

Identity Crisis in Inaam Kachachi's

The American Granddaughter

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Abstract:

The American Granddaughter is a novel written by the Iraqi writer Inaam Kachachi, and it was published in 2010. The novel has strong and impressive language as the prose of narration and stylistic elements of form; this made it possible to be familiarized through the English-speaking world as an appealing and moving story of an individual who suffered from the atrocities of war and confusion of her own identity. The story depicts the experience of Iraqi-born Zeina who lived as "second generation" immigrant and decided to visit her own country with the U.S military forces as interpreter. In Iraq, she meets her own grandmother and other relatives and begins to ask about the identity of herself and the consequences of war and human conflicts from the social and political points of view.

The approaches that are used in the study and analysis of the novel include historical, sociological and psychological criticism along with some analytic remarks which are to be found in psychoanalytic and gender-based theories and criticism. The text gives the possibility of several readings in accordance with these methodologies due to its contextual element of socio-historical and psychological characteristics.

This study aims at analyzing different aspects in the life of novel's main character relatable to her conflicts between immigration and returning, her struggle with both diasporic and national origins and identities at same times, her nostalgia hence being proud of her guest country, and how she perceives herself as different from experience of her parents as immigrant.

Key words: Immigration, War, Conflict, Identity.

المخلص:

الحفيدة الأمريكية هي رواية كتبها الكاتبة العراقية إنعام كج جي ونُشرت عام ٢٠١٠. للرواية لغة قوية ومثيرة للإعجاب كنثر للسرد وعناصر أسلوبية في الشكل. هذا جعل من الممكن التعرف من خلال العالم الناطق باللغة الإنجليزية على أنها قصة جذابة ومؤثرة لفرد كان يواجه صعوبات الحرب والارتباك في هويته.

القصة هي عن تجربة زينة العراقية التي عاشت كمهاجرة من "الجيل الثاني" وقررت زيارة بلدها مع القوات العسكرية الأمريكية كمتترجمة. فتلتقي بجدها وأقارب آخرين وتبدأ في التساؤل عن هويتها وعواقب الحرب والصراعات الإنسانية في وجهات النظر الاجتماعية والسياسية.

عادت زينة إلى الولايات المتحدة مع تغيرات مؤثرة في الحياة ومعتقدات عن نفسها والعالم بشكل عام. وفي بعض الأحيان تصف ما رآته وشعرت به كالصعوبات والشقاء عندما اضطرت أسرتها إلى مغادرة البلاد؛ فثمة حدثان في حياتها تسببا حتى في أحداث صادمة، دفعها إلى تجاوز حدود الخيارات الصارمة بين شخصيتين فقط وبين علاقتها الوثيقة بأمة واحدة.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الجوانب المختلفة في حياة الشخصية الأساسية المتعلقة بصراعاتها بين الهجرة والعودة، وصراعها مع كل من أصول هويات والقومية في نفس الوقت، حنينها من ثم إلى كونها فخورة كضيفة في بلدها، وكيف أنها تعتبر نفسها مختلفة عن تجربة والديها كمهاجرين

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهجرة، الحرب، الصراع، الهوية.

پوخته

(کچەزای ئەمریکی) رۆمانیکە لە نوسینی نوسەری عەزەب ئینعام کەچەچی کە لە سالی ۲۰۱۰ بۆلاوکراوەتەو. رۆمانیکە خاوەنی زمانیکی بەهێز و کارتیکیەرە وەک پارچە پەخشانیکی گێرانەو هەروەها لە لایەنی رەگەزگەلیکی شێوازگەریانەیی فۆرمەو. ئەم هۆکارە وایکردووە کە بەرھەمەکە خۆی ئاشنا بکا بە جیهانی ئینگلیزی زمان وەک چیرۆکیکی کارپەر و ھەستبزوونی تاکیک کە پروو بەرووی تەنگ و چەلمەمەکانی جەنگ و شێوانەکانی شوناسی خۆی دەبێتەو.

چیرۆکەکە ئەزمونی زینا (کە لە دایکبووی عێراقە) پیشان دەدات کە "نەوێ دووم" ی کۆچبەرانی و بێرێار دەدات سەردانی وڵاتەکی خۆی بکاتەو لەگەڵ هێزی سەر بازی و لایەتە یەگرتووکان وەک وەرگیر. لە عێراق چاوی بە داپیرەیی دەکەوێت لەگەڵ ناسیاوەکانیدا کە دواتر دەستدەکات بە پرسیارکردن لە شوناسی خۆی و دەرئەنجامەکانی جەنگ و مەلانی مەروپەکان لە روانگە سیاسی و کۆمەڵایەتییەکیەو.

زینا دەگەرێتەو بۆ ویلايەتە یەگرتووکان لەگەڵ کۆمەڵایک گۆرانکاری لە لە ژیان و باوەرەکانیدا بەرامبەر خۆی و جیهان بە گشتی. بە جۆریک لە جۆرەکان زینا چی ئەزمون کردووە و ھەستی پێکردووە ھاوشیوەی ئەو زەحمەتی و خەمانیە لە کاتیکی کە خێزانەکی بە ناچاری دەبوو وڵات جێبەجێ: دوو پروو داوی ژیانی کە دەبێتە حالەتگەلیکی وەک تراوما بۆ ئەو لەگەڵ ئەوێش ئەم هۆکارانە پالی دەنێن سەنورەکانی ھەلبێزاردنیکی یەکلایەنەیی ھەردوو شوناسی خۆی و ئینتیمایەکی تاکرەھەند تەنیا بۆ نەتەمەکی تێپەڕینیت.

ئەم توێژینەوێە ئامانجی شیکردنەوێە رەھەندە جیاوازەکانە لە ژیانی کاراکتەری سەرەکی رۆمانیکە پەوێند بە مەلانی ئەو ئەنێوان کۆچکردن و گەرانەو، مەلانی لەگەڵ ھەردوو شوناسی نەتەوێی و شوناسی تاراوگەیی، نۆستالجیا و لەھەمان کاتدا شانازیکردن بە بوونی ئەو وڵاتەیی چەن سالیکی لێ ئەزێ لە تاراوگە، لە کۆتاییدا چۆن لە ئەزمونی خۆی دەر وانی وەک کۆچبەریک جیاواز لە باوانی.

کلیله وشە: کۆچ، جەنگ، ناکوکی، ناسنامە.

Introduction:

Immigration is considered to have different social and economic impacts upon the states where immigrants are settled as well as upon the body of immigrants themselves. As it is a process of dislocation of groups of people between two different states and countries of which they are not native to them but, they need to integrate into different cultures and societies from their own. For this reason, and, since they became a minority, they tend to relatively assimilate their part of identity and face many conflicts in this interaction (language, assimilation, marginalization, discrimination, etc.) and many individuals confront many difficulties in practical way of living (for example, health care, housing and other issues).

Since the twentieth century's both world wars and instabilities in the states of Middle east during the twenty-first century, immigration became a phenomenal situation on international scale that resulted in causing many political and socioeconomic outcomes. Some scholars called the two decades of the twenty-first century "the age of immigration". In coming of the new age of twenty-first century, a vast body of immigrants find themselves abroad confronting different issues and difficulties differed from their own countries. These flows of movement were mainly into American

and European states from other countries around the world especially from Asia. "At the beginning of the twenty first century the immigrant population stands at a historic high of 40 million, representing 12.9 percent of the total population. As the foreign born share of the US population continues to increase, the number of second generation Americans, the children of immigrants, also will rise" (Brettel and Hollifield, 2015, p. 1).

Immigration is a broad human phenomenon across different places and histories in the world. It differs from other types of mass movement of individuals like those naturally moving to other places as appears in history of ethnic groups into different continents. Immigration process includes those people who left their own countries and homeland to become immigrant under variety of difficult situations such as large-scale war, civil war, poverty, life under threats of political institutions and terrorism, etc. This phenomenon found its own place in sociological sciences with a special concern on its socio-economic basis that scholars intended to draw many theoretical and empirical findings upon the subject (Portes, 1998, pp. 1-2).

Although these social sciences by nature approach their subjects in rather objective way, writers of any kind of literature approach same issues in more subjective experience of life matters. Experience of an individual with all his/her reluctance and doubt in starting new way of life becomes a reflection of other's experience in a way or another; it becomes general language and impression of individuals within body of immigrants.

The American Granddaughter is an example of literary work that illustrates this subjective experience of a woman that visited other countries (America in this case) as an immigrant.

The aim of this paper is to discover the conflicts of the main character embodied within two kinds of experiences; one's own previous experience in homeland and another more challenging in a foreign country as an immigrant.

Immigration: Sociological Perspectives

Immigrants are those people who pass state and national borders due to different factors of social, political and economic situations or in the hope of changing their quality of life. Some of them have will to gain citizenship or become permanent resident of the country. From the viewpoint of the sending country, they are called "emigrant" though from the viewpoint of the receiving country they are called "Immigrants" (Kelly, 2021).

In sociological perspectives there is a theory referring to the causes that lead people migrate from one place to another which is "push and pull factors theory". Push factors are those reasons which lead individuals and groups to migrate from their own country, in contrast, pull factors are those which attract immigrants to leave their country into destination places. These factors are different in nature and subjected to different questions and analysis of interdisciplinary approaches in humanities (Brettel and Hollifield, 2015, p.2).

There are many reasons that push individuals to inevitably leave their country including: lack of work and having access to local resources, being ambitious about their profitability and affluence, increasing standard of living, these factors are often called economic factors. This distinction in this way according to category of "economic" indicates how factors under this category are important to

be mentioned in case of immigration. "Migration helps improve the employment and earnings prospects of migrants, and it may also help the family at home through remittances" (Wodon and Liverani, 2014, p. 13).

There are also non-economic factors behind migration which include: persecution, oppression, genocide, being exiled for various causes or trying to escape from war, terror, prejudice and sociopolitical conflicts. On the other side, these factors mirror different degrees of fulfilment where one finds solution in destination county which in this case many of them become pull factors; like having opportunity to work and so on.

In sociological studies, one of the central concepts to explain social aspects of migration is "generational change". People who migrate to another country for the first time are called "first generation" by sociologists to investigate the difference from the "second generation" which includes the children of "first generation" born in the receiving county. This can continue to other chains of further generation of immigrants. This prolongation of generations undergoes different social and cultural changes to a degree that sometimes immigrating individuals become markedly intimate to the nation and its way of life which they considered to be their own identity as well.

Nevertheless, they aim at a better life, immigrants in the new country confront other legal and political conditions like immigration detention, racism and stereotyping, associating immigrants with crimes, etc.

Immigration detention is a practice of depriving some measures of individual liberty by state since they are not citizen of that state. "Controls in the EU and the USA following a logic of flanking measures to counter the loss of state control over movement...state authorities can see it as a solution to various problems which arise within their immigration and border control practices" (Guild, 2016, p.148).

Another condition is discriminatory act towards immigrants whether by state or public. Racial, moral and biological stereotypes of immigrants are prevalent in some counties that thought to negatively affect the society's inherent structure and values of immigrant-receiving country (Stowell and Dipietro, 2014, pp. 507-508).

The relation of immigration to crime level also is a subject of current worldwide discussion and debate. Though, the majority of research-based findings is to show that immigration has no impact on the rate of crime. These appealing facts found their consensus about the subject among publics and state politicians (Stowell and Dipietro, 2014, p. 505).

There are other theories of social sciences that relate the phenomena of immigration to different concepts and notions such as globalization, assimilation, generational changes within immigrant classes, social mobility and transnationalism. Each of them tries to explain different aspects of interaction between immigrants as distinct social group and host country which has its own political affair, societal structure, sense of identity and cultural values.

In this sense of sociological perspective, the immigration of an individual or a group is not merely physical movement to another place rather it means interacting of two worldviews and cultures that

make their impact upon those individuals who are dislocated, although being an immigrant and a woman (noticing our main character of novel is a woman) is another different matter to be considered slightly different. "Sometimes these women ran away from their communities, and sometimes they were forced to leave. Either way, they lived in exile, resurfacing only when they were spotted in the supermarket, or on the tongues of others as a cautionary tragic tale" (Minhas, 2019, p. 46).

As matter of historical fact, the social structure of the Iraqi people is multicultural and multinational with a variety of ethnic groups (Arabs- Sunnis and Shi'is-, Kurds, Christian, Mandeans, Jews and Yaziddis, etc.) who have lived together for a long period of history until now. From the World War Two up to 1970s, two of the great waves of mass immigration into the United States were reported for different educational, political and economic purposes. This flow of mass immigration is continued until 2003 while another vast body of immigrants found themselves abroad due the fear of atrocities under Iraqi regime, the religious conflicts and violence, terrorism, lack of security and service as well as infrastructure of the state. (Ammari et al, 2019, pp.3-4)

About the Author and the Novel

Inaam Kachachi was born in Baghdad in 1952 and studied in Baghdad University then moved to France to accomplish her academic degree. She worked as journalist in Iraqi press and radio and now is journalist for Sharq Al-Awsat British-based newspaper and Kol Al-Usra magazine in Sharjah. "As a journalist, she travelled all over the world: USA, China, south Korea, Peru, many European countries, most of the Arab countries, as a writer she participated in many international conferences and meetings" (Ateliermondial, 2021).

She wrote her first novel *Heart Springs* published in 2005 and her second novel *The American Granddaughter* came out in 2009 which is translated into English language in 2010 (Arabfiction, 2021).

She is also an activist and documentarist, and she has produced non-fiction works like *Lorna*. She was shortlisted for IPAF (International Prize for Arabic Fiction) in 2014 (Arabfiction, 2014).

The novel owns simple though, impressive language and style of narration that its equally magnificent translation made it passable into the English-speaking world. "The novel is beautifully written in a language that is literary yet very accessible and representative of the language spoken by young generations today. Skillfully translated by Nariman Youssef, the English edition of *The American Granddaughter* is a welcome addition to Arabic literature in translation from the recently established Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing" (Kratka, 2021).

After publishing the book, *The American Granddaughter* met different excellent reviews, articles and academic paper that praised the work for its appealing line of story and narration of the complex psychological and intellectual confrontation of the experience of a woman as immigrant and consequences of her return for her own homeland. "There are many books about Iraq, many novels...but there is only one book that brings out insights of the contradictions of such conflicts today, only one book that is so thought-provoking that everyday realities described on its pages and its storylines will resonate with you forever" (Kratka, 2021).

One of the best descriptions of the novel on the whole (in sense of form and content) is by Fadwa Abdelrahman in the paper *Writing the Self/Writing the Other* who states:

Zeina and her story belong to the "post-colonial legacy" proper. The text is a dialogic amalgamation of diverse cultures, signs patterns, genres, and languages. Zeina tries to make sense of her strange life by representing it in a typical postmodern way. It is in the realm of this syncretic sphere that Zeina tries to negotiate her subjective experience through a chain of metaphoric and metonymic associations that dialogically deliver the encoded meaning of the experience through so many texts and voices (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.14).

Despite all the literary merits and meanings of the narratives and texts, this novel can be accounted as important story of historical context that illuminates the facets of a historical period in the eye of an individual. "Inspired by some of the major and most controversial political events in the recent history of the Middle East and of the world at large, namely, the crisis in Iraq which culminated in the 2003 American invasion" (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.2).

An Account of Novel's Story

The American Granddaughter narrates the story of an Iraqi-born young woman, Zeina Benham, who has grown up in Detroit in the United States. There she takes the job as translator and returns to her own country with U.S military staff during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She has a son and her parents are still alive in America, when she returns, she meets her own grandmother Rahma in Iraq whom she lived in there when her children left the country. During this visit, Zeina encounters an ideological as well as emotional dilemma when she realizes her grandmother blames the U.S military force for all the miseries occurred to them because of the state of which her granddaughter immigrated to, where as, she still has different eyes looking a foreign country she loved since she was a teenager (Kratka, 2021).

In the company of her military staff to guard her during the raid into Iraqi town, she disguises herself in Iraqi military uniform in order to visit the place where her grandmother lives and there, she sees her. Then, she reunites with her nanny Tawoos and her mild brother Muhaymen and Hayder. Muhaymen fights alongside Iraqi forces against the U.S military occupation which makes his relation to Zeina conflicting and disagreeable. After seeing horror and hardship of war, she returns to the America with painful and woeful experience from her homeland of which she didn't expected and many questions raised in her mind about her own identity and beliefs (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.2).

The Conflict of the Main Character between Immigration and Returning

1- Nostalgic feeling and "inner conflicts" between two "homes"

Nostalgia is often thought to be an immediate feeling which comes to those who left their home and a certain period in their lifetime. The meaning of "Nostalgia" usually creates an inspiring and poetic feeling for those who write literary works of different kind. Nostalgia represents the intense emotion of an individual for his/her past related to specific period of time, certain places or any kind of event and circumstance in the past that inspired his/her the most. For the person:

It brings both the great joy and pain...He does not wish that the feeling would go away. He cherishes it. It is in his language the "algea" for the "noston": pain for the return, ache for the

homecoming... it is like a hole in your heart. The Greek word that has entered English: nostalgia, the ache to turn back home (Esolen, 2018, p.5).

In the beginning of the novel, the first-person narrator who is Zeina herself tells the consequence of visiting to Iraq which laid heavily upon her personal and spiritual experiences. She is spellbound for what she has been through and depicts this in moving and poetic language that immediately attracts the reader:

For it has honed me and smoothed over the edges of my reckless nature. It has turned the world and everything in it a strange colour with unfamiliar hues that my words stutter to describe and my eyes fail to register. I was colour-blind before. Or was my eyesight perfect then, and is the colour that I now see the wrong one? (Kachachi, 2010, p.1).

Here, the visiting for Zeina is not merely a displacement between two countries, it was rather a spiritual journey which is capable to shape and redefine the connection of Zeina to the whole world; the different and possible ways to see herself and perceive herself after that visiting. Nonetheless, this journey widens the gap between her present and her past and enforce her nostalgia more and more.

Zeina confesses that she returned as "defeated", as misery and sorrow pinned depth of her heart. She is in inner struggle and agony about how her "self" will no longer be what has been before, this even adds nostalgic aura to her past "self": "I see myself on the screen, a disillusioned saint... who raise the victory sign despite their defeat" (Kachachi, 2010, p.2).

This disturbed perception of "self" is characteristic of people who feel themselves as exiled person though emotionally have been drawn by nostalgic memories. "The exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (Said, 2000, p. 137).

Through the narration at the same time self-discovery and reflection upon her whole life, she doesn't hesitate to recall the experience of her visiting with nostalgic feeling of her own nationhood and motherland that embodied partly in meeting with her grandmother:

Eyes welled with tears when I presented her with the green fruit picked from the garden of the big house in which she spent her youth. She took the limes in both hands and inhaled deeply like she was smelling her father's prayer beads and her mother's milk and her past life. A betrayed life encapsulated in two limes (Kachachi, 2010, p.2).

Here, nostalgia makes one's connection to his/her past strong, thus, it helps to deepen one's sense of identity despite it can cause inner conflict and great grief as well. "Nostalgia begins in desire, and may well end in truth. It can, and often does, serve as a key to the multiple pasts that make us who and what we are, for better or worse" (Walder, 2011, p.3).

Zeina's home (which she never "felt full" at it) is in Mosul, her nostalgic feelings are depicted in warm embracing of its nature and the happiness of one's being surrounded by their native culture and language:

They took me to Mosul one day when I was little... the valleys were ablaze with camomile flowers. The sprawling yellow vastness bewitched me; the scent of nature made me dizzy... How could I not love Mosul, when everyone there spoke with my grandmother's accent? (Kachachi, 2010, pp.3-4).

These nostalgic feelings reveal her sense of intimacy and belonging that echoed in the beginning of the novel. However, as Fadwa Abdelrahman pointed out this nostalgic aura of exquisite description of her past in homeland doesn't make her to be in total loss.

She has a gang of Lebanese, Iraqi, Palestinian and Syrian friends... [who] met for dinner...every month at one of the Arabic [sic] restaurants in the city. [They] chatted and laughed, ate tabouleh, mejaddareh and Shawermeh, and danced to the rhythms of oud and tabla. Those are all well-known strategies used by immigrants to protect themselves from being engulfed by the host culture with all its might and power. Although, her hybrid self is too willful to succumb to total assimilation (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.14).

The encounter of Zeina with her grandmother is a symbolic one between her new accustomed life abroad and her past memories some times ago. She describes her grandmother as a "channel" into forgotten past; possibly her whole life and manner.

What my grandmother was after was a direct channel from her memory into my consciousness, without the writer's mediation. That was the only thing my grandmother lived for now. I don't know what gave her the idea that my family history would redeem me. She would use it to put me back on the righteous path and to correct the directions of my compass. The stories she told me mirror the history of the homeland. Her characters were perfumed with the scent of Iraq, and her education program took no shortcuts (Kachachi, 2010, p.110).

However, this memory of past and nostalgic passion cannot be a "substitute" for identity. Because, identity of a person is not all about the feeling and passion nor about just past.

After all, Zeina is accompanied by all the sorrow of her returning, "Here's what I'd brought back from Baghdad: a sadness like pure honey, thick and sticky and translucent, good for insomnia and poetry" (Kachachi, 2010, p.184). Nevertheless, she wishes to leave memories behind and save those that were beautiful only for the sake of their being humanistic:

I decided: no presents, no tears, no final glances at a house, bridge or palm tree. I was still dealing with the burden of my grandmother's memory. We'd barely had time to talk. My visits to her had been furtive, stolen from the war. Her project of my re-education was never completed, but what she'd given me had completed me as a woman, as a human being (Kachachi, 2010, p.184).

2- The conflict between national and diasporic identities

Since the long history of mankind, all kinds of war and violence have caused many physical and psychological harms upon the life of the individuals in society. Within the aftermaths of war (despite its infliction on humanistic values) we usually see small or large displacement of people from a place to another; for those found themselves in another state or country that is different from their own, the effects and changes on their national and ethnic identities instantly are at work. "The familiar space

of the Other (in the process of identification) develops a graphic historical and cultural specificity in the splitting of the postcolonial or migrant subject” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 47).

Thus, there is a strong relation between the concept of identity and place. “Identity is a relation between individual and his home” (Al-Zamili, 2018, p.38). Instability and disharmony within such relation make “homeland” as an “enigma of arrival”. “Being-at-home is an anxious striving for accommodation unsettled by cycles of loss and disoriented by processes of social transition and cultural translation” (Bhabha, 2018, p.4).

Immigration is a kind of phenomena which alters such correspondence between identity of individuals and groups with their place of origin along with other effects on different aspects of immigrant’s life. Zeina directly defines the immigration process as "captivity" while she was undergone its difficulties. "Emigration was like captivity: both left you suspended between two lives, with no comfort in moving on or turning back" (Kachachi, 2010, p.130). Here, immigration is linked with the notion of freedom; it confiscates the liberty of human and the right to choose the life he/she wants to live. However, such process appeared as to open the possibilities of new life in front of immigrants though often puts many strains into different dimensions of individual's life abroad.

The American Granddaughter seeks this relationship between the displacement of people (as caused by war) with their collective identity. "Despite the significance of the novel's humanistic concerns, the text seems simultaneously to express the vulnerability of all humanistic and idealistic values under the weight of war and aggression. Unrestrained power poisons any ability to affect any kind of human relation between the invading army and the colonized people” (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.7).

Zeina, as a main character of the novel, describes her knowledge of what it means to be struggling between more than one identity. She literary is depicted as "a dog with two homes but unable to feel at home in either" (Kachachi, 2010, p.147). She, on one hand, refers to this struggle between two unsatisfying experiences, and, on the other hands, she indirectly expresses the impossibility of men’s intention to think that they would be able to have “two homes” at once. The origin of a person always remains unique and irreplaceable; to think having another one merely adds confusion.

This situation of her is, nevertheless, full of sorrow and somehow unbearable, but it seems that it became a part of her as she convinced to live that way. Nevertheless, it threw her in confusion of identity crisis, beyond what "ordinary American" meant to her.

These conflicts reach its peak and strike her sense of identity when she encounters the situation while being in company with the U.S military forces at the same time be loyal to her own origin. This historical moment is also a hard one for the spiritual experience of her "self"; as though intellectually confused to choose as whose side she be. "However, her love for Iraq remains as much alive as it is in her diasporic characters. The notion of a 'Real Iraq' living in her and many other diasporic Iraqis reflects their enchantment with their experienced memories of better times" (Ammari et al, 2019, p.1).

Diaspora as a term has contemporary use (twenty-first century) in humanities as well as literary texts which includes minority populations living abroad (immigrants, guest workers, refugees, etc.).

The term refers to their dispersal characteristic in the host country and as a specific type of migration (Shuval, 2000, p.1).

In their study of the novel (Ammari et al, 2019), Ammari and his colleagues claim that the encounter of "second generation" young immigrant's experience in diaspora is from of their parents. And they call this experience of second generation "diaspora in reverse". Although, diasporic experiences may have their own effects of individuals who wish to return to their own country of origin, these two experience (one at diaspora and another at county of origin) reciprocally affect one another, "revisiting their homeland as adults, with the sole purpose of directly forming personal, social and political experiences, tangible enough to form memories, upon which a diasporic identity may be created is a necessity, before they return to their country of residence." (Ammari et al, 2019, p.3) furthermore, this returning of Zeina helps her to discover her national identity. "Since the greater part of her life was lived as an American, the only way for her to identify with Iraq is by going back to it and recreating memories that would be no one but hers." (Ammari et al, 2019, p.7)

Moreover, for Zeina's dealing with these two different lives is more dynamic and challenging than of her parent's preserving attitude towards their identity. "Understanding Zeina's diaspora pauses a challenge in her particular story, as it is multi-layered and rather complex" (Ammari et al, p.6).

Zeina tends to accept the reality of living in this situation as a person having two identities that often clash with each other. "Zeina's other self understands that she cannot shed her American component, that truth is multi-faceted and identity can never be univocal. The confrontation between Zeina and her author-self takes the shape of a mirroring glance that externalizes the character's struggle for self-definition and self-scrutiny" (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.15).

The deep depiction of dual identity with all its harmonious and conflicting aspects is a merit of versatile and rich imagination and language of Kachachi's novel. This characteristic of the narrative "opens the door for a more harmonious representation of the self and its other(s) that acknowledges the unity of human origin and rights, in principle, while leaving space for cultural variety and multiplicity, in practice" (Abdelrahman, p.16). However, above these conflicting elements of both identities, Zeina has the knowledge to deal with them, though after all, they are all humanistic in a broad sense as she would be able to liquefy them in single all-embracing cosmopolitan view. This cosmopolitan belief seems to make her escape from conflicting emotions for multiple identities and attitudes towards two different nations and cultures. In Zeina's definition: "'In this day and age, migration was a form of settling, that belonging didn't necessarily came from staying in one's birthplace", one needs to see "whole world...as your homeland" (Kachachi, 2010, p.130).

In the course of the story, Zeina wishes to do anything that makes her intimate for the people of her own homeland. "I wanted to flaunt my kinship in front of them, show them that I was a daughter of the same of part of country". For even "simply invite myself in for a glass of cold water" unnecessarily. But she bounds to be submissive for orders of her colleagues as the army force told her to not do such things as revealing her identity and her passion for the people for the sake of safety and security of them. "For the first time, I resented my army uniform that was cutting me off from my people" (Kachachi, 2010, p.5). In another place, this is further elucidated as the narration describes

her as an interpreter. She "listened [To Iraqi people] and interpreted and filled in forms and gave advice. But [she] didn't permit [herself] sympathy and displays of emotion" (Kachachi, 2010, p.84).

Going along with this struggle in showing loyalty for her Americannes and intimacy for her homeland simultaneously, the situation demands her to be a capable actor. "I felt I had the ability to adopt a role and change character, to be simultaneously their daughter and their enemy, while they could be my kin as well as my enemy" (Kachachi, 2010, p.5). This conflicting nature between two state (American force and Iraqi resistance) both having their own benefits and trying to defend their existent identity and land is greatly conquered the thought of Zeina as she is obliged to be in a state of indecision and personal doubt about the politics of both nations.

Back in America, Zeina is deeply attached to intimate feeling of her original identity. In a biblical tone, she says: "I'd give my right hand if I should ever forget you, Baghdad" (Kachachi, 2010, p.188). Though, the experience of her being in her own country refines her love and intimacy and affect her current and accepted Americannes. "This alignment to Iraq is reinforced through her choice to write her text in Arabic, not in English. Thus, her return to America is not an acceptance of the cultural power of the West but rather a triumph of multiplicity and a subversive activity that helps to re-define what it means to be American" (Abdelrahman, 2012, p.16).

3- Traumatic experience of the character

Trauma is considered to be a serious issue when it comes to define the person's mental well-being. Traumatic experience often lays a great weight of emotional and mental disturbances and difficulties upon the psychology of the victims, it can affect the personality in various ways and makes people to be in different kind of psychological conflicts.

The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner which undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy (Herman, 1997, p.1).

In her paper Mona Elnamoury argues that the self-description of the main character through the narration elucidates many aspects of her traumatic experience during her visiting to Iraq as well as all the difficulties she has been though psychologically and practically:

The novel starts as Zeina is coming to grips with what she has been through all her life: different kinds of trauma. Zeina brings the readers into her world of shattered identity and devaluation of language due to the strain of belonging to two contrasting worlds at the same time: the colonized and the colonizer. In the turmoil of her personal narrative, Zeina never fails to picture in the most subtle and panoramic way what has been going on in Iraq and the US during the last fifteen years (Elnamoury, 2021, p.2).

In fact, the traumatic experience of which Zeina encounters is not only during her visit to Iraq nor to only her within the family. It was established a long time ago since her childhood:

Zeina, the American/Iraqi translator suffers from complex trauma and is consequently possibly dissociative. She is traumatized as a child when her Saddam-oppressed parents were forced to leave Iraq with their kids. Their living standard changes in their adoptive country from sublime to ridiculous. The father, a famous TV host and the mother, a university professor become a hotel receptionist and a porter respectively in the US. The same trauma affects Zeina's brother, Yazan, who turns into a drug addict (Elnamoury, 2021, p.2).

In both cases, her returning to Iraq and her childhood, the traumatic experience of Zeina is mostly caused by the violent scene of war and all its griefs and losses that she confronts them during her visit to Iraq as an adult as well as living under the dictatorship of Iraqi regime and its oppression. Thus, violence and war have strong link to the occurrence of trauma that affect the individual's psychology and mental health of subsequent generations. (Gibson and Beneduce, 2017, p. 14). This relation between war and trauma is the characteristic of colonialist countries where they control other's home and alienate them from their own at the same time cause the disintegration and fragmentation of the national and ethnic identity (Fanon, 1963, p. 249).

In the novel, Zeina depicts the effects of such violent nature of war, the shocking moments within the actual field of battle, the way that situation affects her physical sensitivity shows some characteristic impacts of traumatic experience upon her:

I was watched a plane crashing into a tower. There another tower burning next to it on the screen. I froze where I stood. Every American did.... I remained frozen, not blinking, not breathing, not registering what I was seeing...I turned up the volume to find out if this was a movie or a special effects scene being shot, but my eyes fell immediately on the phrase 'breaking news' at the bottom of the screen (Kachachi, 2010, pp. 11-12).

The shocking aftermath of what she saw made her to see the entire world in different though strange way and she intensifies this effect upon herself to physical metaphor by describing it as though she might have been colour-blinded or now has totally different eyesight. She further elicits this to utmost degree of how her entire "self" was changed; a miserable human being:

Even my laughter has changed. I no longer laugh from the depths of my heart like I used to...Miserable, that's what I've become. A dressing table turned upside down, its mirror cracked. I laugh joylessly from the outer shell of my heart. A fat-free laugh, low-cal, like a tasteless fizzy drink. I don't even really laugh, but just struggle for the briefest smile (Kachachi, 2010, p.1).

This accumulation of psychological difficulties in traumatic experience of two stages in her life entangles with other aspects of her instabilities and dissonance of her identity and the passion for two nations. This condition makes the situation more difficult to be handled at once and her traumatic experience to be faced. "Psychologically, she is now a stranger to both lands, her identity perhaps evolving into an open quest that retains the commodities offered by the US, while also being drawn to Iraq mostly from a US perspective" (Wadi, 2020). Here her life seems to be a swing between two traumatic moments; one was her past grief, another recently one even though she is mature adult.

However, these shocking encounters with events in her life, Mona Elnamoury came to read other experiences of Zeina and Zeina's family to be not less traumatic. "It is the sorrow of coming to terms with her first trauma and apprehending the rest of them together. Zeina's complex trauma comes from the first trauma of forced deployment and immigration at hands of Saddam Hussein's regime". (Elnamoury, 2021, p.5).

Moreover, traumatic incidents are somehow rooted in her family: "After uttering the oath and while everyone was celebrating finally becoming US citizens, the mother broke into tears wailing "Forgive me, Father. Yaabaa, forgive me." There was also the marital separation that ended a long love story, and her younger brother's drug addiction--all testify to the depth of this family trauma." (Elnamoury, p.6). These self-narratives and descriptions of her show how Zeina's traumatic incidents shatter her identity and make her into seemingly never-ending struggle with these sufferings.

Conclusion

The American Granddaughter describes different aspects of Zeina's life as an individual who encounters the difficulties of human situations after the war and the psychosocial elements of these difficulties through rich and elaborated language of the narration.

The story of Zeina though has written in deep personal voice of how she feels and thinks of herself and world around, but it does resemble the experience of thousands of people who have seen the struggle and misery of their distance from homeland. Thus, the voice of protagonist expresses the wider experience of those people who labeled as an immigrant and how they think and feel themselves, their past and the country they immigrated to. In short, the novel offers an account of a life of an individual at same time a collective experience of people who called immigrants.

The novel illuminates the depth of Zeina's psychology and the emotional conflict of her "inner self" between two identities, two homes and two worlds. She is in a struggle to reconcile both identities though she can not project herself wholly into one of them; to live with them, as it seems to her, is mandatory as it is only way of dealing with it.

For Zeina, the experience of diasporic life affects the way she can relate herself to her homeland, her past experience and nostalgic feelings. When she decides to return to her homeland, she concludes that it would be possible to establish a deep connection and new memory with her country of origin after long exposure to life abroad.

Zeina discovers these contrasting experiences to be wholesome when they give you humanistic view in order to transcend the conflicts between identities and ideologies of different nations and cultures. She finds her true "self" to be humanistic above all such conflicts; Zeina exemplify the philanthropic aspect of men by seeking the possibility of being a humane above all conflicting identities, ideologies and beliefs in life as well as the pains and tragedies of war.

Zeina came back to United States with great changes in life and beliefs about herself and world in general. At some points, she describes what she saw and felt as same of many difficulties and griefs when her family compelled to leave the country; two events of her life that caused even traumatic

incidents though pushed her to cross the boundaries of strict choices between only two identities and her intimacy for single nation.

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