

Echoes of Exile: Migration, Memory, and Belonging in Suheir Hammad's Poetry (Interdisciplinary Study)

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ABSTRACT

Suheir Hammad's poetry is explored in this article as a multidisciplinary method of developing cultural knowledge, where she develops a form of cultural knowledge that combines both a migration studies lens with a post-colonial lens as well as a feminist epistemological lens. This article focuses largely on Born Palestinian, Born Black, and it makes the argument that Hammad creates exile not as a condition of loss, but as a creative space for producing, negotiating, and creating memory, identity and political awareness in the diaspora.

Hammad is placed within the context of Arab American Women's Writing as well as Transnational Cultural Discourse, and this article shows how her use of poetic practice acts as an alternate archive (preserving individual and collective memory as a way to resist historical erasure) and challenges Orientalist and Racialized frameworks of representation. The article uses close reading methodology of Hammad's texts as well as theoretical methodologies such as Post-Colonial Studies, Intersectional Approaches, and Diaspora Studies to highlight the material and performance aspects of language in the creation of Diasporic Belonging and Resistance.

The article uses Literature as a Mode of Interdisciplinary Inquiry; therefore, the article adds to larger conversations about Migration, Identity Formation, and Cultural Resilience, and offers a wealth of information for scholars across the Humanities and Social Sciences who are interested in Memory, Displacement and Transnational Knowledge Systems.

Keywords: *Migration; cultural memory; diaspora studies; interdisciplinary humanities; Arab American literature; identity formation; cultural resistance*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is an experience that involves much more than simply statistics and politics (and demographics); it is an experiential event for human beings. It creates memory, identity, and a sense of belonging for generations of migrants. The interdisciplinary research that focuses on migration and exile today has begun to ask about migration in ways that go beyond statistics and policy analysis to look at the narratives and expressions of culture that migrant peoples have created. And there is no better way to understand this than through literature - specifically through literature written by people from diasporas who were themselves forced to migrate. Poetic form and personal narrative within literary works create an opportunity to examine the "lived" experiences of migrants and exiles, and demonstrate how this work illuminates larger issues surrounding displacement, identity, and cultural continuity that exist throughout many disciplines of study. Suheir Hammad was born in 1973 in a refugee camp in Amman, Jordan, to Palestinian parents who were displaced by the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Her family moved to Brooklyn, New York, in 1978, driven more by the lack of economic opportunities in Jordan and Lebanon than by the Lebanese Civil War. Raised in the culturally diverse, working-class neighbourhood of Sunset Park, Brooklyn, Hammad's life was shaped in large part by the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood, which was also home to Puerto Rican, African American, Dominican, and Haitian communities. According to Marcy Knopf-Newman, Hammad's upbringing in such a neighbourhood gave her a unique perspective on migration and identity that she explores in her writing and that differs from more conventional stories of the Arab-American experience.

Hammad's cultural interconnectedness, as informed by her Brooklyn community, had a lasting impact on her worldview. In a conversation with Natalie Handal, Hammad discusses how her interactions with multicultural communities shaped her dedication to cultural and religious bridge-building. A particularly compelling anecdote describes Hammad's

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inaugural gele wearing, a traditional African headwrap, which bonded her to her African heritage and served as spiritual confirmation (Handal).

Safaa Abdulrahim's dissertation, *Between Empire and Diaspora: Identity Poetics in Contemporary Arab-American Women's Poetry* (2013), discusses Hammad's distinction from other Arab-American authors, citing her urban, working-class upbringing as differing from authors such as Naomi Shihab Nye and Etel Adnan, who were raised in white, suburban settings. Abdulrahim also discusses how Hammad's Palestinian identity in Brooklyn creates both a distance from more general Arab-American communities and a more-firm affiliation with African American and other marginalized communities. This status as insider/outsider strengthens Hammad's distinct poetic voice, causing her works to resonate on various levels.

2. PALESTINIAN BELONGING

Natalie Hopkinson's 2002 article *Out of the Ashes, Drops of Meaning: The Poetic Success of Suheir Hammad* brings to light Hammad's confrontation with early experiences of cultural erasure, specifically an experience in childhood when a teacher refused the existence of Palestinian identity. This early experience paved the way for Hammad's life-long resistance against cultural erasure and her attempts to claim her Palestinian identity despite never having visited Palestine.

Although Hammad adopted some elements of American urban culture, like hip-hop, she also embraced her heritage as a Palestinian. In a 1997 interview with Natalie Handal, Hammad stressed that knowing her Palestinian heritage was key to her identity, despite the physical distance from the land. Hammad's efforts to balance her American urban life and Palestinian roots reflects the tension she feels towards both her heritage and the country she now calls home. This thematic conflict is expressed throughout her poetry, in which she challenges concepts of belonging and identity, mirroring the tensions of a diaspora characterized by historical loss, displacement, and estrangement.

Moreover, Hammad's connection to Palestine, even in her physical absence from the land, encompasses a transnational experience that transcends borders. Her poetry is not just a representation of Palestinian identity but also a contemplation on the dynamics of belonging to a homeland that is never visited a dimension that surfaces as a predominant theme in her literary work, exploring further the limitations and possibilities of memory in forging identity.

3. ARAB AMERICAN RACIALIZATION

In order to understand Hammad's poetry completely, it needs to be placed within the larger racialization of Arab Americans in the U.S. As Hartman argues in *Sweet Music* (2005), Arab Americans' racial identity cannot be easily placed into the binary of "Black" or "white", and so they often experience alienation and solidarity with other marginalized groups. Lisa Majaj further describes Arab Americans' exclusion from racial discourse, describing their paradoxical location within the U.S racial system. Nadine Naber's scholarship on Arab immigrant invisibility highlights the complexities of Arab American identity, an identity formed through U.S foreign policy, Orientalism, and neo-imperialism.

This racial uncertainty is central to Hammad's work, where she addresses both the racialization of Arab Americans and the unity between Arab American and African American communities. Especially, Hammad's poetry, with its involvement in both Arab-American and African American racial struggles, speaks to the racialization of Arabs post-9/11 and the ongoing tension between adapting and resistance to racial stereotypes. In her professional capacity, she reflects a shared history of exclusion, while also reinforcing her distinct identity as a Palestinian-American woman.

In books such as *Born Palestinian, Born Black*, Hammad illustrates how the Arab-American experience is racialized in ways that are not always recognized within general debates on race. Her poetry gives up the "model minority" myth and instead narrates the struggles of her community in ways that analyze most common racial types. The intersection of race, religion, and gender forms the core of Hammad's work as she sheds light on the racialization of Arab Americans, especially women, in a post-9/11 context.

4. SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN ARAB-AMERICAN LITERARY PRODUCTIONS

The development of Arab-American literature has been characterized by substantial changes, especially with the work of newer writers, and in particular women, who contribute to and complicate further the discussion of identity, migration, and cultural belonging. Andrea Shalal-Esa notices a considerable shift within Arab-American literature, whereby newer writers, such as Hammad, actively engage in collaboration with other marginalized groups. This practice reflects a commitment to addressing issues of racism, discrimination, and cultural resistance, broadening the discussion beyond the narratives developed by previous generations of Arab-American writers. Writers like Hammad tackle issues such as trauma, migration, gender, and race, which all contribute to a more complex and nuanced understanding of Arab-American identity.

Hammad's writing is part of this turn, as it contributes to the third stage of Arab-American literature—a stage marked by the inclusion of varied Arab experiences, including Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian experiences. As Harb notes in

Articulations (2010), this phase of Arab American literature is defined by explorations of transnationalism, citizenship, and hybridity. Hammad's writing, which fluidly brings together diverse cultural and political perspectives, reflects the new direction of Arab American literature one that highlights diaspora experiences, intersectionality, and transnational identities.

5. MIGRATION, MEMORY, AND IDENTITY

5.1. Postcolonial and Diaspora Theory

Suheir Hammad's poetry conveys a powerful history of migration, illuminating Palestinian exile and immigrant life in Brooklyn by her. She speaks the psychological and physical displacement which is the fate of forced migration with forceful narrative and sensual imagery. Hammad wrestles with the dilemma of marrying desire for homeland lost to accommodation in the new world. By giving voice to both the refugee and the migrant, she forces us to conceptualize migration not as an event, but as a condition of existence. Her work addresses recent theory on exile and identity by scholars like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Leila Ahmed, and Mohja Kahf to theorize migration as a rich and complex condition. Edward Said theorizes exile as a state of being caught in between several cultures and histories and forming a complex and hybrid self.

He contends that exile is both a state of alienation and a site of oppositional creativity in the sense that it necessitates one to come face to face with all kinds of standpoint and histories. Said refers to the doublethink of the exile great loss though it involves, it is a site of vantage where hegemonic sight and relations of power can be questioned. His Orientalism is also interested in Western representations of the East as they generate and perpetuate stereotypes and silence the Arab voice. Said emphasizes that memory functions as a form of resistance against historical erasure in Palestinian literature, highlighting narrative as a vital medium for the recovery of identity and the preservation of cultural memory.

Hammad's poetry interrupts such knowledge by interweaving personal and public histories and placing exile as a brutal reality and space of empowerment. Homi Bhabha offers the concept of the "third space", the space-in-between in which cultural identity is negotiated, reinscribed and remade. This third space is less of a hybridity between two destinations and more of a place of resistant activity and re-signification, where new meaning is constructed and hegemonic discourse is negotiated among the immigrants. Identity is for Bhabha never a destination but always a becoming, being newly constructed by encounters and negotiations across different cultural contexts. His theory is specifically apropos for the poetry of Hammad because she engages the confluence of her Palestinian heritage and American upbringing in a project to create a voice that cannot be hyphenated into strict national or cultural divisions. Memory underlies the work of Hammad, bridging past and present and vibrating with the collective history of exile for Palestinians. She weaves family histories, family memories, and collective struggles through memory as both anchor and act of resistance. In fragmented narrative and flexible verse, Hammad relates the burden of intergenerational trauma, highlighting the strength of remembering as an act of opposition against the negation of history. Marianne Hirsch propounds the "post-memory" theory in examining how children of exiles inherit the memory of their ancestors, go on to continue it in remoulded forms. Said discusses the importance of memory in Palestinian literature as a form of resistance against forgetting and erasure from history and contends that the very act of memory is a political act of resistance against the occupation and expulsion. Gayatri Spivak resists the effacement of periphery histories, and she claims that literature is one method of recovering such histories otherwise forgotten. Evelyn Alsultany also explores how Arab-American literature constructs memory in opposition to the dominant representation of Arab lives within Western discourses, and it identifies its purpose to warn towards a more multifaceted acknowledgment of Arab lives.

Hammad's work also addresses identity fluidity, that is, as an Arab-American woman and a woman who has lived in multiple worlds. Distrustful of fixed constructions of belonging, she stakes out an active, mutable identity that negotiates both aspects of her Palestinian childhood and Brooklyn childhood. Merging Arabic poetry, hip-hop beats, and spoken-word rhythms, Hammad enacts identity as a process evolving with historical and cultural contexts in lieu of fixed or static. Stuart Hall argues that identity is not an essential single identity but a process perpetually guided by cultural discourse and historical experience. He proposes the concept of 'cultural identity as a positioning', through which individuals negotiate their own identity within an extended socio-political context. His work is unmatched in how it explains that diasporic identities, such as those described in Hammad's poetry, are negotiated by engaging with personal histories and collective memory, and not predetermined or fixed. His focus on identity being fluid and fractured resonates with the poetic questioning in Hammad's work on belonging, displacement, and self-definition.

5.2 Feminist and Intersectional Critique

The full comprehension of Arab American women's writing involves not only postcolonial and diaspora theory (Said, Bhabha, Hall, Spivak, Hirsch, Majaj) but also intersectional and transnational feminist theory. These theories make a part of the understanding of how Arab American women writers depict hybrid identity and work through the dislocation.

Intersectionality

Crenshaw's early work, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex* (1989) and *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color* (1991), produces the argument that women of colour carry intersectional oppressions that are unable to be accurately mapped along individual axes of race or gender. While Crenshaw refines her focus on African American women in the United States legal and social environment, her work is most central to the reading of Arab American women's literature. Writers such as Suheir Hammad, Mohja Kahf, and Leila Ahmed bring out how Arab and Muslim women navigate simultaneous racialization, gender marginality, and religious stereotyping in America. Intersectionality attempts to uncover how their written selves avoid reductionist speech categories in favour of richly textured subjectivities that are sensitive to such entwinements.

5.3 Transnational Feminism

Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan's *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (1994) is a critique of Western feminism for its universalism, rather highlighting global and local interconnections that shape women's lives. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003) also critically addresses "Third World woman" stereotypes in mainstream feminist accounts and encourages feminist solidarities based on particular histories and particular contexts. Such ideas are particularly pertinent to Arab American literature: Hammad and Kahf's works are transnational feminist praxis in the sense that they place Arab women's lives within the contexts of U.S. racial struggles and Middle Eastern geopolitical conflict. Their works raise the issue that questions of war, exile, veiling, and racism cannot be imagined within national contexts but must be articulated through transnational modalities of power, identity, and resistance.

By establishing a link between Crenshaw's intersectionality and Kaplan's and Mohanty's transnational feminism, this book places Arab American women's writing at the intersection of race, gender, diaspora, and international politics. These theories enable an engagement with how authors not only express hybrid diasporic selves but also create solidarities among subaltern communities, thus reshaping the boundaries of Arab American feminist literary criticism. In summary, Suheir Hammad's poetry is a compelling witness to the interdependence between migration, memory, and identity. In blending individual and communal history, she writes into being the voice of displaced peoples and resistant to prevalent forms of representation of Arab-American being. Her poetry, guided by critical theoretical theory, takes centre stage in exploring identity fluidity and memory resilience in constructing diasporic consciousness. In her lyrical and evocative poems, Hammad not only tells stories of migration but also recovers discourses of resistance and belonging.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: HAMMAD'S POETRY

Suheir Hammad's three collections of poetry *Born Palestinian, Born Black* (1996), *Zaatar Diva* (2005), and *Breaking Poems* (2008) represent the essence of her diasporic consciousness. By employing a diverse poetic framework Hammad masterfully deals with the complex intersections of her Palestinian and African American selves, highlighting the tensions and contradictions that stem from belonging to two disparate cultures. Judith Butler's "derealization of the Other" captures the marginalization of Arabs, which degrades them to harmful stereotypes and renders them invisible. Hammad's poetry directly challenges these stereotypes, delivering a counter-hegemonic voice resisting cultural erasure. Hammad's poetry is shaped by Black and Third World feminist theory, as well as her Brooklyn upbringing, fusing Arabic literary traditions with hip-hop's rhythmic pulse. Her colloquial diction, absence of punctuation, and refusal of capitalization craft a unique rhythm that usher readers into a landscape of fractured identity. This style is characteristic of her larger refusal of both cultural erasure and the homogenization of Arab-American identity.

Hammad's poetry explores racialized representations of Arabs and Muslims, particularly in the post-9/11 American context. Her poetry recollects African American literary traditions and places her writings within the larger context of racial resistance, analysing the intersectionality of race, gender and identity. The thematic writings of celebrated Black literary icons like June Jordan and Piri Thomas played a great role in impressing Suheir Hammad. Hammad was greatly influenced by the literary and cultural writings of Piri Thomas. This can be seen especially in her first poetry collection, *Born Palestinian, Born Black* (1996), where she explicitly invokes Thomas in the author's note. In *Born Palestinian, Born Black*, Suheir Hammad recognizes an influence from Puerto Rican-Cuban author and poet Piri Thomas. She quotes his strong view about words in her author's note, "Words can be, as Piri Thomas says, bullets or butterflies" (Hammad, *Born Palestinian, Born Black* ix). The quote is reminder of Thomas's famous contention regarding the effects of words.

In an interview with Ilan Stavans, Thomas elaborates on this theme, highlighting that language has the power to awaken consciousness and stir action (Stavans and Thomas 351). He clarifies that the manner of word usage is imperative, as words can either inspire and uplift like butterflies or hurt and kill like bullets (Stavans and Thomas 351-352). Thomas also talks about racism and the importance of skin colour, highlighting that despite racial or ethnic affiliation, everyone shares a common cause. At last, he highlights the theme that humanity binds everyone together despite heritage differences (Stavans and Thomas 351).

In an interview with Nathalie Handal, Suheir Hammad expresses her identity with both Black and Arab affiliations, referencing her exploration of the term "Black" in the author's note in *Born Palestinian, Born Black*. She quotes poet Audre Lorde, who explained that Blackness is more than a racial identity but also entails political and cultural affiliation. Hammad is aware that in Palestinian culture, as in many parts of the world, Blackness is often associated with negative meanings. Moreover, she sees her literary work as an attempt to dispel such misperceptions, laying claim to Blackness as a source of strength, resistance, and survival (Handal).

Literary critic Alex Lubin explores Hammad's complex understanding of Blackness, asserting that it is shaped by her Arab background in combination with her relation with African American culture (Geographies 167). He analyzes a short poem from the author's note of *Born Palestinian, Born Black*, in which Hammad defines a set of connotations associated with the term "Black". Her references include not just anti-Black prejudice but also icons of empowerment in the Black diaspora (Hammad, *Born Palestinian* x). Lubin narrates Hammad's approach to Blackness as "multivocal", noting her mention of the Black September massacre of Palestinians and the Arabic expression "to blacken your face" (Lubin 167). While Blackness has long been showed negatively in both Arab and Western contexts, Hammad redefines its meaning on her own terms, celebrating its resilience, strength, and cultural significance.

The 1996 publication of *Born Palestinian, Born Black* contained twenty-nine poems where Suheir Hammad confronts popular narratives and disrupts stereotypes, such as the label of Arab men as savagely violent and the fetishism of women in the Global South (Ghosh 531). This chapter will analyze several of Hammad's important poems, concluding our discussion with "Black" in the poem in the author's note, Ismi, Dedication, Gaza, and Rafah, as Hammad's poetry is steeped in themes of identity, memory, and resistance in terms of Palestinian displacement and Arab-American identities. Hammad's work is part personal and part political, attempting to disentangle the individual and collective stories that unpack dominant narratives of Palestinian identity published in Western dialogues.

6.1 Ismi

In the poem Ismi (My Name), Hammad shows the importance of names in maintaining cultural and historical identity, especially when it belongs to Palestinians living in diasporas. In reclaiming her name into a symbol of resistance against erasure, Hammad's purpose in reclaiming her name is partly established by scholars like Amal Amireh, Joseph Massad, and Lila Abu-Lughod.

Amal Amireh, a scholar of Arab literature and feminism, speaks about naming and identity within Middle Eastern cultures. In her article, Framing Nawal El Saadawi: *Arab Feminism in a Transnational World* (2000), she describes the ways in which dominant cultures utilize names to dominate marginalizing cultures. Even though Amireh does not examine Ismi as such, her findings reveal that reclaiming a name is resistance, specifically in the Palestinian context, where erasure and forced re-naming are ubiquitous.

Joseph Massad, in his book *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question* (2006), has argued that it is not simply a matter of erasure or redefinition of the Palestinian identity, but part of what Massad describes as a larger colonial project of subverting Palestinian claim to nationhood. Hammad's insistence on her name can also be understood as total negation of a redefinition. By taking her own name, she establishes her personal identity, while also resisting the colonial project of rewriting Palestinian existence.

please

learn to pronounce

the name of my spirit

The spirit of my name

Correctly. (Hammad 71)

Lila Abu-Lughod, in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013), redefines Western assumptions of Arab women as passive. While she is not writing specifically about Ismi, her work helps to contribute to the ways in which Hammad resists being defined from outside. By taking her name, Hammad both confounds Western and patriarchal definitions in presenting a case for self-definition outside characterizations aside. Her naming is a powerful declaration of cultural survival and representation.

6.2 Dedication

Hammad's poem Dedication is a political and personal declaration. It is an affirmation of the oppressed and those who are continuing to struggle. By interweaving personal stories and historical consciousness, she positions herself within a tradition of struggle, giving primacy to narrative as a strategy of remembering cultural past. Stephen Sheehi, a scholar of Arab-American literature, argues that Dedication illustrates Hammad's capacity to blend poetic language with historical

witness. Her work connects individual accounts to collective histories so that the stories of exile and survival remain in sight.

his love for phalesteen so fierce

he could've swam there

so light with such heavy longing

he could have flown there. (Hammad 21)

Similarly, Moustafa Bayoumi, in *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* (2008), examines Arab identity in Western environments. He chronicles how Hammad diverges from the victim story to one of resilience and introduces Palestinians as acting agents of their own history. Barbara Harlow, in her book on resistance literature, traces Dedication to the poetry tradition of poets like Mahmoud Darwish. In her opinion, Hammad's poetry is resistance, in which language is used as a means of defiance and survival. Hammad's poetry not only documents Palestinian lives but also testifies to their presence in a world that wants to erase them.

6.3 Gaza

In Gaza, Hammad provides a timely record of life under siege and responds to the demonization of all Palestinians in Western media. Hammad is forthright and unapologetic in defending her people, their experiences, and their testimony. Rosemary Sayigh, historian of Palestinian refugees, writes that Hammad's work contradicts media constructions that reduce Palestinians to statistics. Gaza restores human dignity and agency to its subjects, and provides a corrective narrative. Rachel Gregory Fox a historian of spoken word poetry, draws attention to Hammad's attention to rhythm and performance to make "the richness of feeling in the poem transparent", and as a result, the trauma and resilience of the people of Gaza take shape.

each day jihad

each day filled with fear

Each day a mirror of life

the living want to die with their families. (Hammad 87)

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is another work of reference for Gaza. Said denounces Western stereotypes of the East, and Hammad's poem corroborates his contention that stories must be reclaimed. Gaza challenges Orientalist frameworks and offers a more authentic representation of the lived experience of occupation by centring Palestinian voices.

6.4 Rafah

Hammad discusses the role of the political borders in fragmentation and how they are used to physically ununified Palestinian families in Rafah. Rafah is more than a place; it serves as a representation of displacement, as it embodies the ways colonial states have used borders as a means of dominance and oppression of stateless individuals. Nadine Sinno, a scholar in Arab-American studies, describes Rafah as an exploration of how imposed borders separate Palestinian identity. Sinno claims that Hammad's narrative goes beyond geography to also represent how politically constructed fragmentation impacts both individual and collective identity. Sunaina Maira, transnational solidarity specialist, suggests that Hammad connects Palestinian struggles to the struggles of other oppressed people around the world, in order to elicit a response of collective resistance.

People in a high valence state

that's when breathing feeds horns.

That's where settlers take high ground

That's how villages bulldozed betwixt

holidays before your eyes

high violence holy children lamb.

an experience no longer inherited

Actual earth in scorched concrete

Heart in smoking beat. (Hammad 90)

Lisa Suhair Majaj, a poet and scholar, addresses the paradox of exile in Rafah. Despite forced displacement, Palestinian identity is stubbornly linked to land and memory. The figure represented by Hammad calls attention to the continuity of cultural heritage despite occupation and disruptions caused by migration.

The style and tone of Suheir Hammad's writing are characterized by a self-conscious combination of the political and the personal, so that her voice is both intimate, urgent, and confrontational. Hammad's use of colloquial language, unpunctuated writing, and lack of capitalization creates a rhythmic, bordering on oral, voice that imitates the modes of both spoken-word and hip-hop cultures, signalling her diasporic allegiances and engaging the reader into the performative gesture of cultural resistance. Her voice transitions from resistance to loss, exhibiting the tension of negotiating interlocking Palestinian and African American identities. In *Ismi* and *Dedication*, the tone is one of reclaiming and resistance, of taking back agency from erasure and misrepresentation, but in *Gaza* and *Rafah*, it is insistence, witness, documentation of lived occupation, exile, and statelessness. Throughout the works, Hammad's poetry is multivocal: it weaves together historical awareness, political criticism, and lyric thinking in a struggle to find a rhythm that is both traumatic and optimistic. The tone is unapologetic as well as taut, leading the reader to face facts of marginalization while engaging in cultural resilience, forging a poetics of resistance around the imperative of narrative and contained thought.

7. CONCLUSION

Suheir Hammad's work is a rich exploration of Arab-American identity, exile, and cultural resistance. Hammad, through her sophisticated intersectional practice, subverts hegemonic discourse that would circle around Palestinian and African American identities, deconstructing stereotype and remaking language into an instrument of empowerment. Her poetry positions Palestinian exile as not merely a condition of displacement but as one who is bound to the diasporic experience in its widest sense and to that of disadvantaged racialized and ethnicized groups in particular.

By intertwining personal history, collective memory, and political activism, Hammad's poetry is a voice for the histories of those whose have been historically erased or misrepresented. By poems such as *Ismi*, *Dedication*, *Gaza*, and *Rafah*, she resists cultural erasure, refigures Blackness, and insists on the resilience of diasporic communities. Her inscription of hip-hop rhythms, street language, and feminist theory also subverts the conventions of traditional poetry, as does her overall commitment to hybridity and cultural mixing.

Hammad's activism on issues of race, immigration, and identity helps to further propel Arab-American literature to establish her as a chief advocate in the third wave of this literary tradition. Her writing not only reimagines Palestinian identity diaspora but universalizes it in a struggle for justice on the world stage, asking readers to rethink their own race, culture, and belonging in an increasingly globalized world. As such, Hammad's writing is a gesture of resistance and an appeal for solidarity to marginalized individuals all over the world. This article is an academic contribution to Arab American women's writing in the sense that it highlights how Hammad reimagines exile not just as lack, but as productive space for speaking resilience and solidarity between minoritized groups. By its emphasis on spaces of intersection between gender, ethnicity, and political memory, the scholarship demonstrates how Hammad opens up new horizons for Arab American literary production and reimagining what belonging might appear in diaspora.

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