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Master Thesis

The Representation of Madwoman in the Arab Diasporic Narratives, Zyen

Joukhadar *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018)

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Dedication :

I owe endless thanks first to Allah without whose help I could never
have even

Embarked on this dissertation.

To the one who decorated my name with the most beautiful surname, who
believed in me even when I did not believe in myself, to my beloved father.

To the one who Allah put heaven under her feet, to my caring mother

To those who always by my side, to my brothers and sisters.

To Iness, and all my beloved ones !

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ABSTRACT :

This study explores the representation of madwomen in Arab diasporic narratives, with a focus on Zeyn Joukhadar's novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018). Madness, as a psychological and narrative construct, plays a crucial role in shaping the protagonist Nour's fragmented identity, compelling her to traverse multiple countries in a state of displacement.

By employing womanist theory, this research analyzes how Joukhadar's female characters navigate the dual oppressions of war and tradition, ultimately reclaiming agency despite their marginalization. The study situates itself within Arab diasporic literary discourse, examining key themes such as identity, loss, memory, and displacement. Special attention is given to the *hargga*—a symbolic act of self-erasure—as a central motif representing the struggles of illegal displaced women striving for survival and self-realization. Furthermore, this thesis investigates the intersection of madness, womanism, and memory as narrative strategies that shape female subjectivity in a diasporic context. Through this analysis, the research contributes to broader discussions on trauma, resilience, and gendered resistance in Arab diasporic literature.

KEY WORDS :

Diaspora, madwomen, displacement, *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Womenism, Hargga.

***The Representation of Madwomen in Arab Diasporic Narratives,
Zyen Joukhadar's The Map of Salt and Stars (2018)***

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General Introduction

Introduction to the Theme and Scope of the Thesis :

This thesis explores the representation of *madwomen* in Arab diasporic literature through the analysis of Zeyn Joukhadar's novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018). The theme focuses on how female characters, particularly those considered deviant, mentally unstable, are portrayed within a diasporic context marked by displacement, loss, and cultural conflict.

The concept of the "madwoman" is linked in both literary and feminist traditions, often symbolising female resistance to patriarchal norms. In this thesis, the term is used to examine how Arab women's psychological experiences, emotional outbursts, and internal rebellions are framed within narratives shaped by other social norms, displacement, war, and memory. The novel provides two parallel narratives, one set in contemporary Syria and another in medieval times, exploring how women across history navigate silence, oppression, and resilience.

The scope of this study extends across three primary dimensions, first of all, cultural and literary framework. This is to portray the madwoman in Arabic literature, because women seen as marginalized in the traditional Arab culture, and the male-dominated societies see women as a symbol of weakness, because they did not reveal their rights. Originally, this study explores something new and different. The crazy woman's personality is related to psychological or mental disorders, reflecting the conflicts that women face in their lives as a female. The latter becomes an indicator of loss of identity and repression, which results in madness. The woman represents the image of an entire society suffering from displacement or disintegration.

Moreover, Feminist and Womanist Theories, studies the conditions of women after wars, that is, the effects left by Western interventions. Here, women suffer from two things, the first of their patriarchal society and the second of colonialism. Women become victims of exploitation. From here, the novel *The Map of Salt and the Stars* shows how women resist and

do the impossible to survive. Through the term *harraga*, we find the danger of the stages they went through in their experiences as displaced. The heroine in the novel refuses to be erased from memory. The protagonist suffers resembled in her resistance, which causes her the fail to abandon her identity. She uses memory to recall the past, and this was increasing her hope and making her feel a sense of belonging and existence by linking it between the past and the present.

Furthermore, Psycho-social displacement occurs because in the novel, the women live through bad and dangerous experiences, such as the loss of relatives and many misfortunes, and this may greatly affect their mental health. Stress generates internal explosions that cannot be expressed, and from this, the term madness appears, and it is a metaphor that describes a woman when she bears psychological trauma and does not have mental illnesses at all. She is a worthless refugee, and from here we conclude that insanity is not a mental illness, but rather the result of social wars externally and psychologically internally.

To sum up, the representation of the madwoman in Arab Diasporic literature is not seen as a result of mental illness, but rather as a result of the repercussions of social, cultural, and even political problems. Painful experiences are the main reason for creating the character of the madwoman, and among the womanist and feminist theories are that it has been shown that the woman is an alternative voice that reveals the suffering of society and not as a marginalised being.

Overview of Zeyn Joukhadar's literary significance

Zeyn Joukhadar or Jennifer Zeynab Joukhadar is a Syrian American writer. Joukhadar has emerged as a powerful voice in contemporary Arab Diasporic Literature, celebrated for her ability to blend the personal and the political, especially those affecting marginalised communities in ways that resonate deeply with readers. Also, her writing sheds light on how the experience of being in the diaspora is not just about physical displacement, the

psychological, emotional, and cultural dislocation that accompanies it. Joukhadar's works focus on issues that she was already reflecting on as a woman who had suffered in her life and lived in diaspora, displacement and social injustice.

The Map of Salt and Stars is a testament to his skill, as a starting point, Joukhadar belongs to the writings that address and deal with issues of identity, as she lives at the intersection of East and West. This is what led her to this type of writing, as she lived in the shadow of a crisis of belonging, as she fought displacement and exile. In her novel, "*The Map of Salt and the Stars*," Joukhadar depicts the character Nour, who finds herself in the heart of the war. She is a character who identifies with the novel's heroine, as the narrator is a Syrian American girl with deep experience in the Syrian civil war. Most of the events were real, as Joukhadar stated in conferences such as Meet Summer 2018 Preview

In the same way, she highlighted women as a fundamental factor in society and witnessed a special character in stating the importance of women. She proved that women are not a symbol of weakness, but rather a symbol of resistance and struggle. In the novel "*The Map of Salt and Stars*," the narrator uses a fictional story to portray an adventurous character who fought great and difficult battles to reach what she wanted, and this was the reason for raising the status of women throughout history. Joukhadar also dealt with topics such as madness, which is a symbol to express women's psychological suffering resulting from the pressures they suffer from, and to demonstrate that women can live only with their memories.

Arab Diasporic Literature is one of the topics that Joukhadar adopts in her writing, as she is writer who lived in diaspora. When we speak about the Islamic emigration, we need to talk about migration in Arab history was the focus of iron and the continuation of life, through its use of maps, which played a great role in its novel and the journeys it took.

Over and beyond that, the double narrative is a technique used by Joukhadar's, through blending the present and the past. This comes from the present story of Nour and the

past story of Rawya. This mixing gives a temporal depth and invites the reader to connect the events between the two times and how the myth can be based on reality, and how we can mix myth and reality without forgetting the depth of the language and vocabulary she used. The title of the novel alone makes the reader dive between fantasy and reality at the same time.

Even though Joukhadar writes in English to make Arab issues reach all parts of the world, to deliver a clearer voice, as she is one of those who possess two nationalities and two cultures. Joukhadar was and still is in control of the issues of Arab belonging. She demonstrates that language is a means of empowerment, a means of emulating the world, and another tool for resistance.

All in all, Joukhadar is a human being before she is a writer. Her writings are a silent cry that reflects what she lived and what she and many others like her suffered from. She proves that women are a symbol of resistance, steadfastness and challenges. Her literary style also has a special character that creates a touch that distinguishes her from other writers. She has proven that literature can be voice heard globally.

The Relevance of Women's Relationships in Contemporary Discourse:

Most of the women's relationships in Joukhadar's writings are related to exile, asylum, war, and diaspora. These tragedies create reasons for women to interact with each other, to meet each other's needs, to help each other, and through this, they exchange food, stories, and comfort each other and support each other.

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, there is a strong relationship between the heroine, Nour, and her mother. This relationship is not merely biological, but also linked to homeland and origin. The mother returns to Syria after the death of her husband, which helps her not abandon her sense of belonging. Nour represents the voyage between two cultures at a young age. Their relationship here is not only emotional, but also symbolic of struggle and unity. Most of the female relationships in Joukhadar's writing relate to exile, asylum, war, and

diaspora. These tragedies create reasons for women to interact with each other, meet each other's needs, and help each other. Through this, they exchange food, stories, comfort, and support. Joukhadar narrates a relationship between the girl Nour and the other Rawiya, as Nour uses the character Rawiya as an effective character who helps in building a historical feminist discourse that proves that women are part of history, and this is what shapes the relationship of the female characters with each other.

Zeyn Joukhadar is a contemporary example of women's discourse in her writings and speeches. She portrays female heroines creates bonds of unity for them, and embodies the importance of women to other women. This is what is called self-exploration in the context of war and asylum. In this way, masculine discourses have declined after feminine discourses took on great importance in the present era, leading to the emergence of women's relationships with women.

Statement of the Problem:

Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018) explores madwomen in Arab diasporic narratives, yet their representation, the role of madness, and *harrga* besides the interplay of womanism and memory.

Research Question

- How does Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018) represent madwomen in Arab diasporic narratives ?

Sub questions:

- How does the novel address womanism and women's roles in Arab culture?
- What role does memory play in the lives of displaced women in the novel?
- How does the concept of Hargga represent the struggles of madwomen in the diaspora?

Objectives of the Study:

The main goals of this research are:

- To investigate the representation of madwomen in Arab tradition.
- To shed light on the theoretical framework of womenism and its application to the portrayal of women in Joukhadar's novel.
- To explore the interplay between madness, feminism, and memory.
- To contribute to the understanding of Joukhadar's narrative techniques and their significance.

Research methodology :

This study will be based mainly upon the analytic approach to explore Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars*, in order to provide the significance of the author's work, the era in which it is set, and the behaviors of the characters, we will also try to explore the issue from the psychological perspective in order to better understand the emotional and mental states of the characters. In addition, womenism and feminist theories are needed in this study, since madwomen in the context of the Arab diaspora often carries gendered implications. This study will explore how madness is represented in Joukhadar's portrayal of displaced women.

Aim of the study :

This thesis aims to examine the representation of madwomen within Arab diasporic narratives by using womenism and feminist perspectives to unravel the psychological and emotional journeys of the displaced women in Zeyn Joukhadar *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018). Also, the research will explore the presence of memory in the lives of these women, through the concept of *hargga* and others who embody the struggles of displacement and loss, shedding light on the interplay between madness, womanism, and memory within the novel. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the cultural dimensions of Arab diasporic literature as well as the role of women in challenging and redefining traditional narratives.

Chapter One:
Madwomen relationship in
Arab tradition in *The Map of*
Salt and Stars

1.1Introduction:

After all problems, suffering and trauma and pains, women in the entire world started to find solution to survive and improve herself and to change her situation in life. Women began to consider the importance of their roles in society and they used every available means to change their circumstances or traditional position in society.

Arab women are considered to be marginalized and to suffer binary gender injustice within their societies and cultures. The idea that madness or mental disorder is innate among woman has a history from ancient society, how the biological distinctions between woman and man have been socially constructed, that they marginalize, Control and exploit woman must be understood to appreciate the current state of a woman (Morris and Nolt, 2002). Madness here does not mean that it is a symbol of self-assertion and revealing the psychological disorders that women face, and this is what leads to the formation of the relationship between madness and resilience. This chapter revolves around portraying the displaced woman in light of the conflicts facing her and her determination to achieve her dreams, with a focus on women's solidarity as a form of resistance.

1.2Theoretical framework of womanism:

1.2.1 An overview of Womanism :

Womanism is coined by the American Alice Walker in her book *In search of Our Mothers Gardens: Womanist Prose*, argues that the life experiences of women of color in womanism was originally theologically oriented.

From her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, to her most recent collection of essays, *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For*, Alice Walker, the founder of womanism, is one of the most well-known African American writers today because of the wide range of themes in her work that reflect the varied experiences of the African American community in the United States. Walker studied the entire history of African Americans, from the difficult time of slavery and the protracted fight for civil rights to the successes achieved

in overcoming unfavourable stereotypes and limitations imposed by the white community. In the preface to *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Alice Walker clarifies the term “womanist” in four sections. Each section of them adds a unique layer of meaning to the concept.

In the first entry, Walker defines “womanist” in reference to the origin and the original use and meaning of the term. The only phrase that does not go into these more etymological issues is the one in which she indicates that “womanist” is a synonym for a black feminist or by extension, a feminist of color (Torfs 18).

In the second entry, Walker defines “womanist” by referring to the different types of relationships that can occur between women. Most importantly, womanists love other women, especially for those things that make them female, like their specific female culture, their emotional life, their strength (Torfs 19).

In the third entry, Walker defines “womanist” associatively. In an enumeration which lists things a womanist loves, she mainly considers the irrational side women are traditionally said to have (cf. the moon as a symbol of femininity) (Torfs 20).

The fourth and last entry consists solely of the phrase “Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender” (Walker, 1984: xii), which has become famous by now. With this statement, Walker indicates that both have things in common, but in the end are undeniably different (Torfs 21).

These four entries collectively show how Walker broadens the definition womanism to encompass Black women's cultural, emotional, and spiritual experiences. Through this explanation, one notice Walker does not disproves the shortcomings of popular (white) feminism but also establishes a fresh, inclusive framework based on ancestry, identity, and community. As Torfs notes, womanism is a more complex, multi-layered idea that respects diversity while promoting unity, not just a synonym for Black feminism.

Some authors use the terms womanism and black feminism interchangeably, despite the fact that womanism has specifics on many levels. This is most likely because of the common heroes and foremothers, as well as the parallels in the interest in the black woman and her story.

In a comparative study, Balaa (2023) interrogates the trope of female madness in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Fadia Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (1996), challenging dominant feminist readings that frame madness as a subversive act, drawing on Caminero-Santangelo's (1998) argument that "the madwoman can't speak," Balaa contends that characters like Bertha Mason, Maha, and Um Saad exemplify how patriarchal and colonial systems weaponize madness to enforce silence and exclusion. Where Gilbert and Gubar (1979) interpret Bertha's defiance as symbolic resistance, Balaa demonstrates how her animalistic portrayal and attic confinement—like the asylum imprisonment of Maha and Um Saad reflect institutionalized oppression rather than agency. The analysis underscores intersections of gender, race, and colonial power how madness is pathologized to justify control.

Ultimately, Balaa critiques romanticized narratives of insanity in feminist discourse, asserting that such portrayals reinforce stereotypes of the "irrational woman" while obscuring structural violence (1–21).

The concept "womenism," which has strong historical and social justice roots, provides a useful framework for understanding the challenges and experiences that women face within social systems. In addition, it emerges as a reaction to the historical discrimination against women and develops through many waves to reflect the diversity of women experiences and perspectives despite all the challenges.

1.2.2 Womenism in the Arab Diasporic Literature:

In Arab literature, womenism refers to all kinds of women, whether Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, or white, womenism aims to empower and promote all women by

acknowledging that their experiences of oppression are influenced by their skin, culture, and social class in addition to their gender.

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Joukhadar represents the female characters according to their experiences and displacement, the author tries to show us how women seek to prove their abilities to move forward and achieve their individual goals away from traditional norms. Nour, Despite being young and having experienced the trauma of escaping war, she tries to survive in a world that frequently seems to be against her. This character demonstrates strength, independence, and courage as they navigate displacement, war, and cultural limitations.

"I am a woman and a warrior" (Joukhadar, 244). It means the strength and resilience of women, asserting that being a woman does not limit one's ability to be courageous or fight against adversity. It challenges traditional gender roles and emphasizes the empowerment of women.

According to Floyd-Thomas (2006) in "Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society" pointed out that the womanist in everyday life strove to maintain her identity as a communal asset and not an individualistic entity (331). This argument asserts that womenism sees women as part of the fabric of society, which is evident in the connection of the novel of its characters to their communities whether family or historical heritage.

Arab Diasporic Literature has broken the silence of women, and women's voices have become not only a central theme but also a means of disclosure, expression, and a means of demanding their legitimate rights. Women's presence in literary texts is no longer superficial or subordinate, but has become a focus for rethinking fundamental issues such as honor, marriage, religion, and the body.

Thus, women's writing in Arab Diasporic Literature transforms into an act of resistance and a redefinition of the feminine self from within, from a perspective that reflects the cultural and social specificity of the Arab world.

1.2.3 Womanism VS Feminism:

Womanism is formed by the legacy and the cultural heritage of the Afro-American women. It is based on the wisdom of the grandmothers and transfers their experience to the young generations. For that reason, Walker has used the word ' Womanism ' in preference to ' black feminism ' to describe more appropriately the black woman's cultural heritage. Walker explains that the term ' Womanism ' does not come from a vacuum (ElShennawy 375).

The difference between feminism and womanism is that feminism is female centered and revolves around the empowerment of the women in the patriarchal society. Womanism, on the other hand, is family – centered and focuses on the liberation of the entire people, male as well as female (El-Shennawy 377). In this way, womanism is not just about fighting gender, also is about healing and empowerment of women entire communities affected by race, class, family and gender. It emphasizes love, unity and support, rather than gender conflicts.

In contrast to feminism, womanism views race and community as deeply intertwined with gender issues. It values and celebrates the culture of Black women and acknowledges the broader struggles faced by all women, while rejecting gender-based ideologies that create division between Black women and Black men.

Alice Walker states:

I don't choose womanism because it is ' better ' than feminism ... I choose It because I prefer the sound, the feel, the fit of it' because I cherish the spirit of the women (like sojourner) the word calls to mind, and because I share the old ethic – American habit of offering society a new word when the old word it is using fails to describe behavior and change that only a new word can help it more fully see " ("The black women's story" 94). Here, Walker supports

womanism rather than feminism because in her point of view, womanism captures the intersection of gender, race, class and culture, to include the liberation within the communal context.

In addition, Tally, Walker argues that "feminism needed a new word that would capture its complexity and fullness (216). Hence, the concept 'Womanism ' is meant to complement the deficiencies in feminism and to tackle the issues of women from a much broader perspective.

Historically, the first wave of feminism, which continued from the mid-19th to the mid20th century, focused on the legal rights of women but in practice ignored the concerns of women of color. Indeed, many first-wave feminists viewed the injustices faced by Black women as an unworthy distraction from the effort to gain gender equality (Weida).

In light of the above, while feminism has laid the groundwork for the global struggle for women's rights, it has often failed to account for the diverse cultural that shape women's lives across different contexts. On the other hand, womanism explores a more inclusive framework that embraces the complexities of identity for women of color and diasporic women.

Within the context of Arab diasporic literature, for example *The Map of Salt and Stars*, womanism allows for a subtle reading of women experiences in the Arab diaspora, one that confirms cultural belonging, resilience, and the strength of gender resistance. As has been shown, womanism not only critiques the limitations of mainstream feminism but also enriches the discourse by centering marginalized voices.

1.2.4 Arab Women Writings and War:

In the last two centuries, Arabic literature has witnessed a proliferation of literary productions by Arab women writers. The group of Arab women novelists who started their

feminist literary journey in the late 1950s not only preserved the tradition of women's writing but also made significant and dedicated contributions to its growth and development.

Arab women writers who have lived through wars and conflicts and chosen to share their experiences through writing may have experienced a deep anxiety about expressing their identities as both Arabs and women simultaneously. Writing during times of war is an integral part of the war experience itself, shaping and reflecting the social and political roles that come before it. Syrian, Palestinian, Algerian and all the Arab women writers serve as powerful and authentic examples of the creative potential women possess in such contexts.

Zeyn Joukhadar is considered to be one of the most important contemporary Arab woman writers. She is Syrian American novelist her works represents how war can change the inward and the outward stability of people. The novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* is a smart novel that follows 12-year-old Nour through a harrowing journey to find safety after her city is bombed during the Syrian Civil War. I flagged many amazing passages and insightful sentences.

During Lebanon's civil war (1975–1982), the breakdown of traditional norms created space for women to voice their perspectives and publish their work. As the conflict continued and many men departed, writers such as Lebanese author Emily Nasrallah, Palestinian Nuha Samara, and Iraqi Daisy Al-Amir began portraying society through a lens shaped by feminist awareness and reflection (Mocbil 89).

Additionally, Assia Djebar's writings have a sense of necessity and importance that induce her readers to listen the nasty legacy of 130 years of colonialism in Algeria followed by the bloody eight years of Algerian Revolution (1954-1962) then the Dark decade (1992-2002) that caused the loss of many lives because she personally experienced Algeria's tyrannical social policies against women and intellectuals especially who were her friends as: Abdelkader Alloula, Tahar

Djaout, Youssef Sebti, Mahfoud Boucebsi, M'haned Boukhobza and many others (Lazarus 2010).

Fadwa Touqan is considered one of the most prominent Palestinian poets who reflected the suffering of the Palestinian people in her poetry. Her personal experience and the experience of her homeland under Israeli occupation had a significant impact on her writings (Zaidan AlSarraj 24). Fadwa Touqan portrayed the role of the Palestinian woman and her determination and patience as a participant in the war. She represented it by mixing psychological disturbances and the painful situation in which she was one of them. She described the situation of Palestinian refugees and one of the most important writings that spoke about this is *The Mountainous Journey*, which revolves around the social oppression that women face.

Women were themselves the only champions as they expressed their life and feeling through their writings and the readers were also majorly women. To take a glimpse of the beginning and growth of women writings, here are a few writers whose contributions had a great impact in women literature. The purpose of women's literature is to define and establish a field that highlights the experiences of a historically marginalized group and to use their writing to examine their lives within the specific sociopolitical context they lived in.

1.3 Analyzing Women from Arab Tradition perspective:

Over the recent decades, Arab women's history and involvement in public life have seen significant transformations. Different regions of the Arab world have seen significant advancements in women's potential roles to differing degrees.

In *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018), Joukhadar conveys the experience of women in Arab tradition, and he depicted that through his novel, where it represents the character of Nour which characterized as a sensitive young girl who suffers from psychological and social challenges. Also, it represents the struggle of identity which makes her life difficult and sad,

which it explores the difficulty in adapting to society and its complex traditions, as she felt stressed and scared.

Nour journeys begins when she lost her father and moved with her family from Syria to other arab countries, where she faced societies and saw how societies control women and determine their fate because Nour was mixed between Arab and American cultures, however, she defied all the difficulties and imposed herself.

According to Alice Walker the concept of womanism explores the experiences of black women. She argues that "A womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender. Lavender is a pale, soft version of purple.

Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (Walker 236). Here Walker's womanism recognizes that Black women's experiences are influenced by both racial and gender oppression, integrating race, culture, and identity into the feminist conversation. Walker emphasizes the diversity of Black women's experiences by characterizing womanism as "purple," a rich and nuanced color, which cannot be reduced to the "pale" version of feminism that ignores their particular circumstances.

In the novel, "*The Map of Salt and Stars*," the focus is on womanism through the portrayal of Arab women who experience displacement due to war, this because womanism is concerned too with the experiences of Arab women who migrate to Western countries. Women in the novel are not victims, but rather symbols of resistance and strength. The character Nour also has a strong relationship with her sisters, Zahra and Huda, as well as her mother, which this reflects the power of feminine bonds in shaping women.

Furthermore, the novel demonstrates that women are not only oppressed because they are women, but also because of their nationality, race, and sometimes religion. Nour is marginalized as a refugee and an outsider, and as soon as people realise this, they treat her as a worthless human being, this confirms the womanist view that refugee women are persecuted because of their race, nationality and oppression.

In a world where women were no more than objects of sexual gratification for men, and at a time when the religious circles argued over whether women were human or not, possessing souls, Islam proclaimed:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female.”[AlQur’an 49:13]. This means that there is no difference between men and women, they are equal. According to Islam, a woman has an independent entity, and thus she is a fully responsible human being. Islam addresses her directly and does not approach her through the agency of a Muslim male. A woman would assume full capacity and liability once she has attained maturity and has received the message of Islam (On the Position of Women).

A dispassionate study of the primary sources of Islam, along with an analysis of the position of women in societies where Islam was implemented, actually proves that for women, Islam is a special blessing (Al Rashid Mosque). Which examines that Islam elevated the status of women as a source of empowerment, not oppression.

Elizabeth Fernea has written in her book *In Search of Islamic Feminism* (1998) about her travel to Saudi Arabia and how she discovered a different image of Saudi women described in popular literature and media as passive creatures. She notices they worked to improve themselves and their families and help in the development of their cities, and some were generously donating to a charitable organization as mandated by the Islamic faith (Fernea 342). The previous argument refers on how Muslim women, inspired by Islamic teachings to improve themselves and their families while also contributing to the progress of their communities, aligning with the Islamic obligation of giving.

Also, the Jeddah Document on Women's Rights in Islam of the International Conference of Women in Islam, issued in Jeddah and adopted by the fifteenth Islamic Summit in The Gambia, stands as a prominent reference for policymakers, legal experts, scientists, and academics in shaping women status, thereby empowering them in the Muslim societies (Zaid Alrshoud 5).

Also, During his well-known Farewell Sermon on the Mount of Mercy at Arafat, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of treating women with kindness and respect. Speaking to a crowd of 124,000 of his Companions during the Hajj alWada (Farewell Pilgrimage), he instructed them and all future Muslims through them to uphold the dignity and rights of women with care and compassion. He said: "Fear Allah regarding women. You have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got (rights) over them, and they have got (rights) over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means" (Women in the Quran).

Islam does not consider woman "an instrument of the Devil", but rather the Qur'an calls her muhsana - a fortress against Satan because a good woman, by marrying a man, helps him keep to the path of rectitude in his life (Women in the Quran).

Moreover, Arab Muslim women are often seen as being pushed to the margins of society and treated unfairly because of their gender. This unfair treatment has many causes and leads to different discussions and opinions. Many people in the West believe that Islam is unfair to women and that Arab culture is deeply patriarchal and old-fashioned. However, these views are often based on stereotypes and don't always reflect the full picture.

Buthaina Shaaban, an Arab feminist and scholar, emphasizes that Arab Muslim women played a significant role in the global women's liberation movement, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She notes that prior to World War I, women in the Arab world were already publishing and distributing 25 magazines, demonstrating active participation in intellectual and social discourse (Shaaban, 8). A closer look at the history of the Arab women's movement reveals it developed through three interrelated stages, each of which is crucial to understanding how women gradually advanced toward claiming their full rights within society.

Today, Islamic legal and social systems differ widely in how well they uphold women's rights, and in many cases, they still fall short. It is thus clear that the status of women in Islam is very high. Islam has granted them rights that match beautifully with their duties. What Islam has established for women is that which suits their nature, gives them full security and protects them against disgraceful circumstances and uncertain channels of life (Al Rashid Mosque).

1.4 The Displaced Women in Achieving their Dream:

Displaced women and girls need specialized support and protection to safeguard their rights and well-being. Their experiences of displacement differ from those of men and boys, presenting unique challenges that must be more deeply understood in order to offer effective assistance.

Displacement is the fact of moving from one country to another. Colonized people and people whose countries are under war find themselves challenged to leave their countries for various reasons mainly improving their life conditions. Most of the time, the process of displacement goes in a forced manner, because displaced people suffer from wars, poverty, and bad living conditions, thus, they find themselves forced to leave to another country dreaming of better living conditions.

Women's displacement does not just mean changing country, it means leaving behind memories and the old person they once were. In Arab society, women are viewed as having a place in the home, as mothers, sisters, and wives who cook, wash, clean, raise children, and perform many household chores. This has made the issue of women's displacement a sensitive one, and seen as contrary to the customs of society, especially the Arab world, which is a conservative society that follows customs and traditions. However, women choose to realize their dreams, and sometimes displacement is the door that opens opportunities.

The displacement of women is considered an abandonment and loss, as the person loses their homeland, traditions, memories, and everything related to their old life. In other words, he seeks to build a new self and liberate himself from the restrictions that deprived him of his role in society. The displaced woman charts a path to reach her dream, realizing how difficult and dangerous this path is and that she will face the world face to face without safety or protection, because women alone understand the sweetness of dreams after oppression.

In *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Nour's journey as a displaced woman reflects the broader struggles of displaced women striving to achieve their dreams. After the death of Nour's father the Syrian-American girl moved from her home to Homs, Syria only to be displaced by the Syrian civil war, being American born but culturally Syrian. As she struggles with language barriers and cultural adaptation.

Nour reflects on the difficulty of leaving a place she has dreamed of for her whole life, expressing:

"How can we leave a place I've been waiting to see my whole life? How can we leave twice?" (Joukhadar 83). The mother's response, "You can't bake bread without flour. You can't draw a map of a place you've never been," emphasizes the need for essential resources and experiences to rebuild one's life, a metaphor that resonates with the struggles displaced women often face in creating a new life in a foreign environment (Joukhadar,83). These two arguments offer connotations about the experience of displacement, nostalgia and the difficulties that people especially women, face as they try to rebuild their lives after losing their homeland.

Also, in the novel *Americanah* (2015), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, notices that "She hoped so. Often, she would sit in cafés, or airports, or train stations, watching strangers, imagining their lives, and wondering which of them were likely to have read her blog"

(Adichie 2). This experience of displaced woman who struggle with emotions of alienation in a strange setting while searching for a sense of belonging.

Women face a number of challenges when pursuing their goals and seeing the statistics can be discouraging. However, if you have big aspirations, do not let these realities hold you back. Displaced women, despite facing immense adversity, are finding ways to rebuild their lives, claim their rights, and pursue their dreams. They show that with the right support whether through skills training, funding, displaced women can be agents of change, not just victims of circumstance.

1.5 Conclusion:

The novel of *The Map of Salt and Stars* gives a powerful exploration of the womanism ideals, offering how did a displaced woman deal with displacement and loss. This chapter focused on the literary method that Zeyn Joukhadar adopted in preparing this work and her reliance on the things she experienced in writing the novel and the wars that she also went through. Additionally, it tackles the idea of how Arab society views women, especially Arab women, in terms of customs and traditions and how they treat them. This chapter examines the wishes, dreams and the ability of woman to change her position in the society not just as being a daughter, wife or a mother but rather as normal citizen with regular rights and duties. In all the means and by a general agreement, it succeeded to change woman from a slave or even an animal to a human being with rights and chances in living their lives in the way they want it.

**Conceptual framework in Chapter
Two:**
The Map of Salt and Stars

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two offers the conceptual framework which relied upon for the literary analysis of the novel, to depict the madwomen in the Arab Diaspora Joukhadar's novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, which aims to prove that the madwoman in literature is not a victim.

Then, this will shed light on family relations within the Arab diasporic literature context by providing the complexities and the struggles of a family through the story of the main character Nour who experienced a special relationship with his father.

In addition, the following chapter it will explore the concept of madwomen and their relationship to the protagonist, which offers a critique of societal expectations and female struggles. We will also examine the feminist perspective through the portrayal of women.

2.2 Arab Diaspora and Literature:

Millions of people around the world are fleeing their native homelands for countless reasons, such as disease, persecution, and war. It is a phenomenon that we call diaspora. The meaning of diaspora has changed over time; it is when a group of people is dispersed from their native homelands to other locations around the world. There are several examples of diasporas throughout world history, such as the Arab Diaspora.

The Arab Diaspora requires engaging painful questions, caused by the human rights abuses in some Arab countries to seek safety abroad, unemployment rates, and many other miserable things. It refers to Arab communities who have migrated or been forced to move from their Arab countries and found themselves in non-Arab countries, Writers used literature as a powerful tool to express their traumatic diasporic experience and to navigate the complexities of displacement.

Zahia Smail Salhi in her edited book *The Arab Diaspora: Voices of an Anguished scream* (2006),

believed that literature represents a breathing space for the Arab Diaspora, a space through which the authors voice their ephemeral joys and their ever-resurrecting pains, it also acts as a bridge between the Diaspora writer's host society on the one hand, and their country of origin on the other (Salhi 15). Which means that literature provides a creative and emotional outlet for the Arab Diaspora where writers can express the complexities of displacement, feelings and capturing both happiness and pain. Additionally, Salhi explains the role of literature in connecting the diaspora's host society with their countries of origin.

2.2.1 Arab Anglophone literature:

Arab Diasporic writers choose to write in the language of host countries rather than their native tongue. By writing in languages like English, French, this is Anglophone Arab literature, which allows them to navigate their dual identities and amplify their voices on the global stage also to reach a broader, international audience.

However, Anglophone Arab diasporic literature is special genre because it tells the stories of refugees trying to find themselves in a new society, as they face struggles of race, ethnicity, gender, and language, exploring the complexities of what it is like to live between two worlds, as well as themes of identity, belonging, displacement.

Arab Anglophone authors increasingly demonstrate both the diversity of the Arab cultural roots on which they draw and the diverse ways in which these cultural roots play out in the West. For some, Arab Anglophone literature remains a domain that simply narrates leaving behind one identity and acquiring a new one (Al Ghaberi 12).

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 a few other writers, over a duration of forty-eight years, Khalil Gibran achieved high success for an Anglophone Arab writer (2).

2.2.2 The quest of identity:

The novel by Assia Djébar, *Femmes d'Alger dans leurs appartements* (1980), interweaves the stories of the lives of three Muslim Algerian women: Sarah, Baya, and Fatma. The novel explores the quest for female identity by shedding light on women's lives in the pre- and post-colonial eras. She depicts women subduing and suffering in a male-favouring society (Rahmani 24).

On the other hand, searching for identity is also considered a feature of Arab Diasporic literature, which serves to provide the combination of personal experiences and societal expectations. Arab writers in Diaspora are challenging stereotypes, preserving memory and creating new identities that reflect their unique experiences by blending them with Western literary forms.

Brah (1996) points out that the concept of identity, much like culture, is difficult to pin down. We often refer to different identities, acknowledging that our sense of self varies in different situations and changes over time. "We know from our everyday experience that what we call 'me' or 'I' is not the same in every situation; that we are changing from day to day" (20).

2.2.3 Arab American Literature:

Arab American authors increasingly demonstrate both the diversity of the Arab cultural roots on which they draw and the diverse ways in which these cultural roots play out in the U.S. For some, ArabAmerican literature will always be about the narrative of leaving behind one identity and acquiring a new one (Majaj 45).

Palestinian-American Naomi Shihab Nye offers another example of a writer who affirms and gives voice to Arab culture and tradition while at the same time making space for change. Nye, daughter of a Palestinian Muslim father and an American Christian mother, is one of the most well-known of ArabAmerican authors: a prolific writer who has earned an avid readership among both Arab-American and mainstream American audiences, children and adults, Nye has managed to bring Arab culture and politics into the U.S (Majaj 15).

In Diasporic Literature, characters may experience a sense of detachment from both societies where the norms, values, and lifestyles differ from their own, this detachment can lead to conflicts and tensions within the new community. Ultimately, the diaspora subject confronts a clash that leads to inner alienation and a quest for identity or belonging in this new home. However, establishing this new home often requires compromises for coexistence within the new society or even assimilation at times.

2.3 Family Relations:

The family is an influential factor in a person's life. Based on love, support, and shared experiences, it is considered the central social security system for the young and older people, one of the most basic elements of human relationships, and it has a major role in a person's development. In traditional society, family comes in second after faith in shaping Arab lives. It is the basic unit that teaches values and traditions that embody commitment and unity, honour, loyalty, and obligations.

The family in the Arab culture, parents take care of their children well into their adult lives, and children reciprocate by taking responsibility for their parents as they age. The responsibilities that Arabs usually handle are done with great pride (Abed-Rabbo 1). This support can be emotional, financial, or involve helping them with life decisions.

2.3.1 Father-son relationship in the Arab tradition:

Literature indicates the importance of the father-son relationship and the need to maintain quality relationships in order to sustain healthy development in a child.

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Joukhadar indicates the journey of Nour and her family. Nour reflects on the events of her journey to process her feelings and emotions surrounding the death of her father.

Nour starts her journey with her mother, and each time they arrive in a new country, memories of her father, who passed away recently. In the novel, Nour says: I thought maybe if I could see Baba ne more time, I would be able to stop missing him (Joukhadar, 78). This provides a strong relationship between a child and father, father-son relationship, in shaping one's sense of identity. Nour expresses a desire to meet her Baba, in hopes that seeing him again would be able to stop feeling like she misses him.

Pfiffner, McBurnett and Rathouz (2001), compared families with and without fathers to determine the effect a father has on the antisocial qualities present in each family member. Additionally, in the Arab family, the father traditionally holds a central role, expected to be rational, wise, productive and understanding to an Arab ideal. However, in the modern Arab family, the father's role has evolved. Today, Arab fathers share authority and responsibility more equally with the mothers and children, differing from the traditional paternal role.

In this sense, sociologists generally classify families in the Arab family as both patriarchal and matriarchal at the same time, while families can be categorized as dominated by either the father or the mother.

2.3.2 Mother-son relationship:

The Arab mother often has a more lasting and practical influence on the children in the society; her silent work and continued service are remembered and appreciated. Usually, a mother has on her children's lives and the immeasurable value of her love and guidance. It serves as a reminder to always cherish and appreciate the sacrifices mothers make for their families.

In *The Map of Salt and Stars*, the relationship between Nour and her mother is deeply emotional; it is a blending between love, loss and the impact of displacement, and we can see this in the following quote:

Nour, habibti! Mama rushes to me, surrounding me with hair and warmth. I was so worried! (Joukhadar 117).

This captures the strong relationship between Nour and her mother.

Moreover, mothers sometimes face difficulties in raising their children by teaching them what is right and what is wrong, which places a great responsibility on them in guiding them. Lina Slaymaker, an Iraqi mother of two teenage daughters, spoke about her experience raising her daughters, whose father is Italian-English. "I teach my daughters about Islam but they are constantly being influenced by their friends. For example, my daughters say I'm homophobic but I am not. They think I'm weird. Although I could be wrong, to my understanding, this is not the norm (El-Zoubaidi 2) . In this quote, she tries to express to her daughters that they are adopting perspectives through their social space that clash with the beliefs she's trying to teach at home.

In some cases, it becomes apparent that parents or other close family members hold strong views about certain relatives, which could create tension. For example, a parent may decline to communicate with or maintain a relationship to specific relatives in situations where there are past unresolved problems.

At the end, family serves as the primary social unit responsible for safeguarding the core elements that define a society's general human characteristics and specific national, ethnic, and religious identity.

2.4 Madwomen and Feminism:

Madness has been perceived for centuries metaphorically and symbolically as a feminine illness and continues to be gendered into the twenty-first century. Works of art and literature and psychiatric medicine influence each other as well as our understanding and perception of mental illness. Throughout history, images of mental illness in women send the message that women are weak, dangerous, and require containment because we must control what we perceive to be uncontrollable (Julianna 1).

The concept of madwoman emerged and was explored during the second wave of feminism (1960s-1980s). This wave focused on issues such as women's rights, gender equality, and challenging the societal norms that confined women to traditional roles.

In thesis entitled “Frailty, thy name is Woman: Depiction of Female Madness”, Little Julianna depicts female madness and how women were solely seen as wives and mothers; they followed their masculine relatives in everything; their fathers, brothers, or husbands. They felt ignored, depressed, and passive. All these led them to hysteria, mental disorder, depression and madness (Julianna 1-2). This saying that madness is viewed as symbolic and gendered, linked to women.

Feminism and feminist scholars analyse madness by exploring its origins and main causes, often through women's personal experiences across different traditions and cultures. These societies silence women's voices, talents, and rights, which deeply impacts their psychological well-being and causes immense suffering. Feminist writers also focus on the significant consequences of madwomen in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, making it a central theme in their work.

Moreover, Gilbert and Gubar discussed, in their text *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), that the insane woman is a central element of feminist rebellion (qtd. in Rogers 7). In a world dominated by gender inequalities, writers who portrayed rebellious femininity often faced marginalization, much like madwomen characters in their works.

2.4.1 Madwoman in *The Map of Salt and Stars*:

In the novel, Nour is the character who officially represents the madwoman as a trope. In the novel, *The Map of Salt and Stars*, the concept of a madwoman is tied to the psychological effects of war, displacement, and loss. Nour's madness becomes a reflection of her struggles of displacement, the death of her father and her home is destroyed in Homs, which depicts a woman suffering, repression and trauma. I feel for the first time how far away we are from Homs (Joukhadar 95). This quote examines Nour's pain of displacement and loss, which can lead to madness.

Joukhadar added in her novel the following argument which refers to the onset of madness , and this when Nour said : At first, I forget what to do, and I stiffen up. I'm afraid that if I don't, the last hug I got from Baba will seep out through my pores and be lost forever (Joukhadar 103). Another quote that depicts the depth of Nour's emotional pain of the death of her father, she is navigating as a refugee and someone who has been separated from her past.

For Foucault, madness and sanity are mutually constructed. He speaks of the "man of madness and the man of reason, moving apart, are not yet disjunct...Here madness and nonmadness, reason and nonreason are inextricably involved: inseparable at the moment when they do not yet exist." Sanity and insanity are dualistic oppositions, but for Foucault, they are coexisting (Alshammari 3). This passage illustrates Foucault's opinion that the concepts of madness and insanity are not fixed opposites but are constructed about each other.

Furthermore, Foucault argued, "madness and the madman [became] major figures, in their ambiguity: menace and mockery, the dizzying unreason of the world, and the feeble ridicule of men" (Alshammari 1).

Ultimately, the mad protagonist often lives within the familiar world of civilised society, although his madness can be the cause to withdraw into a more primal, untamed state, "wild man" of tradition. While his erratic thoughts and behaviours may define his role. Madness is just one aspect of his character; it typically manifests in extreme circumstances, rather than being a constant trait.

2.4.2 Hysteria :

By the mid-19th century, women outnumbered men in overcrowded asylums. This period saw middle-class norms defining what was considered sane or insane, and the belief that women's biology caused madness led to the widespread diagnosis of hysteria among white, middle-class Victorian women.

It is important to note that hysteria often linked to reproductive and sexual issues, was primarily attributed to these women, who were expected to conform to strict roles of

domesticity and virtue. In contrast, lower-class women and women of colour, who were often demonised, were rarely diagnosed with hysteria. This distinction stemmed from Victorian gender roles, which emphasised the separation of spheres, with men working outside and women managing domestic duties. Women's primary role was to uphold moral values and prepare the next generation for this way of life.

Greek, the meaning of the womb. Hysteria was one of the popular disorders of the United States, Britain, and Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the syndrome became so common as to become a way of life (Julianna 21).

Namely, Victorian psychiatrist, Henry Maudsley, believed that many suffering from Hysteria were actually young women who believing or claiming that they cannot rise or walk, lie on bed all day long became objects of attentive concern of the part of their parents or relatives, although, their disability is a matter of disability of will (Showalter, *malady* 133). This point of view indicates that women who suffer from psychological conflicts are weak-willed and they have no will, and that hysteria comes from gendered assumptions.

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, hysteria is embodied through women suffering from war and exile, especially Nour, who suffered from emotional disturbances that led to shock due to loss and lack of belonging. Sudden crying spells and the confusion of reality and myth are among the hysterical effects Nour suffered as a result of the war. Hysteria here does not represent a psychological illness, but rather an indicator of alienation and separation from one's homeland. Thus, Joukhadar uses the mythical story as a narrator to embody hysteria, indicating that Nour was escaping into fantasy as a psychological mechanism to escape the harsh reality.

All things considered the belief that patients were pretending their conditions led to treatments based on psychiatric hysteria that reinforced the authority of the doctors through indifference and neglect. These methods included harsh practices like freezing cold water

showers, holding the patient's breath, physical abuse, shaving their heads, and humiliating them by parading them in front of their families and friends. These dehumanising actions were meant to assert control over the patients, often stripping them of dignity in the process.

Conclusions :

This work of fiction illustrates how Madwomen is employed to challenge societal and cultural boundaries and norms, revealing how women have been restricted, demonized, and invalidated. Although the madwoman trope has roots in deeply patriarchal traditions of thought and literature, it has been reclaimed in recent centuries. In this chapter, we have examined the Arab Diaspora and familial bonds to reshape the concept of madwomen. This has allowed the trope to be used as a way of affirming women's experiences, emotions. Ultimately, the madwoman trope has come to serve as a tool for critiquing society and its restrictive perceptions of women.

Chapter three :

Analysis of the framework

Introduction :

Joukhadar's novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* explores the struggles of the protagonist, Nour, and her family as they are forced to leave their homeland due to the Syrian civil war. Although Nour has lost her father, his presence continues to linger in her mind, serving as a source of comfort and guidance as she journeys across the Middle East and North Africa, eventually arriving in Europe.

The third chapter aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon involving a growing number of Arab women participating in the *hargga* movement, seeking to cross the Mediterranean Sea. It also sheds light on the women involved in this form of irregular migration, a reality that has been imposed on Arab societies due to various socio-political pressures.

Indeed, this chapter examines the relationship between madness, feminism, and memory in *The Map of Salt and Stars*, exploring how women remember, resist, and redefine themselves through the emotional and psychological journeys of displacement.

3.2 Unrevealing the displaced Women:

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, the protagonist Nour is forced to adopt a fake identity to protect herself from society, and this is what makes her live a big lie. However, she misses and yearns for her real identity. Nour always felt lost and did not belong because she would remain a displaced woman despite everything. During her displacement journey, Nour was portraying a personality different from her own in order to be safe. Still, her memories and past continued to live within her. Nour and her family found it necessary to hide their identity to break the barrier of danger while crossing the countries they were heading to, and their fear of rejection, deportation, and exploitation.

‘Today, like every day, I look for the salt where I left my voice in the earth’ (10). This quote refers to the journey of a displaced woman who is trying to restore what was lost in the process of displacement: her voice, identity, and sense of belonging.

Additionally, since Nour is an American-Syrian, she is fluent in the English language, and her Arabic is somewhat weak. In the novel, Nour appears, and she hides her English in order to keep the risks away from her. They might think that she is an American woman who has relations with the West, and this becomes a threat to her journey of displacement. There is a quote in the novel that refers to this idea, “Whatever happens,” she says, “don’t say anything. Your English will give us away” (225). Here, her sister warned Nour to speak English, in order to avoid exposing herself and people would know that she is a stranger, which would lead people to doubt them. I can feel the Arabic translations behind the English words, as though my brain has become two. (235).

Furthermore, Nour only identified herself by her name and did not mention her family name. Hence, that they would not know that she was the daughter of Khaled for fear of revenge, and that they would not know that she is from Damascus. Nour was also trying to hide her body in order to preserve her identity. She wore worn-out clothes to appear as a displaced woman and bent her back to appear sick and disabled just so that others would not exploit her. She also put ashes in her eyes to appear exhausted and tired, that no one would suspect her.

Moreover, one can see that Nour is portrayed as distinguished by living with memories only, which gives her a unique way of experiencing the world. For example, when she says, “No matter where I am, I’ll put my story in the ground and the water. It’ll get to Baba, and it’ll get to you too” (11), this quote shows Nour’s deep connection to memory, family, and storytelling, even in the face of separation and loss.

Nour had scars and wounds (275). Nour covered them with mud, they would not be discovered and would turn out to be just dirt. She lied about the wounds and made-up stories

that had no basis in truth, for example, she would mention places that didn't exist. She usually covers her scars by wrapping them in cloth to make them appear to be just ordinary wounds.

Despite all of this, Nour used those scars as a symbol to remember Damascus and her life before. Once, Nour had to show her arm to the nurse in the camp so that she could treat her wound. She was afraid that they would know that she was a displaced person from Damascus, but to be honest, the nurse was Syrian and asked her, Damascus? Then she covered it without comment. Her scars were like a map showing where she was from.

In many cases, Nour preferred to remain silent rather than speak, for that would be a dangerous matter. She assumed many identities, but this did not make her happy. Rather, she felt that her identity was fading little by little however, the memories lived with her, she remembered Damascus, her father, her home before and everything that connected her to her identity.

3.3 Representation of *Hargga* in *The Map of Salt and Stars* :

Illegal migration is not particular to a given society, it is rather a global phenomenon which has resulted from various circumstances such as unemployment, economic hardship and war. In the North African societies' dialect, this social phenomenon is referred to as '*Hargga*'. It is a term associated with those who burn the borders illegally on makeshift boats seeking fortune as asylum seekers in Europe because they are bored and fed up with the lack of opportunities in their home country.

The phenomenon of migration has long been a part of life in Arab societies, shaped by history and personal stories of change. Over the years, it has not only transformed regions but also impacted the lives of individuals across all walks of life, whether through the lens of gender, culture, or class. migration continues to touch people deeply, influencing their hopes, challenges, and opportunities for a better future.

Undocumented existence is a significant aspect of Latina/o existence; consequently, for Ledesma, ‘the voices of undocumented immigrant subjects present in Chicana and Chicano narratives should be read, understood, and discussed as a fundamental part of Chicano experience’” (Ledesma, *Undocumented Crossings* 1). This quote highlights how undocumented migration is not only present but central to Latina and Chicana literary narratives and identity.

In the same corner, “The construction of our current concept of ‘illegal immigrants’ has involved a pervasive racialization of the category, such that illegal immigrants are assumed to be predominantly Mexican, and Mexicans are similarly assumed to be largely ‘illegal.’” (Caminero-Santangelo 2). The previous statement confirms that illegal immigration is a racist and political concept, which influences how people perceive Latinx individuals regardless of citizenship status.

To put it differently, the reasons that drive people to the hargga from their homelands and risk their lives are to escape the painful reality in which they live. They flee in search of a better place that will shelter them and help them start living in better conditions. Generally, the term of hargga refers to migration by dangerous boats, risking life by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. It is a common term in North Africa because their people resort to this kind of migration.

Debdouche and Saoudi state in their article published in *Ichkalat Journal*, these political, social, and economic exclusions lead the leftovers to take such hazardous journeys for better living standards” (Debdouche and Saoudi 91). The quote means that systemic oppression and inequality force people to migrate under dangerous conditions, their lives are difficult, and opportunities limited that they’re willing to risk dangerous.

In the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, Joukhadar portrayed Nour's migration as something imposed,

not a choice. In search of a safer life, better than the one she was living, she began her illegal migration with her family, embarking on dangerous journeys, escaping from Syria to Jordan, then Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco, finally reaching Ceuta, Spain.

Hargga seeks to escape the reality of injustice, and deep down, Nour was seeking more than survival; she was searching for meaning, a voice, and a place where she could be visible, not hidden. Despite her childhood, Nour goes through a journey full of fear, hunger and fatigue. It was a psychological journey, like being lost from one world to another. Nour says:

Zahra and I pick our way between the crates (250). In this argument, the crates evoke a sense of transience and impermanence, symbolising how displaced individuals are often treated as cargo moved, hidden, and stored rather than welcomed or protected.

Nour faced many difficulties and dangers during her journeys and crossing borders, for example, when crossing the Lybian, they were treated like goods, being asked for money, being them silent, being held in trucks, and mistreated. It was full of gangs and smugglers. Zahra asks, how much? the man eyes her and names a sum. American dollars or Euros, he says. Zahra argues with him, but she has nothing to bargain with (226).

I read in a book once that freezing to death isn't a bad way to go, that right before you die, you feel warm instead of cold. But I don't want to die (256). This quote shows how close to death

Nour felt; she's in such a desperate, life-threatening situation that she's thinking about how people die from cold, but almost with acceptance.

It's too cold to fall asleep, but we soon lose control of our numb knees. We bounce and crash into the wooden door when the truck goes over a hill (256). They were suffering, hungry and cold, but it was better than death. In Nour's case, hargga is a strategy to recover her position in society, caused by wars and political conflicts. Hargga becomes her last resort to escape an unknown fate. However, this escape does not mean the end of her suffering; rather the beginning of a new journey of fear.

In Northern Africa, the word “hargga,” which is derived from the Arabic language and is synonymous with illegal immigration, stands for “to burn,” referring to the process by which “the harragas,” or illegal immigrants, burn the borders and their passport papers, since they lack visas, in the hopes of a better life in Europe (Lalami 5).

Along the migration route from Western Algeria to the Southeastern Spain, in places like Alicante, Marseille, and nearby Algerian cities, researchers spoke with women who had made the difficult journey known as harrga. Their stories were collected alongside on-the-ground observations and statistics. What the study suggests is powerful, in the face of heavy social pressure and deep-rooted stigma back home, these women aren’t just running away, they are fighting to take back control of their lives. Through courage and resilience, they are crafting their paths and reaching for futures where they can finally belong and be seen.

By escaping this status, she and many other women are forced to make sacrifices to get better opportunities in life as the project of illegal emigration or what we call in North African societies. Hargga allows women to freely choose their desires in the new society without restrictions and the need to escape from the painful.

We conclude that both before and after their journey, harrga are in two different situations. In addition to breaking social standards, it initially travels illegally, destroying borders. Thus, the shift in his society's customary structure highlights their migration, which is a novel phenomenon in and of itself.

3.4 The Interplay between, Madwomen, Womanism and Memory:

The term “madness” is the colloquial term used to describe insanity, the fragmented and chaotic state of the mind of the person who becomes detached from reality (Evans 1). Casey B, et al conduct research in order to explore human mental illnesses. Their study focuses mainly on how people may be negatively influenced by their environments and their beliefs, which cause their mental insanity. It is suggested that a major solution for people

suffering from psychological inconsistencies is to share their personal experiences and stories with others. By doing so, they can overcome their problems (Casey et al 89).

The concept of madwomen embodies a psychological disorder in women, as it affects them because of their connection between the past, present and future sometimes. The fiction may have exceeded the norm, women become obsessed with imaginary things that lead them to what are called madwomen. For example, in the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars*, it is used as an alternative to recover the lost identity in the shadow of diaspora and displacement.

Shahd Alshammari mentioned, “The theme of madness and madwomen protagonists is a textual strategy, one that makes use of fragmentation and unsettles the readers. The texts do not provide a sense of completeness or closure; they are fictions of fragmentation, of gaps and inconsistencies, multilayered discourses of otherness, and a sense of disintegration” (Alshammari 2). Alshammari’s quote shows how madwomen in literature are not merely tragic figures but symbols of feminist resistance, their memories and identities expose the silences in narratives and create space for alternative forms of expression that are emotional.

The protagonist Nour in the novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* blurred the lines between truth and fiction by recalling old stories, especially Rawiya’s story. This was a result of the psychological pain that Nour was experiencing through her memory. She tries to understand the events taking place around her by linking reality and fiction to be able to understand the devastation she was going through. She finds that there is a connection that connects her to Rawya’s story, which was like a feminine symbol that helped her to be able to resist. Memory is especially important for anyone concerned with change, because forgetting condemns us to repetition; it is of particular importance to feminists.

Rawiya dreamed of seeing the world, but she and her mother could barely afford couscous, even with the money Rawiya’s brother, Salim, brought home from his sea voyages

(11). Nour's memories of her mother's story make her imagine Rawiya's journey as more than just a fairy tale. Also, it explores the common struggles of Rawiya and Nour as a feminine resistance. Nour opens a border space where Rawiya's story intersects with her own.

Moreover, throughout the narrative, Nour mentions Baba to show the past and her connection with him. Nour says: It's something Baba used to say when he thought nobody was listening to him, when it was quiet enough that I could hear him pray (62). This quote Nour recalls a deeply personal memory about her father, not something he told her directly, but something she heard quietly, in the languid moments of everyday life. This demonstrates the power of memory in the novel.

Shahd Alshammari adds also that perhaps even more so is the madwoman, who in her madness can threaten the patriarchal order. In the selections of texts I have chosen, the madwoman figure is a figure of protest that almost always speaks out against the hegemonic order, and uncannily is the voice of wisdom.

Her voice is the voice of true reason, the voice that the author employs to critique society and women's subjugation. (Alshammari 4). Alshammari's reading challenges us to reevaluate whether so-called madness can truly be a source of moral insight or clarity, particularly in cultures where women's voices are frequently silenced.

By discussing women's individual experiences in diverse customs and civilisations, feminism and feminists thoroughly examine madness, elucidating its causes and origins. These societies oppress women's rights, voices, and abilities, all of which have a devastating impact on women's inner lives, psyche, and suffering.

In *Women and Madness*, feminist psychologist Phyllis Chesler was among the first to explore how women have been treated within the mental health system. Drawing on interviews with patients and historical depictions of female madness, Chesler argues that medical discourse—while claiming to be neutral—has often been used to reinforce traditional gender roles. Women who strayed from expected norms of femininity were frequently labeled

as mentally ill, which in turn justified harsh and sometimes extreme forms of treatment (Kuryloski 12).

From the feminist perspective, the term "madwomen" is not seen as a weakness for women. Rather, it is seen as a symbol of the recovery of feminine memory. In the novel, we see that whenever Nour's physical pain intensifies, she remembers something internal and psychological and resorts to her imagination. Here, madness becomes a means for women to express truth and reality. Here, memory becomes a symbol of resilience and resistance, used by women to rebuild themselves. Nour mentions that "No matter where I am," I say, "I'll put my story in the ground and the water. en it'll get to Baba, and it'll get to you too." (11) . As if she wanted to say that my voice will be heard and I will achieve what I want no matter what it costs me.

In this novel, Joukhadar created a combination of madness, feminism, and memory to represent the psychological damage to the displaced woman in the shadow of diaspora and described her as a symbol of resistance. This was through her presentation of the character Nour and drawing out her psychological states that she was going through as not weakness but strength. The narrator also presented a concept that shows that the suffering is not a stigma but rather a pressure that generates an explosion, and that explosion is what leads the woman to use imagination and memory to escape from the painful reality.

Conclusion :

Zeyn Joukhadar 's novel *The Map of Salt and Stars* analyses how the identity of displaced women is revealed during their journey of displacement. Joukhadar symbolises strength and resilience at a time when characters were viewed as weak. As for the representation of *Hargga*, it was a means of demonstrating the danger of waging difficult battles to fight for the sake of life. Riding the boats of death is not easy, especially for women, because it is an experience that mixes fear, anxiety, and sorrow. However, the protagonist

never gave up; she resisted and continued to struggle. This chapter emphasises the interaction between madness, feminism and memory, and this is demonstrated through the protagonist's use of her memory to recall past events and her old memories, which were her only hope to present herself as belonging somewhere. Without forgetting her narration of the story of Rawiya. From here, the interweaving between reality and imagination becomes clear, which led to what is called the madwoman.

General Conclusion

Literature was marked a significant depiction of madwoman characters, Zeyn Joukhadar for instance, wrote *The Map of Salt and Stars*. Zeyn Joukhadar is one of these women who fight to make women's issues known to the whole world through her writings. She explains in *The Map of Salt and Stars* the sufferance of displaced women in the Arab diaspora by imposing the unfair values and Arab traditions on them. Joukhadar's novel is considered an autobiographical one in which she portrays her problems, desires and hopes in the protagonist Nour, the Syrian American girl who was witnessing the Syrian civil war. Joukhadar tells her story through her use that character to express the pain se experienced in her life.

This thesis has explored the representation of the concept of madwomen in Arab diasporic narratives, with a focus on Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars*, using the womenist theoretical frameworks, the study explored how Joukhadar represents the madwomam to shed light on the complexities and the struggles of displaced women, displacement and memory within the context of Arab diaspora.

The key findings show that the term "madness" in the novel is not only a psychological disorder, but also an emotional response resulting from wars, trauma, and migration, especially in cases of loss. Madness reflects the voice of women who do not speak for themselves and continue to resist and adapt in patriarchal societies. We can also see this through the "*Hargga*," where women forced to do this difficult thing embody a form of madness that is outside of Arab traditions. The term "*Hargga*" in Arab societies is considered irrational and alien, especially for women. Here, we see Jokhadar criticising traditional Arab societies in the context of migration, we also see the novel's dual narrative technique, which creates a link between two journeys: the first, Nour's contemporary, realistic journey, and the

other, Rawiya's, an imaginary journey. This demonstrates that displacement did not begin today and has no specific time frame. Rather, it is an act that has been and continues to be. This indicates that madness is

not an illness, but as a form of expressing suffering. The results also show that Joukhadar used madness to highlight madness as an alternative language used by women to communicate and restore their identity, sense of belonging and preserve their cultures.

This thesis shows the narrative techniques that Joukhadar adopted in writing this novel, these techniques are not just artistic means, but rather to deal with and analyse the topics of asylum and domination, and she always speaks in the name of Arab women who are silent and cannot speak about themselves, Joukhadar relies on talking about the contemporary issues of the diaspora and instills the idea that what women suffer from is something that is passed down through future generations.

Joukhadar's novel has been celebrated for its unique contribution to the social and political debates on the Arab diaspora. *The Map of Salt and Stars* discusses how Joukhadar blends fantasy and reality to present displacement as an age-old phenomenon rather than a modern one. Last, the author highlights the timeless human quest for belonging.

For future research, researchers and scholars could investigate how madness is expressed in the context of Arab women's suffering from war, displacement, and migration in diaspora, to reshape womanist discourse through the lens of experimental narrative forms. This can also be used by other researchers to compare the works, but this differs according to the narrative styles, and each of them uses his own technique to express the subject of refugee women and the concept of the madwomen.

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Appendixes

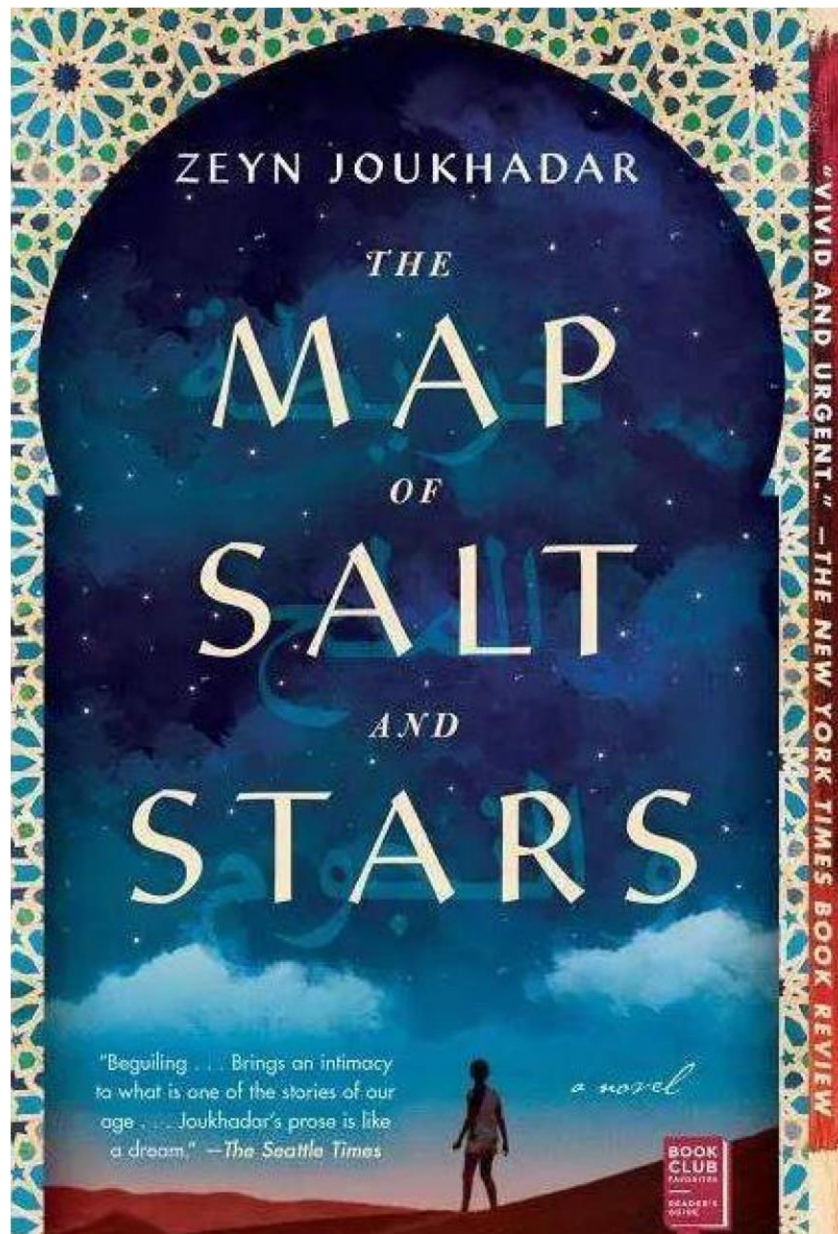
Appendix A :

A picture of the Syrian-American writer Zeyn Joukhadar



https://www.middleeasteye.net/sites/default/files/styles/article_page/public/images-story/Zeyn%20Joukhadar%20%C2%A9%20Nadia%20Bouchenni.jpg.webp?itok=dqSxTLYd Appendix B

Zeyn Joukhadar's novel The Map of Salt and Stars



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