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MIGRANT FEELINGS: THE AFFECTIVE ROOTS OF ARAB LATIN AMERICAN IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

by

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Professor Ignacio López-Calvo

To the best Sensei one could ever wish for, Ignacio.

A mi madre y mis hermanas, quienes siempre han estado presentes.

To my beautiful fiancée (soon-to-be wife), Destinee.

A mi infalible compañero de desvelos y noches de escritura, Don Gato

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Contents

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Curriculum Vita

Hugo Alberto López Chavolla specializes in Latin American studies, focusing on Arab communities' cultural and literary production in Latin America. In his research, he utilizes an interdisciplinary approach - borrowing from cultural, sociological, literary, postcolonial, decolonial, and affect theories - to the study of literature, film, virtual worlds, and video games. His research interests include Latin American and Caribbean literature and cultures, Chicano studies, Mexican literature and culture, and critical race and ethnic studies. He holds a B.A. in Spanish, a B.S. in Management, and an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Humanities from the University of California, Merced.

Abstract

This dissertation studies the identity formation and cultural production of Latin American authors of Arab descent. More specifically, it focuses on the strategies used by Arab-Latin American authors and cultural producers to build spaces of belonging and transform the cultural landscape of Latin America through the production of cultural artifacts such as travelogues, testimonies, short stories, novels, films, documentaries, and poetry. Since most of the research on the Arab presence in Latin America has been studied from socioeconomic and political perspectives, this study attempts to fill a vacuum in the study of contemporary cultural production of Arab and Latin American authors of Arab descent in two ways. First, from an interdisciplinary approach and the perspectives of postcolonial, decolonial, and affect theory lenses, this dissertation analyzes the cultural products of Arab-Latin Americans as emotional repositories that served as the basis for the creation of spaces of belonging where Arab-Latin American communities were able to not only survive but thrive and climb the social ladder as they immersed themselves into different countries across Latin America. Moreover, this study reflects on how these emotional repositories assisted in the development of self-identities and pride in Arab ancestry while simultaneously promoting the process that Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz identified as transculturation. Second, most studies on the relationship between the Middle East and Latin America have focused on the Arab people and Arab-Latin Americans as passive objects of study by analyzing their migratory patterns, socio-economic conditions and development, and political structures, among other topics. While this dissertation builds upon this prior research, it attempts to underscore Arab-Latin Americans' agency and self-definition of identities as it highlights their experiences and voices as agents of their own history.

Introduction

Some of the memories I cherish the most from my childhood in Southwest Mexico take place during the days leading to and after Christmas while celebrating *posadas*, signing *villancicos* (Christmas carols), Christmas, New Year's Day, and opening the *Reyes Magos*'s presents next to the Nativity scene on the January 6 mornings. It has been years since the last time I experienced these celebrations after moving to the United States, but even today, it is not surprising to find the portrayals of the Nativity scene throughout Latin American homes during the wintertime. These symbolic reenactments of Jesus's first moments on Earth take the form of porcelain or plastic figurines that serve as representations of Jesus as a newborn alongside his human parents, Joseph and Mary, who are often accompanied by angels, shepherds, farm animals such as donkeys, cows, and sheep, as well as the Three Wise Men. In some places in Latin America, it is even common to celebrate *las posadas* during the week prior to the arrival of Christmas. Essentially, the *pedir posada* (request refugee or asylum) liturgy commemorates the time when Mary and Joseph were looking for a place to spend the night because the time of Jesus's birth had arrived. In an allegoric reenactment of the circumstances that Joseph and Mary had to go through to find a place where Jesus could be born, people across Latin America still carry Nativity scenes (sometimes people dress as Mary and Joseph instead of using figurines) and do processions around their neighborhoods. They go door to door, *pidiendo posada* (asking for asylum), followed by a crowd that sings Christmas carols. Every evening for about nine days, people in the community come together to bring this scene to life and go singing and knocking door to door until a kind soul (pre-determined by the *posadas*'s organizers) allows them, the representations of Joseph and Mary, to come inside and spend the night. According to tradition, the family who hosts Joseph and Mary for that night must provide *aguinaldos*, gifts in the form of small bags filled with candy or small appetizers, to the crowd, which represent the shepherds following the traces of Joseph and Mary. Finally, on Christmas Eve, families gather around the Nativity scene and prepare for the arrival of midnight to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25. The moment the clock hits midnight and Christmas arrives, a figurine of Jesus as a baby is brought out, as people sing birthday songs and lullabies while rocking and laying him on his cradle. But the celebration period is not over yet end there.

While the image and legend of Santa Claus, an old and gracious bearded man riding a sled pulled by reindeer who brings gifts to children during Christmas night, are prevalent across different regions of the world, in the Catholic tradition, specifically in Latin America and Spain, this image used to be replaced by that of the *Reyes Magos* (the Three Wise Men, and up to twenty-eight of them in some traditions, mentioned earlier). Instead of arriving on Christmas, they arrive a couple of weeks later, on January 6. Initially, the real motive of their visit was to come and pay their respects to the son of God, Jesus. However, just like Santa Claus, their duties have extended to serve as an incentive for children to behave well in exchange for gifts. Additionally, on the same day, January 6, people follow the tradition of cutting the *rosca de Reyes*, a ceremonial bread specifically made to commemorate the

arrival of the *Reyes Magos* as well as Joseph's, Mary's, and Jesus's escape to Egypt. Inside this piece of bread resembling a large donut, several plastic figurines in the shape of babies are hidden, representing the children that were hidden from Herod's attempt at killing Jesus by ordering the murder of all children two years of age and younger in Bethlehem, after he was told that the son of God would be born in his domains. If, when cutting the *Rosca de Reyes,* a figurine of a child is found on the piece of bread, the person who finds it is responsible for hosting a dinner for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus on the day of the Candelaria, February 2.

Since the 1970s, these celebrations have been known as the Guadalupe-Reyes Marathon across Latin America. It all begins with the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe on December 12, followed by nine days of *Posadas*, Christmas Eve, Christmas, Holy Innocents' Day, New Year's Day, and ending on January 6 with the Epiphany (the arrival of the Three Wise Men). Although deeply rooted in Hispanic culture, they emerge from the various currents of Christianity, the most prominent religion across Latin America. This is where things get interesting. While Christianity arrived on the American continent through European means, it only takes a glance at a map to realize its real origins. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ (the son of God, according to all versions of Christianity), is located in what is considered, religiously speaking, one of the most sacred (if not the most sacred) regions in the world and, contradictorily, this region is also one of the most geopolitically fragile and violent. Moreover, it is important to highlight that the protagonists of all these celebrations belong to a Jewish, Middle Eastern family accompanied by Middle Eastern shepherds coming to witness the birth of Jesus, while Middle Eastern rulers (*Los Reyes Magos de Oriente*) arrive to pay respects and celebrate the birth of God in human form. In this sense, the Guadalupe-Reyes Marathon can also be considered a celebration of Latin American and Middle Eastern cross-cultural relations, which dates to the earliest moments of globalization and, in the modern era, hides in plain sight from food recipes to linguistic elements and even some of the most deeply rooted and characteristic religious celebrations across Latin American countries.

In this light and in recent decades, the Global South as a repository of cross-cultural relations has sparked interest in academic circles. Often following conversations centered around the Globalization phenomenon that began in 1492 alongside capitalism and modernity, an increasing number of studies from the perspectives of history, literature, sociology, and anthropology, to name a few, focusing on the relationships between the Southern regions of the globe – often the most affected and disenfranchised by capitalism and modernity –have unearthed a vast array of knowledge on the dynamics of relationships that were traditionally relegated to the margins of academic analyses. Nonetheless, prior to the increasing interest in these regions, the histories of South-to-South relations have not only been ignored by academic studies, but they have also been expelled from the historical memory of these regions, as Axel Gasquet and Georges Lomné explain:

> La presencia de distintas comunidades asiáticas en América y los lazos comerciales, políticos y culturales entre ambos mundos desde el siglo XVI aparecen en las historiografías nacionales como un episodio menor (un epifenómeno) del proceso de modernización americana en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. Las

> comunicaciones transpacíficas y los vínculos asiáticos en la era colonial americana son curiosamente expulsadas de la memoria histórica continental. (Gasquet and Lomné 11)

This doesn't mean, however, that questions and preoccupations about South-to-South relationships were never present in people's minds. Since the early moments of Globalization, these two regions not only shared a common calamity under European pretensions of colonization and exploitation, as many experts from Aimé Césaire to Edward Said to Walter Mignolo have pointed out, but they also shared a common curiosity and a thirst for knowledge that sought to unveil the mysteries posed by their global homologous, even if only through fictitious acknowledgments of their existence. As Gasquet and Lomné assert:

> El legado asiático se desvanece durante varias décadas en la memoria social, política, económica y cultural americanas. Sin embargo, esta relación intensa dejó, antes de desaparecer, una huella indeleble en la primera novela hispanoamericana: efectivamente, *El Periquillo Sarniento* (1816-1831), del mexicano Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, se ambienta en gran medida en Manila, con algunos episodios en Guam, otrora posesiones españolas. (12)

In the same vein, French historian and specialist in Latin America Serge Gruzinski ,in *¿Qué hora es allá? América y el Islam en los linderos de la modernidad* (2008), asserts that relationships between Latin America and the Middle East can be traced to the earliest moments of the colonial era. As an example of these preoccupations, Gruzinski points to a manuscript written in Arabic, *Tarih-i Hind-i garbi* (*Historia de la India del Oeste*), by an anonymous writer, which appeared in Istanbul as early as 1580. In this manuscript, its author heavily relied on European accounts and descriptions of the newly "discovered" world to capture and deliver the essence of the American continent to Middle Eastern audiences whose geographical and political circumstances created an array of limitations that prohibited them from accessing these territories. As might be expected, the manuscript's tone, imagery, and narratives closely resembled that of European travelers, especially those of Spanish chroniclers who, until then, had been the ones who had managed to venture the deepest into America. At the same time, however, what differentiated the voice of this author, most likely an Ottoman subject, from that of his sources of inspiration was a sustained degree of worry about the future of these uncharted lands and the possibility that they might fall under the European yoke.

Just a few decades later, on the other side of the world, we find a similar attempt to satisfy a thirst for knowledge about foreign territories in Heinrich Martin's *Repertorio de los tiempos*, first published in Mexico City in 1606, where, among other topics, Martin provided insight into the Middle East through two chapters dedicated to the origins and rise of the Ottoman empire. Although a seasoned traveler, just as in the case of the anonymous author who wrote about foreign lands that he never stepped on, Martin never actually visited Istanbul or the rest of Ottoman Empire. Most of his accounts come from the travel logs and narratives of other Europeans, the likes of Marco Polo, Ruy González de Clavijo, and Miguel de Luarca. Born in today's northern Germany, Martin's travels took him away from the East rather than into it. Therefore, his closest encounter with Middle

Eastern cultures and peoples probably occurred while travelling in the southern regions of Spain, just before embarking on his journey toward America. Despite the potential inaccuracies and ample spaces for error in their narratives, just as with the anonymous author, Martin satisfied a deep hunger for knowledge in his audience and, in doing so, both authors provided structures to guide each other's audiences' representations of peoples and places located thousands of miles away from each other.

From these perspectives and with the hope of contributing to the understanding and historicization of the Global South, this dissertation, *Migrant Feelings: The Affective Roots of Arab-Latin American Identities and Cultural Production,* proposes to utilize an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, borrowing from postcolonial and affect studies to the analysis of Arab-Latin American self-identification, historicization, and conceptualization and creation of spaces of belonging. It traces the steps of the first known Arab to provide written accounts of his travels across colonial Spanish America during the second half of the seventeenth century. Then, it moves from Chile to Bolivia and Mexico, where I analyze different texts and films that have been neglected by academic inquiry despite the notable influence of the Arab community in Latin American history, society, and culture. Finally, taking the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a case study, it engages with Arab-Latin Americans' current relationships with and contributions to the ancestral homeland. By focusing on Arab and Arab-Latin American authors, I seek to underscore these communities' agencies across Latin American countries and their power to produce their own understanding of self-identity, histories, and experiences and what these meant for the communities' understanding of belonging in foreign spaces that were transformed into homeland-like places filled with emotional, cultural, and historical meaning.

Arabs in Latin America

For over a century, Latin America has been a home for a diverse and complex Arab diaspora. Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian immigrants arrived in countries across Latin America, such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico, to name a few, in the late 1800s, avoiding the Ottoman Empire's forced conscription, seeking better economic opportunities, and refuge from persecution in their home countries. Since their inception, these communities have made significant strides in various areas, including culture, economics, and politics, leaving an indelible mark on the region's social fabric (Klich and Lesser 1998; Marín-Guzmán 2000; Civantos 2005; Amo 2006; Alfaro-Velcamp 2007). One of the most notable contributions made by Arab communities in Latin America (often hidden in plain sight and, thus, understudied) is in the realm of cultural production. Arab immigrants have introduced a rich tapestry of heritage and diversity to these countries, with their music, dance, literature, and cuisine, thus becoming integral to the local cultural scene.

For instance, the Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce reports that close to ten million people of Arab descent reside in Brazil, making Brazil host the largest Arab population outside of the Middle East. These communities have established thriving businesses, including restaurants, grocery stores, and textile factories, and have also made

significant contributions to Brazil's music, art, and literature (Truzzi 2005; Müller 2010). Consequently, these established Arab Brazilian communities have played an active role in the national imaginary, as reflected in Brazil's reaction toward the Syrian conflict, which began in 2011 and has caused one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, Brazil has welcomed close to 4,000 Syrian refugees. Though this number may seem small compared to the millions who have fled Syria, it is a significant number given the distance between the two countries and the challenges of resettling in a new place. Moreover, the Brazilian government has been proactive in its efforts to welcome Syrian refugees. In 2013, it created a special visa category for Syrians and other nationals affected by the conflict. This has made it easier for Syrians to enter Brazil and start new lives. Once in Brazil, Syrian refugees have faced several challenges. Many have struggled to find work, as their skills may not be recognized in Brazil. Language has been another barrier, as Portuguese is the official language of Brazil, and most Syrians speak Arabic or may have learned French in school. Despite these challenges, many Syrian refugees have found success in Brazil as they have been warmly welcomed and supported by the Brazilian Arab community, which has welcomed them with open arms.

Similarly, Arab immigrants in Mexico have played a crucial role in shaping the country's social fabric. For instance, the Lebanese community in Mexico boasts a rich and fascinating history that can be traced back to the late 1800s. Arriving at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution, many Lebanese initially saw an opportunity in the mercantile sector and began working as peddlers. However, over time, they diversified into other areas, including textiles, commerce, and finance, and have since become a significant presence in the country's political sphere. In fact, many of Mexico's most distinguished politicians and public figures today can trace their ancestry back to Lebanon, including Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim Helu and Miguel de la Madrid, a former President of Mexico (Pastor 2017). The Lebanese impression upon Mexico's cultural imaginary can be further appreciated in films such as *Libanés en México* (1942), *El baisano Jalil* (1942), and *El barchante Neguib* (1946), produced during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema. These cultural contributions extend to today's Mexican cultural landscapes with Lebanese-Mexican establishments, including restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores, offering authentic Lebanese cuisine, such as kibbeh, tabbouleh, and baklava, as well as establishments offering fusion dishes, such as *tacos árabes* (made with pita instead of tortilla), which are scattered throughout the country. These establishments serve as a testament to the community's rich cultural heritage and culinary traditions.

Analogously, Arab immigrants in Chile have played a vital role in the country's political and economic development. Many have become prominent political figures, business leaders, and cultural icons, thus contributing to the country's rich cultural diversity. In this respect, the Palestinian community in Chile is a thriving and dynamic group of people, distinguished by their contributions to Chilean society in a variety of areas, such as politics, business, and culture (Rafide 1989). The community, which numbers around 500,000, has a rich history that also dates back to the late 19th century when the majority of immigrants arrived from Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour. As in the case of Arab immigrants elsewhere, initially, these immigrants worked as peddlers and merchants and eventually ventured into industries, such as textiles, commerce, and

finance. Today, Palestinians in Chile are well-represented in the country's political sphere, with many prominent politicians and public figures of Palestinian descent. Carlos Alberto Délano, a successful businessman and philanthropist, is one such example, as is Óscar Daniel Jadue Jadue, a renowned sociologist and Marxist politician who has served as Mayor of Recoleta since 2012. Moreover, *Chilestinians*, as Chileans of Palestinian descent often choose to identify (Meruane 2018), have also played an important role in Chile's internal and external politics while providing support for the Palestinians' plea in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Their successes exemplify the enduring spirit of diversity and inclusivity, and their contributions underscore the importance of valuing and respecting different cultures in building vibrant and inclusive societies. Despite the obstacles and setbacks faced by the first waves of migrants, Palestinians in Chile have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to progress and success that is showcased in their contributions to Chilean society as well as their ancestral homeland.

Nevertheless, despite the significant contributions made by Arab communities in Latin America, they have faced various forms of discrimination and prejudice since the inception of the immigration process. These include these communities' erasure from the official history of Latin American countries and a minimal acknowledgment of their achievements and contributions, which, rather than being parallel to Latin American nations' growth, were crucial for it to occur. In this vein, the objective of this dissertation is to explore and shed light on the cultural hybridity developing and percolating in Arab Latin American cultural production, as they inform us of the historical marginality of Arab migration and Arab community identity formation that was built and continues to evolve throughout Latin America.

Taking into consideration Latin American intersections of nationalism, identity configurations, and traditional understandings of belonging from a socio-cultural context, I will focus on the exploration of affective roots and emotional attachments in the process of identity formation, space creation, and community building, studying representative works that show an immigrants' consciousness and strategies of flexible identity and citizenship. In many aspects, these texts open a window into the affective understanding of identity and the emotional factors and allegiances that inform senses of belonging and identification. At times, the authors and characters in these texts approach the world with fluid identities that challenge traditional understandings of belonging. Other times, they choose to identify with a geopolitical space based on their allegiance to political beliefs and potential benefits. Sometimes, their sense of identity becomes a challenge, as they seek to develop spaces of belonging in places occupied by unwelcoming rhetoric of identity politics and nationalistic discourses.

Affect Theory and Emotional Studies

We inhabit in motion; we exist inside of it. If anything holds stable in the human experience of existence is this singular observation about the universe's refusal to stay still. Everything and anything inside and outside of what we understand as *our bodies* is a perpetual circulation of processes that produce not only the life that runs and shapes these

vessels, but also the lives that we share with other bodies, with other objects, and the societies we build around the experiencing of existence. In *Lénine et la philosophie* (1970), French philosopher Louis Althusser hinted at this sense of existence in motion when introducing the concept of *interpellation*, also known as *hailing*. Whereas Althusser explored this concept focusing on the sublimation of economic identities through the installation of ideological and repressive state apparatuses, an unorthodox peak at interpellation reveals the ways in which bodies are affected by the circulation of ideas, the abstractions of actions and behaviors, the unconscious forces beyond rationale, and the cultural momentums of impact that are captured in the in-betweenness of existence.

British philosopher of language J.L. Austin, in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), noted, for instance, that the very utterance of a word is an act that affects the meaning of existence and the distribution of realities for both the objects and subjects that are in proximity and are addressed by what he called "performative utterances." In one of his most famous examples, he observed how the utterance of the performative "I do" articulated in a marriage ceremony constituted an act of transformation that redefined the realities of the couple being wedded. For her part, American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), asserted that gender was a performative act derived from behaviors, mannerisms, and movement articulations. Femininity and masculinity, she argued, were nothing but abstract movements of the body coded by cultural normativity and decodified by social homeostasis as if seeking an illusory equilibrium. According to Butler, participating in this social homeostasis as a body that intends to perform and express itself as a woman means the repression of aggressive motions and behaviors while heightening delicate movements, soft utterances, and a deeper sentimental sensitivity. A body performing the part of the man, on the other hand, is required to actively engage in rough movements, develop an affinity to more aggressive behaviors, and reject the delicate comfort of softness. In this sense, our *bodies*, their plain existence in motion, affect and are affected by every atom circulating through space.

In Deleuzean terms, the machines that move us across this world of assemblages are not static entities with a pre-configured, pre-planned, end-purpose loaded into a blueprint of a grand design; rather, the connections we produce in tandem with other assemblages *interpellate* a continuum of production that is exposed and expressed onto the world through every little action, every little word, every little articulation of the senses that find their way into existence. To say the least, any intent to rationalize and theorize these unstable entanglements of being appears self-defeating and contradictory. However, these entanglements are exactly what Affect Theory aims to emotionalize and destabilize, as it intends to redirect the spectrum of theoretical fulcrums as, in the words of cultural theorist Sianne Ngai, it "demonstrates how feeling can be used to expand the project of criticism and theory" (8).

Often hidden in plain sight, the affective approach to politics has been historically undertaken by feminists, queer theorists, disability activists, and subaltern peoples. This approach implies resistance to the normativization of corporeal collective experiences, narratives promoting social normativity, and power fluctuations flowing across bodies,

spaces, and objects. In this sense, affects, feelings and emotions appear as an in-between force, as the interpellation of forces that propose to look at emotions as culturally created.

Cultural critics and political philosophers, such as Sara Ahmed, Michael Hardt, and Gilles Deleuze, are known for operating in the margins of conventional discourse, while bringing attention to the way in which affective realities shape socio-political structures. American political philosopher Michael Hardt, co-author of *Empire* (2000) – the 21st-century communist manifesto, according to Slavoj Žižek – asserts that affectivity is essential to the ways in which everyday life is organized by what he calls the "post-fordist" capitalist economy. For Hardt, the commodification of services is the production of affects and is one of the forces (along with class oppression and globalization, among others) that has the potential to spark a social change of unprecedented dimensions. He is concerned with the joy of political life and has stated that: "[o]ne has to expand the concept of love beyond the limits of the couple" (12), for the politics of the multitude is not solely about controlling the means of production or liberating one's own subjectivity. These two are also linked to love and the joy of political life and to realizing political goals.

In the same vein, cultural critic Sarah Ahmed has pointed out the ways in which happiness is narrated and woven into the idea of utilitarianism. In her book *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Ahmed explores how happiness acts as "social pressure" to push individuals towards or away from certain experiences, objects, and behaviors. This intersects with her study of queerness in the chapter "Happy Objects" (2010), where she describes the experience of being a young queer person at a family dinner table being overlooked by ancestral photos of heterosexual nuclear families and the ramifications on the collective experiences of marginalization and exclusion produced by socio-political experiences of rejection. From these perspectives, Affect Theory has been useful in reinstating marginalized narratives of experience and redirecting our attention to the key role that emotional experiences play in everyday political lives.

From the perspective of the humanities, the field of Affect Theory represented an attempt to turn away from the much-heralded "linguistic turn," which claimed the latter half of the twentieth century, as it engulfed almost every discipline from cultural anthropology to literary theory to cultural studies and communications. In their own way, the works of Raymond Williams, Frantz Fanon, Walter Benjamin, Susanne Langer, Gloria Anzaldúa, and John Dewey already attempted to guide a myriad of discussions towards a dimension beyond the constraints of linguistic conceptions of the world. In their works, each of these critics alluded to a third space, a third mode of existence beyond the dichotomy of imposed realities and beyond the structures of language. Often, their discussions were tied to the perception of social realities through the imprints set by affective forces. The works of both Fanon and Anzaldúa, for instance, make references to the lack of *feelings* of belonging and the renewal of the world through the emotion of *love*.

Furthermore, in her book *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (1991), American cultural theorist Lauren Berlant explains how modes of belonging in popular culture are related to the history and fantasy of citizenship. Berlant proposes to view public spheres as affect worlds, where affect and emotion lead the way for belonging ahead of the modes of rational or deliberative thought, thus creating

attachment to strangers and relationships within civil society. In another example, in his book *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production*, cultural critic Ignacio López-Calvo, extrapolating from the twentieth-century cultural productions of Nikkei authors in Brazil, alludes to the experience of nostalgia as a process that redefines experiences of belonging and sentiments of Brazilianness and Japaneseness from both national and transnational perspectives. In this sense, the approach of the humanities toward Affect Studies has proven to extend the capabilities of critical theorization. This approach has added flexibility and fluidity to conversations that were becoming stagnant due to the constraints presented by more traditionally rigid modes of thought.

In turn, I insist on the value of Affect Theory and its interdisciplinary impasses while agreeing with Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado's proposition that: "la idea no es de reducir la cuestión de los afectos a un paradigma identificable, sino de reflexionar de manera colectiva sobre el enorme potencial que los lenguajes críticos del afecto, la emoción y la sentimentalidad tienen para una posible reinterpretación de producciones canónicas de la cultura" (Sánchez Prado 12-13). Thus, the analyses presented in this dissertation are strongly guided and sustained by an affect and emotional framework.

Postcolonial Theory

World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire opened the door for what the surrealists called "European murderous humanitarianism" in the Arab world. European restructuring of the region after World War II only destabilized the region further, a situation that was exacerbated by the high tensions produced during the Cold War. On September 11, 2001, these tensions reached a violent and lamentable climax with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. What followed was the transnationalization of terrorism and Western military control of the Middle East at unprecedented levels (Dekmejian 2007). Simultaneously, the media became flooded with images of a chaotic region and caricatured depictions (at times contradictory) of its inhabitants ranging from blood-thirsty insurgents to servile, childlike beings (Alsultany 2013). Furthermore, while it is true that in the post-911 world, corrosive representations of the non-Westerner heightened, this was nothing new. Images of the Middle East as a decadent place that urgently needed Western, redeeming civilization were very much present in Westerners' conscience long before any American troops were deployed to any Arab territory.

According to U.S.-based Palestinian cultural critic Edward Said, these Western ideological constructs dated as far back as the time of Homer and served to secure and facilitate the attainment of Western imperial interests in the Middle East for centuries (Orientalism11). This European ideology had not only built the "Orient" and the "Oriental," but also fueled the entire rhetoric of European culture and imperial expansion across the Globe. In his foundational text Orientalism (1978), borrowing from Gramscian concepts on cultural hegemony and Foucauldian notions on discourse, power, and knowledge, Said studied the narratives that sustained the myths of (and excuses for) Western imperialism and colonization upon non-Western territories and non-European

people. In his analysis, Said explored the historic and decadent representations of the East by the West and redefined the meaning of Orientalism. For him, the "Orient" was nothing else than an imaginary construct fostered by an essentialist discourse that facilized Western ambitions of "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3).

Perhaps one of the most controversial and widely known terms in the post-colonial vernacular, Orientalism managed to yield a strong diagnosis on the cultural logic of imperial expansion built upon the dichotomization of imagined identities: the superior Westerner and the inferior, often complete opposite, non-Westerner or "Oriental." Identities that, explains Andre Gingrich, "are multidimensional and contradictory, and they include power-related, dialogical ascriptions by selves and by others which are processual configurated, enacted and transformed by cognition, language, imagination, emotion, body and (additional forms of) agency" (6).

Said's controversial thesis on Orientalism soon attracted both praise and criticism. Despite its fair number of contradictions and inconsistencies, his book became foundational in post-colonial studies while inflicting a deep wound to the field of Orientalism. Several orientalist scholars resented this and fixed their sights on Said's work, prompting an array of responses against it. Chief concerns with Said's work were his Manichaean rhetoric and oversimplification of relationships between East and West; the essentialization and construction of the very "Orient" that Said is trying to deconstruct; and the lack of non-Westerners' voices present in a work that is supposed to direct attention to them (Hourani 1991; Irwin 2006; Keddie 1983). Among his most fervent critics, historian Bernard Lewis, in a book review titled "The Question of Orientalism," accused the book of demonizing Orientalism and being "anti-Western." Lewis also attempted to dismiss Said's efforts by concluding that "The most rigorous and penetrating critique of Orientalist scholarship has always been and will remain that of the Orientalists themselves" (17). Said's response to his critics appeared in a 1995 piece titled "Orientalism, an Afterword":

> One scarcely knows what to make of these caricatural permutations of a book that to its author and in its arguments is explicitly anti-essentialist, radically skeptical about all categorical designations like Orient and Occident, and painstakingly careful about not "defending" or even discussing the Orient and Islam. Yet Orientalism has in fact been read and written about in the Arab world as a systematic defense of Islam and the Arabs, even though I say explicitly that I have no interest, much less the capacity for showing what the true Orient and Islam really are. Actually, I go a great deal further when very early in the book I say that words like Orient and Occident correspond to no stable reality that exists as a natural fact. Moreover, all such geographical designations are an odd combination of the empirical and imaginative.

As Said explains, in Orientalism he set out to find a methodological alternative in order to study other cultures and peoples from a liberating perspective, far from the repressive and manipulative appropriation characteristic of Orientalist discourses.

In Culture and Imperialism (1993), a theoretical sequel of Orientalism, Said further dives into how empires are built through cultural artifacts that reinforce and perpetuate

hegemonic discourses. Most likely referring to Homi Bhabha's Nation and Narration (1990), in his introduction Said writes:

> As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most importantly, the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection. (1993; 13)

From this perspective, Culture and Imperialism deconstructs the myths of the empire embedded in the cultural production of mainstream authors in the likes of Joseph Conrad, Jane Austen, and Rudyard Kipling. Additionally, taking note of the criticism received in Orientalism, Said also analyzed the works of writers such as W.B. Yeats, Chinua Achebe, and Salman Rushdie, and insisted on using a contrapuntal approach to these novels and their interpretations: "The point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes·, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it" (66). Written fifteen years after Orientalism, this second book found a more welcoming crowd in a much more established field of studyInspired by Said's work, scholars continue to expand on his work. Since the publications of Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism, a myriad of studies has emerged addressing the question of the "Other" and its alternative planes of representation (Camayd Freixas 2013; López-Calvo 2007); the cultural relationships between the metropoles and peripheries as well as between the peripheries themselves (López-Calvo 2010); and the transdisciplinary nature of cultural imperialism (Pels 1997).

While recognizing that deconstructing the myths that built the West is a difficult task and given that these myths are deeply rooted in the conscience of humanity along with its atrocious effects and affects, this dissertation bears in mind the importance of highlighting the historical realities of communities and groups that are often relegated to the margins. In this sense, from a postcolonial perspective, it engages with Arab-Latin American histories emerging from their own voices and perspectives.

Chapter Outline

Arab-Latin American cultural production reveals processes beyond nationalistic and historical logic deeply entrenched with an affective and emotional understanding of belonging and identity. In turn, the cultural production of Arabs and Latin Americans of Arab descent challenges Latin American traditions and historical understandings of identity by considering the spectrum of emotional and affective entanglements ingrained in the roots and processes of identity building, socio-economic networks, and the significance of belonging to a geopolitical space. Topics on migration, diaspora, space creation, emotional cartography, cultural assimilation, cultural nationalism, self-orientalization, and hybridity are addressed and compared across the cultural products studied. This analysis is further contextualized by historical studies on Arab migration to Latin America, early-modern notions of identity during the seventeenth century, the implications of the Ottoman

Empire's rule and fall, the Middle East's geopolitical and territorial reconfigurations during the French and British mandates post-World War I, the *Nakba* (the massive displacement of Palestinians that began with Israel's establishment in 1948), and the 9/11 terrorists attacks in the U.S., which threatened the stability of Arab communities outside the Middle East.

The first chapter studies emotional cartography, identity construction, and the roots of Arab identity in Latin America in the travelogues of Elias al-Musili, the first known Arab to leave a written record of his travels across Spanish colonial America during the second half of the seventeenth century. I contextualize the topics of space configuration through the emotions of fear and wonder as well as the emergence of *emotional cartography* in his travelogues, where the explorer relies on his *affective compass* as he studies and invests himself into the narration process while attempting to capture the essence of foreign lands with the purpose of sharing this knowledge with other Arabs. The exploration of the emotional cartography and affective compass concepts will lead to the problematization of stable notions of identity, while reflecting on the complex, fluid, and hybrid nature of early modern migrations and identity roots across Latin America.

Chapter 2 explores racism, identity formation and the creation of spaces of belonging in Roberto Sarah's novel *Los turcos* (1961) and Walter Garib's *El viajero de la alfombra mágica* (1991). The authors address not only Arabophobia, but also the Arabs immigrants' racist and xenophobic feelings toward other Arabs, mixed-race Arabs, and theimselves, as they, often contradictorily, intend to carve out spaces of Arab inclusion within the adoptive communities. The issues explored include the relationship between ancestry and migrants' identity crisis as they seek to assimilate into a new culture, a *geography of anger* impeding the establishment of Arab communities, and strategies to assimilate while maintaining ties to Arab ancestry, including the deployment of *flexible citizenship*. *Los turcos* and *El viajero de la alfombra mágica* reflect upon the difficulties faced by early Arab immigrants in Latin America, while celebrating their socioeconomic and political ascend, as they carved out spaces of belonging dedicated to the celebration of Arab pride. In this sense, these novels serve as promoters of Arab culture and identity that reinforce the communities' collective agency across Latin America.

Chapter 3 analyzes the migrants' inherited nostalgia and, the often present, frustrated plans of return in Barbara Jacob's novel *Las hojas muertas* (1987) and Lina Meruane's travel journal *Volverse Palestina* (2013). These authors explore the memories of their fathers and challenge their nostalgia and desires to return to a land that is no longer perceived as home. Their internal conflicts and feelings about what home means, alongside the exploration of what I call *inherited nostalgia*, are a testament to the emotional structures that serve as the foundational pillars for Arab-Latin American identity and community building. In this sense, this chapter addresses the Arab diasporic communities in Chile and Mexico, while insisting on an understanding of subjects' claims to belonging within a determinate space and community through a cultural production deeply rooted in emotional inheritance as well as the subject's own feelings for the space they identify as home.

Finally, chapter 4 showcases a series of Arab-Latin American cultural productions and perspectives on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict produced in Latin American *cultural*

exclaves. It includes films by Miguel Littín and Alberto Nazal, as well as two literary anthologies of Arab and Jewish literary productions, one compiled by Rose Mary Salúm and another one by Ignacio López-Calvo and Cristián H. Ricci. These works engage with the Palestinian-Israeli relationship and cultural clashes as they adapt to a globalized world while insisting on the possibility of coexistence between Palestine and Israel. They explore the early and current relationship between Palestinians and Jews amid the foundation of Israel and address the struggles and pressures presented by European and American politics vis-à-vis Arab Latin American support, while still maintaining hope on the possibility of a peaceful resolution to the conflict that promotes the acceptance of Arab ethnocultural values and contributions to the world.

Overall, this interdisciplinary project, which deals with travelogues, novels, documentaries, testimonials, essays, short stories, interviews, films, and poetry, contributes to the unveiling of new Arab-Latin American discourse. Its purpose is to broaden the idea of Arab-Latin American identity and culture and to explore an important minority discourse through its affective roots and emotional claims of belonging.

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Chapter 1: Fears and Miracles of the New World: Elias al-Musili's Journey to Seventeenth-century Colonial Spanish America

Furthering the insights into early interwoven histories between the Americas and the Middle East, this chapter contributes to the growing field of Global South cross-cultural relations by bringing attention to the first recorded writings of an Arab traveler across Latin America. Through an affective and close reading lens focusing on the emotions of fear and wonder, this chapter analyzes the travelogues of Reverend Elias al-Musili during his journey into seventeenth-century colonial Spanish America. Specifically, this study utilizes the analytical concepts of *affective compass* and *emotional cartography* to extrapolate from the phenomenology of fear and the emotional structures of miracles and wonder. As will be seen in the case of al-Musili's writings, fear is experienced through the traumas hidden within the experience of traveling, which include a sense of uprooting, confusion, anxiety, and identity morphing. Similarly, the experience of wonder is deployed as a response to stimuli from his surroundings that, as it passes through a cultural filter, tends to be recognized as miracles. In essence, these responses are not pure since they are filtered and mediated through al-Musili's layers of identity and his *affective compass*, which ultimately inform the processes of his *emotional cartography*. In this sense, this chapter seeks not only to dive into al-Musili's journey through Spanish Colonial America but also to deepen the analysis of his identity formation and evolution through the emotions and experiences of fear and wonder that percolate through his travels.

The Affective Compass and Emotional Cartography

When I speak of an affective compass and emotional cartography, I refer to the emotional and affective, mostly unconscious, structures that guide a person's actions and reactions in particular situations, places, and relationships. This is because we approach the world that surrounds us not merely through independent experiences but rather through an interwoven network of knowledges and social memories inherited from our ancestors and the society that created us. In other words, humans map out spaces and locations – and the knowledge of these spaces and locations – based on what Mignolo calls "the locus of enunciation": we think from where we are located (Mignolo 13). But we not only think from where we are located; we also perceive and feel from there. When we think of a memory, for instance, we not only access a plain image in our mind but rather a series of affective experiences that indicate the pleasantry or unpleasantry of said memory. This, in turn, unconsciously assists us in reacting not only to that memory but to similar experiences that resemble the feeling that a new experience evokes. If it is unpleasant, we avoid it; if it evokes pleasure, we pursue it. In *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth define these affects as

> the name we give to those forces – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion – that can

> serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability. (1)

And these affects, as human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan hints at in his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), have real consequences in our understanding and experience of the world. Tuan situates the human experience of reality in the binary of space and place, where space represents freedom of movement and detachment from affective signification. We could compare this to the space occupied by the dimensions of the commute between one's home and one's job. For the most part, the space occupied by the commute from home to work, and vice versa, tends to be rather detached from the emotional signification of our existence. Perhaps our brains and bodies have become so used to traveling through that space that it might even feel like a blink at times. Many things could be happening to other people along this same road, and many other interwoven histories, memories, and emotions might be contained in that space, but since they are not ours, we perceive this space as empty in the sense that it is emotionally insignificant to us. A place, on the other hand, is filled with affective and emotional forces that give signification to the space they occupy. Whereas the space between one's home and one's job might be detached from emotional signification, the spaces that we call *our* home and *our* workplace are different in the sense that they are charged with emotional and affective forces – whether positive or negative – that give them meaning in our experience of reality. Thus, these affective mechanisms structure an unconscious guide that leads us to safety or signals danger; they become an affective compass that allows us to differentiate between hostile and safe environments, whether we have experienced them or not before. This affective compass also allows us to map out our surroundings through an internal network of emotional and affective structures that assist us in interacting with our environments and the people and objects in them through a process that I call *emotional cartography*. This process, in turn, helps us map out spaces as we endow them with affective forces and emotional signification while developing not only mental but also emotional maps whose purpose is to guide us as we navigate the world and its intricate spatial networks.

In *Ordinary Affects*, Kathleen Steward reminds us that "From the perspective of ordinary affects, things like narrative and identity become tentative though forceful compositions of disparate and moving elements . . . Forms of power and meaning become circuits lodged in singularities" (5-6). From this perspective, the entirety of al-Musili's writings is weaved by fear, miracles, and wonders. When analyzed from an affective perspective, these experiences reveal different paths of space and emotional cartography creation, which assisted al-Musili's affective compass to navigate the New World and, in turn, capture said experiences in his descriptions of this experience. But beyond aiding him in his own journey, al-Musili's writings also affected the collective emotional cartographical processes of his audience by relying on already established emotional blueprints and creating a repository of structures of feeling that also intercepted with notions of identity and influenced future generations. As Jerónimo Arellano insists in *Magical Realism and The History of the Emotions in Latin America* (2015):

> forms of feeling such as wonder may experience a spectral afterlife of the same kind, outlasting their initial conditions of possibility and bringing along with them a cloud of afterimages of past structures of feeling. The process through which narrative or an artwork recalls obsolescent or submerged forms of feeling is never straightforward or uncomplicated . . . an exploration of these mechanisms, particularly in postcolonial contexts, leads to the recognition of forms of affective creativity and self-reflexivity that perhaps insinuate new directions in contemporary scholarship on affect within the humanities. (XX)

In this sense, the fears, miracles, and wonders that engulf al-Musili's travels are intricately conceived in the intersections of identity formation and affective constructions of the world that unfolds before him.

Context and Historical Background

Reverent Antun Rabbat, who discovered Reverent Elias al-Musili's travelogues in the library of the Syrian bishopric in Aleppo in the early 1900s, stated that: "while Easterners are noted for their love of travel, none before Rev. Elias had ventured into the Americas . . . what the traveler left for posterity 'had not been matched by anyone or anything' in the contents of libraries that he himself had investigated" (Farah XI). Similarly, Middle East historian and Islamic studies scholar Roberto Marín Guzmán has observed that, although many Arabs arrived in America before al-Musili, none before al-Musili appear to have had the permissions and freedoms necessary to travel at their leisure across the Spanish colonies. On the contrary, most of the early Arab peoples who arrived in America were either brought in as enslaved peoples or were escaping from the Iberic Peninsula after the Alhambra Decree of 1492 and, most notably, between 1609-1614, during one of the early modern examples of ethnic cleansing when king Philip III of Spain and the Duke of Lerma's engaged in a campaign to expel all the Moriscos from Iberian soil. While the Moriscos had already been forcibly converted to Christianity, they still lacked *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) and did not enjoy the same prestige as "old Christians" due to their being considered as people with tainted ancestry since they were descendants of Moors. Consequently, alongside the efforts of colonization and conversion to Christianity, the early Spanish colonizers heavily invested in securing the territories and peoples of America by preventing any other people or faith outside Euro-Christian circles from entering contact with what they viewed and claimed as their property--all more reasons to ponder upon al-Musili's journey across these territories.

Indeed, al-Musili's journey is a peculiar one for a couple of reasons. First, he was the first Arab who was able to compile an account of his entire journey through America from a non-Westerner's perspective. This journey, which began in Baghdad in 1668 as he headed toward Europe seeking funds for his Chaldean church, soon led him into an unexpected journey spanning from 1675 to 1683, through the territories of what are now Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Cuba. Marín Guzmán does note, however, that although al-

Musili asserts to have visited all these territories, his narratives are filled with contradictions and misplaced details, which make us wonder whether he actually visited all of the places as he claimed. In the same vein, al-Musili himself states that many of the pages in his narrative were written well after the events took place, which once again fills the pages of his travelogues with uncertainty and a myriad of questions. Secondly, the circumstances that permitted al-Musili to embark on such an adventure were directly linked to his position as a Chaldean priest professing the Christian faith. This fact alone granted him access to privileges and connections only available to the nobility and elite of the time, and this is something that he is well aware of when he writes: "No foreigner was permitted to travel to [America] . . . without an absolute order from the king" (al-Musili 14). Yet his motives to embark on such a journey appear to follow the patterns of explorers before him, who sought adventure alongside the promises of riches. In this sense, many of the events that develop in his narratives appear to be exaggerated with the purpose of enhancing al-Musili's image as a heroic character or, for that matter, as the protagonist of an epic adventure similar to that of Odysseus. Thus, making use of his connections and status, al-Musili begins his journey on the morning of February 12, 1675, with the following words:

> As we sailed away, some of the travelers were happy, and others, sad over leaving their families behind. Such an armada sets sail only once every three years for that part of the Indies called Peru, 1,500 *farsakhs*,[1] to the New World from which the treasury of the king is replenished. Merchants load their galleons with all sorts of merchandise to sell there. They allow no one, priest or merchant, not of Spanish extraction to accompany them without special orders from the king as previously mentioned. (al-Musili 16)

Originally written in Arabic – al-Musili's second language[2] – and later translated into Italian to be published in Rome by the Propaganda Fide in 1692, "al-Musili's travelogue provided a record of his observations and experiences that shed light on towns, villages, cities, provinces, and native peoples as well as on their Spanish overlords" (Farah XI). Beyond the description of these new territories from a non-Westerner's perspective, through a close reading of al-Musili's travelogues and from an affect theory lens, this chapter argues that al-Musili's narratives shed light on shared preoccupations of colonial-era travelers regardless of their ethnic background while, at the same time, provide critical insights on early notions of racial and ethnic identity. In many respects, his travelogues also make us wonder about the early moments of colonization and global imperialism, as literary critic Mary Louise Pratt notes in her 1992 book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*:

> Travel books . . . gave European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement, and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being

[1] Known in Persian as *parsang*. Each *farsakh* is the equivalent of three miles.

[2] According to Rev. Antun Rabat, it appears that al-Musili's first language, as an Ottoman subject, was Turkish. However, and though the reasons are unclear, al-Musili decided to write his travel memoirs in Arabic, often relying on Persian to describe units of measure. Seeking to respect the significance of the original manuscripts, Rev. Antun Rabat corrected the grammar and syntax of al-Musili's writings before publishing them for the first time in 1906 without disrupting any of its contents.

> explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized. Travel books were very popular. They created a sense of curiosity, excitement, adventure, and even moral fervor about European expansionism. They were . . . one of the key instruments that made people "at home" in Europe feel part of a planetary project; a key instrument, in other words, in creating the "domestic subject" of empire. (3)

Moreover, in using an affective lens to analyze al-Musili's narratives, I intend to derive a common denominator between the expression of al-Musili's experiences of the "New World" that he captures in his narratives and his subjective *a priori* – as a subject formed by and invested in the idea of an empire – understanding of these unknown territories. The reason for this approach is that, on the one hand, al-Musili's writings are refreshing in the sense that they are structured from a non-Westerner's perspective. The descriptions set forth by al-Musili are often approached from his cultural understanding of what it means to belong to a geopolitical space. For instance, while still in Europe preparing for his departure toward America, al-Musili writes in a tone of lament: "Accompanying me from Cádiz was a deacon who belonged to the Greek faith, born in Athens because I could not find anyone in Cádiz from my own people or religious rite. I regretted deeply having sent my nephew Yunan to the lands of the East. But regret at this juncture was to no avail" (15). Here al-Musili still notes a difference between what he considers his people and the Europeans, yet he also follows his complaint of the circumstances by underscoring difference through a religious sense of belonging. On the other hand, as I dive into a deeper analysis of al-Musili's narratives, once in America, the traveler's understanding of himself appears to shift as he becomes immersed in the belief of belonging to a Euro-Christian polity. Although al-Musili is not a European himself, when traveling through the New World, he approaches these unknown lands and peoples as if he were one. Similarly, his descriptions of the peoples of the Americas appear to be based on juxtapositions of early notions of racial and ethnic identities, but above all religious underpinnings. Most likely, this is due to three major factors: his deeply rooted religious views; his limited knowledge of America – mostly, if not completely, deriving from a highly Eurocentric perspective; and, of particular interest to this study, his affective compass and emotional cartography.

Fear as a Cartographical Tool

Today it is not uncommon to hear people say that they are afraid of flying. Perhaps those suffering from aerophobia, aside from being haunted by the thought that something might go wrong mid-fly, might also be aggravated by a fear of heights. Yet, despite these valid reasons to be fearful of flying, we can safely assume that never before in human history, traveling has been as safe as it is today. Not only have we, humans, populated almost every corner of the globe but we have also developed technologies that allow us to communicate with one another from virtually any place in the world. For the most part, today's travels are often initiated through pre-programmed trajectories to and from destinations that have been already charted by global positioning systems (GPS), where human beings have already secured the locations to be visited. Our anxieties about traveling, although still very real, are less governed by the unknown, the uncharted, or

metaphysical terrors – it is rather unheard-of people to state that they are afraid of flying because of the possibility of running into a dragon or a griffin – than by logically guided explanations that reduce fear, if not expel it altogether, from the experience of travel. Yet for travelers in al-Musili's times, fear often meant the difference between life and death. Beyond that, fear itself was not only conceived at the center of a journey, but it was both an essential tool of survival in any traveler's repertoire of cartographical production, both in the physical and metaphysical sense, as well as an identity marker.

In his book *Landscapes of Fear* (2013), Yi-Fu Tuan defines fear as:

> a complex feeling of which two strains, alarm and anxiety, are clearly distinguishable. Alarm is triggered by an obtrusive event in the environment, and an animal's instinctive response is to combat it or run. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a diffuse sense of dread and presupposes an ability to anticipate. It commonly occurs when an animal is in a strange and disorienting milieu, separated from the supportive objects and figures of its home ground. Anxiety is a presentiment of danger when nothing in the immediate surroundings can be pinpointed as dangerous. The need for decisive action is checked by the lack of any specific circumventable threat. (5)

Following Tuan's definition of fear, we can underscore that part of what provokes fear is a disorientation produced by the separation from familiar grounds and objects, alongside a feeling of anxious uncertainty about the possibilities that lay before the subject experiencing fear. Both of these strains, alarm and anxiety, are present across al-Musili's travelogs from beginning to end. Even before embarking toward America, and despite his tone of excitement when referring to this voyage, al-Musili often alludes to the many preoccupations he has about the unknown and impious nature of these lands. Thus, in the introduction to his travellogues he writes:

> there was not a place or region in all four ends of the earth free from the preaching of the gospel and the true upright faith among different peoples and in various languages. But that lying cursed one [the devil], the enemy of good and righteousness, is ever alert and active in rattling the minds of the faithful and weaning them away from the bosom of the Church, their mother. He casts his nets and lays his traps and plants in the hearts of some the seeds of envy, pride, and defiance to the extent that some sects deny obedience . . . folk of strange tongues and languages dwelling in the wilderness and mountains, pursuing a barbarous life and differing not from animals, tormented and guided by the perdition of the devil. A party of them worshipped stones, others, beasts, and still others, trees. Some offered sacrifices from their own kind to the cursed devil. They dwell in the fourth clime, which was concealed from sight and mind. Even the great saint and teacher of the Holy Church, St. Augustine, used to believe that this clime was uninhabited by humans . . . As for this clime, we aim to talk about it for it is vast in length and width, bigger than the other three known ones: Asia, Africa, and Europe. They named it falsely America. (2-3)

Amid the vast amount of Orientalizing and exoticizing undertones of al-Musili's statements in the previous descriptions, of a place that he does not yet know, there are a few assertions that stand out. Beginning with the religious structures upon which al-Musili builds his perception about the organization of the world, his foreshadowing of what awaits him in America reveals the nature of his identification as a man of righteous morals, which are defined by his subservience to the Catholic Church while, at the same time, sheds light into al-Musili's rationale and emotional mappings of the unknown. Following this logic, it is safe to assume that al-Musili's identity configuration was conflated with allusions to a Judeo-Christian world under the constant assault of supernatural forces that sought to bring demise upon the creations of God. It is likely that the way in which he understood his place in the world was inside a battlefield between good and evil where the forces of God were those under the armies of the Catholic Church. By that time, among other things, the Catholic Church (along with the Spanish crown) had managed to expel the Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and to avert the fall of Europe under the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over al-Musili's homeland, even though he appears not to identify with it. Moreover, in the middle of this battle, there was always something to be fearful about: the unknown, the unchartered, the supernatural, or, for that matter, anything outside of the Christian faith. In this respect, al-Musili's world was built by fear. It was a place where something to be fearful about was ever present, and perhaps for a good reason, too. After all, the tremendous amount of societal emotional investment of the time was utilized to fuel the belief that forces beyond human control were at play with the "devil ever alert," as al-Musili states, and only faith could hold them back. Thus, al-Musili's fear of the unknown is based upon the fear of the evil propagated by the Devil. His notion of America and its people, as is seen in his *a priori* understanding of it, is of a place where one must proceed with extreme care, just as Dante's stroll through the circles of hell. On the other hand, these fears also reinforce his identification as a Christian and, as will be explored, an identity alignment with European values, beliefs, and traditions.

Another interesting revelation that these statements provide is the notion that America, as a place that existed within the confines of the world, was already present in the minds of Europeans long before their first ships arrived at its shores. Initially, al-Musili attributes this knowledge to St. Augustine, who adapted classical philosophy to Christian teachings, thus laying the foundation for much of medieval and modern Christian thought. Nonetheless, it is also believed that St. Augustine lived between 354 AD and 430 AD. Consequently, it is more likely that the belief in the existence of lands beyond those of Asia, Africa, and Europe was an inheritance from Greek and Roman mythology passed down by generations and reshaped through cultural filters, such as the Italian Renaissance and the Spanish Golden Age. Notably, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* credited to Homer, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Divine Comedy* (*Divina Commedia*, 1320), and Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605), were well-known works of literature across Europe that, among other themes, dived into human's exploration of the world and its dangers. But traveling landscapes that evoked fear wondering about what lay beyond the horizons, and underscoring the dangers of the road were expected not only in European literary traditions. One of the most recognized collections of world literature emerging from the Middle East Golden Age, the *One Thousand and One Nights* (also known as *The Arabian Nights*),

composed of Middle Eastern folktales collected from 600 to 900 C.E., often portrayed traveling as an exciting yet extremely dangerous experience filled with dangers. Other non-Western literary works, such as the *Baburnama* (1589?), written by Timurid Prince Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire and direct descendant of Timur, or the *Book of Travels* (*Seyahatname*, 1665?), written by Ottoman traveler Evliya Celebi, "probably the longest and most ambitious travel account by any writer in any language" (Dankoff and Sooyong XI), constantly emphasized the difficulties and perils of travel, while alluring to the possibility of dying as a latent consideration of the experience. The whole experience of traveling, as depicted not only by these works but also by maps of the era, was both a marvelous and dangerous enterprise full of motives to be afraid. From hellish paths to warzones to seas guarded by monsters and lands under the yoke of the devil, getting robbed by bandits waiting on the road, or simply the idea of getting lost, the cultural productions of the era were built upon layers of fear around the experience of traveling. And with Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the second half of the fifteenth century, the production and reach of these works only intensified. This had a direct impact on Europeans' emotional cartography of the time, which, as it stands, was already heavily tinted with Judeo-Christian ideologies and discourses. At their core, these cultural productions fomented a culture of fear as the means to control the masses or, in Foucauldian terms, a culture of self-surveillance under a panopticon propelled by the fear of the supernatural hidden in the unknown, where the Devil was the main culprit of the fall of man and, in al-Musili's understanding of the world, the one responsible for the chaotic nature of the peoples and lands of America.

Already on his way to America via the Atlantic Ocean, al-Musili briefly describes the journey. It is possible that this is because, as mentioned earlier, he began writing the greater part of his travelogues toward the end of his journey. In any case, only two pieces of information stand out in his description of this voyage. On a lesser aspect, al-Musili mentions an encounter with an English embarkation transporting slaves toward Brazil, but aside from acknowledging its presence, he does not go into any details or further descriptions. The most important event that al-Musili appears to recall is a storm that took place three days after departing from Cádiz and which lasted for about three hours. Though al-Musili provides no information of damages caused by the storm, he does note that Don Nicolao Infante, who was deputy of the king who had been appointed to the head government at Quito in Ecuador, "died that night of intense fear" (16). Don Nicolao Infante's body was then tied to a large jug made of some type of ceramic and thrown overboard while three cannon fires were shot. Al-Musili does not provide any further information about Don Nicolao Infante's death, but the mere notion that fear could overwhelm a person to the point of taking his life appears to have left an imprint in al-Musili. Across different episodes in his journey, fear plays a key role in guiding his decision making. Also, noting that this section of his travel was most likely written well after the events occurred, the fact that al-Musili attributes Don Nicolao Infate's dead to fear alone provides hints about al-Musili's understanding of the unknown. The argument can be made that, on the surface, his major fears in this journey appear to be rather logical in nature and shared with his European companions, such as becoming sick in the middle of the voyage, being attacked by enemies, or facing the forces of nature. However, on a deeper

level, and as explained earlier, al-Musili's fears continue to be guided by his emotional mapping of a world and his understanding of identity, which, as will be seen, becomes more entrenched with Euro-Christian tradition the more he ventured into America.

After spending over a month at sea with his Spanish companions, al-Musili was finally arriving to America. By this time al-Musili had probably struck many conversations with Spaniards who were traveling to America for the first time and discovered that they all shared similar anxieties and preoccupations about what waited for them in these lands. Maybe they had imagined what they could encounter along these roads and wondered about the possibilities of seeing and collecting objects and things that they had never seen before. Perhaps, other travelers who had visited America before were aboard as well. Maybe they were familiar with some of America's regions and shared their experiences with the first timers, seeking to ease their anxieties and fears. Or maybe their experiences of the things they had seen – or even imagined having seen – further nurtured their fears and questions. In any case, from conversations to first-hand experiences, al-Musili's understanding of America was gaining traction in his unconscious as he ventured deeper into these lands. His affective compass was becoming more precise as he began to be more trusting of his European companions, who, in many aspects, were helping him to develop an emotional mapping of these territories beyond the perceptions that he had already uploaded into his mind through earlier readings and conversations in preparation for the journey.

As he reached these unknown lands, al-Musili recalls having landed briefly in Caracas and visited Isla de Margarita. There, he recounts a local story of divers on the island who used to find shells filled with large pearls along the shore, but whose greed and failure to fulfill a promise to the Virgin Mary – to dedicate her the first pearl they found by taking it to her church – had caused the pearls to stop appearing altogether on the island. In many aspects this story encapsules two of the major tropes that these early arrivals were chasing after when they chose to travel to America: wonder and wealth.[3] At the same time, however, it served as a warning to those who chose to astray from religion by promising demise and failure in their future endeavors. In this story, the fear of upsetting the Virgin Mary and, by extension, God himself, was a shared sentiment in Spanish colonial America, as an affinity toward a Catholic religious identity deeply united the Spanish colonizers. Hence, the fear of upsetting God was a prominent shared cultural experience that not only defined early-modern colonial settlers but also provided a sense of protection under a sort of divine veil confectioned by the design of shared beliefs and ideologies. The only implication was that they all had to become accepting of fear toward their protector or fence off the consequences of not doing so. In this sense, this layer of fear was an essential part of Spanish identity across the colonies and, in consequence, became an important gear in al-Musili's affective compass.

As his journey progresses, al-Musili's emotional mapping of America and the guidance of his affective compass continue to be adjusted by his surroundings and his

[3] It appears that, for the most part, these early arrivals considered themselves as travelers or sojourners who were just passing by without the intention of fully settling into these lands. They saw themselves as an extension of the world they inhabited and did not seek to stay in the places where they had arrived.

interactions with the Spanish and indigenous peoples of America. At this point, many of the spaces that al-Musili describes are from first-hand experience. They unfold before his senses, allowing him to reconcile the images that he has of America with what he is actually perceiving in front of him. Nonetheless, for those things that al-Musili has not experienced, he relies on others' experiences to map out these spaces and simultaneously adopts an identity position resembling that of Europeans. For instance, about two months into the journey, when reaching the port of Cumana, Venezuela, al-Musili notes: "From this port one can travel to all parts of Peru. The only deterrent is fear of *jalaliyah,* and of the high mountains, rivers, forests, and wild animals" (al-Musili 18). According to Caesar E. Farah, who translated al-Musili's travelogs from the Arabic into English, "jalaliya" is an Arabic term for people who have evacuated a place, but al-Musili appears to be using here as *bandits* or *guerrillas*. Semantically speaking, using the word "jalaliyah" to refer to the indigenous people who inhabit the wilderness would be correct given that colonizers displaced thousands of indigenous people across America. On the other hand, the suggestion that al-Musili is using the term to either mean bandits or guerrillas implies a process of Othering in which the indigenous peoples whom the Spanish displaced becomes a group that inflicts suffering upon the Spanish colonies. Given that al-Musili had just arrived in Venezuela and had hardly ventured into the wilderness, it is safe to say that most of what he knew about the indigenous people of America was still deriving from Spanish sources. Yet, in informing his awareness of these unknown lands, fearing "jalaliyah" was al-Musili's safest bet at avoiding danger. Thus, from this perspective, since the "jalaliyah" produced fear upon the Spanish colonizers, it was more than logical that they should also inflict fear upon al-Musili and inform his affective compass in such a way that he ought to be vigilant when entering their territories. But this will not be the last time that al-Musili approaches indigenous people with fear. On the contrary, al-Musili's Othering of indigenous people will be a constant reminder of his identification with European identity through a trajectory of shared fears and affectivities that align with Europeans' emotional mapping of the world.

A few years after arriving in America, al-Musili found himself on a journey across Tucuman and Buenos Aires,[4] while making his way to Chile. He then recalls: "There are many pagan Indians in those mountains. I was afraid of them which is why I did not want to go . . . They had not horses at first nor did they know how to ride them. Now they ride horses bearing spears, like Arabs, and constantly combat the Spaniards" (al-Musili 64). By then, al-Musili had seen and experienced plenty in the Americas and he had even celebrated mass for a group of, according to him, over four thousand indigenous people. Yet, as his narrative proves, he is still appalled by the fear of the presence of indigenous peoples still resisting the Spanish attempts at colonization and conversion. In this example, the imagery utilized is clearly preceded by the Spanish Reconquista of the Iberic peninsula after being under Umayyad Caliphate's rule from 711 to1492. However, this example also reveals a

[4] Roberto Marín Guzmán notes that while al-Musili did travel through many townships across Spanish colonial America, he tends to exaggerate the number of places he visited. According to Marín Guzmán, it is likely that al-Musili did not visit all the places he said he did, but rather wrote about them based on accounts of others whom he encountered on the road. Tucuman is one of those places that, perhaps, al-Musili never visited based on the historical evidence provided by Marín Guzmán.

deeper layer of fear formed by al-Musili's mapping of the world alongside his identity constitution. Through a shared fear with the Spanish of "pagan Indians" and their resemblance to "Arabs," this comparison points not only toward the Orientalizing logic of the colonization but also toward al-Musili's understanding of his place in the world. It also raises questions on what "Arab" might have meant for al-Musili and how he came to understand his own ancestry and socio-political alliances. And although al-Musili's travelogues do not provide concrete answers to these questions, an earlier episode in al-Musili's narratives during his journey from Panama to Peru appears to shed light on his understanding of his identity while traveling across America:

> I, the humble one, resolved to accompany those merchants to Peru. Therefore, I rented three mules for ninety piasters, but the governor did not want me to proceed by myself because of the mountains that grow a type of grass resembling bamboo. When a white man steps on it, it rises from the ground like the shaft of an arrow and strikes him. The one thus smitten does not recover. He dies. It does not strike Indians or blacks nor does it harm them in any way. (23)

He then continues:

> When the governor told me this story, I said to him that I do not believe what do not see with my own eyes. He rose and sent an Indian servant along to point the weed out to me. When he reached where it was located, the Indian came around to my side of the horse and quickly disappeared. Lo and behold, the weed, still at a distance of ten yards from the road, rose and headed in my direction as if intending to strike me. The red man came out [of hiding] and shouted at it: "Beware O dog!" and it immediately fell back onto the ground. I witnessed this with my own eyes! (23)

This section of al-Musili's travels is very telling of the way he understood himself and others within the emotional mapping of the spaces he visited and occupied across colonial Spanish America. Curiously enough, both Indigenous and Black people appear to be unaffected by the nature of America. They even appear to have some sort of power over it and the ability to tame it. Even though it would be understandable for Indians to have power over these lands, it is unclear how Black people who arrived in America via the slave trade, as al-Musili himself acknowledges at different instances, are also immune to these afflictions. On the other hand, White people are both afraid and afflicted by these mysterious and dangerous lands. More importantly, in this section al-Musili reveals his understanding of himself as a White person and, it is highly likely that he understood his identity in America as interwoven with that of Europeans. After all, his understanding of identity was not only deeply marked by Eurocentric logic but also informed his emotional cartography and affective compass. Al-Musili not only shared the same anxieties, preoccupations, and fears with Spaniards but was also affected by the same dangers. In this sense, it was more than logical for al-Musili to feel European, especially when, considering the times, identity itself was not marked by the logic of citizenship but rather by socio-political and religious alliances. Thus, in inferring what being "Arab" might had meant for

al-Musili, it was probably just another marker of an identity that was constituted by religious and socio-political layers that, by the looks of it, were foreign to him.

Daniel McMann and Claire McKechnie-Mason remind us that "Although fear is a facet of human existence across cultures and time, its impact upon culture is far from uniform. Narratives that represent or evoke fear can provide sophisticated cultural engagements that offer unique insights into the human condition through time" (6). Across his travelogues, al-Musili expresses many fears and anxieties that were common among Europeans traveling to America. Whereas sometimes these fears were cast by the presence of factual and potential dangers that were very present across these uncharted lands, other times al-Musili seemed worried about metaphysical preoccupations, such as bad spirits and demons, or was intrigued by the possibility of encounters with giants and mythological-like-creatures, such as a caiman that resembled a dragon. Fear, ultimately, informed his actions, as he mapped out spaces that he had never seen before and utilized his affective compass to stay away from danger and in tune with his perceived identity. But despite the many latent fears and deterrents from traveling, al-Musili's faith kept him going, shaped his emotional mapping of America, and guided his affective compass beyond uncertainty.

Miracles and Wonders as Markers of Identity

The very opening lines of al-Musili's writings begin as follows: "Praise be to God who created the world out of His wisdom and all beings by His command and word . . . He sent his beloved son . . . He walked among men and performed miracles by curing the sick and raising the dead" (1). On a first instance, these lines reiterate his understanding of himself and his position in the world. As a Chaldean priest, and despite the imminent dangers and engulfing presence of fear in his travelogues, al-Musili relied on his Christian faith to tame and counteract the emotion of fear and the anxiety present across his voyages. Specifically, and interestingly, miracles and wonders appear as important elements in al-Musili's travelogues that serve him to adjust his affective compass, as they intersect in his approach to mapping out and exploring his surroundings. This further highlights his understanding of identity through affective and emotional alliances with European folklore, beliefs, and religious customs. These elements also point out unconscious structures that, in one way or another, manifested themselves in his conception of the real, as it engages with metaphysical and supernatural forces beyond ontological eminence. Lastly, the presence of wonders becomes embodied in his experiences of these events as well as of the environments he experiences from his sense and the things he sees, hears, touches, smells, and tastes. Before continuing, however, is important to understand what a miracle and its function are.

Historian Michale E. Goodich asserts: "The term *miraculum* is derived from *mirus*, namely something to wonder at, a phenomenon which confounds or even appears to contradict the normal rules governing nature or society. . . A 'sign' often served the larger purpose of signifying God's greatness or the order that underlies Creation" (8). Discussions around its nature were present across cultures and traditions since antiquity:

> Following the Christianization of the [Roman] Empire in the fourth century . . . Cult and miracle became a socially and religiously legitimate agency for the expression of familial, communal, or patriotic pride and cohesion. This role of the miracles as a means of defining the boundaries of community remained an integral part of the economy of the supernatural well into the late Middle Ages. (Goodich 12)

For his part, Peter Harrison notes that early notions of miracles in Christian tradition are quite vague in their nature: "Those events typically identified as miracles are variously described as 'signs' (semeia), 'wonders' (terata), 'mighty works' (dunameis), and, on occasion, simply 'works' (erga). The absence of a distinct terminology for the miraculous suggests that the authors of the Gospels were not working with a formal conception of 'miracle' . . . familiar to modern readers" (493). St. Augustine later proposed a more solidified description of miracles by insisting that they were an acceleration of the normal processes of nature guided by divine intervention, which sought to teach humanity a lesson, while consoling and bringing the faithful closer to God and confounding the non-believers or heretics (Goodich 14). David Hume refuted this claim by stating that miracles were "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity or by the interposition of some invisible agent" (115) and, in this sense, an impossibility. Hence, Hume began a tradition of rationalistic approaches toward experiences of the divine during the Enlightenment period in which miracles were rejected as a natural or feasible experience of the universe. Nonetheless, English philosopher Richard Swinburn challenged humean perspectives on the understanding of miracles by insisting that miracles, rather than impossibilities, could be defined as a non-repeatable counter-instance to a law of nature and that "there are no logical difficulties in supposing that there could be strong historical evidence for the occurrence of miracles. [But] whether there is such evidence is, of course, another matter" (328). In other words, for Swinburn, miracles were a conglomeration of events coming down, as in a domino effect, to a single outcome that was understood by the people experiencing this outcome as an answer to their prayers. Likewise, he also highlights that, whereas the Protestant Reformation of 1517 contended that miracles were a thing of the past that was no longer necessary to human experience since Christ had already proven to be the son of God, the Roman Catholic religion adopted a more lax approach toward miracles and by arguing that miracles were only revealed to those who more closely followed the path of Christ and that, rather than a way of confirming the existence of God and Christ's divinity, they were an ongoing promise of the wonders that await for those who chose to follow him.

With this in mind, miracles and wonders are important to the understanding of al-Musili's writings for a few reasons. First, given the ongoing religious conflicts in Europe at the time, it is not surprising that al-Musili, as a Chaldean priest with ties to the Roman Catholic Church, would dedicate many pages of his travelogues to the descriptions of miracles that he either witnessed himself or heard of from the locals in the regions he visited in the Americas. Miracles and wonders were part of Roman Catholic Church tradition, and had become deeply interlaced with European consciousness, especially with Iberian thought during both the Iberin Reconquista and the conquest of America.

For instance, Santiago de Zebedeo or Santiago Mayor, an apostle of Christ in Christian religious tradition is most widely known as Santiago Matamoros (Saint James, the Moor-Slayer) for his divine apparitions in battle in favor of the Christians and against the Muslim armies, most notably in the Battle of Clavijo on May 23, 844, where his legend first came to light. But his interventions are not reduced to the Old World, since Santiago also became the Patron Saint of the American Conquest and "a New World representation of triumph" (Dalton 95), this time under the name Santiago Mataindios (Saint James, the Indian-Slayer). And although miraculous apparitions such as this one might have not been as reliable or impactful in real battles, the promise of the miracle appeased the minds of conquistadors and, in general, the belief in these types of divine interventions helped to ease the anxieties of Europeans in foreign lands. In the case of al-Musili, following a Euro-Christian logic and rationale, the belief in miracles constituted an important aspect of his affective compass and emotional cartography. Second, and beyond the religious context of the marvelous, it is important to remember that in early European chronicles, "the New World appears as a land of enchantment that is filled with objects and phenomena that were considered marvelous and ordinary at the same time: wonder inducing yet part of everyday life" (Arellano xiii). This added a miraculous and wonderous layer to al-Musili's experience of the world and of himself. Ultimately, it informed the understanding of his reality through his mapping of spaces that were foreign to him yet filled him with awe-inducing preconceptions of reality. Lastly, Tuan points out: "Metaphysical terror, unique to human beings, cannot be assuaged anywhere in this world. Only God can provide relief" (6). For all the fears that al-Musili expresses in the pages of his travelogues, a miraculous and wondrous solution, often as a response to prayer, appears to assist him in his hour of need. This further denotes his attachment to European and Christian affective responses and exposes his understanding of reality, as al-Musili seems to deliberately deploy his faith in miracles and wonders not only to ease his own doubts and fears, but also to connect with and gain the favor of different peoples that he crosses along his path. Noting, of course, that he is a Chaldean Catholic priest with recommendations from the Queen of Spain and the Pope themselves, he is welcomed with open arms in virtually any place he arrives to. However, it is often the case that whenever al-Musili speaks of the "wonders" that he had seen, and of the miracles that he has heard of, witnessed, and even enacted himself, his audience appears to take a deeper interest in him. This results in the development of deeper affective connections between al-Musili and his hosts, and in greater donations toward al-Musili's cause.

One of the ways in which al-Musili deploys his faith is as an antidote to uncertainty in the face of fear and as an answer to misfortunes. In many instances, soon after expressing his fears of embarking on a journey or describing the dangerous nature of the spaces that unveil before him, he is prompt to glorify God and engage in the belief that He will deliver him from any evil ahead. In other instances, when danger is imminent or when an unpleasant event has already taken place, he resorts to praying as an innate response to the situation. For instance, al-Musili describes his journey from Panama to Guayaquil as follows:

> It is an adventure traveling through this treacherous sea on account of the strong waves, for it is known as the turbulent sea with pounding waves. He who travels through it is lost, and whoever comes out of it is considered born again. Were it not for God's care, which saved us from the evils of its waves, we would have remained on the surface of the waters longer than the month it took us to break out. (25)

The initial description of this voyage is, again, tied to the emotion of fear emerging from the uncertainty of sailing in foreign waters. At the same time, however, religious allusions and references to divine intervention appear to appease al-Musili's experiences, and the awe inducing distress that disorients his affective compass is then recalibrated by his religious affectivities and the belief in a superior power looking over him. But this is not all; as the distress sharpens and his emotional cartography is unable to rationalize the experience, al-Musili deploys an even deeper emotion of wonder that is rationalized through his belief in miracles, as seen in an incident that he and his companions suffered at one of the nights during this same voyage:

> Next, I embarked on a ship sailing for the Southern Sea but called "The Blue Sea" [Pacific Ocean] as we headed for Peru. Opposite to the port of Panama is a small, inhabited island called Taboga . . . When we reached the island two hours into the night, the captain suggested that we spend it on land because the governor of the island was his brother-in-law. I accepted and we were carried to shore on a small raft. The raft consisted of about five planks of wood. When it was next to the ship it turned over. It was at night, and dark. For a moment, I saw my soul floating on the water. I prayed and held onto the raft by means of that cane that the bishop had given me. The Lord and his Mother, the Virgin Mary, thus came to my rescue and all three of us reached land without any harm at all befalling us. (25)

Not discarding exaggeration in al-Musili's descriptions of the dangers that he potentially faced, it is safe to note that miracles appear to level with the intensity of fear exalted by the experiences that he described. In his writings, the variance of intensity in miracles ranges from him blessing his journeys and reiterating that God is looking upon him to the actual apparition of religious figures to his rescue. On plenty of instances across the pages of his travelogues, he describes himself praying for comfort after becoming ill, getting lost, almost being robbed, or, as in the example above, facing potential injury or death.

On other occasions, these divine wonders and miracles appear to manifest themselves through al-Musili himself as a manifestation of the grace of God. While in Quito, for example, he recalls curing a nun who had been suffering from bleeding for over eight years by giving her some "sweet water" (31) that he had acquired from some canes that grew in Guayaquil earlier in his journey. Later, while visiting Barancilavacan, and just a day after being saved from being robbed by the Virgin of Copacabana, al-Musili freed seven Indian prisoners who had been imprisoned for "minor infractions" (56-57) upon the request of the bishop of the town and without the consent of Don Elia, the ruler of Barancilavacan. In the end, and according to al-Musili, Don Elia, instead of becoming upset about al-Musili's actions, thanked him for his wisdom and visit. But among his most notable displays of miracles that induced wonder and awe upon the audience, were al-

Musili's mass services, which he held in his Eastern Syrian tongue and were often requested by the most prominent figures of every township he visited. According to al-Musili, while in Lima, they induced the gathering of over 4,000 Indians in awe (82). In this sense, al-Musili was a messenger of God: "The performer of miracles was regarded as a mere messenger whose mission was to lead to the recognition of God's greatness, uniqueness, and power against His (usually pagan) foes" and the miracles he claimed to have performed "further justify the value of God's commandments and religious institutions, and the righteousness of the sages" (Goodich 10). And it is likely that he not only captured this miracles and wonders in his writings, but also shared them with others when he traveled from one location to another, as "these miracles and wonders 'persuaded those who heard new doctrines and new teachings who heard new doctrines and new teachings to leave their traditional religion and to accept the Apostle' teaching at the risk of their lives" (Goodich 9). At the same time, it reaffirmed his own sanctity and faith, as al-Musili, above everything, depended on people's perception of him as a religious and righteous man to find safe passage across America. This rationale is later implicitly reaffirmed when, after describing the miracle of the Virgin of Guadalupe as he traveled through Mexico, he underscores Juan Diego's fate as a result of of his lack of faith in his initial encounter with the Virgin of Guadalupe: "The aforementioned Indian, Juan Diego, spent the rest of his life serving the Virgin in that church, wailing like one of those seeking repentance" (al-Musili 82). Another example worth noting occurs in Lima where Al-Musili engages in a heated discussion with the bishop in Lima to defend the deposed viceroy of Lima, his friend, who had been accused of wrongdoings without substantial proof:

> Two months later, the bishop sent for me. When I entered the town I went to my friend, the head Inquisitor, and told him about it. He told me to go see him [the bishop] and tell him what was on my mind. When I went and spoke with him [about his views on the viceroy's situation], he answered: "Why don't you go back to your country?" I replied: "If I wished to do so, nothing would prevent me. At the moment, I have no intention of leaving." He said in turn: "The order you received and the permission granted you are valid for four years, which are completed." I said: "Yes, it is so; but I do not wish to leave and be parted form the viceroy, and you can do what you wish or please." He said in reply: "For what reason do you like this man and defend him, but do not accord me the same?" I replied: "Yes, in our country and according to our ways, we defend the man who is down and render him assistance in keeping with God's commandment 'love thy neighbor as thyself.' I am fond of the viceroy and of you, as if you were my kin." (68)

In this context, al-Musili's descriptions of miracles and wonder calibrated his affective compass by reaffirming his emotional alliances with his faith and religious identity, which was the same identity shared by the Spaniards across colonial America. The emotional investment that al-Musili placed in his fate rewarded him with antidotes to the fears and dangers of what unraveled before him as he explored the New World and, in a similar fashion, strengthened the connections he engaged in with people across his path. These miracles and wonders were most likely not kept in his travelogues but were rather

shared with others who wondered about this wandering Syrian prophet and his ability to, by the grace of God, overcome the challenges and tame the nature of unknown regions.

Conclusion

Caesar E. Farah asserts: "It is probable the author wrote also for the benefit of fellow Syrians . . . The travel portion might have been designed to entertain his fellow countrymen with tales of exploits in unknown lands. They would have been fascinated to learn of conditions in the countries visited before they became Christianized and of his own experiences" (xviii). From a modern perspective, al-Musili's travelogues might sound far-fetched and close to the edges of fiction, exaggeration and even incoherence. Nonetheless, by focusing on the anatomy of his fears and his understanding of miracles and wonders, the essence of his humanity and his understanding of reality approach a more vivid and palpable experience, comparable, in many aspects, to modern understandings of existence. Additionally, from a nationalistic perspective, Benedict Anderson noted that our alliances and sense of belonging to a community are highly dependable on the accumulation of culture and sensibilities that align with that community's imaginary and logic. However, without the emotional investments and affinities with that community, it would be impossible to create said alliances. Thus, the dissection of these fears and miracles in al-Musili's travelogues reveal layers of identity beyond the commonly accepted labels utilized in contemporary understandings of processes of identity formation. Ethnically, al-Musili was an Arab and racially he was Middle Easterner, but based on his travelogues, which were arguably the most notable writings in al-Musili's life, given the depth in time and space they covered, he did not find pride and not even identified himself as an Ottoman subject. This is even more noticeable when noting that he chose to write his travelogues in Arabic rather than Turkish, even when Arabic appears to not be his first language. Rather, al-Musili's identity seems to be deeply connected to his emotional and affective alliances, which tend to shift with his environment and are guided by prior experiences and culturally mediated tropes. In essence, his identity was defined by his affective compass and emotional cartography. How he felt wherever he was and how he mapped the spaces around him allowed him to adopt different identities. For the most part, it appears that while in America, he saw himself as a European, as he shared the same fears that all Europeans shared around him. But from an ethnic perspective, as he deployed his faith through miracles and when conducting mass services in his Eastern Syrian language, he adopted a new identity beyond his European affiliations. At the same time, it was not attached to a traditional understanding of political belonging but rather to emotional belonging. The latter will be explored more in depth in the following chapter, as the first waves of migrants from the Middle East arrived in Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and strived to create emotional spaces of belonging while dealing with Arabophobia, socio-economic instability, crises of identity, and as they discovered strategies to integrate and flourish in their new communities.

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Chapter 2: Arabophobia, Emotional Citizenship and Arab-Latin American Identity in Walter Garib's *El viajero de la alfombra mágica* and Roberto Saráh's *Los Turcos*

Whereas the first chapter of this dissertation focused on Reverent Elias al-Musili's lived experiences of Spanish colonial America during the seventeenth century, as captured in his travelogues, through the emotions of fear and awe, which guided his affective compass and refined his mapping of spaces through a process that I described as emotional cartography, this chapter exercises a time and genre jump. First, the time jump occurs from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth and early twenty centuries. The reason for this abrupt but necessary movement is that, as stated in the previous chapter, no other record like al-Musili's travelogues has been discovered thus far. And although it is well known that Middle-Easterners did travel to America, what we know about their presence has been reduced to second-hand accounts such as in the case of Estebanico, in Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* (1542), who Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca vaguely describes follows: "El cuarto se llama Estebanico; es negro alárabe, natural de Azmor" (115). Beyond these types of accounts, what we know about Middle Easterners' experiences of America before or after al-Musili, and up until the late nineteenth century are primarily speculations. It is also essential to keep in mind that from the early moments of Spanish rule in Latin America and until the years leading to the wars for independence across the colonies, the Catholic Church and the Spanish crown (the Portuguese in the case of Brazil), held a tight grip on the regulation of the press.

Moreover, following the struggles for independence, the nation-building project became a priority for the recently born and confused independent nations. But given that they were inflicted by the poisonous structures of racial hierarchies, where lighter skins tones and European languages and traditions still reigned, these national projects were rooted in what Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano identified as the coloniality of matrix power: "the model of power based on coloniality also involved a cognitive model, a new perspective of knowledge within which non-Europe was the past, and because of that inferior, if not always primitive" (552) Conflicted by a crisis of identity, these infant nations contemplated Europe as both: a curse and a blessing. Suffocated by feelings of inferiority and a deep necessity to forge their identities as independent states, they searched within their entrails for unique traits that set them apart from their former subjugators. From this reflective process, the discourse of *mestizaje* provided a liberating alternative to their conflictive sense of identity. Hence, the *mestizo*, conceived from the union of indigenous and European pasts, traditions, cultures, and histories, became the central, prideful, and leading figure in the historicization of these new nations.

Nonetheless, while the discourse of *mestizaje* was critical in stabilizing the sense of shared identity and purpose in the national narratives across different Latin American countries, it also became a culprit in obscuring and erasing any histories that lay outside of it. Thus, even when other Middle Easterners might have been able to leave written records of their presence in Latin America, these were most likely kept within family circles and continue to be lost in the margins of Latin America's histories and memories. This latter

observation leads us to the second jump from a firsthand account written by Elias al-Musili, in the form of travelogues, to the genre of the novel.

For the aforementioned reasons, and despite the existence of records and census data on Arab migration into different Latin American countries and the increasing studies on patterns of Arab migration and socio-economic developments in these host countries (Alfaro-Velcamp 2007; Brégain 2008; Marín-Guzmán 2000; Pastor 2017), the absence of firsthand testimonies and records that capture the historical realities of Arabs in Latin America creates a rupture in the historical agency and self-definition of Arab-Latin American identity. This is further corroborated when taking a brief glance at the historical and geopolitical climate of the Middle East across time, but most notably during its period under Ottoman rule when inhabitants of the Levant region, despite their communal loyalties, self-definitions and understanding of existence, as previously explored in the case of al-Musili, were considered subjects of the Ottoman Empire and, thus, had their documents produced under this empire's official registries. Whether any Middle Easterner migrating to Latin America from the Levant prior to the end of the Great War, which caused the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, considered themselves Ottoman subjects or not, the passport emitted by Ottoman authorities identified them as *Turks* and, consequently, denied them a right to self-definition within the boundaries of their own fatherlands.

Subsequently, by the time they arrived in Latin America, the term "*turco*" became attached to their identities as a derogatory adjective that further negated their self-definition and integration not only in their final destinations but also in their own sense of self. In this sense, cultural productions of Arab-Latin Americans become an alternative escape from the jaws of oblivion and negation and serve as points of reference to their lived realities and struggles as they engage in the building of communities across the different Latin American countries. Thus, novels engaging with these early migrations of peoples from the Levant region, most notably Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, to Latin America and diving into a fictional account of their early struggles for sociocultural, economic, and linguistic integration in the different host nations, provide a window to a past that otherwise would be inaccessible to our eyes.

Notably, the late nineteenth and early twenty centuries appear as critical periods to explore the roots of Arab-Latin American identity mediated through the narratives presented in fictional historical accounts. These are inspired and distilled from historical nodes of early influxes of Arab migration into Latin America. With this in mind, and through an affective lens, this chapter provides an analysis of early Arab migrations, struggles, and integration as presented in Roberto Saráh's *Los Turcos* (1961) and Walter Garib's *El viajero de la alfombra mágica* (1991). More specifically, it analyzes the emotional dimensions of belonging and a sense of identity through the analysis of Arabophobia against the first waves of Arab migrants into Latin America and the establishment of *geographies of anger*, and the development of *emotional citizenship* as a sense of belonging that allowed them to claim their Arab-Latin American identity.

Emotional Dimensions of Belonging and Identity

In their novels, Roberto C. Saráh and Walter Garib describe the trajectories and struggles of early Arab migrants in Latin America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Despite their generational differences as writers, which can be appreciated in the structures and aesthetics of their novels, for instance, Saráh's *Los Turcos* was published in 1961 and followed a more traditional and linear trajectory in his narration, while Garib's *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, published in 1991, is presented as a puzzle-like third person narrative composed of memories, flashbacks, flashforwards, and what ifs, both of their novels follow a similar thematical pattern in around Arab migrants narratives and motifs. In their way, each author paints a similar portrayal of the challenges suffered by these early migrants as they embarked on unknown lands at the turn of the twentieth century with the hope of finding prosperity, attaining wealth, and, eventually, returning to their homeland where they can establish themselves in the higher levels of their societies and assure a prosperous life for themselves and the rest of their families. However, these hopes were truncated as these new arrivals were confronted not only by the socio-economic realities of the countries where they arrived but also by rejection and Arabophobia that produced a sense of emotional displacement that deprived them from achieving a sense of belonging and threatened their own sense of identity.

Belonging and identity, although often seen as fixed and established terms under political and social structures, as noted by highlighted by Sará's and Garbi's novels, are lived experiences that are vastly fluid and ever evolving. Moreover, when utilized as political identifiers, identity and belonging are often detached from the subject's experience of a sense of self and sense of belonging. But as social psychology and affect studies have shown, identity and belonging do not thrive in isolation as mere terms of identification but are instead constructed through socioemotional relations and interactions that are

> critical for the social responsiveness of any organism. It is only when the joy of the other activates joy in the self, fear of the other activates fear within, anger of the other activates anger within, excitement of the other activates one's own excitement that we may speak of an animal as a social animal. It is now known that the distress cries of animals taped and reproduced over aloud speaker are capable of evacuating from a small town all animals of that species. In such a case it is a matter of indifference *who* is emitting a distress cry so long as it is heard (Tomkins 296-297)

Furthermore, belonging and identity, in the political sense, tend to engage with a subject's emergence to the world through birth rights, and are tied to a subject's genetical ancestry and historical accumulation of cultural and ethnic roots within a geopolitical space. In turn, these interactions are entangled in what Anglo-Irish political scientist, Benedict Anderson, calls *imagined communities*: the widespread belief of communal belonging among individuals that share a defined space that is delineated by political boundaries, which propelled the birth and adoption of the nation-state political system across the globe (13) Yet, considering the complexities of politics of belonging and identity, especially when seen through the lenses of lived experiences, it is imperative to

not only approach belonging and identity as a political identifier tied to birth rights, parental ancestry, and political boundaries, but to dive deeper into the subject's lived experiences and sense of belonging. This implies the emotional dimensions of a subject's experience and their relationship to their inner as well as their outer world, their sense of self and their understanding of their positioning within a particular environment that exists both beyond political boundaries and inside of them.

As French psychologist, Jacaques Lacan, reminds us in his conceptualization of the *mirror stage*:

> This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history. The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego's verifications. (3)

In other words, the identification of an *I*, in Lacanian terms, as the subject identifies themselves before the mirror during infancy produces and split between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* of the subject, which, in turn, ignites the consciousness of the subject and the realization of their existence within the boundaries of the real. This is because as subjects begin to engage with the world that surrounds them, they commence to develop a sense of identity that is tied to the physical space that they occupy in the world, which is defined by the socio-political structures that allow for this particular space to exist as a community under a common understanding of co-habitation with other bodies and minds that share said space. Lacan highlights that "from the deflection of the specular *I* into the social *I*" the mirror stage comes to an end and inaugurates a link from the *I* to socially elaborated situations (4). And similarly, French sociologist, Émile Durkheim, notes that: "Most of our ideas and our tendencies are not developed by ourselves but come to us from without. How can they become a part of us except by imposing themselves upon us?" (4).

From these perspectives, it becomes clearer that sense of self and sense of belonging are entangled in a never-ending cycle of co-dependency based on one's reflection of themselves against the larger society and the larger society's impasses and contagions reflected upon the individual. But of particular importance to this study, is the affective dimensions of these relations and their circulation, which reverberates through this cycle of identity formation and emotional investments into the creation of spaces of belonging, noting, of course, that:

> Emotions are not 'in' either the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects . . . emotions create the very surfaces and boundaries that allow

> all kinds of objects to be delineated. The objects of emotion take shape as effects of circulation (Ahmed 10).

Thus, in highlighting these emotional dimensions of identity and belonging, I seek not to dismiss their ties to political maneuvers of power acquisition and retention but to engage with their affective significance within the subject's sense of self and sense of belonging linked to their socio-emotional and actual life dimensions, which go beyond their rationally strict and logistically defined statuses of being that, while seeking to create an illusory sense of uniformity, produce isolation and socio-emotional insularism.

Geographies of Anger: Structures of Othering and Arabophobia

Identity and belonging, when used as political artifacts disengaged from collective emotions, not only damage the body of society but become detrimental to its communal identity. Underneath their definitions, and when used without considering their socio-emotional dimensions, identity and belonging have the capacity to become destructive and even promote the development of what Indian-American anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai, calls a *geography of anger*. Such geography thrives in "the surplus of rage, the urge to degradation, [and] the narcissism of minor differences [that] is now vastly more dangerous than in the past because of the new economy of slippage and morphing which characterizes the relationship between majority and minority identities and powers" (10) In this sense, identity and belonging, as political artifacts devoid of emotional dimensions serve to protects the imaginary "whole" within an imagined political community and prevent it from the intrusion of uncertainties embodied in "small numbers" while promoting an

> *anxiety of incompleteness* . . . [where] numerical majorities can become predatory and ethnocidal with regard to *small numbers* precisely when some minorities (and their small numbers) remind these majorities of the small gap which lies between their condition as majorities and the horizon of an unsullied national whole, a pure and untainted national ethnos. This sense of incompleteness can drive majorities into paroxysms of violence against minorities (Appadurai 10).

In the case of early Arab migrants to Latin America, their arrival inspired the formation of geographies of anger and the deployment of Arabophobia across different social strata in their host nations. In turn, these reactions founded on emotions of anger and rage, promoted hostile environments that demoralized these early arrivals, negated them claims to spaces of belonging and identity, and rejected their very existence within these nations' political boundaries. Consequently, early Arab migrants to Latin America were subjected to humiliation and rejection by larger established populations that often saw them as threats to their communal identity as portrayed by Roberto Saráh's and Walter Garib's novels.

First, in *Los turcos* (1961), rather than focusing on a single character's experience, Roberto Saráh dives into the communal experiences, traumas, and struggles for adaptation

of a group of friends: Hánna Nabal, Mitri Sedan, Yacúb Marbat, Fuad Amir, Nayib and Chucri Ibsalém, who migrate from small villages in Palestine including Beit-Yala, Beit-Saur, and Bethlem, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pressured by financial uncertainty and chasing after the promise of fast fortune and riches, they decide to embark to America in their teenage years with a common goal in mind: to become wealthy as soon possible so that they can return home with their families. None of them know exactly what America is, its different regions, cultures, or ethnic compositions, and neither its precise location. All that they know about what waits for them on the side of the Atlantic is what they have heard in passing through secondhand accounts or mentions of letters that are often filled with allusions to wonders and promises of riches: "*Estoy viviendo en un pueblo del norte llamado Antofagasta* – decía en aquella carta que Búlus enseñó a su cuñado Hánna – *y he hecho amistad con otros paisanos, inmigrantes como yo, y creo que permaneceremos en este país donde se gana dinero…*" (Saráh 51) Yet, as their unexpectedly long voyage to América reaches the port of Buenos Aires, Argentina, they soon realize the mismatch in their expectations and the realities of their migrant experiences as cognitive dissonance begins to settle in and obscure their sense of belonging and identity.

Meanwhile, in *El viajero de la alfombra mágica* (1991), Walter Garib structures his novel in a more complex manner, reaching a closer approximation to the human's consciousness and its disjointed experience of time and space. In a nonlinear fashion and through the generational tapestry of the Madgalani family's memories, Garib weaves a story about Arab-Latin American migration, belonging, and identity. Furthermore, he also foreshadows the some of the most common destinies for these early Arab migrants after they arrived in Latin America, often resulting in their indefinite stay in the host countries and leading to the structural establishment of what John S. MacDonald and Leatrice D. MacDonald identified as chain migration. He begins the narration with the arrival of a Palestinian migrant, Aziz Magdalani, at the port of Buenos Aires, his eventual ventures as a peddler in Paraguay, where he meets a life partner who the reader will only know as "la Nativa", and his establishment as a recognized merchant in Bolivia where his family flourishes after two different marriages and the birth of his children. After misfortunes strike, including defamation, Arabophobia and the war between Bolivia and Paraguay, the family is forced to migrate once again and start from scratch, this time in Chile. In his novel, Garib also notes how, two generations after Aziz Magdalani's arrival, the Magdalani family has not only achieved stability but has also become one of the wealthiest families in the capital of Chile. This crowning achievement in the Magdalani's family trajectory, however, comes at a high cost as a crisis of identity and sense of displacements is felt by the later generations who attempt to make sense of who they are while negotiating their Arab roots and the social pressure to belong in high Chilean society where European ascendance is highly valued while non-European heritage is regarded as a mark of a degrading lineage.

Beginning with the title of his novel, *Los Turcos*, Saráh highlights a process of othering that is present as one of the core processes of migration but that was particularly impactful in Arab migration towards any territory outside the Ottoman empire. As

mentioned earlier, these migrants were considered Turks based on their passports or any other form of documentation produced by the Ottoman empire but, unlike European migrants, the Ottoman Empire did not offer any protections to its citizens who willingly chose to leave its political boundaries. On the contrary, given the political circumstances at the time, including the enactment of forced conscription into the Ottoman military, many men that willingly chose to leave their homeland were considered traitors to the empire and were less likely to receive any sort of support or protections outside of it, as is highlighted in Aziz Madgalani's memory of his decision to travel to America, in Walter Garib's novel:

> Ese barco se parecía mucho al que o trajera a América desde Palestina, cuando la hostilidad turca estaba a flor de piel, se manifestaba a gritos donde uno fuese. Su padre fue quien le habló de emigrar; de lo contrario, los turcos lo obligarían a incorporarse al ejército. ¿A dónde ir? Unos primos le hablaron de América, donde vivía un tío, y él, sin conocer más allá de las fronteras de su pueblo o del pueblo vecino, se entusiasmó (84).

Generally, these early migrants were young men from poor and rural villages in the Levant region (Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine). While some left their fatherlands in order to escape conscription into the Ottoman empire, many others left, despite the opacity of their destinies, looking for better lives as they realized that their futures were tied to their families' socio-economic limits. This is a situation that Saráh captures in the conversation between Issa Nabal, the father of one of the characters who deicides to migrate to America, and his son, Hanná Nabal, about his son's decision to migrate:

> – Gran tristeza me das, hijo mío, porque sé que quienes emigran a tan distantes tierras casi nunca regresan. Los que logran retornar lo hacen ya viejos y sólo encuentran la tumba de sus padres. Tu resolución, por otra parte, me produce alegría al saberte intrépido y deseoso de surgir, ya que en Palestina el trabajo escasea y somos pobres. Si tu idea es firme, para lo cual te insto a que reflexiones en ella día y noche, no creo que tendrán mis palabras fuerzas suficientes para hacerte desistir del viaje, y pienso que tendré que darte mi bendición para que tengas una travesía feliz. Estoy viejo – añadió lastimosamente – y tu madre llorará al saberlo, por lo que trataré de comunicárselo de tal forma que no sea duro para su pobre y delicada alma.
>
> – ¡Volveré rico padre! – repitió Hánna, con los ojos húmedos y brillosos –. Y mi regreso será en breve pues no podría quedarme lejos de vosotros en una tierra desconocida. Partiré para retornar, con ayuda de *Al-lah*, con muchas libras que os entregaré con agrado.
>
> Pero el anciano Issa se quedó mirando a su hijo en silencio. (34)

Hánna, still hopeful of his future return to his native village and with his father's blessing, decides to embark on the long journey to America. Nonetheless, the resentful comments of

his mother about his decision will eventually weigh heavy upon his shoulders: "¡Si no se lo lleva el mar lo arrebatará esa maldita América!" (Saráh 35).

For these Arab migrants, this journey began with their departure from their native villages to the Mediterranean ports of Beirut, Haifa, or Alexandria. From these points, they would sail to Genova or Marsella and then through the Atlantic towards Buenos Aires, Argentina, or Río de Janeiro, Brazil. Given their financial circumstances, they often traveled in third class or perhaps, as Walter Garib suggests in *El viajero de la alfombrá mágica* through Aziz Magdalani's voyage, as stowaways. In either case, they suffered hunger, malnourishment, and sickness and tended to be mistreated both because of their physical appearance and socio-economic status. Moreover, and from an affective and emotional perspective, the longer they traveled both in distance and time they also suffered from a socio-emotional traumatic uprooting. Many of these migrants became homesick as they realized how the distance between their location and their homelands grew with the changing of the physical and auditory reliefs of their morphing surroundings began to reveal a world that was unknown to them and, in many aspects, rejected them.

As their travel elongated through time and space, tensions escalated among the group of friends in Saráh's novel. Yacúb falls ill due to malnourishment while the rest of the group commences questioning the point of leaving behind their beloved homelands. Particularly, Fuad, the youngest in the group, begs his friends to return to him to Palestine amid the despair and frustration produced by his inability to assist Yacúb as well as their collective failure to communicate with the ship's crew about their circumstances due to linguistic differences that further reaffirm a sense of dislocation. From a different perspective, almost lingering on the edges of a romantic cliché but also highlighting the complex configurations of human's sense of belonging and the fragile dimensions of such, Garib describes Aziz's voyage in the context of a failed romance. Aziz, who travels as a stowaway towards America, questions his decision to embark on this journey when he becomes homesick while suffering hunger and the pressures to live under hiding given his circumstances. During the trip, Aziz meets a Greek migrant, Penelope, who travels with her family toward Brazil, where Penelope will marry a wealthy Greek man who made his fortune in the coffee plantation business. Regardless of their inability to properly communicate with one another, since Penelope knows only limited Arabic and Aziz does not know any other language, the exhilaration produced by the intensifying experience of their passion is enough to suspend them from the tragedies of their realities. It is perhaps for this reason that, many years later, when Aziz tells the story of his travel to America to his children, he recalls the experience as a wonderful voyage on his magic carpet. In this story, he reminisces about the Middle Easter classic the *One Thousand and One Nights* and the love that sustained him emotionally, almost as in mid-air, during his travel, even when the distance from home and the transformation of his surroundings mortified him. Once again, unlike European migrants, these early Arab migrants tended to be less familiar with Western culture, architecture, history, and language. Hence, beyond the ports of Beirut, Haifa, and Alexandria, the world they entered became a blurry image that many were attempting to make sense of for the first time in their lives.

As they disembarked in American lands, they soon realized that their presence was not welcomed and that these lands were foreign and hostile to them as they were configured within a geography of anger that refused to accept them within their boundaries. Within moments of venturing into Buenos Aires, the six friends are received with violence and humiliation in Saráh's novel:

> El vehículo se detuvo en una estrecha calle del barrio de Boca, entre sórdidas casas de un piso, por las que merodeaban perros y niños; estos jugaban bulliciosamente entre gritos y carcajadas, señalando despectivamente a los árabes que descendían de él con sus enormes envoltorios.
>
> – ¡Los *turcos*! – anunció uno de ellos –. ¡Son los *turcos*!
>
> Algunos empezaron a dispararles trozos de estiércol mezclado con barro, y latas vacías de conservas, mientras los más palmoteaban, coreando a los otros:
>
> – ¡*Turcos*! ...¡Los *turcos*! (Saráh 59)

On a first instance, Fuad questions why they call them *turcos* and treat them with disdain. As mentioned earlier, this adjective utilized to link them to the Ottoman Empire was first used by Americans because it was present in Arab documents and passports. Soon enough, the word *turco* was used as a device for othering that sought to reposition these new arrivals vis-à-vis the established communities whether they intended to deny them of their identity. But beyond being a simple insult, the animosity presented by the established communities towards the new arrivals turned the word *turco* into a weapon. After all, what is a weapon if not a device that serves to deter, threaten, or inflict damage, harm, or kill? *Turco*, thus, aimed to damage the morale and socio-emotional capital of the Arab migrants who entered American territories and reinforced a geography of anger that was pitted against minorities. It was used as a deterrent that deprived them of developing a sense of belonging while simultaneously seeking to pressure them into leaving these territories.

In response to his questions about the treatment they received from the Argentinians, a group of fellow Arabs, who had lived in America for some time, assures Fuad that he will get used to it. Nonetheless, for Fuad,

> todo aquello no era sino la primera desilusión que habrían de experimentar. No tardaron en comprender, una vez que sus compatriotas les dejaron solos, que todo cuanto veían hallábase lejos de lo que imaginaran. Pronto Fuad comprendió que los ríos no llevaban oro sino piedras, como todos los ríos del mundo y que debían ganarse el sustento a fuer de penurias, venciendo humillaciones, ahorrando un centavo tras otros, durmiendo en el suelo y comiendo míseramente en las hospederías y pensiones de tercera clase, donde se les proporcionaba la sobra de los alimentos. No se atrevían a protestar por temor a que les despidiesen (Saráh 59-60).

Through Fuad's realization, Saráh explores the affective damage produced by the rejection exerted upon Arab migrants at the turn of the twentieth century who, physically separated

from their native lands, approached a process of identity deconstruction and a deprivation from a sense of belonging. And although Fuad's friends and compatriots attempted to cheer him up, the reality of the situation points towards an eviscerating emotional uprooting that was communally shared among his fellow Arabs. In the end, Fuad's pleadings were in vain, as their economic circumstances left them with no option but to withstand the situation and hope for things to improve.

Soon after arriving in Buenos Aires, the group splits with Nayib and Chucri Ibsalém deciding to stay in Buenos Aires and search for their cousins who had arrived earlier. Meanwhile the rest of the friends: Hánna, Mitri, Yacúb, and Fuad, continue their journey towards Chile. This was a joint decision among early Arab migrants in Latin America who, upon their arrival at the ports of Buenos Aires or Rio Janeiro, chose to either settle down nearby, often with family members or friends who had arrived earlier. Others, chasing better financial opportunities and hoping that their socioeconomic circumstances would improve as they moved from one place to another, many left their initial arrival points and moved further into Latin America. But it is also possible that beyond financial stability and at an unconscious level, these migrants were also venturing in search of sanctuaries where the hostilities posed by geographies of anger at the ports of entry were not so strenuous and rampantly blatant, for as Saráh notes:

> Con su morena tez y su pintoresco lenguaje, los emigrantes árabes eran fácilmente reconocidos en las calles. Rapazuelos y mayores los señalaban en las calles, lanzándoles pullas y palabrotas, riéndoseles en las narices. Esta impresión inicial de América, que había tenido ya a su bautismo de fuego el día de su llegada, fue deprimiendo el optimismo y la ilusión de todos ellos, especialmente de Fuad, quien no cesaba de pedir que le devolviesen a su tierra (Saráh 61-62).

Thus, searching for better living conditions, Arab migrants, especially Lebanese and Syrians, dispersed across Argentinian or Brazilian regions. Others opted for the neighboring countries of Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, or Uruguay. And many more, most notably Lebanese and Palestinians, headed north towards Central America and even tried to reach the United States by crossing through Mexico. However, in addition to harsh migration restrictions in the United States, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 made traveling and relocating much more difficult for these groups. Notably, Palestinians continued migrated toward Bolivia and Chile in greater quantities. Those with resources tended to travel by train or sea through the Strait of Magellan and relocated in the Pacific Ocean side of the American continent, most notably in Chile. Not surprisingly, as of today, Chile hosts the largest population of Palestinians outside the Middle East, surpassing half a million Chileans of Palestinian descent or Chilestinians, as some of them choose to identify. Others, with fewer resources to spare or who dreaded traveling through sea again, opted to continue the journey by land. They first headed to Mendoza, Argentina, and then, on the backs of mules, crossed the Andean Mountain Range toward Chile.

Once in Chile, Hánna Nabal, Mitri Sedan, Yacúb Marbat, and Fuad Amir proceeded to settle down in the coastal city of Valparaiso, where Arab migrants typically worked as

peddlers while sharing meaner living quarters and saving almost every cent that they earned:

> La mayoría trabajaba como buhoneros, llevando grandes cestas con toda clase de baratijas – pasadores, peines, espejos y medias – que ofrecían, en mal español en los barrios populares, sobre todo en aquellos que circundaban el puerto. Algunos se dedicaban a la venta de dulces típicos de su país, que preparaban en sus estrechas bohardillas donde se confundían los olores más extraños, el de las especias y el aceite con el picante humo de la leña, el de anís y las nueces con el de las letrinas. (Saráh 61)

Despite being a smaller city in contrast with Buenos Aires, Valparaiso was still incorporated into the larger national project, which fostered structures for establishing geographies of anger against the new arrivals. But in contrast with the metropoles' hostile emotional structures heavily consolidated by disdain and rancor, smaller and peripheral regions provided an additional layer of wonder and curiosity to the inhabitants of these regions. For instance, in areas like Valparaiso in Saráh's novel or rural areas of Paraguay in Garib's, although the term *turco* and the mistreatment toward these migrants were still present, they were also juxtaposed with an alternative *falte* which promoted a different vision of the migrants. The term *falte*, deriving from the migrants' chants as they peddled through the streets selling their goods and yelling out: ¿qué le falte? (*what do you need?*), became another way of recognizing their presence. Incidentally, as Alfaro-Velcamp explores in her book *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (2007) and as it is further analyzed in the next section, it was also in these regions that many migrants were able to create and establish commercial and social niches since they were the few merchants that were willing to venture into the peripheries of Latin American countries. In doing so, they saw an opportunity to use their perceived differences as an advantage. By deploying self-orientalization, these migrants were able to maneuver these peripherical and weaker geographies of anger in plain sight while forming enclaves in the structural in-betweenness of anger and marvel as Garib highlights in Aziz Madgalani's deliberate deployment of "castárabe" (232) and storytelling as one of his most notable business tactics:

> Apenas asomaba sus narices por un poblado, la gente corría a su encuentro para oír a ese joven gesticulador de hablar enrevesado, amigo de referir cuentos de lámparas encantadas y aves del tamaño de diez cóndores y dueño de otros recursos, pues ejecutaba algunas destrezas de manos que dejaban con la boca abierta, lo que embelesaba a su auditorio renuente a comprar, y al final se transformaba en el mejor anzuelo para persuadirlo de gastar su dinero, muchas veces en objetos inservibles (232).

Moreover, both Saráh and Garib note that through the enclaves formed by early Arab migrants, economic, social and political alliances germinated among Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, and local communities. In *Los Turcos*, a couple of years after arriving to Valparaiso, Mitri, Yacúb and Fuad, finally begin to see the fruits of their labor and, once again, decide to pursue larger economic and social ventures by moving to Chile's

capital, Santiago, where they intend to establish their stores focusing on the importation and sale of textiles. On his part, Hanná Nabal fell in love with a Chilean woman, María, who becomes pregnant with his child and, despite his friends' harsh comments and advice against exogamy, decided to look for a house where the couple could form a family in Valparaiso. But Hanná's respite is brief. Before the birth of his child, he loses both his wife and his future child during the Valpaiso earthquake of 1906, an event that shatters Hanná's emotional being and forces him to abandon Valparaiso and rejoin his friends once more.

Similarly, in *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, during his early stay along the shores of what the reader can only assume to be the Paraguay River, Aziz Magdalani falls in love with an indigenous woman. Incidentally, her name name is never revealed and, thorougout the novel, she will only be known as "la Nativa guaraní" (*the Guarani native*), or simply "la Nativa" (*the native*) as she is referred to in the novel. Unlike Hanná in Saráh's book, Aziz never married la Nativa who, like a shadow, accompanied him durign his entire life and whose relationship to Aziz will be further analyzed in the following section. And like the rest of the friends in Saráh's novel, once Aziz financial capital necessary to escalate the socio-economic ladder, he chose to relocate in an urbanized area. Thus, alongside la Nativa, Aziz moves to Cochabamba in Bolivia, where he goes from peddler to store owner. Although, their next step in the socio-economic alleviated some of the migrants' early penuries, it also introduced them to new layers of exclusion within these geographies of anger.

As years passed, the migrant generations became more adept in navigating both different physical geographical regions of Latin America and the geographies of anger structured within these societies. From rural, desertic, mountainous, and tropical regions to industrialized and urbanized metropoles, these first wave of Arab migrants slowly began to infiltrate into the social fabric of these societies. But despite their socio-economic success, they continued to face exclusion and mistreatment on deeper layers fostered within the host societies' geographies of anger. In *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, for instance, by deploying an ambitious and violent figure representing the state, colonel Melchor García Ponce, Garib highlights the difficulties and pressures that migrants were subjected to as they climbed the socio-economic layer. Initially, the colonel would visit Aziz Magdalani's store to buy clothes and house supplies on credit, a practice that was often implemented and fostered by Arab peddlers and store owners, which increased their clientele. The colonel's visits were friendly and usually ended with him taking more supplies without paying his outstanding debt. As the Chaco War (Sep. 9, 1932- Jun. 12, 1935) broke out between Bolivia and Paraguay, the colonel saw an opportunity to repay Aziz and make some money for himself by proposing to make Aziz the sole provider of military uniforms for the army in exchange for a percentage of the earnings. Under pressure and reluctant about this decision, Aziz accepted the colonel's offer. However, after the war ended and the colonel lost all his earnings, he began to harass Aziz and his family for money until Aziz finally confronted him: " 'Yo tengo mis propios problemas', dijo Aziz, y despidió de su tienda al compungido militar" (Garib 60). While in the short-run the colonel left the Magdalani family alone, in the long-run this episode would lead to a catastrophic outcome

years later when the colonel was promoted to general, after lieutenant general Germán Busch Becerra toppled off President José Luis Tejada Sorzano's government:

> Al imponerse, años después, Aziz de que el general García Ponce lo difamaba a través del diario 'La Trompeta', imputándole haber colaborado junto con la Nativa guaraní y el profesor Gumercindo Serrano en una organización de espionaje, descubrió, aunque tardíamente, lo disparatado de haberse asociado con un hombre estrecho de mollera, aficionado a batirse en duelo, lances en los que despachó a tres militares y dos civiles (Garib 69).

Given the circumstances, the Madgalani family is forced to flee from Cochabamba and find refuge in Chile's capital where they have to begin anew as they face bankruptcy, accumulation of debts, and social exclusion.

In contrast to the Magdalani family, in *Los Turcos* Saráh incorporates a time jump after the Valparaiso's earthquake, and present us with a more mature group of friends: Hanná, Mitri, Yacúb and Fuad, who are now financially stable and are well on their way towards more significant economic ventures which will lead them to escalate in the socio-economic ladder further. Planning for a family and increasing their wealth became a priority in their case. Although Yacúb died before finding a partner, Hanná, Mitri and Fuad, ended up marrying spouses within the Arab community and strengthening Arab social and emotional citizenship structures within Chile, as will be further analyzed in the next section.

Furthermore, as the Second World War exploded, many migrant communities were able to take advantage of the war's economic disruptions. Since the war created an international vacuum in the supply and demand chain of products, specifically the textile industry, many Arab migrants in Latin America took advantage of their geographical and economic position to exponentially increase their wealth and investments. However, and similar to the Magdalani family, which also managed to turn their fortune around during the Second World War and obtain a place in the highest ranks of Chilean society, the friends in Saráh's novel soon realize that despite all their wealth, they are still unwelcomed by the larger community. In essence, every time they climbed the socio-economic ladder, they were seen as a threat to the established societies at their different levels.

In the early stages, when they had recently arrived in Latin America and survived as peddlers, they were mistrusted and seen as threats to the lower classes. Then, those who became store owners also became competitors and a threat against the established middle classes. But perhaps the most telling level of exclusion and pressure emitted by the geographies anger found in the host countries occurred when Arab-Latin Americans reached the upper classes. As Saráh and Garib highlight in their novels, Arab migrants tended to reach this socioeconomic level during the first and, most often, the second generations born in America. In other words, the geographies of anger were deployed not only against the Arab migrants but also their children and grandchildren who had been born in America. Once again, this was a reaction propelled by the host nations' conception of Arab migrants, and minorities in general, as threats to their social constitution.

Alongside Arab migrant's longitudinal struggle for adaptation and acceptance at the different socio-economic circles, both Saráh and Garib also bring light to the struggles faced by the first and second generations of Arab-Latin Americans. At this point is critical to highlight that since the trajectory of all the characters in both novels led them towards financial stability and high socioeconomic status, the authors move the foci of struggle for the children of these migrants from the socioeconomic towards the sociopolitical. Saráh approaches this new layer of struggle in his novel by introducing the reader to Salvador Nabal, one of Hanná Nabal's children. On his part, Walter Garib, through the divergent experiences of Aziz Magdalani's grandchildren and great grandchildren, explores the ramifications of living under the pressures produced by geographies of anger that promote exclusion and rejection of minorities. These pressures, as Garib highlights, are so oppressive and destructive to the point of causing minorities to develop self-hatred and an illusory sense of self.

On Saráh's example, born in Santigo, Chile, and named after his grandfather, but with a Spanish adaptation of the Arab name: Issa, Salvador demonstrates an affinity towards his studies from a young age and is particularly drawn to politics. Hence, years later, he chose to pursue a degree in law while becoming a member, and eventual leader, of the labor party. After graduating in 1942, in the middle of the Second World War, he became his party's candidate for the parliamentary elections but lost to the opposing party. After his defeat, and exhausted by the fierce campaign, Salvador chooses to take a break from politics and proposes to his father to travel to Palestine despite the war: “tengo el deber, o diría mejor, la necesidad de concer Palestina, allí donde naciste y viviste y donde vivieron y murieron mis abuelos” (Saráh 200), but the family does not travel to Palestine until the war is over, in 1949. Until this point, Salvador's political career is virtually untainted by his Arab ancestry. Saráh appears to detach the progression of Salvador's life from his identity as if suggesting that an individual's identity and ancestry should not define a person's worth. However, the story of Salvador takes an interesting turn during and after his trip to Palestine.

It is important to highlight that Hanná Nabal and his family visited Palestine in 1949, fifty years after Hanná and his friends migrated to America. Moreover, politically speaking, 1949 marks an important year as it initiated the cease-fire period of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, initiated on May 14, 1948, with the establishment of Israel as an independent state. Thus, while visiting Palestine, Salvador is naturally attracted to and engaged with the political circumstances developing in the region. Consequently, this fuels his desire for political action on a deeper level and encourages him to invest his entire being into his political career. Upon his return to Chile, Salvador's life and career move exponentially faster as he advances the political ranks and gains recognition under the nickname "el *turco* Nabal" (Saráh 202). Later, with the help of Mittri and the Arab Club of Chile, Salvador gains enough support and political notoriety to become the presidential candidate under the labor party. It is at this moment that racism and Arabophobia intensify against him. Political ads are deployed targeting his ancestry and identity by painting him as a foreigner by making fun of his physical appearance, specifically his nose, while painting him as a political threat to the fabric of Chilean society. In this sense, Saráh awaits

to strategically bring Salvador's identity and ancestry to the surface until his career has become a real threat to the layers of Chile's political structures.

Ultimately, Salvador loses the election, and Hanná, now an old man, addresses his son with a contradicting message: “No te aflijas, Issa . . . Parecía demasiado hermoso y grande: ¡Tú, mi hijo, presidente del país! Demasiado para mí… No era posible…; no soy sino un *félah* que ha venido de *Beit-Láhem*” (Saráh 250). With these words, Hanná appears to be proud yet defeated by his son's achievement. Most likely, Hanná's conflicted stance has more to do with the political ads highlighting his son's ancestry and identity as something to be ashamed of rather than Salvador's actual defeat. Afterall, the triggering nature of these ads are directly entangled with Hanná's own experiences of rejection and exclusion during his younger years as a migrant. After Hanná's death and burial service, just five days after the election, this notion continues to be reinforced all the way to the book's last sentence. After describing Hanná's burial, Saráh zooms out from this moment and refocus the attention to the ads still lingering across the streets of Santiago, especially to one that reads: "*¡No permitas que un turco…!*" (Saráh 256). With this last sentence, Saráh buries Hanná's life journey and his struggles while noting that the geographies of anger that welcomed him during his first years as a migrant are still very present many decades later and still affecting Arab-Latin Americans.

In the case of the Magdalani family, Garib focuses the attention on the family tensions that emerge among Aziz's grandchildren and great grandchildren. In his novel, Garib plays with the organization of time through the deployment of an omniscient third-person narrator that guides the reader through the Magdalani family's history and trajectory. In this trajectory, the figure of Aziz Magdalani represents the axis of rotation that maintains the flow of time and space in motion and perpetuates his ancestry and Arab identity through oral tradition. In many instances, the reader is introduced to a heart-warming scene where Aziz tells his children about his voyage through the Atlantic from Palestine to America on a magic carpet or stories taken from the *One Thousand and One Nights* where Aziz takes the role of the protagonist and hero in these stories. Nonetheless, the dead of Aziz, which occurs on the later pages of the novel has repercussions on the stability of his family's identity, most notably on the identity of his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Incidentally, this identity conflict, which is introduced at the very beginning of the novel and is occurring in the present time, is the real reason that the narrator recapitulates Aziz's life.

As noted earlier, Aziz's life began in Palestine where his father encouraged him to migrate to America so that he could escape the Ottoman Empire's forced conscription of non-Muslim individuals. Upon arriving to America, he engaged with the geographies of anger that targeted him due to his Arab identity. Soon after arriving, he met la Nativa who became his life companion and the mother of his first son, Chafik. Years later, Afife arrived from Palestine to marry Aziz and from this union, Jazmin, Nadia, Kirfe, Said and Amín were born. Until this point, all the Magdalani descendants were fully aware and welcoming of their Arab identities. Also, at this point the family's socioeconomic status was still fragile and developing. However, by the time the reader is introduced to the second generation of Magdalani descendants born in America, the family no longer suffers from financial

distress and have attained a stable position within the higher spaces of Chilean society. Interestingly, Garib, as if highlighting the union of America and the Middle East, only explores these generations from the lineage of Aziz and la Nativa, namely through the children and grandchildren of Chafik and his wife, Yamile.

Chafik and Yamile's children: Chucre, Bachir and Miriam were born during the last years of Aziz's life and manged to reatin memories of him: "Bachir Magdalani se puso a recordar aquellos lejanos días en que su abuelo, Aziz Magdalani, les narraba a él y a sus hermanos, entre infinidad de cuentos de Las Mil y Una Noches, el de la alfombra mágica" (Garib 1). But unlike their parents, their high socioeconomic status allowed them to infiltrate the social fabric of Chilean society with more ease. However, and although Garib does not explore the lives of Chucre, Bachir, and Miriam in as much detail as he does with their parents and grandparents, it is clear that their Arab identity continues to weight heavy on them. This is most notable at the beginning of the story when the reader is introduced to Bachir's family, in the present time, and their attempt to Europeanize their lineage. An attempt that massively backfires.

In many aspects, Garib uses Barchir's family attempt to Europeanize the family lineage as a point of departure to engage with a discussion on Arab-Latin American identity formation under the pressures of Chile's geographies of anger. The opening image, which Garib slowly reveals in full through the progression of the novel, will turn out to be one of opulence and disorder where the Bachir Magdalani's family house has been desecrated after Bachir and his wife, Estrella, hosted a party to present their daughters, Penelope del Pilar and Andrea, and their European lineage to Chilean high society. As Garib notes, the provocation for the fanfare

> comenzó el día en que un profesor de lenguas semitas, amigo de la familia, le dijo a Bachir que el apellido Magdalani no significaba nada en árabe . . . se le antojó que su apellido no era árabe, que sus antepasados habían llegado a Palestina en alguna de las Cruzadas . . . que los Magdalani habían luchado junto a los nobles de Francia . . . que de veras su familia poseía antecedentes de nobleza y un apellido con clara ascendencia francesa o italiana (20).

Excited by these news, Bachir's family decided to announce to the entirety of Chile their "true" ancestry. On the other hand, Bachir's older brother Chucre, who is his associate in the Magdalani company, refused to engage in his brother's delirium causing Bachir to invest himself deeper in the myth of the family's European ascendance.

These tensions are further intensified by the relationship between Barchir's and Chucre's children, whose intellectual pursuits and notions of identity heavily contrast with one another. Penelope del Pilar and Andrea share his father's delusory hope to be fully accepted in Chilean society whereas Jorge, Eric, and Renanta, are deeply engaged with their Arab roots. Thus, exalted by their father's discovery, Penelope and Pilar reject their Arab identity as if it was something to be ashamed of and in doing so develop a disdain toward Arab culture and, in turn, toward their cousins. This is reinforced by Penelope and Andrea's decision not to invite their cousins to their party because of their affinity toward

Arab culture and their disinterest in "reparar un error histórico" (Garib 286). In this sense, through the fracturing of Arab identities, Garib demonstrates the degree of pressure that geographies of anger pose upon Arab migrants and their descendants to the point of disintegrating familiar relationships. Moreover, nearing the end of the novel, the reader is introduced to a scene after the party, where an appalled Bachir walks through the destruction of his house. Fine porcelain lay broken on the floor, portrayals of his family were pulled down from the walls and stained with human excrement, and one of his own daughters was covered in vomit by a drunkard. Bachir's ambition to become accepted in Chilean society involved the destruction of his own family history, and even when he paid the price to be part of it, he was rejected by it. Inherently, this is also Garib's message and critique, which he notes in the dedication of his novel: "*A mis abuelos, cuyas estirpes no serán deshonradas al amanecer*".

As noted by Saráh and Garib in their novels, Arab migrants were received by geographies of fear that targeted at different layers of society despite the countries they visited across Latin Americ. And in response to Arabophobia, rejection, and humiliation, Arab migrants were forced to carve out spaces of emotional belonging and acceptance inside the interstices of these geographies of anger in order to flourish from within and, strategically, level the socioemotional field. In turn, this translated into the acquisition of political, economic, social power and recognition as they attained and developed their *emotional citizenship* within the political boundaries of spaces that rejected them as will be seen in the following section.

Emotional Citizenship and Arab-Latin American Identity

In developing the concept of *emotional citizenship,* I derive from anthropologist Aihwa Ong's conceptualization of *flexible citizenship* and cultural critic Sarah Ahmed's work on the cultural politics of emotion. On the one hand, Ong describes flexible citizenship as

> the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that include subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political economic conditions. In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practiced favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. These logics and practices are produced within particular structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power" (6).

In other words, Ong asserts that the transnational nature of modernity and displacing aura of globalization encourage the subject to be flexible to the opportunities of capital accumulation presented in the markets by the deployment of different modes of citizenship. Of course, this option, as Ong asserts, is more vivid within the middle and upper classes who have the resources to attain and claim diverse citizenship. In the same manner, Ong

reiterates that in exploring the flexibility of citizenship the implication of a dichotomy between cosmopolitanism and patriotism must be observed with caution. The insistence on flexible accumulation does not signify disloyalties towards the mother country of the subject, but rather the subject's deployment of conscious as well as subconscious strategies to facilitate social mobility depending on the location within the markets.

On the other hand, Sarah Ahmed's work on the cultural politics of emotions emphasizes how emotions work within a political context and their circulatory function in society. This flow of circulation takes place within "contact zones" where "impressions" are traded between objects and subjects (The Cultural Politics of Emotion 12). Ahmed explains that emotions drive how, in a cyclical manner, we shape and interact with reality as we come into contact with it:

> The relationship between movement and attachment is instructive. What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from the 'where' of its inhabitance, but connects bodies to other bodies: attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others. Movement may affect different others differently . . . emotions may involve 'being moved' for some precisely by fixing others as 'having' certain characteristics. The circulation of objects of emotion involves the transformation of others into objects of feeling (The Cultural Politics of Emotion 11).

Hence, Ahmed's conception of politics is structurally engaged with the circulation of affects and emotions throughout sociopolitical institutions. They function as building blocks for the creation of meaning and engagement within these institutions. In other words, political significance and meaning is directly dependent upon subject's emotional structures and these structures' engagements with the political in a cyclical manner. Consequently, emotional structures are directly linked and affected by their political and social realities and vice versa. This gives rise to the emergence of power from the frictions that occur at the contact zones where impressions between the subject's *Innenwelth* and *Umwelt*, in Lacan's words, takes place. In this sense and from these perspectives, when speaking of *emotional citizenship*, I refer to the subject's fluid emotional responses to political, economic, and social conditions, and their adaptation strategies based on emotional conceptions of belonging and identity. This includes the subject's emotional perceptions of themselves through the lenses of the larger society, and their investments in the process of acculturation, deculturation, and affinity towards communal engagement.

In the case of the first waves of Arab migrants into Latin America emotional citizenship was first deployed as a response to the confusion and a sense of displacement that settled in these migrant communities when their ideas of the American continent met the living realities of the same. Through the deployment of emotional citizenship, these first arrivals were able to cultivate communities outside their fatherlands and carry on establishing emotional structures that allowed them to carve a sense of belonging thousands of miles away from the places that they considered home. Similarly, this emotional citizenship allowed them to create roots within their host nations despite the ambiguous

nature of their sociopolitical status as migrants who were often seen as a threat to the already established societies. This translated into an investment toward the development of their identity as Arab Latin Americans whose social recognition and political power began to grow as they merged into the larger society. An identity that became more robust with each preceding generation. Echoing humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's conceptions of space and place, these early Arab migrants were able to engage with these spaces of through emotional maneuvers that countered and disarmed geographies of anger and, in the process, embedded these spaces with their own emotional and affective energies to transform them into places of belonging as it is seen in Saráh's and Garib's novels.

In *Los Turcos* and *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, the authors often present their characters within a defeating context where the world is pitted against them. Their childhood years, although joyful, are filled with lack and poverty, something that they become cognizant of as they approach adolescence. Durign adolescence, the weight of their socioeconomic realities and the pressing limitations of their futures becomes too oppressive of their dreams and hopes and gives no option than to abandon their homes in search for better futures. And from the moment they leave their beloved homelands, they are confronted by spaces, languages, illnesses, individuals, and many other challenging circumstances that damage their emotional and affective realities. In this respect, most of their life journeys are a trial by fire, especially upon arriving to Latin America. As we saw in *Los Turcos*, Fuad is the first one to voice his discontent with their situations and desperately begs his friends to send him back to Palestine. Meanwhile, in *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, although Aziz Magdalani does not tend to complain about his circumstances, he is clearly distressed while nostalgia for his homeland is ever present.

Nonetheless, it is through the verbalization of their discontent and the sustainment of their nostalgic memories of home that they begin to carve out spaces of belonging and sculpt emotional structures and social networks. In turn, these communal emotional structures provided the foundations for the flourishing of Arab Latin American identity. For instance, one of the most heartfelt descriptions of migrant resilience in Saráh's novel occurs during a harsh winter in Buenos Aires, the first winter experienced by the six friends shortly after arriving in Latin America. Saráh writes:

> Un despiadado invierno azotaba la ciudad de Buenos Aires; súbitas tormentas eléctricas estremecían las calles y el alma de los emigrantes palestinos. Hallábanse agobiados por la tristeza y la nostalgia, algunos por el temor y el arrepentimiento. Esta mixta sensación de soledad y lejanía habíase amortiguado al descubrir la presencia y amistad de otros compatriotas que les habían precedido en su viaje a América, la mayor parte de ellos provenientes de Palestina, aunque también los había de Siria y El Líbano. Los recién llegados árabes conocían a algunos de sus parientes, y al descubrirlo se abrazaban, emocionados, como si les uniera una misma sangre, lanzándose entonces en interminables preguntas, insaciables los unos de saber de la patria que habían abandonado y los otros acerca del país al que acababan de llegar, y, sobre todo, acerca de sus costumbres (Saráh 61) .

As previously explained, for the most part, the regions where Arab migrants arrived were not kind to them. They were forced to navigate geographies of anger that repelled and excluded them from claiming any sense of belonging in the host countries. In this passage, Saráh utilizes Buenos Aires' ruthless winter to intensify the hostilities withstood by the Arab migrants, who are already feeling defeated, lonely, and saddened by their circumstances. At the same time, however, while the winter seems to engulf the migrants' last vestiges of emotional sanity, Saráh refocuses the attention toward the resilience and emotional respite emanating from the migrants encounters with relatives, friends, or just other fellow Arabs. In this sense, Anna Gibbs notes that: "Because affects . . . are innate activators of themselves . . . and because affects are communicated rapidly through facial expression, affect is also contagious between people" (387). Thus, in these exchanges that included hugs, welcomes, and information, Arab migrants also countered the pressures faced by their circumstances and fostered sentiments of trust and community allowing them to create spaces of inclusion within the geographies of anger that fostered spaces of exclusion against them.

On another example, it is possible to see how displays of communal empathy among the Arab migrants, along the structuring of socioemotional networks, translated into the socioeconomic advancement of the migrant community as whole.

> Vendían, como lo habían visto a sus compatriotas en Buenos Aires, mercancías que llevaban en un cesto. Conocieron a un compatriota llamado Ibchara Barcuch, que comenzando también como buhonero, tenía ahora un negocio de menestras. Barcuch les dio algunos consejo para iniciarlos en aquel duro oficio. Los cuatro emigrantes le confiaron sus tribulaciones e inquietudes, a las cuales trató de restarles importancia, asegurándoles que peores zozobras había tenido él que soportar desde su llegada, hacía algunos años. Era oriundo de Beit-Yala y sabía suficiente el español como para hacerse entender, e hizo que sus compatriotas aprendieran un reducido, aunque imprescindible vocabulario para entenderse con la gente, haciéndolos repetir una y otra vez. Asimismo, les habló de las costumbres de los habitantes, de su modo de vida y de la mejor forma en que debían tratarlos y entenderse con ellos. (Saráh 79-80)

In this passage, Saráh describes an interaction between the recent Arab arrivals and a migrant who has achieved socioeconomic stability. In essence, this describes the communal knowledge that has been acquired by earlier Arab migrants and its transmission to the most recent arrivals. At the same time, it suggests a feeling of responsibility felt by those earlier migrants toward the care and wellbeing of their fellow Arabs who arrived after them. These sentiments are further reinforced by the presence of Arabic newspapers in Latin America at the turn of the century, especially those written in Arabic such as the Chilean newspaper the *Al-Murchid* with it first publication in 1912 in Santiago, as Mercedes del Amo explains:

> Los sentimientos contradictorios que les supusieron estas renuncias a la propia identidad, les dirigió a la preservación del sentimiento comunitario y a intentos de crear vínculos que conservaran estos lazos de forma indeleble. Así apareció la prensa árabe casi desde el comienzo de su llegada a Chile, como en otras zonas de

> la emigración americana, cuyo objetivo, entre otros, era de servir como medio a esta cohesión (6).

Along these lines, in *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, Garib also makes a brief reference to the transmission of information and its emotional dimension when Aziz Magdalani's children are questioned about their father's origins: "Nuestro padre llegó de Palestina en una alfombra mágica. Eso usted lo puede leer incluso en los diarios de la época" (Garib 239). In their response, they incorporate Aziz's love and nostalgia for his homeland given that the memory of Aziz Madgalani's voyage to America on a magic carpet became one of the most powerful memories that his children and grandchildren have of him. In this respect, Anna Gibbs reminds us that:

> we might begin to think about the means by which biological capacities for affective response, mimetic communication and cross-modalization are co-opted in and by the cultural world and to formulate a new view of the relationship between media and audiences. Here we might seek to say what a theory of the discrete innate affects can actually contribute to our understanding of feedback (amplification, magnification and contagion) processes between human bodies and various communicational media, including text . . . [Since] media and bodies appear as vectors, and affect itself [serves] as the primary communicational medium for the circulation of ideas, attitudes and prescriptions for action among them. Here I would want to draw on work in the field of somatics to begin to elaborate the linkages, often automatic and outside awareness, between affects, attitudes, ideas and action (338-339).

Thus, through these emotional acts of service and compassion along the diffusion of information and sharing of stories, fellow Arab migrants fostered spaces of belonging where recent Arab migrants could thrive and advance outside their homelands.

Another example of emotional structures formed by early Arab migrants, explored by Garib and Saráh, is the engagement of Arab migrants in exogamic relationships. As noted in the prior section, Hanná, in Saráh's novel, and Aziz, in Garib's, develop romantic relationships with Latin American women relatively soon after arriving in Latin America. Unlike the rest of their experiences, these emotional entanglements represent a welcoming form of acculturation for Hanná and Aziz. In the case of Hanná, her partner, María, is attracted towards his foreignness as well as his exotic expression both bodily and verbal. For Hanná, María represents the first kind and generous welcome into these strange lands and the hope that his life in Latin America can be better. In fact, when the rest of his friends, Mittri, Fuad, and Yacúb, decide to move from Valparaíso to Santiago, Hanná chooses to stay with María with the intention of forming a family and set roots in Valparaíso. Although his friends react adversely to Hanná's decision to marry outside the Arab community, something common among recent migrant arrivals, perhaps due in part to the treatment they received by established communities in the host countries, and encourage him to move with them to Santiago, they ultimately respect his decision.

As María's and Hanná's relationship grows so do Hanná's emotional investments and engagements in Valparaíso. María helps Hanná to become acquainted with the customs of the region, to better his Spanish, and even baptizes Hanná with the name of Juan. The latter is significant for a couple of reasons. Firs, although this was a recurrent episode in Arabs migrant's transition and acquisition of identity in Latin America (Alfaro-Velcamp 2007; Pastor 2017), this is the first and only time that either Saráh or Garib describe such situation in their novels. And second, María hispanization of Hanná's name, given the circumstances of their relationship, indicates an acceptance extended toward Hanná for him to become part of her life as well as of Latin America. Moreover, soon after learning of María's pregnancy the couple marry and Hanná opens a store with the purpose of establishing roots in Valparaíso.

Lamentably, as it is the case with Garbi's and Saráh's plots which present a continual set of challenges for their characters in order to emphasize the migrants' distress, Hanná's joy perishes along María and their recently born child on August 16, 1906, during an earthquake in Valparaíso. Upon learning about the news, his friends visit him and convince him to relocate in Santigo where he opens a store named "El Nilo". In "El Nilo" Hanná sells imported goods and textiles while mixing his Arab heritage and the knowledge of Spanish language and Chilean customs he learned from María to grow his business. The memory of María and his unnamed child will accompany him until his death. This memory is important because, in contracts to other characters such as Mittri, whose core motif is economic accumulation even at the expense of others, Hanná's relationship to María suggests a deeper relationship that allowed for Hanná to feel embraced by Latin America. It also encouraged him to engage and care for the society around him beyond ethnic boundaries. This is later strengthened by Hanná's son Salvador and his political career based on a deep commitment both to his homeland, Chile, and his father's homeland, Palestine.

In the case of Aziz, in Garbi's novel, and as previously mentioned, he meets La Nativa durign his first months in Latin America. Among many other things, she taught Aziz Spanish and learned Arabic from him; gave birth to his first son in America, Chucre, who never learned that she was his mother; was present at Afife's arrival and marriage to Aziz as well at Afife's funeral. Over her lifetime, La Nativa served as a guide and a companion to Aziz, who often relied on her for advice. Even when Afife arrived from Palestine, la Nativa, continued to be an integral part of the family and of Aziz's identity in Latin America. At some point, she and Afife became close friends and began to learn from each other. Just as she did with Aziz, la Nativa taught Afife Spanish and the customs of Latin America while she learned from Afife the language, customs, and even the cuisine of her homeland. Moreover, la Nativa in act of love and respecting the union between Aziz and Afife, never revealed her relationship to Chucre and gave him to Afife to raise him as her own. As time passed and Afife died, la Nativa sustained Aziz throughout his grief and suffering and provided comfort by maintaining Afife's memory alive through language as well as the preparation of dishes that Afife taught her how to make. In this sense, and although heavily tinted with Orientalizing references, Garib's description of the relationship between Aziz, Afife, and la Nativa represents the union of three cultures

through emotional bonds and structures of love, trust, and hope. Such structures based on emotional relationship and networks, eased the Arab migrants process of acculturation and allowed to establish seeds for the emergence of spaces of belonging where they were able to discover and explore identities beyond those that were imposed for them by the geographies of anger, or the social structures present in the host nations already established societies.

Furthermore, the socioemotional entanglements that resulted from Arab migrants' affective affinities and early emotional relationships, also led to their develop of an emotional citizenship that, eventually, translated into their self-definition as Arab-Latin Americans. Garib and Saráh make note of this through development of their characters' socioemotional networks and the emergence of Arab clubs, business networks, and political entanglements, especially in the first, second, and third generations. In *El viajero de la alfombra mágica*, Garib introduces Aziz's relationship to la Nativa as a point of departure for his emotional investment into the cultures and societies of Latin America. As the story progresses, these emotional investments intertwine with his socioeconomic growth. Moreover, beyond his romantic relationship, Aziz also begins to engage in the sociopolitical configurations of Cochabamba, Bolivia, as many of the Arab migrants decide to form an Arab club where they can reunite to maintain and celebrate their traditions, culture, language, and social life. These socioemotional networks became notable across Latin America and extended both through time and space and assisted in the preservation of Arab heritage and the emergence of Latin American identity. An example form Garbi's novel is found in Aziz Magdalani's dead:

> Un día de abril, a las seis de la tarde, murió Aziz Magdalani . . . En menos de una hora la noticia llegó al comercio de los árabes . . . Dos días después, un sábado en la mañana se realizaron los funerales de Aziz Magdalani en el cementerio de Iquique. Como es usual entre árabes, únicamente asistieron los hombres al entierro, mientras las mujeres permanecían en la casa de los Magdalani para acompañar en su dolor a los parientes . . . según lo prescribían las tradiciones, esas milenarias tradiciones que Aziz Magdalani seguraba haber traído escritas en papiros dentro de una caja de madera de sándalo . . . que durante años sus hijos y después sus nietos, buscaron afanosos en los sitios más recónditos, sin hallarla (Garib 241-243)

In the description of Aziz Magdalani's funeral, Garib emphasizes the continuation of Arab traditions and the emotional ramifications of such while paying particular attention to the inheritance left by Aziz to his family that, according to Aziz's stories, he left "en papiros dentro de una caja de madera de sándalo". Although the children and grandchildren were unable to find said box, the traditions continued through an extensive network of socioemotional relationships and entanglements within the Arab community in Latin America. Aziz children and grandchildren, benefited from the creation of these networks and deployed both their emotional citizenship, inherited from the first waves of Arab migrants, and their political citizenship, obtained by birth, to further their advances in the socioeconomic ladder.

Simliarly, Saráh makes note of these spaces in *Los Turcos*, and recognizes the importance that they played in sustaining Arab communities' sense of belonging and development of emotional citizenship while promoting their members' socioeconomic and political advancement. Most notably, in Saráh's novel, Mitri, who became president of the Club Árabe in Chile, and the entirety of the Club's members, assist Salvador Nabal durign his political campaign to run for president of Chile. In this last example, it is important to note that while Salvador Nabal is the first son of Hanná to be born in Latin America, most of the Arab club's members are migrants who are unable to fully deploy any political power. Thus, through the assistance provided to Salvador, they deploy their emotional citizenship and engage with the political configurations of their adoptive countries. In this regard, poet, writer and Professor, Matías Rafide notes that Arab migrants in Latin America,

> [t]omaron parte activa en todos los trabajos y oficios públicos y privados: en el comercio, la industria, la agricultura, las profesiones liberales, la política, las artes y las letras. En cada uno de los sectores de la vida ciudadana pusieron su cuota de esfuerzo y sacrificio, contribuyendo de esta manera al engrandecimiento de la patria chilena: la adoptiva de los mayores y la natal de los hijos y descendientes (18).

In the process, Arab migrants established the socioemotional structures to sustain their identity and developed strategies to navigate, counteract, and adapt to the geographies of anger present across Latin America, while developing spaces of belonging, deploying their emotional citizenship, and explore their self-definition as Arab Latin Americans.

Conclusion

In his book, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995), Will Kymlicka asserts that:

> To achieve this ideal of a homogeneous polity, governments throughout history have pursued a variety of policies regarding cultural minorities. Some minorities were physically eliminated, either by mass expulsion (what we now call 'ethnic cleansing') or by genocide. Other minorities were coercively assimilated, forced to adopt the language, religion, and customs of the majority. In yet other cases, minorities were treated as resident aliens, subjected to physical segregation and economic discrimination, and denied political rights (2).

In this chapter, through the exploration and analysis of Roberto Saráh's *Los Turcos* (1961) and Walter Garbi's *El viajero de la alfrombra mágica* (1991), we saw how Arab migrants were subjected to the different forms of social pressure described by Kymlicka. The first waves of Arab migration at the turn of the of the twentieth century activated geographies of anger against migrants' presence across Latin America. They were unwelcomed at different levels of society and were constantly under the pressures of hostilities and

humiliations due to their foreign ascendance as well as their socioeconomic status. Even when they managed to climb the socioeconomic, they continued to be viewed as threats to the sociopolitical configurations of their host countries. And in many instances, they were forced to flee their original arrival points in the hope of finding better living conditions, not only financially speaking but emotionally as well.

Nonetheless and despite the pressures posed by these geographies of anger, through the forging of socioemotional relationships and affective entanglements among fellow Arab migrants as well as exogamic relationships, Arab migrants were able to carve out spaces of belonging and inclusion. In these spaces they were able to strengthen their Arab identities outside their homelands while developing an emotional citizenship that prompted them to invest in the advancing of their communities within their adoptive countries. These socioemotional investments translated into socioeconomic and political power that was later inherited by their descendants in the successive generations. In the process, they were able to maintain their traditions and culture while developing an Arab-Latin American identity that continues to persist until today. In the following chapter, this Arab Latin American identity will be further explored through the notion of inherited nostalgia that is present in the succeeding generations of Arab Latin Americans.

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Chapter 3: Daughters of the Mahjar: Inherited Nostalgia and Politics of (Be)longing in Barbara Jacob's Las hojas muertas and Lina Meruane's Volverse Palestina.

The first two chapters of this dissertation focused on the early presence and roots of the Arab diaspora in Latin America. Specifically, chapter two dived into their migration patterns and the development of a sense of belonging outside the Middle East despite the challenges of the Latin American host nations and their socioemotional and geographical spaces. As it was analyzed, this process was deeply emotional. It relied on a communal engagement and effort from Arab migrants to maintain their pride in their Arab identities and traditions while deliberately building bonds with Latin American societies through affective investments. From their deployment of emotional citizenship along with their cumulative experiences and self-awareness when navigating Latin America's intricate geographical, political, socioeconomic, and emotional networks, the first waves of Arab migrants were able to ground the foundations for the establishment of an Arab Latin American identity that provided and sustained spaces of belonging for both newly arrived Arab migrants and the descendants of Arabs in Latin America. But although the previous analyzes were deeply engaged with the movement of Arab migrants in transnational spaces, I have not been involved with the terms *Mashriq*, *Mashriqi*, *Mahjar*, or *Mahjari* until now. Before continuing, reviewing them and providing a reason for their absence in the prior chapters will be helpful.

First, in her book *The Mexican Mahjar: Transnational Maronites, Jews, and Arabs under the French Mandate* (2017), Camila Pastor explains that "*Mashriq* is a geographical term referring to Arabic speaking countries of the Easter Mediterranean. . . [and] *Mashriqi* refers to its inhabitants, an alternative to the modern national categories slowly and incompletely produced during the twentieth century" (2). Similarly, Pastor defines *Mahjar* as a "space of migration, diasporic homeland, dwelling in movement. . . [as] used by Arabic speakers to describe geographies and sociabilities inhabited by *muhajireen* (migrants) since the late nineteenth century" (2). Lastly, she insists on the usage of the terms "*Mahjari* and *migrant* to refer to people who moved and to their descendants insofar as they continued to engage the Mahjar as a social space, dwelling at a crossroads, in transit, subject to multiple sovereignties" (2). Overall, Pastor's proposed definitions of these terms are compelling and assist in contextualizing Arab realities and their migratory processes during a turbulent period of geopolitical fragmentation and confusion in the Middle East during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, her assertation that the *Mahjar* is a social space existing in transit that requires a continuous engagement by the migrants and the *mahjari* peoples that inhabit it highlights the affective dimensions of collective identity and its capacity to create spaces of belonging beyond the perceived homeland. Thus, it now seems proper to explain the reasoning behind the delay in using these terms within this dissertation.

The absence of the terms *Mashriq*, *Mashriqi*, *Mahjar*, *muhajireen*, and *Mahjari* in chapter one stems from the terms' contextual nature, which is heavily derived from movement and a sense of dislocation produced among the first waves of Arab migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, far beyond al-Musili's era. Although

movement was a core component of al-Musili's travels, he cannot be considered a *mahjari* or a *muhajireen*, migrant. Regarding the use of the terms *Mashriq* – roughly translated as "the place of Sunrise" and referring to the part of the Arab world located in North Africa and Eastern Asia – and *Mashriqi*, an inhabitant of the *Mashriq*, their presence proved counterproductive within the first chapter given that al-Musili's travelogs, aside from not making any reference to the *Mashriq*, often contested notions of Arab identity and his understanding of the self and his ethnic and cultural allegiances, which I chose to leave intact under his own terms. On the other hand, in the analysis presented in chapter two, the leading characters of Saráh's and Garib's novels fall within the category of *muhajireen*, migrants, and their descendants can be considered *Mahjari*. Nonetheless, one of the objectives of chapter two is to emphasize the desire to belong and feel connected to specific spaces. It highlighted the development of affective investments and emotional networks that allowed for the establishment of spaces of belonging and, in turn, the establishment of the *Mahjar* as a transnational space of belonging for the descendants of the *muhajireen*. In other words, the *Mahjar*, beyond a "social space a social space, dwelling at a crossroads" (Pastor, The Mexican Mahjar: Transnational Mronites, Jews, and Arabs under the French Mandate 2), is also a concentration of inherited traditions, transcultural points of inflection, socioemotional engagements, and, specific to this chapter, an inherited vault of nostalgic mementos transmitted through generations of *muhajireen* and *mahjari* that sustain affective bonds between the *Mashriq* and the *Mahjar*. In this sense, this chapter builds upon the nostalgic dimension that is present in the essence of identity, culture, and tradition. It seeks to underscore the transmutable nature of generational identities and the complex nature of existing beyond one's own memories, emotions, and desires. Thus, emerging from the voices of Arab Latin American women, this chapter explores the presence of what I call *inherited nostalgia* and its implications in the conception of community, heritage, politics of belonging, and constructions of the self in Barbara Jacob's *Las hojas muertas* (1987) and Lina Meruane's *Volverse Palestina* (2013).

Inherited Nostalgia

Benedict Anderson noted that modern nations are a conglomeration of imagined communities where individuals have come to believe that their membership in a nation depends, simultaneously, on their own sense of belonging and the extension of somebody else's belief in that welcoming feeling. This imagined sense of belonging is reinforced by the production of official and unofficial documentation assigned to individuals as their lives move from the cradle to the grave. Birth certificates, school report cards, diplomas, driver's licenses, identification cards, marriage licenses, contracts and agreements, passports, and even death certificates are all forms of documentation produced within the nation that are proof of one's existence as well as evidence of one's rights to belong within the state that produced said documents. Alongside these processes of documentation, time as a marker of daily habits and routines from the moment we wake up, get ready and head to work, plan our meals, schedule meetings, to when and for how long we sleep, is often focused on the simple necessity to maintain us on our path toward somewhere, anywhere,

sometime in the future. It can be argued that, as a species, one of the characteristics that have assisted humans to build and advance societies the way we have is our ability to structure change within the concept of time and, within this conceptualization, invent ways to measure and control it. Nonetheless, the passing of the days and the ticking of the clocks registered and archived in the annals of history as documents stamped by time, as acts devoid of feelings, are rather dry, irrelevant even. Yet, once again, emotions prove to be an antidote to monotony and oblivion.

In the prologue to *My Country and My People* (1935), Lin Yutang states that "only through the sorrows of men and the weeping of women we can truly understand a nation. The differences are only in the forms of social behavior. This is the basis of all sound international criticism" (14). Yutang's assertion furthers the association of Anderson's imaginary constructs and refocuses attention toward the confluence of emotions and affects in community building. And, using a more creative approach, Antoine de Saint Exupéry furhter explains the sensibilites and entanglements between the passing of time and affects in *Le petit prince* (1943) when the fox explains to the little Prince the importance of bonds and rites:

> Ma vie est monotone. Je chasse les poules, les hommes me chassent. Toutes les poules se ressemblent, et tous les hommes se ressemblent. Je m'ennuie donc un peu. Mais, si tu m'apprivoises, ma vie sera comme ensoleillée. Je connaîtrai un bruit de pas qui sera différent de tous les autres. Les autres pas me font rentrer sous terre. Le tien m'appellera hors du terrier, comme une musique. Et puis regarde! Tu vois, là-bas, les champs de blé? Je ne mange pas de pain. Le blé pour moi est inutile. Les champs de blé ne me rappellent rien. Et ça, c'est triste! Mais tu as des cheveux couleur d'or. Alors ce sera merveilleux quand tu m'auras apprivoisé ! Le blé, qui est doré, me fera souvenir de toi. Et j'aimerai le bruit du vent dans le blé . . . C'est aussi quelque chose de trop oublié, dit le renard. C'est ce qui fait qu'un jour est différent des autres jours, une heure, des autres heures. (80-81)

As noted by Yutang and de Saint Exupéry, what makes one moment different from another, beyond all the little intrincacies that a human life partakes in, is the engagement in social acts, gatherings with family and friends, moments of reflection and creation, and the minute passing of feelings that make time feel like is flying at times or is stuck at others. And yet, the ephemeral nature of moments makes us wonder where it all goes when the day is gone, when the bonds of moments and feelings reach the climax of existence in the present as we depart the company of friends, embark into foreign spaces, engage in identity building, or when loved ones' lives come to an end. Moreover, what happens with all those emotional bonds and networks that are not actually ours, but rather a continuation of someone else's existence? To that, we turn our attention to what I call inherited nostalgia, which is inevitably embedded upon us through the process of birth when we receive our first certificate of existence alongside all the emotional networks and affective investments contained within the weight of our parents' memories and their lives' trajectories.

In order to develop the concept of inherited nostalgia, Marianne Hirsch's *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (2012) and Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) are useful points of departure. First, in

her book, Marianne Hirsch examines the "post-memory" condition that is present in the works of several writers and artists that fall within the denomination of what she calls the "1.5 generation" and "second generation" in the context of the Holocaust. For her, "postmemory is *not an identity* position but a *generational* structure of transmission embedded in multiple forms of mediation" (Hirsch 34). She utilizes the term "1.5 generation" to refer to children who survived the Holocaust yet do not have an established recollection of memories of such. Their memories are linked to the absence of objects and places, which are vague fragments of a trauma they never truly experienced. The "second generation" that Hirsch speaks of refers to the children of the Holocaust survivors. Although they did not experience the traumatic events that their parents suffered, they inherited all the fears and traumas of their parents through what Hirsch defines as "postmemory". Hirsch argues that "postmemory" is not an identity or a social movement, but rather a generational structure that links the traumatic experiences that the survivors of the Holocaust lived to the memory of their children. Even though these children did not suffer their parents' traumas, through "postmemory" they have been directly affected by it. These children grew up with their parents' fears as if they were their own, leading them to feel guilty and responsible for their parent's trauma. In this sense, their parents' survival reflects upon their existence, causing them to live in an in-between world of memories: they suffer what they never experienced while attempting to ground themselves in their present lives and circumstances. Consequently, traumas that they never experienced keep them under a sort of ghostly stresses and constants pressures that they cannot heal from. This "postmemorial" structure, Hirsch argues, urges the "1.5 generation" and the "second generation" to find reparation even though they do not need it.

Being part of the "second generation" herself, Hirsch attempts to repair this postmemory trauma by writing her book. Furthermore, Hirsch utilizes a feminist approach to examine this "postmemory" trauma. Using this approach leads to the revelation of a secondary history taking place in the Holocaust, which is that of the women's silences that have historically appeared in visual and literary works like Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah* (1985) and Art Spiegelman's series of graphic novels *Maus* (1980-1991). These silences open the floor to an alternate reading of the Holocaust experience where the alienation of women inherently carries the painful loss of a memory. In *Maus*, for instance, it is known that the mother is present even when she never speaks for herself. She is in the background but mute up until she is completely gone from the series altogether. Although she never utters a single sound, the lack of her presence is all that remains as a painful reminder of her loss. Such a feminist reading of the Holocaust experience reveals further gaps in the existence of a "postmemory" that haunts the generation that inherited it. Thus, Hirsch argues that the memory, or lack of it, of an event or an experience are not only linked to the individuals who lived them, but they rather accumulate and reverberate through generations and are inevitably inherited as a condition of existence by right, or obligation, of birth.

On her part, Stevlana Boym examines the sentiment of nostalgia within the context of globalization and the fragmentation of collective memories in transnational spaces where the sensation of interconnective socialization emerging from technological advancements, specifically cyberspace and "virtual villages", displace the embodied

experience of belonging and cast anxiety into the future of community building. She explains that "Nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (Boym xiii). In the context of globalization and considering the perception that the speed of time is increasing by and with the production of new technologies, the fantasy that Boym refers to is an attempt to find refuge in a past that has been consumed by the myth of progress and the dislocation of sentiments of belonging by the lack of a communal embodied identity. Through personal memoirs, philosophical essays, and historical analysis, Boym examines the transformation of modern times when "Nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals. . . [representing a] rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. . . [fueled by] nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology" (ix-xv).

Thus, borrowing from Hirsch and Boym, I conceive the concept of inherited nostalgia as a sentiment of longing for a past that one never lived and that is characterized by the urge to return to a home that one never visited. This sentiment is perpetuated by the inheritance of someone else's longing for a return to a home that they experienced once but were unable to return to. In the process, the discomfort produced by the impossibility of return is attenuated by storing the nostalgic feeling in cultural artifacts whether they be anecdotes, stories, literary productions, photos, letters, visuals arts, culinary arts, oral histories, and so on. Moreover, these units of storage, aside from retaining the emotional weight of nostalgia for times and places that are no longer present in an individual's existence, serve as emotional containers destined to be inherited by future generations. These "acts of transfer" (68), to use Paul Connerton's term, internalize systems of emotion guided by a ghostly- yearning, in the form of inherited nostalgia, that urge the individual to complete the return to the fantasy of home, but only to be received by something similar to what the Dutch language conceptualizes as *keir*: "an ill-fated attempt to reenact a beloved memory years later, returning to a place that once felt like home, only to find it now feels uncannily off, like walking through a wax museum of your own childhood" (Koenig 163), except is not even one's own childhood.

Notably, the presence of inherited nostalgia and its intensity tends to be stronger in the children of migrants. These children are frequently raised hearing their parents' stories about the mythical homeland while simultaneously immersing themselves in their own identity building process fostered by the host nations that, by birth right, they are citizens of. Whereas their documentations and spaces of belonging classifies them with nationalities distinct from those of their parents, their emotional networks and affective investments are produced inside transcultural spaces that often include a nostalgic craving to fantasize with the parental homeland and a disjunctive sense of identity of belonging by the presence of the lack of memories of a place that they have nostalgia for yet have never visited. Thus, in what follows, I propose an analysis inherited nostalgia from the perspective of Arab Latin American women who, living in the *Mahjar*, engage with and explore the nostalgic baggage inherited to them as descendants of Arab migrants in Latin America.

Longing Belonging and Inherited Nostalgia in Las hojas muertas and Volverse Palestina

Bárbara Jacobs (1947-) and Lina Meruane (1970-) are writers who have no need for introductions and whose literary productions have titillated the minds of readers across national borders. Yet, the analysis of their texts, *Las hojas muertas* and *Volverse Palestina*, from an affective perspective charged with transgenerational nostalgia inherited by their familial and ancestral networks, requires me to introduce both writers and highlight their Mexican Lebanese ancestry, in the case of Jacobs, and Meruane's Chilean Palestinian ascendance.

Bárbara Jacobs is a highly respected Mexican author whose literary works have captured the attention of readers worldwide. Born in Mexico City in 1947, Jacobs developed a passion for storytelling at a young age. In an interview with Roberto García Bonilla, she states: "Crecí oyendo varios idiomas a mi alrededor: español, inglés, francés, árabe y la lengua autóctona de mi nana", and at the age of twelve she began journaling as a process of self-discovery that , among other things, led her on the path of literary creation and continues to be a core component of her identity as a literary producer (Los inicios de Bárbara Jacobs). The release of her debut novel, *Las hojas muertas* (1987), which has been translated into English, Italian and Portuguese, immediately garnered critical acclaim and earned her the prestigious literary prize Xavier Villaurrutia Award. In the novel, Jacobs relies on multiple perspectives emerging from a single narrational voice to trace an engaging portrayal of the different lives of her father: from his early childhood days, born in a family of Lebanese migrants in a small town in the United States East Coast, where he sold newspapers around his neighborhood; his early years as an adult serving as a correspondent for a New York based magazine while living in Moscow during the 1930s; his participation in the Spanish Civil War as part of the Lincoln Brigade; to his later years as a hotel owner and manager in Mexico City.

Traci Roberts-Camps notes that in her literary production Jacobs

> unceasingly examines how her texts interact with each other as well as with those of other writers. In so doing, she reveals a depth of knowledge about literature and an exceptional openness to self-exploration. Furthermore, her style is at once earnest and playful, delving into the formalities of writing while at the same time questioning the need to do so (196).

This is the case of *Las hojas muertas* where the language of novel is uncomplicated and straightforward, yet filled with an air of playful mysteriousness enhanced by the rapid succession of events as well as gaps and silences that appear as breadcrumbs to entice the reader to turn each page looking for answers and conclusions. In many instances, no other conclusions beyond the assumptions exists. Other times, answers are found in waves of Jacobs' inherited nostalgia that interconnect each generation and are threaded by lingering imaginations of somebody else's life, most notably Jacobs' father, and are the central axis on which the novel is built and produced. But despite Jacobs' father's life being the core of the novel, this analysis emphasizes the brief moments where Jacobs' memories and

imaginations shed light upon her paternal grandparents' lives. Often surrounded by silences, these moments are key in understanding Jacobs' understanding of her Arab ancestry and are an example of how second and third generation cultural producers in the *Mahjar* reconnect with the *Mashriq*.

A major example of the presence of inherited nostalgia in this novel emerges from Jacob's lurking fascination with her family origins. Although "both sets of Jacobs's grandparents were Lebanese immigrants; those on her father's side went to New York City and the ones on her mother's side to Mexico City" (Roberts-Camps 180), Jacobs focuses on the exploration of her father's side of the family. Despite their brief appearances, Jacobs' paternal grandparents, Mama Salima and abuelito Rashid Nahum, appear to have a deep influence in the grounding of Jacob's writings and literary production. In her novel, she notes that her grandparents were born, raised, met, and married in a small village in the Hasroun mountain range in Lebanon before migrating to Ellis Island in the United States. Regarding her grandfather, Jacobs uses his experiences and image as the quintessential figure of the Middle Eastern migrant arriving to the American continent:

> Probre abuelito Rashid. Cuando emigró a los Estados Unidos creemos que lleno de ilusiones empezó por tener que aceptar que en Ellis Island le cambiaran el nombre y nos parece que no le ha de haber parecido como le parecería a nadie. Pero a Ellis Island entraban los emigrantes pobres y si quería pasar de ahí tenían que bajar la cabeza y aceptar o resignarse y es lo que hizo abuelito Rashid. Tuvo que dejar de llamarse Rashid Nahum (42).

With these brief lines describing the experience of her grandfather's arrival to Ellis Island, Jacobs is able to creatively and concisely capture the traumatic experiences of migration withstood by Middle Eastern immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The endearment of her voice when stating "Pobre abuelito Rashid" underscores a sentimental connection to the struggles portrayed by the figure of her grandfather while the following lines point to the communal disenchantment of the migratory experience and the defeated stance of "bajar la cabeza y aceptar o resignarse". Moreover, as several studies regarding Middle Eastern migration to the Americas have noted (Klich and Lesser 1998; Alfaro-Velcamp 2007; Pastor 2017), Jacob's also highlights his grandfather's name change as a process of forced integration into Western society yet never reveals his other name. In doing so, Jacobs reaffirms her grandfather's real name alongside its ethnic roots and through the silence present in her writings, as if protecting the memory of her grandfather, obliterates the presence of an alternative name that represents the degradation that he and many more migrants had to withstand. This is further reiterated when she writes:

> Mama Salima no guardó nada de abuelito Rashid ni siquiera una fotografía y de ahí que nosotros no tengamos de él una imagen en la cual pensar y perdernos. . . A lo mejor abuelito Rashid era bajito y delgado, aunque nosotros queremos imaginarlo grande y fuerte y de bigotes gruesos y pelo abundante y negro cuando pisó tierra americana en Ellis Island (43).

Here, among all the possible portrayals of her grandfather Rashid, Jacobs chooses to imagine him "grande y fuerte y de bigotes gruesos y pelo abundante y negro". Once again,

this description is brief and deviates from a contextualization of the actual conditions in which her grandfather most likely arrived in America. However, Jacobs, perhaps incidentally, in choosing this image as a potential memory of her grandfather, not only manages to vindicate her family's Middle Easter origins and history but the entire history of Middle Eastern migrants to America. On the one hand, this mental image of her grandfather arriving as a healthy and strong immigrant bypasses the historical realities of Middle Eastern migrants' journey toward America, including the contraction of diseases such as "[t]rachoma [which] afflicted many immigrants coming to the Americas because of its prevalence in areas of overcrowding and poor hygiene" (Alfaro-Velcamp 31). On the other, this description of her grandfather challenges the Orientalist representations of Western cultural productions that embed non-Western peoples with weaknesses, predispositions for evil, a treacherous nature, and a lesser intellect, among other moral and physical defects, as noted by Postcolonial scholar Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978).

Overall, Abuelito Rashid's first and last appearances take place halfway through the novel where Jacobs dedicates a minimal space, in a couple of pages, to describe the life of man that she never met as she indulges in the pleasure of engaging with her inherited nostalgia as an avenue to trace her family origins and tradition. The last time Abuelito Rashid is present in the novel, Jacobs describes his circumstances in a contradicting light:

> A nosotros nos ha ido dando por imaginar a abuelito cuando regresó a su país de pelo blanco y con las mejillas hundidas, con bastón de mango de plata pero no para poyarse en él sino sólo como una especie de arma y lo vemos alto, delgado, con los primeros botones de la camisa desabrochados y un saco suelto y gastado. Así lo vemos regresar a su país y de modo específico a su ciudad natal. O triste o enojado. . . tampoco sabemos si creía que después de unos meses en que la gente lo llamara por su nombre él recuperaría algo que no era sólo fuerza y que entonces podría volver a hacer frente a su país adoptado y a su negocio y a su esposa y a sus hijos. A lo mejor esto era lo que él creía. Pero un día mientras estaba ahí creyendo esto o alguna otra cosa lo que sucedió fue que se murió y en consecuencia lo enterraron allá y de allá no volvió a América ni a su familia y su familia de América no asistió al entierro y a nadie le consta qué nombre pusieron en la lápida si Rashid Nahum o el que le pusieron en Ellis Island como requisito para que se quedara y para que les facilitara a los demás dirigirse a él y sentirlo familiar y cercano. Así que allá se quedó abuelito Rashid solo y triste completamente (43).

As noted earlier, many of the silences present in Jacobs' stylistics leave a door open for readers to arrive at their own conclusions. Abuelito Rashid's migration conditions or status is never described, but it is likely that his circumstances were similar to those of many poor Levantine immigrants who, under Ottoman rule, were forbidden to leave the empire. But unlike many Middle Eastern immigrants that shared similar socioeconomic circumstances, Abuelito Rashid arrived at Ellis Island alongside his wife, Mama Salima, and was able to return to his homeland years later. Yet, it is rather difficult to discern the circumstances and motifs of his return to his natal village in Lebanon. It is never clear whether this return was voluntary or forced but based on Jacobs' imaginary assumptions of his grandfather's

arrival to his homeland as well as his thoughts and emotions, this return appears to be unpleasant. On a first instance, Jacobs presents a gloom picture of him arriving to his homeland "con bastón de mango de plata pero no para poyarse en él sino sólo como una especie de arma y lo vemos alto, delgado, con los primeros botones de la camisa desabrochados y un saco suelto y gastado". In this description, which present a high contrast to that of his arrival in Ellis Island, Abuelito Rashid appears both consumed by his life away in America but strong enough to fight his way to return home. Curiously enough, home now appears to be his adopted country and his village appears as a threat to his return to Ellis Island. From this perspective, this imaginary depiction of her grandfather using a silver cane as a weapon to protect himself in his native homeland contradicts the hope and illusion of return that many migrants had when they left the Middle East. At the same time, however, this image captures the realization of many of these immigrants when facing the implications of returning to a homeland that no longer exist as they remember it and, instead, has become a highly unstable region, especially after the fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. Moreover, as Jacobs' take on the thoughts of abuelito Rashid indicate, some of the implications included the confrontation of socioeconomic realities and generational dislocations. These become evident as abuelito Rashid submerges in negative feelings of anger and sadness when thinking of the name given by his adoptive country, his family and his business in Ellis Island. While meditating on these matters his life comes to a sudden and lonely end in the land where he was born but that was now foreign to him. And on a last note, regarding abuelito Rashid's life and death, Jacobs notes: "que allá se quedó abuelito Rashid solo y triste completamente". This last sentence allures to the contrast in conceptions and senses of belonging generationally transmuted from abuelito Rashid to Jacobs' father who: "no era tanto emigrante como hijo de emigrantes y quería volverse y se volvió americano aunque después aunque mucho después en ocasiones se avergonzara de serlo pero sin que por eso fuera a renunciar a su nacionalidad" (93), and to Jacobs who, thorugh her inherited nostalgia, revisits the family origins and almost forgotten memory of abuelito Rashid as to not abandon him in the Levantine mountains.

In addition to the memory of abuelito Rashid, Jacobs inherits nostalgia from the memory of her paternal grandmother, Mama Salima. In contrast with the space dedicated to summarizing the story of abuelito Rashid in a couple of pages, Mama Salima's presence in Jacobs' novel appears in gleams of memories and assumptions that reveal certain familial customs, traditions, and even daily habits that not only shape the lives of Jacobs' father and his siblings but have repercussions in Jacobs' own life and literary production. For instance, making a reference to religious practices of early Middle Easter immigrants, Jacobs writes:

> Mama Salima era de familia maronita y suponemos que adoptó la religión católica porque en Flint no habrá habido suficientes libaneses maronitas como para seguir la tradición de ese rito en la religión y desde entonces empezó a enredarse un rosario entre los dedos y el volante de su viejo Chevrolet y chocar por el carril derecho de las carreteras de vez en cuando mientras rezaba (44-45).

Notably, the majority of *muhajireen* that emigrated from the Levant while the regions was under the Ottoman Empire rule in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were religiously affiliated with faiths other than Islam. Religious groups outside the Islam were forced were forcefully conscripted by the Ottoman military, which was one of the major reasons outside financial hardship for many Levantines to leave the region. Albeit a minor hint, this reference to her grandmother as a fervent non-Muslim religious woman furthers cements the idea of her grandparents' emigration because of religious persecution alongside financial hardship. Also, given that the Ottoman empire barred the emigration of its citizens, especially those who were non-Muslim, it suggests that Jacobs' grandparents were likely undocumented immigrants, adding another layer of challenge to the process of integration into American culture. Aligning this situation with abuelito's Rashid mysterious trip to his hometown and his inability to return to Ellis Island serves as a reminder of exclusionary politics and practices that targeted and continue to target minorities. But this is not all that we can infer from this passage.

In addition to hinting toward highlighting the religious aspect of Jacobs' grandparents' family and her grandparents' migrant status, the last passage about Mama Salima also serves to refocus the attention on the presence of women in narratives about Arab migration while challenging stereotypical and orientalist notions of gender roles. As noted earlier, abuelito Rashi and Mama Salima emigrated together to America at the turn of the nineteenth century. As mentioned in the previous chapter, durign the first waves of migration toward America, most *muhajireen* were young men looking for better opportunities outside of their native lands who faced many dangerous and uncomfortable circumstances in their travels to America, but it does not mean that only the men migrated. In this respect, Mercedes del Amo observes that:

> Las mujeres inmigrantes árabes asumen el papel fundamental en la reproducción social, sin participar directamente en la decisión de emigrar. Se incorporan a la emigración tras la avanzadilla del varón que les envía los medios necesarios para su salida del país de origen. En el momento de ingresar, sólo el 9,4% estaban casadas, por lo que se supone que la mayoría eran hijas de inmigrantes, o fueron llamadas con objeto de contraer matrimonio con algún hombre de la comunidad árabe (5).

Despite this fact, narratives and analysis on Arab emigration tend to miss the women's perspective on their traveling conditions and even when Jacobs does not dive into the details of her grandparents' journey, the fact that she mentions that they travelled together to Ellis Island reminds the readers that women were also subjected to the same marginalized and inhumane treatment suffered by male *muhajireen*. Moreover, their presence in early Arab migrant communities was a core component of daily lives inside and outside the household. This last passage notes that Mama Salima attempted to uphold her religious tradition while integrating herself to American culture by approaching the Catholic faith "porque en Flint no habrá habido suficientes libaneses maronitas como para seguir la tradición de ese rito en la religión" (Jacobs 44). Her desire to continue this tradition led her to expand her networks beyond the family home and engage with non-Lebanese, non-Maronite, communities.

Along these lines, but this time from the perspective of the family life, in another passage Jacobs writes that: “Mama Salima les canto canciones de cuna en árabe a sus tres hijos . . . y el árabe fue entonces para papá y sus hermanos su lengua materna” (45). Just as in the case of religion, Jcobs envisions Mama Salima as the foundation of Lebanese traditions and continuation of Arabic language in her family’s history. Through her – and the lives and voices of Arab migrant women in general – religion, language, culture, and customs are sustained and passed down through generations. And although Jacobs herself was not able to inherit those traditions, it was not because she did not yearned for them but rather because her father’s cultural integration, first into American and later into Mexican societies, took him through a different path of growth and self-discovery, as she notes when stating that: “la verdadera vida de papá empezó los sábados cuando de niño se convirtió en americano y por las mañanas repatía periódico en bicicleta entre sus vecinos y por las tardes con el dinero que ganaba compraba libros desde entonces” (54). However, in contrast to her father, Jacobs praises her aunt Sara, her father’s sisters, for maintaining her Lebanese traditions: “La casa de la tía Sara era muy chiquita y muy bonita y estaba llena de luz y de calor y de plantas y de cosas delicadas de porcelana y antiguas libanesas porque ella sí era paisana” (25). In lauding her aunt, Jacobs once again highlights the importance of Arab migrant women in maintaining and fostering Arab traditions as they nurture the home and the community with the memories of their native lands.

It is also worth noting that: “desde entonces [Mama Salima] empezó a enredarse un rosario entre los dedos y el volante de su viejo Chevrolet y chocar por el carril derecho de las carreteras” (Jacobs 44-45). Again, this all taking place in the early nineteenth century. Jacobs’ description of Mama Salima owning and driving a car durign these times highlights her independence as a woman while challenging orientalist imagery of Middle Eastern women as inferior and docile who suffer the yoke of her male partners. Although the details of Mama Salima and abuelito Rashid’s relationship can only be inferred through silences and brief descriptions of their lives apart from one another, it is possible to sense a self of shared responsibility and autonomy which portrays as engaging in an egalitarian relationship where the gender roles mattered little to the familial structure. Another piece of evidence that suggests such a type of relationship is present when abuelito Rashid is no longer around. In the absence of abuelito Rashid, Mama Salima continued to provide for her family and took full responsibility for her household: “Mama Salima había cerrado el negocio y se dedicaba a leer y fumar y además escribía en el periódico en árabe sobre lo que leía y lo que pensaba y se encerraba a cocinar y a hacerse la ilusión de que vivía en una choza de madera a la orilla de un lago” (Jacobs 46). Beyond pointing toward a deep appreciation and admiration for Mama Salima on Jacobs part, this passage also presents an interesting mixture of descriptions regarding gender roles and imagery.

On the one side, Jacobs’ description paints Mama Salima as a decisive woman who takes on administrative functions and decisions while playing with imagery of activities that are often thought of as masculine such as smoking while reading and writing to express her opinions (it is important to remember that this is occurring at the turn of the nineteenth century). This type of descriptions of Mama Salima break stereotypes of women’s participation within the home and challenge gender roles in general, but they are even more powerful given that they challenge orientalist tradition altogether and reinstate the dignity

both of Arab women and Arab men – the first because, in orientalist tradition, they are often portrayed as submissive while the latter are depicted as cruel and abusive. On the other hand, Jacobs also states that Mama Salima "se encerraba a cocinar y a hacerse la ilusión de que vivía en una choza de madera a la orilla de un lago". This latter imagery depicts traits that are more in tune with femininity and reveal Mama Salima's solemn quietude and resilience as a single mother in a foreign land. Through cooking and, perhaps, thinking of her native land and former life, she endures the challenges of cultural integration and the difficulties of sustaining her traditions and home while caring for her children.

Lastly, while Jacobs does not go into detail about how Mama Salima sustained her family, she does note that after closing the shop that she owned alongside abuelito Rashid, she dedicated herself to writing in the Arab journal in her mother tongue. Mama Salima's active participation in the literary production of the Arab community is another example of how women's preoccupation for the preservation of their traditions and their contributions to the foundation of the *Mahajar*. In this regard, Del Amo asserts that:

> Una preocupación temprana de la comunidad árabe fue la cohesión como grupo y la preservación de la su identidad árabe fuera de sus países de origen, pero esto no impidió la integración completa dentro de la sociedad . . . aún a costa de la pérdida de una parte de los rasgos identitarios ancestrales, el más esencial de los cuales fue la pérdida de la lengua árabe por el intento de que la segunda generación . . . no sufriera la discriminación que había soportado la primera generación y pudiera integrarse desde la infancia sin el rechazo de la sociedad de acogida (6).

It is true that Mama Salima's journalistic participation was an important contribution to the *Mahjar*, especially during the first waves of Arab migration into America. Nonetheless, following Del Amo's observation, through Jacob's novel it is possible to see how certain cultural components and traditions were modified or altogether lost as they were transferred from one generation to another.

In the case of Jacobs, she looks at the past with curiosity about her origins and in her grandparents, specifically in Mama Salima, she finds a former version of herself who began a tradition of reading and literary creation. This tradition was continued by her father, but this time in English instead of Arabic and, interestingly, the passion for reading that he inherited from his mother was also the reason that he detached himself from the Catholic Church and any religious groups as he began to read Karl Marx and align himself with the struggles of humanity (Jacobs 46). However, he continued to be preoccupied by the geopolitical transformations and transgressions suffered in the Middle East:

> Israel desde donde antes a papá le habría dado tanto gusto recibir algo pero desde donde ahora le daba una mezcla de tristeza y extrañeza y hasta de coraje pues decía cuando sucedía algo de lo que ahora a cada rato sucedía en el mundo que Israel al igual que los Estados Unidos se había convertido en un país terrorista a pesar de todo (96).

Thus, alongside the reading and literary tradition started by Mama Salima, this passage also reveals the continuation of the Arab community's preoccupation for their native land.

In this sense, through her novel, this time in Spanish, and by way of her inherited nostalgia Jacobs continues this tradition by recuperating the memory of her grandparents from oblivion while giving them and her father a voice to share the struggles of the *Mahjar* and the *muhajireen* who founded it, in America. And while "certainly, we do not have literal 'memories' of others' experiences, and certainly, one person's lived memories cannot be transformed into another's" (34), as Marianne Hirsch notes, inherited nostalgia produces a sentiment of urgency toward the restoration of times long past that parallels Jacobs novel's ending when she realizes that, at some point, her father will no longer exist, and that all the life he ever lived will only become a memory that will reverberate through nostalgia for him and for the lives that his life engaged with: "entonces sí que no oirá cuando . . . todos nosotros por más infantiles que parezcamos y que sonemos y que de hecho seamos porque todavía lo busquemos . . . le cantemos Papá te necesitamos, Papá te queremos, Papá te extrañamos y nos haces falta" (Jacobs 102-3).

On her part, born in 1970 in Santiago, Chile, Lina Meruane has made remarkable contributions to Latin American literature throughout her career. Meruane's literary production is renowned for her exploration of themes such as identity, memory, trauma, and the body. Her works delve into the experiences of Latin American women and their struggles for self-actualization. Additionally, her writing style is experimental, incorporating elements of autofiction, stream of consciousness, and nonlinear narrative. Meruane's debut novel, *Póstuma,* published in 2000, was met with widespread acclaim. The novel examines non-conventional family and sexual relations as the female protagonists unfold the family history at the edge of eroticism and death. Similarly, Meruane's second novel, *Cercada*, published in 2000, continues to explore the themes of identity and trauma. Her most recent novels, *Sangre en el ojo* (2012) and *Sistema nervioso* (2019), delve into the experience of sense of self and relationships between body and environment. Her work has been translated into multiple languages and has garnered several accolades, including the Anna Seghers Award for Literature in 2011 and the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize in 2012 for *Sangre en el ojo*. She has received rave reviews from critics, including praise from lauded writer Roberto Bolaño who stated that: "hay una generación de escritoras [chilenas] que prometen devorarlo todo. A la cabeza, claramente, se destacan dos. Éstas son Lina Meruane y Alejandra Costamagna, seguidas por Nona Fernández y por otras cinco o seis jóvenes armadas con todos los implementos de la buena literatura" (67).

Meruane has also published numerous essays and literary criticism, with a focus on the connections between literature and politics. Most notably, her chronicle and personal essay *Volverse Palestina* (2013), the focus of this analysis, earned her the Institute of Chilean-Arab Culture Award in 2015. Although this literary piece is minute in comparison with Meruane's other works, during an interview with Pía Castro in 2018, Meruane stated that her chronicle, *Volverse Palestina*, is the book that has affected her the most as an individual (Aquí estoy - Lina Meruane, escritora chilena). Similarly, Dunia Gras Miravet states: "me atrevería a decir que [*Volverse Palestina*] puede considerarse como una obra en marcha, ya que, posiblemente, no se trate de un capítulo cerrado todavía en la producción de Meruane, puesto que ha devenido proyecto en este momento de su trayectoria, como punto de inflexión" (167). It is important to keep in mind Gras Miravet's

observation as Meruane's *Volverse Palestina* is not only a process of self-discovery but also a statement of self-determination for the Palestinians in Palestine, and for the Palestinian diaspora. On the surface, her chronicle onboards her experiences as a Chilean woman of Palestinian ancestry while she addresses her desire to return to a home that always belonged to her but only through glimpses of inherited nostalgia, a compromise to land that she has only seen in other people's memories – her father and her grandparents – , and a deep sense of confusion about her own identity as a Chilean woman of Palestinian descend residing in New York by the time that she finally visits her family's natal land. On a deeper level, Meruane's internal conflicts of identity fostered by her inherited nostalgia that fuels her desire for a "return" to Palestine, challenges notions of stable national identities and highlights issues associated with politics of (be)longing and imaginary constructions of the self within geopolitical boundaries. Similarly, it addresses the question of Palestinian claims to identity in Chile and, on a larger scale, *Mahjar* diasporic identities in relationship to the emotional, temporal, and spatial experiences of their ancestors.

An important element that is present in Meruane's narrative – also present in other *Mahjar* writers' works – develops from a sense of responsibility to fulfill a promise that does not belong to her:

> Regresar. Ese es el verbo que me asalta cada vez que pienso en la posibilidad de Palestina. Me digo: no sería un Volver sino apenas un visitar a una tierra en la que nunca estuve, de la que no tengo ni una sola imagen propia. Lo palestino ha sido siempre para mí un rumor de fondo, un relato al que se accede para salvar un origen compartido de la extinción. No sería un regreso mío, repito. Sería un regreso prestado. (11)

As she states, Meruane's desire for a return is not actually hers but rather emerges from the failed promise that her ancestors made to their Palestinian relatives and friends who stayed behind, before embarking on the journey toward America. And, speaking of a "borrowed return", Marianne Hirsch reminds us that,

> Postmemorial work . . . strives to reactivate and re-embody more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression. In these ways, less directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory that can persist even after all participants and even their familial descendants are gone. (34)

In this sense, when her ancestors' return became frustrated as the catastrophic realities of the twentieth century unfolded – here emphasizing the geopolitical issues that developed in and continue to affect the Middle East – this promise to return to the Mashriq became a core component of Arab Latin American identities that was inherited to the second and third generations. In many aspects, the nostalgia that the first waves of *muhajireen* had for the Mashriq could only be dealt as a memory of a life that no longer existed as it was sacrificed in the process of assimilation into Latin American cultures. "Como la vida de tantos palestinos que ya no pudieron o no quisieron regresar, que olvidaron incluso la palabra del regreso, que llegaron a sentirse (al igual que mis abuelos, dice mi padre) chilenos comunes y corrientes" (Meruane 12). This process of assimilation required that

they left their customs and culture to become, if not fully, mostly Chilean. But at the same time, the nostalgia for the homeland and the desire to return was always present in everything: from the daily routines that echoed the routines of the homeland to customs, meals, stories, photographs and so on. Memories that, as Meruane narrates, sustained a link across generations and communities beyond national borders and politics: "[mi padre] mantiene, como muchos paisanos de esa generación, un vínculo solidario con Beit Jala del que jamás hace alarde. Ayudas que sumadas sostienen, allá, un colegio llamado Chile. Una plaza llamada Chile. Unos niños, palestinos de verdad, si acaso la verdad de lo palestino todavía existe" (13). A link that, as Meruane allures, is both very real but at the same time very subjective. On the one side, her Palestinian heritage is real through her parents' and grandparents' connection to Palestine. On the other, her Palestinian identity appears fractured and nurtured merely by nostalgias that does not belong to her, which prompts her to question her Palestinianess.

Coincidentally, as Meruane ruminates on the inflections and dimensions of her identity – as a Chilean of Palestinian ancestry living in New York – while on her way to the airport to catch a plane toward Spain, she engages in a strangely comforting conversation with a taxi driver. Once in the taxi, the driver begins to engage in conversation with Meruane about her destination which, inevitably, leads him to ask her where she is from. This last question prompts Meruane to talk about her Chilean roots and her Palestinian ancestry, and results in an unexpected response from the driver:

> Usted es una palestina, usted es una exiliada. ¿Usted no conoce su tierra?, me dice sin recriminación. Debería ir allá, usted. ¿Para dónde viaja ahora? Oye, dice, dejándose de formalidades, desde España los territorios no están tan lejos. Unas cinco horas en avión. Debería ir, insiste, volviendo a lo formal, le va a encantar, y empieza su campaña del porqué del regreso. Volver a Palestina, imagino mientras habla, y comprendo que nunca se me había ocurrido ese destino (Meruane, Volverse Palestina 28).

To a certain degree, Meruane finds comfort in hearing someone else confirming her identity as a Palestinian. And, as unlikely as it might sound, the driver's assertion about who she is further invites her to seek that return to the land of her ancestors. A return that, as she states, never crossed her mind yet was always present as part of her identity and the nostalgia she inherited as part of her family's history. Then, the driver continues:

> Ojalá vengas a conocer la tierra de tus ancestros, vale mucho la pena a pesar de todo lo dicho . . . Yo también soy palestino, un palestino nacido en el exilio. Sonríe complacido de haber encontrado a alguien como él. ¿Y cómo es que no conoces Palestina si puedes entrar?, pregunta, asombrado, en un inglés tan exacto que suena impostado (Meruane, Volverse Palestina 32-34).

With these words, the Palestinian taxi driver extends an invitation to Meruane to visit their land. But despite all the cheerful remarks and the taxi driver's excitement to encounter another Palestinian, like him, it is difficult not to notice the abrasiveness of the invitation to visit Palestine, which is only intensified by the question "¿Y cómo es que no conoces Palestina si puedes entrar?". These comments and question appear as a backhanded

compliment toward Meruane who now feels more than ever the weight of her inherited nostalgia in addition to the pressure given to her by the taxi driver's own inherited nostalgia as a Palestinian born in exile.

Still thinking that Chile is her only Levant (Meruane 29) and convincing herself that she the trip has to more to do with her profession as a writer directing a journal about "places", Meruane decides to head to Palestine. In her luggage she brings her passport, clothes, and her laptop, but on her shoulders, she carries the accumulation of her family's nostalgia for a land that she has never seen, an invitation with tones of reproach from an exiled compatriot, and her desire to learn who she really is. And before arriving to her destination in Jaffa where she is scheduled to meet a colleague, Ankar, who will introduce her to this strange place that fills her mind with ghostly memories, she confronts reality at the airport as an Israeli officer checks her luggage. Meruane writes: "De dónde vengo. (Entorna los ojos sobre la patética fotografía de mi pasaporte y murmura Chile, pensando, lo leo en las arrugas de su frente, ese país de palestinos)" (39-40). As noted in prior chapters, Chile became a popular destination for Arab migrants at the turn of the twentieth century, seeing a high influx of Palestinians and becoming the country with the largest population of Palestinians outside the Middle East. In this passage, Meruane highlights the confirmation of her Chilean identity by means of her passport while making a reference to the Palestinian influence in Chile by interpreting the Israeli officer expression when looking at her passport. In the process, Meruane juxtaposes her identities as a Chilean and as a Palestinian but her comment allures to Chilean history of Palestinian migration as a reason for her identity, which signals a difficulty in embracing her Palestinianess. Likely, this is because she does not have real affective ties to Palestine other than the nostalgia inherited by her family. Nonetheless, as the Israeli officer finish checking her bag and documents, Meruane procedes to go on her way and, eventually, takes a moment to reflect on the situation: "Tengo la certeza de que en las horas que pasé con los tiras fui más palestina que en mis últimos cuarenta años de existencia. La palestinidad que sólo defendía como diferencia cuando me llamaban turca, alguna vez, en Chile, había adquirido densidad en Heathrow" (Meruane 43). As she begins to process her encounter with the Israeli officer and remembers her childhood own memories where she embraced her identity as a Palestinian while rejecting the derogatory term "turca", Meruane establishes a direct link between her real Palestinianess and the nostalgic and ghostly sense of Palestinianess inherited by her ancestors. But in an unexpected turn of events, as Meruane begins to embrace her identity as a Palestinian, another identity conflict arises.

Soon after her experience at the airport checkpoint, Meruane arrives in Tel Aviv and looks for a taxi to take her to Jaffa where she is received by Ankar. Conversing with Ankar, Meruane expresses her desire to visit Beit Jala, her family's homeland and in doing so, fulfilling the promise of return that begun with his grandparents, was inherited by her parents, and now belongs to her. But as she approaches Beit Jala in search of her roots in a house that she has only seen through other people's memories and, for the first time, meets people that she only consider family because she was instructed to do so, Meruane begins to question herself and the meaning of all these borrowed emotions. This is evidente when Meruane describes her first encounter with someone who is supposed to be her aunt: "Y ahora esa mujer se está abrazando a mí sin preguntarme si verdaderamente soy quien ella

cree. El lado menos ascético de mi cerebro me exige representar el rol para el que he viajado de tan lejos y responda a ese beso suyo, a ese apretón, y la siga hacia su casa" (51). This awkward situation reveals a cognitive dissonance produced by Meruane's imaginary self and understanding of her identity as a Chilean while at the same time carrying with her the Palestinian memories of her grandparents, and the frustrated return and inherited nostalgias of her parents.

As Meruane has stated several times, her return to the homeland is only borrowed. When she finally experiences it herself, she realizes that her Palestinianess was always, above all, not something that belonged to her because of her existence as an individual, but rather as the product of collective histories, memories, and emotions, especially that of nostalgia. This realization echoes sociologist Nira Yubal Davis observation that: "politics of belonging is about the intersection of the sociology of power with the sociology of emotions, but it is the normative values lens which filters the meaning of both to individuals and collectivities, differentially situated along intersectional global social locations" (14). But beyond this realization, Meruane is confroted with a much more difficult reality that emerges from her conversation with her aunt. "Ustedes no son Meruane", states her aunt, as Meruane continues with the description of the exchange: "Apuro el paso on el dolor de mis talones y le digo: ¿Cómo que no somos Meruane? No, dice, sin agistarse. Ustedes son Saba. ¿Sabaj?, pregunto yo casi afirmado, Sabaj o Saba, porque esa parte de mi familia recibión nombres distintos al ingresar a Chile. No, no, repite. Saba. Los Sabaj son otros" (52). Listening to her aunt, Meruane begins to submerge into yet a deeper state of affliction. The whole purpose of her trip to Palestine was to reunite both of her identities, Chilean and Palestinian, but rather than arriving at point of convergence, her identity is further shattered. Social psychologist Margaret Wetherell notes that identity narratives provide people with a sense of "personal order" (67), and when Meruane's narrative of her identity is confronted by that of her family's origins, which is sustained by collective narratives of those Palestinians who remained in Palestine, her sense of self becomes fragile and highly unstable. In response to her aunt's comments, she writes: "Algo se revuelve en mi cabeza. Algo se viene abajo. Si yo no soy Meruane entonces esta mujer que dice ser mi pariente no es nada mío. Pero hay algo aún peor: si nosotros no somos Meruane, entonces, quién soy" (Meruane 52). As Meruane begins to realize, this is a question that she can only unveil through her own experiences of Palestine, but this time not as her homeland but rather as the homeland of her ancestors and a place that, in spite of being so present throughout her life, has always been and continues to be foreign to her.

In her book *Vida y escritura* (2009), literary critic Lorena Amaro Castro asserts that:

> la construcción de los espacios es un aspecto importante en la construcción del yo autobiográfico. La vinculación afectiva con los distintos lugares en que ha transcurrido la vida . . . las zonas umbrías o luminosas de la primera casa, los laberintos de la ciudad de origen, las sorpresas en los caminos del viaje pueden marcar un antes y un después (113).

As Meruane chronicle continues, she begins to experience Palestine for the first time in her life and to gain her own memories of a place that was always just a ghostly presence

nourished by the nostalgias of her ancestors. In the interview with Pía Castro, Meruane states that, "[Volverse Palestina" es el ensayo que me volvió palestina. La escritura de ese libro fue lo que me conectó fuertemente con esas raíces, con la situación política". Although meeting her aunt and confronting the possibility of not even being Meruane proved to be a devastating realization, it also marked a before and after for her. Moreover, falling into the cognitive and emotional dissonance that breached the nostalgia that she inherited from her parents, allowed her to create her own emotional connections based on tangible experiences of the *Masriq* and claim her identity as a Chilestinian compromised to both of her homelands and heritages: "en terminos de mi sangres soy 50% palestina, en terminos de mi compromiso soy 100% palestina" (Meruane, Aquí estoy - Lina Meruane, escritora chilena).

Conclusion

Migration is a traumatic event. When the first waves of *muhajireen* embarked on their journey toward America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, they experienced an emotional rupture took place within themselves that became part of their identities. Longing to return home and yearning to belong in their adoptive lands became a struggle that they internalized. But not everything in this struggle was affliction. On the contrary, it proved useful because this:

> presence of embodied and affective experience in the process of transmission that is best described by the notion of memory as opposed to history . . . signals an affective link to the past – a sense, precisely, of a material 'living connection' – and it is powerfully mediated by technologies like literature, photography, and testimony (Hirsch 134).

In this sense, the emotional rupture that resulted from the traumatic experience of migration also led to the reinforcement of memories that persisted beyond historical accounts of migratory experiences. In turn, these experiences nourished the establishment of the *Mahjar* and became powerful links between the nostalgic and idealized homeland and the tangible and real adoptive home. And, it was seen, this inherited nostalgia not only sustained the spirits of the first waves of migrants as they faced the challenges of adapting to new lands, cultures, and traditions but also served to establish a transgenerational link of Arab identities propelled by the feeling of nostalgia. This is the case of Jacobs and Meruane whose inherited nostalgia became intricately and intimately connected to their sense of self. And it not only affected their understanding of identity but also their literary works and the exploration of Arab Latin American identities.

Nonetheless, from Meruane's and Jacobs' exploration of their ancestry, two other questions emerge: what does it mean to inherit an Arab identity outside of the Middle East? What does it mean to be Arab Latin American? These two questions will be further explore in the following and last chapter of this dissertation while focusing on the question of Palestine from the perspectives of Arab Latin Americans.

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Chapter 4: Arab Latin American Cultural Exclaves and Perspectives on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

In the previous chapters, this dissertation examined the socioemotional and cultural roots establishing the Latin American Mahjar. It delved into the foundation and evolution of Arab Latin American identity from the early travels of Reverent al-Musil across seventeenth-century Spanish colonial America, the arrival and establishment of the first waves of *muhajireen* at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, to the exploration of second and third generations of Arab Latin Americans' relationship with their Arab ancestry in the second half of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century. This last chapter continues the exploration of Arab Latin American identity, and similar to previous chapters, it provides an overview of cultural productions by Arab Latin Americans from affective and postcolonial lenses. But unlike the previous chapters, rather than focusing on its contributions to Latin America itself, it examines Arab Latin American's impact on Latin America's imaginaries politics and relations to the *Mashriq*. Specifically, it aims to present a case study on the Arab Latin American perspectives with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Arab Latin American contributions to Palestinian self-determination, and efforts for an approximation toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Also, in contrast with other chapters where the focus was on specific novels, memoirs, and travelogues, and with the hope to amplify the field of vision on Latin America's relationship to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this chapter analyzes a wider variety of sources that include documentaries, video journals, newspapers, and two anthologies that provide as a space of literary production and creative dialogue for both Arabs and Jews. The works analyzed are Miguel Littín's documentary film *Crónica palestina: los caminos de la ira* (2001) and his drama film *La última luna* (2005), Alberto Nazal's *Beit Jala Forever* (2006), and the collections of Arab and Jewish short stories in Spanish complied in the books *Caminos para la paz* (2007) coordinated by Ignacio López Calvo and Cristián Ricci, and *Delta de las areas* (2013) compiled by Rose Mary Salum.

The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The conflict's roots can be traced back to the late 19th century when Zionist leaders advocated for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. This movement was fueled by a desire to establish a homeland for Jewish people in their historic territory. However, given that the creation of the Israel state was heavily conducted by what the surrealists called "European murderous humanitarianism," the Arab population did not share this vision in the Arab world. As a matter of fact, they viewed the Zionist movement as a threat to their own rights of self-determination. The conflict was further compounded by events in the 20th century, including the ultimate establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians – a displacement that is known as the *Nakba*, meaning "catastrophe" in Arabic, in the Arab world. The Six-Day War in 1967 was another turning point in the conflict. Israel took control of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, which exacerbated the frequent violent clashes, including suicide bombings, rocket attacks, and military operations.

Although not directly connected to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, another important point of tension occurred at the turn of the 21st century. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, focused the world's attention on the Middle East. These terrorist attacks produced a discourse on the transnationalization of terrorism, leading to unprecedented Western military control of the region (Dekmejian 2006). Incidentally, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict garnered attention but in a very unfair and damaging manner toward the Palestinian people. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the global media became flooded with images of the Arab world as a chaotic region and caricatured depictions (at times contradictory) of its inhabitants ranging from blood-thirsty insurgents to servile, childlike-beings plagued Western newspapers and television (Alsultany 2013). Also, as an incidental result, Israel was lauded as a critical ally in the struggle against transnational terrorism and was viewed as a beacon of hope inside a chaotic Arab world. From a purely political perspective, this resulted in Western popularity toward Israel and permitted it to tighten its grip on the region. This situation further dismembered the question of Palestine in a global arena and, especially in the West, turned it into an afterthought that could only be addressed under the table as global security against terrorism became a priority. Meanwhile, the struggle for self-determination and human rights abuses experienced by the Palestinian people turned into collateral damage in the War on Terror.

A critical and drastic turn regarding the visibility of the conflict on a global scale took place on October 7th, 2023, when Hamas deployed a series of horrifying terrorist attacks along Israel's southern border with Gaza. As soon as notice of the attacks reached the internet, millions of people across the globe began to express their condemnation of Hamas' terrorist acts and their support toward Israel on social media as the international community mobilized resources, military equipment, and humanitarian aid destined for Israel. In a matter of minutes, virtually everyone with access to the internet was aware of a conflict that, in many cases, had never been on their list of preoccupations before. In some instances, Netflix's political thriller *Fauda*, which gained widespread popularity after its release in 2015 for its portrayal of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, was perhaps the closest imaginary conception of this situation outside of Palestine-Israel. Co-written by a former undercover operative in Shin Bet, West Bank, and series' protagonist actor, Lior Raz, and a former *Haaretz* journalist who specialized in Palestinian issues, the series follows the undercover operations of *mistaarvim* (those who live among the Arabs, in Hebrew), undercover commands living and operating in Palestinian territories while countering Hamas' terrorist units in the West Bank. Taking advantage of its widespread popularity, within days of Hamas' attacks, FaudaOfficial posted a video of the Jewish singer and one of the series' leading actors, Idan Amedi, on the platform X. In the video, the actor appears in military combat gear holding an assault rifle while stating: "this is not Fauda; this is real life." As of January 2024, the video had been reproduced at least 1.8 million times. Also, as of January 2024, Idan Amedi had suffered injuries during a military incursion into Gaza and was recovering at a hospital in Tel Aviv.

Until October 7th, 2023, *Fauda* was one of the very few compelling and thought-provoking productions that provided a space for discussions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and engaged with imaginaries outside the Middle East where the question of

Palestine used to be, if anything, merely a blurred image. The show has not been without controversy, however. Some critics accused the series of perpetuating harmful stereotypes of Palestinians and glorifying violence against them by anchoring its themes around the aftermath of the West Bank's Second Intifada (2000-2005) and associating them with the emerging presence of ISIS near Israel (Zeidan; Sanz). This trend paralleled the developments following the October 7th attacks, when many news outlets saw themselves repeatedly clarifying that Hamas is not Palestine. Others have criticized the show for its lack of nuance and failure to address the root causes of the conflict (White). Setting *Fauda* in current times overlooked the historical dimensions of the struggle for dominance and self-determination over the lands occupied by Palestine and Israel, which include a complex web of political, social, and religious factors at play since the late nineteenth century. Over the years, these were exacerbated by the European restructuring of the Middle East following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War and following World War II decades later, which were further intensified by the Cold War tensions. This vacuum of knowledge was also heavily present during the earlier moments following the terrorist attacks against Israel and Israel's devastating response that, as of January 2024, has taken the lives of over 24,000 Palestinians (1% of Gaza's population), many of whom are children. But as the conflict develops, the global community has been swift in denouncing the human rights violations against Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli state. Even in countries such as the U.S., where support for Israel had never been questioned, people have demonstrated their support for the Palestinian people and demanded their governments to act in their defense against Israel's retaliation. Although unprecedented in the U.S. and many European nations, these demonstrations of support for the Palestinian people and their cause are nothing new in the Global South, even before the Palestinian-Israeli conflict escalated to its current levels of violence.

Latin America and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

While the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been the subject of intense debate for several decades at the forefront of European and U.S. discussions on external politics, its impact has also been felt in Latin America. In general, it is worth noting that the historical ties between Latin America and the Arab world have a complex relationship that has been shaped by various factors such as colonialism, political ideologies, and social beliefs. Ignacio Klich notes that "despite Latin America's majority support for the partition of Palestine, the UN General Assembly witnessed a minority of the region's players cast non-affirmative votes in November 1947, with Cuba the single consistent opponent of such a plan" (405). Additionally, many Latin American countries have sizable Arab communities that have maintained strong cultural and economic ties with the Middle East. These Arab communities in Latin America have played a significant role in shaping the region's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and have assisted in creating a sense of empathy for the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination. Klich further explains that:

> Soon after the passage of the resolution on the partition, Benno Weiser (later Varon), at the time of the voting the Bogota-based Jewish Agency representative for South America's Northern Cone countries and Panama, wrote perceptively that the political and economic power of the Arabs in Chile, Cuba and Mexico was decisive in explaining these countries' non-affirmative votes. Decades later, a Chilean actor of Transjordanian descent, Alejandro Hales Jamarne, who was familiar with Arab efforts to sway Chile's President Gabriel Gonzalez Videla's government to abandon the supporters of partition, quite independently concurred with Weiser's early judgment (412).

Another important element in Latin American countries' perspectives on the conflict is Latin America's long history of colonialism by European powers, particularly Spain and Portugal, and its complex relationship with U.S. imperialistic pretenses in the region have influenced its cultural and political identity. This history has also created a sense of solidarity among Latin American countries that has extended to other regions of the world, including the Middle East, where many Latin American countries have expressed their support for the Palestinian cause. Many countries in the region have provided economic and political support to Palestine over the years, including Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In this regard, Brazilian political scientist Cecilia Baeza has noted that "Palestinians have found an ally in the indigenous peoples of Latin America. Over the last decade, indigenous movements have been among the most vocal supporters in the region of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" (34). She further highlights that in 2009:

> Bolivia's Evo Morales, the first self-identified indigenous president in Latin America since colonization, has broken off diplomatic relations with Israel, endorsed the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, called Israel a 'terrorist state,' and denounced Israeli 'apartheid' and 'genocide in Gaza'. No other Latin American head of state has gone so far in supporting the Palestinian cause (34).

It is worth mentioning that following the bombings of Gaza, Bolivia was among the first countries to denounce Israel's violations of humanitarian laws and, in response to Israel's airstrikes on the Jabalia refugee camp, it broke its diplomatic ties and ordered to close the Israeli embassy in the country.

However, not all Latin American countries have taken the same position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this respect, Peruvian philosopher Juan Abugattas asserts that:

> Concerning the Palestinian Question, as concerning many other questions of international politics not directly or obviously relating to their immediate realm, Latin American politicians have often tended to adopt, almost uncritically, the positions defended and advocated by the European and North American groups which they consider to be their natural counterparts (120).

Even when considering Latin American countries' colonial past, it is impossible to ignore their complex political history and their search for strategic alliances in the global arena, especially during tumultuous times. An example of this is the period that

> was marked by the Cold War, the Korean War, the Hungarian Revolt, and the Suez Crisis. In this period, Latin America was, on the whole, deeply conservative, solidly pro-Western, vehemently anti-Communist, and closely tied to the United States. The lack of substantive economic or political ties with any of the Middle Eastern states allowed for the unusual weight of emotional and ideological factors in the Latin American attitude to Israel. Initial sympathy for Israel may be ascribed to an array of such factors: uneasy memories of the Holocaust; admiration for the Jewish population's struggle against the British administration and later against the invading Arab states; the urgent need for a solution of the Jewish refugee problem, to avoid the complications and embarrassment of a world-wide emigration of Jewish war survivors; a feeling of closer affinity, on cultural and other grounds, with the Jews than with the Arabs (Barromi and Feldman 147).

Following this trend of support, some countries in the region, including Brazil and Argentina, were beginning to move closer to Israel during the second decade of 2000s by establishing diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, working towards stronger economic ties, and vocalizing their support of the Israeli position in the conflict. However, perceptions of Israel's retaliatory action against the terrorist attacks of October 7th, 2023, and its growing list of transgressions against human rights are redirecting some of these countries' support toward Palestine, as in the case of Brazil, alongside Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba, which has declared its support of South Africa's denounce of Israel's genocidal practices in the war in Gaza (Galarraga Gortázar, Reynoso y Montes). These dynamic positions reflect the complexity of the issue and the range of perspectives that exist in Latin America.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is clear that Latin America, in one way or another, has been deeply involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the very beginning, with some countries taking a firm stance on one side or the other. Moreover, the region's relationship and the different Latin American countries' perspectives on the conflict are multifaceted and influenced by a range of historical, political, and social factors. But beyond Latin American countries' political and economic impact on the conflict, it is critical to note their function as cultural exclaves and safe spaces for Palestinian communities across Latin America, which has undoubtedly played a critical role in shaping the region's conversation around this contentious issue.

Arab Latin American Cultural Exclaves and Perspectives on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

As noted in the previous sections, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is highly complex on historical, political, social, and economic levels, especially after the escalations of violence following the October 7th terrorist attacks. Also, as noted elsewhere, while U.S.

and Europe are often seen as the most important agents in the production of discourses and debates around the issue, Latin American countries have also had a historically important role in the direction of the conflict and its perception on a global scale. Specifically, from a cultural perspective, Latin American countries have served as cultural exclaves that have provided a space for both Palestinian and Jewish voices to engage in literary dialogue and creation. By cultural exclaves, I refer to the spaces where cultural production about a geopolitical region is possible outside that entity's geopolitical boundaries. This is the case in spaces where exiled and refugee cultural producers (or cultural producers in general) are able to express their voices and opinions about a geopolitical space without the need to be inside that space and, in that way, continue to contribute to that geopolitical entity's evolving cultural body.

In the case of Palestinians and Jews, cultural exclaves in Latin American countries, have served them as spaces to express their concern about the conflict beyond political discourses and the nuances of international policies that tend to be highly charged with Manichean views on the issue. These cultural exclaves allow for the possibility of imagining and highlighting alternative realities of the conflict by serving as "una forma de abrir espacios para la interacción pacífica de estas culturas [la árabe y la judía], aunque sea desde la periferia. . . [donde] millones de árabes y judíos coexisten en paz y en armonía" (Salum, Delta de las arenas. Cuentos árabes, cuentos judíos. 14). Specifically, the productions of Miguel Littín and Alberto Nazal, and the collections of Arab and Jewish short stories in Spanish complied by Ignacio López Calvo and Cristián Ricci, and those compiled by Rose Mary Salum, each serve as examples of cultural productions germinating inside cultural exclaves with the purpose of creating an alternative way of envisioning Palestinian-Israeli relations while advancing conversations toward a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

First, Miguel Littín is a highly esteemed Chilean filmmaker who has garnered worldwide recognition for his distinct cinematic style and passionate involvement in political movements. Born of a Palestinian father and a Greek mother, in Palmilla, Chile in 1942, Littín pursued his passion for cinematography by studying drama and theater at the University of Chile while simultaneously working as a television director at his alma mater. In 1969 he began his career as a filmmaker with his film *El chacal de naueltoro*, and in 1971 Salvador Allende designated him as the Director of Chile Films. As soon as General Augusto Pinochet's military coup overthrew Chile's democratic government in 1973, Littín became deeply entrenched in political activism against the ruling dictatorship and the regime's egregious human rights violations. Despite the imminent danger he faced, Littín remained steadfast in his commitment to social justice and fled to Mexico, where he continued to pursue his artistic career while becoming a prominent advocate in the global human rights movement. During this time, he also entered Chile clandestinely with the purpose of exposing the crimes of the Pinochet regime though his documentary *Acta general de Chile* (1986). Littín's commitment to social justice did not go unnoticed, and, most notably, Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Marquez made his clandestine incursions into Chile during the regime the subject of his book *Las aventuras de Miguel Littín clandestino en Chile* (1986). Overall, Littín's films are renowned for their exploration of themes of struggle against social and political injustice, which stem from his personal experiences

and his unwavering dedication to social justice. This commitment is also notable in his exploration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through his documentary film *Crónica Palestinas: Los Caminos de la Ira* (2001) and his drama film *La última luna* (2005).

Littín became initially interested in returning to his ancestor's homeland following the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada against Israel after the Camp David Summit failed to reach an expected final agreement on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in July 2000. Armed with a camera and seeking to experience the conflict through his own senses and collect these experiences, Littín headed to the region where he documented the realities of the occupation and the different perspectives of the common people across the fragmented Palestinian territories in his *Crónica palestina: caminos de la ira*. In this documentary, Littín offers an insightful and nuanced perspective by providing an overview of the state of Palestinian-Israeli relations half a century after the conflict began. The style and structure of the film are easily accessible and are mostly composed by Littín's different takes on the daily lives of Palestinians and Israelis alongside interviews with inhabitants from the region. Additionally, the presence of Littín narrational voice provides context and reflections based on his own experiences and the conversations that emerge from the interviews he conducts.

What sets *Crónica Palestina* apart is its integration of the experiences and perspectives not only of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation but also those of Israelis who suffer from the incessant violence produced by the conflict. In this sense, Littín offers a contrapuntal narration that includes the experiences and voices of both Palestinians and Israelis whose livelihoods are under constant siege by powers that disregard their voices and opinions on a matter that affects them daily. For instance, one of his interviewees, Greek Orthodox Archimandrite Theodosius Hanna, states that:

> el islam, el cristianismo y el judaísmo creen en el mismo Dios . . . Mi problema no es con los judíos, son seres humanos como todos los demás, son seres humanos. Pero el verdadero problema es que dentro de la comunidad judía, existe este movimiento segregacionista que es el movimiento sionista . . . y es enemigo de todo lo que no es judío. . . Lo que ha sufrido el árabe cristiano, el árabe musulmán…el sufrimiento es uno. (Crónica Palestina: Los caminos de la ira).

From a contrapuntal perspective, another of Littín interviewees, Israeli filmmaker Amus Gidae asserts that: "La paz tiene que surgir de un acuerdo regional porque en la medida que siga siendo un acuerdo bilateral, otras fuerzas van a desestabilizar siempre la situación, van a manipular a los israelíes contra los palestinos y viceversa" (Crónica Palestina: Los caminos de la ira). Reflecting upon these conversations, Littín notes that an important step in approaching a peaceful agreement in the conflict begins with the recognition of the other. In this respect, Littín's approach to documenting the realities of the Israeli occupation in Palestine subverts mainstream media narratives that favor one side over the other and provides a deeper context to a complex situation that often forgets the voices of the most affected.

Littin's film also explores the ways in which Israel's occupation of Palestine has led to the violation of Palestinian human rights, including the construction of settlements

on Palestinian land, the use of military force against civilians, and the denial of basic freedoms and rights, specifically in the Gaza strip. But despite the film's critical perspective, its essence is deeply humanizing and focused on fostering bridges of understanding and mutual agreement rather than perpetuating violence. The interviews with Palestinians and Israelis highlight the resilience and determination of those who are striving for a just and peaceful resolution to a conflict that consumes their existence. In this sense, *Crónica Palestina* is a powerful example of how cultural productions can shed light on complex political issues and a reminder that the struggle for justice and freedom is a deeply human one. This humanizing theme in Littín approach to an alternative perspective of the conflict is further explored in his film *La última luna*.

Coincidentally, the release of Littín's drama film *La última luna* aligns with what is considered the end of the Second Palestinian Intifada during the 2005 Sharm el-Sheihk Summit in 2005. Similar to the creation process of his *Crónica palestina*, Littín also chose to travel to the region and film in Palestine. However, unlike *Crónica palestina* where he focuses on the current struggles for self-determination of the Palestinian people and the relationships between the inhabitants of the region, in *La última luna* Littín proposes to return to the roots of the conflict, which for him takes place at the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the British Mandate. Specifically, through the memories of his own great-grandfather, Soliman, alongside his creative freedom, Littín relives and traces the experiences and struggles of the inhabitants of Beit Sahour in the early twentieth century. From this perspective, he depicts a largely Christian population under Ottoman rule in a region targeted by European Jewish immigration fostered by the imminent imposition of a British mandate. Alongside these external historical transformations, Littín is conscious of acknowledging his family's ancestral homeland's internal social, economic, and political instability. He does so by highlighting aspects of daily routines that produce tensions throughout the film such as the scenography (mostly desertic and arid spaces and modest houses), the fast-paced transformation and disjointed experiences of social life (such as differences in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish relationships), and the town's population communal preoccupation with their immediate future: conversations around migration (specifically toward America), the increasing arrival of Jewish settlers, and the distrust of political figures (particularly Ottoman empire's representatives).

It is important to note, however, that all these environmental, political, economic, and social tensions are mostly there to contextualize the real focus of the narrative: the emergence of a friendship between two male characters, Soliman, Littín's Palestinian great-grandfather, and Jacob, an Argentinian Jew who just arrived in Beit Sahour. After years of living in Argentina, Jacob learns about the migration of Jewish settlers, supported by the British, into the Levant and decides to gather all his savings and migrate to what he considers the land of his ancestors. Upon arriving, he begins the search for a location where he can build a home and start a family. In the process, he meets Soliman, who sells him a piece of land on a hill overlooking Beit Sahour. Since many people in the town are preoccupied with the arrival of Jewish settlers, rumors about Jacob being a Jewish spy begin to circulate in town and Soliman is advised not to assist Jacob and to stop talking to him at once. Jacob, on the other hand, is merely concerned with building his house and daydreams about having a wife and children who can enjoy the views from a balcony in

his hill home. Through these tensions and moments of uncertainty, Littín provides a subtle critique of the relationships between Palestinians and Israelis as they become encumbered by the larger opinion and global dynamics that pollute daily life interactions.

As Jacob attempts to build his house, Soliman soon realizes that he has no skills as a builder and decides to help him despite everyone else's opinion of their relationship. The time and effort they share in building the house leads them to an intimate relationship of understanding and respect for each other. Soliman tells Jacob about his struggles and the struggles of his people under Ottoman rule, and his decision to send his only son, Littín's grandfather, to America. In turn, Jacob tells him about his life in Argentina, his dream of having a family, and his hope for everything to reach stability. In this friendship, Littín embodies the daily lives of millions of Palestinians and Israelis who hope for a peaceful future and Soliman's and Jacob's shared process of building a house becomes a metaphor for reconstruction of the region. But as Soliman and Jacob finish building the house, a group of British soldiers arrive in the town and take possession of the house to use it as a military base. Specifically, the balcony, where Jacob daydreamed of enjoying the views with his family and shared moments of rest and intimacy with Soliman, is destroyed and replaced by a cannon overlooking Beit Sahour. In this way, Littín concludes the film with an alternative perspective on the conflict that humanizes Palestinian and Israeli relationships while denouncing the cruelty of Western intervention.

On his part, scholar Alberto Nazal's documentary *Beit Yala Forever* (2006) expands on the exploration of Palestinians' daily life under Israeli occupation. In contrast with Miguel Littín whose professional formation and expertise are in filmmaking and cinematography, Nazal's incursion into filmmaking was rather unexpected. Nazal originally planned to travel to the land of his ancestors, Beit Jala, where he intended to live for a year while studying Arabic language and history. As he shared his plans with friends and family, the Chilean Palestinian community became interested in Nazal's plans and encouraged him to film a documentary about his experiences in Beit Jala. The community's motivation and support for the project led to the creation of a financial fund dedicated to Nazal's production of the documentary on Beit Jala with the purpose of connecting other Chilean Palestinians, especially younger generations, with their ancestral homeland.

While the film lacks the professional affinity and composure of Migule Littín's productions, it is important to underscore Nazal's contributions to the collective memory and imagery of Palestine beyond its geopolitical boundaries. The film opens with Nazal sitting inside a Bedouin tent, holding a hookah, and wearing an Arabian *abaya*. The tent is filled with objects that evoke memories of the Middle East and that most of the Latin Americans of Arab descent, as Nazal points out, are likely familiar with. After addressing his audience and briefly discussing the nostalgic and emotional importance of his visit to Palestine, he highlights the importance of maintaining Arab culture alive in Palestine and beyond. Following Nazal's introduction, the film refocuses the attention on a group of Palestinian students and their music instructor playing the piano while singing what Nazal describes as a traditional Palestinian song. Another take brings attention to the classroom's chalkboard where it reads "Viva Chile! Viva Beit Yala!". As it has been explained elsewhere, Chile is home to the largest population of Palestinians outside the Middle East.

This inscription reinforces the deep connections that exist between Chile and Palestine but, along with Nazal's presence and efforts in producing this documentary, the inscription also asserts that as long as Chile is alive so will Beit Jala; Palestine continues to exist beyond its borders and has found a safe haven in cultural exclaves that support and perpetuate its existence. While the students and teacher continue to sign, the film goes on to show different scenes of the city with some intermissions where Nazal appears spray-painting the words "Beit Yala Forever" on the Israeli's segregation walls. This time, the afore-explained notions of Beit Jala existing beyond Palestine become embodied in Nazal as a Chilean of Palestinian ancestry reclaiming the existence of Beit Jala on the very walls that attempt to obliterate it.

The rest of the documentary depicts Nazal traveling through Beit Jala, having conversations with people around the city, including Beit Jala's mayor, and describing the daily lives of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Although most of the conversations in the film are lively and light-hearted, often highlighting the deep contributions and beauty of Arab culture to the world, the Israeli occupation and the thought of Palestine's uncertain future looms heavily upon Beit Jala's inhabitants. Notably, most of the preoccupations that Palestinians experience result from uncertainty not so much for the current generations but for their children. On his way across the city in a taxi, Nazal comments on the high unemployment rate, up to 50%, and the difficulties for children to thrive in such circumstances. In a later conversation with the Arab Orthodox Benevolence Society, the sense of urgency is latent again as one of the members highlights the importance of strengthening and maintaining communications with Palestinians outside of Palestine and invites them to visit Beit Jala, pointing out that the Beit Jala of their ancestors is not the same Beit Jala of today. This is another reason why Nazal's documentary is so important as it serves as a link in a network of cultural communication and not only serves to extract information from Beit Jala but also reinforces Palestinians' self-esteem by showing the support and interest that exists for Palestine beyond Palestinian unstable geopolitical borders.

In addition to Littín's and Nazal's films, two literary anthologies, *Caminos para la paz* and *Delta de las arenas*, offer a collection of short stories and poems produced in cultural exclaves by authors of Arab and Jewish descent. Although these anthologies are not the first ones of their kind (Syrian Mexican poet and writer Ikram Antaki's collection, *Poemas de los judíos y los árabes* (1989), stands out as one of the earliest projects merging Jewish and Arab literary productions in Spanish), they are some of the most complete, and by complete I refer to their gamma of styles and contributors. First published in 2007, *Caminos para la paz* began as a project that sought to compile literary texts written Spanish by Arab and Israeli authors. The project's proposal, which emerged at the end of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2005, was timely and, on the surface, straightforward:

> A priori, nuestra intención era que la mayoría de las contribuciones, si no todas, trataran de algún modo el tema del desencuentro entre árabes e israelíes en Oriente Medio, para ofrecer así una vía alternativa de diálogo, la literatura, que quedara lo más lejos posible de un debate político que hasta ahora parece haber sofocado el verdadero diálogo y el avance hacia la paz (López Calvo y Ricci, Prólogo 9).

Nonetheless, as the project developed from an idea into action by inviting Arab, mostly Moroccan, and Israeli authors to contribute to the anthology, interactions with different authors began to shed light on the gravity and extension of the circumstances. “Un autor palestino . . . decidió retirar su contribución tras recibir amenazas de muerte . . . por parte de los propios colegas a los que había invitado a participar” (15), assert López Calvo and Ricci. Initially, this Palestinian author’s decision to remove his piece from the anthology due to fear of retaliation from colleagues that he had extended the invitation to, proved to be an unexpected moment of discouragement for the project editors. But on the other hand, it confirmed the need to open avenues of conversation especially during times when “el arte y la literatura son las únicas alternativas de cuestionamiento que se presentan en un mundo moderno carente de líderes que rechacen un discurso político beligerante, intransigente, obtuso al diálogo entre culturas” (11) as López Calvo and Ricci assert. In this sense, *Caminos para la paz* offers alternative avenues, as the title of the anthology indicates, for the open exercise of dialogues that highlight the lived realities of those most affected by the conflict and yet mostly invisible to political discourses while searching for a peaceful resolution to a series of struggles that are beyond the language of politics.

Within *Caminos para la paz*, the contributors have found a neutral ground for conversation in the Spanish language beyond the geopolitical and physical boundaries of Palestine-Israel. In it, critiques in the form of literary worlds propose to face the conflict head on, not as a political struggle for power but rather as a transgenerational humanitarian crisis. For example, Chilean Palestinian Andrés Gidi Lueje embarks in a humanitarian reflection in his short story “Tierra sin ley”, where he speaks of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a nightmarish dream that should have no place in an earth inhabited by rational and sentient beings:

> Ayer desperté demasiado sobresaltado. Había soñado que en alguna parte del mundo existía una tierra sin ley . . . Una tierra done los niños debían abandonar las escuelas para defender dentro de sus inocentes posibilidades lo que naturalmente les pertenecía . . . Donde los acuerdos escritos en el papel, eran borrados con balas . . . un lugar en el mundo donde reinaba la desesperanza (228-229).

By detaching the conflict from its geopolitical identifiers, Palestine-Israel, and presenting the situation within a lawless space, “una tierra sin ley”, Gidi Lueje forces the reader to confront the situation head on and acknowledge the devastating realities and repercussions of this conflict. Specifically, the imagery of the children protecting what naturally pertains to them: life and safety, and the fragility of accords in the presence of violence, highlight a sentiment of hopelessness that should be felt by humanity in general by knowing that place and a situation like the one in his “dream” is a continuous reality experienced by children in Palestine.

Continuing with the theme of reflection on the Palestine-Israeli conflict as a humanitarian struggle, in “Árabes en América” Gidi Lueje traces his preoccupation with the situation in Palestine and Israel through his Palestinian ancestry. In this brief memoir, this time fully awake, Gidi Luejel finds himself in an Arab Latin American Congress in Viña del Mar. According to him, it is the first time that he is in such a “special” space; “Vi a los clones de mi padre y de mi abuelo” (Gidi-Lueje 230), he writes. After entering into

conversations with many of the people present at the event, he begins to reflect on who he is and the responsibilities he has to his ancestors and to his descendants: "[a]prendí muchas cosas de mí mismo . . . Que debo ser un puente entre mi abuelo, mi padre y mis hijos para que vivan según la cultura que nos han heredado (Gidi-Lueje 231). But also, from a horizontal and globalizing perspective, Gidi Lueje reflects on the lives of those who suffer beyond America, particularly the Palestinians living in the occupied territories: "Cómo haber llegado a América, no fue más que volver a casa. . . Tomé más conciencia que nunca de la Causa Palestina. . . Comprendí que no es nuestra causa, sino que es la causa de la Humanidad, de la justicia, de los Derechos Humanos y del entendimiento entre los pueblos" (231). Considering these experiences and contextualizing them alongside his literary production in cultural exclaves, spaces of culture creation outside Palesitne, Gidi Lueje produces an alternative conversation that focuses the attention on the true and devastating nature of the conflict rather than persisting on political discourses detached from the suffering of those most deeply affected.

Another author in this anthology who provides an example of an alternative dialogue that refocuses the attention toward the real perpetrators who capitalize in the continuation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is Palestinian American scholar Carl Jubrán. The very title of Jubrán's contribution, "Granada hecha en Estados Unidos", echoes the 1492 Spanish Expulsion of Jews after the Spanish Army defeated the last standing Muslim forces in Granada, Spain. Notably, under the rule of the Umayyad Caliphate in Al-Andalus, Jews and Arabs lived relatively peacefully, and it was not until the consummation of the Reconquista that the Catholic Kings expelled both Jews and Muslims from the Iberic Peninsula. Jubrán's short story's title interlaces the historical roots of the Spanish Expulsion of the Jews in 1492 with the Nakba, the destruction of Palestinian society and homeland in 1948. Both historical situations, infers Jubrán, were produced and sustained by forces beyond those of the Jewish and the Arab populations. Specifically, the Nabka, as Jubrán asserts, was a product of the United Staes and its allies.

Beyond the title, Jubrán contribution pays homage to the devastating realities that Palestinians and Israelis suffer daily. In it, Jubrán explores the parallel lives, or rather suffering, of Yejiel, an Orthodox Jew, and Zaid, a Muslim Arab, and the Palestinian and Israeli experiences that, by extension, both characters represent. In this brief story, Jubrón focuses specifically in the painful implications of forgiveness as Yejiel and Zaid struggle with the loss of their families to a terrorist attack and a Israeli military incursion, respectively:

> Perdonar, olvidar, expiar – sueño imposible. Yejiel no pudo perdonar el asesinato de su esposa en el autobús de Haifa. Apenas se habían casado la semana anterior y, como todos los hebreos ortodoxos, ya habían discutido los asuntos de su futura familia hasta los nombres históricamente relevantes de todos los niños. Zaid no pudo perdonar las explosiones que destruyeron 28 casa y causaron la muerte de toda su familia. Tantos muertos, tanta sangre, un desastre total (Jubrán 264).

Yejiel's and Zaid's embody the survival of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples in a violent space of destruction and devastation. A space designed by forces outside of Palestine and Israel where Palestinians and Israelis are pitted against each other: "Malditos Sionistas sin

compasión", gritó Zaid mientras buscaba a su familia entre las piedras. En el hospital, Yejiel gritó a los policías que el responsable es un "palestino hijo de puta" (Jubrán 264). Moreover, in this "tierra sin ley", in Gidi Lueje's words, Palestinian and Israeli ancestry and descendants are forced to blame each other for their parallelistic experience of existence in a space that was never created by them as Jubrán highlights it the last sentences of his piece: "Zaid volvió a desastre para recuperar cualquier recuerdo de su mamá, una huella de su familia, algún símbolo de la inocencia de su juventud. Lo único que encontró fue una granada. Al voltearla leyó en la parte de atrás "Made in USA" (264). Using the grenade as a symbol of violence compressed by United States' and its allies' political strategies and incursions in Palestinian and Israeli territories, Jubrán, writing from a cultural exclave, denounces the foreign violence inflicted on Palestinian and Israeli peoples and interests. Essentially, Jubrán's plea insists on a Palestinian and Israeli reconciliation by denouncing foreign politics and interventions that potentially benefit from the Palestinian-Israeli conlfic. His contribution, alongside Gidi Lueje's and the other contributions presented in *Caminos para la paz*, provide alternative perspectives on the conflict that are often difficult, if not impossible, to emerge within the conflict itself.

A last example of a compilation of alternative perspectives on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict produced in cultural exclaves is the literary anthology *Delta de las arenas: cuentos árabes, cuentos judíos* compiled and edited by Mexican writer of Lebanese descent Rose Mary Salum. Originally published in 2013, *Delta de las arenas*, as Salum notes, follows the content thematic of *Caminos para la paz* (2007) compiled by Ignacio López Calvo and Cristián Ricci as well as Adriana Armony's and Tatiana Salme Levy's compilation of short stories written by Brazilian authors of Arab and Jewish descent *Primos*, published in 2010. Similar to the to the other anthologies, it seeks to engage the voices of millions of Arabs and Jews who inhabit cultural exclaves beyond Palesitnian and Israeli territories and open spaces of conversation where the peace can begin to germinate through literature.

However, as Salum points out, her vision of *Delta de las arenas* can be traced to her early experiences as a child growing up between two worlds, in a cultural exclave beyond the geopolitical boundaries and struggles of the Levant:

> Mi niñez fue un *collage* de tradiciones, contradicciones y mucha confusión: en casa teníamos puesta la mirada (y la nostalgia) en Líbano y en la escuela estudiábamos todo lo referente a México y su historia. Esta circunstancia en la que me colocó el destino, no sólo determinó mi pensamiento sino que alimentó mi voraz curiosidad para conocer más sobre el país de mis antecesores, las naciones vecinas y los conflictos con los que se ha enfrentado desde su independencia (Salum 14-15).

Alongside this early curiosity, conversations that she overheard while growing up among her older family members also built her understanding of the *Mashriq* and her emotional connection toward it. These conversations, in turn, led her to internalize a feeling of duty toward the *Mashriq* that is expressed in *Delta de las arenas*:

> Sólo hasta ahora puedo entender por qué cada domingo que visitábamos a mis abuelos, mis tíos discutían apasionadamente sobre temas tan distantes entre sí como

> el de la guerra civil de Líbano, la represión estudiantil del 68 y la desaparición de algunos familiares, el éxodo palestino y el asentamiento judío, o si el sexenio del expresidente Luis Echeverría había sido productivo o no . . . Mi vida transcurrió entonces en un vaivén cultural . . . Mi atención se centró no sólo en el país que me vio nacer sino también en el Medio Oriente, con su carácter controvertido e incendiario (Salum 15).

In many aspects, Salum's familial experiences and formation in cultural exclaves are a representation of the thirty-four Latin American writers of Arab and Jewish descent who, without necessarily living in the Levant, have inherited, and accepted, a cultural responsibility toward their ancestors' homeland. In the same vein, this anthology confirms that "América Latina ha ido abrazando las oleadas de inmigrantes y las ha integrado a su seno; que ha adecuado su identidad al influjo y los aportes de diversas etnias y culturas" (Salum 19). In this sense, alongside *Caminos para la paz* and *Primos, Delta de las arenas* contributes to the fostering of alternative discourses on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and is a vessel of cultural wealth that contains the voices of generations of both Arabs and Jews from three continents and twelve countries. These include Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Lebanon, and France. Its literary body is composed of the contributions of world class authors in the likes of Lina Meruane, Jeanette L. Clariond, Bárbara Jacobs, Ariel Dorfman, Luis Fayad, and Carlos Martínez Assad, to mention a few.

Interestingly, the contributions in *Delta de las arenas* slightly deviate from themes that directly address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Instead, most of the short stories focus on tracing ancestral and familial memories, the immigration of Arabs and Jews in Latin American countries, the experiences of growing up in liminal spaces, the nostalgia for the homeland inherited by the earlier migrant generations, processes of acculturation and socio-economic development, and the maintenance and perpetuation of Arab and Jewish culture in adoptive Latin American countries. This does not mean, however, that the writers ignore the violent and devastating circumstances occurring in the *Mashriq*. On the contrary, references to the situation between Palestine and Israel appear in almost every single contribution. Nonetheless, the focus of the anthology is to showcase the harmony that exists among Palestinians and Jews outside of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to redirect the attention and highlight the reality that their relationship does not necessarily have to be dictated by violence.

A specific example of how this anthology seeks to highlight this notion of a harmonious state of coexistence between Palestinians and Jews outside the Middle East can be found in Rose Mary Salum's short story "El agua que mece el silencio". In it, Salum presents the perspective of a child who must confront the horrors of war for the first time when his house is bombed, and his brother is killed before him. At no point does Salum make anyone in specific responsible for the situation and chooses to merely describe the situation through the child's perception of the events: "Papá no suelta el teléfono, sigue alterado. Apenas y se detiene a respirar entre palabra y palabra, quiere llevar de inmediato a la abuela a recoger sus cosas para que de aquí irnos a Siria y evitar las bombas" (276). By taking the perspective of a child who is unable to understand the dimensions of the

conflict beyond his innocent perception of the events, Salum, instead of seeking culprits, brings attention to the unnecessary violence and refocuses the attention on the real victims of a conflict that they have no say in. "Es una sola palabra," Salum continues, "Bomba. Bolas de boliche sobre los barrios de Beirut. Bengalas de bronce. Todo flota. Mi cuerpo es una bóveda de agua" (276). Following the bombing, the child finds his brother's body lying before him on the floor. His brother's legs are missing, and a pool of blood begins to form around him. What follows is a short moment of confusion and chaos before an abrupt silence concludes the story as the child merely observes the results of a situation that he is oblivious to. Yet, once again, Salum never names a responsible for this horrific event. This in turn, aligns with the earlier thematic and objectives found in *Caminos para la paz* where the authors conceived the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a humanitarian crisis and, in brining Palestinian and Jewish authors together, seek alternatives to the resolution of the conflict.

Conclusion

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has elicited a range of political perspectives from Latin American countries. However, while some countries have been vocal in their support for one side or the other, there are common threads that run through the region's perspective on the conflict. These include a belief in the importance of a two-state solution and a focus on human rights. Additionally, many countries in the region have expressed concern about Israel's treatment of Palestinians, including the use of military force and the construction of settlements in the West Bank. This concern stems from the region's own history of oppression and struggle for independence.

Another significant aspect of the Latin American perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict stems from cultural exclaves where Arab Latin Americans and their Jewish counterparts have been able to voice their opinions on the conflict and demonstrate solidarity with the real victims of this precarious situation. As noted elsewhere, numerous Latin American cultural producers of Arab and Jewish descend have voiced their concerns about the Israeli military's treatment of Palestinians and expressed concern about the violence that has emerged as a result of the conflict. They have also emphasized the importance of a just peace that considers the needs and desires of both Israelis and Palestinians beyond the political interests of third parties such as the United States and its allies. Lastly, the works studied in this chapter showcase the contributions of Arab Latin Americans toward the *Mashriq*, and their desire to honor the memory and homeland of their ancestors by contributing to the future of Palestine, and the Levant as a whole.

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Closing Remarks

While in the early stages of this project, I wrote a short piece titled "The Question of the Palestinians in Chile" for the Interdisciplinary *Humanities Graduate Group Journal* at the University of California, Merced. In the title of this short essay, I alluded to Cultural Critic and Postcolonial pioneer and theorist Edward Said's book *The Question of Palestine* (1979). Specifically, I engaged with his book's opening statement, which addresses the fragile circumstances affecting Palestinians and highlights their mobility and relocation patterns, whether they be voluntary or involuntary: "It's somehow the fate of the Palestinians not to end where they started but somewhere unexpected and far away". Similarly, I explained that one of Chile's famous sayings states that: "en todas las ciudades de Chile hay un cura, un carabinero y un palestino," and I posed the questions: "What is a Palestinian doing in Chile? And more importantly, how has a Palestinian become so embedded in Chile's culture that it has become a key element of one of Chile's popular sayings?" (López Chavolla). As noted elsewhere, Arab migrants from the Levant region, today Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, began migrating to Latin America at the end of the 19th century. For the most part, the first migration waves sought better economic opportunities or escaped persecution from the Ottoman Empire's forced conscription. Most of these early migrants were young, single males who practiced Christianity and originated from the peripheries of the Ottoman Empire. They often departed from the ports of Haifa or Beirut and traveled through the Mediterranean Sea toward the ports of Naples, Genoa, Marseille, Barcelona, or Cádiz, important maritime points of departure for transatlantic crossing (Norris, 2023). From these European ports, they embarked toward America, where they arrived in the different ports of Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Since they arrived with an Ottoman passport, "turcos" became their default identity in the eyes of Latin American host nations and established communities, who often used it as an insult and a way to exclude them. However, as addressed throughout this dissertation, despite the challenges they faced, Arab immigrants managed to develop socio-emotional networks and structures of belonging that allowed for the integration of Arabness into Latin American countries, while carving out an Arab-Latin American identity. This process led them to establish themselves and form communities that have contributed to Latin America's cultural and socioeconomic richness.

Although Arabs' presence and influence in Latin America can be traced to the earliest moments of the Globalization process that began in 1492, as noted in the introduction and analyzed in the first chapter, it was not until recent decades that a renewed interest in the experiences of Arab migrants in Latin America has surfaced. Scholars such as Ignacio Klich, Jeffrey Lesser, Camila Pastor, Theresa Alfaro Velcamp, and Roberto Marín Guzman, among others, have spearheaded the exploration of the complexities of Arab Latin Americans' identities and the ways in which they have negotiated their place in Latin American societies. Other scholars, such as Cristina Civantos, Matías Rafide, María Olga Samamé, Miranda Müller and Thaia Nasser, have also examined the contributions of Arab migrants to Latin American culture, including food, music, and, especially, the literary field. Another area of interest for scholars has been the experiences of Arab women in Latin America, which was the focus of Chapter 3. While much of the

scholarship on Arab migrants has focused on male experiences, there is a growing body of work that explores the experiences of Arab women in Latin America. These types of studies have the potential to reveal the challenges faced by Arab women in navigating the patriarchal structures of both Arab and Latin American societies, while shedding light on another layer of Arab Latin American identity.

Moreover, as explored in Chapters 2 and 4, some of the most notable contributions of Arab migrants to Latin America have been felt in the fields of business and politics. Many Arab migrants, especially first and second-generation Arab Latin Americans, established successful businesses, including textile factories, import/export companies, and small shops that further established their presence within Latin American countries. These businesses not only contributed to the economic growth of Latin America but also helped to create jobs and support local communities while providing an inviting environment for subsequent waves of Arab migration into Latin America. This economic expansion allowed Arab-Latin Americans to climb the socioeconomic ladder and gain notoriety on a political level. In the political arena, Arab Latin Americans have been and continue to be deeply involved, with many of them reaching the highest office in their respective Latin American countries. These include former Ecuadorian presidents Abdalá Bucaram (of Lebanese descent), Antonio Saca (of Palestinian ancestry), and Jamil Mahuad (also of Lebanese ancestry); former president Carlos Menem (of Syrian descent) in Argentina; former president Jacobo Majluta (Lebanese) in the Dominican Republic; former president Julio César Turbay (from a Lebanese family) in Colombia; Carlos Facusse (of Palestinian ancestry); and current Salvadorean president Nayib Bukele (of Palestinian ancestry), to mention a few. Looking at this list, it is clear that Arab-Latin Americans play a key role in the shaping of their respective countries' internal and external policies, and an Arab-Latin American identity has been and will continue to be a core component of Latin America as a whole.

In many respects, this interdisciplinary project has sought to provide some answers to the question of the Palestinians in Chile and of all the Arab communities across Latin American countries. While they have faced many challenges, including prejudice and exclusion, they have also made significant contributions to the economic and cultural growth of Latin America. To say the least, the experiences of Arab migrants in Latin America are complex and multifaceted, and this study is only a minuscule contribution compared to the vast sea of knowledge on the history of Arab-Latin American relations that is yet to be explored. Looking forward to the exploration of Arab Latin Americans' experiences, we must strive to understand the nuances of their experiences and the ways in which they have negotiated their place in Latin American societies.

As I write the last pages of this dissertation, something has been unleashed in the Middle East. On October 7th, 2023, Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel's southern border with Gaza prompted the world to veer its attention to the Levant. Thanks to modern technologies, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, more than ever, became a topic of conversation virtually everywhere. From news channels to social media to daily conversations, the world became flooded with images of war and destruction. In the early stages of the conflict, amidst confusion due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of

the conflict alongside the resurgence of fears of terrorism, people expressed unwavering support for Israel. Soon after, Israel's brutal retaliations and continuous human rights violations shook the initial support it received and shifted the sympathy toward the Palestinian people who were caught in the middle of the conflict. People and governments all over the world demand a cease-fire and pressure Israel and its remaining allies to establish an end to the conflict and recognize Palestinian self-determination. At this point in the war is difficult to discern what awaits on the horizon, but one thing is for sure: the world is watching.

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