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EXILE, TRAUMA AND MEMORIES: STORIES OF SURVIVAL OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN SUSAN ABULHAWA'S *MORNINGS IN JENIN*

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Abstract:

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the Israel- Palestinian conflict has emerged as one of the most pathetic and complicated cases in the history of migration and displacement. The Jewish infiltration in the middle-east in 1948 as a consequence of the escalating anti-Semitic waves in the post-war Europe had in turn led to forced expulsion and exodus of the Palestinians from their native land. Piteously, even after decades, majority of the Palestinian-Arabs are segregated and surviving in straightened conditions in other countries. For the Palestinians, the issue of rehabilitation is as much problematic as their return to their land. This paper seeks to study how Susan Abulhawa's novel *Mornings in Jenin* (2006) unravel and brings to foreground the dichotomies of development for the Palestinian-Arabs. Beleaguered by the sudden eviction, the community is still entrapped in a complex web of transgenerational trauma. Abulhawa chronicles the turmoil of Abulheja family over four generations and shows how each one of them confronted the ramifications of the dispossession. While some have been detained, imprisoned and tortured by the Israeli forces and spent their lives in the refugee camps, others have vainly fled to the Western countries in search of peace. But in no way, life has been redemptive to them. Rootless and scattered, Abulhawa depicts that the Palestinians are being incessantly pushed toward more psychic disruption. In probing the terrible psycho-social repressions, the novel thus represents a compulsive portrayal of the Palestinian predicament marred by a cycle of trauma, memories, hopes and disillusionments. In light of such an intimate delineation, the paper will finally posit, that Abulhawa's novel not only offers a strong commentary on the uniqueness of the Palestinian refugee status that has stymied the possibilities of healthy development but more significantly also throws a scorching light on the political negligence of the global institutions in assuaging the deeper undercurrents of the crisis.

Keywords: Migration, development, refugee crisis, rootlessness.

Since the later half of the twentieth century, the Israeli Palestinian conflict has emerged as one of the most pathetic and complicated cases in the history of migration and displacement. While it is true that most of the migrations in the current decades are being motivated by the opportunities of better lives in the metropolis, it is also an undeniable fact that the predicament of refugees and their diasporic experience across the world foreground a bitter picture. Indeed, it will be no exaggeration to say that the forced expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs following the massive Jewish infiltration in the middle-east in the post-Second World War period testify to the persistence of such a grim reality. The encroachment of the Jewish people and later the establishment of the state of Israel led to the tragic exodus of the Palestinians from their native land an event that marked the perennial exile of the latter from their homeland. Consequently, the Palestinian Arabs faced extreme problems of relocation and rehabilitation as much as they were continually tormented by a desire to return to their home. This paper seeks to study Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* as a crucial literary intervention in attempting to analyze the fragile status of the Palestinian Arabs since 1948. A Palestinian- American writer, Abulhawa portrays the vulnerabilities and complications enmeshing the community even today. *Mornings in Jenin* unravels the dichotomies of

development for the Palestinian Arabs. Abulhawa chronicles the turmoil of a four-generation family and shows how the ramifications of dispossession are incessant. Shattered by the history of eviction, the community is still confronting the challenges of healthy development and social restoration. Entrapped in cycles of trauma and victimization, Abulhawa's novel offers a powerful commentary on the uniqueness of the Palestinian refugee crisis. No less, the author also pinpoints the political negligence of the global institutions in assuaging the deeper undercurrents of such crisis.

Beginning as early as the 1940s, the novel captures the atrocities perpetrated by the Jewish forces on the Palestinian masses, resulting in the uprooting and displacement of thousands of families from their land. Abulhawa's novel not only depicts the brutalities of the Israeli forces but more significantly lays bare how the horrendous repressions curbed the possibilities of hopeful future of the Palestinians. In portraying the harrowing experiences of the Palestinians, Abulhawa delineates how their psycho-social development was stymied. Though the novel centralizes the journey of Amal, a girl born in a refugee camp, yet it assumes much significance in highlighting the difficulties, trauma and challenges heaped upon the Palestinian community since the influx of the Jewish people. Against the backdrop of Palestinians enjoying a free life in the land, Abulhawa places her narrative vividly delineating how the Jewish people suddenly attacked and expelled them. Quite interestingly, unlike the other communal conflicts, the Jewish-Palestinian one got initiated with the occupation of land. Historically, the Arabs resided in the territory of Palestine until the Jewish people in the later-half of the twentieth century started their march to establish autonomy over it. Aftermath the anti-Semitic hue in the WWII era, the Jewish people fled from different corners of Europe moving to the middle-east and forcefully declared their birthright to the land of Palestine. The novel provides a description of the Jewish calling themselves as:

Freedom Fighters, Soldiers of God . . . set about getting rid of the non-Jewish population first the British, through lynching and bombings, then the Arabs, through massacres, terror, and expulsion. Their numbers were not large, but the fear they provoked made the year 1947 quake with menace, injecting it with warnings of coming history. (Abulhawa 25)

The combat between the "heavily armed, well organized, and well-trained" Jewish forces and the helpless Palestinian natives led to merciless usurpation of the latter. This was followed by the erroneous interference of the Western powers, who exhibited their arbitrariness in dividing the land without minimum regard to the sovereign rights of the Palestinian people. The territory of Palestine, which once had been the home to many thousands of Arabs, then got partitioned by the United Nations into Israel, West Bank and Gaza. The area covering Jerusalem and Bethlehem was declared an international zone. Then in 1948, the British evacuated Palestine and subsequently, the Zionist leaders proclaimed the independent existence of the state of Israel. Robin Cohen in his book *Global Diasporas* summarizes this event as:

Israeli politicians and Zionists alike assume that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 was the logical development of the Jewish aspirations since the original dispersals. Zionists imagined a Golden Age when King Solomon and David ruled and the Jews were united and free from fear. The establishment of Israel was seen as a means of recovering a lost Eden, resolving the causes of anti-Semitism and re-territorializing Jewish identity making of Jews a nation like other nations. . .

[And] perhaps the most controversial and difficult issue for Zionists to accept is that while founding of the Israeli state provided a measure of justice to Jews, it occasioned serious injustices for Palestinians. (104-05)

Abulhawa's novel throws a scorching light on the duplicitous role played by the Western organizations and countries. For the rest of the world, the plight of the Palestinian-Arabs remained only as matter of negotiation and re-negotiation. The historic tragedy of the Palestinian-Arabs finds its most pathetic reflection in the words of Yehya, Amal's grandfather:

Yehya tallied forty generations of living, now stolen. Forty generations of childbirth and funerals, weddings and dance, prayer and scraped knees. Forty generations of sin and charity, of cooking, toiling, and idling, of friendships and animosities and pacts, of rain and lovemaking. Forty generations with their imprinted memories, secrets, and scandals. All carried away by the notion of entitlement of another people, who would settle in the vacancy and proclaim it all that was left in the way of architecture, orchards, wells, flowers, and charms the heritage of Jewish foreigners arriving from Europe, Russia, the United States, and other corners of the globe. . .

In the sorrow of a history buried alive, the year 1948 in Palestine fell from the calendar into exile, ceasing to reckon the marching count of days, months, and years, instead becoming an infinite mist of one moment in history. The twelve months of that year rearranged themselves and swirled aimlessly in the heart of Palestine. (Abulhawa 35)

The other heinous consequence of the Jewish occupation was the rampant measures of de-Arabization. The community was gradually stripped of its identity. On one hand, the Palestinians could not go back to their land, and on the other, more disastrously, those who were detained had to suffer inhuman torture at the hand of the Israeli forces. Sometimes, the Palestinian-Arabs were being physically brutalized and at other times, were dumped as bare anomalies. In the novel, Yousef, Amal's elder brother suffers endless harassments. Abulhawa depicts that "Yousef had endured torture and random beatings that had marked nearly every part of his body, he had been forced to strip before women and his students [and] made to kiss the feet of a soldier who had threatened to beat a small boy if Yousef did not kneel" (Abulhawa 108). Ironically, such physical victimization of the Palestinian natives disrupted their family lives. The author shows how "[m]ost men [who] had endured such treatment . . . [and] had returned from the humiliation with violent tempers aimed [miserably] at their wives or sisters or children" (Abulhawa 108). Poignantly, these people unable to overcome the trauma of victimization became enmeshed in the cycle of memories, disillusionments and hopes. One such piteous example is Dalia, Amal's mother. Witness to the viciousness of the Jewish invaders, Dalia neurotically shrinks into her self-constructed world of fear and nostalgia. Refraining from the joys of a normal livelihood, Dalia's coldness and rigidity prove detrimental to her motherhood. After her newborn son is snatched by a Jewish soldier, Dalia almost surrenders to a comatose life, suffering a psychic fragmentation. Dalia's aversion and lifelessness dismantled her relationship with Amal and Yousef. Remembering the terrible dysfunction that Dalia embodied, Amal, after her death mulls:

My eyes vented quiet tears. I cried, not for this woman's death, but for my mother, who had departed that body years before. I cried with a bittersweet relief that she was finally and completely rid of the whorehouse world that had deflowered her spirit. I cried for the blunt impact of guilt that I could not, had not saved her somehow. I cried because, hard I tried, I could not find in the small pale body the woman whose womb had given me life. (Abulhawa 127)

In other words, Abulhawa depicts how the Palestinian Arabs were left either as prey to the Jewish army or at the mercy of the whimsicalities of the foreign powers. Unsheltered and scattered, the question of socio-economic development of the Palestinians turned to be a crucial one. With the dismantling of Palestine's territoriality, the hope of returning to their original homeland became as much profound as ambiguous. Spending their lives in camps in the neighboring countries, the Palestinian Arabs forever remained incarcerated in a web of complex citizenry. While on one hand, the hopes of resettlement were gradually deteriorating, then on the other the desire to return intensified more and more, almost becoming immutable. Abulhawa's novel brings to light the uniqueness of the Palestinian crisis testifying to the problems that utterly beleaguered the backbone of the community.

Elucidating the insidiousness of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, *Mornings in Jenin* depicts how the Palestinian people's demand for their rights and citizenship were thrown in disarray. In this context, one is

easily reminded of Susan M. Akram who makes an in-depth study of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Refugee Protocol, and analyzes how those were trying to probe the rights and issues of refugees across the world. She claims:

The Refugee Convention brought about a number of significant changes in the substantive definition of “refugee” and in the manner in which the international community dealt with refugee flows. One of the most significant of these was the adoption of an individualized definition of “refugee,” as opposed to the group or category approach that had been used until then. A second major change involved a shift in emphasis from returning refugees to their places of origin to the principle of *non-refoulement* (nonreturn) against a refugee's wishes, as well as a new emphasis on resettlement in third states. Finally, instead of addressing refugee problems in an ad hoc fashion involving only the states directly affected, the new approach viewed these problems as being the responsibility of the entire world community. (36)

Read against the backdrop of such an observation in which alleviation of the refugee problems was perceived as a collective responsibility, the plight of the Palestinians seemed to be a massive contradiction. Reduced to a liminal status, the Palestinian-Arabs faced tremendous abjection. The global institutions could neither appropriately address the problems of the refugees nor decimate the overwhelming tension. As Abbas Shibli puts it forward:

Three durable solutions to refugee situations are widely recognized worldwide: repatriation to the country of origin, rehabilitation in the country of first asylum, and resettlement in a third country having the capacity and willingness to absorb the refugees. In the case of the Palestinians, the largest single refugee group, none of these options is available. Given Israel's refusal to comply with UN Resolution 194 of 1948, which established the principle of repatriation and/or compensation, and the Arab states' unwillingness to accept the permanence of the status quo involving hundreds of thousands of refugees on their soil, the Palestinian refugees have been left in limbo for some fifty years. (36)

To add to this, the deteriorating political climate could not be assuaged by special agencies such as UNCCP and UNRWA. United Nations Conciliation Commission on Palestine (UNCCP) set up in 1948, seeks the protection of the refugees and pacifies the escalating discontent. Similarly, in 1949, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) started relief work for the displaced and strove to resolve the crisis of the refugees through specific programmes. Sadly, given the uniqueness of the Palestinian situation, most of the issues remained unresolved and undecided. If, the forcible expulsion had haunted the community, then the desire to return evoked the right to nationality and self-determination. S.M. Akram rightly encapsulates the internal conflict that torn the community within itself:

The right of return, most commonly articulated in the language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 25 also is included in many draft declarations, constitutions, laws, and jurisprudence of states. Aside from the significant support existing in international conventions for the right of return, the right not to be expelled, the right to a nationality, and the right not to be denationalized on an arbitrary or discriminatory basis, a large body of declaratory law has developed through UN Resolutions affirming the right of return specifically in the Palestinian context, Resolution 194 (III) being the most important one. (41)

Caught in such complications, the healthy growth of the Palestinian refugees was pathetically truncated. While some found temporary solace in the camaraderie in the camps, others somehow struggled to escape to the Western countries in search of peace, though in vain. Majority men took recourse to violence, as the only means to retaliate the Israeli forces and enunciate their national rights. The Palestinian-Arabs were to

be beneficiaries of a special regime to ensure their protection, when the main prongs of that regime failed, they were left without even the minimal protections that afforded all other refugees under the “international burden-sharing system” (42). Abulhawa's novel points the deplorable conditions of the Palestinians showing how their lives got marred by an inimitable cycle of trauma, memories and imaginations.

In the novel, Abulhawa depicts how each of the characters are deeply entrenched in their past. Even if time progresses and the refugee girls like Amal make their way to the United States, the cultural psyche of the Palestinians always remain rife with nostalgia and love of the homeland. To put in other words, Abulhawa evinces how the Palestinians are being incessantly pushed toward psychic conflicts and life has never been redemptive to them. Yehya, Amal's grandfather, “makes his way back to Ein Hod, undetected by the soldiers” (Abulhawa 43) crying out “[t]hat terrain is in my blood”. . . ‘I know every tree and every bird. The soldiers do not” (Abulhawa 44). Undoubtedly, the grandeur with which Yehya “roamed his fields, greeting his carob and fig trees” epitomizes the “excitement of a man reuniting with his family” (Abulhawa 44). Significantly, Yehya's love for the land becomes a transgenerational cultural memory. As in the narrative, “almost thirty years later, and with the same curled moustache as his grandfather, Yousef would recall the yellow clay across Yehya's teeth on the day he came from his sixteen days in the paradise of realized nostalgia. . . Despite [Yehya's] vagabond appearance, he came invested with euphoria and the people lifted him to heights of esteem befitting the only man among them who had outwitted a ruthless military and had done what five great nations could not effectuate” (Abulhawa 44). Yehya's pride, heroism and indomitable spirit later inspired the nationalist zeal of the Palestinian Arabs who by then were growing “weary of the promises of the United Nations and lethargic with the humiliation of 1948” (Abulhawa 44). Not surprisingly, Yousef would feel glorified recapitulating about his ancestor and “in the happiest days of his life, some thirty years after Yehya made his daring journey, Yousef would tell his sister Amal about their grandfather, whom she had never known” (Abulhawa 44). If, Israeli brutalities have thus ignited the heroic temper of Yehya and later Yousef, then for majority Palestinians survival was excruciatingly painful. Amal's reminiscence brings one case to point.

Abu Sameeh . . . a refugee who had started life over after 1948. [The] Israeli campaign had taken the lives of his father and four brothers. He had married in the refugee camp, raised children, and supported his two widowed sisters. Like the rest of us, he looked forward to the return, when we would all go home. But in the end, the original injustice came to him again and took his entire family once more. There could be no starting over a third time. Nothing more of life was left to live. (Abulhawa 70).

Alarmingly thus, thousands of uprooted families were jeopardized forever with the consequence that could hardly regain the hope of living a normal life.

The love of homeland and an acute sense of betrayal have an unflinching impact on Amal. Not witness to the tragic history, for a second-generation Palestinian such as Amal, homeland is only a psychological construct that torments as well as mesmerizes her. Amal says: “I conjured all the places of the home that had been built up in my young mind, one tree, one rosebush, one story at a time. I thought of the water and sandy beaches of the Mediterranean “The Bride of Palestine,” Baba called it which I had visited only in my dreams” (Abulhawa 64). Listening to the stories of the Palestinian exodus and experiencing its trauma via her parents, Amal's only way of returning to her homeland is through imagination. At times, Amal recollects the spirit of camaraderie that rejuvenated the Palestinian refugees in moments of hardest turmoil. Amal reminisces the warmth that she shared with her father, her childhood confidante Huda and her brother Yousef. Sadly, with flickering hopes of restoration, Amal gradually realizes that unification or permanent re-settlement is a far cry. Cursed with exile, physical and psychological, the refugees vainly searched for peace and progress. While Amal, an academically promising student makes her way to America, others stumble in various camps. With the passage of time,

Amal succeeds to carve an independent living there and subsequently also makes endeavors to relocate her husband and her brother. But to her bad luck, her brother sacrifices his life fighting for the emancipation of the Palestinians and her husband is annihilated in a bomb-blast. As the narrative progresses, we find Amal suffering from the pangs of estrangement. Abulhawa delineates how Amal, despite settling in United States, fails to have a life of mental peace and relief. Neither can she amalgamate with the foreign culture, nor happily reintegrate with her family, then scattered in different camps. As an immigrant, Amal's identity and hopes of constructing a laudable future are paralyzed, and she condemned to an "in-between" status. While she attains economic stability, but the ambiguous relationship with her country and its immutable associations tormented and agitated her throughout. In positing Amal's psychic anxieties, Abulhawa depicts how the Palestinian history of deprivation and its ongoing strife, stifled the possibilities of healthy psycho-social growth. Amal, forever remained incarcerated in a disturbing world of re-imaginings and re-constructions, with the dream of returning to homeland being continually deferred. Writers such as Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul have stated about their diasporic experiences of homelessness and exile as eventually affecting their identities. Rushdie, for example, in *Imaginary Homelands* observes:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but the invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (10)

Pertinently, unlike Rushdie's, Amal's crisis in Abulhawa's novel represents a case of collective trauma. She is passionately attached to the land as well as also bears wariness for it. The conflict is piteously articulated in her own words:

I have always found it difficult not to be moved by Jerusalem, even when I hated it and God knows I have hated it for the sheer human cost of it. But the sight of it, from afar or inside the labyrinth of its walls, softens me. Every inch of it holds the confidence of ancient civilizations, their deaths and their birthmarks pressed deep into the city's viscera and onto the rubble of its edges. The deified and the condemned have set their footprints in its sand. It has been conquered, razed, and rebuilt so many times that its stones seem to possess life, bestowed by the adult trail of prayer and blood. Yet somehow, it exhales humility. It sparks an inherent sense of familiarity in me that doubtless, irrefutable Palestinian certainty that I belong to this land. It possesses me, no matter who conquers it, because its soil is the keeper of my roots, of the bones of my ancestors. Because it knows the private lust that flamed the beds of all my forefathers. Because I am the natural seed of its passionate, tempestuous past. I am a daughter of the land, and Jerusalem reassures me of this inalienable title, far more than the yellowed property deeds, the Ottoman land registers, the iron keys to our stolen homes, or UN resolutions and decrees of superpowers could ever do. (Abulhawa 140)

Amal's tragedy brings to spotlight the profound feeling of betrayal that ruined the Palestinian community. Violence, mayhem and dispossession upstaged the dignity of the Palestinians who forever "[became] confused in the rank eternity of waiting, pining at abstract international resolutions, resistance, and struggle" (Abulhawa 48). Predictably, the race remained either imprisoned within a web of conflictual imaginings or poignantly inclined to aggression as the only mean to retaliate the racial coercion. Incessant betrayal and dehumanization at the hands of the Jewish people led majority of the Palestinians to take up arms. In the novel, Amal's elder brother Yousef becomes the leader of the Palestinian liberation organization (PLO) and fights till death for the country's cause. Incidentally, though PLO strove for

restoring the causes of the Arab race, it was charged for fueling terror and vengeance. Through such political complications, Abulhawa drives home how the issue of development became problematized. Beleaguered by the Israeli forces and negligence of the global organizations, the Palestinian-Arabs over the time struggled to preserve their nationalist pride and recuperate Arab sovereignty.

Narrating the turbulences in the lives of Yousef, Fatima, Huda and Amal, the author shows how each of them chartered their own course in braving the challenges of displacement. While the world paid minimal attention to the demands and grievances of the Palestinian community, these people miserably survived amidst the dread of victimization, merely conjuring dreams of reintegration in land of their own. Importantly, Abulhawa raises the question of the development of this community through ironically depicting the undercurrents of humanity that each of these refugees do inculcate. Despite being torn and tattered, these refugees for generations went on rejuvenating each other's lives through memories and stories of Palestine. If the years of cruelty have eradicated the possibilities of healthy future, then deep nostalgia for ancestors and land have reinforced the solidarity among the rootless.

On its publication, Bernard-Henri Levy, a well-known French star had thrashed Abulhawa's novel as biased stating that 'is there no end to the demonization of Israel?' ("The Antisemitism to Come?"). Abulhawa, in her response draws upon the mass usurpation that has been a reality since the consolidation of Israel. She retorts:

Israel has been wiping Palestine off the map, expelling us and stealing everything we have. All that remains to us is less than 11 percent of our historic homeland, now in the form of isolated Bantustans, surrounded by menacing walls, snipers, checkpoints, settler-only roads and the ever-expanding Jewish-only settlements built on confiscated Palestinian property. We have no control over our own natural resources. The amount of water one receives is based on one's religion, such that Palestinians must share bathing water, while their Jewish neighbors water their lawns and enjoy private swimming pools. According to Defense for Children International, in Jerusalem alone, Israel has imprisoned 1,200 Palestinian children this year, who are routinely abused and forced to sign confessions in Hebrew, which they do not understand. Israel routinely targets Palestinian schools and has created a full generation of lost souls in Gaza, who are growing up knowing only fear, insecurity, and hunger. ("The Antisemitism to Come?")

Significantly, Abulhawa's sharpens her critique by dramatizing the hideousness of jingoist nationalism and asserting a humanist perspective. While the Arabs have been peripheralized and their citizenry undermined, the author does not only show how the Palestinian community is subjugated with the question of their development being pushed to the margin but more poignantly unveils that the insidiousness of this conflict poured beyond generations. In the novel, Ismael's tragedy is a case in the point. Ismael is Amal's youngest brother. As a child, he is snatched from Dalia, Amal's brother by Moshe, an Israeli soldier. Moshe wants to bring happiness to his wife Jolanta by gifting him a child. Jolanta, a Jewish woman is "ravaged by Nazis who had forced her to spend her late teens serving the physical appetites of the SS" (Abulhawa 36). Victim of the genocidal violence, Jolanta "lost every member of her family in death camps and had sailed alone to Palestine at the end of Second World War. She knew nothing of Palestine or Palestinians, following only the lure of Zionism and the lush promises of milk and honey. She wanted refuge" (Abulhawa 36). Jolanta's escape to Palestine represents the helplessness of many "orphaned, widowed [and] devastated Jews" (Abulhawa 36), and when Moshe, Jolanta's husband, snatches an infant from an Arab woman to gift to Jolanta who being a victim of the genocide could not "bear a child" (Abulhawa 36), the narrative undoubtedly upholds the picture of a crisis that has transgressed the lines of race and religion. This child grows up as David, unaware of his origin paradoxically nurturing hatred for the Palestinians. Later, David becomes instrumental in oppressing Yousef. In juxtaposing the stories of the two brothers, Abulhawa evinces the piteous fate of many

Palestinians who are usurped by the Israeli army and condemned to perpetual estrangement.

To conclude, *Mornings in Jenin* offers a powerful portrayal of the Israel-Palestinian problematic. On one hand, Abulhawa reproduces the step-motherly attitude of the global organizations towards the Arab nationalism and on the other, she highlights the liminality of the community unable to overcome the horrors of exodus. As a consequence, most of the Palestinians are losing their lives either as prisoners or are fighting to win back a land of their own. As immigrants in the neighboring countries, they are peripheralized and their issue of citizenry desperately sidelined. Entrapped in stories and memories, the unabashed love for the homeland is still predominant. Amal's irrevocable love for her land finally turns out to be fatal testifying to the hapless destinies of the Palestinian-Arabs. Interweaving autobiographical elements with humanist zeal, Abulhawa upholds the pangs of the Palestinian community. Thus, facing one of the biggest turmoil, the Palestinian predicament is precarious and undecided. Living the life of an exile, Abulhawa delineates that if the Nazi persecution of the Jews has been horrific, then what the Palestinian-Arabs faced was no less heinous. Bringing to spotlight a humane account of the continual political impediments, the author endeavors to capture the attention of the international readership to the traumatic existence of the Palestinians that has received little attention. In picturizing the cumbersome survival of a race undauntedly combatting with the psychic and social hazards, Abulhawa aims to drive home the point that vital growth is possible only through the envisaging of the Palestinian refugee problems as a crisis of the larger humanity.

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