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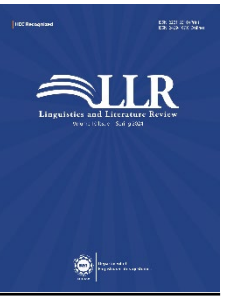

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Ecofeminist Resistance and the Post-colonial Realities in *Against the Loveless World* (2020)

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Abstract

More recent literature on the conflict in Palestine has focused on historical and political injustice. The structural violence the people of Palestine have encountered from Israel's regime, arguably a Zionist ideology has been condemned by a sizeable section of the international community. However, the literature mostly by exiled Palestinian writers carries on the flame of resistance. Historically, women are the worst victims of warfare, however, postmodernity envisages the non-human agency of nature as an equal victim of war. Therefore, ecofeminism sees women and nature as joint victims of war and violence. Susan Abulhawa is an American-Palestinian author and activist whose fictional accounts of the torture and daily violence Palestinian women face bring a fresh insight not only into Israel's brutalization of human rights but into the impunity they enjoy having political franchises in the Western political corridors. Abulhawa's novels *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), *The Blue Between Sky and Water* (2015), and *Against the Loveless World* (2020), document the horrors of Israel's colonial project and its aftermaths for women and Nature. I argue that both women and nature are uprooted. Therefore, the theory of ecofeminism aligns with my line of argument. Notably, ecofeminism is a sub-branch of feminism, originally coined by a French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne who contends that patriarchal society maltreats both women and nature. The aggressor is masculine, may it be a war machine or an ideology. By implication, in the fictional narratives, the victim is female, deriving her resistance from nature's resilience against hegemonic masculinity and the resultant man-made destruction of vegetative life. Therefore, Abulhawa's novels encompass feminist resistance as a version of ecological resistance- a literary trope. In the present research, this survivalist behavior of mythical Mother Earth and the woman as a natural and biological nurturer in Palestine-occupied territory under Israel's colonial gaze is investigated through the lens of Ecofeminism, a combination of Ecocriticism and

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Feminism.

Keywords: double colonization, ecofeminism, hegemonic masculinity, settler colonialism

Introduction

I am an Arab woman of color/ Beware! Beware my anger" (Ziadah).

Through *Against the Loveless World (ATLW),* this work investigates the ecofeminist resistance both from the angle of pre-colonial world and post-colonial experiences. In addition, its focus lies in the Western imperialistic agency that has been the backbone of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine and the Arab world. It studies this alliance in the milieu of women's tragic lives, the horrific realities they had to endure, and the coping mechanism they adopted in different forms of resistance in *ATLW.* Though there are many traces of ecological resistance as well, the text essentially sheds light on the personal, social, and economic crises occurring in the world of women and men because of the union of America and Israel.

The text introduces several instances where Abulhawa has discreetly called out the engendered and normalized patriarchal system in Arab societies. The disloyalty of men and their getting away with this callous attitude is shown to be one of the most practiced liberties in the long list of patriarchal-bound privileges reserved for men only as is shown in the later parts of the paper. Before going into how women were subdued by the west and resurrected by their innate sense of fighting back and acting against the odds, the text also shows flawed, patriarchal narratives that were prevalent in the Arab world.

Against the Loveless World (2020) is the creation of Susan Abulhawa. Born to refugees during the 1967 war, Abulhawa is a Palestinian-American author and human rights activist. She is also the founder of 'Playground for Palestine,' a non-governmental organization. She has written several novels – her first novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, originally known as *The Scar of David* published in 2006, was translated into 26 languages. It was followed by another novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water* published in 2015 - it was translated into about 13 languages. Finally, her third and latest novel, the text under discussion, *Against the Loveless World (ATLW)* was published in 2020. It was selected as a finalist for the Aspen Words Prize and had won the 2021 Arab American Book Award alongside the 2021 Palestine Book Award. This study digs into the ecofeminist resistance alongside the

analysis of post-colonial undertones in the concerned text.

The fact that Abulhawa does not sketch her female characters as victims, rather as fighters who ace against all kinds of odds they are put in, makes the text all the more relevant to the study of feminist resistance that this paper undergoes. Each one of them has her own way of dissent in the world where they are perpetually looked down upon. All of them have their own distinct journey, but one thing that is common in all of Abulhawa's women is resistance. They never give up before the wretched Zionist occupation. *ATLW* (2020) depicts one such round-peg-in-the-square-hole i.e. Nahr, who breaks all her gender stereotypes, walks her road, and grows through her life journey. The female resistance in this novel is best manifested through the character of Nahr.

Along with the distinctive feminist feature of this work, the presence of environmental factors that are considered in the same novel is equally perceptible. When asked about the 'environmental violence' and 'trees as a means for resistance against Israeli settlements,' by the interviewer, Rachael Rosenberg (2021), Abulhawa talks about ecological awareness and its significance in the novel in the following comment:

> The natural world plays a big part in all my novels, as it does in my own life. Palestinian society, in particular the fellaheen, collectively have a reverence, curiosity, and respect for trees that I've rarely seen in other societies. Israel has always understood this, as do their paramilitary settlers, which is why tree groves have been targets in their violence against us. (para. 8)

Thus, to study the symbiotic relationship between women and the land in Palestine, to analyze the overt influence of Nature on Palestinians- especially women, and how the latter draw inspiration from the strength and fortitude of the former, it is imperative to explore the premises of ecofeminism and how it resonates with the characters of the text.

Research Questions

- What is Double Colonization? How does it relate to the uprootedness of women and Nature?
- What are the commonalities between human (women) and non-human (Nature) agencies and their dissent? How do they dismantle the prevalent colonial structures?

- How does passive resistance pave way for redemption against an active persecution of political apparatuses?

Theoretical Framework

To explore what eco-feminism framed in a post-colonial milieu is about and how it contributes to the better understanding of the subject under discussion, it is inevitable to first dig into its roots to understand where this idea sprouts from, and how it has evolved with the passage of time. So, at this point, the paper goes on to the exploration of the path that paves way for ecofeminism. The imprints of colonization have left a permanent mark on almost every form of life, be it human or non-human. Especially, it has been particularly damaging for women of the colonized world at its disposal. It has been "double colonization" for them as Petersen and Rutherford (2008) have coined this term in their work, *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing*. The simplest definition of double colonization is the oppression of women not only by colonial forces but also by their patriarchal culture. They are made to suffer both because of the race they belong to and the gender they have. It is important to note that this concept of double colonization or even by extension, ecofeminism, does not opine that the men of the colonized states were spared, or they were not made to suffer by their colonial masters. It unravels the long-standing tradition of women being cornered on account of ancient patriarchal structures of whatever respective culture they belong to. Thus, when a group of people already being suppressed and considered less is put into an even worse whirlpool of intimidation and besiegement, it becomes inevitable to highlight both agencies that had made it suffer at different times in various ways. Thus, post-colonial feminism, which is one part of postcolonial ecofeminism, is to be studied under the context of double colonization.

The post-colonial theory may be defined as, "a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century" (Elam, 2019, p. 1). Critical examination of the impact of European colonial rule on women brings post-colonial feminism to the fore. Feminism paves way for post-colonialism to "produce a more critical and self-reflexive account of cultural nationalism" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 102). Moving onto the second half of the framework under question, the paper now presents a brief understanding of the representation

of the environment and its relation to women in a colonized region. The term "Ecofeminism" was originally coined by the French feminist, Francoise d'Eaubonne (1974) in her work, *Feminism or death* originally published in French as, *Le Feminisme ou la mort*. There are several interpretations that circle ecofeminism.

Judith Plant, a Cultural ecofeminist, maintains that women are naturally compassionate and caring towards Nature owing to their gender roles (Carlassare, 2000, pp. 89–106). There's another group of Ecofeminists that contend that women are 'socialized' to become more caring and nurturing towards Nature as compared to men because men are not 'socialized' to be nurturers and caretakers. This group is called Constructivists (Merchant, 1992). However, the environment is not simply restricted to being a natural phenomenon, nor is it solely a feministic, nurturing, and motherly entity. Rather, it is a socio-political construct. It is historically knitted, politically constructed (local and global politics), and socially driven (Rahman, 2021, p. 27).

Extending this argument and applying it to the Arab cultural formation, where women have a secondary position, it is observed that this culture, has been regulated to reinforce the masculine prowess of men. It is only befitting in this regard that women and Nature both have been the victims of its cultural and historical instruments. The prevalence of patriarchal frameworks on such a large scale demands a particular show of various masculinities from men most of which maintain the superiority of men over women. It has to be understood that patriarchy and masculinity, that sound almost synonymous have a subtle difference. Patriarchy is a socio-political domination of men whereas masculinity offers a closer look at the behaviors and attitudes of men in that male-dominated system. "Masculinity, however, relies on the performance and behavior of men in social-cultural and emotional contexts. It differs from one culture to another in accordance to certain expectations" (Berrebbah, 2022, p. 154). It "emerges as a psychic and social identity" (Cerchiaro, 2021, p. 3). Considering masculinity through the above interpretations of it, it is inferred that masculinity, comprising of the psychic performance of men, varies from one man to the other. It is fluid and tends to change over time. Various masculinities operate depending on various patriarchal systems of various cultures. However, studying the Arab culture and the masculinity asserted by most men in the concerned text, it can be assumed that theirs is the "hegemonic

masculinity" (Inhorn, 2012, p. 3). Mike Donaldson (1993), in his article, *what is Hegemonic Masculinity*, defines hegemonic masculinity as:

> Culturally idealized form, it is both a personal and collective project, and is the common sense about breadwinning and manhood. It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent. It is pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory, crisis-prone, rich, and socially sustained. (p. 645)

Taking these claims into consideration and exploring them through the text at hand, the paper strives to view the thread of Palestinian Women-Nature dynamics and the tropes of resistance in the face of precolonial, colonial, and neocolonial discourses that are at play in that part of the world.

Findings

Studying the patriarchal apparatuses functioning in *ATLW,* it is noticed that men and their masculinity in this specific arena of patriarchy resonate with the definition of hegemonic masculinity. Nahr, the protagonist of *ATLW,* has a father who is the first specimen of his cultural construct of masculinity. He cheats on his wife and yet, at the same time, continues loving her. He has a 'common sense about manhood' as is stated above by Donaldson. He gets away with his extra-marital affairs and even accuses his daughter, Nahr, of being an incarnation of 'Yaqoot,' because "he was probably with Yaqoot the night Mama went into labor, probably a little drunk when he reached the hospital and still basking in the glow of a romantic evening when he impulsively named me after his new lover…" as is stated by Nahr (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 20). His manhood is asserted by keeping several women and staying off the hook, without being answerable to his wife or anyone else for that matter. As Connell argues, "… masculinity is shaped by … cultural ideals of manliness" (p. 77). The cultural ideals of manliness allow Nahr's father, Um Buraq's husband, and Ajay–Deepa's husband to discard their wives whenever it suits them and take them back whenever their fluid hegemonic masculinity feels like it. Like Nahr's father, Ajay, another character in the novel is introduced as, "…(Ajay) had been disgraced in India and had nowhere to go but Kuwait with Deepa… She (Um Buraq) was making him pay for leaving Deepa, a proxy punishment of her own husband, who had taken a second wife and abandoned her" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 48). Like Deepa, Um Buraq, a woman

of steel and controversies, has a "compromised standing as an abandoned first wife" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 41). Altogether, male characters embody varying levels of hegemonic masculinity in intent and social behavior.

A considerable section of Arab patriarchal structure anchors on toxic masculinity. The atmosphere of war and violence on one hand and women being historically vulnerable on the other hand make them easy bait to masculinist assumptions. The political upheaval amongst some Arab countries, an outcome of the Israeli occupation of Palestine followed by economic crisis gives way to a vicious cycle of exploitation of which Palestinian women are the worst recipient. The Western intrusion in this Arab-Israel conflict makes it all the worse, making life impossible for Palestinians. Nahr, being the eldest born of the family, takes it upon herself to make both ends meet. Her adoption of the occupation of prostitution can be taken as both the result of the financial crisis faced by Palestinians and the women's act of resistance against a culture that shuts them in a suffocating box where their only way out is marriage. They either get married and have a little social standing or else get ready to serve as a plaything that is made to cater to all kinds of whims and fancies of their society. This corporate body/ the clan/ the extended family determines a woman's sexuality and her major life decisions. In this case, if a woman does not follow the set patterns of her culture, she is stigmatized for being a dishonor to her family and society.

The act of rebellion, of joining the institution of prostitution pulled by Nahr, which is more of a matter of penniless fate than of choice, helps her form her identity. It makes her lose her identity and make one simultaneously. She loses her sense of self because she's caught in exploitative relationships with men, but she gains it when she achieves financial autonomy and forms a life-changing friendship that becomes her niche, stability and support for years to come. Nahr's relationship with Um Buraq goes way beyond mere friendship. Um Buraq serves different roles at different points in time in the life of Nahr. She serves as her mother, friend, comrade, confidant, teacher, and sister. Their shared grief of being discarded by the men of their lives makes their love deeper and bond stronger. "Until I met Um Buraq, it had never occurred to me that patriarchy was anything but the natural order of life" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 48). Her resistance against this man-made 'natural order of life' is most pronounced in the text as is shown here in this statement said by her, "God did not make

us just to have babies and serve the needs of men while they run around and do whatever they want" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 47). Thus, this everyday resistance, this non-resistant resistance, this rather innate resistance is one of the most practiced and potent strategies to subvert patriarchy or the Zionist absurdities.

An American-backed Israeli occupation is a new form of western colonialism in an apparently post-colonial world. This can be regarded as a neo-colonial western-cum-Israeli regime. The so-called 'white man's burden' did not let the exploitative western colonial masters to allow the pre-colonial regions to come out of the state of deterioration because of its notorious alliance with Israel. The U.S. foreign policy is motivated primarily to advance its own perceived strategic interests – the strategies related to US arms testing and Israel's intelligence services provided to the US, among many others (Zunes, 2002). To benefit from Israel's resourceful forces, the US has been taking part in spreading the narrative of Palestine launching 'terrorist attacks' in return. Nahr is frequently visited by western journalists in the Cube, who view her imprisonment as an outcome of her terrorist activities. One of them asks, "… how I (Nahr) became involved in the resistance. She called it 'terrorism.' She asked about my prison cell, which she called a 'nice room,' …" (p. 7). These are the "businesspeople from the prison industry … coming to survey the Cube" (p. 4). The terms 'businesspeople' and 'prison industry' suggest the economic benefits that these 'white visitors might enjoy by the virtue of 'Palestinian terrorists' and the narrative these white people sell out in the world.

Nevertheless, Nahr, despite being utterly helpless, shackled and held captive by the Israeli militia, maintains a natural order of resistance in whatever little control she has over her life. There are incidents where she tries to create an uneasy environment, (however easy it might be to ignore it) for the intruders-cum-visitors who ask triggering questions related to her past and strive to extract something out of Nahr's mouth so it can help them further their (neo)colonial agendas. One such instance is when the white visitors expect her "… to speak English. I can, of course, but it's not easy on my tongue and I don't care to be accommodating" (p. 5). Her deliberate refusal to speak a western language is one of the most significant examples of everyday resistance especially if the context is considered on objective grounds. She is already in the notorious Cube- a loner. She has nobody to talk to except for these prying white gossipmongers exercising yellow

journalism. Yet, she makes space for rebellion, for defiance, and does not surrender.

Therefore, the forging of sisterhood among stranger women for the sake of their common concerns is what post-colonial feminist resistance is made of. In 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the refugee Palestinians living in Kuwait had to face horrible consequences because Palestine's Yasser Arafat sided with Saddam Hussein. The cost of global political figures' subjective decisions had to be paid for by the common masses. Their jobs were taken away and they were made to leave Kuwait, thus becoming refugees yet another time. "My retail job vanished as stores shuttered during the occupation, …" (p. 86). That was the time when Um Buraq and Nahr, already stung by the patriarchal colonization, created a safe haven in an otherwise violent and bloodthirsty world - "She loved my company as much as I did hers, and our friendship grew in the common ground on the margins of honor" (p. 86). It was Um Buraq who uses her Kuwaiti citizenship to make the Kuwaiti militia let Nahr and her family exit Kuwait safely. Woven through the mutual sense of being honor-shamed by society, strengthened by the resilience to fight back and regain some control over their lives and fate, the relationship of Nahr and Um Buraq is the primary source of everyday resistance. She bids Nahr farewell with these words, "Whatever happens in this ungenerous world, we will meet again, my sister" (p. 108).

Additionally, through the holding back of natural resources and the overall decadence of Nature by Jewish forces, Abulhawa introduces a different and more powerful line of resistance in *ATLW*. Unlike *MIJ,* where only indirect resistance was recorded, here, Palestinian women, as well as men, are also involved in active resistance. The facts about the Israeli confiscation of natural resources have already been mentioned. Thus, the paper directly digs into the resistance activities regarding the scarcity of water and feminist involvement in this area of resistance in the text, A*TLW*.

By that very fact, Israel's incessant attempts at depriving Palestinians of their land and its resources do not keep the undefeatable Palestinian spirits from celebrating their harvesting season. They keep on growing their crops, and Israel keeps on bombing and teargassing their fields, affecting their economic as well as health conditions, but the Palestinians cannot hand the Jews their land fearing their military advances. "They know olives have been the mainstay and centerpiece of our social, economic, and cultural

presence for millennia, and it infuriated them -still does -to watch the unbroken continuity of our indigenous traditions" (p. 263). However, this cycle had to be stopped because "Israeli settlers setting fire to trees during the harvest had become so commonplace in the past ten years … I (Nahr) showed up as much as I could to help with replanting and turning over the soil…" (p. 266). Despite Palestinians' replenishment of the soil and replantation of the trees, they had to have a strategic plan to prevent Israel from fully confiscating their land and establishing permanent violent settlements. The character of Bilal, Nahr's second husband, and a Palestinian freedom fighter got himself and Nahr along with some of their mutual friends involved in a health-injurious chemical that they would install in the water directed to the Israeli pipelines. They knew they would suffer stomach-churning consequences for it, and may even lose their lives but they could not let Zionist settlers occupy their entire land. Their idea worked for a while, "… settlers were coming out of the colony" (p. 315) but they got caught and both Nahr and her fellow revolutionist, Jumana, had to lose their partners but their "redemptive sisterhood" sustained (p. 230). Nahr's bond with Jumana as well as with Bilal's mother, Hajjeh Um Mhammad, is stitched with ferocity and a common resolute for struggle. Though Hajjeh Um Mhammad never took part in a direct resistance activity, however, when Bilal got arrested owing to one of his many revolutionary practices, his mother put up her resilient spirit and never complained. She asserted her resistance by not coming in the way of her son's active resistance. Abulhawa writes about her through the words of Nahr, "I saw then a formidable woman (Hajjeh Um Mhammad) who had endured a lifetime of military occupation, toil, and widowhood… But she shed not tear. She was a rock. A wall. A force. A woman" (p. 253). Hajjeh Um Mhammad's attitude embodies a trope of feminist resistance born out of her intrinsic rebellious spirit untainted by nationalist affiliations, rather her way of life. An example on this account is her resilience not to mourn her son's incarceration, but to simply endure it, and make peace with it.

By the very fact, this approach of Hajjeh Um Mhammad toward life can be scrutinized under the theoretical hypothesis of James C. Scott (1985) presented in his book, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985). In this text, he lays bare the idea of 'invisible resistance' which he calls 'everyday forms of resistance.' He is of the view that this resistance includes "any act" by the oppressed class to "mitigate or deny claims ... by superordinate classes… or to advance its own claims" (p. 290).

This 'any act' also includes a non-conformist attitude that could "undermine power" (p. 290). Nahr's refusal to speak English before her western journalists and Um Mhammad's refusal to wail over her son's endangered life is a form of unorganized and unrecognized resistance that might not bring any considerable changes but that is exactly what this form of resistance is about. Its "enduring strategy … has the potential to dislodge the dominant structures, if not dismantle them" (Multani, 2013, p. 2). It is to be noted that these dominant structures are not confined to outside oppressive agencies. Rather, it can be any exploitative system irrespective of its origins/roots. It might be local as well as foreign powers – ranging from the colonialist, and post-colonialist to neo-colonialist oppressive powers (Rhit, 2020, p. 51). Calculating the moves of Nahr by taking this perspective into consideration, her decision to take the financial responsibility of her family, involve herself in prostitution and later become a professional dancer, choosing to live alone rather than getting herself into another potentially abusive marriage, all of her 'everyday' decisions make her a revolutionary way before she actively takes part in nationalist freedom fighting movement and becomes a top 'terrorist' in the eyes of Israel and the west.

Nahr's passive resistance is a major concern of the novel. Bilal's confidence in Nahr's choices shows some support existing for women inside the patriarchal setup: "The way you (Nahr) live your life in our culture, without apology or shame, even if with sadness, makes you extraordinary and special, Nahr. You, more than any of us, are a revolutionary…" (p. 186). However, Nahr's rebellion does not just revolve around daily life refusals. She goes on to participate in Bilal's channelized movement and is therefore imprisoned and sent into a separate Cube where she is made to stay for sixteen long years of her life. Even during her trial, when she is in chains, and prison guards are surrounding her, she channelizes her inner defiant and ungovernable spirit. She finds a way to make the colonizers around her uncomfortable and baffled because that was the most she could do in the state of being handcuffed, that too in a Jewish courtroom. Her trail, which was held in Hebrew language, lasted longer than it was supposed to be because "… I (Nahr) had 'wasted the court's time and made things worse'" (p. 333). Nahr goes on to describe the unconventional disruption she had successfully created in the courtroom –

I took Bilal's imagined defiance a step further. I sang, even though

> I don't have a good voice…The judge admonished me. I waited a while, and then sang every Abdel Halim song I could think of… The judge was baffled, then irate, yelling at me, at the prosecutors, lawyers, bailiffs. She ordered the guards to silence me… on their way out, they (the reporters) snapped photos and videos, for which I posed as best I could…I colonized the colonizer's space of authority. I made myself free in chains and held that courtroom captive to my freedom. (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 333)

Nahr's songs in the courtroom before the judge, her noncompliance towards the decorum of the court, her rejection of putting up a miserable, life-torn face before the media shed a profound light on how Nahr, in a sarcastic and belligerent way, 'earns her keep'. Her ability to 'colonize the colonizer's space,' and her metaphorical incarceration of those roaming free around her – all of these gestures make up for an inactive post-colonial feminist resistance during the trial based on her participation in the active resistance movement. But it must be remembered that these actions do not necessarily bear fruitful results. These 'irreverent' acts would not result in the eviction of Israel, nor would they lessen their atrocities towards Palestine; in fact, their violence would only increase. One may ask what good is this resistance then? According to Scott (1985), "resistance refers to a form of insurgency denoted by the refusal of people to cooperate actively with, or express support for, the current regime or authority figures; even when this may appear passive, it is an activity, an 'action'" (p. 290). From Scott's definition of this type of resistance, it may be inferred that this less visible, passive resistance, that includes "foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage", is more of a gesture than an organized, planned, backed by some formal leadership, nationalist kind of resistance movement (Scott, 1985, p. 29). It conveys a message that the masses are dissatisfied with the institutionalized oppressive system. It might help society's underdogs to have a voice, and to bring themselves into the center from the margins.

As mentioned in the earlier part of this section, Abulhawa focuses on women's resilience against the socio-economic consequences of the Zionist regime and western alliance with them more than the ecological degradation and its resistance. However, there are some important bits where the author features landscape, the intersection of ecological and feminist non-conformity where women, through their love and fondness for Nature,

exhibit dissension. In *ATLW*, there comes a point when Nahr comes across her mother's childhood home for the first time. During her first visit to Palestine as an adult, Nahr discovers her mother's house and wishes to see the flora circling the house – the trees her "great-grandfather had planted for his children and grandchildren" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 161). Just when she climbs a tree to taste the fruit of her mother's tree, the now Jewish resident of the house appears and pulls Nahr's hair. Nahr "punched her, … again and again." She says, she "wanted to beat her bloody. For taking away our trees. For pulling the land from under us" (p. 182). She knows the repercussions of messing up with a Jew, but her love and awareness of her rightful ownership of those trees force her to do what she deems right.

Similarly, Nahr's mother prepares her bridal dress which can be taken as an ode to Nature, heritage, and the unflinching will of Palestinians. She adds "… geometric patterns typical of Romi thobes from the Ramallah area to show the olive, almond, and pomegranate trees" (Abulhawa, 2020, p. 289). Despite a gradual clean sweep of their land and Nature by Israel, it can be said that the Palestinian women 'wear' resistance quite literally. In another case, plants are used as tools of resistance by Palestinians:

> Some of the arrowheads were poisoned with plant oils, all of which were found in Ghassan's (Nahr's group fellow) home. Soldiers had raided his house many times before, not realizing the weapons he would use against them were there in the potted plants they ransacked, and which Ghassan simply replanted. (Abulhawa, 2020, pp. 339–340)

Therefore, the use of plants as a smoke screen for insurgency against Israel, juxtaposed with embroidered bridal dress featuring filigree work and olive and almond trees, poignantly illustrates the Palestinian people's deep reverence towards Nature. Furthermore, it also proves how Palestinians are essentially agrarian people who, by virtue of their wide knowledge about Nature, plants, and trees, can deploy their flora and fauna as their daggers – daggers against technologically advanced Israeli military forces and still can beat them, albeit on a small scale or on a temporary basis.

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to deconstruct the subjective reality built and perpetuated by Israel all over the world with the support of the west. This reality has not only proved injurious to the people, and women, but also to

the environment of Palestine. There are several instances where this paper has sought to display how women and Nature intersect in the pattern of their exploitation by the Jews. Both are considered delicate, weak, and easy targets for the agencies of power. Referring to Nature as 'mother earth' and considering its other 'feminine' qualities, it is mechanically assumed that feminine attributes must be synonymous with weakness, fragility, and vulnerability. The paper has strived to dismantle such perceptions by anchoring its claim in Susan Abulhawa's seminal work within literature voicing the Palestinian cause. The paper maintains that neither Nature nor women can be situated on the periphery when it comes to fighting against agencies of power. They have been warriors all their life, dealing with 'double colonization' one at the same time. The co-resistance of women and Nature, no matter what the form of their resistance is; active or passive, whether it is successful or unsuccessful, on a large or small scale, holds an undeniably substantial value because together, these marginalized and cornered human and non-human voices create a voice that cannot be suppressed for long, either by their own neo-colonialist patriarchal hegemony or the outside (Zionist) colonial hegemonic powers.

Author Contribution

Fatima Ibrahim Bajwa: writing- original draft, conceptualization, data curation, methodology, formal analysis. **Rizwan Akhtar:** supervision, writing- review and editing

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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The authors did not used any type of generative artificial intelligence software for this research.

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