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Narrative Representations of War Diaspora
in Selected Works by Male and Female
Ethnic American Writers: A Gynocritical
Study Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis relates Elaine Showalter's gynocriticism as a theoretical framework to the theme of war diaspora as a background. It delineates six male and female ethnic American diasporic writers who tackle the experience of war as a background for their novels and as a direct reason for the sense of diaspora. Distance enabled them to write from the vantage point of informed outsiders looking in and more specifically, looking back to the past. The thesis uses the three elements of feminist narratology – the narrative voice, the narrative level and plot - in order to analyze the selected texts, to explore the similarities and differences between male and female fictional writings.

The Fragmented Narrative in Adnan and Alameddine's Works :A Feminist Narratology analyzes the works of both Lebanese-American writers: Etel Adnan and Rabih Alameddine from a feminist narratological view. It chooses the fragmented narrative in *Of Cities and Women: Letters to Fawwaz* and *Koolaid's: The Art of War* as a point of comparison.

In the nine letters, she illustrates cultural experience from cities throughout Europe and Beirut. She uses this format to provide her reader an accurate yet metaphoric vision of Europe. By using the three levels of feminist narratology as a method of analysis, the study draws the similarities and differences between Adnan and Alameddine's fragmented narratives. By applying the narrative voice, Adnan opts to use the epistolary voice in the nine letters. This format enables Adnan to read the figures of landscape, nation, art and street, as easily as words in a

page. Unlike Adnan, Alameddine chooses a stream of consciousness voice in order to tell the story of his novel. In *Koolaid's*, Alameddine includes a numerous characters that are connected through a series of short narrations. Their narrations are not given in chronological order, in order to increase a sense of chaos to the novel.

By applying the narrative level, Adnan's narrator, Etel, is an intradiegetic homodiegetic. She conveys her judgements, pleas and information about each city she travels. In each city, she narrates a different tale that framed by a description of this city: buildings, trees, streets, museums... etc. The embedded tale of each city reveals Adnan's meanings of womanhood and its relationship to manhood and humanhood historically and geographically. Like Adnan, Alameddine's narrators are intradiegetic homodiegetic. They share the fact that their lives were impacted by either the AIDS epidemic or the Lebanese Civil War. These two fronts become the framed narrative to the whole segments of the novel. Each vignette contains an embedded narration, discussing sex, death, art ... etc. In *Of Cities and Women*, the narrative of the nine letters contains a unity, both geographically and historically. Adnan gives an integral and integrating history to the different places of her wandering. Unlike Adnan, Alameddine's *Koolaid's* is a very complicated novel both structurally and stylistically. It is divided into a series of vignettes that are presented in a disjointed manner that serves to reflect the great chaos brought by the Lebanese Civil War and AIDS epidemic.

The Fragmented Narrative in Etel Adnan and Rabih Alameddine's Works: A Feminist Narratology

The fragmented narrative in Etel Adnan and Rabih Alameddine's works examines the three elements of feminist narratology. Adnan's *Of Cities and Women: Letters to Fawwaz* (1993) is a fiction in the form of an epistolary novel that converges with women's studies. It tells a story of a woman called Etel who writes letters to deal with the agonies of loss and life during wartime. It discusses the problems of Arab women and all women fairly. Adnan makes insightful observations on the relation of war and the overwhelming destruction of Beirut. These observations explain the motives behind war and the overwhelming destruction of Beirut. Through the investigation of plot, it is clear that the narrative of the nine letters, as Ouyang Wen-Chin illustrates, in Adnan's *Of Cities*, contains a unity, both geographically and historically (83). Adnan gives an integral and integrating history of the different places of her wandering. In the sense that, this collection is written from Adnan to Fawwaz Traboulsi, the Arab writer and intellectual living, who asked Adnan for an essay on feminism to publish in his journal *Zawaya*. Michael Sollars says that Adnan never wrote the essay, but instead wrote to him, from various European cities and from Beirut, a series of letters exploring issues of gender and feminism (8).

In *Of Cities*, Adnan writes "it is no longer a question of clarifying the distinction between the feminine and the masculine, but of redefining the human species" (37). Adnan goes about thinking through this redefinition in many guises: through an incident in the red-light district of Barcelona; the tale of a "disturbed" single woman on the

Greek island of Skopelos who had been taken to a mental asylum; the death of a close friend in Beirut; her obsession with "What Cezanne and Picasso can reveal about women, about the way women are looked at" (Adnan 22). The passages on "these two sacred monsters" (Ibid. 23), in addition to representing some of the most revelatory writing on Cezanne and Picasso, are also some of the most striking sections in the book.

Ammiel Alcalay sees that the awareness of war exists throughout the letters. It can be found as a presence, companion, nightmare, yardstick, and fulcrum (144). For instance, the eventual outbreak of the Gulf War haunts these letters as does Andalusia and the cultural genocide of the Arabs in Spain, followed by the slaughter of the Indians in the New World Andalusia. These incidents make Adnan Lament that, "the first loss, the death of the Mother, and of the orchards of which Lorca was the last tree" (56). Thus, Adnan "embodies the role of both visionary and chronicler, seeing what is to come by unveiling accepted ways of receiving and recording the past" (Alcalay 145)

Adnan's insistence on remembering haunts also the letters. She insists that memory sustains the survival of the species:

The Christian militias of East Beirut concentrated their attacks, as if to annihilate the essentially Muslim center of the city which was the beauty and the memory. They behaved as if they had to destroy History in order to assert their specificity. But like a man who has murdered the woman he loved, the Lebanese will start and have started to become the mad lovers of old Beirut (82).

By never losing sight of the primal and contradictory impulses that motivate human action, Adnan serves as an essential guide to a world where, as a friend of hers in Beirut says, "Our memories don't have any future any more" (Adnan 112).

The narrative of the nine letters functions as a part of the diasporic journey. It redefines the meaning of home. It is presented in the form of travel: inside Paris, outside Paris, and in Europe, with the journey ending in Beirut. Narrative structure, as Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska write, can be:

regarded as an intro-subjective journey. Through narrative the subject itself is allowed a regressive splitting – into fragment component selves – and is offered forms of identification for subsequent reintegration (212).

That is to say, Adnan's narrative journey is a structure of development, growth and change. She tries to acquire knowledge and solves problems. In this Journey, Adnan seems at first to descend "into the unknowing", she eventually "emerges from the tunnel that life in California or Paris can become" (Adnan 38) and finds the "right geography for [her] revelations" (Ibid. 93).

Koolaid's: The Art of War (1998) is Alameddine's first novel. The majority of the story takes place in San Francisco and Beirut, the sites of two very different wars. San Francisco from the mid-1980s into the 1990s is the main site of the AIDS epidemic, especially among the gay community. While Beirut is the site of a brutal Civil War.

Alameddine's *Koolaid* is a very complicated novel both structurally and stylistically. Kim Jensen states in "Viruses and Epidemics of Futility", the novel is divided into a series of vignettes that are presented in a seemingly disjointed manner that serves to reflect the great chaos brought by the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1992) and the AIDS epidemic. The main vignettes deal with the main characters such as Mohammad and Samir, but there are many others that introduce, and reintroduce characters creating a disjointed reading experience not found in many novels. Many of these small episodes do not even deal with tangible characters but rather figments of one of the other characters imagination. Other times the vignettes contain detailed accounts of personas, such as the lovers from opposite sides of the conflict in Beirut, who persistently remain unidentified. The reader really does not get a true idea of how all the scenes relate to each other until the end of the book.

One of the main components of Alameddine's novel and one of the few linear components are the diary entries of Samir's mother, written during the Lebanese Civil War. She gives detailed accounts of her life as a result of the war and how it affects those around her. The diaries are seventeen in number. They focus on the violence, death, and war that affect Samir's mother and her family and also the AIDS virus that is having a major impact on her son. For example, the first diary, dated March 20, 1976, gives an account barely a year after the war began (April 1975). It illustrates how innocent people are injured and killed as a result of the war: "Najwa's husband and three boys were dead. Killed by the explosion" (Alameddine 7).

Koolhaas goes back and forth over the course of more than twenty years, from childhood of various characters, until their deaths. Therefore, as Sarah Robinson states in "Rabih Alameddine", it structurally lacks a sequenced time. For example, the novel begins with Scott's death in 1990, then Alameddine presents Scott's sexual state in page 12, and his healthy case in page 28. Another example occurs in the last vignette of the novel. It deals with the death of Mohammad that occurring in the present. This can be confusing at times, but like the other vignettes, it can be understood at the end and a unified story becomes apparent. The novel lacks also a conclusion. It ends with Mohammad, the main narrator, dying unceremoniously.

The narrative voice in both Adnan and Alameddine's works vary. In the sense that, in *Of Cities*, Adnan spreads herself, across three continents – North America, Europe, and Asia. Generally, her narratives reveal symptoms of universalized postmodern experience of displacement and of fragmented identity. Therefore, her narrative voice oscillates between "we", "I", and "you":

I am saying to you that we no longer enter forests in the mythic sense. We no longer enter the universe of women, either, we no longer have that feeling of an adventurous entering, of a process that could produce unbearable frights (Adnan 18).

Indeed Adnan's hybridity is at the heart of her diaspora. She says:

There is unity in some people's lives ... a French man in Paris watches French variety shows. To my life there is no such center. I borrowed the French language, borrow their

city, buy Yugoslav shoes, Scottish Cashmere, sweaters, Italian socks (33).

For Adnan, writing is a willful journey toward the center, ending is some sort of homecoming. Home becomes the physical space from which one is initially dispersed, but she creates the world for herself. This world exists in her writing. For this reason, Adnan's books are her home (Adnan 111). She tries to bring the diaspora from the margin to the center.

Therefore, Adnan opts to use the epistolary voice throughout writing the nine letters. By adopting the epistolary voice, as H.R. Hegnauer illustrates in "About", Adnan reads the figures of landscape, nation, art and street, as easily as words in a page. In these letters, she draws graceful connections between these elements, showing her readers how to find the essence of country in a Cezanne mountain. She makes them understand diaspora by contemplating the composition of a buffet. She writes "I'm obsessed by what Cezanne and Picasso can reveal about women, about the way women are looked at" (Adnan 22). Throughout adopting the epistolary voice, Adnan writes to articulate the painfully disorienting experiences like diaspora. She says "I feel that I haven't settled anywhere, really, that I'm rather living in the world, all over, in newspapers, in railway stations, cafes, air ports..." (Ibid. 111). According to Ouyang, she narrates the nine letters to bring cohesion, coherence and structure to fragmented memories (82).

In *Koolaid's*, Alameddine chooses a stream of consciousness voice in order to tell the story of his novel. This mode of voice, according to the article titled "Stream

of Consciousness", gives the narrator's perspective by attempting to replicate the thought process of the narrator. Any sensory stimuli that the character encounters, random thoughts that might pop into his head, all this is incorporated into the narration to create a story that allows the reader to get inside a character's head. This is clear from the first time of the novel:

Time. Time is what I need right now. I can't think straight anymore. I should not have said that. I try never saying the word straight. Let's say I can't concentrate. That describes my predicament accurately. I can't speak English anymore either. Really I can't think in English. It's back to my roots. I now think and dream only in Arabic. I haven't done that for the longest time (Alameddine 1).

In this segment, the narrator gives a true picture of his case to the reader. The narrator is impacted by the AIDS epidemic, and for him, time gets very confusing.

Kooloids fits many of these criteria but takes the notion of a stream of consciousness to a new level. It follows more than just a team of characters. In this novel, Alameddine includes a numerous characters that are connected through a series of short narrations. There are the identifiable main characters, Mohammad, Samir, Samir's mother and Kurt. Their narration seem to be laid out sporadically because Alameddine alternates between each of them, and they are not given in chronological order.

Mohammad is one of the four main narrators in the novel. His narration is the first of the four that the reader encounters him in the beginning, and also the last of the four at the end of the story. Mohammad, Samir and Kurt opt to

use the first person point of view. They have different backgrounds and religious identities . Adopting the first person point of view gives the reader a sense of confusion. This confusion, according to Corinne Blackmer's "Rabih Alameddine: The Art of War", makes the reader realize that each character represents a different facet of one overall Lebanese personality. This litany of perspectives tends to cater to the cynical American view of the Middle East.

Mohammad's first person narrations introduce his sexual state as a gay character that uses his talent to cope with the war and other conflicts that he faces in life. Mohammad is the only narrator that directly communicates with the reader, allowing the audience to assume that he is the backbone of the novel. For example, there are several instances in which he talks about wanting to write a book. He says, "When I first started seeing my friends die, I wanted to write a book where all the characters died in the beginning, say in the first twenty-five pages or so" (Alameddine 18). Through this quote , the reader can infer that Alameddine created Mohammed as a character that is somewhat in his image.

Samir is also a gay character. Through his narrative, it seems as though he is focused on his individual identity, his prized national identity, and finding the meaning of his life and life in general. Samir's mother is a Lebanese woman who lives in Beirut, and whose contribution to the book is her diary entries . Though she remains nameless, one can assume that she is Samir's mother because of the events that she addresses in her entries, and the countless times in which she refers to Samir. Her story is one of the few that remains in chronological order. Her main focus is generally on the violence, death, and war that affect her and her

family and also the AIDS virus that is having a major impact on her son. Alameddine introduces her, as Robinson states, as a compassionate individual who engages the readers through introducing controversial issues and posing poignant questions. Kurt is also a gay character. His narratives indicate the positive view on his life and confirm a belief in an afterlife.

The other dialogues that take place between famous people from different cultures exist four different times throughout the novel. In each of these dialogues, there are six characters that appear everytime, Arjuna, Krsna, Eleanor Roosevelt, Krishnamurti, Julio Cortazar, and Tom Cruise. Other characters that are seen in these dialogues are Jesus, Mame Dennis, and Jalaleddine Rumi. The main theme of each of these dialogues is the search for the meaning of life. Before each dialogue, the same phrase appears: "An hour later, Arjuna and his charioteer, Krsna, on the battlefield. They are now joined by Eleanor Roosevelt, Krishnamurti, Julio Cortazar, and Tom Cruise, who looks a little lost" (Alameddine 37). These characters share the fact that their lives were impacted by either AIDS or the Lebanese Civil War. The novel does not have an understandable reason for having multiple and often unidentified narrators. This conforms the novel's theme of chaos and the loss of identity experienced in modern Lebanese society and the San Francisco gay community.

The novel offers narratives on an inadequate representation of the realities of AIDS and the Lebanese Civil War in the mass media. Alameddine writes these narratives by citing fictional examples told from the first person point of view on the exploitation of the sick and the

disregard for human life in war. These examples reflect the insufficiency of monolithic narratives of AIDS and war. Mohammad and Samir's perspectives seem to be the novel's twinned center of consciousness, and contribute to the polyphony of the novel.

Adnan and Alameddine's narrators are an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators. On the one hand, Adnan makes a connection between place and women. Throughout writing the nine letters, she conveys her judgements, pleas and information about each city she travels. Mary Layoun states that, there is also a kind of transient and intermittent community with Fawwaz, the addressee of these letters, who make up this epistolary text. Through reading these letters, readers realize that *Of Cities* both underscore the urgent need and desire for home, for community and for belonging (199). On the other hand, the several narrators in Alameddine's *Koolaid*s share the fact that their lives were impacted by either the AIDS epidemic or the Lebanese Civil War. These narrators tell their own stories and switch between memories of their childhood in Beirut and their new life in San Francisco.

The fragmented narratives in Adnan and Alameddine's works contain many embedded narrations. The nine letters, in *Of Cities*, include nine embedded narrations. They classify Adnan's travel in each European city – Barcelona, Aix-En-Provence, Skopelos, Murcia, Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome – and her arrival to Beirut. Each embedded narration narrates a different tale and reveals Adnan's meanings of womanhood, its definitions, manifestations and practices, and its relationship to manhood and humanhood historically and geographically. Narrative mobility is the core of the nine letters, as intensified by Layoun:

Privileged by virtue of education and cultural fluency in five languages, of dual citizenship and a reasonably secure financial status, and by the narrator's reasonably comfortable literary acclaim as she reads her poetry and fiction and meets with women's groups throughout her travels (177-78).

Adnan acknowledges that she has become a stranger to certain definitions of womanhood. She feels like a stranger to the places she lives in. Her experiences in various cities call into question her identity and force her to reexamine the relationship between these places and her self.

The framed narrative of the first letter, "Barcelona, June 25th, 1990", discusses freedom for women in Barcelona. Through visiting Barcelona, Adnan gives Fawwaz some insights about places: "Gaudi monuments of the city", "Tapiés" (Adnan 5). She tells him that the significance of the city derives from the significance of "the Art of Painting", especially, when she visits Picasso Museum. Picasso is the Andalusian who came to Barcelona when he was young. In this museum, Adnan revives the idea of home. She clarifies how Picasso's

grandeur is in the memory, in the belonging, in pride. ... grandeur is in his talent; in his idea of painting, in the work of the painter who transforms the ordinary object into an object of contemplation (Ibid. 6).

Adnan's embedded narrative refers to how women carry themselves in Marrakesh and Beirut:

Women of this city free, ... they appear to have control over their bodies and their movements. ... by using comparison I

could manage to grasp some aspect of the women's question. ... In Marrakesh women carry their social status much more than they carry their "soul" (2-3).

Adnan points out that the poor women are embarrassed, "as if they had to justify their existence" (Ibid.), however, the rich are invisible in their cars or homes. The great difference among women in these two countries make Adnan write a letter on "feminism" to Fawwaz.

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After that, Adnan tries to look for a response to her question of "women's problem"? What does it mean? How is it experienced?" (8). She realizes that "It's a problem of liberty. It's personal. It's social. A secret problem, and a problem of society" (Ibid.). She goes to link between women and the city, by giving another embedded tale. She gives an example of a gypsy song from a woman heard in the street. The woman's song was "a real flamenco" and "everything about her and around her, was poverty" (9). She discovers that women in this city "didn't have to be considered beautiful to dance in the street,-...- they were free" (10). At this point, she draws another comparison: "In an Arab city, in Beirut for example, young people ... would have said cruel thing. "You're too fat to dance", ... "you're too old" " (Ibid.).

In addition, men from Arab countries do not accept women who express themselves with their body in public.

The framed narrative of the second letter, "Aix-En-Provence, Monday July 23rd, 1990", discusses diaspora, which is linked to womanhood through the paintings of Cezanne and Picasso. Adnan presents Picasso's

Vauvenargues Buffet as an embedded narration to give a metaphor of diaspora. Picasso's Vauvenargues Buffet is:

a woman. A feminine object as container, a domestic object. Picasso paints the buffet, his mountain, a Spanish buffet, which is to say Spain itself, a country spelled in the feminine in French as well as in Spanish. In other words, he paints the woman/earth that he has lost... . The young Picasso, in Spain, painted portraits of men: his friend Sabartes, his self- portrait, fishermen, acrobats, children, and also women, which is to say that he painted a complete world, a kind of universe leaning against the sea or landscape. Picasso in exile paints nothing but still-lives and women, a succession of women who surrounded him.... After his departure from Spain, Picasso painted nothing but his exile... . He made paintings, drawings and engravings of women, especially during his later years. Could he have seen in women prisoners like himself, prisoners of their own sexuality, prisoners caught in their own condition? (24-26).

Ouyang explains that this metaphor works on multiple levels of association. At the outset, the Spanish buffet serves as a symbol of Spain, the country Picasso lost in his diaspora. Since Spain, both in name and concept, is defined as feminine in Spanish language. In this painting, woman is a metaphor for homeland. The shift in Picasso's paintings to women instead of men as an objects of mediation confirms to Adnan the association between women and home, therefore women and the loss of home. When Picasso paints in diaspora, he paints his diaspora and turns himself into the object of his art-woman. Women are , therefore, powerless and their role in writing, as Adnan sees it, is similar to their

place in paintings: they are the object not the subject (73-74).

Through this embedded narration, what Adnan sees in Picasso's *Vauvenargues Buffet* is precisely her own diasporic condition and practices. Ouyang asserts that:

Working outside the confines of tradition, whether social, cultural or literary, Adnan is freer to roam, both physically and intellectually; to find a definition for herself as a woman; to find her own literary expression; and to find a home of her own, as her paintings and, ... , her writings tell us (75).

Adnan has turned her diasporic self into the object of her works. She writes mainly in English about her wandering and homelessness both as an Arab and a woman, and makes the Arabic language the object of her art.

In the third letter, "Skopelos, Saturday, August 19th, 1990", the framed narrative implies that the time and place of "a lost paradise" (Adnan 33) is impossible to return to. Thus, in this letter, Adnan revives the meaning of "home". Layoun comments that "if the space of Beirut – as – home is at the far side of a tremendous temporal gap, so too is the experience of a mother's tongue out of reach" (178). Adnan gives her embedded narration to search for her mother's voice:

I went to Greece, after so many years, partly, or perhaps even mainly, because I was looking for (and am still looking for) the voice of my mother. I have lost the memory of the voice of my parents. I went to Greece hoping to hear the Greek spoken by my mother. I listened closely, and it seemed that no one spoke the way she did. I was telling

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myself that perhaps the Greek spoken in Smyrna was different: more musical, more passionate ... (45).

In this quotation, the delicate unspoken irony is that Adnan's mother was herself – a mobile woman of the diaspora. But her mobility was of a different sort than her daughter's. Her mobility was the effect of one of the first international experiments in ethnic purification in the twentieth century, following on the disastrous and disastrously ill-advised Greek invasion of Asia Minor in 1919 (Layoun 178).

Through this embedded narration, the reader discovers that, Adnan's mother never returned home; her home was no longer there to return to. Nor can Adnan herself return to or find the home of her mother's tongue. In the last letter, "Beirut, August 7th 1992", readers recognize that Adnan finds her home in newspapers, railway stations, cafés airports and, more importantly, as Adnan states, in "the books that I'm writing are houses that I build for myself" (Adnan 111).

In the next four letters, Adnan's embedded narrations reexamines her ties with Beirut and the historical ties between Spain and the Arab-Islamic world. For instance, as Adnan writes in the fourth letter, 'Murcia, November 10th, 1990:

Spain descends toward the South, and in the landscape, Arab castles follow one after the other (chimerical castles), ochre, in ruins, tenacious and crumbling, like everything that is Arabic. The plain shrinks, the high peaks stand on each side with miradors still standing guard. These

witnesses to civil wars of Arabic Spain make me think that nothing can destroy an Arab better than another Arab (49).

While Adnan presents the role of women in Ibn's Arabi's thought as a framed narrative, her embedded narrations reflect the war against Iraq. The other embedded narration tells the tale of the white pigeons and a little girl who feeds seeds to them. This scene aroused in her a sense of pain. She felt that Arabs are terrorists, not in the political and ordinary sense of the word, but because they carry inside their bodies all the deep troubles that befall their countries.

Adnan's embedded narration in "Amsterdam, Friday November 30th, 1990" introduces patience as women's virtue. In "Berlin, January 28th, 1991" the embedded narration covers the Gulf War in Iraq, by which she links the contemporary history of Iraq to world events. In "Rome, February 19th, 1992", Adnan makes her writing look like "a sort of diary" (86). According to Ouyang, Adnan does not take the whole of Rome with a single glance. Rather, Adnan's embedded narration introduces the stable and the fluid, in Rome, the past and the present, and monuments and the street. For example, in "Rome" the place of woman in Christianity is scrutinized through Michaelangelo's paintings. In addition, Rome reminds Adnan with Beirut and the entire Mediterranean culture (83). Roman ruins in turn remind Adnan of Baalbek and Syria as she writes: "I lived again my childhood's visiting sites like Baalbek and the Crusader's for tresses of Syria. We bring all our perfect innocence to these stones!" (Adnan 93).

Along the nine letters, Adnan remembers "Beirut from time to time"(4). For instance, in the first letter Bill Osborn, Adnan's friend, tells her that "he'd left New York because

... He'd lost too many friends, who died from AIDS" (Ibid.).
This makes her think about:

The misery of the homeless, the gutted streets, a level of criminality which is a veritable civil war, the crumbling of the city into the rich and the poor, Blacks and Whites, the healthy and the sick; all the anguish, the runaway corruption, the cold panic, and the death. In Beirut, many children are condemned for having inherited a war. In New York, ..., one out of eight children is born with AIDS... (Ibid.).

Therefore, Beirut becomes the major embedded narration that haunts the nine letters.

Generally, Beirut is a proper place in Adnan's life. Her question in the very first pages of her narrative is a curious one, "Beirut? But which Beirut?" (3). Ouyang asks that:

Is the question geographical-social about the multiplicity of Beirut societies, or is it historical, about the difference between Beirut in the past and Beirut now, or is it rhetorical about the Beirut in her heart and the real Beirut? (84).

As the narrative unfolds, Beirut is the "lost paradise" that embodies all the ugliness of the Arab world, as well as the potential for its destruction. Adnan longs for the city in its days of glory, between 1925 and 1975. She realizes that the ideal country it symbolizes no longer exists. As a matter of fact, Beirut can no longer be home to her, for one thing, the city "which is by excellence a woman's place, has become the exclusive domain of men" (Adnan 80).

Therefore, Adnan ends her narrative with unplanned letter from "Beirut, August 7th, 1992", in which she recounts her experience. The framed narrative is the funeral of her close friend, Janie Rubeiz. In this letter, she bids farewell to the Beirut she remembers as she says goodbye to her friend: Beirut and Janie become one. She ends a paragraph on Beirut with the sentence, "one cries over the ideal country. The tears I'm having over my friends death make a screen of light which hides her image as well as the city and its problems" (Ibid. 106).

Adnan's grief over her friend's death is framed her grief over the entire Arab world: "on my dead friend's frail shoulders, encroached upon by disintegration, I place the Arab world's destiny whose apocalyptic future we all seem to know" (Adnan 107). When she speaks of Janine's death, it is as if she were speaking of Beirut's death:

How can one ask her to come back, to rebuild herself, bit by bit, somehow or other, like the city is trying to, ask her to participate in our little occupations, ask her not to wall herself in this starless world, this waterless ocean, in which she went for ever, there where may be nothingness itself is no more. We can find her nowhere, on no continent, no space, no boat, not even beyond the visible world (Ibid. 108).

When she decides to leave Janine behind "in her dreadful last resting place" (Ibid. 113), she also bids farewell to Beirut.

Syrine C. Hout asserts that *Koolaid's*' content contains an endless critical process and is rendered absurd through irony and parody. Thus, the text is not about the Lebanese

Civil War but rather about conditions of war, furnishing a view of global history and common destiny (193). The novel is considered as a reference for readers to learn more about many taboo topics. This is conveyed through a series of short sections, or vignettes. The different types of vignettes include diary entries, e-mails, newspaper articles, holy texts/prayers, and dialogues. Each vignette contains different embedded narration.

The framed narrative of the novel centers around wars in Lebanon as well as the AIDS epidemic in the United States, two fronts where death occurs on a regular basis. In Maya Sfeir's "Koolaid's: The Art of War", or "The Inescapable Duality", Alameddine talks about death in various ways, describing in an embedded narrations the deathbeds of those suffering from AIDS as well as the sometimes instant deaths of those in Lebanon. For example, Alameddine writes, in three different cases, about death in very different ways. In one segment: "I am back in Beirut. In a stable, hiding. My father walks in. He asks me what I am doing. I tell him I killed him. He is lying on the ground, dead. We both look at his body" (75).

In this vignette, the narrator has a dream in which he kills his father. This surreal experience is not uncommon throughout the book, nor is its correlation to death. The narrator seems to be almost fascinated at the sight of his dead father's body and the experience seems to be treated lightly.

Alameddine introduces another embedded narration related to situations of death. This can be seen where the narrator talks about a poem he wanted to write on his deathbed and then makes a comment on how he is unable to.

The reason is that the writer wrote "much better than I ever could, in the thirteenth century no less" (159). Alameddine discusses the idea of the living dead. In one vignette: "Brain stem, you say? By that definition, Juan should have been declared dead long before he even got to the hospital" (95). It is about an AIDS patient with a brainstem issue. In another vignette, a similar scenario comes up. "Kurt was snoring. I sat next to his bed. I did not want to disturb him. He looked dead already. He opened his eyes suddenly" (159). In these two quotes, Alameddine brings up the idea of death as a subjective topic. In a way Alameddine lets the reader to decide what death means scientifically and emotionally. Death, in Alameddine's eyes, is not something determined by doctors, but can come sooner and often does: "Death comes in many shapes and sizes, but it always comes. No one escapes the little tag on the big toe" (1).

The sexual relationships that dominate the novel are an indication of the embedded narration. The sexual scenes are framed by the war in Lebanon and AIDS in San Francisco. The first sexual experience that is introduced in the novel, is about Samir's loss of virginity. It is not only graphic but uses language to illustrate painful sex. In the garage of the apartment building, described as "dark, damp, and putried" (Alameddine 15), and Samir "felt a wet finger penetrate [him]". Georges tells Samir that "he is a natural" and Samir repeats, "I like it. I try to help him, but it gets too painful". As Georges climaxes "the sound of gunfire erupts again" (Ibid.). This scene presents the image of a boy living everyday life in a conflicted environment. The author's statement, in this scene, is about gay sex being unsafe at this time, like dodging a bullet. Survival in relation to the

disease and the war was a matter of luck, not based on precautions or actions.

Another sexual relationship makes a link between violence and sex. This can be clear in the context of an affair, in Lebanon, between a powerful political figure's wife and a war lord. She falls in love with him and he seems to love her, but still the war and violence is the theme of their relationship and sex. At one point they are lying in bed and she feels a gun under the pillow, and he tells her that he has many more guns. He takes five guns and lays them on her belly and says she has to take one. With the loaded gun he "massages her" (Ibid. 181). When she points the gun at his head he smiles and performs fellatio on the gun. Then "she looks into his eyes. He is hers ... she orgasms" (Ibid.). This scene is dangerous and has conflicting images but still expresses love.

Alameddine presents another embedded sexual scene and frames it with the dangers of AIDS. The narrator walks to the Badlands to find someone to have sex with and "walked out with a boy ... took him home and fucked him silly" (176). The use of the word fuck as opposed to make love or have sex makes the act purely physical and takes the emotion out of it. The next morning the boy wakes up and realizes he has slept with an HIV⁻¹ positive man and gets really upset, saying that he did not know. In an act of defiance, the narrator goes to the tattoo parlor and has an "HIV+" tattooed on his chest, so that "now no one can claim [he] never told them" (Alameddine 177). Art News asked him to pose for a picture of the tattoo thinking that it was an artistic statement. This example of confusion and

¹ HIV: is the abbreviation of human immunodeficiency virus.

repercussion illustrates the domination of the disease on daily life. Furthermore, it shows how the outside community cannot understand the struggles of a gay man with AIDS, even when he attempts to make it very clear. Therefore, Alameddine tries to make his reader familiar with this type of persons: "sex is the last refuge of the miserable" (176).

As death embeddes many scenes in the novel, art occupies a large portion too. Art scenes are framed by the struggle with AIDS, a community, and the search for an identity. The artist believes that, in order to be remembered you need to leave something physical behind that will be protected or kept. For example, in one segment, Mohammad says "I tried a portrait of Juan, who had just died. ... I started another painting, a portrait of Steve, who had also just died" (Alameddine 140). By painting people who have just died, the painter is preserved the subject. Regardless of the quality, the painting is a tribute to their memory.

In another segment, Scott acknowledges this ability in art and asks Mohammad to use his ashes in a painting specifically "he wanted to be immortal" (Alameddine 103). He realizes that people will look at a painting of him and it will most likely be appreciated and never destroyed. Art is also a part of Kurt's death scene. When Kurt asks Mohammad to take his paintings, because he "can't take them on [his] trip" (Ibid. 160). Both Scott and Kurt believe that art could preserve them.

Another vignette related to art takes place when Mohammed's father asks him to show his paintings. He looked at his copies and said: "this is good, but how come you always draw the men? I think you should draw some of the women as well. Come back and show me when you

have drawn some women" (Ibid. 49). Mohammad follows his father's advice and eagerly draws a copy of Goya's "Nude Maja". He does not know how to draw the face and decides to improvise, and then returns to show his father. His father slaps him because the face looks like Mohammad's mother. Mohammad is called a pervert by his father at age seven for his attempt to replicate a painting and using his own concepts of reality to create his artwork. Later his painting sold for \$300,000 and was titled My Mother as the Nude Maja. Alameddine presents a character who uses classic art and makes it his own but his father rejected it. Art, in this scene, is used as a framed narrative, while the embedded tale shows the acceptance and exclusion in society.

One of the major embedded cultural references in the novel is the disease HIV/AIDS. Almost every character in the story is related to the disease in some way. Alameddine's characters constantly refer to HIV/AIDS related terms and the disease itself throughout the novel. Sometimes it is slight and other times it is quite obvious. The first reference to HIV/AIDS is a "KS Lesion"² (8), which is a Kaposi's sarcoma Lesion, and form various places of a person in a later stage of HIV/AIDS. The lesions are most visible and recognizable on skin, and therefore give away the HIV/AIDS status of the person who has them. Other HIV/AIDS vocabulary used throughout the novel are CMV retinitis (Cytomegalovirus retinitis), in which the infected person loses his or her eyesight. One of the narrators refers to this condition when talking of his friend who was an artist who stopped painting due to CMV

² KS Lesion: It is known as one of the AIDS-defining illnesses in the 1980s. It is a cancer that develops from the cells that line lymph or blood vessels.

retinitis. In this reference he describes the condition by saying that his friend "couldn't see worth shit due to CMV retinitis" (Alameddine 10).

War becomes a framed narrative in many segments of the novel. In these segments, the embedded narrations cover the self-awareness of HIV/AIDS, and the ignorance of HIV/AIDS by American society. For example, after an incident involving Christopher, who is HIV positive, sharing his food with his sister sparks outrage. His brother-in-law, Dennis, becomes very upset and accuses Christopher of possibly infecting his sister with HIV/AIDS (Ibid. 108-109). In response to Dennis' anger Christopher's partner, Joe, makes his position to Dennis, possibly very clear, "Neither Christopher, nor I, are here to be your HIV or AIDS education service" (Ibid.). Alameddine wants the readers to realize that the responsibility of being informed about HIV/AIDS is your own. Although Alameddine does not provide anything on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, the inclusion of HIV/AIDS vocabulary allows the reader to be exposed to the reality of the disease. Alameddine's approach is to intrigue readers to learn more about HIV/AIDS by not explaining everything to them. He believes that by planting curiosity within the readers minds, they will seek the knowledge.

Another embedded concept about HIV/AIDS throughout the novel is the ignorance of HIV/AIDS by American society. There is a mock Walton scene that illustrates that concept. At first, the narrator says "I love you" to all of the characters who already died. Then he goes on to talk about a movie called Longtime Companion, that he believes it was a joke, and "could have been called The Waltons Do AIDS". The movie is unrealistic and all the

characters died one by one. Another movie mentioned in this montage is Philadelphia (Film), which has a bad reception as well. At the end of this scene the narrator says, "Ask the reader. They have an objective view of this whole thing. Okay. Hey you! Hey you! Do you think this is enough?". The anger within the voice of the narrator reflects the ignorance by the majority of people to the disease. (Alameddine 113-14)

This concept is intensified and the message is more obvious when the narrator states, "When did the last AIDS story make a newspaper's front page? My friends die. They keep dying, but people forget. Life goes on" (Ibid. 152). In this segment, there is a reflection of the portrayal of the disease. It is often ignored in the media and because of the ignorance, more people believe lies about HIV/AIDS and are not familiar with any terms or medication that those with HIV/AIDS use. This scene is framed by news about Israel's attacking on Lebanon and many incidents concerning to Christians, Syrians, and Druze.

In *Koolaid's*, the embedded narration takes various faces. In one face, Alameddine weaves nostalgic memory and critical memory into his text. Nostalgic memory focuses on the positive aspects of the traumatized past. By contrast, critical memory incorporates the negative and bitter from the immediate past. In his novel, sweet and bitter memories exist side by side. The fragments expressing nostalgia for happier times remain anonymous, articulating perhaps the covert homesickness of the Lebanese characters abroad (Hout 194). In one segment:

I pine for pine. That is a funny way of putting it, but I really do miss the smell of pine. There are various trees back

home, each with its own charm, yet it is the pine trees I miss. ... I do miss the olive trees, and I do miss the oaks. I do miss the cedars. However, it is the smell of pine that gets me. It calls me home (Alameddine 83).

In another segment, the nameless narrator declares: "Lebanon is a piece of land ... but it's our land, our home (even if actually we are not living there). It's our Sweet Home, land we love it. So we are called Lebanese" (183). In both segments, the narrator remembers Lebanon and laments it.

On the other hand, critical memory is exhibited when Mohammad declares that he hates his sister's cooking because it "reminds [him] of home" (Ibid. 17). Later, however, when she "talks to [him] of home", he insists that he is in 'home' (Ibid. 212). Although Mohammad insists that his happiest day was when he became an American citizen and tore up his Lebanese passport, in his last moments he curses Lebanese and Americans alike. Further, he expresses his diasporic mood as follows:

I tried so hard to rid myself of anything Lebanese. I hate everything Lebanese. But I never could. It seeps through my entire being. The harder I tried, the more it showed up in the unlikeliest of places. But I never gave up. I do not want to be considered a Lebanese. But that is not up to me. ... Nothing in my life is up to me (Ibid. 243-44).

The embedded critical memory is framed by incidents related to AIDS and War.

In another face, according to Hout, Alameddine relies on the modern communications, particularly the internet and e-mail, to create what Benedict Anderson terms "long-

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distance nationalism, that is, the technological capacity of diasporic national groups to participate in the political life of their nations" (qtd. in Hout 199). The dates of the sundry letters and e-mails that Alameddine scatters throughout Koolaid range between 19 March and 2 August 1996. They encapsulate concurrent, discrepant views on what consistutes Lebanese nationalism. Depending on what speaker, anti-Arab, anti-Syrian, anti-Muslim, anti-Hizbullah, anti-Christian or anti-Israeli sentiments are prerequisites for being a true Lebanese. While electronic correspondence facilitates discussion, some mailing lists are limited to like-minded recipients. "The result is a cacophony in tune with the splintered narration of this mosaic novel". From these letters and e-mails, Alameddine tries to show the immense danger and disastrous consequences of confusing cultural and national identities and mistaking the former for the latter (199).

By choosing a gynocritical approach, Adnan relies entirely on topics drawn from her personal experience. In the nine letters, she illustrates cultural experience from cities throughout Europe and Beirut. She uses this format to provide her reader an accurate yet metaphoric vision of Europe. By using the three levels of feminist narratology as a method of analysis, the thesis draws the similarities and differences between Adnan and Alameddine's fragmented narratives. By applying the narrative voice, Adnan opts to use the epistolary voice in the nine letters. This format enables Adnan to read the figures of landscape, nation, art and street, as easily as words in a page. Unlike Adnan, Alameddine chooses a stream of consciousness voice in order to tell the story of his novel. In Koolaid, Alameddine includes a numerous characters that are connected through a

series of short narrations. Their narrations are not given in chronological order, in order to increase a sense of chaos to the novel.

By applying the narrative level, Adnan's narrator, Etel, is an intradiegetic homodiegetic. She conveys her judgements, pleas and information about each city she travels. In each city, she narrates a different tale framed by a description of this city: buildings, trees, streets, museums... etc. The embedded tale of each city reveals Adnan's meanings of womanhood and its relationship to manhood and humankind historically and geographically. Like Adnan, Alameddine's narrators are intradiegetic homodiegetic. They share the fact that their lives were impacted by either the AIDS epidemic or the Lebanese Civil War. These two fronts become the framed narrative to the whole segments of the novel. Each vignette contains an embedded narration, discussing sex, death, art ... etc.

In *Of Cities*, the narrative of the nine letters contains a unity, both geographically and historically. Adnan gives an integral and integrating history to the different places of her wandering. Unlike Adnan, Alameddine's *Koolaid* is a very complicated novel both structurally and stylistically. It is divided into a series of vignettes that are presented in a disjointed manner that serves to reflect the great chaos brought by the Lebanese Civil War and AIDS epidemic.

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أشكال سردية لشتات الحرب في أعمال مختاره لكاتبات وكتاب امريكين من أصول عرقية : دراسة نقدية نسائية

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعريف بنظرية «النقد النسائي» لألين شوالتز وهي النقد الذي يعتمد على بناء إطار نسائي عن طريق تحليل الأعمال الأدبية النسائية من أجل إيجاد نماذج جديدة تعتمد على دراسة الخبرة النسائية بدلاً من الاعتماد على نظريات ونماذج ذكورية. كما تهدف إلى ربط هذه النظرية بموضوع شتات الحرب، ففي هذه الدراسة استخدم الكتاب المختارين من النساء والذكور تجربة الحرب كخلفية أو أساس لرواياتهم . تعد هذه التجربة سبباً مباشراً لإحساسهم «بالشتات».

ففي هذه الدراسة استخدمت النظرية النسائية الروائية لسوزان لانسر كمنهج لتحليل النصوص المختارة . ويعتبر هذا المنهج أساس للإجابة على أحد الأسئلة الأكثر تعقيداً بالنسبة للنقد النسائي ألا وهو: هل يوجد كتابة نسائية أو تاريخ نسائي للكتابة؟ هل هناك اختلافات جوهرية في كتابة النساء والذكور؟ و للإجابة على هذه التساؤلات، قدمت لانسر ثلاث عناصر للمقارنة بين الأعمال الأدبية النسائية و الذكورية ، ألا وهم: الصوت الروائي، المستوى الروائي والحبكة الروائية، وتم اختيار عمل لإتيل عدنان وعمل لربيع علم الدين للتطبيق.

التقسيم الروائي عند أعمال عدنان وعلم الدين: دراسة روائية نسائية
يهدف هذا الفصل إلى المقارنة بين استخدام عدنان للتقسيم الروائي في مدن ونسوة: رسائل إلى فواز واستخدام علم الدين للتقسيم الروائي في الإينز البار:

فن الحرب. واستخدم هذا الفصل المستويات الروائية النسائية الثلاثة كمنهج للمقارنة.

فمن خلال التسع خطابات قامت إيتيل عدنان بإيضاح فكرة الخبرة الثقافية من خلال زيارتها لمدن أوروبا وبيروت. وشرعت في استخدام هذا الشكل الروائي "الخطابات" لتقديم رؤية واضحة لهذه المدن للقارئ.

واستخدمت عدنان صوتاً واحداً في هذه الخطابات مما مكنها من قراءة الأمم، الشعوب، الفن، الشوارع... إلخ، بسهولة ويسر، وتقديم نماذج نسائية مختلفة في كل خطاب على حدا. وبالعكس اختار علم الدين صوت تيار الوعي في روايته واستعان بعدد كبير من الشخصيات يربطهم مجموعة أو سلسلة من الأشكال الروائية (خطابات - مقاطع - قصائد - إيميلات... إلخ)

استخدام عدنان لشخصية واحدة لسرد خطاباتها مكنها من عرض قصة مختلفة في كل خطاب، محاطة بوصف تفصيلي لكل مدينة: أشجارها، بناياتها، شوارعها، متاحفها... إلخ. وبالمثل وعلى الرغم من استخدام علم الدين لأكثر من راو كان يربطهم نفس الخلفية ألا وهي خطر مرض الإيدز والحرب الأهلية في لبنان، إلا أنه استطاع وضع الفكرتين كلتاهما كإطار لكل مجموعة من الرواية و التي يندرج تحتها القصة الروائية الضمنية، مثل: الجنس، الموت، الفن... إلخ.

تناول عدنان للحبكة الروائية يختلف عن علم الدين. فتقديم عدنان للوحدة التاريخية والجغرافية من خلال التسع خطابات مكنها من عرض تاريخ مترابط لكل مدينة زارتها، ولكن رواية علم الدين معقدة أسلوباً وبناءً، حيث إن القارئ لا يستطيع معرفة البداية من النهاية.