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Reconstructing Palestinian Identity Beyond Neo-Orientalist Stereotypes in Isabella Hammad's *Enter Ghost*

Bushra Baneen

Abstract

This article examined how Isabella Hammad's *Enter Ghost* (2023) reconstructed Palestinian identity in ways that resisted dominant Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourse and the stereotypes it has sustained in Western representation. Drawn from a larger qualitative study, the article addressed that study's first objective and research question: how the novel reconstructed Palestinian identity against Western stereotypes and Orientalist discourse, and by what narrative means it did so. The analysis drew on Edward Said's account of Orientalism, Hamid Dabashi's work on neo-Orientalism and self-representation, Lisa Lau's concept of re-Orientalism and Graham Huggan's theory of postcolonial exoticism. The findings indicated that *Enter Ghost* refused the binary categories through which Palestinians have conventionally been rendered, whether as victim or aggressor, terrorist or backward, politically unstable or silent. Instead, Hammad constructed identity through diaspora, memory, family, language, embodiment, place, domestic life, cultural participation and the difficulty of return. Sonia's position was central: her British-Palestinian inheritance made identity a matter of negotiation rather than straightforward reclamation. Her interrogation at the airport, her recollection of family history, her sensory encounter with Palestine, her involvement in Arabic cultural life and the differences she observed among Palestinians within Palestine each exposed the limits of externally imposed categories. Hammad's counter-discursive strategy did not substitute an idealised image for a hostile one; it restored complexity, contradiction, plurality and ordinary humanity to the Palestinian subject. The novel therefore reconstructed Palestinian identity as relational, historical, embodied, diasporic and continually in production through memory and self-representation.

Keywords: diaspora; *Enter Ghost*; memory; Neo-Orientalism; Palestinian identity; self-representation

Bahria University Islamabad Bushrabaneen1@gmail.com

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Introduction

Historically, there has been an unequal knowledge and power dynamic in representations of the East. Edward Said's (1978) Orientalism provided evidence that Orientalism was not just a discovery, but was constructed by a process of representation, wherein the West was the agent of discovery, and the East was the known Other. In this system, the Orient was continuously characterised as irrational, backward, exotic, passive and inferior. This kind of representation was no longer limited to colonial scholarship in the nineteenth century. They have gone on to be modified in today's political, media, cultural and literary thinking. In post-9/11 contexts, the vocabulary of Orientalism has come more and more to be linked to security, terrorism, fanaticism, instability and cultural threat. Neo-Orientalism can be, therefore, interpreted as a reconfiguration of the Orientalist discourse in a newer political and cultural language (Behdad & Williams, 2010; Sa'di, 2020; Samiei, 2010).

This issue of representation is especially important in the Palestinian context. The thesis behind which this article is based highlights the tendency in the prevailing Western discourse to categorise Palestinians in very simplified and polarised ways: the passive victim, the violent militant, the refugee with no history, or the political problem. Such depictions dehistoricize, defamiliarize and demote Palestinian subjectivity from the history, culture, feelings, family and intellectual life of ordinary people. For example, Tuastad (2003) discusses the potential of the ‘new barbarism’ thesis to obscure history and structure by calling political violence a reflection of cultural inferiority. Likewise, research on media representation has demonstrated that Arab/Muslim subjects may also be made visible through stereotypes, while their culture remains marginal (Alsultany, 2012; Shaheen, 2003).

A productive example of this counter-discursive possibility is the work of Isabella Hammad's *Enter Ghost (2023)*. The novel is a story of a British-Palestinian actress, Sonia, who comes back to Palestine after a long time and becomes embroiled in a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The return brings together issues of diaspora and memory, belonging, cultural inheritance, language, performance, family and political history. Not least, Palestine is not for Hammad just a landscape of victimisation or political crisis. Rather, the novel portrays the lives of Palestinians in conflicting and personal ways. Sonia's uncertainty, her recollections of childhood, her body's

relationship to place, and her experiences with other Palestinians create an identity that is not stable or politically contained in one class.

The first goal of the initial thesis is explored in this article: ‘To investigate the reconstruction of Palestinian identity in opposition to Western stereotypes and orientalist discourse’.This research question is related to the novel's reconstruction of Palestinian identity in opposition to Western stereotypes and dominant orientalist discourse: ‘How does the novel reconstruct Palestinian identity against Western stereotypes and dominant orientalist discourse?’The second and third aims and research questions are deliberately omitted. Only when they provide direct illumination of the reconstruction of identity addressed by the first objective do the terms “resistance,” “theatre,” or “political experience” appear in the list of references. The aim is not to simply tell the thesis story, but to create a focused argument on identity reconstruction in *Enter Ghost*.

The article concludes that Hammad creates Palestinian identity by considering the process of outside-to-inside classification. The novel exposes repeatedly the lack of adequacy of identities that are forced upon it in the name of security discourse, racist assumptions, cultural stereotypes, and the expectation of a ‘Palestinian story’. Hammad challenges such dichotomies, seeing identity as historically mediated, diasporic, embodied, linguistically situated, emotionally complex and internally diverse. Complexity, then, is the most significant counter-discursive strategy in the novel: Palestinians are not a unified political subject but instead a people whose identities are constructed through memory, relationship, culture, movement and experience.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how *Enter Ghost* refuses the binary categories through which Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourse has represented Palestinians.
2. To analyse the narrative strategies through which the novel reconstructs Palestinian identity as relational, embodied, diasporic and continually in production.

Research Questions

1. How does *Enter Ghost* resist the binary categories — victim or aggressor, terrorist or backward, politically unstable or silent — through which Palestinians have conventionally been represented?
2. Through what narrative strategies does Hammad reconstruct Palestinian identity as relational, embodied, diasporic and continually in production?

Literature Review

Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism

In Said's (1978) Orientalism, the representational problem discussed in this study is examined. Orientalism is not only a series of denigrating references to the East, it is also a discourse that generates knowledge of the East from the perspective of the West. The Occident and Orient represent a binary in which the West is represented by rationality, modernity and authority, while the Orient is represented as the source of knowledge and representation. As a result, cultural difference may be turned into a hierarchy of value.

Subsequent scholarship has shown that this rationale still holds in the present world. According to Behdad and Williams (2010), Neo-Orientalism emerged from Orientalism, maintaining its essential elements of otherness, but adapting them to the new historical context. Samiei (2010) also contends that globalisation has shaped the Western-Islamic dichotomy but has not eradicated it. Arabs and Muslims are often represented in post-9/11 discourse in terms of terrorism, security, instability, and cultural incompatibility. In the contemporary world, according to Altwaiji (2023) and Sa'di (2020), there is a way of Orientalism that can be negotiated and talked about in terms of politics and security, instead of descriptions that are overtly exotic, as in classical Orientalism.

These methods are especially applicable to the Palestinian context as dominant representations can have the effect of simplifying a historically and culturally complicated population into a political image. Tuastad (2003) demonstrates the connection between violence in the Middle East and cultural inferiority in the language of “new barbarism”, which diverts focus

from history and structures. The limited representation of Arabs in Western cultural systems is also shown in the work of Alsultany (2012) and Shaheen (2003). This is not just a matter of being represented negatively; it's a matter of the representational vocabulary being limited to narrow down one's possible identity as a Palestinian.

In particular, Dabashi's discussion of Neo-Orientalism is valuable to the understanding of this process as one of knowledge and power. Dabashi (2011, 2017) is sceptical of the dominant institutions' prerogative to determine Arabs, Muslims and other marginalised subjects from the outside. His focus on self-representation and counter-knowledge offers a means by which to question who can determine Palestinian identity. With this lens, the literary reconstruction of Palestinian identity is important, as it is about a subject's self-understanding and lived experience rather than external classification.

Re-Orientalism and the Politics of Representation

The representational issue is further complicated by the idea of Re-Orientalism. Lau (2009) suggests that writers from the East and diasporic writers who have internalised the Western gaze can at times reinforce the expectations of the Orientalists. The international publishing system and the audience's expectations for popular novels might, then, influence contemporary literary production by favouring familiar versions of cultural difference, suffering, violence, or exoticism. This is particularly true of English-language Palestinian fiction in the literary market around the world.

Enter Ghost is a productive alternative, since it does not offer a simple and sellable image of Palestine. Hammad does not pretend that there is no violence and no displacement, no surveillance and no political conflict, but she does not want these to be the only possible meanings of Palestinian life. Sonia is an actress and daughter, a sister and diasporic subject, who feels uncertain, funny, uncomfortable, privileged, remembered, estranged, attached. Therefore, the story does not succumb to the temptation of rendering Palestinian identity immediately visible through selected familiar political images.

There is another dimension added to Huggan's (2002) notion of postcolonial exoticism. Huggan clarifies how cultural difference can be turned into a product in the international literary

marketplace. Suffering or authenticity can be represented in ways that are familiar to marginalised communities and make them ‘readable’ and ‘consumable’. A Palestinian novel, then, can thus be subject to a paradox; it can question dominant narratives, and it may be read as an image that is attractive through the same global market structures. *Enter Ghost* is a work that highlights the complexity of subjectivity and the ordinariness of life. Past family memories, domestic spaces, language, food, relationships, performance, awkwardness, and uncertainty line the Palestinian landscape of the novel. It is hard to come up with a single image of suffering that captures the essence of Palestinian identity, given these details.

Palestinian Identity as Constructed and Diasporic

In the thesis, Palestinian identity is understood as historically moulded and not essential or uniform. In recent scholarship examined in this thesis, Palestinian identity is seen as something that is historically formed and not essential or homogeneous. Khalidi (1997) narrates that Palestinian national consciousness is a product of historical processes, whereas Kocatepe (2025) highlights the various geographical and political contexts in which Palestinianness is negotiated. Fragmentation, displacement and diaspora are central themes of Rickard's (2022) work as well. These approaches defy the idea that there exists one Palestinian essence that can be reduced to one identity.

An influential account of cultural identity by Stuart Hall (1990) is also relevant here, as identity is not viewed as a thing but as a process of ‘becoming '. A similar concept is explored in hybridity and the ‘third space’ by Bhabha (1994), in which identities are negotiated from cultural positions. These views shed light on *Enter Ghost's* Sonya. The British passport, the English theatrical career, her long time away from Palestine, and her emotional attachment to family history cause her not to fit into a neat category. Her Palestinian identity is not lost in diaspora, but neither is it offered as an unproblematized return to a pre-diaspora self.

This process is focused on memory. Memory of historical trauma is passed down from one generation to the next and experienced through affective and imaginative relationships to the past, as illustrated in Hirsch's (2008) work on postmemory. The novel tries to link this personal experience with collective history through family stories, places that are remembered, inherited

phrases, and sensations of Palestine. Memory thus becomes not only memory, but one of the ways in which identity is constantly being re-created.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design, which is supported by the use of textual analysis and thematic analysis of the book entitled *Enter Ghost (2023)* by Isabella Hammad. The novel itself is the secondary textual source, with theoretical and critical support provided by secondary scholarship. The analysis focuses only on material that is pertinent to the first research objective and the first research question, which relates to reconstructing Palestinian identity by challenging Western stereotypes and the Orientalist discourse.

The theoretical framework merges Said's Orientalism with Dabashi's Neo-Orientalism and notions of self-representation, Lau's Re-Orientalism and Huggan's postcolonial exoticism. These views are not seen as independent theories which generate independent results but are employed side by side to consider how the novel challenges Palestinian identity imposed from outside the novel. This analysis is interpretive and it has no statistical generalizability. It aims to describe the ways in which literary representation creates identity meaning in the novel chosen.

Analysis

This is a step-by-step guide to self-representation in the context of external classification. The most obvious method of constructing Palestinian identity in one of *Enter Ghost's* most obvious is the exposure of the violence of external classification. Sonia's journey to Palestine starts with an interrogation. She expects to be interviewed at the airport and recalls when she was interviewed, specifically about her family relationships with the location (Hammad, 2023). Significant because her Palestinian identity is transformed into an object of institutional suspicion right away. Her family is not just a personal web of relationships; it is part of the state's classification project. It is not just the web of personal relationships, but also the family becomes part of the state's attempt to classify her.

In this encounter, Hammad brings to the fore the connection between identity and power that Dabashi (2011, 2017) has described. Identity is not just a personal attribute, but is potentially

something that can be attributed, identified, tracked and authorised by an institution. Sonia's experience, therefore, is an example of the ways in which Palestinian identity is constituted from the outside, by means of security-related assumptions. The novel nevertheless does not give the institution the last word on Sonia. Rather, the story centres on her own experience, which is at the same time puzzling and contemplative. It shifts from being assessed as a class to being depicted as a person. This is an important difference from the first research question. Hammad isn't just replacing the negative stereotype with a positive one. She upsets the logic of stereotyping. Sonia can't be just a threat, a victim, a refugee, or a political symbol. Her identity arises through paradoxes and connections. She is British and Palestinian, geographically separated and emotionally bound; privileged at times and at others unsettled by her privilege; professionally engaged in the English theatre and yet drawn to Palestinian cultural memory. This novel thus undermines the assumption that the Palestinian identity is immediately recognisable from the outside.

Diaspora, Hybridity, and the Unsettled Self

One of the most significant ways of Sonia's identity reconstruction is her diasporic position. She has not been back to Palestine for 11 years, and her familiarity and familiarity within the place is that of a stranger. Her coming back isn't a simple return to a sense of belonging. Rather, it creates uncertainty and recognition simultaneously. This is in keeping with Hall's (1990) conception of a process of identity and Bhabha's (1994) explanation of hybridity.

Palestinian identity is linked with movement between locations rather than being tied to a place of permanent residence in the novel. However, her Britishness comes into special relief. She has made clear her Englishness; here she has identified identity as a form of social presentation, which is influenced by power and circumstance. Englishness can be a protective or socially legitimising language, but it can also be a ‘foreign language’ that distances from Palestinian belonging. Thus, diasporic identity is presented here as negotiated, and not as a sign of cultural loss, by Hammad.

One of the most telling moments is when Sonia identifies another as ‘blended and uncertain’(Hammad, 2023). The words reflect the novel's overall perception of identity. The

uncertainty is not a manifestation of a lack of a real identity. Rather, it is proof of the layering and relationality of identity. Sonia's Palestinian identity is not negated by her British connections, nor is it solidified by her actual return. Belonging is constructed in the processes she makes visible as she occupies the position of being situated between cultural worlds.

This depiction directly confronts Orientalist essentialism. The Other is made visible in Orientalist discourse in terms of fixed cultural categories. Hammad's characters are not easily categorizable since, as marked by mobility, history, privilege, estrangement and memory, they are all displaced. The novel thus presents hybridity as a conceptual problem to the notion of representing Palestinians with a single culture.

Embodied Memory and the Geography of Belonging

One of the most powerful ways in which Hammad is reconstructing Palestinian identity is through memory. When Sonia returns to Palestine, there is an overwhelming response in her body. She shares her experience of the ‘bodily impact’ and ‘memory of my senses’ (Hammad, 2023). This is an important moment because it takes us beyond politics and abstraction. Palestine is not only a geopolitical space or an ideological symbol, but it is felt and smelt, heard, seen, remembered, and lived as a body, a space, an atmosphere, and a landscape.

This connection between memory and embodiment is explained by Hirsch (2008). Affective and Imaginative Connections are ways in which earlier generations can influence future generations, based on repeated experiences. *Enter Ghost*, then, is, at least in part, an inherited, reconstructed relation between the two in Sonia's sensory experience. Her identity is linked with her history, and while it may not have been lived exactly the same as previous generations, it is nonetheless alive in the collective consciousness of family and culture.

This is reinforced by the motif of the grandparents' house. When faced with remembered spaces, Sonia has a ‘tremor of recognition’ (Hammad, 2023). The recalled location is different from the current location. Buildings and roads appear smaller and different than what she recalls. Yet recognition persists. Hammad thus does not fall into the trap of romanticising homeland as a pristine source. Instead, the present moment is a location between memory and the present moment.

This representation is important because it refrains from making Palestinian identity about geography or politics. The homeland is not just a place of physical presence and continuity, but one of meaning. Even the lack of a house can be a part of family memory. The absence of a physical house can have as strong an effect on identity as physical presence, as witnessed in Sonia's thoughts on a house that may have been lost in 1948. The erased or inaccessible place becomes part of the narrative of belonging. For this reason, I think the concept of imperial debris introduced by Stoler (2008) is appropriate, as it is in historical violence there are material and emotional remains that still affect social life.

Hammad's work explores the idea of place as memory, absence and sensory recognition, rejecting representations that separate Palestinians from history. The novel builds up Palestinian identity as a historical one, but does not turn Palestinians into victims of history.

Language, Culture, and Continuity in the Family.

The Other Main Space for Identity Construction is Family. The Palestinian identity is not solely represented through national symbols or political statements by Hammad. It is present in talk, thinking, familial relations, home life, and family traditions. One memory that is particularly important for Sonia is the Arabic word “Teta”. The word is still set in a sentence in the English language and has meanings beyond just translation: emotional and cultural (Hammad, 2023).

In this context, language is a cultural marker. The Arabic in the English is an obstacle to the idea that Palestinian culture should be made comprehensible to an outside observer. The word is family intimate because it isn't simply a word of political classification. It's a part of life. However, what is helpful is that the novel uses culturally specific language, which further makes the creation of a fully transparent and easily consumable Palestinian identity difficult and problematic, as discussed by Lau (2009) in his analysis of Re-Orientalism.

Sonia's admission that she doesn't know Arabic theatre, and her subsequent comment that she'd never even read an Arabic play, is a testament to the complicated relationship between diaspora and cultural inheritance. She is not a Palestinian artist, but she is a Palestinian. Instead, it shows identity as a negotiation with, an effort to reconnect with and often a clash with, absence.

Hammad does not take cultural belonging for granted. Sonia has to experience something that she doesn't know in her inheritance, and this experience is part of reconstructing self.

Inter-generational history is also linked to individual identity within the family memory. Sonia remembers her grandmother's statements on Palestine as a future Palestinian state and the emotional connection to Palestine, even if living there is not guaranteed. These kinds of memories show that family speech can be transmitted from generation to generation. Palestinian self is thus constructed not only by the politics of the here and now, but also through stories, words and remembered relations.

The concept of historical consciousness without political reduction

At the same time, *Enter Ghost* is a work that reconstructs the Palestinian identity through historical consciousness, without sacrificing the characters' humanity. Sonia's recollections of the intifada are a reminder of the ways in which political history becomes personal history. However, Hammad challenges the notion that being Palestinian is the same as being politically aware at all times.

Sonia recalls looking away from television coverage as one way of protecting her emotions from the political climate, even though she was engaged with it ‘by default’ but not fully imaginatively (Hammad, 2023). This is a significant break from the norm in stereotypical depictions. A reductive narrative may call for Palestinian characters to be politically aware or heroic at all times. Instead, Hammad shows a child's reaction to violence, one that comes in the form of confusion, boredom, avoidance, and emotional protection.

This complexity is important because it renders the political experience a human experience. Palestinian identity is not a psychological state that is predetermined. It involves uncertainty, fear, detachment, recollection, and subsequent reflection. Fanon's (1952/2008) discussion of colonial subjectivity can aid in understanding how political violence may impact psychological life, and Dabashi's work (2011) can assist in grasping the concept of identity not as an essential identity but as a process that is historically constructed.

The novel's approach to political history, then, enhances rather than detracts from its critique of orientalist representation. Hammad does not make a picture of everyday life by erasing Palestinian history. Rather than this, she demonstrates the possibility of historical awareness in the midst of common feeling and psychological ambiguity. History is important to Palestinian identity, but politics is not the end of Palestinian identity.

The Internal Plurality and the Refusal of Homogeneity

Another approach to reconstruction is Hammad's focus on difference in Palestinian experience. Orientalist representations tend to erase the differences among the people they represent and present 'Palestinians' as a unified entity. *Enter Ghost* is instead all about differences of geography, citizenship, class, privilege, political experience, and diaspora.

What Sonia has learned from various Palestinian communities is that being close together does not mean having a similar 'experience'. The novel recognises the conflicts between Palestinians who suffer directly and Palestinians who suffer indirectly from a different geographical or social place. The differences can generate guilt, discomfort, silence, solidarity or disagreement. Instead of tinkering with these tensions to create a single national image, Hammad uses such tensions to express a Palestinian identity.

This is especially relevant for the debate over Kocatepe's (2025) definition of the Palestinian identity as a historically and geographically differentiated identity. Fragmentation too is highlighted as a key aspect of Palestinian experience by Rickard (2022). Literary is Hammad's contribution: plurality becomes characterisation; it becomes a structure of narrative. Palestinians are not simply interchangeable spokeswomen for a political cause but rather are located at different points in historical and social relations.

This leads to a more complicated form of collective identity. Disagreements are not an indication of the lack of Palestinian identity. It can encompass privilege and vulnerability, belonging and estrangement, memory and forgetting. Hammad's use of the term internal diversity subverts the binary logic of Orientalist discourse since the term Palestinian is internally divided.

Domesticity and The Ordinary Human

The best part of *Enter Ghost* is that it focuses on mundane life. Hammad's representation includes food, houses, family rooms, smell, conversation, humour, professional ambition and interpersonal tensions. When compared with the great political events, these details seem inconsequential, but they play a vital role in the reconstruction of identity in the novel. However, the concept of exoticism as adhered to by the post-colonial theory put forward by Huggan in 2002 is very pertinent in this context. When cultural difference is made into a commodity, and made to seem extraordinary, tragic, or exotic, then ordinary detail can be a rejection of that market logic. Hammad does not ignore Palestinian suffering, but she also does not let suffering be the sole category for Palestinians to be known.

Here, the novel's depiction of a person who cooks, eats, stores food, feeds others, and lives in a ‘beautiful grubby house’ (Hammad, 2023) is important because of just this reason. Domestic activity brings scale to representation. Palestinians are seen engaging in activities that people engage in in their everyday life. No abstract argumentation of their humanity is made, but they are shown by focusing on daily life in a narrative way. This approach also subverts the concept of identity. Palestinian identity is not only in public political symbols; it is in intimate spaces as well. Kitchen, home, family room, food, words, smells and memories become places of cultural belonging. The outcome is a particular and human representation. The novel does not erase Palestinian history, but it humanises it by relating it to familiar and quotidian relationships.

Discussion

As a whole, the patterns in the text illustrate how *Enter Ghost* rebuilds Palestinian identity by altering the ways in which identity is represented. The novel starts out in a world where Palestinian identity is susceptible to being categorised from the outside. Sonia's interrogation is due to her family connections; Palestinian history is always filtered through political categories; diasporic subjects face expectations of cultural authenticity; and Palestinian identity is limited in its representation in Western theatre. Modifying the representational field is a response that is not the creation of a counter-image but its extension, as Hammad does.

This transformation from imposed knowledge to self-representation can be understood by referring to Dabashi's framework. This novel challenges the legitimacy of outside organisations to define the Palestinian identity. Lau's Re-Orientalism emphasises the extra challenge for writing Palestinian identity for people all over the world: the novel must navigate readers' expectations that could be met by familiar representations of suffering or cultural difference. The novel resists easy classification because of the ambiguous, domestic, multilingual intimacy and internal diversities that Hammad emphasises. In short, Huggan's theory can account for the significance of this complexity in global literary markets. A story that emphasises everyday life and conflict is difficult to make into an exotic show.

The reconstruction of identity is thus being accomplished in several interrelated processes. Firstly, the process of identity changes from classification by the outside to self-representation. Secondly, diaspora turns identity into a negotiation, rather than an attachment. Third, memory relates personal experience with collective history. Fourth, language and family contribute to an intimate continuity of culture. Fifth, there are internal Palestinian differences that question homogeneity. Fifth, Internal Palestinian differences question homogeneity. Sixth, there is restitution of humanity beyond display in normal domestic life. Finally, Theatre and cultural participation make Palestinians interpreters and producers of meaning.

The findings are not intended to portray Palestine as a politically unproblematic entity or a neutralised one in the sense of the ideals of the peace process. Rather, it is the novel's capacity to embrace contradiction and its counter-discursive power. Her Britishness is not erased, her privilege is not erased, her uncertainty is not erased, and Palestinian internal differences are not erased into a single consensus. Such tensions enhance the representation in both its verisimilitude and essentialist resistance.

Palestinian identity can then be built in the context of the first research question by arguing that *Enter Ghost* creates Palestinian identity in terms of complexity, relationality and lived experience. The novel confronts Western and Orientalist stereotypes not only by repeating that Palestinians are ‘different’ from the stereotypes, but by demonstrating that none of the stereotypes can encompass the spectrum of experiences that the novel depicts. Palestinian identity becomes diasporic, historical, embodied, cultural, familial, linguistic, emotional and internally plural. The

novel thus transforms Palestinian identity from an object of production to a continually evolving subject.

Conclusion

In this article, the process of reconstructing Palestinian identity in Enter Ghost (2023) as a critique of Western stereotypes and the dominant orientalist discourse has been discussed. The analysis shows that Hammad refuses to essentialize the representation of Palestinians as a people of violence, victims, terrorists, backwards, and politically unstable, centring on the first research objective and first research question of the thesis.

A focus on lived experience throughout the novel drives towards the reconstruction of identity. Sonia undergoes an airport interrogation and learns about external classification, and continues her experiences to see the limits of that classification. Her diasporic position has made for an ambivalent sense of self, a sensory experience of Palestine that has brought her body into relation with memory, familial ties and the use of Arabic that have linked identity with cultural continuity, and memories of political history, which have taught her that historical consciousness does not exclude emotional uncertainty, and her encounters with various Palestinian communities that have undermined the notion of a single Palestinian experience.

Dabashi, Lau, and Huggan offer alternate interpretations of this reconstruction. Dabashi highlights the interplay between knowledge, power and self-representation; Lau reminds us that diasporic writing can be complicit with or resistant to the expectations of the West; and Huggan reveals the commercialisation of cultural difference. In Hammad's novel, Palestinian identity is introduced as complicated and unmanageable in any one representational frame, to negotiate all three pressures.

A process of becoming- that is, the Palestinian identity reconstructed by the study *Enter Ghost* is found not so much as an attempt to return to a pure or an original essence as to construct it. Memory, diaspora, language, family, place, cultural involvement, historical awareness, and everyday life are all ways of identifying as a person. It is not a lack of identity or a weakness that makes it so complex, but rather this quality that enables the novel to resist the Orientalist simplifications.

The answer to the first research question could then be as follows: In the process of reconstruction of Palestinian identity, *Enter Ghost* eliminates the externally imposed, homogeneous categories of the West in favour of a multidimensional representation based on the direct experience and self-representation of Palestine. Hammad shows that Palestinians are not monolithic, not static, not removed from their Palestinian past, not separate from their Palestinian culture, not distant from Palestine, and not just about the physical place. The novel in turn is a literary anti-discursive work that adds complexity and humanity to the Palestinian subject.

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