

Can Home Be Found? A Palestinian Woman's Search for Identity in Against the Loveless World Shaped by Colonialism

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Abstract

Muslim women in Palestine are often portrayed through the lens of the brutalities of war and colonial violence, overshadowing their identity. The study explores the collapse of Palestinian territory and the futile identity of Palestinians through a distinctive characterization of Nahr and her journey to find home, in *Against the Loveless World* (2020) by Abulhawa (b.1970). Through Nahr's tussles and survival, Abulhawa in her novel revealed the folded effects of Israeli colonization embedded in Palestine. Additionally, it examines how Palestinian women encounter rootlessness and forfeiture of identity in disputed lands with the exclusive theoretical underpinning of Frantz Fanon's (2007) colonial violence. Furthermore, the author has kept the emphasis limited to the issues of love, ruptured identity, longing for home, exile, rootlessness, trauma, violence, colonization, and endurance. Moreover, this study elucidates the survival of women in a colonized terrestrial where a female subject is doubly colonized and treated as another by the men of her society and the colonizers. The study's implications are to examine the space granted to women in colonized societies and their struggles to confront violence to reclaim their land and lost identities.

Keywords: Colonization, double colonization, exile, Fanon, survival

Introduction

The scuffle between the Palestinian citizens in Israel and the broader socio-political landscape considerably centers on the body of Palestinian women (Zinngrebe, 2018). In the folded history of Palestine and Israel, the victimization of

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women becomes a distressing pivotal point, resonating with the themes explored in Abulhawa's novel *Against the Loveless World* (2020). The research delves deeper into Nahr's evolving self-identification, through her multiple names and roles, reflecting broader issues of displacement and alienation with the profound impact of historical colonization on her life. Palestine, a land with an ancient history and a religious hub, has endured one of the longest conflicts in history. Despite multiple attempts at resolution, the conflict persists, exacerbating colonial violence. Simultaneously affecting the woman's body (Hillstead, 2023).

This paper explores a study on the quest for identity and longing for home in *Against the Loveless World* (2020) through the journey of Nahr, the protagonist. By implementing Fanon's theory of colonial violence depicted in *Wretched of the Earth* (2007), particularly his conceptualization of trauma, systematic oppression, and the courage of resistance. While Fanon's framework anchors the analysis, combining various perspectives such as Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, Homi Bhabha's (1994) hybridity, and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) subalternity enhances the analysis on identity and resistance. Additionally, this research poses a question about how colonial violence ruptures the identity of colonized subjects, especially women. Also, how does Nahr, the protagonist, portray a paradoxical condition of belonging 'everywhere and nowhere' as a refugee? They remain scattered into the pieces of the world to find peace and home.

Based on the relevant literature, like Nguyen (2019) argues that refugee narratives view home as an act of resistance against the violence, this perspective also supports Fanon's (1963) theory of decolonial agency. Contemporary critics like Goyal (2019) also critique "home" as a neoliberal commodity in migrant literature. Similarly, Mbembe's (2020) theory of "planetary belonging" encounters nation-centric models, suggesting that home might be found in solidarity across borders, which is portrayed through Nahr when she bonds with marginalized figures. By examining scholarly literature, the paper examines Nahr's story, folded in the layers of identity, longing for home, and resistance.

In 1948, during the Arab-Israel war, the mass displacement of Palestinians, also known as Nakba (catastrophe), caused forced expulsion and exile of more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs (United Nations, 1949; Khalidi, 1992). The violence, the people of Palestine and Israel endured during this conflict had been the subject of various international conferences dealing with historic rights, security issues, and

human rights. Through their writings, Palestinian authors also strived to portray the agony of their people by illustrating the exile, grief, identity-longing, and tragic journey of their people from Palestine to other lands. In *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance and Mobility under Occupation* (Taraki, 2006), the author has portrayed the intricate narratives of Palestinian families migrating to survival, and unfolds the severe challenges encountered by Palestinians navigating the complexities of occupation.

Likewise, Abulhawa also explores the traumatizing experience of Palestinian women, representing them not merely as passive victims of wars and colonization but robust figures, whose bodies became disputed territories in the wars. She also sheds light on the dehumanizing impact of conflict on women of Palestine by portraying the character of Nahr. In addition to that, numerous writers have written books to showcase multiple aspects of the conflict. In the memoir *In Search of Fatima* (Karmi, 2020), the writer intensely explained the experience of growing up in Palestine, the Jewish settlement in her neighbourhood, and the tussle against British occupation. Apart from that, in *Six Days of War*, the author keenly traces the occasions leading up to the 1967 Israeli Arab War, the geopolitical inferences of the war, and the military strategies used by both edges (Oren, 2022). Furthermore, Said (2008) explained the political and historical background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which was inspected through a postcolonial perspective. Apart from that, he critically examined multiple narratives surrounding the conflict, constructed by several actors.

In addition to these works, Abulhawa's novel *Against the Loveless World* (2020) portrays a picture of the lived experiences of Palestinian women during the conflict, which shattered their identity and created a home search. Abulhawa (b.1970) is among them, she has mourned the segregation of identity and the gloomy consequences of exile. She has a Palestinian origin, and in 1967, her family was cast out from their home during the Palestine-Israel war. She reveals those miseries through her writings, which made her a distinguished novelist, activist, poet, and essayist. Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* (2020) is the harrowing tale of a prisoner named Nahr who was incarcerated in a cube for 15 years along with her remembrances. The memories of her childhood, her family, her friends, her tussles, her agony, her exile, her refuge, and her love. The walls of the cube and the solitude were her only companions in the cube. In her isolated confinement, she narrated

the journey of her life. She was married to a man named Muhammad while she was in her teens out of a whirlwind of love, but his betrayal of her left her in tatters. After that, she indulged in prostitution along with other multiple jobs to withstand society's harshness and provide for her family. During prostitution, Nahr was encountered with men, who left wounds not only on her body but also on her soul. Abulhawa effectively portrayed the diverse intensities of Nahr's torn self as she says, "Each bought a small piece of me and took it away forever. I recall each of them" (Abulhawa, 2020: 54). Additionally, she was double colonized, one by Israeli invaders and another by men of her society. According to Said's theory of orientalism, women are doubly marginalized, men are superior, and women are inferior. They are double colonized, once, they represent the other for the colonial power, and secondly, they represent the other for their own husband, father, and male members of the society (Scott, 2008). In this respect, the colonial power and the patriarchy have the same role in dominating their control over the female body as a colonized subject.

Ghabra also unfolds that gender roles began to change in the exiled generation as women became "symbols of sacrifice and courage" (2019). Nahr's life is a perfect embodiment of the symbol of sacrifice for his family and courage, when she rebelled against the Israeli army. Nahr, being a Palestinian woman growing up with the kind of transferred identity, was commonly called the exiled child. Even one of her classmates taunts her by saying that "Palestinians are stupid, that's why Jews stole your country" (Abulhawa, 2020: 32). By hearing this, Nahr's violent retaliation caused her suspension from school. From school to jail life, she was dealing with traumatic experiences, but all this could not shatter her ground. She was a rebellious girl, brave enough to face adversities and equipped to find her identity and peaceful home at any cost.

The Palestinian women forged in the crucible to protect their identities, but they were embattled the most, not only by the invaders but by the men around them as well. Likewise, Abulhawa portrayed the character of Nahr to showcase the sufferings and subsistence of Palestinian women. Moreover, this paper investigates Palestinian Nahr's displacement, Identity loss, colonial violence, survival, and her journey from the brutality and traumatization of Israeli jails to Palestine by employing Fanon's (1925-1961) theory of 'colonial violence' from *Wretched of the Earth* (2007). Fanon's approach to violence and its effects on the individual is distinctively guided by his lived experiences. "Fanon strongly emphasizes that colonial rule is the bringer of

violence into the home and the mind of the native” (Pallas, 2016). For the colonial subject, liberating themselves from colonialism through violence is a cathartic experience as Nahr, Bilal, and their group of friends collectively worked as revolutionaries to fight for their freedom and identity to diminish colonial rule over their land and their identities.

According to Fanon, the colonial subject can have the power to restore and regain their self-esteem by employing control over their political lives through violence. So, violent acts serve as a restorative mechanism to help them replenish their broken and deformed selves. He also suggests that violence emancipates the natives from their inferiority complex and their desolation and inaction; it rather makes them unafraid and rebuilds their self-respect (Pallas, 2016). Fanon was one of the renowned figures who extensively talked about the process of decolonization and true liberation. However, some scholars like Mbembe (2019) warn that fighting violence by using violent means can create replicating effects, especially when civilians are affected or when violence leads to endless revenge cycles. On the other hand, Spivak (2004) argues that pacific resistance cannot always be the right solution to end oppression, as it can impose “respectable” rules on people, set by the same system that oppresses them. In *Against the Loveless World*, Nahr reflects the same struggle, to either fight violently or suffer quietly.

Fanon also traces the adverse aspects of violence, which became a reason for physical harm and mental trauma, as occurred with Nahr during the different turns of the novel. Nahr was oppressed by the people of Kuwait and the Israeli army, she was treated as an outsider in every piece of land she escaped to. She fled numerous times to find a place called home, but ultimately the only way to survive was to confront the violence she had been subjected to with courage. Moreover, Abulhawa traces the main roots of colonial violence and the oppression caused by colonizers to ruin the world of Palestinians, which eventually tormented their identity and seized the Earth underneath them.

Methodology

This article employs Frantz Fanon’s theory of colonial violence as depicted in his seminal work *Wretched of the Earth* (2007), which acts as a primary lens to examine Abulhawa’s novel *Against the Loveless World* (2020). This study employs a qualitative literary analysis research method that focuses on a structural narratology

and thematic analysis to analyze the experiences and consequences of colonial violence in *Against the Loveless Worlds* by Abulhawa (2020) through the theoretical underpinning of Fanon's theory of colonial violence. The research involves the close reading of the novel to gain insights into the colonial impact on the Palestinian women through Fanon's theoretical analysis.

Primary and secondary sources are explored about the novel and Fanon's theory to collect data. Novel is a primary source of data, whereas scholarly articles are a secondary source of data. The sources are collected from libraries, academic platforms, and online databases to incorporate a wide range of authentic viewpoints. Furthermore, the lens of thematic analysis is used to explore the collected data. The novel is keenly examined to explore recurring themes, narrative style, and the incidents adding to colonial violence. Fanon's theoretical framework is implemented to analyze these themes for a deeper understanding of the psychological and social impact of colonial violence on the identity of the colonized and how it adds to the longing for home to the people of nowhere.

The core purpose of this research is to critically analyze Abulhawa's (2020) novel through the journey of the novel's protagonist, Nahr, in disputed lands by implementing Fanon's colonial violence. As a Pakistani, I can relate to the displacement of Palestinians because Pakistan also has a folded history of displacement, partition, and post-colonial identity, which resonates with *Against the Loveless World*. This research will also explore the colonization and victimization of women in colonized lands, ruled by both male members of society and the colonizers. Although many authors have discussed this novel from various perspectives, no research has been specifically focused on the colonial violence that leads to the dual colonization of women, resulting in their loss of identity and longing for home. Therefore, this research aims to address this gap in the research.

Colonial Impact on Nahr's Identity

Palestine is a conflicted land, full of miseries and hardships, and carries within itself the amalgamation of different identities. It is the center of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The people of Palestine were victimized throughout their lives due to the Palestine-Israel conflict. In summer 2006, the Second Lebanon War (Farquhar, 2010) broke out between Hezbollah and Israel, causing numerous deaths and injuries of Israelis and Palestinians. The multiple wars happened in Palestine

resulted in extensive consequences on the psychological, health, environmental and most importantly the uprooting of 'homes' which is an apt psychological hardship and emotional disturbances as losing home is not only a physical state but a loss of embedded historical memories and carries major psychological ramifications (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2005). They were forcefully disinherited from their homeland. Abulhawa's (2020) novel also depicts the exile and displacement of a girl, Nahr, from her homeland to other lands, and that forceful exile ruptures her identity. One of the strongest legacies of colonialism is the effect of it on the identities of the people living under the rule of colonial force. Even after they gain their land back, their identities remain hollow and fragmented among the disputed lands.

Exile is more than a geographical concept. "One can be exiled in his homeland, in his own house, in a room. He also addresses the soil as his lover, and when that lover is detached from your roots, you lose the inner peace of belonging" (Yousef, 2011). This illuminates the deep effect of dislocation on an individual's sense of self and belonging to a homeland. Nahr's tale is a demonstration of the enduring heritage of colonial violence and its consequences on the people who are compelled to live a life of exile. Nahr's story is not alone, as millions of people have been uprooted around the world from their homes and sense of belonging.

Nahr has scattered identity since her childhood. She has as many names as her homes. She was 'Nahr' for her mother. Her father named her 'Yaqoot'. Muhammad, her husband, loved her by calling her 'Tamara', which was his lover's name. And Um Buraq reshaped her from Nahr to 'Almas' when she transmuted her into a prostitute to earn a living (Abulhawa, 2020). Although she had different identities in different phases of life still her identity remained divested among the dismembered pieces of land. "Sometimes I'll tell you the story behind my having two names. Three, if you count Nanu, which is reserved for Jihad. Almas was long gone by then" (Abulhawa, 2020:164). Nahr's experience highlights the complex and often painful ways in which our sense of self can be shaped by external forces. While the different names she was given represent different parts of her life, they also reflect how she has been defined by others rather than by her agency.

Nahr's journey of banishment begins with her birth in Palestine, her parents were moved to Kuwait to protect the lives of their children. Nahr grew up in Kuwait. She loved the land where she spent her childhood, but still, the land and people of

Kuwait didn't own her. She was double colonized, one by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the other by the men of her society. "You fucking ungrateful Palestinians.... You thought you could betray us like that? Here's your reminder, bitch. This is what Palestinians are good for. Cheap labor and cheap whores. We buy and sell people like you here." (Abulhawa, 2020:65). Spivak in her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Coined the term 'double-colonization' to describe the subjugation of the female body (Riach, 2017). This concept resonates with the concept of identity loss in *Against the Loveless World*. Nahr, as a Palestinian woman, undergoes a form of double colonization, facing both the effects of colonialism and gender-specific challenges that compound her struggles and contribute to the loss of her identity. The people were treated as a commodity once they were colonized. They become slaves in their territory, and along with their land, they lose their identity. As Fanon is of the view that for colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity (Fashina, 1989).

On the brink of poverty, to survive in Kuwait and to keep her family afloat, she did multiple jobs, from working as a beautician to working as a prostitute to ensure her survival. She wanted to support her family, educate her brother, and earn a good living, but all efforts were fruitless until she met Um Buraq. Initially, she became the breadwinner of the house but then she was brutally tortured and raped by many men.

"Something sharp, maybe a rock or a shell, dug into my back under the blanket with the very thrust he made. I had to pee again. The stars were watching me, daring me to move. But I didn't. I endured and waited, because that's what girls do." (Abulhawa, 2020:52).

After that, her life became excruciating at the time of the Iraqi invasion. She was bleakly wandering for love, money, and identity. But all struggles and sufferings were futile. Her family and she were victimized and blamed for being the mole of the colonizers, her brother was jailed and mercilessly beaten in prison. Lastly, she left with no other opportunity for survival than to escape the country, which she once loved.

The craving for a peaceful land takes her toward Jordan, but she feels alienated and deprived over there as well. "Everywhere I turned in Amman, there was a reminder

of loss.”(Abulhawa, 2020:81). Fanon also elaborates on this in his book *Black Skin, White Mask* (Fanon, 2017), the colonized subject cannot gain the same sense of belonging in any other land. Their identity remains scattered in their bruised land. Nahr lived in Kuwait, Amman, and Palestine, but she never felt whole. She never felt at peace. Every land seemed familiar yet unknown to her. They all welcomed yet disowned her, gave her shelter to live in, and threw her out with hatred of being an outsider. Nahr observes that, “going from place to place is just something exiles have to do. Whatever the reason, the earth is never steady beneath our feet” (Abulhawa, 2020:115). In Kuwait, she lived her whole childhood, and she loved the land unswervingly, but the land became a prison for her when invaded by colonizers.

The colonizers implement their power on colonized people through material damage and also by dehumanizing them to transform the colonized people into slaves. Colonizers corrupt the colonized mentally and culturally, and make themselves superior and natives, inferior beings. In the novel, Nahr, who is in a state of constant rootlessness, accepts her status of being a refugee and an oppressed person who has to go through all the struggles and trauma in the host country. As Fanon is of the view that for centuries the capitalists have behaved in the developed world like nothing more than war criminals. Deportations, massacres, forced labor, and slavery have been the main methods used by capitalism... to establish its power (Fairchild, 1994). As in the novel, when Nahr and her family were displaced to Amman, they got into the environment of that place rapidly because their mindsets were colonized, and they were accustomed to being displaced.

“It amazed me to see how quickly they got comfortable in the new apartment and settled into a routine, as if their lives had simply been excised and replanted elsewhere, intact, with just a dusting of grief they shook off before returning to the business of living. Maybe...They were experienced refugees, better equipped to handle recurring generational trauma” (Abulhawa, 2020:73).

The protagonist, Nahr, was struggling in different places as an outsider with being in a state of geographical fragmentation, but never belonging to one place. Along with her disseminated identity, her love life was also devastated. At a very young age, she fell in love and then married a boy, named Muhammad, who also disowned her like she was disowned by her own country and left her alone. She lived with a discolored identity, sometimes as Yaqaot and sometimes as Nahr. Furthermore, her husband loved her by calling her lover’s name, which scattered her damaged identity

more. In her search for belonging and love, Nahr also found solace in her friendship with Bilal. However, even this relationship was threatened by the political turmoil and violence in the region, further highlighting Nahr's feeling of displacement and disconnection.

After Amman, her life took a turn when she moved to Palestine for her divorce. Palestine was the place of her birth. In Palestine, her identity was explored against the backdrop of love, mistrust, and social and political customs. Initially, she regained her strength in Palestine because it felt like home to her, but her soul remained split into different lands where she made memories of her life. "I had forged in my birthright homeland, but I knew I could never again be complete in one place. This was what it meant to be exiled and disinherited" (Abulhawa, 2020:115). Colonizers not only take the land of the colonized but also their sense of belonging, which remains buried inside them after losing their native land. The land and the identity are parallel to each other; once the colonizer loses the sense of ownership of his land, his identity also vanishes in the bloodshed of violence.

Nahr, living in either Palestine or Kuwait, was colonized by the male members of the society, and her identity was robbed from her by the colonizers through different means of violence. Nahr was double colonized by the Israeli invaders and predominantly by the patriarchal society she was living in. "She was exploited by the male members of the society in exchange of money" (Shahzad and Yar Tanvir, 2023) "Only, I was acting, because even though I was getting paid, it felt like rape, my screams muffled by his hands" (Abulhawa, 2020:51) In Kuwait, Nahr faced a persistent struggle with her tormented identity, as Palestinians encountered a tremendous absence of respect and recognition in Kuwait as well. "That's what Palestinians do. You eat and then bite the hand that fed you" (Abulhawa, 2020:85). Moreover, Abulhawa sheds light on how the political conflict and the struggle for land and power in the region exacerbate the gender-based violence and inequality, and how the Palestinian women are left to bear the brunt of these systemic injustices. Through Nahr's character, Abulhawa portrays the psychological and emotional toll of living in a state of constant violence and uncertainty, and the resilience and strength of those who endure it. "I feel they are colonizing me and all Arab Women who are the keepers of our traditions and heritage" (Abulhawa, 2020:9). When in Jordan, they were living as refugees, they underwent a series of distressing experiences due to state policies, encompassing religious and political oppression, migration, and war. The traumatic effects are vast, from imprisonment

and property loss to extreme physical fear of rape and dismemberment. Nahr's family specifically these injustices in Jordan as well, grappling to keep their boat of life afloat with an uncertain future and loss of reconstruction of identity.

“Trust me, Nahr. We should try to get residency cards. We are unwanted in the world. It couldn't hurt for us to have another option, even if we don't use it. How long do you think we've got before something happens here and Jordan kicks us out to God knows where?” (Abulhawa, 2020:138)

Palestinian women scuffle against gendered violence woven by the Israeli colonizers in their own society. Palestine is a patriarchal land, keeping men as the dominant figure of the society, which enforces stereotypes and gender binaries to preserve the current power structure. “While patriarchy affects everyone in the society but its violent manifestations inexplicably affect women” (Bibi et al., 2022). Palestinian women undergo the detrimental impact of patriarchy, which manifests not only through challenging social dynamics and gendered violence but also through the additional layers of identity loss enforced by the occupation and the settler colonialism. “Until I met Um Buraq, it had never occurred to me that patriarchy was anything but the natural order of life. She was the first woman I met who truly hated men. She said it openly and without apology” (Abulhawa, 2020:68). Palestinian women are subjected to multiple kinds of torture and harassment, which is a perfect example of how patriarchy dominates to keep the women rootless and marginalized under a destructing system of oppression. The life of women in Palestine can be called one of the lost eras. Nahr continuously tries to prove her identity in the novel, but is finally named as the daughter of refugees in occupied lands. “Her life was one of a lost era, in some ways too idyllic to be real” (Abulhawa, 2020:170).

Survival Struggles of Nahr

In her book *Against the Loveless World*, Abulhawa not only talks about the violence against women living in Palestine, both by the Israeli Army and male members of the society, but also how this violence urges them to use violence with greater force against them to regain their self-esteem and lost identity. As Fanon said that colonial rule is the bringer of violence into the home and the mind of natives (Pallas, 2016). Nahr had a long journey of longing for 'home' and her identity, but when she came to Palestine, her birthplace, she decided to stay, determined to survive and hold to

her identity. Palestine is Abulhawa's homeland too, and she describes her feelings through the character of Nahr when she reaches Palestine.

"I was content to just sit there in the splendid silence of the hills, where the quiet amplified small sounds, the wind rustling trees; sheep chewing, roaming, bleating, breathing; the soft crackle of the fire; the purr of Bilal's breathing. I realized how much I had come to love these hills; how profound was my link to this soil" (Abulhawa, 2020:194).

The colonizers tend to colonize the natives by colonial practices or methods that dehumanize the people under the colonial forces. Due to colonization, people feel inferior, and they start questioning their identity. Fanon, in his book, said that "Colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly in reality, who am I?" (Cade, 2017). Due to this, they lost their identity and formed a new one. In the novel, when Nahr lost her identity as a woman, she found a way to gain her lost identity and freedom by using violence against the Israeli army as a tool for decolonization. However, Abulhawa's portrayal of Nahr's use of violence as a means of decolonization also raises important questions about the ethics and effectiveness of violent resistance in the face of oppression. The novel ultimately invites readers to reflect on the complex relationship between violence and liberation, and the role of identity in the struggle for freedom and justice.

Violence not only physically removes the colonizers, but it also unifies the people. It is an inclusive act that restores the native's self-respect. As Fanon concluded in his seminal work *The Wretched of the Earth* that "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" (Fanon, 2007). Similarly, to rebuild their broken identities, Nahr and her second husband, Bilal, formed a plan with a group of friends to evacuate their country from the colonizers. They use violence against the Israeli Army by using their brains and made an underground hole under a salon where they hide all the guns and bullets and used them on the Israeli army to regain their homeland.

They used drug dealers to supply them with guns. There is a scene from the novel where they are talking about the smuggling of guns: "the van's secret compartments would transport our guns instead of drugs" (Abulhawa, 2020:206). After continuously facing the brutality from the Israeli army, they found a way to resist them, and the only way to gain freedom was to use violence against violence. As Fanon argues that violence is the only language spoken by the colonist and that

violence is the only way to respond to the inherently violent system (Fanon, 2022). The Israeli army put a curfew on them for months, they remain encapsulated in their homes with a shortage of food and water. But they use that time wisely to chalk out a better way to remove the colonizer rule.

“These people are trying to wipe away all traces of us. I’m going to do whatever it takes. Even though they pump poison and sewage into our wells and springs, all I’m trying to do is spook them enough to make them leave. So, yes, that’s what I’m doing, and I thank you for having the brilliant idea in the first place” (Abulhawa, 2020:302). Violence unites people from different places and tribes to raise their voices against the colonizers. Fanon also said that “At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude (BK Jha, 1988).” In Abulhawa’s novel, when Nahr and her husband found a way to counterattack the Israeli army, they started working on making a chemical that could harm the Israeli army. Bilal said that “the compound he was cooking up was called Phthalates. They are anti-androgenic, which means they will feminize men and weaken their sperms” (Abulhawa, 2020:309). Although they were fewer in number to fight the massive army of Israel, they found a way to weaken the forces so that they would be easy to fight. Moreover, Nahr’s interaction with her companion in the book gives us a glimpse of her rebellious attitude, “God didn’t make us just to have babies and serve the needs of men while they run around and do whatever they thought. They’re vampires who leave when they’ve sucked your last drop of blood” (Abulhawa, 2020:46).

Apart from that, toward the end, when Nahr’s trial was conducted in the Israeli court, the whole trial session was held in Hebrew, due to which Nahr was unaware of the nature of the alleged crime. But as the trial started, she drove into immense pleasure by throwing the Israeli court into a loop through her rebellious conduct. She launches into a melody of Arabic songs, hoping to set a model of defiance against colonialism.

“I started with ‘Yumma Mweil elHawa,’ to set the mood. The judge admonished me. I waited a while, then sang every Abdel Halim Hafez song I could think of. ‘El Hawa Hawaya’ followed by my favourite, ‘Qariatol Fingan.’ The judge was baffled, then irritated, and yelled at me, at the prosecutors, lawyers, and bailiffs. She ordered the guards to silence me” (Abulhawa, 2020, 321).

As she sings, Nahr, who is also the first-person narrator of the novel, explains the purpose of her performance to the readers. The song she sang was: "I colonized the coloniser's space of authority. I made myself free in chains and held the courtroom captive to my freedom" (Abulhawa, 2020, 332). Although she was captured in chains by the Israeli army and was held in court, she was still courageous and found a way to rebel against all their people and the jury. Even though during the period of collective resistance, Nahr demonstrated confrontational tactics, when she had the support of her community, but even when she was all caged by the invaders, she still faced her oppressors without any fear.

Therefore, to repair the ruptured identities, confrontation is necessary. It could be by using violence or by incorporating handicraft. And from violence, there is a unified fight against the colonizers and the creation of a newly liberated subjectivity to replace the earlier colonized subjectivity. Once the colonized regain their strength to confront the colonial forces, they bounce back with more courage to encounter the superior forces and to re-establish their ruptured identities more strongly. Hence, violence can cause damage to the identities, but if used wisely, it can bring back self-esteem as well. While violent resistance may offer a means of confronting and challenging the colonial forces, Abulhawa's novel also illustrates the importance of community and solidarity in the process of repairing and re-establishing identities. Through Nahr's relationships with other Palestinians and her connection to her cultural heritage, the novel highlights how collective action and mutual support can serve as powerful tools of resistance and liberation.

Conclusion

Abulhawa's narrative reflects on the miseries of people who encountered colonialism in their lives, especially the women of the colonized land. As female bodies were double colonized, one by the men of their society, and by the colonizers at the same time. The whole crux of colonization is violence, which is the poison and at the same time the antidote to it. Hence, the novel portrays the violence caused by Israeli colonizers to gain power over Palestine, which causes the people of the colonized land to become slaves in their own country, and they have suffered forceful displacement from their inherited land to host countries. They were forced to become refugees in other countries to protect their lives, but in that brutal detachment, they lost their self-esteem, their identity, and their homes. Apart from that, the protagonist Nahr is a conspicuous reminder of how women can be

combatants for their rights and learn to survive under a societal or colonial order. Furthermore, this novel also justifies Fanon's violence as a mechanism of self-defense through the character of Nahr and Bilal, to liberate themselves and gain their lost identity. As violence is the only means to confront violence.

This novel is an illuminating portrayal of the impacts of colonialism on the lives of individuals, particularly women. Abulhawa's work highlights the struggles and pains of the colonized, and the role of violence in resisting and overcoming colonial oppression. The book presents a vivid image of how colonialism engenders violence, which in turn leads to the disintegration of identity and loss of self-esteem among the colonized. It also shows how the colonized can regain their power and sense of self through resistance and struggle. Moreover, the novel also provides insights into the experiences of refugees, who were forced to leave their homes and country due to colonial violence. The plight of refugees is a common theme in the contemporary world, and Abulhawa's work gives voice to the struggles and sufferings of this marginalized group. Through the character of Nahr, the novel depicts how refugees face a constant battle for survival, identity, and dignity in the face of adversity. The book also reveals how refugees find ways to resist and fight against their oppressors, despite the overwhelming odds against them.

The book's portrayal of violence as a means of resistance and self-defense has important implications for our understanding of colonialism and its legacies. Fanon's work emphasized the role of violence in decolonization and the creation of new subjectivities. *Against the Loveless World* (2020) carries on this legacy by showing how violence can be a powerful tool in reclaiming agency and identity in the face of colonial oppression. At the same time, the novel also highlights the costs of violence and the need for caution in its use. Overall, Abulhawa's work provides a powerful critique of colonialism and a call to action for those who seek to resist it. Furthermore, the book emphasizes the importance of solidarity among the oppressed to combat the colonial forces. Nahr's relationship with Bilal, a Palestinian activist, illustrates this point. They both come from different backgrounds, but they share the common goal of fighting against the oppressors. Their bond grows stronger as they face the challenges together, and they learn from each other's experiences. This solidarity helps them to cope with the trauma and to find hope in the face of adversity.

In conclusion, *Against the Loveless World* (2020) is a significant contribution to the literature of Palestine that depicts the plight of Palestinian women who suffer from double colonization. The novel highlights the violence and trauma caused by the Israeli colonial forces that led to the loss of identity, self-esteem, and homes of the Palestinians. The protagonist, Nahr, represents the resilience and strength of Palestinian women who learn to survive and resist the colonial order. Through her character, Abulhawa justifies the use of violence as a mechanism of self-defence against colonialism. Fanon's concept of violence as a tool for decolonization is also evident in the novel. Therefore, *Against the Loveless World* (2020) is a poignant portrayal of the struggles of Palestinians and their quest for liberation and reclaiming their identities in the face of colonization and violence.

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