

Together-in-Diaspora: Narratives of Spatial Identities in Leila Aboulela's *Bird Summons*

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Abstract Contemporary Anglophone Arab novelists seek to negotiate traumatic issues related to diaspora, adaptation, fragmentation, and identity transformation. They attempt to reveal how dislocated diasporic identities are weighed down by ambivalent wounded consciousnesses. This paper sets out to negotiate the issue of dislocation narratives of diaspora in Leila Aboulela's *Bird Summons* (2019), its representation, and its impact on transformation and self-discovery. It also reveals narrative experimentations and techniques as a way of artistic representation to expose the crisis and conflict of individual choice and existentialism. Aboulela uses a spatial metaphorical journey to open a space of spiritual freedom of the self through traveling and crossing boundaries to a religious space. In this regard, the protagonists of the novel travel to achieve a transformation within the consciousness of the individual intellectually and spiritually. It is in this sense that the diasporic characters of *Bird Summons* have finally eloped from an elusive matrix of inside and outside, being and becoming, social dissonance, and ambiguities of identity.

Keywords Narrative; diaspora; dislocation; identity; transformation; self-discovery

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In contemporary fiction, narrative is an act of communication, a human phenomenon, a way of collaboration, a style of expression, and a representation of events. It exists through individual interactions and continuous communicative processes. Roland Barthes states:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio's *Saint Ursula*), stained-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different, even opposing, cultural backgrounds. Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (Roland 3)

Barthes' quote stresses on the universality of narrative and its ability in knowing, absorbing and expressing knowledge. This knowledge is built of various dimensions of spaces, inhabited by characters who have interior and exterior worlds. In this perspective, narrative discourse is a forking-path world, it encapsulates endless multiple meanings and contexts, it is not fixed and closed but transforms and changes as it is interpreted and reinterpreted in multiple and varied contexts. Moreover, comprehending the narrative discourse must include interior and exterior textual apparatus and parameters that inhere ontological, existential, political, social, and cultural tools that shape the fictional characters and the writer's text. Thus, the narrative discourse carries many textual and contextual layers and dimensions to excavate the inner spaces that are latent in the literary work. The communicative and interactive dimensions of narratives not only represent but also create and shape new existential and social practices relevant to the understanding of human existence and experiences. Thus, narrative discourse is a human practice of lived and shared experiences among individuals and between them and it is not only a communicative tool but also fundamental to humanitarian communications. In this vein, narrative in contemporary fiction has started negotiating new contexts related to current life issues, particularly in diaspora and migration studies. It has structurally and contextually adopted new parameters and apparatus to be in tandem with the fragmentation of reality, spatial dislocation, contemporary dilemmas, and traumas of its age. The representation of narratives of diaspora moves across

boundaries and spatial deixis in an atemporal matrix style; it overlaps, loops, mixes, and interlaces in a heterogeneous dislocated structure. Moreover, the narrative of diaspora is dynamic and movable; it opens up a space between different cultural, social, and ethnic groupings. All diasporic identities are not pure and rooted, they are multiple, alienated, dislocated, extraordinarily differentiated, and have resulted from the experiences of diasporic migrations. Wendy Walter believes that “the notion of diaspora can represent multiple, plurilocal, constructed locations of home, thus avoiding ideas of fixity, boundedness, and nostalgic exclusivity traditionally implied by the word home” (Wendy xvi).

The concept of diasporic narrative has been accumulated over time and ornamented by containing contemporary perspectives related to current issues of humanitarian contexts, individualistic dilemmas, traumatic thoughts, and feelings. It is a dialectical issue, both in literary debatable patterns and in the ambivalences and problems, the migrants face in their everyday life. The theory of diasporic narrative is argumentative and multifaceted, it oscillates between exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, belonging and rejection, ‘I’ and the other. In this vein, Homi Bhabhi demonstrates that “we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (Homi 1). It further stretches to include identities within the same individual, ways in which it transits and transforms according to circumstances, interactions, and situations, and in which hybrid identities are existed, adapted, assimilated, changed, or repressed through cultural and social boundaries and communications.

The diasporic identities are usually conflicted and heterogeneous; they mutate and change through transition, traveling between multiple spiral spaces and experiencing transformational change. In this vein, diasporic identity has become ever more fluid, hybrid, fractured, and arisen from diasporic migrations. Stuart Hall argues that “identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall & Paul 4). This suggests that diasporic identity is fragmentary and subaltern; it runs through diverse social and cultural mutations to represent itself, always in a process of transformation and self-discovery. Hall believes that “they undergo constant transformation” (Hall 225). From this perspective, the dominated and marginalized identities try to find a stable space irrespective of traumatic experiences, deforms and, authority. They try to open a tunnel of freedom and resist being silenced, protest against the stereotypical images that are latent in their injured consciousness

diasporic identities strive to constitute a space of visibility, recognition, and identification to speak up in a space of interpersonal reality. Thus, they enter an anxious space of self-discovery, in which they try to forget the conflicts, lacerations, and crises of the images and memories of the past. Here, there is an openness to transform and change or to reconstitute autonomy on a new culture and basis. At this point, the diasporic identity crosses the heterogeneity of lived identifications, existential quandaries, and borders, crosses memories and spaces of in-betweenness.

In recent years, contemporary literature has experienced tremendous and influential transformations and changes in the postmodern era, sequential of which is the commencing of Anglophone Arab diasporic literature. Verily, the writers of this genre have negotiated intersected and interrelated issues and contexts related to society, culture, identity, and individuals have aimed to dig up liminal spaces and dislocated unstable points of identification. Anglophone Arab Diasporic writers have reconnoitered galaxies of synergistic discourses of traumatized identity, false identity, lost identity, self-awareness identity, the border between identity and others, and the quest for identity. In this vein, the narrative discourse of this genre excavates obscured spaces, looped trajectories, and various zones and at the same time how all these overlap, cut across, interact and open up a horizontal and vertical passageway of communicative and dialogical mechanisms.

Indeed, the writers of the Anglophone Arab diaspora de-chronologize the continuum of the narrative discourse and deploy paradoxical deictic devices such as 'there' and 'here', 'I' and 'the other' in their fictional writings. They embrace divergent existential, social, cultural, and political dimensions; they manipulate the text in a spiral and movable way rather than a static and independent texture. The disintegration and deconstruction of the fictional characters and the continuity of narrative discourse allow the writer to merge and pass through disparate spaces, locales, voices, and times. The amalgamation and collage of non-identical images and scenes decode the interior parameters of the text and reveal the exterior contextual apparatus of social, ideological, and dialogical relationships. Furthermore, the representation of Anglophone Arab diaspora writers is structured through crevasses, spatial-temporal dislocations, home, belonging, assimilation, diaspora, and in-betweenness. In this light, Dalal Sarnou opines that "they voice two consciousnesses: home and diaspora, English and Arabic, the past and the present" (Dalal 3). Here, then, a duality, a biofocality, a dislocality, a disorientality and a decentrality of the writer and its textual texture. Majed Aladylah maintains that:

Narrative discourse of Anglophone Arab writers entails divergent social,

cultural, and political practices, they treat the text as a movable orbit, is not static and it is not self-contained, instead a space of dialogic interactions and a plurality of many styles of discourse. The fragmentation and defamiliarization of their narrative discoowesomeurses permit the writer to move in multiple modes, voices, spaces, and time. (Aladylah 4-5)

In fact, many Arab female writers are voluntary or obligatory dislocated physically, culturally and emotionally. They are on a journey of crossing cultural and social boundaries; they write to expose the impact of displacement and detachment, interrogate conflicted feelings of belonging and struggle towards self-consciousness and self-transformation. Geoffrey P. Nash argues that “a commonality within Anglophone Arab British women’s fiction, whatever ideological spin is attached to it, is its frequent inscription of Arab migrant women’s marginalization within British society. Soueif, Faqir, and Aboulela center their plots on a displaced Arab woman” (Nash 566). In so doing, they use their fictional narrative discourse to express problematic transitional issues connected to many notions of lived experiences and memories hovering in the realms of their displacement, existence, sense of alienation, and consciousness. Moreover, these writers attempt to have a voice that is heard and recognized, and its location in the formation of assimilated identities. They portray aggregated experiences and memories of dislocated and marginalized groups and the relations of authoritarian and dominant groups to these depicted narratives. In addition, Anglophone Arab writers try to bridge the crevasse between the cultures and open a space of shared humanitarian experiences and coexistence. Yousef Awad holds that:

A contrapuntal vision, Arab writers try to bridge the gaps between cultures and to leave corridors of dialogue open. Their belief in the potential of open dialogue and its role in preserving harmony are prompted by their contrapuntal perspective shaped by their hyphenated identities. (Awad 18)

One of these voices who live in multi-cultural hybrid society is Leila Aboulela, she is a capricious magician and a protean novelist, a diasporic, and prolific Arab-British writer. Aboulela has written many novels like *The Translator* (1999), *Colored Lights* (2001), *Minaret* (2005), *Lyrics Alley* (2010), *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015), *Elsewhere, Home*, (2018), and *Bird Summons* (2019). She lives in Aberdeen in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Western society, questions the relationship between diaspora, identity, and subjectivity, depicts marginalized voices and tries to raise

conflictual issues related to cultural and social contexts. Aboulela negotiates the matrix of biofocality and difference that results from dialectical arenas including values and conflicting religious and cultural impacts on identities. This matrix revolves around coexistence, religious practices, moderate Islam, debilitating Islamophobia, Muslim communities, accepting the other, mutual understanding, and gender norms. Chris Weedon notes that “identity is made visible and intelligible to others through cultural signs, symbols and practices” (7). Aboulela wants to tell a story about the diasporic ambivalences, dilemmas, and disillusion of her people. She writes in a foreign language from a different country about scattered identities, torn between multiple spaces, and began a voyage of displacement, searching for coexistence, as assimilation and adaptation.

Bird Summons (2019) is a pastiche novel, a massive *tour de force*, a magic portrait of three fictional excavators, who embark on a religious and cultural journey of self-discovery and transformation. *Bird Summons* excavates unexplored panoramic trajectory spaces, skillfully and explicitly portrays and depicts fictional characters who experience a sense of self-discovery and transformational change through transition, travel and in-between multiple spaces and identities. These identities encounter, oscillate, and interact between conflictual feelings of dispersal and fragmentation, exclusiveness and inclusiveness, dislocation and relocation, estrangement, and attachment.

The orbit of *Bird Summons* goes through a diasporic spatial trajectory, and moves in a transformative asymmetrical curved path. Aboulela has defamiliarized and deconstructed the linearity of the narrative sequence by using introspective, retrospective, and simultaneous techniques. In addition, she has structured the novel in an experimental manner by employing flashbacks; memories, and juxtaposition of multiple scenes through a spatial and existential journey of three women embarking on a voyage to the grave of Lady Evelyn Cobbold. Aboulela opens spaces of transformation of the inner self and consciousness amid nothingness and loneliness. Spaces that perform a significant role in the formation of identity; aim to reveal the internal memories, feelings, aspirations, and thoughts of individuals, then, the goal is the transcendence and the transmutation of the individual’s interior consciousness. Aboulela intends to carve out free space and subjectivity for her fictional characters away from their culture and home in the diaspora. Additionally, *Bird Summons* employs diverse narrative techniques to break the restricted circles of home, society, and individuality. It also tries to unveil the hybrid and transcultural dislocations of portraying characters that have suffered from broken, scattered, and fragmented selves to an aspirational identity.

In this light, *Bird Summons* is a fictional sporadic journey of three different female characters: Iman, Salma, and Moni. They are on a voyage to a place where they are physically, individually, culturally, and emotionally dislocated. All these voyagers have similar existential diasporic dilemmas and pressures, they share the concept of dislocation within the new space, remaking and reforming their identities without erasing their home culture and roots. Moreover, these characters try to immerse themselves in a diasporic space, where they can achieve metamorphosis and self-discovery. Thus, they gradually begin to break the interior silence and restraints of the self and undergo a sense of self-transformation, spiritual peace, and self-realization of their two individual consciousnesses and two spaces. "We need our own space, our own break. Just once in a while" (Aboulela 78).

This exilic novel is like a magic carpet and a movable orbit in which the characters and the events run through shifting scenes and spaces. The migrant characters consciously search for better lives in the social, medical, economical, and existential circumstances and arenas. Their identities are polycentric of diverse icons, experiencing depression, disharmony, fear, homelessness, lost love, and imposed social constraints. These diasporic dislocated characters seek to move from subjugation of women, the authority of power, and social oppressions; they strive for self-conscious identity, stability, and autonomy to reconstruct a new identity in the diaspora. "Each of them was self-conscious, aware of her restored body, how good it felt to be whole, to be upright" (Aboulela 267). Consequently, the fictional portrayed characters act freely without hindrance and dive in the realms of self-representations and self-consciousness, as they are not coerced, suppressed, and dominated by exterior cultural and social impacts.

Bird Summons is narrated through the voices of three women who plan a journey to the Scottish Highlands to visit the grave of Lady Evelyn Cobbold- the first British Muslim lady who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca to honor Lady Evelyn Cobbold, and to educate themselves about the history of Islam in Britain. The novel is divided into seventeen chapters and an author's note, chapter one is narrated in the third person narrative in the past tense, the narrator talks about an Arab Muslim female, her name is Salma from Egypt, who tries to convince Moni and Iman to accompany her to visit Lady Evelyn Cobbold, because Cobbold

Was a woman like us, a wife and a grandmother. Worshipped as we worshipped, though she kept her own culture, wore Edwardian fashion, shot deer and left instructions for bagpipes to be played at her funeral. She is the mother of Scottish Islam, and we need her as our role model. (Aboulela 2)

Aboulela asserts that Islamic religion and culture are inseparable, except for small partials of cultural practices, rituals, life serotypes, traditions that differentiate the nations, and cultures. Furthermore, the culture of Islam is tolerant, comprehensive, humanitarian and not discriminatory between races; it accepts the other and does not exclude the various cultures. The Islamic identity is not regional, it is transcendental, and it is inclusive to all cultures, races and languages.

The three travelling companions Salma, Moni, and Iman are immigrant Muslim women in Britain, they are members of the local Arab Speaking Muslim Women's Group, decide their spatial and transitional journey together and alone to Scottish Highlands "we will accomplish our goal and read Fatiha at Lady Evelyn's grave" (Aboulela 14). Moni is from Sudan, gives up her job in banking to care for her son Adam who has severe cerebral palsy without the help of her indifferent husband, and he wants her and Adam to join him in Saudi Arabia. Iman is a refugee from Syria, married many husbands and had given her nothing, her new husband died in the first revolt against Assad at the hands of police forces, wants to be a queen of her own household and to bring her mother from Syria. Salma is from Egypt, is married to a Scottish man and she has started messaging her former fiancé in Egypt. Each of them has a different experience, conflict, and dilemma, but they all share one object which is individual growth of consciousness and self-independence, "a necessity, a grab for freedom from pain" (Aboulela 32).

Moreover, the Egyptian immigrant Salma feels alienated and distanced from her assimilated children, husband, and the British culture "deep down his people would think that she was not really one of them, that she was not British enough" (Aboulela 42). In this regard, Salma feels that although she is married to a Scottish man and her children are Scottish, but she feels rejected and not accepted by his people. This reveals that her identity is erosional and marginalized, and lives in a liminal space. Salma's conflict is the cultural exclusion based on differences of religion, culture, and race "the cultural differences did become a problem for them" (Aboulela 107). Vijay Agnew demonstrates that "cultural differences, or the sense of being an outsider or a foreigner, can make the individual feel alienated and heighten feelings of sadness, nostalgia, and create a longing for home" (Vijay 42). Thus, her identity oscillates between not home and home, assimilation and estrangement, and exclusion and inclusion. Additionally, Salma swings between attachment to her children, and husband and her nostalgia for her home by texting her former lover, and her desire for liberation, and self-realization. "She would then feel that they were his children, and not hers. She was the outsider, the foreign wife,

and they were one unit” (Aboulela 41). In this light, Salma experiences a sense of denial, foreignness, and strangeness, and she is not able to adjust her identity according to her new culture. Thus, Salma’s identity is fragmented, and incoherent due to diversification, exclusion, and homogenization. Hall suggests that:

It accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall & Paul 4)

In this light, the diasporic identity is always in a state of changing, restructuring and searching for its own space, “we need our own space” (Aboulela 78).

In the narrative of *Bird Summons*, Iman is a refugee from Syria because of war and the uprising of the Syrian people against Assad. She leaves her country in the hopes of a new and better life and lives comfortably. She is not able to bring her mother to live in Britain, and all the members of her family are scattered in different places. She misses her home, family, and village “she found herself thinking of siblings and her village, the way it changed during the war” (Aboulela 52). Iman suffers from the loss of her identity, homesickness, aimlessness, isolation, and the fear of her well-being in a different culture and country. She does not want to remember the devastating impact of war and the flickering images of her past life to influence her present life.

War should stay out of here. Shaking windows, wailing women, burnt skin.... Blood that was not menstrual, softness that was damaged flesh, stillness that was not sleep but death. She wishes she could wash her mind of all these things. She breathed in the smell of the garden, touched the flowers. This was the present, and she was here inside it. (Aboulela 69)

Iman is tied for the emotions of nostalgia for her home and her mother, but not for the traumas of war, and the dead past. She needs guidance, a new tunnel of identity, and self-discovery searches for relief from anxiety, sadness, and fear of the future. The traumatic dilemmas of her memories and experiences anger, torture and depress her, and she does not want her individuality, identity, and coherence to fall apart, she tries to comprehend the juice of life, and crosses the boundaries of the culture and

self, and goes through spaces of renewal and change.

She was in Britain now and there were choices. More choices than watching daytime TV or children's movies. She could do this or that, be this or that. To know, to set herself on the right track, to strive, to achieve. One step at a time. (Aboulela 170)

Salma's diasporic spatial journey provides a transition from traumatic restrictions and sophistications of her presence and being to a space where, fully aware of the freedom of the self, a revival and the emancipation of the individual, "I have changed. I do want to stand on my own feet" (Aboulela 178). Besides, Aboulela insists on the freedom of choice for her character Iman and the capability of taking a decision of wearing or not wearing hijab to cover her head.

If I'm not dressed for a role, then who am I? She said. If I do not know who I am, then can I know what I want? The hijab was not forced on me against my will, but I was not given a choice to wear it or not, either. (Aboulela 183)

Aboulela is a diasporic voice, stresses on the freedom of choice and existentialism of Arab females in home countries and diaspora, "Lady Evelyn did not wear the Hijab. She did when she went on pilgrimage" (Aboulela 185). She highlights the spiritual essence of religion and the true femininity that covers the human soul. Another point is that Aboulela does not proclaim that hijab is a symbol of unjustness and patriarchal domination over women, it is a personal choice and freedom, depends on the individual spiritual satisfaction.

Bird Summons is a marvelously knitted novel, a diasporic spatial tableau, that juxtaposes and welds ambivalent dislocated trio voices; undertakes a journey to reconstruct their identities. The third in-between voice is Moni, a Sudanese woman, who has a handicapped son, Adam to whom she dedicates her life and refuses her husband, Murtada who is completely indifferent and alienated from his wife and his disabled son to go with him to Saudi Arabia. Moni rejects on the bases that her son will not get a proper medical care he is getting in Britain. "No, says Moni again, I will not leave this country" (Aboulela 281). Moni's disapproval is based upon her attempts to negotiate her selfhood, freedom of choice and existentialism as a human being. "No one in Saudi would give her that" (Aboulela 27). Moni has led a struggle for her rebirth and metamorphosis; she wants to be recognized, feels confused, distracted, stressed and uncomfortable with her identity, keeps on fleeing

from her circumstances and she no longer wants to be ashamed of her disabled son and Adam should not be a burden on her. In effect, Moni decides to get away of her interior imprisoned space and has a sense of change and transformation, “to step away from herself and her problems. To be more than a mother of a disabled child” (Aboulela 261). Moni as a traveler heads for spiritual freedom, guidance, and independence, wants to be herself and self-conscious, “each of them was self-conscious, aware of her restored body, how good it felt to be whole, to be upright. How good it was to have a clear mind and balance, to have a tongue that could talk” (Aboulela 267). Moni, therefore, creates a space of adjustment and reconciliation; she acquires the strength of individuality to face the challenges of her identity’s formation to new culture, environment, and society.

Leila Aboulela, an Anglophone novelist, tackles diasporic issues related to identity formation through difference and change. The mechanism of identity is slippery and dynamic and it is constructed according to its social, political, and cultural arenas. In fact, the identity of the trio women is weighed down with perplexed and paradoxical experiences; it strives for breaking the boundaries that have been confined to temporal and spatial spaces incised in their cultures and circumstances. Also, their identities do not act in accordance with the linear sequence of narrative discourse, but they move in a mixed spatial experience of dislocation and movement. Aboulela’s protagonists undergo a metaphorical spiritual journey that is not fixed and complete, but a continuous transformation, in which there is no static identity. The trio fictional characters have evolved, understood, transformed themselves, untied the knots of their existence, loosened themselves from rigid and adamant spaces, and transcended any hindrance “but it was the transformation they had all longed for, their burdens slipped away. Iman became a human being, Moni unfurled and straightened. Strength coursed through Salma’s body” (Aboulela 200). Thus, their journey is not only to the grave of Lady Evelyn Cobbold, but also into themselves, as they face the challenges of their circumstances, dilemmas, and conflicts, they emerge independent, stronger, and wiser. Hall states that “diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall 235). The trio individuals are dislocated culturally, physically and geographically. Their dislocation is a multi-layered transformation and discovery: discovering the life of freedom, choice, and metamorphosis, they embark on a journey that could change and transform them into human beings aware of the formation of their new identities in a new space. This internal and external transformation is not only physical but also spiritual, “the women must make their own choices. Away from

the city-with its restrictions, formality and rituals, both religious and secular- the spiritual freedom that the women encounter is vast and beyond control” (Aboulela 287).

In fact, Leila Aboulela has become a prominent novelist in Anglophone Arab literature, in *Bird Summons*; she addresses the predicaments of her trio characters inflicted by dislocation, diaspora, crisis of identity, fragmentation, alienation, and cultural dilemmas. Salma, Moni and Iman suffer in their home countries from stereotypical suppressions and oppressions that weaken their consciousnesses and in the host country from diasporic anxieties, cynicism, discomforts and disillusionments. In their spiritual journey, they emerge self-confident and have a voice to speak and decenter their former sense of being and existence. In analyzing the duality of consciousness and narratives of diaspora and dislocation in *Bird Summons*, it is clear from the outset of the journey that the identities of Salma, Moni and Iman are abound with conflictual paradoxes and double consciousnesses due to personal spiritual weakness, immature and confused knowledge of the self, and uncertainty. As such, they choose an escaping metaphorical journey with its feminist autonomous independent perspectives to reshape and reconstruct their fragmented identities. Their journey that is woven into narrative discourse pulls the reader into a magic realist fictional world of the story, crystalize their shattered psyches, stress, debased selves and subjectivity to keep moving and evolving. Salma, Moni, and Iman carry the spirit of the same conflict - are prototypical enlightened and open-minded, and they experience the difficulty of breaking free from the political, social, religious, and cultural dilemmas in order to be radically self-realized. The ideas of change, self-discovery and transformation are correlated with spiritual freedom. Eventually, they have been transformed through religious referent and context; they possess a new conception of the self that gives them a new space in the humane sense.

Finally, Aboulela is magical, intellectual, and creative, has eliminated the conventional linearity of narrative in *Bird Summons* by juxtaposing diverse spaces that dismantle the center. She peppers her narrative with a cocktail of multiple tenses narrated simultaneously “her screams and his cries of distress. I am sorry. I am sorry, Adam. She was the responsible adult and he was a child in her care” (Aboulela 219). This dislocation in narrative has undoubtedly destabilized the succession of events and the mobility of time. Consequently, Aboulela has laced the narrative with spatial metaphors that disorganize the trajectory of narrative discourse to serve the demands of her characters in rejecting the stable narrative. Salma, Moni and Iman try to carve out a space for their freedom and change in adapting the horizontal

evolution of their consciousnesses. In this particular sense, Aboulela incorporates a metaphorical journey to create a transformation within the consciousness of the individual intellectually and spiritually. It is in this sense that the diasporic characters of *Bird Summons* have finally eloped from elusive matrix of inside and outside, being and becoming, social dissonance, and ambiguities of identity. At the end of their voyage, the trio characters are freed from the restrictions of social, religious, and cultural conventions. They have made sense of themselves and the world around them; they have adapted new spaces of identity, self-understanding, and self-reconciliation and opened a new personal space of identification, spiritual transmutation, and metamorphosis.

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