertainty with the characters, creating a sense of unpredictability and urgency that keeps readers engaged and wanting to continue reading.

In *The Hakawati* Alameddine uses the traditional art of storytelling to explore the complex cultural and religious identities of the characters. Through the stories, Alameddine highlights the importance of oral history and the need to keep traditions alive. The characters rely on their stories to explain themselves, their past, and the relationships between them. The stories also provide insight into the experience of living in Lebanon during wartime and the challenges of being Lebanese in the diaspora. Alameddine use of storytelling brings to life the intricate details of history and culture that cannot be found in books and allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the characters and the world they inhabit.

In the novel, Alameddine uses the traditional art of storytelling to emphasize the importance of counter-narratives in the face of oppression and violence. By highlighting the power of storytelling to spread counter-narratives, Alameddine draws attention to the potential of stories to create change and challenge dominant narratives. The dominant

narrative in the novel is the idea that oppression and violence are Inevitable. It means something that is certain to occur and cannot be avoided or prevented. Alameddine counters this narrative by demonstrating how storytelling can be used to challenge this idea and create positive change.

The scholars assert that post-colonialism has a variety of effects on the formerly colonized nations. One of the positive consequences is the blending of the colonizer's culture with the inhabitants, creating a new, and more beneficial culture, the other negative consequence is that colonizers instill fear and trauma in the colonized people (Mursalina and Harsono 6). The blending of cultures can create a more diverse and interesting society, allowing for different ideas and perspectives to be shared. It can also create more economic opportunities, as more people have access to different markets and resources. In addition, it can create more cultural understanding between different groups, reducing prejudice and discrimination.

The novel uses storytelling as a way to explore how colonialism has affected the people of the Middle East. The characters in the novel are diverse and represent different cultures, religions, and social classes that were affected by colonialism. Through their stories, the reader can gain a deeper understanding of what living under colonial rule meant for the people of the region.

In the novel, colonialism is presented as a major theme that affects the lives of the family in Lebanon. It reveals how the characters are impacted by the drastic political and social changes caused by colonialism. The novel paints a vivid picture of the effects of colonialism that can lead to a power struggle between the colonizers and the colonized and how it can cause oppressive and exploitative relationships between them. By exploring these themes, the novel highlights the devastating consequences of colonialism, and its long-lasting impact on individuals and societies.

*The Hakawati* novel depicts the long-lasting effects of colonialism on the lives of the characters, such as the protagonist's grandfather, who is still angry about the French occupation of his country (Alameddine 29). He expresses his anger by refusing to speak French despite being able to do so. The novel also explores the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized, as well as the effects of colonialism on the economy, politics, and culture of the colonized country (Alameddine 63).

Alameddine employs the technique of using the same names and characteristics throughout his stories to connect them, the author uses these techniques to create a sense of continuity and familiarity for his readers. By utilizing the same names and characters across his stories, he is able to create a cohesive narrative that ties together the different stories and characters, allowing readers to easily follow the stories and understand the connections between them, additionally this technique allows readers to become more invested in the characters and their stories, as they become more familiar with them. Alameddine wants to challenge the traditional narrative of Middle Eastern culture and provide an alternative viewpoint. He uses counter-narrative to bring to light the stories of those who have been left out or marginalized by mainstream stories and to show how their experiences are unique and important.

The character Layla in the al-karate family is a complex character; she is a strong-willed and determined woman who is willing to go against the traditional gender roles of the time. She is a bold, independent woman who pursues her dreams and desires without fear or hesitation. Layla is also a compassionate and caring character, who is always willing to help others. She is a symbol of hope and resilience in the face of adversity she is also unafraid to stand up to the patriarchy in her family and society. Her story is a unique one that challenges the traditional narrative of the time and provides the reader with a different perspective.

For example, in chapter Sixteen, Osama's father knew that Layla was a classic Lebanese beauty, she was from an upper-class family and that if he marries her he would gain access to a world he could only dream about (Alameddine 422). The example shows Layla's strength by emphasizing that her beauty and upper-class background give her certain power that Osama's father wants to access. It implies that she is in a position to determine her destiny and that she is not bound by the traditional expectations of her society.

There is another Layla in the novel from the popular story of Baybars, Layla is a brave and courageous character who is determined to do what is right, even if it means going against the powerful Baybars. She is a strong female character who is determined to protect her family and her village, and she is willing to risk her own life to stand up for what is right. Her strong sense of justice and her courage make her a compelling character in *The Hakawati* novel. For example, When Baybars is held captive by the Bedouins; Layla goes to the camp and demands his release. She refuses to accept any other outcome and succeeds in freeing him (Alameddine 145-448). Both characters are a representation of the same archetype and symbolize the same idea of a woman whose beauty and character are so powerful that they can transform a man's life. They are the protagonists in their respective stories and are linked by their similar attributes in terms of strength and courage. Layla in al\_khrrat family and Layla in Baybars story are both portrayed as strong and independent women. They both take control of their destinies and make their own decisions. They are both capable of making the right choices and standing up for what they believe in. They both demonstrate unwavering courage and determination in the face of adversity and are willing to take risks for the greater good.

Alameddine is trying to emphasize the theme of strength and courage through the use of the same character. He is conveying the idea that women have the power to transform the world with their strength and courage and that their inner strength is something that should

be celebrated and admired. He is also suggesting that the same character, Layla in al\_khrrat Family and Layla in Baybars story, can be found in many different contexts and can be a powerful source of inspiration.

The two 'Fatimas' are another example of names and personalities that relate to each other. The first Fatima is a young slave girl who is forced to work for her master, the Emir. Despite her difficult circumstances, she is determined and brave, she is unafraid to take risks and make her own decisions, even in the face of strong opposition from her master. Furthermore, she can think quickly and come up with clever solutions to get out of tough situations. She is a strong and independent woman who does not let her circumstances define her and is an example of strength and resilience. For example, when Fatima first knew the intentions of her master, the Emir, and his wife of having a baby through her she did not hesitate; but when the Emir said he loves his wife and he does not want to have a baby with another woman. Fatima said that there is another solution; a woman in her hometown has something magic that can help them to have a baby (Alameddine 16).

Fatima showed courage and strength by standing up to her master and defending her own opinion and beliefs. She was not afraid to suggest an alternative solution to the problem, even though it was a risky move. She also showed strength in her commitment to her hometown and her willingness to help the Emir and his wife.

The other Fatima is portrayed as a strong, independent, and determined woman who is unafraid to speak her mind. She is fiercely loyal to her family and values their traditions and customs. Fatima is also a compassionate and understanding person who is willing to help others and support them. She has an adventurous spirit and is willing to take risks to achieve her goals. Overall, Fatima is a complex and multi-dimensional character who is a central figure in the novel.

For example, when Ms. Farouk was kidnapped and killed in 1976, his death overwhelmed Fatima (Alameddine 390). Fatima's strength and fearlessness are shown in the novel, despite her grief, she speaks out about the injustices of her father's death, despite the risks to her safety. She is determined to seek justice and to ensure that her father's death is not forgotten. This strength and resilience in the face of tragedy is a testament to her courage and determination. Both characters named Fatima are strong-willed and independent female characters, they both have a strong sense of self and a desire to make their own decisions, despite the obstacles they face.

The point behind Alameddine's repetition of the names of the characters in *The Hakawati* is to emphasize the importance of storytelling and the power of memory. Alameddine's writing style serves to illustrate the significance of the act of storytelling in a traditional Middle Eastern culture. Alameddine's repetition of the characters' names serves to establish a counter-narrative to the idea that stories are mere entertainment, emphasizing the power and importance of storytelling as a form of cultural transmission. By illustrating the significance of storytelling in a Middle Eastern culture, Alameddine presents a narrative that challenges the dominant Western notion of storytelling.

Through the repetition of names, Alameddine can draw attention to the themes of identity and lineage, as well as stress the importance of oral tradition. By using this technique, Alameddine can bring to life the vivid characters of the novel and create a sense of nostalgia for the reader. Ultimately, the repetition of names serves to illustrate the power of storytelling and to emphasize the importance of memory and tradition in Middle Eastern culture.

### **II.3. Postcolonial hybrid identity and belonging**

Postcolonial hybrid identity and belonging is often expressed through the use of traditional instruments, such as the oud which is a prominent musical instrument in the Arab

world. Through playing the oud, individuals are reclaiming their heritage and asserting their identity in a way that celebrates and honors their culture. It is a powerful way of reclaiming cultural identity and further understanding one's sense of self. The postcolonial theory challenges Western culture's dominant narrative. By using instruments such as the oud, individuals reclaim their identity and create a counter-narrative by celebrating their heritage and culture. This is a form of resistance against Western culture and a way of asserting postcolonial hybrid identity and belonging.

Osama's involvement with a musical instrument demonstrates his divided consciousness. It led him to remember the common Arab cultural identity, thus enabling him to express his cultural background and become part of a greater community. Through his music, he was able to communicate his longing for a unified Arab cultural identity (Al-Zoubi 161). His music served as a tool to bridge the gap between the traditional and modern Arab world. Through his instrument, he was able to express his feelings and emotions, which allowed him to connect with a larger community. His music also allowed him to explore and express his identity, which gave him a better understanding of who he was and where he belonged.

For example, this is shown in the novel in chapter Six when Osama said: "Once upon a time, the oud was my instrument, my companion, my lover. I played it between the two wars, started taking lessons during the Six-Day War, and gave them up"(Alameddine 155). This quote demonstrates how the oud has been a part of the narrator's life for many years, spanning different periods of time, including wars. It shows how meaningful the oud is to the narrator and how it has been a source of comfort and joy during difficult times. The quote emphasizes the strong connection between the narrator and the instrument and the power of music to provide solace and companionship. The oud has been a constant companion to the narrator, providing solace and comfort in times of war and peace.



The quote highlights the deep emotional bond between the narrator and the oud and the transformative power of music. The oud has been a source of comfort and joy, helping the narrator to cope with difficult times and providing a sense of connection and purpose. Music is an integral part of the narrator's life and the oud is a symbol of the strength and resilience of the human spirit that can help us persevere during hard times.

Istiz Camil the teacher of Osama informs him "You're hitting the right notes, but there's more to this than that." (Alameddine 223). Istiz is suggesting that Osama's performance is good, but that he needs to add more depth and emotion to his music. He is encouraging him to think beyond the technical aspects of playing and to explore the emotional aspects as well. This quote demonstrates Istiz's belief that music is more than just a technical skill; it is also an emotional art form. He is encouraging Osama to dig deeper and explore the emotions that underlie the music he is playing. Additionally, Istiz is emphasizing the importance of emotion in music and the need for performers to convey their feelings through their performance. By emphasizing the emotional aspects of the music, Istiz hopes that Osama can tap into those feelings and capture the true essence of the piece he is playing.

As a postcolonial diasporic topic, residing in a diverse present that is full of different traditions also the impact of the war and the dominance of the Western world has a huge impact on the Arabs; the emphasize of a non-conventional sense of hybrid consciousness (Al-Zoubi 161). This hybrid consciousness is a form of identity that is constantly shifting and adapting to different contexts. It is a form of identity that is rooted in the past but also looks to the future. It is a form of identity that is both unique and collective:

The guitar's sound proved awkward, and my pick had to strum harder.  
My fingers still remembered how to play, but the frets got in the way. I  
had to improvise. I slowed down, allowing myself more time to adjust  
[...] I switched to Maqâm Bayati [...] Images of the great desert seared

the back of my eyelids. The notes seemed so naturally logical [...] it had a soul. (Alameddine 360)

This example highlights the struggles of Osama in adjusting to playing the guitar. Despite the initial difficulty, he perseveres and manages to play a piece of music that they feel has a soul. This highlights the importance of perseverance and the rewards of following through on a challenge. Additionally, Osama's experience with the music conjures up vivid imagery, demonstrating the power of music to evoke emotion. This quote conveys the power of music to evoke memories, emotions and transport people to other places. The protagonist is able to overcome the difficulty of playing a new instrument and capture a feeling of soulfulness. It demonstrates how music can be a vehicle of self-expression, as well as a way to connect with others.

Osama's transformation from a novice to a competent musician serves as a metaphor for the power of dedication and hard work. Additionally, his joy at being able to play a piece of music with his soul demonstrates the reward of reaching a difficult goal. The imagery and emotion that he experiences while playing the guitar also serve as a reminder of the power of music to move and inspire. For example, when Osama said: "I would always choose the oud over the piano. Always"(Alameddine 164). This statement implies that Osama has a strong preference for the oud over the piano. It is possible that he has a personal connection with the oud or finds it to be more expressive than the piano. It could also be that he is more familiar with the oud than the piano, and therefore has an easier time playing it. It could also be that he finds it to be more evocative. Ouds have been used for centuries in various cultures, and it is possible that Osama is drawn to the instrument's rich history.

The oud is a symbol of both the past and the present for Osama; it is a reminder of the traditional music and culture of his homeland, and it is a source of comfort and solace in a time of war and conflict. For Osama, the oud is a way of connecting to his roots and to his

heritage, while also being a source of strength and resilience during difficult times. By using the oud as a symbol of his cultural heritage, Osama is able to resist the dominant narrative of war and conflict and create a counter-narrative that celebrates his culture and identity. This is in line with postcolonial theory, which emphasizes the importance of cultural identity and heritage as a form of resistance to colonial oppression and subjugation. By using the oud, he is able to reclaim a part of his identity that has been taken away from him. By doing so, he is able to create a sense of belonging and pride in his cultural heritage, which serves as a form of resistance against the dominant narratives of war and conflict.

Osama's experience with the musical instruments in *The Hakawati* serves to establish a counter-narrative to the traditional views of the Middle East. Through his passionate playing of the instruments, Osama is demonstrating that the Middle East is not just a place of violence, but of beauty, culture, and creativity. He is countering the idea that the Middle East is only a place of conflict and turmoil.

In the novel *The Hakawati*, belonging is represented in many ways. One example is the relationship between the narrator and his grandmother. She has created a home and a family for her grandson, providing him with a sense of belonging and security. This is further explored in the scene where the narrator is told stories of his family's history, and how they have shaped the family's legacy giving him a stronger connection to his ancestral roots and a deeper understanding of where he belongs (Alameddine 229). This is symbolic of the importance of storytelling and passing down knowledge and traditions from one generation to the next. This example reflects the idea of postcolonial hybrid identity and belonging by demonstrating the hybridity of the narrator's cultural identity. The narrator is able to connect his personal identity to the collective identity of his family and his ancestors, creating a sense of belonging in both the diasporic world and in his family. This passage also reflects the counter-narrative of diasporic identity, which is the idea of reclaiming belonging by

connecting to multiple cultures and identities. In this scene, the narrator is able to find a sense of belonging not only to his family but also to his ancestral roots. He is able to reclaim his identity by connecting to his cultural heritage and his family's history, creating a hybrid identity that allows him to feel connected to both his diasporic world and his family.

In the novel, identity and belonging are explored through the lens of a Lebanese diaspora. The main character, a Lebanese-American, is constantly straddling two worlds, struggling to reconcile his dual identities. Identity and belonging are further explored through the lens of generational differences, with the novel highlighting the ways in which the experience of diaspora changes from one generation to the next. Counter-narratives of identity and belonging are also explored in the novel, showing how the Lebanese diaspora is often framed as an "Other" in the Western world. *The Hakawati* is a novel that uses storytelling as a way to challenge dominant narratives. By telling stories from a different perspective, it allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of how a particular event or situation may have come to be. This can help to create a more accurate understanding of the truth, which can be used to shape counter-narratives.

Counter-narratives play a crucial role in challenging stereotypical representations of the Orient, which is a term often used to refer to the cultures, societies, and people of the Middle East. These narratives help to refute Orientalist stereotypes that have historically permeated Western discourse and media, perpetuating misconceptions, simplifications, and prejudices about these regions. Counter-narratives challenge Orientalism, a critical concept coined by Edward Said. The term Orientalism refers to the Western lens that objectifies the Orient, reinforcing stereotypes of backwardness, and danger. In addition, storytelling has the power to establish counter-narratives by presenting a Western view and boost marginalized voices.

### **Chapter Three: Counter-Narrative and the Impact of Colonialism in *The Parisian***

This chapter aims to explore how counter-narratives can be used to challenge unfair expectations, resist unjust systems, occupy cultural spaces, and combat inferiority complexes. The first section discusses the idea of ideal expectations linking it to counter-narrative using Postcolonial theory. It illustrates this concept with examples from the novel, and examines how these events shaped the counter-narrative. Additionally, it examines how the novel's writing style reflects the voice of resistance in the face of injustice, how it is linked to Postcolonial theory, as well as how colonialism has influenced colonized countries, and how they can use their voices to rise up against oppression. The third section tackles cultural occupation in *The Parisian*, is also provides examples of Isabella's literary work, and then looks at how counter-narrative is displayed in the chosen piece of literature, it also deals with the inferiority complex providing examples from the novel with particular attention to how these concepts are presented in the novel about the writing environment. The language used in *The Parisian* as a counter-narrative is also examined. Lastly, the final section of the chapter explores the motivations behind Isabella's desire to write a counter-narrative is examined.

Isabella Hammad, born in London, has had her writing featured in *Conjunctions*, *The Paris Review*, *The New York Times*, and other places. In 2018, she was given the Plimpton Prize for Fiction and the O. Henry Prize in 2019. Her debut novel, *The Parisian*, released in April of 2019, was awarded the Palestine Book Award, the Sue Kaufman Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Betty Trask Award from the Society of Authors in the UK. She was an Honoree for the National Book Foundation's 5 under 35 and has acquired fellowships from MacDowell and the Lennon Foundation. Currently, she is a fellow at the Columbia University Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris (Book Browse).

Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* follows the story of Palestinian Midhat Kamal, a young man who embarks on a journey of self-discovery during the tumultuous years of the

British Mandate in Palestine in the early twentieth century. In the novel, Midhat is forced to confront the difficult realities of colonialism, displacement, and the struggle for identity, love, and belonging in a world that is constantly in flux. Through his journey, he learns about the power of resilience and the courage it takes to find one's true self. Ultimately, *The Parisian* is a story of hope in the midst of hardship, as it celebrates the human spirit's capacity for transformation.

### **III.1. Unrealistic Expectations in Arab Diasporic Literature**

Postcolonial theory analysis looks at how power dynamics, specifically those of colonialism, create and shape cultural expectations. *The Parisian* is an example of how these expectations are challenged, as it follows the journey of a protagonist who questions the conventions of society. Through this counter-narrative, the novel deconstructs the underlying power structures and ideals that have created these expectations.

The novel examines how colonizers used ideals of progress and civilization to justify their exploitation of the colonized. It shows how the colonizers attempted to impose their own values and expectations onto those they colonized, resulting in a power imbalance that left the colonized with limited access to resources and opportunities. For example, the novel's protagonist, Midhat Kamal, is sent to Paris to learn medicine and assume the role of an educated, polite man. His education and behavior are intended to be a reflection of the colonizers' own values and expectations. However, Midhat refuses this ideal expectation by actively rejecting the colonizers' expectations of him. He begins to question their intentions for him and refuses to conform to their ideals of what an educated, polite man should be. He also begins to explore his own cultural identity and embrace his cultural heritage, which is something the colonizers would not accept. Ultimately, Midhat's refusal to conform to the colonizers' expectations of him is a form of resistance against their oppressive rule. Midhat's education is an example of the colonizer's expectations. He is described as "educated in the

Euro-centric syllabus of the mission school he attended French English, Mathematics, History, but his education had not been wholly embraced” (Hammad 76). Here, Midhat’s education is seen as an example of the colonizer’s expectations, which he does not fully embrace.

In the novel, Hammad examines the ways in which idealized expectations of love, and family. She uses the characters to explore how these expectations can lead to disillusionment and unhappiness, and how they can shape and limit people's lives. Her counter-narrative offers a different path, one in which individuals have the freedom to choose their own paths and find their own happiness. Hammad portrays the characters as being trapped in a cycle of expectations and obligations that they feel they must live up to, but that ultimately bring them nothing but pain and suffering. She suggests that they should instead break free from these expectations and create a life for themselves that is based on their own desires, rather than following the path that society has laid out for them. For example, in the novel, the protagonist, Midhat, is expected to marry a woman of his family's choosing, but he ultimately chooses to marry the woman he loves, despite his family's wishes (Hammad 215-217). This demonstrates how one can reject the expectations of others and choose their own path, which can lead to greater happiness.

The ideal expectation of love portrayed in *The Parisian* can create a false sense of reality when it is applied to real life. This can lead to feelings of disillusionment because the expectations of love are often based on colonial ideals. This can lead to the creation of counter-narratives that challenge colonial ideals and create a more equitable and realistic understanding of love. Furthermore, this false sense of reality can be perpetuated by the media, which often portrays love as a set of rigid ideals that are unattainable in real life. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy or even depression, as people strive to meet these expectations. To combat this, it is important to recognize that these expectations are based on an inaccurate

representation of love and challenge these expectations by creating narratives that reflect the complexities of relationships in their true form.

Colonial ideals of love involve the idea that love is a form of power and control, that it is based on predetermined roles and expectations, and that it is a one-way street in which one person is the dominant partner. These ideals are often linked to oppressive power structures such as patriarchy and racism. Counter-narratives challenge these colonial ideals by promoting love as a two-way street, emphasizing mutual respect, understanding, and communication. The ideal expectations of love and progress are used by Hammad to counter the oppressive narratives of colonization. The novel follows the story of a Palestinian man, Midhat Kamal, who travels to France in search of love, adventure, and a new life. In doing so, she challenges the idea that colonization was a positive force, instead showing how it has shaped the lives of the colonized in a negative way. By presenting Midhat's story, Hammad is able to create a counter-narrative that critiques the oppressive power structures of colonization.

### **III.2. A Voice of Resistance in the Face of Injustice**

This section explores the concept of resistance in the face of injustice, and how this is connected to postcolonial theory. It looks at how individuals in colonized societies have used their voices to resist oppression and create a counter-narrative to existing colonial discourse. It also examines the role of postcolonial theory in understanding how these counter-narratives are created and sustained. Moreover, the writing style is also examined.

In *The Parisian*, Isabella Hammad provides a counter-narrative to the injustices that Palestinians face. Through the story of the main character, Midhat Kamal, she highlights the strength and resilience of Palestinians in the face of oppression and violence. The novel serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of



oppression. Postcolonial theory refers to the ways in which formerly colonized peoples use their voices to challenge and resist oppressive systems of power. The section suggests that people in postcolonial contexts are capable of standing up against injustice and asserting their own strength, despite the continued effects of colonialism. This speaks to the power of collective action and the importance of solidarity in resisting oppressive systems.

*The Parisian* follows the story of Midhat Kamal, a Palestinian man growing up in a small village in Palestine and later in the city of Nablus. Through his journey, Midhat experiences the beauty of Palestinian culture as well as the violence and discrimination imposed on the Palestinian people by the British. The novel paints a vivid picture of the struggles Palestinians face and the strength and courage they display in the face of adversity.

In *The Parisian*, Hammad portrays the strength of protagonist, Midhat Kamal, when faced with injustice. For example, Midhat stands up for his friend Abdallah. Midhat and Abdallah are friends who have been living in Paris, they are both of Arab descent, they experienced prejudice and discrimination from the French authorities, and Midhat's strength is shown up when he helps his friend's father Abu Zayad when he is unjustly arrested by the French authorities (Hammad 192). Despite the danger to himself, Midhat speaks out in protest and writes to the French governor in an effort to save Abdallah's father.

Another example that shows a voice of resistance in the face of injustice is when "Abdallah Atwan spoke up for the first time since the group had relocated to their new table"(Hammad 168). This quote shows a voice of resistance in the face of injustice because Abdallah Atwan is speaking up for the group despite the fact that they have been relocated to a new table. He is standing up for the group and showing a sense of courage and strength in the face of injustice. This strength is demonstrated by Abdallah Atwan's willingness to speak out against the unjust treatment his group has received, without fear of further repercussions from the authorities for speaking out against their unjust treatment. The authorities in this case

are likely the people in charge of the relocation of the group. They have unjustly relocated the group to a new table, and Abdallah Atwan is speaking out against this unjust treatment. He is standing up against the authorities in charge of the relocation and showing a voice of strength in the face of injustice. Postcolonial theory helps to understand how marginalized groups are able to create and sustain a narrative of strength and resilience in the face of injustice. It looks at how the power dynamics of colonialism have shaped the ways in which people construct their identities, cultures, and histories.

Hammad's writing style is a powerful voice of resistance in the face of injustice. She uses a poetic and lyrical style to convey her message, and her words carry an emotional weight that speaks to the unjust conditions of the time. Her words not only point to a counter-narrative but also inspire readers to take action against the injustices they are facing. Her writing is a powerful reminder never to remain silent in the face of injustice and to continue to fight for a better tomorrow. The powerful words that Hammad uses convey the idea that no matter how difficult the circumstances are, people should never give up the fight for justice. This idea is further reinforced by the fact that Hammad's words are timeless - they will continue to inspire people to take action and stand up for what is right, regardless of the era.

This shows that Hammad presented a counter-narrative in this section because it encourages readers to fight against injustices and unjust conditions, rather than accepting them. Hammad's words are a reminder that oppression and injustice should not be accepted, but instead actively opposed and resisted. This idea of resistance is a counter-narrative to the idea of passively accepting oppression and injustice as an inevitable part of life. It encourages readers to take action and use their voices to speak out against injustice and oppression. By taking a stand against oppression and injustice, Hammad's words remind the reader that everyone can make a difference and that it is their moral duty to do so.

### **III.3. The Power of Language in *The Parisian***

The Post-colonial theory has a great influence on the psyche of the Palestinians generally and on the protagonist Midhat who lives in a state of instability specifically following the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Overall, postcolonial theory provides a critical lens through which one can understand the complex dynamics of cultural occupation in Paris. It helps uncover and challenge the legacies of colonialism that continue to shape the city's cultural landscape and social relations. However, *The Parisian* expresses the idea of culture and it indicates that the Arabic language contributes to the establishment of a counter-narrative. Language plays an important role in showing the culture of *The Parisian* characters; the term culture cannot stand alone; so language goes hand in hand with the culture, language is a tool for communication and the primary means of transmitting culture from one generation to another. It is a reflection of the culture in which it is spoken and can shape the way people think and interact. In this context, the counter-narrative is reshaped by multilingualism and the manipulation of culture from the Eastern world to the West. During colonialism, language functioned as a tool for colonizers to assert their voices, while also preserving Palestinian identity, culture, and religion on another side, the language fosters support and unified societies to confront colonialism, and even eliminating it from its root.

Through language people can understand concepts and thoughts that may differ from their own society, indeed by learning a foreign language, individuals can explore the traditions and social dynamics of a certain society. Language aids humans to not only learn about others and share ideas swiftly but also helps in the conservation of civilizations (Nair). Everyone has the capability to produce a foreign language either written or spoken. According to the views of specific categories of people, naturally, language is acquired that is to say by learning how to communicate before taking part and debating, but as older grow they find solutions to manipulate the situation by asking others for help in order to transfer and convey their ideas (Nair). In addition to that, language is a tool for change used in *The*

*Parisian* to express certain thoughts; it functions as a mirror to reflect the ideas of Arabs during the Palestinian revolution. The narrator of the story sheds light on the history and culture of a marginalized man who travels from his native country Palestine to a Western country to build his life and narrate the experience before returning to their independent homeland. The novel uses the Arabic language to challenge and reject the idea of cultural occupation and to shed light on the struggles of the Arab people in a way that captures the truth of their experiences. By writing in Arabic, Hammad has the ability to present her own counter-narrative and to give voice to people who may not otherwise hear.

The idea of culture is represented through *The Parisian* it is full of instances that express the culture as well as different frequent uses of the Arabic language one of the examples, is "Baris." He sighed. "It is where my life is" (Hammad 11). The quote shows that Farouq is highly impressed by Western life through which there is an imagination of the city as a world of fantasy, full of women's dance, doing as they wish without any control from the authorities.

Another example that embraces the cultural sides in the novel is this quote "ya'tik al\_afieh" (Hammad 157). The excerpt is an Arabic phrase that translates to "May you have good health". This phrase highlights the importance of the Arabic language in the culture and identity of the community. The phrase is a common expression in *The Parisian* that demonstrates the existence of the Arabic language as a symbol of culture, serving to underscore the power dynamics between dominant and marginalized cultures. The presence of the Arabic language in the novel serves to create a counter-narrative to the dominant French culture that is present in Paris. The use of Arabic words throughout the novel serves to demonstrate the importance of the Arabic language and culture to the characters in the novel. The Arabic language is still alive and prevalent. This serves to challenge the dominant French narrative and to create a space for a more diverse and inclusive view of Palestinian culture.

Hammad portrays the occupation of Palestine by France and the struggles of the Palestinian people under colonial rule. The author concentrates on the cultural and political implications of the occupations, investigating themes like resistance, identity, and displacement.

In addition, the following extract "ya tayrin taayir fis-sama' al-aali; sallim al-hilu al-aziz al-ghali"(Hammad 15). This example illustrates the traditions of Syrian, and Lebanese society. It is a well-known song in the Syrian world, sung by the protagonist of the story, and it is considered a sign of powerful expression done by a skillful Midhat in the second fantasy. These parts affected the psyche of the hearers and make them shed tears because it reminds people who were in exile and that they are far from their beloved homes. Likewise, the extract denotes the traditional culture and its emphasis on hospitality. It highlights the importance of cordiality and generosity in the Arab culture. The quote encourages people to treat each other with kindness and respect regardless of their background or beliefs. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of hospitality in Arab culture, which is often seen as an act of unselfishness and a way to produce a strong relationship between people.

The fourth example summarizes the Palestinian culture by using such expressive statements "Irahamna ya Rab—iraham-na. Li-an-nuna mutaha-yru-un-a an ku-u-u-ul-i jawab" (Hammad 394). This quote shows the effects of religion on the priest and how it is proud of its beliefs it also demonstrates that it belongs to the national spirit, and this is a strong indication of God's love and piety. The character asks for God's help and for him to inform and guide her. Adherence to God and seeking help from him, especially in worse circumstances, draws an aesthetic picture of Arabs and Islam. Through this Hammad defies all forms of exploitation, and colonialization and portrays the Arabic language as a means for the Palestinians to deliver their voices.

The narrative of culture and language is often used to justify the suppression of minority cultures and the status quo of the dominant group. It is a way of controlling the

narrative and shaping the way people perceive the world around them. Counter-narrative on the other hand, is a narrative that challenges the dominant narrative by giving voice to the marginalized and oppressed groups in society. It seeks to expose the injustices and inequalities that are perpetuated by the dominant cultural narrative and to offer alternative perspectives and ways of thinking. However, these events of culture and language can be seen as a method to form a counter-narrative, where one group is able to impose their own values and beliefs on another group in order to reshape their narrative and culture. This is frequently done through the use of colonialization and media manipulation, and other forms of cultural domination.

#### **III.4. Overcoming the Inferiority Complex in *The Parisian***

British colonialism had the power to make the oppressed people under the control of the West through portraying the East as weak, inferior, and unable to face the colonizer. This created a sort of inferiority complex for the colonized people. For that, Hammad challenges the inferiority complex because it creates an extremist image between the self and others this means that the extremist groups often view themselves as fundamentally different from and superior to those whom they consider Other.

Inferiority complex is a psychological symptom that occurs at an early age, it happens in either childhood or adolescence it was introduced by the French psychologist Alfred Adler in the 1920s, who argued that all humans feel inferior when they are children, and they spend the rest of their lives trying to compensate those feelings (Wangari 1).

Freud, the teacher of Adler, also deals with the concept and describes it as an overwhelming feeling of inferiority that leads to defense mechanisms represented in aggressive behavior resulting from conflict and repressed desires. ("Inferiority Complex |

Encyclopedia.com"). Hammad refutes this psychological disorder since it tends to produce a gap among the population, and it prioritizes the West at the expense of the East.

One of the main causes of an inferiority complex is that it makes humans feel unappreciated, and disappointed it affects them negatively including their inability to cope and solve their problems by relying on their own. This complex feeling influences their personality which makes the individuals feel that it is impossible to achieve goals and reach objectives (Wangari 2). People who suffer from this inferiority complex naturally feel alienated from social, cultural, and economic empowerment in all areas of life. They have low self-esteem and try to make themselves as small as possible through others' eyes since they see others as superiors and themselves as inferiors. There are times when people do not express their thoughts, even if they are right, or they hide their feelings inside, and they cannot take a decisive decision because they are afraid of facing society. Consequently, those people with this inferiority complex always realize they suffer from many issues.

Throughout the novel, it is clear that Midhat Kamal feels inferior to his doctor, Molineu. Midhat often speaks of Molineu in a reverential manner, and his admiration for Molineu's medical knowledge and skills is evident. Midhat also often seeks validation from Molineu, which demonstrates his feelings of inferiority. He even goes so far as to ask Molineu for advice and approval, highlighting how powerful Molineu's influence is over him.

This inferiority complex is shown in the following quote: "Thank you, Patrice, for that lesson," said Frédéric, with a jolly smile. The damage was done. Midhat wished he had not spoken" (Hammad 82). Midhat's remarks revealed his inferiority complex toward Doctor Molineu, as evidenced by the fact that he was apologetic and regretful after expressing his opinion. His jovial tone toward Frédéric showed his attempt to restore the good atmosphere in the room, indicating his respect for the doctor.

Another example that shows an inferiority complex is in this quote: “Frédéric was almost correct. Both the prospect of the first-year assessment and the scenes of the war-wounded and dying at the hospital was causing Midhat anxiety, and he was feeling increasingly uncertain about his capacity to become a doctor” (Hammad 76). This quote illustrates Midhat's inner conflict between his ambition to be a doctor and his anxiety about the overwhelming responsibility of being a doctor. The harrowing scenes of the war-wounded and dying at the hospital he visits further compound his anxiety, which is a stark contrast to the optimism of his expectations of becoming a doctor. This quote thus serves as a counter-narrative to the traditional narrative of ambition leading to success, providing an insight into the emotional complexity of Midhat's journey to becoming a doctor.

Midhat is often portrayed as a subservient character, differing from Molineu's judgment and decisions. He seems to feel unworthy and powerless in comparison to the doctor and is unable to assert himself or express his own opinions. Midhat's insecurities are reflected in his interactions with Molineu, as he is constantly seeking validation and approval the stark contrast between Midhat's statuses as a figure of authority.

The narrative of inferiority complex centers on feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt people who experience an inferiority complex often feel that they are not worthy enough to achieve success, and this can lead to a range of negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. The counter-narrative of the inferiority complex challenges the idea that people are inherently inferior or less valuable than others. This narrative acknowledges that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and that success is not based on innate abilities but rather on hard work and perseverance. Upon learning that Dr. Molineu has been studying Midhat to assess his humanity in *the Parisian*, several emotions and tensions are likely to arise. Initially, Midhat may feel shocked and betrayal upon realizing that someone he trusted and believed to be a friend has been observing him as an object of study.



He may feel a sense of violation as if his innermost thoughts and feelings have been invaded and exploited for someone else's gain. The language used in *the Parisian* as counter-narratives is a way to claim the dominant discourse and provide an alternative perspective. It is used to create a dialogue and to open space for discussion and debate. By utilizing counter-narratives, Hammad can actively challenge the dominant narrative and reshape the narrative of their culture, bringing about meaningful change and progress to their culture. In doing so, Hammad can create a powerful tool to engage and inform, enabling Eastern people to shape the way their culture is represented and understood.

The motivation behind Hammad to write a counter-narrative is that she is the great-granddaughter of Midhat; she has taken up the mantle to honor her ancestor in her debut novel. Midhat Kamal, a Palestinian born near the end of the 19th century, was known for his European habits and was celebrated by the family for generations for his memorable anecdotes. Hammad was inspired to capture this legacy in her book (Thomas-Corr). Hammad's motivation also stems from a desire for more inclusive and nuanced representations of postcolonial experiences in Parisian cultural production. Hammad aims to challenge the exoticization of colonial narratives. Counter narratives often aim to uncover hidden or suppressed truths that have been deliberately omitted or distorted in mainstream narratives. Hammad is motivated to reveal these truths and expose the underlying power dynamics or injustices that shape society.

The novel, *The Parisian*, follows Midhat's journey across time and space, connecting the past with the present. It is an honor to the memory of Midhat, the resilience of the Palestinian people, and a reminder of the importance of storytelling. Hammad's novel challenges the dominant narrative by offering a different perspective on the events in Paris. She tells the story from the point of view of an immigrant, which is often ignored or belittled in the dominant narrative. By presenting a different point of view, Hammad's novel becomes a

counter-narrative that sheds light on the experiences of immigrants in Paris. In the novel, the protagonist, Midhat, is a young man who refuses to conform to the social norms of his society. He challenges the social expectations of his family, community, and nation, and speaks out against the injustices he faces. He also rejects the dominant narrative of his society, which glorifies the wealthy and powerful. Through his actions, he provides a counter-narrative that speaks to the struggles of the marginalized and the oppressed. By standing up for what he believes in, Hammad provides a powerful example of courage and conviction, inspiring others to challenge the current situation and fight for a more equitable society.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the various themes of Arab diasporic literature. It has revealed that Arab diasporic literature is filled with unrealistic expectations, and the power of language and culture to overcome the inferiority complex. By exploring these themes, this chapter has illustrated how Arab diasporic literature is an important form of expression and a way to explore the complexities of the diaspora experience.

## Conclusion

Arab diasporic literature is an important form of expression for many Arab authors, providing a way to explore themes of exile, displacement, and identity. Counter-narratives are stories that challenge the dominant narrative of an oppressed group, giving a voice to their experiences and providing an alternative perspective. By providing a platform for marginalized voices, Arab diasporic literature has become an important tool for challenging the dominant narrative and creating counter-narratives. Through this literature, Arab authors can explore themes of identity, culture, and belonging, as well as the struggles as being a part of an oppressed group. In doing so, they can create a richer and more diverse narrative about the Arab experience.

The research aims at exploring that both authors use counter-narratives to inspect Arab diasporic experiences. Based on postcolonial analysis, Alameddine and Hammad use counter-narratives to explore the experiences of people of Arab descent living outside the Arab world. However, they approach it differently. Alameddine employs fantasy and magical realism to examine diasporic Arab experiences. While Hammad utilizes more traditional narrative techniques such as dialogue and description. Alameddine employs a counter-narrative to explore Arab diasporic experiences by combining traditional Middle Eastern folktales with contemporary references to create an intriguing and engaging story. Hammad on the other hand, creates a more subtle counter-narrative that focuses on the struggles of Arab diaspora in the West. The narrative follows the struggles of a Palestinian doctor who must confront colonialism and racism to find his place in the world. The results indicate that both stories offer an in-depth and powerful exploration of Arab diasporic experiences.

The first chapter sums up the most important concepts. It creates an overall introduction to Anglophone Arab diasporic literature, which is a body of literature that includes all the experiences witnessed by Arab people in diaspora. Afterward, it explains the

concept of diaspora, Followed by the Arab-American, and Arab-British literature its origins and developments, and demonstrates the relationship between memory and home in Arab diasporic literature, besides providing an understanding of the concept of orientalism, after that it offers all of the concepts of narrative and “counter-narrative”. In addition to that, this chapter explores the emergence of the Arab-American counter-narrative trend. It discusses double consciousness and the racialization of Arabs. The chapter ends with a theoretical framework, which explains the methodology of work.

The second chapter engages readers with analytical events. First of all the study finds out that Alameddine succeeds in establishing a counter-narrative in *The Hakawati* as a basic component to oppose the dominant narrative In addition to that, *The Hakawati* provides insights and suggests that Orientalist stereotypes can be harmful to Middle Eastern lives, and it works to expand colonialism, and damage, while empowering Arab female characters by allowing them to pursue their will without interference, thereby emancipating them. Moreover, the study shows that storytelling can be used to create a sense of identity and belonging and narrate the past. *The Hakawatis* are used to inform and shape realities that reflect the society. On the other hand, the post-colonial hybrid identities provide an alternative perspective to the traditional narrative.

By conducting a meticulous literary analysis in the third chapter, the study unveils its findings as follows; the ideal expectation is presented in a way that colonialism has the power to affect the Palestinians hence, counter-narrative challenges the colonial invasion and portrays a peaceful image that includes love and care. For that, Hammad counters all kinds of colonial oppression. The second main result is that Palestinians never lose hope and still resist and they attempt to show their power, thus they did not submit to the colonizer despite the unlimited losses. The outputs of the third part are represented in showing how the Arabic language was used as a means for the Arabs to deliver their voices during the war and that it

has a strong impact on challenging tyrannical colonialism. Besides with inferiority complex, as the name suggests it may result in low self-esteem, alienation, and demonstrating all the negative sides that affect humans like the division between the East/West, it may also lead the West to feel superior due to their modernity and civilization and seeing the other as inferior, weak, powerless.

The postcolonial theory allows for an examination of the power dynamics between colonizers and colonized, which is essential in understanding the role of counter-narratives in Arab diasporic literature. *The Hakawati* and *The Parisian* can be seen as examples of how counter-narratives can be used to challenge the status quo and create a space for marginalized voices to be heard.

Through these works, readers are exposed to a new perspective on the Arab diaspora. They challenge the traditional narrative of Arabs as passive victims of Western colonialism and imperialism, instead depicting them as active agents in their own destiny. Additionally, they bring to light the complexities of identity, as the characters in these works grapple with questions of belonging, displacement, and nationality.

The present research on the counter-narratives of Arab diasporic literature has provided new insights into how these works challenge the existing narrative around Arab identities, as seen in these two literary works. This research has highlighted the ways in which these works use storytelling as a form of resistance and to create new stories of identity that challenge the existing narrative.

This research can help shed light on the complex and varied experiences of diasporic communities. It can provide insight into the way that diasporic people have used counter-narratives to challenge dominant narratives and create their own sense of identity and

belonging. Such research can also be used to inform policies and initiatives that seek to support and empower diasporic communities.

This topic addresses a gap in literature by exploring the diasporic experiences of Arab people and their stories of displacement, identity, and belonging. By examining these two texts, readers are able to gain insight into the cultural and psychological struggles of Arab people in the diaspora, as well as the various ways in which they are able to navigate their new environments. This research has found that both Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* and Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian* utilize counter-narratives to challenge existing theories and assumptions about the Arab diaspora. The novels tell stories of characters who must confront both personal and collective trauma, and explore the complexity of identity and belonging in diaspora. In both works, counter-narratives are used to create a space for understanding and healing. Through these counter-narratives, readers gain insight into the experience of trauma, offering an opportunity to appreciate the resilience and perseverance of those in the diaspora.

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated the importance of counter-narratives in Arab diasporic literature. Through a close examination of Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* and Isabella Hammad's *The Parisian*, it has been revealed that counter-narratives are a powerful tool for challenging dominant narratives and for providing an alternative perspective.

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## Résumé

Cette étude examine les contre-récits dans la littérature arabe de la diaspora. À travers une analyse fine d'un roman de *Hakawati* (2008) de Rabih Alameddine et le *Parisien* d'Isabella Hammad (2019). Ces romans explore comment les écrivains arabes de la diaspora utilisent des contre-récits pour défier le récit dominant en s'appuyant sur la théorie postcoloniale. Cette étude ainsi explore comment la littérature de la diaspora arabe aborde les thèmes de la résistance, de l'identité et du pouvoir à travers ces contre-récits. Elle examine également les implications de l'utilisation de contre-récits pour perturber les identités dominantes narratives arabes de la diaspora. Ces romans fournissent un contre-récit important au récit occidental traditionnel des Arabes. Il démontre la complexité et la diversité de la diaspora arabe, permettant une compréhension plus nuancée et précise des personnes et de leurs expériences. Cela contribue à un récit plus inclusif et représentatif de la diaspora arabe, ce qui est essentiel pour une meilleure compréhension de leur culture. Les résultats indiquent que ces romans défient le récit occidental traditionnel des Arabes en fournissant une représentation plus complexe et nuancée de la diaspora arabe. Il fournit un contre-récit plus inclusif et diversifié, qui permet une meilleure compréhension de la diaspora arabe et de ses expériences uniques.

**Mots clés:** Contre-récit, Littérature Arabe Diasporique, *Les Hakawati*, *Le Parisien*, Théorie postcoloniale, identité, Récit dominant.

## ملخص

تدرس هذه المذكرة السرديات المضادة في أدب المهجر من خلال تحليل معمق لرواية *الحكواتي* (2008) وإيزابيلا حماد *الباريسي* (2019). تعالج هاتان الروائيتان كيف يستخدم كُتاب أدب الشتات السرد المعاكس لتحدي السرد المهيمن بواسطة نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار. تكشف هذه الدراسة كيف يتعامل أدب الشتات مع مواضيع المقاومة، الهوية، والقوة من خلال هذا السرد المضاد. تعتبر أيضا تداعيات استخدام السرد المعاكس لتعطيل السرد المسيطر والهوية العربية في الشتات. تقدم هذه الروايات سرد مضاد مهم للسرد الغربي للعرب. وتظهر تعقيد وتنوع الشتات العربي، مما تسمح بفهم أكثر دقة للأشخاص وتجاربهم، هذا يساهم في سرد أكثر شمولا وتمثيلا للشتات العربي، وهو أمر ضروري لفهم ثقافتهم بشكل أفضل. توضح النتائج أن هذه الروايات تحدت السرد الغربي للعرب من خلال تقديم مثال أكثر تعقيدا ودقة للشتات العربي، وتمنح سرد معاكس أكثر حصرية وتنوع، الذي يسمح بفهم أفضل للشتات العربي وتجاربه الفريدة.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

السرديات المضادة، أدب المهجر، *الحكواتي*، *الباريسي*، نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار، الهوية، السرد المهيمن.