



Away from Home at Home: Internal Exile in Nada Awar Jarrar's *An Unsafe Haven*

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Abstract

In a world framed by cultural and geo-political vicissitudes, many find themselves exiled in foreign lands, experiencing the feelings of alienation and disorientation inherent in exile. Such exilic affects are not limited to the physically exiled subjects but also crystallize in the case of the politically destabilized countries wherein individuals become internally exiled, i.e., involved in the exilic rhetoric of displacement *inside* their homelands. This issue is tackled by the novelist Nada Awar Jarrar in her novel *An Unsafe Haven*, the events of which transpire in Lebanon, a country whose incessant upheavals have transmuted it into a typical exile for its denizens. Predicated on the textual analysis of *An Unsafe Haven*, this paper dissects the psychological intricacies of the exilic experience of Hannah, the novel's Lebanese protagonist, who finds herself internally exiled within her homeland, and, hence, seeks the confirmation of her identity drawing on her own psychological implements.

Keywords

exile, identity, space, memory, politics

Introduction

In the light of the inexorable spread of globalization, transnationalism, and political vicissitudes, the contemporary world has become an arena of endless physical and psychological crossings of geo-political and cultural borders. It follows that bestowing the traits of certainty and stability on the postmodern mobile man has become a problematic challenge *per se*. Such instability and indeterminacy generate an existential state of identity crisis. This problematic state of being mostly culminates in the Lebanese case, for this country has grown very tenuous and mutable by the intersection of national, regional and international politics in its cultural, religious and political existence. In this framework emerges the Lebanese-Australian novelist Nada Awar Jarrar who devotes her novel *An Unsafe Haven* to shed light on the identity crisis of her protagonist Hannah. The latter, overwhelmed by Lebanon's political imbroglio and social upheavals, finds herself immersed in an internal exile and seeks, as a result, the confirmation and re-configuration of her identity drawing on her own psychological implements. Accordingly, predicated on the close reading of Jarrar's *An Unsafe Haven*, this paper intends to substantiate that the internal exile, that is, the psychological and psychic exile within one's homeland and one's inner psyche, is no less excruciating than the physical exile, for it engenders the same or even more uncompromising feelings of identity crisis and displacement and to infer that identity is necessarily spatially, socially and culturally configured.

Selves and Spaces: No Longer the Same

It is true that physical exile arouses in the majority of exiles an identity crisis along with other psychic corollaries as a result of the utter absence of traces of familiarity in their exilic existence. However, once the exile recovers the lost homely and familiar bonds, his sense of identity is somewhat re-enlivened. But, what about those individuals who, in the heart of their homes and amid their own culture and people, experience a state of exile? Indeed, this is what might be termed as an internal, existential or psychological exile which is no less excruciating than the physical one. In this regard, internal or psychological exile can be defined as an experience of "alienation from a feeling of intrinsic connection with others or with the world, from the possibility of meaning or purpose, or even as a sense of separation from oneself" (Burr 82). Correspondingly, this is the case of Hannah, the Lebanese protagonist of Jarrar's novel *An Unsafe Haven*, who, in a country where the prevalent concept is *change* and whose contours are increasingly reshaped by its adjacent contemporary conflicts and by the waves of incoming refugees, becomes alienated from both her own self and from her home space that are no longer familiar.

On the one hand, Hannah suffers from an existential exile which crystallizes in the disorder and discontinuity to which her self becomes subjected in the light of the current crises. More particularly, her psychological exile is typified through her identificatory psychological responses vis-à-vis refugees and through her recurrent anxiety attacks. First, Hannah vicariously lives the psychological experiences of refugees, which makes her exiled in her homeland as they are. Probably, this is mostly conspicuous in her feeling of an "overwhelming tiredness" after which she drowns in profound reflections on the many refugees she has encountered: "She thinks of their eyes especially, questioning,

pleading and trusting eyes; she still feels the small hands of children grasping tightly on to hers; she pictures the recognition on the faces of the women and men she met of a shared community” (Jarrar 56). Indeed, the implementation of the verbs “to think”, “to feel” and “to picture” indicates respectively that her thoughts, her feelings and even her imagination are all haunted by vivid images of the helpless, innocent and tyrannized refugees, which rationalizes her tiredness that is but a psychological translation of her despair and displacement at witnessing the wretchedness of such victimized people. These feelings corroborate the discontinuity of her belief in hope and in an optimistic future in Lebanon both for her and for these refugees, giving way to her internal exilic experience. Additionally, in her encounter with a small family in a refugee camp, Hannah’s psychological reactions ascend to a crescendo. Put differently, when she recognizes the little daughter’s enthusiasm for learning despite their drastic poverty, she feels “too moved to speak” (86). Her silence is a vicarious recognition of the silencing and repression to which refugees are subjected wherever they go, but, most significantly, her poignancy, which is heightened through the use of the intensifier “too”, reflects her alienation from the whole humanity as she comes to know that human innocence, personified in the little girl, has ceased to prevail even in her once cherished motherland. Eventually, in the preliminary notes of her journalistic article on refugees, Hannah writes: “I realize that as long as homelessness exists, I am – we all of us are – refugees. We are their fears and their frustration, their anguish and their undying will to survive, their optimism and their conviction that this world, somewhere, somehow, will always be their harbor” (247). Through this claim, she chooses to confine herself to an endless psychological exile as long as refugeeism exists, as an act of identification with the traumatized refugees. In so doing, she embraces their psychological and psychic displacement and projects their homelessness and groundlessness onto her own existence, condemning herself, therefore, to a deliberate existential exile since the latter is “a way of being-in-the-world that arises not from the loss of home per se but rather from the loss of being-at-home in the world” (Burr 83).

Moreover, Hannah’s internal exile concretizes in her recurrent exposure to anxiety disorder, a psychic condition which has “as [its] central organizing theme the emotional state of fear, worry, or excessive apprehension” (VandenBos 66) and with which she becomes acquainted since her awareness of the socio-political vicissitudes surrounding her existence. In fact, this anxiety emanates from the several losses she has experienced since her return from her exile in Cyprus, for they are painfully numerous including her “[m]other’s passing and the missing [of] her that followed; Lebanon’s demise, the death of thousands and the loss of belonging that has gone with it; the slow but certain dissolution of the Arab world so soon after hopes for its deliverance had been high” (Jarrar 199). The first instance of her anxiety disorder manifests in her nightly apprehensions:

[S]he knows these troubling thoughts only come to her at night when she is a vague version of herself, the dark and silence scattering the bits of her that are strongest and most determined into the atmosphere like dust. This is how she waits impatiently for the day, for movement, for speech, for

those, like herself, who wake up counting on something happening, one small thing that will reassure them once again that they are not alone. (70)

In actuality, Hannah's eager waiting for the day connotes her anxious anticipation of the dismissal of the nightly fragmented, decentered and identity-less version of her self. Similarly, her thoughts reveal her overwhelming fear of loneliness as she impatiently looks forward to the slightest cue that will dispel her dread of loss and of solitude. Likewise, in her way to the Syrian encampment in Tyre, she feels a vague discomfort which she fears will grow into a further sense of anxiety (82). Indeed, this imminent anxiety stems from her fear of having to bear witness once again to other pathetic stories, uncompromising losses and heart-breaking conditions within the refugee camp. In the same context, Hannah's anxiety climaxes with her panic attacks – a major symptom of anxiety disorder–, the most significant of which is the one she immediately goes through after her query to her American husband Peter: “You keep saying you wish you could get away from here. Are you serious about wanting to leave?” (140). This culminant anxiety is triggered by her intense fear of Peter's departure on account of the current political chaos in the Arab region, leaving her alone and exacerbating her former losses. Overall, Hannah's self is no longer the same psychically secure and stable version which used to prevail in the golden era of prewar Lebanon. Rather, it is now a frail existential entity engulfed by anxiety, and given that this latter concept is synonymous with exile (Hout 192), it can be extrapolated that Hannah's anxiety immerses her “new” self in a state of internal exile.

On the other hand, as Hannah perceives the new Lebanon as an unfamiliar space which incites her alienation from it, she grows exiled in her own homeland. In other words, her internal exile originates mainly from the unfamiliarity she attributes to present-day Lebanon by transmuting it into a spurious space, by pinpointing the radical changes underlying its backdrop and by foretelling its imminent collapse. To begin with, the burgeoning unfamiliarity of Lebanon can be grasped in Hannah's initial depiction of the current intricate nature of the Lebanese space: “Living in Beirut can be deceptive; it offers a false impression of safety and permanence in the midst of all the upheaval” (Jarrar 5). In this respect, Hannah's use of such adjectives as “deceptive” and “false” in her notes confers on Beirut a sense of stark disparity between its apparent and hidden faces, which alters her life within this space into an unreal, shallow and illusory existence and, thus, alienates her from it, engendering a profound psychological exile. Besides, Hannah highlights the thoroughgoing change which the overall landscape of Lebanon, particularly of its capital, has undergone since the inception of the Syrian conflict. This is emphatically illustrated through her meticulous description of the presence of refugees in Beirut:

Those who flee [the war in Syria] and seek refuge in Lebanon bring their heartache with them, and for nearly four years now, Beirut's street corners have been manned by insistent beggars by day, and at night, in shop doorways, under bridges, in abandoned buildings and anywhere a nook can be found, there are sleeping figures, whole families, wrapped in whatever they can find to shield their eyes from the light.

[...]

Things are not as they should be. There is pain where there should be strength, hesitation instead of resolve [...]. (29-30)

In this vivid imagery, what can be evidently noticed is that Beirut is replete with the feelings of suffering and anguish which the waves of refugees bring with them. In other words, it becomes a spatial translation of the human wretchedness which pervades it and a concrete exemplification of the destiny of refugees. Not only this, but the fact that all of its corners shelter a considerable number of refugees transmogrifies it into a haunted space in its totality, a space haunted by misery, by displacement, by homelessness and by despair. In brief, this Lebanese space becomes a physically and psychologically unsafe haven, a change which results in Hannah's alienation and disjointed psychological state. More particularly, the fact that her expatriation on her psychological change comes immediately after her portrayal of Beirut entrenches a relation of causality between the two; that is to say, the change in her attitudes is, in part, the outcome of the change in Beirut. This is reinforced through her claim, "[t]hings are not as they should be", whereby she psychologically unties all familiarity with this space given that all the feelings with which it used to nurture her selfhood collapse. Put differently, as opposed to the vigor and the optimistic aspiration of a better future inspired by the Lebanon of the past, all she can experience now is the pain of loss and of anxiety and the uncertainty framing her identity crisis. Drawing on this new spatial psychology, it can be asserted that Hannah is utterly detached from this unfamiliar space, which corroborates her existential exile within it and the dissolution of the place identity she used to harbor.

In the light of this, by identifying with refugees, Hannah does not content herself with the anxiety and psychic instability she experiences in a constantly changing countries as Lebanon, but she transcends this to project all the psychic implications of refugeeism onto her existence. In so doing, she doubles her suffering and results in her identity crisis. This latter disorder is more heightened in her case than in the case of the physically exiled characters in the sense that even the space which the latter use to recover their identities is changing before Hannah's eyes into an unfamiliar place. As a result, Hannah's identity crisis ascends to a crescendo which compels her to search for a new mode of identification so as to protect her psyche from disintegration and maintain its sanity.

The Dynamics of Identity Confirmation: The Spatial Rhetoric of Identity

Given that Hannah's psychological exile alienates her from all that used to define and shape her identity, including her past self and the past version of her native space, she becomes bereft of any identificatory foundations and experiences, as a result, an excruciating identity crisis. In an attempt to confirm the continuity of her identity and rule out the discontinuity of exile, she reconfigures her selfhood through her identification with the Lebanese space, through her enactment of her memory and postmemory, through her psychological dependence on her father and husband, and finally through her exhibition of a politically centered Arab ego.

While the physical exile occurs far from the homeland, the internal exile may occur even at home. Yet, the genuine difference between the two can be clearly delineated with regard to space in the sense that in the case of the internal exile, unlike its

physical equivalent, “it is not a return home that is sought, but rather a return to a feeling of being-at-home in the world” (Burr 84). Indeed, this is the case of Hannah since, already being in the heart of her homeland, what she truly searches so as to dissipate her existential exile is a retrieval of the feeling of being-at-home in the Lebanese space. In this regard, her perception of the Lebanese space as a fatherly legacy and as an extension of the cherished prewar Lebanon confirms her sense of being-at-home and, hence, her identity.

First, Hannah restores her identificatory bond with Lebanon as she starts to perceive it as an inherited receptacle of her father’s memories. This is illustrated through her father’s retrospective account on the area where Hannah and her brother were raised: “[It] was once the wilderness of Ras Beirut, where jacaranda and lemon trees grew in profusion [...] This, Faisal [her father] always tells her [...] was long before you were born, Hannah, when I was a young boy and my brothers and I would come here to play after school” (Jarrar 47). This memory of Hannah’s father conveys a vivid imagery of “jacaranda and lemon trees” which are, indeed, but typical metonymic fragments of Lebanon; besides, this space is the locus of his dearest past moments with his brothers. Therefore, this Lebanese site becomes the incarnation of his quintessentially Lebanese place identity. Yet, what matters most is Hannah’s reaction with regard to all this given that she is, after all, the one who is in search of her lost identity. In this respect, she responds to her father’s account: “The way you describe it, Baba [...], it’s not difficult for me to imagine what it was like for you, the joy in that freedom” (48). By saying so, she transmogrifies her father’s past actions and ponderings, the core of which is this Lebanese space, into present mental and emotional images which crystallize in her own mind. Accordingly, she psychologically confirms her identification with this Lebanese microcosmic space as she re-constructs it as a repertoire of her father’s place identity.

In addition, she reinstates her identificatory bond with present-day Lebanon only because she can conceive of it as a continuity of the Lebanon of the past which is part and parcel of both her past and present identities as her memories will expose. This is mostly typified in her musing: “She thinks [...] that even now, in this new and harsher Beirut where people and places have changed [...], there remain gentle impressions of the city’s more reliable past, reminders that come to life from time to time and which provide comfort” (189). In this reflection, Hannah acknowledges the burgeoning change overwhelming present-day Beirut, pointing again to her psychological exile. Nevertheless, she still perceives it as an extension of the past stable version of the Lebanese space which invariably purveys her with sufficient psychic solace and certainty; therefore, she reconciles with it. More subtly, Hannah goes further to notice that despite the quiet period of the early afternoon, Beirut is still lively with movement, after which she “imagines herself part of a larger, more steadfast whole” (189). In fact, such portrayal is only relevant when adducing Hannah’s recollection of a past version of Beirut, prototypal of buoyancy (49), which makes of present-day Beirut a continuous existence of its past equivalent. Accordingly, Hannah’s awareness of such a subtle link between Beirut’s two temporal versions is what roots her selfhood in this present Lebanese space once again.

The Workings of the Mind: Memories

Memory, whether an individual memory, a collective memory or a postmemory, is a convoluted concept which is pivotal in Anglophone Arab literature, be it exilic or diasporic, especially with regard to the theme of identity as it enables the retrospective re-examination of all that is instrumental to the self-identification process. In this context, memory can be classified into *nostalgic* memory and *critical* memory (Hout 194). While the former “is crucial for the reconstitution and continuity of individual and collective identity of all kinds”, the latter is generally a bearer of “the negative and bitter from the immediate past” (194). In the light of this, it can be theorized that Hannah enacts a typically nostalgic memory in an endeavor to ensure the continuity of her past spatial and social identities.

As a matter of fact, Hannah’s reminiscences nurture her present self with a solid identificatory bond with the past version of the Lebanese space. This can be illustrated through her memory of her escape along with her family to Cyprus after the Israeli invasion of Beirut, wherein she recollects: “I was ten years old and felt a finality in [her mother’s] grief. How can we possibly leave home? I wondered” (Jarrar 27). Though very young at this juncture, through her mother, Hannah vicariously experiences the anguish of separation from Lebanon. Further, the finality which she bestows on her mother’s grief suggests an absolute psychic dismay and trauma at being forced out of their home. Subsequently, her query is but an existential resentment of and an objection to their departure from the Lebanese space which she elevates into “home”, that is, into the sole locus of belonging. More significantly, Hannah resolutely transmutes her father’s memories of Lebanon into a postmemory into which she delves in an attempt to unveil the past version of Lebanon:

What she seeks [in her father’s retrospective stories] is not so much to understand the everyday history of this city that came before, but rather to picture it plainly in her mind’s eye and so commit herself to its past, to make for herself tangible memories of another Lebanon, a country built on hope and expectations of better times to come, a home that lived in the hearts and minds of its people. (48-49)

In this regard, following the retrospective spatial discourse which her father articulates, Hannah strives to mentally recreate the “plain”, past version of the Lebanese space, a desire which emanates in essence from the unfamiliarity and unintelligibility of the present Lebanon. Besides, she goes further to voice her willingness to aggregate the lost pieces of a past, promising Lebanon into a whole with which she will identify both mentally and emotionally. In so doing, she seeks to commit herself to an anachronistic version of Lebanon, which endorses her Lebanese identity. Overall, having identified with both the present and the past versions of Lebanon, Hannah assures the continuity of the Lebanese spatial essence in her ontology, which utterly extricates her selfhood from the discontinuous state of being imposed by her psychological exile.

What’s more, by dint of her recollections, Hannah confirms her Lebaneseness by affiliating her selfhood to the social identity of Lebanon’s past community. In fact, relying on her father’s memories, Hannah comes to conceive of Lebanon’s past society as one where “[t]here was more cohesiveness between communities” and which “seemed

much smaller because even when people did not know one another, they were at least familiar with each other's families" (48). This past vista unearths the harmony and the intimate bonds which used to tie people together, regardless of their sectarian or ideological predilections, into a monolithic social entity. Accordingly, Hannah anchors her social identity in the typically Lebanese society exhibited in this memory. This is even enhanced through Hannah's remembrance of her family trips to her aunt Amal's mountain house and of the harmonious familial atmosphere marking these gatherings (49-50). Indeed, what she intends to foreground, through this memory, is the coherence which used to govern and maintain the bonds within the Lebanese family as a microcosmic social institution. Such a trait enables Hannah to confirm her Lebanese social identity in the sense that she extensively enacts this attribute into her present existence through her familial visits with her father to her aunt Amal, confirming, thus, the social precepts of the traditional Lebanese community.

"People are what's important"

"People are what's important" is a momentous utterance which Jarrar embeds in her novel through the voice of Peter, but it is, most importantly, concretized by Hannah who, in the apex of her exilic crisis, anxiously dreads solitude and further losses. For this reason, she endeavors to derive her psychic solace and certainty from the people on whom her existence is centered, that is, her father and her husband.

In point of fact, Hannah re-constructs and confirms her identity through her resort to her father as a source of psychic stability and as an anchor as far as her identity is concerned. To begin with, looking at her father, she believes that after all these years in Lebanon, he still "retains the sense of presence he has always had, with [...] the calmness about him that is evident as soon as one comes near, into a welcoming orbit of tranquility" (51). Through her characterization of him, she demonstrates his paramount centrality in her existence, for he compensates for what she is mostly divested of in this Lebanese era of loss and chaos. Put differently, by conferring on him a "sense of presence", Hannah indicates that he is the only presence left in her existence, which atones for all the losses she has undergone since Lebanon's decline. Similarly, the calmness and tranquility inherent in him connote the psychic equanimity, stability and certainty which she derives from his presence, particularly from his stories and memories. Further, Hannah's identification with her father is evidenced in her recourse to him when she feels overwhelmed by the disjointedness of exile. The most expressive instance of this can be grasped when Hannah, initially subjected to her psychological exile, confides to her father her despair and loss of faith in her motherland through her claim, "Sometimes I think we're never going to know what security is in this country" (52), which marks an exilic disjointedness on the level of her relation with Lebanon. In response to this, her father relates the story of his past sacrifices and political involvements intended to emancipate Lebanon from the French colonization, an account which Hannah inwardly seals with her introspection: "Father was only half himself when away from Lebanon [...] because everything about him that was most true had Lebanon as its anchor. [She] wonders for a moment if this is also now true for her, if in leaving Lebanon, she might find it difficult to keep the pieces of herself together. Remaining whole would be

impossible” (53). In this respect, drawing on her father’s narrative, she follows a logical process of self-examination which she concludes with the internalization of her father’s Lebanese place identity into her psyche. In other words, she deduces her father’s strong identification with Lebanon; then, she goes further to question her position with regard to Lebanon by comparing it to that of her father. Eventually, she answers her ontological query by confirming that the wholeness, the unity and the order of her self cannot be maintained but in Lebanon, projecting, therefore, her father’s Lebanese identity onto her selfhood.

In an analogous way, an integral part of Hannah’s identity hinges on her husband Peter as the basis of her psychological resistance to her internal exile. This is exemplified when, immediately following one of the anxiety moments which symptomize her psychological exile and her fear of loss, Peter, as if in a cue, reassures her: “I’m proud of you [...]. I just want you to know that” (70). It follows that she becomes “suddenly aware of her heart beating” and replies, “Thanks for your confidence in me” (71). In this sense, the beating of her heart symbolizes the reinvigoration of her exilic desolate soul, whereas the thankful words she subsequently utters represent her articulation of gratitude for Peter’s interposition at a time when her self is on the verge of psychic disintegration. Consequently, Peter’s pride of and confidence in her consolidate her formerly shaky selfhood. Over and above, by the very end of her narrative, Hannah acknowledges in a recondite fashion the fulfillment of the process of her identity confirmation, in part because of the psychological support of her husband:

She holds on to her husband’s arm and they walk slowly beneath the umbrella [...]. She leans against him as if she might benefit from his height, from the larger space he occupies in this world, and [...] she realizes how much she has depended on him during this past and difficult year, wonders how she would have coped, given the turmoil around them, without this man who now walks in step with her with such ease. (271)

In this respect, Hannah’s leaning against Peter is not a mere physical movement, but it rather translates her psychological dependence and reliance on him in her pursuit of identity. Likewise, the large space which he occupies indicates his prevalence and presence in her existence, which shuns away her anxiety of losing him. At last, she discloses that the psychic survival of her internal exile incarnated in the chaotic imbroglio of Lebanon would not have been possible without the psychological assistance of her husband. Hence, Hannah’s identity becomes integrally upheld by her psychological identification with Peter.

Mapping Identity and Political History

The history of Lebanon and the Arab world has been abundantly suffused at each point of its course with political occurrences which not only influence the status quo of these nations but radically alter their socio-cultural and political contours and frame their future as well. It follows that the personal identity of every Arab is invariably informed by his political predilections. In this regard, Hannah’s identity is fundamentally predicated on her political loyalties which she actualizes by her job and by her political discourse.

Initially, the magnitude of politics in the construction of Hannah's selfhood is substantiated by her choice of a politically centered job given that a job generally emblemizes one's personal identity and stance. In this context, she evokes her career in journalism immediately after the excruciating identity crisis which she has gone through upon her return from Cyprus to a no longer familiar Lebanon: "What I remembered of home had been irreparably destroyed by present reality, seemed only to have survived as sentiment in the minds of exiles. [...] My career in journalism began soon after I graduated" (29). The narrative sequence of these two occurrences, that is, of her identity crisis then her embarking on journalism, is quite significant in the understanding of her Lebanese political identity. That is to say, by embracing this career, Hannah seeks to exhaustively retrieve the crucial elements of history and politics which define the Lebanon with which she is familiar and to internalize these into her very identity. Additionally, in the middle of the political mayhem which pervades present-day Lebanon, Hannah's attention is outright riveted on her coverage of the lives of refugees in this unsafe haven, an issue which entails the intersection of local, regional and international politics. Thereby, she demonstrates, especially through her recurrent visits to refugee camps and her psychological loyalty vis-à-vis these refugees, an unwavering commitment to the politics of the Arab world, which corroborates her Arab, namely Lebanese, political identity.

Moreover, Hannah's internalization of politics into her very existence is authenticated through her political discourse. This latter is blatantly expounded in her politically shaped conversation with Peter and Maysoun wherein she demystifies the intricacies of the politics that govern the Arab region:

– The real truth is that had these refugees been white and Christian, European countries would have welcomed them with open arms, she says. This is as much about racism as it is about war and the inevitable movement of people away from it.

[...]

– It may be true that no one wants the refugees –Hannah returns to the original discussion– but they're happy to see the conflict in Syria continue. It's a convenient place for them to fight their little wars. (108-109)

In this dialogue, Hannah suffuses her discourse with sundry political allusions. To begin with, she unravels the convoluted nature of the Arab politics by insinuating that the "anti-refugees" policies in the world and the conflicts in the Arab region are conditioned on a deeper level not merely by political impetuses but by underlying ideological incentives, specifically of religious and racial natures. This proves not only Hannah's opposition to the essentialist, Eurocentric political stance vis-à-vis Arab refugees but also her political identification with refugees who are but victims of ideological interests. Further, albeit Peter attempts to drift the conversation from its political focus, Hannah persistently makes allusions to the inertia of Western powers when it comes to Arab issues as well as to their utilitarian outlook as they are solely concerned with the interests they may fulfill in these wars regardless of the lost human lives. Thus, Hannah makes the most of her political discourse to confirm the political viewpoint which forms the basis of her identity.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it can be extrapolated that, in her latest novel, *An Unsafe Haven*, which can be evaluated as half diasporic and half exilic, Jarrar digresses from the convention of the exilic Anglophone Arab literature when it comes to her main protagonist, Hannah, for she devotes much of her novel *not* for the demystification of the physical exile of the latter away from Lebanon but rather for the convoluted expatriation on her psychological exile *inside* Lebanon. Correspondingly, this latter form of exile proves to be more inexorable than the physical exile *per se* and culminates in an acute identity crisis. Yet, drawing on the analysis of Hannah's pattern of identification, it can be inferred that Jarrar's protagonist restores her lost identity through her present and retrospective retrieval of the feeling of being-at-home, through her social identity grounded in Lebaneseness, and through her loyal affiliation with the politics of the Arab world. Here, in a world where politics are growingly shaping its outlines and future, Jarrar finds it inevitable to insert the element of politics in her latest novel as an identificatory component which positions Hannah's identity in the world. Yet, it is of a paramount utility to indicate that politics are necessarily a cultural process (Greenfeld and Malczewski), which makes of Hannah's identity a spatially, socially and culturally framed selfhood.

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