

**Identity and the Culinary Diasporic Memoir:
Asserting the Arab Selfhood through Food in Suheir
Hammad's *Drops of this Story* and Diana Abu
Jaber's *The Language of Baklava***

الهوية ومذكرات الطهي في الشتات: تأكيد الذات العربية من خلال الطعام في
قطرات من هذه القصة لسهير حماد ولغة البقلاوة لديانا أبو جابر

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Abstract:

This article spotsthe light on how, through the use of the memoir genre, Diana Abu Jaber and Suheir Hammad purposefully show the complexities of their identities. It emphasizes onhow they assert their Arab identity through cooking Arab food within the U.S. landscape. It also stresseson how as contemporary Arab American memoirists, Abu Jaber and Hammad tend to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western worlds, and rely on the journey motif in the search for their identities. The purpose of this study is to show how, in their culinary diasporic memoirs, the writers enhance the nostalgia of the homeland and remembering of the beautiful sense of Jordan and Palestine, via smell and taste memory.

Keywords : Nostalgia, Culinary Diasporic Memoir, Identity, Food.

ملخص البحث

يلقي هذا المقال الضوء على كيفية عرض ديانا أبو جابر وسهير حماد، لهويتهم المعقدة، عن طريق استخدام النوع الأدبي المذكورة. إنه يوضح كيف تثبتان هويتهم العربية من خلال طهي الطعام

العربي داخل المشهد الأمريكي. ويؤكد أيضًا كيف تقوم أبو جابر وحماد بصفتهم كاتبتين مذكرات عريبتين أمريكيتين معاصرتين، بسد الفجوة بين العالمين الشرقي والغربي، والاعتماد على عنصر الرحلة في البحث عن هوياتهن. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو إظهار كيف، من خلال مذكرات الطهي في الشتات الخاصة بهن، تعزز الكتابات حنين الوطن وتذكر الإحساس الجميل بالأردن وفلسطين، عن طريق ذاكرة الرائحة والذوق

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحنين ، مذكرات الطهي في الشتات ، الهوية ، الطعام



I- Introduction:

Culinary tradition or Arab cuisine is interlinked with identity where Abu Jaber and Hammad negotiate their assorted ethnic identity through food. It is their means of resisting conformity to Western norms of imposing their food traditions and this allows them to “reveal [their] inner landscape of Arabness through ‘memorable/memorial’ subversion.”² Within this context, food becomes symbolically meaningful in that it introduces a new code of expressing and of preserving their identity. Arab cuisine is complexly significant in that it plays the role of cultural, social, and ethnic marker of one’s inclination to a particular group and thus a signifier of their selfhood. So what is the relation between food, memory, and identity? How is it perceived as a social and cultural marker?

Abu Jaber and Hammad employ food or culinary codes as a symbolic tool or strategy to evoke and decipher certain meanings related to cultural identity. They create a diasporic space formed out of mosaic compositions via the medium of food. It is their gate of entering their ancestral lost homeland. Mehta confirms that, “it becomes the starting point of culinary pilgrimage and the site of creative exploration.”³ The foodscape, as a motif in Abu Jaber’s and Hammad’s works, is a spatial instrument for memory through which the passing of the family traditions, is combined with black ethnic cookery for Hammad. Marta Cariello asserts that,

Food, its preparation and the ritualistic aspect of it often constitute a form of articulation of symbolic communication in the individual and collective memory of exile, memory is reshaped by exile itself, id performed at the crossroads of new ethnic, class, and gender configurations.⁴

The migratory memoir or diasporic memoir is a combination of travel writing as well as self/autobiographical writing. The culinary adds food as an extra ingredient. The culinary diasporic memoir, takes food as an important component in re-living the homeland's past via nostalgic cooking. Such a hybrid genre of the culinary migratory memoir helps in the construction of the self, in which smell or taste memories significantly trigger homesickness via the recalling of sweet past.

Diana's and Suheir's culinary memoirs stress the sensory pleasure of tasting food with family. They include even the metaphorical representation of food that encourages the interpretation of the text via food; i.e: (culturally, politically, psychologically, anthropologically...) *The Language of Baklava* and *Drops of this Story* build culinary bridges between home and host land. Family bonds and homeland memories are strengthened through sharing food at home. Actually, "a particular smell or taste of food would trigger a chain of memories that are vital to the growth of the writer."⁵

Abu Jaber's and Hammad's memoirs record childhood memories which are recalled through the scents and savors of food. Obviously, taste memory empowers them to spontaneously reveal how culinary practices re-create the Arab identity in the diaspora. Since all languages are pervaded by patriarchal language (or colonized by men), so as female memoirists, they resort to food as their language of expression to "transgress the boundaries of patriarchal discourse that creates institutionalized food identities for women."⁶

The kitchen as a private and an empowering space, considered as women's specific area, encourages them to re-narrate their stories through food and cooking. The kitchen as a foodscape is

protected from any external interference or intervention. Transnational food practices often re-fashion the migrant identity, where culinary memoirs undeniably involve the journey motif (whether metaphorical or physical) as they generally travel through food memory. According to Paula Torriero Pazo,

In this kind of memoirs, food is not merely a detail or a background ornament: food becomes the protagonist, playing many different and even opposite roles, such as that of identity marker, an act of trust and love, a bond or a chasm between generations of immigrants, or the symbolic material grounds of memory, superstitions, and religious beliefs, among many other nuances.⁷

The insertion of ethnic recipes within the culinary memoir stresses the writers' need to re-invent a forepassed moment through the flavorful nostalgic memory recall.

The culinary migrant/diasporic memoir does not tell about a food adventure, rather it documents the complicated journey sought by the writer during the constant movement and includes recall and anamnesis. The homeland is presented with its alluring past via traditional food trajectories and practices, supporting the slow food Arab culture as opposed to American fast food.

Taste and memory are two intricately linked elements because the memory of a specific food is connected to the experience of that food.

Culinary memoirs recall experiences with food through taste memory. Taste functions as a recall cue which aids associative memory. [...] Taste memory is a chain of memories that will enable a person to remember people and places through food. [...] Taste memories are long lasting, have emotional content and need not have informational content. Conditioned taste aversions are also due to

taste memory. The emotional content is vital for the memoirist as human experiences remembered through emotions.⁸

The culinary memoir celebrates the emotional satisfaction and delight garnered in taste memories to remember episodes from Suheir's and Diana's lives. The culinary memoir triggers other memories related to a jumble of emotions involving family, friends, and homeland. According to Fabio Paraseoli, "...Food memories are far from being carved in our mind once for all; rather, they interact uninterruptedly with our emotional, physical and motivational states."⁹

Diasporic groups, in this respect, employ the culinary memoir to reunite with the past, understand their present and react to their future. Diasporic culinary memoirists reconsider their own madeleines to proceed in their lives. They employ culinary savory memories to attach with a network of bygone family stories. Food, in this context, becomes the major point that mirrors the ethnicity of the diasporic writer. The heavenly taste of ethnic gustatory food through the combination of homeland ingredients is a crucial element in shaping the nostalgic experience of diasporic memoirists. Evidently, homeland yearning is evoked through taste memory in which the writer of the diasporic memoir wishes to "remember the simplicity of childhood and life back in "homeland" while simultaneously being cognizant of the impossibility of this endeavor"¹⁰

II- Nostalgic Homeland: Revamping the Past via Food:

Suheir's nostalgic vision gives birth to taste memory, which brings to life the homeland via the memory of food. Her narrative is imbued with culinary nostalgia and conducts migrant memories that travel with the diasporic self to the homeland.

Hammad's individual identity is shaped by foodscapes, as she believes in the power of culinary codes, which are so evocative via revitalizing her home. "My ears are filled with the natal juice of this tale," she writes of her 1973 refugee camp birth, "The dates, pomegranates, figs and cactus pears that my father brought home swam in the nectar of this story. I drank it. Chewed this

song lives ago. I once swallowed a fig whole, and it planted this story into my belly.”¹¹

Hammad herself, as a special composition, reflects the multicultural aspects of her identity that are recurrent with regard to food. She maintains, “I tell you I was raised around the delicious stinks of the ghetto. Fried plantains and smoked reefers, my mother’s stuffed eggplant and the neighbor’s pork ribs. Our apartment building was always swaying with the smells of the East, the Caribbean, and the South.”¹² Hammad explains that when she was younger she wanted to eat the typical American food, because the Arab food made her seem different, peculiar, or bizarre “Why couldn’t we just eat pancakes and bacon like everybody else? We had to have olives at every meal and pita bread with everything. I know now that I always loved that food. It’s just hard to be different all the time.”¹³

However, when she has grown up, she has learnt to appreciate her difference because it is not a bad difference. The kind of food she was disinterested in as a child, suddenly transforms into a new kind that principally ensures a vital connection with her native land. And when Arab food gets popular in America she becomes annoyed and resented at the way white Americans prefer to eat it, as they mispronounce the word “hummus” for “ghummus,” because this is a way of altering the authentic Arab identity. She writes,

The time I heard them white girls order falafel in their oh-so-cute voices. They wanted it extra crispy, as though it were some fried chicken or potato chips. I wanted to let them know that falafel is only made two ways; good and not good. [...] Almost choked when I heard them ask for ghummus ‘on their sandwiches. Wanted to tell them it was pronounced hummus. [...] When they were walking out, I hear them talking about how much they loved Israeli food and wasn’t that belly dance music oh-so-cute? I

swallowed it down. Wanted to belly dance
on their heads.¹⁴

Complexly, Hammad's sense of un-belonging is strongly heightened because of the semiology of food. She stands at the crossroads of being Arab and American at the same time. Her Arab family considers her as American while Americans perceive her as Arab because she fasts in Ramadan, and eats hummus and falafel. One example is when she refuses to eat her grandfather's chicken who thinks of her as American, "My grandpa would yell at me when I wouldn't eat his chickens. I was used to Perdue¹³, not these sorry, straggly birds that just a few days ago I saw running around the roof. He'd give me one of his daughter's dirty looks and call me a spoiled American brat."¹⁵

Hammad's realization of her inclination toward her Arab selfhood is made possible through admitting how much she regrets hating Arab food as a little immigrant kid, "trying to fit in," as she has neither liked mayonnaise and cheese, nor hot dogs and apple pie. She argues,

I know now that this story was in the olive oil we sprinkled on our hummus. In the tomato juice that squirted as we prepared tabouleh for parties. When it became cool to eat hummus, falafel, tabouleh, and pita with everything, it was too late. I had already wasted years of trying to trade my labneh sandwiches for peanut butter and jelly, which I didn't even like.¹⁶

Moreover, as an immigrant, Diana, in *The Language of Baklava*, is conscious of time and space compression, pointedly moving back and forth between America and Jordan in order to re-create herself out of the memories and recollections of her father's history. But this is certainly incomplete without the food gatherings that set the bridges for connecting the family together. She asserts in the foreword, "memories give our lives their fullest shape, and eating together helps us to remember." The gatherings of Diana's cousins, aunties, and uncles in America mean that

everyone is hungry “for home, for family, for the old smells and touches and tastes.”¹⁷

Preparing shish kabob in the diaspora reminds Bud- Diana’s father- and his brothers of their life in Jordan. Indeed, “the heat, the spices, the preparation for cooking, and the rituals for eating were all the same as when they were children, eating at their parents’ big table.”¹⁸ Before going to live in Jordan, Diana –born in Syracuse- finds it difficult to understand her father’s nostalgia for the old country. She says about him describing how he communicates with his nostalgic chicken liver, “Bud misses the old country so much, it’s like an ache in his blood. On his days off, he cooks and croons in Arabic to the frying liver and onions songs about missing the one you love. Then he gazes fondly at the frying liver as if it is singing sweetly back to him. I don’t understand this yet.”¹⁹

As Diana travels for the first time to Jordan for a year, she misses American pancakes, hamburgers, and ice cream. She writes, “My mouth falls open; I’d forgotten about pancakes. In that instant I miss them unbearably and completely. It washes over me all the food I forgot: pancakes, ice cream, hamburgers.”²⁰ However, the factor of time widens the space that Jordan takes in Diana’s mind, while America’s space is diminished. “Sometimes I lose track of what language I’m in and gibber between the two of them, substituting English words for Arabic and vice versa.”²¹ Now her favorite breakfast is no longer pancakes but bread doused with oil and zaatar. There are only a few incidents that remind her of her former life, for instance, a woman who laughs like her grandmother. She reflects on her life, “when these reminders occur I stop and think: Am I still an American? And it confuses me because it seems like a kind of unbecoming or re-becoming - to turn into this other Diana- pronounced Dee-ahna, a Jordanian girl who has forgotten the taste of fluffernutter sandwiches or Hershey’s bars.”²² Even when she goes back to America, she rediscovers that she does not like American food, and probably because she has forgotten it, declaring, “this is American food, I tell myself. I don’t like it, I think, because I have somehow forgotten it.”²³

Ethnic food becomes a comforting tool for the diasporic writer. Shoba Narayan confirms that, “A smell can carry a memory and certain foods can compress the memory of an entire childhood in them.”²⁴ Diana correlates taste and smell with emotion and memory. This is particularly obvious when she is nervous and does not want to return to her apartment. So she goes to the International Market and buys “little cellophane bags of amber colored spices, some fresh pita bread, braided cheese, a small glass jug of olive oil, a pomegranate, little plastic containers of hummus, [her] favorite Arabic bean dip- *ful mudammas*- and a small bunch of oranges.”²⁵ Here the act of picking savory flavored Jordanian food from the supermarket offers Diana a healing unique experience. This is similar to Bud’s eating knaffea with its rich, dense, sweet, soft layers that offer him a beautiful dream of a pleasant memory, “now the knaffea calms Bud and Uncle Hal down. It makes them remember their mother, and they forget again about being surrounded by Americans.”²⁶

Forming a food connection is what matters for the whole family. Ethnic food sustains them in the diaspora as it emblemizes home. It captures the complex movement between homeland and host land because the memoir solicits to establish a transnational identity. Uncle Jack calls the magloubeh “our national identity.”²⁷ Indeed, Diana argues that what her family cares about is their meeting together, talking, and laughing, forgetting that they are in America, and letting the magloubeh or any other traditional meal transport them to Jordan. She avows, “I only know that we can’t stop laughing. We watch the adults eat, and we laugh some more. We’re not there for the food so much as for the pure electricity of one another’s presence.”²⁸

As a diasporic subject, Bud’s longing for leaving America and returning to Jordan; his “true country” and especially for reuniting with his family around one big table is at the center of his identity. He tells his family, “In Jordan, we’re going to get a big enough table so the company can sit in the kitchen with us!”²⁹ Diana’s father Ghassen Saleh Abu-Jaber, aka Bud, who has a low income, works at least four jobs a day, and who is tired of life, finds pleasure and delight only in cooking Arabian food in the

weekend or during holidays for his family and relatives who are "...hungry: for home, for family, for the old smells and touches and tastes."³⁰ Afraid of losing his traditional cultural values, Bud tries to protect his family by keeping his daughters always attached to the Jordanian culture via the medium of food. Through preparing tasty platters of "*shish kabob*, stuffed grape leaves, stuffed squash, *kibbeh*, *baklava* and special rice", he teaches his daughters the importance of extended family company through sharing Arabian cooked food. Diana says, "I half wonder if Jordan would exist if Bud weren't there,"³¹ because eating Jordanian traditional food makes them "... Arab at home and American in the streets"³²

Diana's paternal Aunt Aya meaningfully tells her that Bud's obsession or passion of cooking Arab food is purposeful because he "...cooks to remember, but the more he eats, the more he forgets" and that he was eating "...the shadow of a memory"³³. In this context Carole Fadda contends that, "This reclamation of the food's Arab origins, however, is not so much an affirmation of her father's nostalgia as it is an assertion of her own Arab identity within a landscape that often omits such a presence from its genealogy and history or that presents it as perpetually foreign."³⁴ Diana is deeply affected by her father's perspective who has worked as a "cultural ambassador" by trying hard to introduce and popularize Arab food to the American society. She praises the lunch boxes she takes to school full of delicious Arab food and pities children whose food looks and smells disgusting and unappetizing. In America, she became famous for her lunch boxes full of delicious garlic-roasted lamb and stuffed grape leaves. It is true that Abu Jaber's family do not achieve their dream to make food a tool that assures the rapprochement between cultures (mainly because their American neighbors survey them with suspicion as they barbecue in the backyard) but at least they succeed in affirming their ethnic culture and tradition.

Bud's aspirations of opening a restaurant in the U.S to cook Arab and Arab American hybrid food is typical of the family's understanding of their blended Arab American identity. This reflects the mixture he grew up with, the only thing that makes

sense to him. The new idea about their restaurant is that it will fuse different styles of food ranging from Arab, American, and even Italian food. This golden place will become a “Shangri-la” which would “heal the wounds between East and West”,³⁵ by approbating all cultures, languages, and religions. It becomes the place that symbolizes the story of any diasporic minority American whose dream is respect, dignity, recognition, and self-affirmation. Dreaming to open a restaurant in the diaspora that serves ethnic food stands for the memoirist’s yearning to make their ethnic food known to the mainstream culture.

However, Bud’s dream restaurant turns into a fast food serving American burgers and French fries. In the end, what mattered for him is preparing and serving food, whether Arab or American because the process itself of “cooking and feeding people and watching them eat”³⁶ is the symbol of the joyous family gathering around meals. He incites his daughters to live Jordan in America. As a second generation immigrant, Diana finds it difficult to reconcile with the Jordanian part of her identity. She understands that she lives in America as a “transnational citizen.” “The memoirist’s father cooks Jordanian food but her mother insists on cooking American food. The writer is unsure of patronizing any one side of her roots. This shift is demonstrated through the positioning of the recipes.”³⁷ But the smells and tastes of Jordan have always been within her, an inseparable part from her. The scent of mint, the crust of bread, and the taste of dried yogurt vividly and constantly return to her dreams.

When Diana left her parents’ house to study at the State University of New York in Oswego, she started skipping dining meals, and snacking at the Sweet Shoppe. She loses weight because of the appetiteless dining hall with its lifeless top sauces and tepid ingredients, and misses Bud’s meals, craving and meditating over them. When she visits her parents’ house, she eats with abandon her favorite roast chicken, roast kabobs, and grape leaves. She thus re-visits the past, and feels the old place’s presence via Bud’s cooking. With every bite, she senses Jordan’s

sun-soaked air, full of emotion, and glowing within her. She eats “like an amnesiac,” delighted with the sweetness of return.

Throughout the memoir, American or Arab recipes are always preceded by a descriptive adjective such as Comforting Grilled Velveeta Sandwiches, Sentimental Hot Chocolate or Magical *Muhammara*, Poetic *Baklava*, that makes the narrator conclude that it is food that made Diana change her perspective about the need to have one home and the whole world can be her home. Diana names her memoir after the serenading, sentimental baklava or baklawa because its poetic taste and smell give it a new way of tasting Arabic food. Its layered, buttery phyllo pastry, flavored with mild, roasted pistachios, perfumed and sweetened with orange blossoms allows its magical scent to bring with it “the mysteries of time, loss, and grief, as well as promises of journeys and rebirth.”³⁸ Undoubtedly, “The unusual title of the memoir captures the exclusivity of the author’s parent culture. The Baklava is a Middle Eastern sweet pastry made of layers of *filo* filled with chopped nuts sweetened by syrup or honey. By naming her memoir after an exotic dessert the author rouses the curiosity of the reader and establishes her identity as someone different, special and mysterious.”³⁹

Diana finally believes that her true home exists in Jordan because it is embedded in her blood. She reconciles with her second self, and wants to go to Jordan for a grant to write a novel about characters who move between America and the Middle East. Throughout her process of self-recovery, she understands that Jordan is a familiar place, “socially lush, and deeply welcoming than I’d ever expected it to be. I knew as soon as the air plane door opened onto the clean desert night, the scents of jasmine, dust, and mint weaving through the air [...] calling me back, as if to say, *here it is, the place you were meant to be, at last.*”⁴⁰

By the end of the memoir, Diana’s second self is awakened. She says to it “Come back” calling the Jordanian inescapable memories that became an inherent part of her identity construction, re-living the smell of Jordan by looking at the stars in the sky through the glass window, and yearning, “there is tea

and mint here, there is sugar, there is dark bread and oil. I must have these ingredients near me: children, hometown, fresh bread, long conversations, animals; I must bring them very near. The second self draws close, like a wild bird, easy to startle away: It owns nothing, and it wants nothing, only to see, to taste, and to describe.”⁴¹

She concludes that she is certainly a Bedouin, missing, and longing for “every place, every country” crying out “I never want to leave any of these places” and there is no one home. She gets easily attached to the fruits and vegetables, the dishes and music of every place she lives in, and it becomes part of her, growing and living within her.

Diana’s father as well ends up living through borders ensuring Jordan’s presence through food and validating the in-between cultural presence. She states, “My father and his brothers fly back and forth, back and forth, whisking over the oceans and continents. They live their lives in the air, in the ether of in-between, the borderlands. Whenever they see one another they cook, they scoop the warm rice up in the curve of their palms, bring it to their fingertips, and sometimes they feed one another, hand to mouth, in this greatest of intimacies.”⁴² Diana and her father finally understand that they are- as Mo Kadeem, Bud’s friend, says- “like one of the pine trees planted in the Jordan Valley. As soon as you take it away from its home, it dries right up.”⁴³

Diana’s self has been torn open, and she will never be whole again. Now, in America, she herself cooks –like Bud- all the dishes she ate in Jordan, “the simple Bedouin flavors- meat, oil, and fire” because she is “trying to live in the taste of things.”⁴⁴ She always loves to have the comforting scents of mint, zaatar, cumin, and sumac circulating around her apartment. Her sense of distance between places falls apart, as she concludes that geographies are turning liquid, that the distance between Jordan and America is disintegrating, and that every person is somehow connected to every other person.

III- Conclusion:

Abu Jaber and Hammad write their memoirs in order to be able to understand their hybrid identities, to cope with and accept their difference. They learn to love their difference and create beauty out of the complexities of their identities.

This article has tried to show that in their memoirs, Diana Abu Jaber and Suheir Hammad, have represented the culinary from a postcolonial perspective in order to negotiate the hybrid identity in the diasporic space. They reveal how their transnational selves are forged within the context of border crossing and cultural interaction. *The Language of Baklava* and *Drops of this Story*- as culinary memoirs- with their embodiment of “memory politics”, relating notions of childhood and home to cross-cultural subjects that find themselves obliged to live between two worlds, importantly accentuate the idea of constructing identity in the diaspora.

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² Brinda Mehta, *The Semiosis of Food in Diana Abu Jaber’s Crescent*. In *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*. Ed. Layla Al Maleh. New York: Rodopi, 2009, 204.

³ Brinda Mehta, 210.

⁴ Marta Cariello, “Bodies Across: Ahdaf Souief, Fadia Fakir, Diana Abu Jaber.” In *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*. Ed. Layla Al Maleh. New York: Rodopi, 2009, 334.

⁵ Shodhgang, “Remembering through Food: Migratory Culinary Memoirs.”, 147.

⁶ Varma Vrinda, “Constructing Women Identities through Food Memoirs”. In *Odysseys of Plates and Palates: Food, Society and Sociality*. Eds: Simeon S. Magliveras and Catherine Gallin. Inter Disciplinary Press. Oxford. London. 2015, 1.

⁷ Paula Torreiro Pazo, *Diasporic Tastescapes: Intersections of Food and Identity in Asian American Literature*. Zurich: Zweigniederlassung, 2016, 94.

⁸ Shodhgang, 152.

⁹ Fabio Paraseoli, “Hungry Engrams: Food and Non-Representational Memory.” In *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think, and Be Merry*. Eds. Fritz Alhoff & Dave Monroe. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, 113.

¹⁰ Anita Mannur, *Culinary Fictions in South Asian Diasporic Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010, 33.

¹¹ Suheir Hammad, *Drops of this Story*. New York: Harlem River Press, 1996, 51.

- ¹² Suheir Hammad, 6.
¹³ Suheir Hammad, 51.
¹⁴ Suheir Hammad, 72.
¹⁵ Suheir Hammad, 41-42.
¹⁶ Suheir Hammad, 51-52.
¹⁷ Diana Abu Jaber, *The Language of Baklava*. New York: Anchor Books, 2005, 6.
¹⁸ Diana Abu Jaber, 19.
¹⁹ Diana Abu Jaber, 20.
²⁰ Diana Abu Jaber, 36.
²¹ Diana Abu Jaber, 58.
²² Diana Abu Jaber, 58.
²³ Dina Abu Jaber, 73.
²⁴ Shoba Narayan, *Monsson Diary: A Memoir with Recipes*. New York: Penguin Group, 2003, 51.
²⁵ Diana Abu Jaber, 322.
²⁶ Diana Abu Jaber, 119.
²⁷ Abu Jaber, 129.
²⁸ Abu Jaber, 129-130.
²⁹ Abu Jaber, 134.
³⁰ Abu Jaber, 6.
³¹ Abu Jaber, 218.
³² Abu Jaber, 5.
³³ Abu Jaber, 190.
³⁴ Carole Fadda Corney, "Reimagining the Ancestral Homeland." *Contemporary Arab American Literature: Transnational Reconfigurations of Citizenship and Belonging*. New York: New York University Press, 2014, 45.
³⁵ Abu Jaber, 172.
³⁶ Abu Jaber, 325.
³⁷ Shodhgang, 194.
³⁸ Abu Jaber, 191.
³⁹ Shodhgang, 163.
⁴⁰ Abu Jaber, 295.
⁴¹ Abu Jaber, 327.
⁴² Abu Jaber, 326.
⁴³ Abu Jaber, 313.
⁴⁴ Abu Jaber, 318.