

# Natural Areas and Places in Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* Reflecting on the Status of Arabs in the US

RASHIDEH GHAZI BADRAN

DOI: 10.53720/EMKJ5532

*Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to examine the human connection with nature, place, and the physical environment in Mohja Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006) in order to demonstrate the ways the Arab American author employs these themes to reflect the diasporic experience of her protagonist, providing (in)direct commentary on the wavering location of Arab Americans in repellent contexts, on the one hand, and offering readers a possible solution, on the other. This paper, then, explores the portrayal of nature, place, and environment in Kahf's novel as an active agent that accompanies the protagonist throughout the events of the plot to finally highlight the way she finds to reconcile with the world, blend differences, and find inner balance.*

## INTRODUCTION

During the late twentieth century, the number of Arab immigrants to North America increased significantly. This increase has been accompanied with the development of literature written by Arab immigrants—previously called Mahjar literature, but in contemporary scholarship known as Arab American Literature, which should be read as “a literature in its own right,” as Majaj insists (“Arab-American Literature” 3). In the writing of the contemporary generation, the idea of home has been highly reflected, especially as many of these works discuss moving from

homeland to the host-land, where characters try to negotiate their wavering position between worlds. Women writers have especially flourished in reflecting the theme of home since they, as Bahareh Lampert argues, struggled to “find home among the oppressive and empowering forces of both the US and the Middle East” (1).

Influenced by theories of postcolonialism and feminism, Arab American literature has expanded its themes in recent years, which coincides with the emergence and accomplishments of a new generation of Arab American women writers. Issues of gender, class, race, color, ethnicity, and identity have provided a backdrop for works produced by significant authors, such as Naomi Shihab Nye, Lisa Majaj, Diana Abu Jaber, Mohja Kahf, Joanna Kadi, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Suheir Hammad, Laila Lalami, Evelyne Accad, Mervat Hatem, Samia Serageldin, and Laila Halaby, in addition to many others who have become well-established writers of a new generation adopting more theoretically inflected feminist approaches.

Contemporary Arab American female writers have moved beyond ideas of nostalgia or the search for home to discuss “topics that are considered as taboo in their countries of origin” such as resistance to conventions and male dominance that undermine their abilities and freedom (Ulayyan 38). Themes highlighted in their works range from subverting stereotypes about Arabs and Arab females, confronting racism as well as socio-cultural and political exclusion, voicing cultural critique and self-criticism, to reflections on the anxiety regarding the conflictual political relations between their homeland and the US, fighting for recognition, rejecting gender discrimination, searching for identity, and the advocacy of intercultural dialogue (Majaj, “Arab-American Literature” 3–7). Arab American women writers have continued to challenge traditional gender roles and to explore the conjunctions of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and politics, while they have also started to shed more light on the dilemma of identification and belonging in diaspora (Majaj, “Arab-American Literature” 7–10).

Much Arab American writing has been focusing on the experience of expatriates in transitional locations, or “the transit lounge of cultures,” as anthropologist James Clifford termed it (7). As a consequence, nature has been “a peripheral topic in most critical interpretations of Arab American literary writings” (1), as Ismet Bujupaj remarks. This might be attributed to the belief that nature is not likely to exist in a transit lounge; therefore, it is not considered fertile ground for research. However, despite the absence of notable critical work on the treatment of natural areas, environment and places in Arab American literature, scholarship has slowly

turned towards portrayals of nature, as the intellectual climate began to foreground ecofeminist perspectives.

Critics have started to focus on the imagery of nature and place in relation to the socio-cultural and political status of diasporic figures. As Edward Said indicates in his *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, immigrants and people who travel have the advantage of a multiple spatial vision (185–186). In the same vein, Bujupaj points out that Arab American literary production offers the advantage of exploring peoples' experience in “doubled places” (2). In this sense, diaspora literature can utilise nature, place, and environment simultaneously in different places through descriptions of one's homeland and of the place of displacement. In fact, criticism on Arab American literature can greatly benefit from exploring the ways in which diaspora, or more precisely immigration and displacement, affects human relationship with natural areas and places. Nature presentation in Arab American writing is not used in vain, or for purposes of mere amusement through lengthy descriptive paragraphs, but to reflect both on cultural politics and on the formation or stability of the diasporic figures' identity (Bujupaj 2).

In diaspora literature, returning to the place of origin is considered essential for finding and stabilising diasporic characters' identity and is best understood in the tradition of “narratives of return.” “Return narratives recount the adventures embarked upon by diasporic subjects in an attempt to approach and comprehend their origins, most of the time in the hope of resolving the conflicts and contradictions they encounter in their sense of self” (Arami 49). These narratives, eventually, “formulate identities beyond singular national affiliations; they write the diaspora and establish a transnational, diaspora consciousness” (Kindinger 85). Experiencing new environments involves direct and indirect contact or interaction with nature, which plays, in turn, an important role in shaping the personalities of diasporic subjects and affects the way they see things. Thus, return travels and the sojourns undertaken by diasporic figures are of paramount importance, since they combine the discovery of new environments or places with the discovery of their own self (Farley 12; Ulayyan 9).

I suggest that nature, environment, and place are employed in these novels to reflect on human relations and sociopolitical issues. More specifically, I argue that Mohja Kahf, author of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, utilises imagery of nature, place, and environment to offer her readers a critique of the conflictual socio-cultural and political relations experienced by the Arab American population in the US.

In addition, through the commentary provided by nature imagery, Kahf unveils the fears and hopes of Arab American women within the context of diaspora.

#### CAN NATURAL AREAS AND PLACES SPEAK?

Mohja Kahf belongs to the most recent generation of Arab American writers (Ludescher 105) who is considered a vibrant and daring literary voice among expatriates, raising new and diverse concerns compared to previous generations (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 11; Ulayyan 37). As Sirene Harb states, Kahf's status as an Arab Muslim American exposes the ambivalent location of diasporic subjects in America, in addition to the various forms of self-division that result from the contradictory strategies of belonging (14). Kahf's writing focuses on the Middle East, Islam, cultural antagonism, overlapping identities, the misrepresentation of Arab Muslim women, and the conditions of Arab and Muslim minorities in diaspora. This makes her a writer very much in tune with what might be called the contemporary Arab American literary canon. As Majaj asserts, she also explores issues such as the politics of racial discrimination, gender and sexual stereotyping, and contexts of female appropriation for male agendas (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 8).

In many of her writings, Kahf deals with the identity of Arab Muslim women in crisscrossed cultural and dogmatic contexts. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, she attempts to expose and indict the operations of racism, cultural antagonism, and women's oppression. The novel explores various facets of peoples' attitudes and criticises institutions, social contexts, legal systems, and educational institutions along with exposing power relations that are fuelled by the intersection of race, class, gender, and religion as pretext to legitimize hegemony. The author's feminist stance is inherently political since she demands, alongside Arab American feminist activists, that social conventions fostering superiority of men over women should be changed. In addition to offering a critique of the various manifestations of hegemony and antagonism, the novel can also be interpreted as a call for the reformation of the politics that rule human relations in multicultural societies. More closely, the author examines the construction of a new generation of women who began building their own stories, creating a new perception of their individuality and negotiating the concept of their "subjectivity in the space of diaspora" (Marques 177).

Kahf's debut novel chronicles, on the narrative level, the story of the Syrian immigrant, Khadra Shamy, who is forced to leave Syria with her family due to the political

conflicts in the early seventies and settle down in Indianapolis in the United States, where the family tries to integrate with both the Arab Muslim community and the local American one. In diaspora, Khadra is raised by her strictly devout Muslim family and the Dawah Centre community according to their cultural ideals. All the events narrated in the novel are focalised through the perspective of Kahf's protagonist who faces paradoxes, discrimination, and exclusion resulting from the intersection of religion, race, gender, and politics in both mainstream America and in her own Arab community in the US. In short, the novel tells the story of the development of Khadra who tries to identify herself within crisscrossed contexts and who sets off to visit Arab countries to find stability and reclaim her roots.

Since the publication of her novel, critical attention to Kahf has not only grown in volume but has also started to undergo a shift from general feminist discussions or commentaries on social and cultural complexities experienced by expatriates to an expanding array of interpretations open to evolving modern concerns. I contend that Mohja Kahf employs imagery of nature and environment not only to add pastoral scenes to the architectural design of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. Rather, I read the novel as a multi-layered text in which descriptions of nature are embedded on the level of narrative discourse to reflect on the experiences characters undergo in certain locations. I suggest that nature appears as an agent to reflect on universal themes concerning human relations and sociopolitical conflicts.

Indeed, utilising nature “adds a deeper dimension to experiences already shaped by political and cultural contestations” (Bujupaj 2). Whether in her poetry or her novel, Kahf injects the depiction of nature and environment with socio-cultural and political commentary. The author gains two advantages from utilising nature in this way. First, she uses nature symbolism to criticise the conflictual human relationships that are experienced within the diasporic environment, particularly between the Arab expatriates' community and the Hoosiers—locals of Indianapolis. Second, having a novel impregnated with a variety of descriptions of places and scenes of nature in both the US and Syria exemplifies the vision of “doubled places” characteristic of displaced subjects and authenticates their stories accordingly. These descriptions are cleverly used as key motifs both to unveil Khadra's fears and anxieties resulting from the overlapping hegemonic relations based on socio-political and dogmatic differences and to unveil her hopes that provide her with a spiritual alternative and form a “source of solace at moments of desperation and despondency while in exile” (Sadouni and Abu Amrieh 1).

The narrative describes events that take place during a time span that covers twenty years of the protagonist's life. However, the reader will observe that the most significant encounters between Khadra and nature appear mainly during her childhood in Indianapolis and during her sojourn of self-discovery in Syria seven years later. On the one hand, nature has shown different facets in each location that may be interpreted as belonging to two opposite poles, heaven and hell, in their effect. Thus, positive and negative facets of nature can be read as commenting on the protagonist's hopes and anxieties, respectively. On the other hand, nature is centralised and is given a strong voice that helps the protagonist undergo spiritual change.

The possibility that natural places or elements of the environment may be used to comment on conflictual socio-political and cultural relations—between Arabs and Americans in the US or, more generally, between the East and the West—is introduced on the very first pages of the novel. The narrator clearly informs the reader how Khadra pictures the natural topography of Indianapolis as a hegemonic body that will not belong to her, which rejects her existence and augments her fear and loneliness. The novel is, in fact, full of instances that corroborate, in free indirect discourse, the image of nature as an antagonistic force of exclusion, with its “[f]orests, high-treed and terrifying, and then land so wide and flat it made you lonely” (Kahf 15). Or even more emphatically: “Khadra, returning to this ground that didn't love her, tries to save the panic in her gut that is entirely the fault of the state of Indiana and the lay of its flat, flat land, to which she had never asked to be brought” (Kahf 17). Hence, it seems appropriate to say that some places and areas, whether natural or humanly constructed, are presented as sharing similar features of hegemony and showing the same indifference towards Khadra's existence:

She passes over the Whitewater River, bracing herself. Here comes the unbearable flatness of central Indiana. She has the feeling that the world's been left behind her somewhere, in the final stretches of Pennsylvania, maybe, where the land had comforting curves. Out here there seems nothing for the eye to see. Strip mall, cornfield, small town main street... soybean field... *All blending into one flat sameness.* There are silver silos and pole barns, tufts of goldthread on the meridian, and the blue day beginning to pour into the dark sky. But it is not mine, she thinks, this blue and gold Indiana morning. None of it is for me. Between the flat land and the broad sky,

she feels ground down to the grain, erased. She feels as if, were she to scream in this place, some Indiana mute button would be on, and no one would hear. (Kahf 1–2, emphasis added)

Streets, roads and highways are central to Kahf’s use of place and environment to convey negative experiences the protagonist undergoes. It is evident on many occasions in the novel that nature has played the role of the enemy, in collusion with mainstream America, showing hostile attitudes towards Arab Americans; therefore, it is associated with sadness, fear, loneliness, grief, and even death. While Khadra is driving on the highway to Indiana, panic sometimes urges her to scream because this road, which she calls the “evil road to Simonsville” (Kahf 414), is where her friend, Zuhura, a dark-skinned Kenyan Muslim woman, was raped and murdered, leaving Khadra with irreversible panic and everlasting anxiety. Thus, the narrator informs us that some places in diaspora form a threat upon Arab Americans in general and upon immigrant females in particular, especially after linking these places to the dark side of relations with others. Put in another way, this particular road and the ditch where Zuhura’s body was left sends warning signs to the protagonist to tell her that she is an intruder, that is, an immigrant not welcomed in the US community. Furthermore, the crime that took place on the road to Simonsville reflects the fact that women are always the most vulnerable in conditions of displacement and the most susceptible to discrimination—especially women of another race and ethnicity. One could, perhaps, say that all the components found along the road, including people, are imbued with the politics of exclusion and discrimination due to cultural or gender difference. When Khadra sees the scary gazes of people on the old National Road, “she feels them [men] screw their eyes at her as she drives past” (Kahf 3). Highway signs, such as the one that says “The People of Indiana Welcome You,” are utilised by the narrator to display a deceptive environment that is ready to kill, as revealed by Khadra’s fears. Such an environment has contributed to stripping off feelings of intimacy towards the host land, leaving the diasporic figures realise that they are literally “erased” (Kahf 2), as Kahf informs us, and that none of this place, this nature, and this America belongs to them.

This, indeed, shows how nature and elements of the environment can work as an antagonist that refuses the existence of the protagonist and, with its repulsive force, renders her detached, lost, and placed on the margins. As Majaj points out, Arabs and Muslims are placed in an ambiguous location within the American context

(“Arab-American Ethnicity” 320), rendered invisible on the margins of nations. To some extent, margins can also be considered indicators of place. They can be construed as places for banishment, leading diasporic subjects towards estrangement within a certain community. Thus, through their connection with the socio-cultural and political atmosphere, nature and places can be complicit in causing the tension experienced by diasporic subjects, as a result of conflicts between countries and cultures. Accordingly, the issue of belonging is interrogated through questions, like “[m]aybe we don’t belong here” (Kahf 97).

#### NATURE AS SAFE HAVEN FOR ALL

At this point, it becomes opportune to shift towards the positive images through which Kahf introduces nature as a place that fills the protagonist with tranquility, enabling Khadra to find answers to her confusion and achieve stability. The author shows that Khadra’s retreat to Syria is an attempt to achieve inner stability by consolidating her attachment to places in the homeland. In Syria she encounters a kind of environment and nature that is totally different from what she has known and experienced in Indianapolis. As the novel proceeds, nature is presented through bright images, offering a place for development and reconciliation with the world.

At this stage, trees, plants, and flowers become central to the narrative as much as streets, highways, buildings, and signs were earlier, but with different associations. Through repeated portrayals, the green environment comes to acquire optimistic connotations, perhaps because such environment has a positive effect on the psychological state of humans in general—that is why so many people visit natural areas to relax and ease feelings of tension (Sadouni and Abu Amrieh 13). In this sense, Kahf utilises nature to be Khadra’s savior who helps her release both her thoughts and will from the spiritual, psychological, mental, and even physical restraints that were imposed on her by conflicting Western and Eastern ideologies. It is in delightful scenes of nature that Khadra finds refuge and escapes her hyphenated state: “in a grove of old-world cherry trees” she “reaches a key moment in her self-development or personal journey” (Bujupaj 19). When breakdown and schizophrenia threaten her, especially after an abortion and consequent divorce leave her abandoned by everyone, surrounded by pressures that question her identity both as Arab Muslim and American, the natural areas in Syria offer her a safe haven and a place where she can retrieve her inner peace and stability.



## NATURAL AREAS AND PLACES

Kahf introduces the theme of human–nature blending through the most significant scene in the novel, which takes place in Ghuta orchard, a wide green area located on the borders of Damascus. A mixture of nature components and people of different backgrounds are integrated into a single scene:

“To the Ghuta, before they cut down the last grove, hurry!” Auntie Hayat and Téta said. The peaches had bloomed and ripened and gone. White cherry flowers in long, pendulous corymbs had blossomed on the dark naked wood, light against dark, like a pale girl in a black man’s arms. Fallen petals carpeted the orchards and had melted into the earth and now the cherries, the cherries were in their prime... In a Ghuta orchard, Khadra and Téta and Hayat and the poet picnicked among other clusters of picnickers. The sky was the blinding turquoise blue typical of Syrian days... (Kahf 308)

In this excerpt, where Khadra and her aunt, Téta, along with Téta’s Christian and Jewish friends, Hayat and Iman, and Khadra’s mentor, the poet, go on a picnic to the grove of cherry trees, Kahf “blends the natural world with a blending of different races or skin colours in the social world, making a statement about the beauty of mixing ethnic differences,” as Bujupaj states (19–20). To some extent, nature is introduced as the saviour who guides Khadra to what Majaj would describe as a modern emphasis on celebrating individuality and cultural diversity (“Arab-American Ethnicity” 20). In addition, the depiction of different images of the natural environment, such as trees, plants, and flowers, along with the juxtaposition of opposites, such as dark/light, pale/black, and girl/man, all coexisting in one place that is “nature,” shows how the human world could also be unified, divested of its conflictual and hegemonic relationships. All people, all religions and all cultures can be connected, just like the layers of nature that should not be trapped into the pressure of social, cultural, racial, ethnic, or gender-based discrimination. This argument is also in line with the perspective evolving from ecofeminist theory. Borrowing Carolyn Merchant’s words, ecofeminist thinkers call for an egalitarian society that is devoid of a dominant group (193–221). Nature, here, becomes an important agent that leads the protagonist to grasp good knowledge and learn that difference in viewpoints, ethnicities, and dogmas should not be used as pretext for conflicts or exclusion.

The influence of natural areas continues as Khadra enjoys the positive feelings nature gives: “Khadra ran and picked cherries, meandering through the colonnade of trees, reaching up through the dappled play of leaf and light and shadow. And the trees bent their fruited branches low for her” (Kahf 308). As Bouchra Sadouni and Yousef Abu Amrieh stress, trees are present as an archetype in literary texts, ranging from the earliest legends and mythologies till contemporary stories, and have always carried layers of cultural and religious symbolism (2). This whole scene of tree branches bending low for Khadra to pick from, as Bujupaj notes, echoes Quranic verses that describe paradise where tree branches bend for believers to pick ripe fruits from them (20). I argue that the reason Kahf presents nature as a simulation of the Garden of Eden is to reinforce nature’s role as a greater primordial force that provides the protagonist with tranquility and peace to enable her release from all tension and think well. As the scene of the orchard continues, the narrator makes nature an active agent paving the way for a turning-point in Khadra’s character development. In the following scene, the focal point transfers from the narrator to nature and, using Samaa Abdurraqib description (63), nature speaks a message from God through which the protagonist ends her distraction:

Khadra paused, standing there in the fading rays with her palms spread, her hands spiralled upward to the sky like question marks. She was in a position like the first stand of prayer. A yellow butterfly flittered by. The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The chiffon fell across her shoulders. She remembered when she’d taken her last swim in the Fallen Timbers pool as a girl. She closed her eyes and let the sun shine rough the thin skin of her eyelids, warm her body to the very core of her. She opened her eyes, and she knew deep in the place of *yaqin* that this was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. *Alhamdu, alhamdulilah*. The sunlight on her head was a gift from God. (Kahf 309)

This passage shows how nature has contributed to generating feelings of intimacy towards her homeland and towards her identity as Arab Muslim woman that overwhelm Khadra. At the same time, trees evoke feelings of nostalgia towards some places in the US from where she had good memories such as Fallen Timbers. Going back in time to Khadra’s childhood, the reader would obviously see that she

also experienced positive encounters with natural areas in America. The imagery of trees in Indianapolis equally echoes the connotations of the Garden of Eden implied through the tree imagery in Damascus. The protagonist recalls that in Square One, “there was a willow tree on the lawn, which her mother called ‘the Shy Tree,’ its Arabic name... The lawn was watered by wonderful spigots that made a musical sound as they inched around... Then up swept an arc of water going back to the beginning...” (Kahf 8). And when Khadra asks her mother, “Mama, what’s heaven?”, her mother replies that “Heaven is where you have all your heart desires” (Kahf 9). Khadra finds solace in the fact that heaven necessarily exists in the US as well. Such encounters with nature in different geographical locations are of paramount importance since they reveal that nature bestows spiritual value on the connections between places and this value is one of the key concepts in Kahf’s novel. One would also argue that Kahf’s narrator correlates, through this technique, conflictual places, and tries to bring them closer together through proving similarities existing among discordant poles.

One more important detail in the excerpt above is the slipping scarf and the entering sunlight. In fact, the veil is ambiguous in this scene. It has been argued that the scarf is seen as a stigmatising device since it is an ethnic dress, thus, a representative of a nation that is considered an Other from the perspective of the west (Abdurraqib 63–64). In this scene, however, the veil has assumed a new meaning. The fact that Khadra lets her scarf slip off her head without fixing it, letting the sunlight touch her head and skin, implies that preserving the markers of her Arab identity does not necessarily mean that she should repel the components of her American identity. The interference of nature results in enabling Khadra to learn how to make balance between her two identities, the American and the Syrian, by embracing the foreign and keeping a firm grip on her Arab Muslim heritage. America is no more a strange land. Khadra does not feel dislocated, but rather reconciled with living in a multicultural world.

#### CONCLUSION

Khadra finds a safe haven among trees and nature, which provide her with a sensation of comfort and confidence after her struggles with the feeling that she does not fit anywhere. Acquaintance with nature helps the protagonist set her ego free and understand that the coexistence of political and religious diversities is possible.

The effect of nature, places, and environment brings reconciliation and makes her understand the fact that multiculturalism does not lead to crossroads (Bose 90). This also helps Khadra recognise that one can extract the beauty and inner peace from the heart of a chaotic and violent reality. Nature has been, accordingly, an active factor that stood side by side with the protagonist throughout the process of self-discovery and the development of her personality. Indeed, embarking on a sojourn in nature offers “a healing experience” (Bujupaj 20) through which Kahf’s protagonist finds the way to reconcile with herself and the world, to blend differences, find inner-balance, and cherish herself.

Through the use of nature, places, and environment, Kahf provides (in)direct commentary on the wavering location of Arab Americans in repellent contexts, on the one hand, and offers her readers—Americans and Arab Americans—her solution, on the other. The novel, thus, adopts a voice of dual critique of forms of oppression that operate, simultaneously, in both mainstream America and the Arab American community. This dual critique, as Bujupaj insists, constitutes “the balance of Kahf’s work” (18). In doing this, Kahf does not offer a voice of rebellion against any of her communities. Instead, she advocates celebrating and embracing coexistence among both communities—a viable alternative for the protagonist to her struggles with pressures that come from mainstream American society or from the traditions of her Arab community.

#### WORKS CITED

- Abdurraqib, Samaa. “Hijab Scenes: Muslim Women, Migration, and Hijab in Immigrant Muslim Literature.” *MELUS* 31.4. (2006): 55–70. <<https://doi.org/10.1093/melus/31.4.55>>
- Arami, Sara. “Encounter, Clash, and Confluence: Mohja Kahf’s *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*.” *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 40.2 (2018): 42–35. <<https://doi.org/10.4000/ces.287>>
- Bose, Purnima. “*The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*: Review.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 105.1 (2009): 90–91.
- Bujupaj, Ismet. “Nature in Arab American Literature: Majaj, Nye, and Kahf.” *European Journal of American Studies* 10.2 (2015): 1–29. <<https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.11130>>

- Clifford, James. "The Transit Lounge of Cultures." *Times Literary Supplement* 4596 (1991): 7–8.
- Farley, David. *Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectuals Abroad*. 1st ed. University of Missouri Press, 2010.
- Harb, Sirène. "Arab American Women's Writing and September 11: Contrapuntality and Associative Remembering." *MELUS* 37.3 (2012): 13–41. <<https://doi.org/10.1353/mel.2012.0044>>
- Kahf, Mohja. *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. New York: Public Affairs, 2006.
- Kindinger, Evangelia. *Homebound: Diaspora Spaces and Selves in Greek American Return Narratives*. 2015. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, PhD dissertation.
- Lampert, Bahareh H. *Voices of New American Women: Visions of Home in the Middle Eastern Diasporic Imagination*. 2008. University of Wisconsin, PhD dissertation.
- Ludescher, Tanyss. "From Nostalgia to Critique: An Overview of Arab American Literature." *MELUS* 31.4 (2006): 93–114. <<https://doi.org/10.1093/melus/31.4.93>>
- Majaj, Lisa S. "Arab-American Ethnicity: Locations, Coalitions, and Cultural Negotiation." In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael Sulieman. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999. 320–335.
- . "Arab-American Literature: Origins and Developments." *American Studies Journal* 52.2 (2008). Web. <<http://www.asjournal.org/52-2008/arab-american-literature-origins-and-developments/#>>
- Marques, Carine. "Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* Seen through the Hijab Perspective." *Estudos Anglo-Americanos* 37 (2012): 177–196. Web. 31 March 2022. <<https://ppgi.paginas.ufsc.br/files/2014/06/REAA-37-9.pdf>>
- Merchant, Carolyn. "Ecofeminism." In *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*. Routledge, 2005. 193–221.
- Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Sadouni, Bouchra, and Yousef Abu Amrieh. "Trees as Safe Havens in Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep* and Matar's *In the Country of Men*." *Anglo Saxonica* 20.1 (2022): 1–12. <<https://doi.org/10.5334/as.73>>
- Ulayyan, Huda. *The Quest for Self-Discovery: A Study of the Journey Motif in Chopin's The Awakening, Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf and Aboulela's The Translator*. 2015. The University of Jordan, PhD dissertation.

## RASHIDEH GHAZI BADRAN

### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Rashideh Badran is a student in the Gender in English and American Literature and Culture Doctoral Programme at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, Hungary. She is researching the question of identity and belonging in the work of Arab American women writers. Badran obtained both her bachelor's and master's degree in English Literature from the University of Jordan (UJ) in Amman in 2005 and 2016, respectively. She also occupies the position of Head of International Cooperation and Correspondence in the International Affairs Unit at UJ. As a PhD student, she sought to experience the engagement in the life of a doctoral student that involves participating in research work, conferences, workshops, events, and cross-cultural dialogues that would add great value to her experience.