STITCHING BELONGING: PALESTINIAN TATREEZ AND THE MAKING OF HOMELAND IN DIASPORA

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Resumo | Abstract

This paper examines Palestinian embroidery (**Tatreez**) as a dynamic cultural practice through which diasporic communities construct and negotiate belonging beyond territorial boundaries. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Amman, the research focuses on second and third generation Palestinian women and their engagement with embroidery as a medium of memory, identity, and cultural transmission.

Moving beyond understandings of heritage as static preservation, the study approaches **Tatreez** as a lived, embodied practice shaped by displacement and intergenerational experience. Through participant observation in women's embroidery circles, semi-structured interviews, and narrative-based engagement, the research explores how stitching operates as both social practice and mnemonic device. Participants describe embroidery as a way of «remembering with the hands, » translating inherited narratives of villages, landscapes, and loss into embodied forms of knowledge.

The paper identifies three distinct yet overlapping modes of engagement: continuity, reconstruction, and everyday practice. While second-generation women mobilize tatreez to sustain inherited memory, third-generation participants actively use it to construct identity in the absence of lived experience. In contrast, professional embroiderers within refugee camp contexts engage with **Tatreez** primarily as continuous labor, complicating its framing as symbolic heritage.

By situating embroidery within broader discussions of diaspora, postmemory, and material culture, this research argues that **Tatreez** functions as a «portable homeland» a relational practice through which place is reconstituted in movement. The study contributes to heritage discourse by demonstrating how cultural meaning is not only preserved but actively produced through everyday practices, revealing heritage as both continuity and diasporic reconstruction.

Palavras-chave | Keywords

Palestinian Tatreez; diaspora; Postmemory; identity construction; belonging.

Resumo biográfico | Short biography

Nayrouz Ali holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the German Jordanian University, where her thesis focused on displaced and depopulated Palestinian villages. She

is currently a Master's student in World Heritage Studies at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg writing her thesis.

Her research interests lie at the intersection of cultural heritage, identity, and memory in diasporic contexts, with a particular focus on material culture and embodied practices. Her current project examines Palestinian embroidery (Tatreez) among women in diaspora in Amman, exploring how textile practices mediate belonging, postmemory, and intergenerational identity formation.

Positioned as a third-generation Palestinian in diaspora, her work adopts reflexive and ethnographic approaches to understand how heritage is actively reconstructed through everyday practices rather than passively inherited.