

## **Violence and Resistance in Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand***

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### **Introduction**

Cathryn Clinton, an American author, was raised in the vibrant and culturally rich milieu of New York City. From an early age, Clinton was immersed in abundant literary resources, fostering a passion for reading and writing, influenced by classic authors such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. These influences have molded her literary style, characterized by its profundity, emotional impact, and emphasis on human experiences, especially those of children and marginalized communities. Clinton's oeuvre frequently examines themes of trauma, identity, and survival, investigating how humans, particularly youth, maneuver through life's intricacies under significant adversities.

Her distinctive approach is most apparent in her 2002 novel *A Stone in My Hand*, in which she merges personal, intimate narratives with overarching social and political themes. Clinton employs her narrative abilities to articulate the experiences of people frequently marginalized in the overarching narratives of conflict and history—children residing in war zones, families

grappling with displacement, and individuals confronting the psychological repercussions of violence. Her decision to emphasize the emotional and psychological trajectories of her characters, rather than only their physical experiences, enables her to investigate the profound effects of trauma and conflict on personal identity.

Clinton's work exemplifies her conviction in the capacity of literature to elucidate the human condition, especially in dire situations. In *A Stone in My Hand*, she offers an intimate narrative of a little Palestinian girl's existence under occupation, while the issues she examines (loss, terror, resilience, and hope) are universal. Clinton's capacity to intertwine personal and political themes establishes her as a significant figure in modern children's literature, especially in tales that confront social justice and the human toll of violence.

The story underscores the tragedies and struggles she encounters, shedding emphasis to the overarching themes related to Palestine and the impact of occupation on individuals. Clinton's authentic depiction of sights and emotions adeptly communicates the Palestinian experience. Clinton's writing underscores the injustices and oppression endured by the Palestinian people. She explores topics of liberty, equity, and identity, highlighting the quotidian challenges faced by Palestinians under occupation. Her work "*A Stone in My Hand*" conveys a dramatic and distressing narrative that demonstrates Clinton's profound comprehension of Palestinian history and culture.

This paper explores how *A Stone in My Hand* transcends conventional portrayals of violence and trauma by emphasizing the

psychological resiliency of its protagonists. Instead of solely depicting them as victims, Clinton's work demonstrates different modes of resistance, highlighting survival and emotional resilience during occupation and oppression.

*A Stone in My Hand* is situated during the First Intifada, a Palestinian insurrection against Israeli occupation that commenced in 1987. This era was characterized by extensive protests, civil disobedience, and violent clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians. The novel is set in Gaza, a location significantly affected by the fighting. Clinton depicts the daily realities of occupation via the perspective of eleven-year-old Malaak and her family, where curfews, checkpoints, and the persistent danger of violence characterize the lives of Palestinian families. The political backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is crucial to the novel; nonetheless, Clinton emphasizes the impact of this broader struggle on the lives of everyday individuals, especially children.

The novel commences with the vanishing of Malaak's father, who traveled to Israel in pursuit of employment and failed to return. This occurrence renders Malaak and her family in a condition of ambiguity and trepidation, as they are unaware of his status, whether deceased or living. "The circumstances surrounding his fate remain unclear. Consequently, his wife surmised he was deceased, however she was preoccupied with her new substantial obligations to ascertain the truth of his situation" (Gilligan 35). The uncertainty regarding her father's fate induces profound psychological suffering for Malaak, as she grapples with her grief

while contending with the difficulties of residing in an occupied region.

The setting of Gaza significantly influences the characters' experiences. Clinton powerfully depicts the severe circumstances of life under occupation, characterized by enforced curfews, school closures, and pervasive violence. Malaak's environment is characterized by anxiety and uncertainty, rendering even the most ordinary tasks, like as attending school, perilous. "I have not attended school since my father departed, and the authorities subsequently closed all educational institutions the following day, maintaining their closure for an extended period" (Clinton 34). Clinton offers a vivid depiction of the effects of employment on everyday life, especially for children compelled to mature in a milieu characterized by violence and instability.

The extensive political framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely a backdrop; it is intricately interwoven with the lives of the protagonists. Clinton employs the backdrop of Gaza to examine the impact of political turmoil on both the physical landscape and the emotional and psychological health of its residents. For Malaak, the struggle transcends an abstract political problem; it constitutes a tangible reality that influences every facet of her life. The novel's setting underscores how political violence permeates the personal lives of those under occupation, obscuring the distinctions between the public and private spheres, as well as between the political and personal realms.

## **The Trauma of Displacement and the Legacy of the Nakba**

The concept of trauma is crucial in *A Stone in My Hand*, especially regarding the pain endured by Palestinian children raised amongst the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Clinton depicts trauma not as an isolated incident but as an ongoing experience that significantly influences the characters' lives. Malaak and her family experience trauma that originates with her father's disappearance, exacerbated by the continual brutality and tyranny they endure under occupation.

Malaak's trauma is intricately linked to the historical trauma of the Palestinian people, especially the legacy of the Nakba in 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcibly uprooted from their homes during the establishment of the state of Israel. This historical event significantly impacts the narrative, shaping the characters' identities and sense of belonging. Sarat elucidates that "the conditions that necessitated the near-total displacement of a portion of Palestine, now Israel, and the resultant refugee crisis... transformed the events of 1948 into a collective trauma" (Sarat 10). Clinton's depiction of this communal trauma underscores the intergenerational effects of displacement, wherein past traumas persistently influence the lives of subsequent generations.

Malaak's personal trauma is interconnected with this broader historical context. The death of her father represents not merely a personal tragedy, but is emblematic of a wider phenomenon of loss and displacement that has impacted the Palestinian populace for decades. Clinton employs Malaak's narrative to examine the relationship between individual pain and community trauma,

illustrating the interconnection of the personal and the political. The relationship is further highlighted by Malaak's mother, who embodies the endurance of Palestinian women enduring the loss of their homes, loved ones, and sense of security. Notwithstanding her husband's disappearance and the persistent fear of violence, she remains devoted to her children and fulfills their needs. Her resolve to maintain family unity exemplifies the overarching tenacity of the Palestinian population, despite significant adversity.

The trauma endured by Malaak extends beyond the death of her father. As the narrative unfolds, she observes instances of violence and mortality that exacerbate her feelings of dread and powerlessness. Clinton offers vivid depictions of these traumatic occurrences, exemplified by the moment when Malaak and her father find themselves amidst a violent clash between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators: "My father's leg pressed me against the wall. I scratched my back. 'Close your eyes,' my father's voice was hard. I closed my eyes, but I heard the crackling sound of the gun" (Clinton 30). The instances of violence profoundly influence Malaak, significantly affecting her emotional and psychological growth.

### **Thematic Exploration of Trauma in *A Stone in My Hand***

The central theme of *A Stone in My Hand* is trauma, namely the trauma endured by children in conflict zones. Clinton depicts trauma as a dual experience, influencing both individuals identities and the social and cultural framework of the Palestinian society. Malaak's trauma originates from her father's absence, exacerbated by the persistent violence and tyranny endured by her family. This persistent trauma shapes Malaak's existence, affecting her emotional growth and self-identity.

Malaak's trauma is intricately connected to the overarching historical trauma of the Palestinian populace. The memory of the 1948 Nakba, during which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced amid the establishment of the state of Israel, prominently influences the novel's context. Clinton's depiction of this historical trauma is nuanced yet omnipresent, influencing the individuals' identities and sense of belonging. Sarat elucidates that "the conditions that necessitated the near-total displacement of a portion of Palestine, now Israel, and the resultant refugee crisis... transformed the events of 1948 into a collective trauma" (Sarat 10). This historical event serves as a reference point for the characters, shaping their comprehension of displacement and grief.

Malaak's personal trauma is deeply intertwined with this broader historical context. The death of her father represents not merely a personal tragedy but also a component of a larger continuum of loss and displacement that has impacted the Palestinian populace for decades. Clinton employs Malaak's narrative to examine the interconnection between individual

trauma and collective trauma, illustrating the inseparability of the emotional and the political within the framework of conflict. The relationship is further underscored by the character of Malaak's mother, who epitomizes the tenacity of Palestinian women. Notwithstanding her husband's departure and the persistent fear of violence, Malaak's mother perseveres in caring for her children and fulfilling their needs. Her capacity to uphold a semblance of routine against exceptional adversity exemplifies the tenacity of the Palestinian population collectively.

Clinton examines the impact of trauma on the psychological development of children such as Malaak. The novel illustrates the enduring impact of early exposure to violence and bereavement on a child's emotional and psychological health. Malaak's anguish from her father's absence, combined with the daily violence she observes, engenders a profound sense of terror and helplessness. Clinton poignantly illustrates Malaak's emotional reactions to these occurrences, particularly when she finds herself amidst a violent clash between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators: "My father's leg pressed me against the wall. I scratched my back. 'Close your eyes,' my father's voice was stern. I closed my eyes, but I heard the crackling sound of the gun" (Clinton 30). The instances of violence profoundly affect Malaak, influencing her perception of safety and security in her environment.



## **Psychological Resilience as a Manifestation of Resistance**

Notwithstanding the tragedy that Malaak endures, *A Stone in My Hand* is fundamentally a narrative of perseverance. Clinton examines how children, even in the most adverse situations, develop mechanisms to manage their anxiety and grief. For Malaak, resilience entails neither external rebellion or defiance; rather, it involves discovering the fortitude to persevere, maintaining her identity, and safeguarding her family in any little manner possible.

A pivotal scene in the narrative that exemplifies Malaak's perseverance is her choice to deliver her father's flag to her brother Hamid in the hospital. This action, however minor, signifies a pivotal moment in Malaak's emotional odyssey. This act symbolizes her increasing autonomy and resolve to preserve her family's tradition despite significant loss. "I again whisper to Hamid, 'Father instructed me in a dream to deliver this to you. He has not abandoned me, and I shall not abandon you... I cannot leave it here with you, as someone may discover it, and there are soldiers at this hospital.' I raise Hamid's arm, extract the flag, and conceal it beneath my sweater" (Clinton 182). By her action, Malaak is simultaneously commemorating her father's legacy and affirming her identity and her entitlement to exist in a world that attempts to diminish both.

Clinton juxtaposes Malaak's subdued fortitude with Hamid's overt disobedience. Hamid, having observed the murder of his neighbors and the violence inside his village, reacts with rage and a want for retribution. "We are engaged in a conflict, regardless of your desire for it to be otherwise." What constitutes security? I

believe no one is secure. "Not anymore" (Clinton 88). Malaak's resilience manifests in her emotional endurance, but Hamid's is demonstrated in his inclination to take physical action and resist. Clinton posits that neither emotional nor physical resilience is greater; instead, she asserts that both are essential for survival in a dangerous environment.

Clinton's depiction of resilience questions conventional narratives of resistance, which typically emphasize explicit actions of defiance or revolt. In *A Stone in My Hand*, Clinton illustrates that resilience manifests in several forms and that mental endurance is equally vital as physical resistance. Malaak's capacity to maintain her identity among chaos serves as her defense against dehumanizing influences.

## **The Significance of Collective Trauma and Community Resilience**

Clinton highlights the significance of community in addressing trauma, with the examination of individual resilience. *A Stone in My Hand* illustrates how the Palestinian population in Gaza, despite enduring persistent violence and injustice, derives resilience from their collective experiences. The same anguish they experience—displacement, loss, and constant humiliation—serves as a unifying force, providing them with the resilience to persist in opposing the occupation.

A dramatic illustration of collective trauma in the narrative occurs when Nasser, a friend of Hamid, is slain by Israeli soldiers. His demise is not an isolated incident—it impacts the entire community, especially his brother Mahmoud, who is subsequently shot while transporting Nasser's coffin. Clinton recounts the incident with excruciating precision: "Someone must have thrown a stone. Upon exiting the store, the Israeli patrol apprehended him and assaulted him with batons. He witnessed the entire event and was aware that he had committed no offense" (Clinton 86). This scene highlights the arbitrary and savage nature of the violence encountered by the community daily, along with the collective sorrow that ensues after each loss.

Clinton's depiction of resiliency underscores the crucial role of women in the community. Malaak's mother is a pivotal person in the family's sustenance. Notwithstanding her husband's disappearance and the persistent fear of violence, she remains devoted to caring for her children and fulfilling their needs.

"Proficient reading skills are essential... She will attend university" (Clinton 34). Her will to secure a better future for her children, despite formidable hurdles, exemplifies the resilience of the Palestinian community, where survival is a group endeavor rather than an individual pursuit.

Clinton emphasizes the significance of cultural identity in the Palestinian struggle for survival through her portrayal of communal resilience. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Israeli occupation to obliterate Palestinian culture and history, the protagonists in *A Stone in My Hand* preserve their traditions and feeling of identity. This cultural resilience manifests as a form of resistance, enabling the group to safeguard their history and sense of belonging amidst attempts to dehumanize and obliterate them.

Malaak's individual journey is profoundly intertwined with this notion of communal resilience. Her personal pain constitutes a component of a broader, collective experience of dislocation and bereavement. Clinton employs Malaak's narrative to demonstrate the interconnectedness of individual pain and communal trauma. Malaak enhances the endurance of the entire community by enduring emotionally and psychologically. Her narrative exemplifies the overarching Palestinian experience, illustrating how people and communities derive resilience from their collective adversities.

## **Clinton's Comprehensive Analysis of the Palestinian Experience**

In *A Stone in My Hand*, Clinton delivers a nuanced perspective on the Palestinian experience, presenting a balanced depiction that emphasizes both the pain and resilience of the Palestinian populace. The story candidly portrays the harshness of the occupation, although Clinton refrains from diminishing her characters to mere victims. She depicts Palestinians as multifaceted individuals, embodying both victimhood and survival, demonstrating perseverance and resistance even in the most arduous situations.

Clinton's depiction of the Palestinian struggle notably highlights hope. Despite the pervasive violence and grief in the novel, an undercurrent of hope persists throughout Malaak's narrative. Her choice to bear her father's flag serves not merely as an act of resistance but also as a symbol of optimism for an improved future. Clinton posits that even in the bleakest situations, humans may discover methods to preserve their humanity and sense of identity.

Clinton also contests conventional tales of resistance, broadening the word to encompass emotional and psychological resilience. Although Hamid's wrath and quest for vengeance are justifiable, Clinton underscores the significance of emotional resilience in confronting tragedy. Malaak's silent fortitude, her capacity to endure emotionally despite her inability to retaliate physically, manifests as a formidable type of resistance.

Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand* illustrates the variety of literature accessible and the distinct challenges encountered by young heroines in several cultural and political contexts. The shared element between the novel and reality is the emotional agony endured by the protagonists and the disillusionment faced by each individual, rendering each person a hero in their own narrative.

The novel illustrates instances of violence and conflict arising from the ongoing war, compelling individuals to confront scenarios that mirror contemporary political and social issues globally. Childhood is characterized by a period of imagination. Joy and little duties are uncommon for Palestinian youngsters who have endured injustice and dictatorship for almost sixty years. Furthermore, they endure persistent violence and pervasive terror, characterized by acts of dragging, beating, mutilation, sexual assault, emotional devastation, and the infringement of childhood innocence and rights.

From a tender age, children are compelled to confront risks and endure the adversities of adulthood, encountering murder, torture, heinous crimes, and many perils that impact their life and those of their families and friends daily. Consequently, they are perpetually in search of sanctuary and methods to safeguard themselves and their loved ones from the surrounding violence. The author observes of the first intifada: "It was painful for Palestinian youngsters to see the destruction of their houses, the humiliation of their mothers and siblings, and the beatings and occasional killings of their parents." (Goodman 10) Palestinian children, more than any other children globally, are

subjected to traumatic and complex experiences that adversely impact their personality development. As Sarat elucidated, "The circumstances that ensued from the near-total displacement of the region of Palestine that is now Israel and the establishment of a refugee crisis rendered the events of 1948 a collective trauma" (Sarat 10).

The above-mentioned literature underscores the grim reality seen by Palestinian children, whose formative years are characterized by violence, bereavement, and trauma. From an early age, kids encounter circumstances that no child ought to endure—mortality, devastation, and the anguish of their relatives. According to Goodman, during the initial intifada, these children actively participated rather than becoming passive observers. They witnessed the destruction of their homes, the beating and humiliation of their families, and in some instances, even fatalities. These events compel children to mature prematurely, perpetually seeking methods to safeguard themselves and their loved ones from the surrounding violence.

Sarat elucidates that the occurrences of 1948, which resulted in the expulsion of Palestinians and the establishment of refugee camps, have engendered profound, collective pain. The legacy of displacement and loss continues to influence the lives of Palestinian children, instilling a sense of instability and peril that impacts their development. In contrast to the majority of children globally, kids endure events that significantly impact their emotional and psychological health, influencing their personalities in manners that frequently result in enduring difficulties. Furthermore,

"Palestinian children experience a distinct upbringing compared to the majority of children globally, as the incessant violence inflicted upon them obliterates their innocence and subjects them to profound and often unquantifiable physical and psychological trauma, which is exceedingly challenging to remedy" (Goodman 11).

Notably, the suffering of children has been overlooked by numerous Western authors for an extended period; however, in recent years, there has been a significant change in the perception of the Palestinian cause and the hardships faced by many Palestinian children under Israeli occupation. A prime illustration of this positive evolution in children's literature is Katherine Clinton's novel *A Stone in My Hand* (2010), which encapsulates the tragic reality of Palestinian children. The narrative commenced with the child's angel, the airborne girl, awaiting her father, who had departed to seek employment in Israel but failed to return. No one knows exactly what transpired with him. Consequently, his wife inferred his demise, although she was preoccupied with her new substantial obligations to ascertain his fate.

Managing her family and nurturing her children in these conditions is exceedingly challenging and a significant responsibility, particularly given the city's curfew and school closures. Malaak states, "I have not attended school since my father departed, and the authorities subsequently closed all schools the following day, maintaining their closure for an extended period" (Clinton 34). Malaak's mother embodies the experience of any Palestinian mother, and her anguish reflects the collective agony of



all moms in that region. She was compelled to labor to sustain the family while her father's absence, as she undertook cleaning duties in the residences of the affluent in Gaza. A diligent mother persistently bears the substantial responsibility of ensuring her children have a quality education, affording them the opportunity for a better life than that of their parents.

Consequently, she continually emphasizes to her daughter, "You must read proficiently ... She will attend university," despite the significant burden of also overseeing her only son, the defiant twelve-year-old Hamid, to prevent his involvement in the recent surge of violence in the city. (Clinton 34). Despite Malaak's mother appearing courageous and resilient, her heart is shattered, and she has been engulfed in sorrow since her husband's vanishing. Goździak characterized her by stating, "Her eyes are filled with saline water like to the sea and the Dead Sea" (188). As night falls, she discovers her solitude. She reminisces about her spouse and weeps throughout the night, prompting her eldest daughter to lie with her.

The Israeli occupation forces violently compelled them to vacate their residences, in contrast to the indigenous population of Gaza, as displaced families were relocated from their native communities to reside in refugee camps during an incursion, as described by Malaak's mother. In 1948, Jewish soldiers forcibly removed hundreds of Palestinians from their residences in Jerusalem, following the British breach of their agreement with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the British let individuals to return, leading Clinton to anticipate that his relatives would have a similar

fate, resulting in their house being shuttered and their subsequent departure.

The painful irony lies in the fact that Palestinian mothers retain the keys to their homes from which they have been displaced, as noted by the author in her novel: "My mother still holds the key. When I was young, I would close my eyes and pretend I was in that beautiful place in Jerusalem, and nothing has changed since that picture" (Clinton 114).

Violence and resilience are key themes in "A Stone in My Hand"; however, the work transcends a superficial depiction of conflict. Clinton employs these themes to emphasize how Palestinian youngsters, such as Malaak and Hamid, fight not only through overt acts of disobedience but also by their emotional resilience and the maintenance of hope in an environment intended to deprive them of both.

The story unfolds during the initial Palestinian intifada, a period when the inhabitants of Gaza were cognizant of violence, mortality, gunfire, homicide, bombardment, and the severe beatings and humiliation inflicted by Israeli soldiers. Every family in the narrative suffered the loss of at least one member due to the violence. Nasser, a teenage neighbor of Malaak, was fatally shot by an Israeli soldier while going home from school: "Someone must have thrown a stone. When he exited the store, the Israeli patrol apprehended him and assaulted him with batons. He witnessed everything and was aware he had committed no offense" (Clinton 86). During Nasser's funeral, his brother Mahmoud, while bearing

the coffin, was struck by a bullet from Israeli soldiers and subsequently succumbed to his injuries.

The pervasive feelings of loss and sorrow among the Palestinians who witnessed Mahmoud's death were overshadowed by dread. Nasser's father asserts that Gazans have lost concern for their lives following his son's death; he expresses a lack of fear: "I sacrificed everything I had... There is nothing anyone can take" (Clinton 98). Tariq's family, resembling a "wounded stray dog," constitutes another grieving family. He is a witness to the death of Tariq's father, who was shot by an Israeli soldier, and was powerless to assist his father: "I was with my father when he died. Blood was everywhere. He was shot multiple times. I could see the bone in his shoulder. Portions of his muscles were exposed. I attempted to reassemble all the fragments, but it was futile. No one can restore all the pieces" (Clinton 127).

Following his father's demise, "a portion of Tariq has been diminished. This is evident in Hamid and in numerous other locations, ubiquitous and omnipresent" (Clinton 77). Rola's family lost their caretaker, her father, who was incarcerated for political reasons. Consequently, Rola's mother is unwell and unable to care for her family, necessitating their residence with Rola's aunt. In this household, grief and stillness prevail; as Malaak observes, Rola is taciturn and exhibits sorrow in her gaze: "Rola has no words for me, but I feel aging in her eyes as well" (Clinton 80).

The present circumstances in Gaza exemplify the anguish of a territory subjugated by occupation. Given the harsh realities encountered by several Palestinian children, "experiencing a typical

childhood in Palestine is improbable under the present conditions, and the future psychological welfare of Palestinian children is jeopardized by persistent traumatic experiences" (Altawil 8). In a location such as Gaza, children resemble grass and trees, while the old appear frail and withered prematurely. Clinton illustrates in her story the degree to which Palestinian youngsters are cognizant of violent occurrences, particularly when they endure perpetual fear. The occupying forces may execute someone at any moment merely for displaying the Palestinian flag, as Malaak observes, "I gasp when I see a young man with a keffiyeh covering his face marching in front of the coffin carrying the Palestinian flag" (Clinton 94).

Existence in a blood-soaked environment is arduous, if not nearly unfeasible; as Clinton noted, "Individuals have been apprehended due to their attire in red, black, green, or white at a funeral" (92). This indicates that Palestinian youngsters experience psychological stressors that impact their personalities and daily existence. The author illustrates the plight of Malaak, the protagonist, as representative of the afflicted children in Gaza, stating: "I think we all use our energy to maintain our fears from within" (Clinton 112). This implies that they endure terror, a profound sense of vulnerability, and powerlessness as a result of the relentless violence to which they are perpetually subjected. Individuals observe the brutal and violent deaths of their friends, neighbors, and family members, which has become a normalized occurrence: "Innocent individuals perish on buses, in shops, and during funerals. Innocent individuals die in wars. The Israelis

appropriated our land in a conflict. They also killed women and children" (Clinton 114).

*A Stone in My Hand* is among numerous works that depict the anguish of children resulting from violence and trauma. *Ask Me without Questions* is a story adapted into a feature film that depicts the anguish of children affected by violence. Furthermore, it illustrates the psychological and moral representation of the psychological variables experienced by children afflicted with trauma from the events in the narrative. Malaak's 12-year-old brother, Hamid, endures a distressing existence, observing extensive violence and homicides in his community, devoid of hope for an improved future.

Hamid, Malaak's brother, observed the murder of his neighbor Tarek by Israeli soldiers and the demise of his brother Mahmoud while transporting his coffin. In assessing Hamid's psychological condition, having endured such abuse, he perceives no alternative but to "fight" alongside the other children. In his dispute with his sister Malaak, he asserts: "We are at war, regardless of your desires. What constitutes security? I believe no one is safe. Not any longer" (88).

Despite his father's alleged death in an Islamist jihadist explosion, he remains hopeful. He attributes his necessity to seek employment in Jerusalem to the curfew enforced on Gaza, which he holds the Israelis responsible for. Consequently, Hamid is perceived as a defiant child raised in an adverse atmosphere, repudiating his surroundings and feeling compelled to express his rage. He perceives no future under an occupation characterized by

the humiliation, enslavement, and deprivation of fundamental human rights. As Mcleigh observes: "I don't want to spend my life standing in lines. Water queues. Queues to get buses crossing the border. Queues to pass through checkpoints simply because you're Palestinian. Lines of laughter, where soldiers mock you. The lines are searched – stripped naked and searched for bombs" (80). Furthermore, the death of his father, pervasive humiliation, feelings of insecurity, and the absence of hope for a more promising and tranquil future incite anger and rebellion in Hamid. He perceives combat as the sole means to forge a better future: "And if we do not win this war, what is my future, angel?" He is skeptical of his parents' teachings of peace and patience.

Malaak, the protagonist and narrator of the novel, initially appears to be an ordinary child imbued with innocence, despite the considerable obstinacy she exhibits in response to the harsh realities of her imaginative world, particularly through her desire to escape with her bird "Abdo" to a more secure location, stating, "I am flying outside the Gaza Strip." Nothing impedes me; neither concrete nor barbed wire, nor firearms, nor soldiers... "I might depart permanently, yet presently I observe and anticipate." (1)

Despite her attempts to "escape" from the collective trauma stemming from her father's death, which represented her sole source of protection, his absence inflicted profound emotional distress. The memories of her father remain inescapable, particularly when she is confronted with fear and horror.

Additionally, she was accompanied by her father when Israeli forces commenced pursuing many Palestinian youths, and her

father's arms provided refuge for Malaak: "My father's leg squeezed me against the wall." I scratched my dorsal region. "Shut your eyes," my father's tone sounded stern. I shut my eyes, however I perceived the crackling sound of the firearm. The jeep commenced operation, and my father retrieved me. He transported me as one would a small infant. I was immersed in his embrace. He swings in his steps. Safe" (Clinton 30).

Malaak finds it exceedingly difficult to lose her sole source of protection in a perilous environment, and this devastating incident may irrevocably alter her existence, leaving her unable to heal from the profound emotional trauma. She appears to endure profound sorrow stemming from her childhood. Goodman, Miller, and Judith state, "After a shocking, sudden, or terrifying death..." Certain children may develop CTG. Children may also receive CTG when they are perplexed about the circumstances behind a person's death.

CTG denotes childhood traumatic grief, a condition wherein children exhibit pronounced trauma symptoms subsequent to the death of a close individual. This concept is associated with the notion that death is perceived as traumatic, leading to a response in the child that encompasses both grief and a trauma reaction, thereby complicating and disrupting the conventional grieving process.

Malaak's abrupt bereavement of her father has her engulfed in profound sorrow, hindering her ability to engage with her family: "The following morning, upon awakening, I had an overwhelming mental exhaustion." My eyeballs felt swollen. I shake my head to dispel fatigue, and then I recall that my father has passed away"

(Clinton 62). The demise of Malaak's father challenges her resilience. It does not result in her total ruin. She confronts her fears by bearing the Palestinian flag to Hamid, despite the overwhelming presence of Israeli soldiers encircling the hospital. She endeavors to heal from her sense of loss by emphasizing her duty to care for what her father cherished, which fosters in her a renewed appreciation for her life.

Similar to Nadira in *Ask Me No Questions*, Malaak possesses the ability to heal herself and transcend her trauma. By the conclusion of the novel, the formerly escapist, fearful, and reticent girl emerges as a mature and seasoned individual capable of confronting the surrounding violence without succumbing to it. She is even more resilient than before.

Similar to Nadira in *Ask Me No Questions*, Malaak exhibits multiple symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The trauma of her father's loss has transformed her from an innocent, carefree girl into a reclusive introvert who seeks solace in her avian companion, existing as a "bird girl" within her realm of nature and fantasy. She perceives her existence "in the eyes of a slave," with Abdo, the distinctive bird that appeared on the night of her father's demise, serving as her sole refuge from the harshness of reality and the world she inhabits.

When she requires understanding, she retreats to her imaginative realm, characterized by the purity of birds and the sky, isolating herself from everybody but her bird, rendering her mute. It is expressed by (Clinton 15), on that initial day when I lost my ability to articulate, I refrained from speaking extensively; when I



attempted to communicate, only fragments of words emerged, occasionally reduced to mere letters or sounds. Presently, I perceive the words traversing my mind, yet they resemble the front page of a newspaper that has been shredded into small fragments, rendering me unreadable, compounded by numerous disjointed pieces that lack coherence.

Fear enveloped her heart as the streets of Gaza transformed from a sanctuary into a desolate and intimidating environment devoid of her father, as she expressed: "I am apprehensive about venturing into the main streets due to the military..." Following the rebellion, numerous units are present, discharging their guns and assaulting individuals" (36). She experiences worry and stress: "Father is not here to pick me up and take me home....My neck is stiff. I rub the bones into them. Is this stress? Tension seems to be a good name for the thing that went into my room and woke me up last night; turning my head from side to side I could feel her hands on my neck"(41).

Similar to numerous trauma survivors, Malaak incessantly revisits her traumatic experiences, narrating her story from various perspectives. Regardless of whether an angel was informed of the events, observed them, or merely conceived them, unsettling thoughts and images regarding the individual's potential demise may persist in the child's consciousness" (Goodman 16). For instance, she is unable to cease contemplating the loss of her father: "By the third day. On the day of the funeral, I experience numbness, having envisioned Dad's Funeral numerous times in my head.

Moreover, Malaak experiences nightmares concerning her father's demise, stating, "She had so many horrible dreams of her father's death that she was afraid to sleep" (Goodman 17). Similar to Nadira in *Ask Me No Questions*, Malaak endured distressing dreams following her father's loss: "One night I had a special dream." It pertained to my father. He traveled to the moon by leaping from star to star. As he neared his destination, he turned and signaled to me. I gestured backward, then sprinted in the opposite direction, orbiting the moon until I seized it and embraced it.

Malaak attempted to retreat into her father's recollections, yet it proved largely ineffective; akin to Nadira, she was compelled to engage with the tumultuous realm of adulthood. Rather than reclaiming her father, she faced the imminent threat of losing her brother. Hamid's ire drove him to ally with other youths at their checkpoint to obstruct Israeli soldiers from entering their vicinity. Concerned that his mother would become distressed, Hamid confided in Malaak about his poetry and extracted a promise from her to keep it from their mother. "If anything befalls me, entrust the football to Tariq." The essence of my poetry belongs to you, yet only you may peruse them. "I am aware that I can place my trust in you" (Clinton 19-20).

The demise of Malaak's father tested her resilience but did not result in her complete devastation. She managed to confront her fears by bearing the Palestinian flag to Hamed, despite the substantial presence of Israeli soldiers encircling the hospital. She sought solace from her grief by reaffirming her duty to cherish what her father valued, which instilled in her a renewed appreciation for

her existence: "I whisper to Hamid again, 'My father instructed me in a dream to bring him to you. He has not abandoned me, and I shall not abandon you. I will return to see you as often as possible and bring the flag each time. I cannot leave him here with you, for someone might discover him, and there are soldiers in this hospital.' I elevate Hamid's arm, remove the flag, and conceal it beneath my jacket (182).

Similar to Nadira, Malaak possesses the ability to self-heal and surmount her trauma. By the conclusion of the tale, the previously timid girl transforms into a seasoned, mature lady capable of navigating the surrounding violence without succumbing to it. It is more robust than ever. With my eyes shut, I sing internally. I accomplished this. She triumphed over adversity. I bore the flag to Hamid. I embraced science resolutely for my sake. I connect with both Hamid and my father while bearing the flag... I resolved to come here each morning to convey my thoughts to Hamed. I will perceive you as a warrior. You shall endure. You are a warrior. You shall endure. I derive strength from these affirmations. They will sustain me, allowing me to witness it daily (184).

Kenneth Kidd aptly observes, "Thanks in part to the popularization of psychoanalysis and the professionalization of mental health work, trauma is a central concept in our lives and our literature." Contemporary children's literature illustrates the psychological trauma experienced by numerous children from diverse cultural backgrounds, whether due to immigration processes, as exemplified in *Ask Me No Questions*, or as a result of

violence and oppression, as depicted in Catherine Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand*. In both works, the youngsters confront social and political issues intensified by the absence of their guardians.

The death of a parent is a significant traumatic event that disrupts a child's world, dismantling traditional structures and unsettling their typical sense of security and resilience. Catherine Clinton's novel *A Stone in My Hand* depicts damaged youngsters exhibiting symptoms of stress, dread, and disintegration. From the perspective of the wounded youngster, the two novels serve as a mechanism for healing. By the conclusion of the novels, both heroines successfully transcend their pain and go from a state of innocence to one of experience.

## **Psychological aspects**

Wars exert detrimental economic, social, and psychological impacts on entire societies. In this study, we will examine the adverse psychological effects of wars on children, focusing on their behavior, relationships, and personalities, which leave lasting negative impressions on them. This results in instances of schizophrenia or inadequate adaptability to their living environment, with the most significant unfavorable impacts being the deprivation of children from compassion, tenderness, and a suitable familial milieu. The proliferation of a society characterized by fear, worry, and avoidance may hinder children's ability to thrive, resulting in detrimental psychological consequences that can persist for numerous years.

Wars erode children's trust in others, resulting in their isolation and detachment from those around them. Fear and chronic anxiety around the potential loss of family and friends persist among youngsters during and after the war, inhibiting their engagement in customary activities such as play, recreation, and education.

## **Images and forms of psychological effects of war on children**

Research has demonstrated that children are the most significantly affected demographic regarding the psychological impacts of warfare. These images manifest in various scenarios: nocturnal terrors in children, distress, anxiety, and discomfort, phobias or pathological fears of auditory stimuli and darkness, involuntary nocturnal enuresis despite prior acclimatization, the onset of speech impediments such as stuttering or functional aphasia, eating disorders and diminished appetite, as well as the

exposure of children to health and psychological setbacks.

The setting of the novel, Gaza under occupation, profoundly influences the reality encountered by numerous Palestinian children: experiencing a typical childhood in Palestine is improbable under present conditions, and the psychological well-being of future generations is jeopardized by continuous traumatic experiences.

In a place such as Gaza, children resemble the grass and trees, seeming aged: "fragile and desiccated prematurely. Old, not youthful." The novel's context reveals that Palestinian children are excessively familiar with instances of violence. They exist in perpetual fear, as they could be murdered at any moment only for displaying the Palestinian flag; as Malaak cautiously observes: "I gasp when I see a young man with his face obscured by a keffiyeh walking in front of the casket, clutching a Palestinian flag" (Clinton 94).

Political psychology elucidates the necessity of comprehending the interconnected dynamics between individuals and attitudes influenced by beliefs, motives, perceptions, information processing, learning methodologies, socialization, behavioral development, external factors, collective movements and conflicts, racist conduct, voting motivations and methods, as well as the media's role in voting, nationalism, political extremism, and behaviors associated with ethnic violence, including warfare and genocide.

Political psychologists examine the foundations, dynamics, and consequences of political behavior through cognitive and social frameworks. Consequently, this emerging specialization in

psychology aims to fulfill specific objectives, one of which is to analyze political events by formulating hypotheses regarding individual interests based on scientific methodology and empirically testing them, thereby employing scientific research methods in the study of politics.

In this "multi-traumatic milieu," where individuals have been apprehended for displaying red, black, green, or white during funerals, young Palestinian youngsters endure psychological pressures that impact their personalities and daily lives (Clinton 92). Malaak states, "I believe we are all expending our efforts to suppress our worries" (Clinton 61). They endure anxiety and a sense of vulnerability and powerlessness due to the pervasive terrible violence surrounding them. They observe the deaths of "innocent individuals in buses, in shops, and during funerals. Innocent individuals perish in wars. The Israelis took our territory in a conflict. They also killed women and children" (Clinton 114).

The primary goal is to establish overarching laws governing individual conduct, enabling the interpretation and prediction of actions in political contexts. Secondly, comprehending group behaviors, their cognitive processes, and the mechanisms by which they formulate political decisions. Third, employing psychology to enhance the political process serves the broader interests of humanity. Fourth, examining the psychological framework of political leaders and politicians, alongside the diverse perspectives of the populace during worldwide popular revolutions, and elucidating the behavioral patterns of individuals in response to crises, revolutions, and protests. Fifth, seeking the rational solution

to the inquiries that engage the researcher in political psychology (Robertson 44).

The domain of political psychology extends beyond merely analyzing major political events via a psychological lens. This discipline delves into comprehending and elucidating the various aspects that contribute to these events, as well as certain subjects within political psychology.

The Frankfurt School of Criticism, spearheaded by Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, and Theodor Adorno, is characterized by its critical methodology in the examination of social phenomena, integrating insights from other disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, and sociology.

The social sciences require cognitive and functional integration and mutual service, particularly in light of the advent of new political practices. Examining social and political events and phenomena necessitates the integration of several disciplines, highlighting the importance of using ideas from political psychology (Potochnick 198).

Alongside many domains of knowledge, it is imperative to examine the cultural transformations and political conduct of individuals and organizations, which have assumed novel forms and dimensions, especially with the advent of the information revolution and contemporary communication methods. These changes have resulted in the creation of a virtual public space—an unofficially regulated platform—that facilitates the expression of many individual and collective political behaviors, whether structured or unstructured, with the latter frequently prevailing.



## **The British School in Comprehending Human Behavior and Contextual Influences and Their Effects**

The British school believed that comprehending human behavior necessitates an understanding of situational circumstances. The individual's circumstances, along with the political, economic, and social settings, significantly influence their behavior, attitudes, and actions. The British school is regarded as a significant paradigm in the examination of human behavior. It emphasizes the significance of contextual elements in influencing individual behavior. This school posits that human behavior cannot be comprehensively understood without accounting for the contextual aspects, including political, economic, and social influences (McConnell 781). It emphasizes that external factors significantly influence human behavior. For example, economic conditions like unemployment or rising prices can affect individuals' behavior. Frustration and anxiety may increase during economic crises, prompting individuals to make unexpected or irrational decisions.

### **Political Influences**

Political factors also play a vital role in shaping individuals' behavior. For instance, in societies experiencing political instability, fear and insecurity may prevail, leading to increased feelings of isolation or even aggressive behaviors. Conversely, individuals feel more secure and confident in politically stable societies, enhancing their social interactions and creativity. (McConnell 788).

## **Social Factors**

Social factors, such as cultural values and traditions, also have a profound impact on individuals' behavior. Individuals raised in environments encouraging cooperation and sharing may exhibit more collaborative behaviors, while those raised in competitive environments may be more inclined to compete and focus on themselves.

Beliefs, convictions, intellectual, ideological, value deposits, political stances, orientations, and genetic legacies play a role in shaping one's behaviors and actions.

### **Gustave Le Bon School and the Study of the Psychology of the Masses:**

Gustave Le Bon is a French thinker interested in studying psychiatry and collective behavior and has published much research on it. The most famous of which remains is his book, "Psychology of the Masses." Le Bon started by trying to answer the following question: "How can leaders mobilize the masses?" (45). He came to a basic justification indented in the fact that the masses are crazy by nature, and the revolutionary instinct overcomes them without reason or justification. Belonging to the group makes them participate in any reason that is predominantly of a mass character, dominated by collective thought (Le Bon 45).

The main advantage of the masses is that they are willing and without feeling to dissolve in one soul, which cancels all personal and individual distinctions because the variables that occur in the behavior of the individual involved in the group are similar to those that a person is exposed to during the hypnosis process. Here, it

appears that (Gustav) employed psychology to analyze the psychology of the masses.

This led him to assert that words only influence the masses when subtly embedded in the subconscious. This process transforms them into "compulsive" emotions and behaviors, driven by a leader who hypnotizes the crowd, much like a doctor influences his patients. As a result, individuals become willing to sacrifice for the group, often without compensation.

If we try to apply Le Bon's theory in practice, we find that this is what happens within the framework of extremist religious and terrorist groups, where ideas and discourses wrapped in religious rhetoric and rhetoric are promoted by the leader of the organization, which makes the individual under a process of influence that results in the ownership of the individual. For a hostile image against authority and others, he adopts extremist ideas and behaviors, especially since he feels empowered by joining the group without awareness of the reckless practices he is doing because he is unable to perceive the discourse wrapped in religious loads, so it is easy to modify and direct his behavior to an action predetermined by the extremist organization.

### **Theodor Adorno School and the Study of the Authoritarian Personality**

Theodor Adorno is a German philosopher who belongs to the Frankfurt School of Criticism that attempted to study the authoritarian personality in totalitarian regimes in general and the Nazi regime in Germany in particular from a psychological point of view of the authoritarian personality by searching for the reasons

behind the authoritarian tendency and its strong ability to mobilize the political and psychological of the public and influence collective behavior.

Theodor Adorno concluded with a basic idea that the German Protestant upbringing based on the principle of coercion and cruelty, as well as implanting the behaviors of reverence, respect, and coercion in the psyche of the child itself, grew and developed to normalize all his behavior even in the late stages of his life (Adorno, 230)

Moreover, it fed the specific criterion for the behavior of the leaders of the state later, which is the same approach that Max Horkheimer followed, who was interested in studying the issue of family and power and researching the causes of authoritarian behavior that formed starting from childhood due to education based on the principle of reverence for adults by young people (Horkheimer 9).

Thus, the man/child adopts the behavior of the group to which he belongs and its prevailing pattern of thinking. This applies, to some extent, to some Islamic organizations and groups that cultivate the values of obedience and servility in their followers and even stress the need to sanctify the leader of this group, even after his death.

A Stone in My Hand addresses the trauma in children's lives, as it portrays the psychological changes that happen to the children who are traumatized by events in the story. Malaak's 12-year-old brother, Hamid, is a victim of such a traumatic life. He witnesses too much violence and killing in his city to have any hope for a

better future. His friend, Nasser, was killed just for passing the street at the wrong time .

Hamid has also seen Nasser's brother being shot by the Israeli soldiers while carrying Nasser's coffin. Hamid recognizes that he does not have a choice; he and the other children have to "fight" as he argues with his sister, Malaak: "we are in a war whether you want to be or not... what is safe? I do not think anyone is safe. Not anymore" (Clinton 88).

Though it is said that his father was killed by Islamic Jihadist bombing, he still lays the blame on the Israelis that his father has had to go out to Jerusalem to find a job to support his family because of the curfew imposed upon Gaza. Hamid is rebellious and unhappy; he refuses everything around him and feels that he has to do something to vent his anger. For him, there is no future under this kind of occupation that humiliates people and deprives them of their basic human rights: I do not want to spend my life standing in lines..., lines for water, lines to get buses to cross the borders, lines to go through checkpoints just because you are a Palestinian. Laughing lines, where the soldiers make fun of you. Lines to be searched – stripped naked and searched for bombs"(Clinton 80).

The existence of this Islamic group, which adopts a rigid stance towards the state, has often been associated with the name of its founding person. This can be said to indicate that it tends to personalize and devote obedience behavior, especially since the leader is considered the pivotal figure around which this organization revolves through his exclusivity of power and lack of discussion. His decisions give him a kind of "sanctity". This Islamic

group has not yet been able to liberate itself from the values and behaviors that the Zawiya institution has established for centuries, represented in the values of honor and blessing, and the behaviors of what can be called sanctification within its structure. Relations of subordination and submission prevail, as there is an existing symmetry between this group and the Zawiya because the latter's characteristics are distinct within the organizational structure of this Islamic group.

### **The Broader Implications of Clinton's Work**

Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand* is a profound exploration of trauma, resilience, and resistance, offering a deeply nuanced perspective on the Palestinian experience. Through the story of Malaak and her family, Clinton presents a narrative of survival in the face of overwhelming violence and loss. The novel's emphasis on emotional resilience challenges traditional notions of resistance, suggesting that the quiet, internal battles fought by individuals like Malaak are just as important as physical acts of defiance.

Clinton's portrayal of resilience in *A Stone in My Hand* expands the definition of resistance to include psychological survival. Her characters resist not only through outward actions but by holding onto their sense of self, hope, and humanity in the face of dehumanizing forces. This focus on emotional strength as a form of defiance offers a powerful and timely message about the importance of resilience in conflict zones.

By weaving together personal stories with broader political and historical themes, Clinton creates a work that is both intimate and

universal. *A Stone in My Hand* is a powerful reminder that even in the darkest circumstances, there is always the possibility of survival—and that survival itself can be an act of resistance. Through Malaak's story, Clinton offers readers a new way of thinking about trauma and resilience, one that emphasizes the power of the human spirit to endure and resist, even in the most oppressive environments.

## **Discussion**

### **Reconceptualizing Trauma and Resilience in *A Stone in My Hand***

In *A Stone in My Hand*, Clinton transcends the conventional emphasis on physical violence and trauma frequently shown in narratives of war. Instead, she emphasizes emotional endurance, demonstrating that just survival in such a hostile setting becomes an act of defiance. The narrative centers on Malaak, a young Palestinian girl, and her family as they navigate life under Israeli control in Gaza during the initial intifada. Clinton's depiction is distinctive since Malaak's defiance manifests not in conventional rebellious behaviors, but in her determination to preserve her identity and optimism despite the tragedy. Malaak is initially reclusive, profoundly impacted by her father's absence—a trauma that renders her incapacitated. Nonetheless, as the narrative advances, we observe her transformation. At a pivotal moment, she resolves to deliver her father's flag to her brother Hamid in the hospital: “I will carry the flag to Hamid today” (Clinton 177). This diminutive yet potent action epitomizes her metamorphosis. Wielding the flag beyond mere remembrance of

her father; it embodies her assertion of identity and familial loyalty, clinging to optimism among despair. Clinton asserts that emotional resilience transcends mere trauma coping; it constitutes a proactive type of resistance.

### **Resilience Manifested Through Targeted Actions: A Subtle Rebellion**

Clinton's characters, especially Malaak and her brother Hamid, embody two distinct yet equally significant kinds of resistance. Hamid's reaction to the surrounding violence is more physical and confrontational—he desires to retaliate. He informs Malaak, “We are engaged in a conflict regardless of your desire to participate... what constitutes safety?” I believe no one is secure. “Not anymore” (Clinton 88). Hamid's ire and inclination to act exemplify the external defiance sometimes linked to insurrection in times of warfare. Malaak's resistance is subtle yet equally potent. Her emotional journey—from dread and quiet to discovering her inner strength—demonstrates that resilience need not be overt or conspicuous to effect change.

Malaak's preservation of her identity and safeguarding of her family constitute acts of defiance against the surrounding violence. Her strength lies not in physical actions but in emotional resilience. Clinton argues that, in circumstances of severe tyranny, maintaining one's spirit while merely living becomes a type of revolt. It serves as a reminder that resistance is not solely characterized by violent opposition; it may also manifest as the refusal to allow trauma and terror to undermine one's resilience.



## **The Influence of Collective Trauma and Community Resilience**

The narrative focuses on Malaak's individual struggle while also illustrating the broader effects of occupation trauma on the entire town. Clinton emphasizes not only the individual experience but also how collective pain unites individuals. This communal trauma, rather than debilitating them, serves as a source of resilience for the Palestinian population. Upon the death of Nasser, a friend of Hamid, and the shooting of his brother Mahmoud while transporting his coffin, the community collectively grieves. This moment encompasses not only pain but also solidarity.

Despite experiencing loss, the community remains resolute. Malaak notes that, despite the pervasive misery and suffering, those around her remain resolute. Clinton states, "Innocent individuals perish in buses, at stores, and during funerals." "Innocent individuals perish in conflicts" (Clinton 114). The recognition of death and loss is sharp; yet, the crucial aspect is the community's response. Instead of capitulating, they persist in advancing, preserving their culture and identity. Clinton demonstrates that trauma has the capacity to fracture individuals, yet it can also foster unity among them. The characters derive resilience from their communal experiences, use that collective fortitude to endure and oppose.

## **A Comprehensive View of the Palestinian Experience**

Clinton's depiction of the Palestinian experience in *A Stone in My Hand* is both authentic and equitable. She does not hesitate to depict the harsh realities of life under occupation—the violence, the

loss, the everyday humiliations—yet she refrains from portraying her characters solely as victims. Malaak's narrative illustrates the anguish and fortitude of Palestinians. Clinton presents a complex portrayal, wherein the people are characterized not merely by their trauma, but also by their capacity to persevere, adjust, and discover hope amidst the bleakest situations. This equilibrium is particularly evident in Clinton's juxtaposition of the reactions of Malaak and Hamid. Hamid's fury and need for retribution are justifiable considering his experiences, however Malaak's subdued resistance illustrates that there are multiple approaches to confronting trauma. Clinton does not advocate for one way over the other; however, she posits that emotional resilience, much to Malaak's, constitutes a formidable and frequently underestimated kind of resistance.

### **Concentrating on the Fundamental Themes of the Novel: Resilience as Rebellion**

Clinton's work emphasizes that emotional resilience constitutes a type of resistance. In *A Stone in My Hand*, the characters demonstrate that enduring the daily tragedies of occupation constitutes a significant act of rebellion. Malaak's transformation from silence and dread to strength and purpose illustrates that the most profound form of resistance may not be external defiance, but rather inner fortitude. Malaak resists the forces attempting to undermine her by maintaining her identity and nurturing her family.

Clinton presents a persuasive argument that resilience transcends mere endurance of adversity; it involves the deliberate decision to maintain one's humanity in dehumanizing situations. This emphasis on emotional and psychological resilience imparts a distinctive voice to the novel in the discourse around children in conflict zones. Clinton urges us to recognize that resistance manifests in various forms, and that often the most subtle actions of survival possess the most strength.

### **Examining Violence and Resilience in Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand***

Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand* transcends conventional depictions of pain and violence in children's literature by providing a more nuanced exploration of resiliency. Clinton illustrates, through the experiences of Palestinian children during the first intifada, both the overt violence and the nuanced methods by which youngsters oppose their restrictive surroundings. Her characters are not merely victims; they are survivors whose emotional resilience is their most significant act of rebellion.

### **A Novel Perspective on Trauma and Resilience**

Clinton's narrative is distinguished by her depiction of resilience as a mode of resistance. In numerous narratives concerning warfare, resistance is depicted through tangible activities, such as demonstrations or combat. However, Clinton adopts an alternative method. In her book, enduring emotional trauma and maintaining optimism constitutes a formidable act of rebellion. The characters, particularly Malaak and Hamid,

exemplify that preserving one's identity in a setting intended to undermine it constitutes a revolutionary act in its own right.

Rather than portraying children as powerless victims, Clinton empowers them with agency. Despite their inability to control the surrounding violence, they resist by refusing to allow it to obliterate their identity. This method challenges conventional notions of resistance and emphasizes the fortitude required to persevere.

### **Reconceptualizing Trauma: Beyond Mere Suffering**

Clinton's perspective on trauma diverges from the conventional depiction of youngsters in combat zones. Instead of depicting trauma solely as a debilitating force, she examines its potential to foster personal growth. Malaak, the protagonist, begins as a timid and fearful girl, although during the narrative, she evolves into a more resilient and resolute individual. This contests the notion that trauma invariably results in an individual being irreparably damaged. Clinton illustrates the coexistence of pain and resilience, influencing children in ways that enable them to surmount difficult situations.

Clinton demonstrates that trauma need not signify the conclusion of an individual's narrative, providing a novel perspective on how children in conflict zones navigate their circumstances. Their trauma encompasses not just loss but also compels them to discover renewed strength and purpose.

### **Resilience as Defiance: An Innovative Perspective**

In *A Stone in My Hand*, Clinton innovatively reinterprets resilience as a manifestation of political opposition. Resilience is typically regarded as an individual characteristic employed to

navigate adversity. In this work, it evolves into a significant means for youngsters to resist the forces attempting to undermine them. By emphasizing their emotional resilience, Clinton demonstrates that just survival can constitute a political act. This contradicts the prevalent notion that resistance must involve combat or demonstration. The protagonists in Clinton's narrative resist by refusing to allow the surrounding violence to undermine their spirits. She provides a novel perspective on the manifestation of resistance in a conflict zone.

### **Collective Trauma: Discovering Resilience in Community**

Clinton also acknowledges the shared trauma endured by the Palestinian population. Instead of concentrating just on grief and loss, she illustrates how collective suffering may foster unity among individuals. The trauma of occupation not only fractures families but also unites them, fostering a shared sense of purpose and resilience.

This is a novel perspective on the conventional depiction of trauma. Rather of solely focusing on the adverse effects, Clinton underscores the capacity of communities to cultivate resilience collectively. This collective power serves as a means of resistance, aiding in the preservation of their identity and the remembrance of their narratives.

### **Endurance as Defiance**

Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand* presents a distinctive perspective on resilience and resistance. By demonstrating that emotional resilience may be as formidable as physical resistance, she broadens our comprehension of the essence of opposing oppression.

The protagonists in Clinton's narrative endure not solely through resistance, but by rejecting the notion of allowing their suffering to shape their identities. By doing so, they illustrate that surviving can serve as a manifestation of defiance.

This novel contests the conventional depiction of children in crisis zones as mere passive victims. Clinton demonstrates that persistence, even during pervasive brutality, constitutes a formidable act of resistance. Her narrative inspires us to perceive survival as not merely enduring; it is a deliberate decision to defy the forces that want to undermine us.

Cathryn Clinton's *A Stone in My Hand* presents a profoundly intricate perspective on trauma, resilience, and resistance. The novel illustrates that enduring in a repressive setting, while maintaining hope and identity, constitutes an act of rebellion. Clinton examines the various methods of resistance individuals can employ, whether through overt actions or emotional fortitude, via Malaak and Hamid.

Through an emphasis on her characters' perseverance, Clinton broadens the concept of resistance. She prompts the reader to reconceptualize resistance not merely as physical defiance, but as the capacity to preserve one's humanity and soul amidst profound oppression. In *A Stone in My Hand*, survival emerges as a potent kind of resistance, and Clinton's characters demonstrate that emotional and collective perseverance is a revolutionary act.

For centuries, children's literature reflected each era's historical and cultural backgrounds. For example, English children's literature was mainly educational and moral during the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, while in the nineteenth century, it was more interested in travel, adventure, and communication with new people and cultures. All this was written under the genre of "folk and fairy tales" (Gopalakrishnan 6).

The prevailing conception of childhood in this literature is that "children do not" deserve "suffering because, in their ideal form, they symbolize purity and innocence" (Gilligan 129). However, in the twentieth century, the concept of childhood changed, and children's literature emerged as a well-established literary genre and, therefore, seriously considered as any other literary genre. Since World War I, "people were previously considered too annoying for children [considered] appropriate and even necessary" (Kidd 120).

Modern-day children have been caught in the crosshairs of numerous ethnic , cultural, and war clashes. The problems of migration, wars, terrorism, natural disasters, and extermination have become an inevitable part of children's literature. As Ambika Gopalakrishnan explains:

Children of all ages have increasingly become victims as targets and perpetrators of violence. Two million children are believed to have died in wars between 1990 and 2001, another six million were injured or disabled, and one million children were orphaned... Nearly 20 million children have been forced from their homes by armed conflict and civil war. Some seven million of these children have sought refuge in another country. (Godziak 188-189).

Moreover, the end of the Cold War created "a favorable international environment that facilitated the export of Western models of childhood, victims, and human psychology around the world" (Gilligan 129). Since many children have experienced wars and faced migration problems, their literature has been a rich field of study in psychology in armed conflicts in recent years.

### **Conclusion**

The novel intricately weaves the personal with the political. While the characters face the universal struggles of adolescence—identity crises, familial tensions, and dreams of the future—their experiences are indelibly marked by the socio-political upheavals surrounding them. The streets they play in, the schools they attend, and even the simple act of looking out of a window are laden with political significance.

The portrayal of violence, too, is multi-dimensional. Beyond the evident physical violence, there is the psychological violence of living in constant fear, the emotional violence of lost loved ones, and the cultural violence of eroded identities and histories. The novels, in its heart-wrenching detail, compel readers to recognize that violence is not just about physical harm—it is about the scars that are not visible, the traumas that echo across generations.



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### المُلخَص باللغة العربية:

تروي رواية "A Stone in My Hand" للكاتبة كاثرين كلينتون قصة فتاة فلسطينية تُدعى ملك، تبلغ من العمر 11 عامًا، تعيش في قطاع غزة خلال الانتفاضة الفلسطينية الأولى. تركز القصة على تجارب ملك الشخصية وعائلتها في مواجهة الإحتلال الإسرائيلي، حيث فقدت ملك والدها بشكل غامض بعد أن ذهب للبحث عن عمل ولم يعد. هذا الحدث يترك أثراً عميقاً على العائلة، وخاصةً ملك التي تحاول فهم ما حدث لوالدها وسط الفوضى والعنف المستمرين.

ملك هي الفتاة التي تمثل البراءة المفقودة في ظل العنف والاحتلال، حيث تجد نفسها مجبرة على التعامل مع المشاهد المروعة للموت والقمع. في الوقت نفسه، يعكس شقيقها حامد الرفض الواضح للإحتلال، وهو متמרّد يُحاول الرد على الظلم من خلال الانضمام إلى الشباب الذين يواجهون الجنود الإسرائيليين بالحجارة. تُسلط الرواية الضوء على التأثير النفسي العميق الذي يتركه الإحتلال والحرب على الأطفال الفلسطينيين، وكيف يحاولون النجاة رغم القسوة والظروف المُحيطة.

**الرمزية في الرواية :** من خلال شخصية ملك وعلاقتها بالطائر الذي تطلق عليه "عبدو"، تصور الرواية الحاجة إلى الهروب والحرية التي تعيشها الفتاة في مخيلتها، حيث ترى نفسها تطير بعيداً عن غزة التي تعيش فيها تحت الاحتلال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستخدم الرواية رمزية الحجر الذي يمسك به حامد، والذي يشير إلى المقاومة الفلسطينية المتجذرة في التاريخ ضد الاحتلال.

### النظرية المستخدمة لتحليل الرواية:

تم تحليل الرواية من خلال نظريات علم النفس السياسي ودراسات الصدمة. تركز هذه النظريات على تأثير الصدمات النفسية على الأفراد والمجتمعات نتيجة للعنف والاحتلال. في هذه الرواية، تبرز نظرية الصدمة النفسية من خلال تصوير تجارب الأطفال الفلسطينيين الذين يواجهون مواقف عنيفة تؤثر على تكوين شخصياتهم وسلوكهم.

نظرية الصدمة: تركز على التأثيرات النفسية والاجتماعية التي يواجهها الأفراد الذين تعرضوا للعنف، مثل ملك وشقيقها حامد. الرواية تعكس كيف تؤدي تجربة الاحتلال والموت والعنف إلى زعزعة الشعور بالأمان لدى الأطفال، مما يخلق جروحاً نفسية عميقة. ومع ذلك، فإن الرواية لا تقتصر على عرض الضحية فقط، بل تقدم نوعاً من المقاومة النفسية، حيث تتمكن ملك من التغلب على مخاوفها وتتحوّل من طفلة خائفة إلى شخصية قوية تواجه واقعها.

### **المقاومة النفسية:**

تتعلق النقطة الجديدة والمختلفة في التحليل بفكرة المقاومة النفسية أو المرونة. بدلاً من التركيز فقط على المقاومة الجسدية أو العنف، تقدم الرواية مقاومة من نوع آخر تتمثل في قدرة الشخصيات على الصمود العاطفي والنفسي. بالرغم من الخسائر المتكررة، إلا أن ملك تجد الأمل من خلال التمسك بذكريات والدها ومواصلة حياتها بحمل العلم الفلسطيني إلى شقيقها حامد في نهاية الرواية، كرمز للأمل والإستمرار.

### **ختام التحليل:**

يبرز تحليل الرواية بإستخدام نظريات علم النفس السياسي كيف أن الأطفال الفلسطينيين ليسوا فقط ضحايا للعنف، بل أيضاً قادرين على المقاومة بطرق نفسية وعاطفية. ملك ووالدها وشقيقها حامد يمثلون رموزاً للمرونة والصمود في وجه القمع، بينما تقدم الرواية نقداً للطرق التقليدية في تصوير المقاومة كفعل جسدي فقط.