

Walking through Occupation: Reading Selected Fictional Works on Everyday Palestinian Resistance and Remembrance

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the everyday lived experiences of Palestinians under Israeli Occupation through the lens of two narrative texts: *Balcony on the Moon* by Ibtisam Barakat and *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa. Both texts unravel stories of displacement, trauma, and resistance embedded in the daily lives of individuals, especially women and children, who navigate a constant state of socio-political instability. Through memoir and fiction, the authors articulate intergenerational trauma, dispossession, and the normalization of violence while also illuminating moments of resilience and hope. By foregrounding the protagonists' struggle for education, bodily autonomy, and remembrance of lost homes, the paper highlights how personal narratives become acts of political resistance. It also explores how Palestinian identity and memory are shaped not only by lived experiences but also by inherited histories and collective suffering. The intersectionality of class, gender, and geography reveals the fragmented nature of Palestinian resistance, challenged further by global indifference and media misrepresentation. Ultimately, the paper asserts that remembrance and resistance are not mutually exclusive but coexist through storytelling, rituals, and the desire for dignity, offering new insights into the Palestinian narrative beyond political binaries.

Keywords: Conflict; Identity; Intergenerational trauma; Memory; Migration; Resistance.

Introduction

"A Land without People for a People without Land."

This phrase has resonated into the ears of millions of Palestinians and Israelis; killing the souls of the former and evoking a renewed hope for the latter. These nine words have gone down in history for erasing an entire population of its identity, robbing them of their right to their homes, their dignity that persists even in death. The Israel-Palestine conflict has infiltrated the land and lives of Palestinians and become an uninvited, unwanted, yet permanent resident in their memories.

While the political and economic aspects of this enduring conflict seem to secure a place for themselves amidst global discourse, the lives affected by it remain in the periphery of survival, consciously peeping only in the most innermost quarters of people's homes, finding refuge in their acts of remembrance and resistance. The Occupation has successfully managed to make itself an omnipresent eye that is constantly looking out for anything remotely associated with challenge, dissent and basic humanity and disrobing the Palestinians of their dignity- the Palestinians are denied their right to access their lands, and making its presence felt by gross human rights violations, and an overall disregard and denial of the Palestinians' right to be human.

The Palestinians, on the other hand, continue to wait for justice, seeking it, claiming it and reveling for its success in their own small, subtle and significant ways. From consistently crossing over to occupied land through unsupervised ways to bravely standing tall through intimidating security checks, the people have managed to keep Palestine alive in ways which can be unfolded between the lines of their letters and faces; the shards of their collective memories, their sheer devotion to sustaining whatever little is left of their culture, their fear and anxieties reflected in their alert reflexes and their homes and documented in their writing that is written with the ink of compassion for their homeland.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has haunted the people residing in the region and those who left it in one way or the other. Works emerging from the region and on the region are laden with the trauma of the Occupation and the struggles of living under one, with the constant fear of death, uncertainty and violence lurking right outside their homes- built and rebuilt after every attack, building and rebuilding their memories and sense of being as well. Creative freedom in such challenging environments is seldom found, however, activists and artists across different forms have found a way to document these memories; an act that can be interpreted as a way of remembrance, a way to give their home and its lived and un-lived memories a sense of permanence as well a way to make peace.

Everyday Life under Occupation

Ibtisam Barakat's memoir entitled, *Balcony on the Moon* (2016), is her story of coming of age in occupied Palestine where she fought little battles on a daily basis to save her pride, make peace with departures of loved ones, uncertainty and the desire to be seen and heard both at home and outside. Beginning with her family's arrival in northern Ramallah in 1971 as a curious seven-year-old girl, the novel is a memoir that documents Barakat's life under Occupation wherein she learnt to fight her way through patriarchy and the apartheid regime that robbed her and other Palestinians off their rights as basic as education. It is a memory of a life lived in used clothes given by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and books which have been in far too many hands before. At the same time, it is also a story of ambition and resilience that finds the motivation to own new clothes one day and smell the different countries a book has traveled to before landing in one's calloused, poverty-stricken hands that eventually illuminate the importance of education within her mother and grandmother.

Mornings in Jenin (2006) written by Susan Abulhawa, however, is a story that takes the reader inside the cramped quarters of the Jenin Refugee camp, unraveling the injustice, misery, helplessness and the gross disregard for human suffering. A story of an un-lived history spanning four generations and their unending resolve to fight the external and its resultant inner turmoil, it depicts war, migration, separation, love and its tragic ending that comes to an end with peacemaking with oneself and others before taking the last breath that seems like the only way for Palestinians to be free.

The primary narrators of the works resonate not with a sense of nostalgia for the lost homeland, but with the broken and uncertain that had become their normal. It is in this shared nostalgia and injured memories that the reader can also identify a certain connection, love and compassion for their culture as well as the persistence that has become both strength and tragedy of the Palestinian people as well as the authors and their protagonists. We see a young Ibtisam in '*Balcony on the Moon*' delving in melancholy about her state of affairs after receiving clothes sent in aid and making a silent promise to herself to support herself one day. We also see a young Amal in '*Mornings in Jenin*' marveling at a discarded doll that she found with her best friend. The doll had one arm missing, yet the girls giggled in excitement over their sheer luck to have found a toy at-last and went about making a little doll house for her with scraps. Memories likethese,

symbolizing the emotional and physical brunt of an apartheid regime are carried by bodies of the protagonists across continents, and they resurface in the way their characters and perhaps through them, the authors revisit their Home, reliving their collective trauma and finding shreds of hope.

The authors, through their many characters and experiences shed light on the intimate ways the regime has dispossessed them off not just their material possessions but their sense of being, belonging and dignity as well. In Barakat's *Balcony on the Moon*, her family was not just ripped off their house and property, rather their sense of security that was offered by that house, a lifetime of memories collected with hard work and their father's self-worth, which took such a hit that he could never really overcome the blow. Barakat mentions in her memoir how often she found him sitting alone of reminiscing the olden days in their own home. She informs the reader that the only thread that helped her father remain stable was his hobby to rear a goat in their home. However, their constant relocation, added onto their family's struggle with work due to restrictions imposed by Israeli policies led them to live in a compromised home, subtly snatching away that one single act of normalcy that could have helped her father cope with the loss of other things. Besides this, we see in the memoir one of the many reasons for their relocation was the Occupation's soldiers' undignified and suggestive interest in the author's mother, threatening them with the possibility of a robbery that cannot be reprimanded. The Occupation's complicated rules for the movement of Arabs and the exhaustive security checks they have to go through highlight the plight of Barakat and thousand other students, professionals, youngsters and old people in Palestine who are dispossessed of their dignity every day and calls to attention the ways the Occupation aims to break the backbone and very spirit of the average Palestinian, nullifying any possibility of dissent.

Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* talks about similar experiences that Palestinians go through on a regular basis and the atrocities they are subjected to. The initial dispossession of their ancestral lands shatters the well-respected and well to do Abulheja family during the Nakba, forcing them to gather on the streets like others and at the mercy of the Soldiers. However, this was only the material aspect of their loss- they do not only lose their lands, but one of their newborn babies, their Home as well as the dignity with which they had lived until then. The men are beaten while the women endure objectifying gazes of the soldiers. The family could not recover from the loss and is reminded of it every day in the ways they have to struggle for basic necessities such as food, sufficient clothing, education and a respectable and stable means to sustain themselves. This is

further weighed down by the loss of their family members to the conflict that robbed the other members of their sense of security of having family around. The Jenin refugee camp where Abulhawa's primary characters are brought up is infected with disease, violence and violations of basic rights and privacy. She narrated through her prose that it was not and it still is not uncommon for men to be detained, harassed and questioned on no solid grounds. We see characters moving from one point of the camp to the other under the ever-present gaze of the soldiers deployed to act on their whims. Instances such as shooting, unannounced raids in homes for rebels without any proof or prior notice, being stopped at security checks and denied movement add to one's understanding how Palestinians are constantly robbed off their existence and denied any right to claim it without risking their lives.

Hope and Ambition amidst a Normalized Uncertainty

Barakat's work recounts her time from the age of 7 to late teens when she received a scholarship to study at Birzeit University, a feat less heard of for a girl from the lower rungs of middle class in the politically tumultuous Palestine. The memoir documents her and her family's struggle for survival due to loss of land, livelihood and lack of work opportunities which were scarce and difficult to sustain because of the restrictions on the free movement of Arabs in the territory. Ibtisam is shown to be a curious child, wanting nothing more than to study in peace and write- a medium in which she found refuge and managed to live through the months of curfews that came just as sporadically as the soldiers' trucks, disrupting their temporary routine once more. Her naïve hope to see Palestine free someday eventually metamorphoses into skepticism and sparks her ambition to see the world beyond the boundaries laid down by the Occupation outside and inside her Home. We see her break down the boundaries in her conventional Arab home and seek education as well as challenging and bypassing those of the Occupation. The Barakat family changes homes frequently and gets into the habit of attaching and detaching itself from the physical and emotional security of their four walls, a perpetual migration that causes them to create, spread and collect their memories every few years.

Suffering, Trauma and the Ghosts of the Past

Abulhawa has penned down the story of four generations who spend a good part of their lives in a refugee camp in Jenin fighting for basic human needs and rights. The story revolves around the Abulheja family whose

patriarch Yehya Mohammed Abulheja and his family is forced to abandon their ancestral lands and home during the Nakba. It is also during this time that one of his grandsons is snatched away from them by a Jewish soldier- growing up as his son, after being renamed as David and becomes the cause of immense grief for his biological brother Yousef by beating him up at a check point. The story is laden with the pain of losing your loved ones to war, war crimes and witnessing death every day that is amplified by socio-economic disparities. It is carried to its climax through the memories of Amal, the third generation of the Abulheja family. She was born in the camp amidst the family's upheaval from their respectable lives and died there at the hands of an Israeli soldier. Her journey from the camp to the US to back to the camp was emotionally charged with the trauma of losing her family to the conflict that she numbed by disassociating herself with her daughter and molding herself into the lifestyle of a first world citizen by adopting an English name 'Amy'. However, she is stricken with the psychological signs of the trauma such as anxiety and insomnia.

Amal eventually returns to Palestine after three decades with her daughter to see Home once again and for the last time, reconciling with her lost and now Jewish brother and dies saving her daughter with wide eyes- at peace with herself, her homeland and a possibly better future that is shown to the reader through the reunion, communication and reconciliation of Amal with her Jewish brother David and her father's old friend, Ari Perlstein. Her death, this way is shown as a welcome change that she was seeking as it came without the ghosts of her past- a brother, father, mother and husband lost to the Occupation.

Basic Rights and their Dismissal- A Normalized Reality

Everyday life in conflict zones is accompanied by a constant fear of danger and uncertainty lurking around. Works emerging from conflict torn areas, be it the fictional tales of Khaled Hosseini who writes about the many wars witnessed by Afghanistan or Azar Nafisi writing on the tense decades during and after the Iranian Revolution of 1970s, resonate with the shared emotion of helplessness and give the reader a detailed account of the ways occupations turn a blind eye towards the needs of people; and in more instances than one, work to deliberately disrobe the people of them.

The memoir *Balcony on the Moon*, introduces the reader to the difficulties Palestinian children face in terms of education and healthcare. Schools in the region are mostly run by non-profit organizations that depend on aid to provide for the children's books and uniforms. The author is shown

to have a difficult time adjusting to this system of life where she sees no potential of holding new, unused books to read. The many and more often unreasonable restrictions on the movement of Arabs curb the Palestinians' scope of any betterment by way of dignified work. Barakat, in the memoir also recalls her time observing fascinatingly at the many modern looking cafes decorating the markets of Ramallah and the visibly better crowd of the settlers thronging them, completely unaware or ignorant of the people forced to live parallel to them in a sharp contrast. Additionally, this loss of control is magnified by the author's account of her struggle to post a simple letter to another country and the reader gets to witness first-hand how calculatedly the restrictions are laid out to break the backbone of the victims. However, Barakat's eventual success in finding a long yet fruitful alternative to bypass this invisible boundary are a sign how people in conflict zones tend to develop ways which let them retain some control over their lives and reflect the intense control Palestinians fight every day.

Such accounts of intrusive controls and complete disregard for people's lives and their basic rights are also the central theme of Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. Right from the start, the Abulheja's and many other families of the village are dismissed from their ancestral homes. No legal right is ever given to them to claim their homes back and they are forced to live in make-shift shacks, longing to return. Enough graphic evidence is present to validate the total disregard of consideration and facilities that one needs to live a life suitable for a civilized human. Not only is there a complete lack of healthcare, education and work but also a dismissive attitude for human life which is ended on a young soldier's whim to make a bad day better or to simply put the Other in their place. Illness, hunger, gruesome violence and its trauma is the norm in the camp and through media channels, we see how their resultant rebellion is propagated further to fuel more violence and curbs, leading to a perpetual conflict and the dismissal of one's rights running after another in a loop.

Eyewitness accounts of historian and social activist Ilan Pappé and Anna Baltzer document the wide gap between the people living in the same region. Baltzer has documented her experience of living in Gaza as a volunteer that exposed her to the grim conditions of people living under Israeli Occupation as well as the authorities' and global organizations' complete failure in recognizing the everyday struggles Palestinians are out through and holding the Regime accountable. She mentions in her documentaries and accounts the apartheid model of Israeli occupation such as segregated roads, check-posts around Arab neighborhoods and the violent criminal and illegal nature of Israeli settlers that is largely encouraged by the au-

thorities and ignored by the international law. Pappe treads on a similar path, documenting the Nakba or the Exodus of 1948 and its aftermath wherein he uses photographic historical evidence to initiate a conversation on global stage to hold Israel accountable for the planned expulsions of Arabs from 500 villages- a systemic disrobing and dispossession that continues to this day.

The consequences of these curbs on one's life and land can be devastating to people's mental well-being which may take a turn for the worse eventually. Barakat talks in her memoir about her two elder brothers- the eldest battled short-temper until he was able to secure a way out of Palestine to the US while the second brother dropped out of school despite excellent grades to help their father out with finances. He also grew quieter by the day and went into a shell, resorting to cheap but hazardous substance abuse at one point. Abulhawa too introduces the readers to such invisible injuries of conflict through the mother-daughter duo of Dalia and Amal. We see how Amal grows up in shacks, playing with and finding joy in broken toys found in dumpsters and returning home to an unresponsive, shell-shocked mother who never recovered from witnessing mass killings, losing her home, husband and a newborn child; and dies alone, not speaking to anyone but the ghosts of her past.

Two decades later, we see Amal living a double life in America, paving through her dual-identity and severe emotional trauma. Amal's account of self-reflection hints towards PTSD and a guilt that she harbors for being the sole survivor in her family- a survivor's guilt that affects her relationship with her daughter and resort to escapism via alcohol. The body language and reflexes of these characters also reflect how this emotional injury slowly peeps through the physical maneuvers of people such as fidgeting, long periods of silence, insomnia, depression, and detachment from people as well as a constant paranoia. These characters are representative of the attendant trauma that haunts multiple generations of Palestinians, by having witnessed, experienced and lived under Occupation. They live in a constant fear of violence- making the mental and physical consequences of living in a socio-political conflict an unfortunate normal.

Negotiating Memories for Resisting and Remembering

Both Barakat and Abulhawa illuminate the living conditions of Palestinians who had become homeless in their own land, seeking refuge in temporary homes erected initially with whatever was left with them and civil society foundations in the subsequent years. Their narratives are weighed

down with sorrow of being denied access to their own homes and the accompanying shame and helplessness that Palestinians are subjected to under the Occupation. The subjects in both the texts talk about their ancestral land and homes, remembering them with fondness and melancholy while trying to cope with the trauma and loss of dignity that came with the uprooting. This shared nostalgia and memory of home and its loss has had its influence on the newer generations as well that can be witnessed in the un-lived memories of Barakat herself and Abulhawa's subjects Amal and her daughter Sara, who reminisce every nook and corner of their family homes as if they ran through those corridors and long to be there, tied by their collective un-lived histories and memories.

The authors have also addressed the inequalities pertaining to education and work in regions under Occupation, fueled further by pre-existing gender inequalities because of the regions' cultural and social climate. Education continues to be the key for characters in the texts to break through the borders- physical, psychological and emotional. In 'Balcony on the Moon', Barakat remembers her inclination to study and the classes where their teachers encouraged the students to study hard in order to leave Palestine so that they can live 'freely' as humans should and make a normal, dignified life for themselves. Barakat grew up with this vision and fought to claim her right, eventually crossing the physical border to move to the US and the emotional border of being able to live in a dignified, human way she and Palestinians deserve and finding a voice for herself and her people.

Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* however, gives a different picture where Amal's grandfather regrets the education he denied to her father before the Nakba, an opportunity that he felt could have saved their family from the hard life of a refugee camp. This regret is materialized by Amal who was encouraged by her well-read father to study as hard as possible and give herself a good life. Amal also works hard, but she does so to cross the psychological barrier and hardships of being stuck in a refugee camp with a mentally unstable mother, an absentee brother and the haunting memories of her dead father. She turns to books to remember her father and live his dream of having a formal education. Amal too moves to the US eventually, but her migration is a way to keep in touch with her father; her life in the host-land is a bubble to keep herself from the memories of personal loss, abandonment and their resultant grief.

The authors of the primary texts and their subjects continuously change homes, migrating from one locality or building to another, picking up the

pieces of their lives and starting over again. In the wake of such perpetual migration, the reader also witnesses a pattern of everyday resistance that Palestinians have developed- more pronounced in the women's emphasis on following customs and traditions of celebrating local festivals, weddings and socializing every once in a while, despite restrictions. In 'Balcony on the Moon', a young Barakat visits her new neighbors introducing herself and her family, carrying sweets made by her mother for them for goodwill, welcoming them into the neighborhood- an Arabic tradition symbolizing brotherhood regardless of one's ethnic and religious identity. Similar patterns of social behavior are documented by Abulhawa in *Mornings in Jenin* by displaying everyday routines of men's gathering over Arabic coffee for a chat, women visiting each other and their insistence on celebrating important events such as weddings in the customary ways with all the rituals being followed albeit under the ever-present gaze of the Other.

Barakat and Abulhawa exhibit patterns of resistance through characters like Fatima and Barakat herself who question the gender roles in their conventional society that shoves marriage onto the youth for its religious and cultural significance- the former resists marriage for as long as she can to finally reunite with her partner Yousef and the latter doing the same to pursue her higher education and moving to Jordan and America respectively. The insistence of other characters in keeping up with traditions, socializing and traveling despite stressful and dehumanizing security checks lets them sustain a little semblance of normalcy and control in their lives. In doing so, the characters are shown to claim agency, resisting the patriarchal and the political occupation that looms over them. The conclusion of both the texts, despite one being a memoir and the other being a work of fiction, reflects the authors' desire to emphasize on education and its importance in at-least initiating, if not completely resolving the conflict between Israel and Palestine as well as directing the attention of global players towards the atrocities and injustice endured by the people of Palestine with Barakat finding and raising her voice for the Palestinian cause through her memoir, fiction writing and poetry; and Abulhawa through her writing of fictionalized realities.

Intersections of Class, Gender and Cultural Frames

The impact of an apartheid occupation is jolting as it is, however, in the case of Palestine; it is magnified due to internal conflicts and a cultural system that thrives on a conservative framework of extreme interpretation of religion and traditions; intensified further by unequal distribution of

resources. Such pre-existing imbalances in the social climate of the region have created gaps in what is supposed to be a united fight for freedom. The primary texts subjected for this analysis throw light on such imbalances and add to the understanding of psychological, physical and gendered struggle of Palestinian people who are at the crossroads of different regional, religious and ethnic borders perpetually.

The Abulheja family's struggle in *Mornings in Jenin* is similar and yet so different from that of the Barakat family in *Balcony on the Moon* - the characters suffer from sickness, more intense violence, humiliating security checks and are seen as a threat in the former, where they live in an overpopulated refugee camp, brimming with poverty; while the characters in the latter, though below poverty line, are able to avoid perpetual sickness, death and dehumanization as they live in fairly better economic conditions than their brothers in refugee camps. This class difference creates gaps which make their claim to their basic rights and their shared goal a farfetched dream. Both the authors give the reader a glimpse into the everyday life under occupation and we see instances where the Regime is involved in breaking the spirit of the people by using tactics such as physical violence towards men in the form of beatings, unwarranted arrests and sexual offences from as subtle as a lecherous gaze to reckless rapes towards women. In *Mornings in Jenin*, the protagonist Amal's brother Yousef along with other men, young and old are detained by the Israeli forces and kept there indefinitely.

The men subjected to immense torcher are returned; however, they are forced to leave their tattered clothing behind and walk, exhibiting their physical injuries to the world and creating more damaging psychological ones that may last a lifetime. Amal's father never returned and the family never received any information about him; and her brother and other men who did make it back home, were carrying intense trauma and the loss of whatever was left of their dignity. In her memoir, Barakat mentions that her father moved from their almost permanent home as Israeli soldiers had started making rounds to and around their house in his absence and intimidating their mother with their objectifying and sexually suggestive gazes; while the bone-chilling description of the mass rapes and murders of women during the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982 in Abulhawa's prose intimates the reader about the inhuman extent of atrocities aimed at Palestinians.

These gruesome acts of violence, most commonly directed towards the economically and socially weaker sections of the society reflect the lay-

ered and unequal suffering of people that fuels hostility towards one's own brothers who have fared well as well as distrust in the leadership that has failed to uplift them to the bare minimum in the seventy years of struggle. The historical accounts of Palestinian leaders promising and failing at giving their people their regional and national identity back hints at their lack of or rather ignorance of the people's everyday struggles pertaining to their ethnic, religious, economic and gender differences. The surface level understanding and ignorance of the Palestinian Cause by the global players has created innumerable opportunities for atrocities to be inflicted on Palestinians in broad daylight, most recently witnessed in the last twelve months wherein the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been violently attacked by air raids.

The international media stirs for a few days and moves on. Such a pattern makes its presence felt in Mornings in Jenin where we read that the horrific war crimes committed during the massacre of refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila were misreported. However, in the wake of technological and social advancement, these gaps between multiple ethnic and religious identities, classes and the reportage of the situation at ground zero have managed to find a space through voices rising from Palestine as well as on Palestine. Writers such as Barakat and Abulhawa, writing on Palestine attempt to shed light on the life under Occupation, while also brimming with the migrants' acts of remembrance and longing for home reflected in mannerisms and generational memories of culturally significant traditions, their homes and the trauma of war and migration. Whereas, authors such as KhuludKhamis, Mariam Barghouti write from Palestine, addressing the double standards of media and governments towards the sufferings of its people; together aiding them in bringing attention to their drowned voices and rights to some extent while also creating avenues where writers, artists, and people on both sides of the border can share their narratives with hints of post-traumatic stress and nostalgia; and attempt to understand the Other and reimagine their existence in a better light.

Conclusion

The novels tread on a precarious path as they present a narrative that is constantly being downplayed by the global community. The authors relive their histories and attempt to bring the attention towards the suffering of these seventy years that has been sidelined by the bigger powers while also attempting to re-visit their trauma, find hope through characters such as Ari Perlstein and Ahmad Baha Al-Din who represent the humanity

that they (authors) believe exists, bridging the gap between the divergent narratives and blurring the regional, communal and physical boundaries.

The conclusion of both the works opens the windows for careful consideration regarding establishing a dialogue between the communities and the nation-states of Israel and Palestine. While Abulhawa shows us a possible reconciliation and brotherhood through Amal and David; Barakat does so by holding onto an opportunity of education in a university run by the state of Israel, indicating that a step towards the other side can be the reconciliation, if not the final solution towards peace. What the primary texts also prod one to reflect upon is the urgent need to understand factors such as unequal economic and educational opportunities as a result of class, gender and ethnicity to establish an intra-communal and intra-regional dialogue as well. The layered and multi-dimensional suffering of the Palestinian people and their skepticism towards their own and the global leadership is a result of misunderstood intra narratives and differences; and a roadblock in a possible peacemaking process. A dialogue and more importantly, the acknowledgement and attempt to understand the Other on the other side of the border as well as among themselves can perhaps provide a pathway where many other Palestinians may find their peace, justice and their lost dignity. Lastly, the authors and their characters also push the readers in recognizing the role of media in the current geo-political conflicts. Both Barakat and Abuhawa are authors and activists-the former contributing her own and fellow Palestinians' voice forward through publications in noted columns and Abulhawa being more actively involved through her NGO Playgrounds for Palestine. The media has primarily played the role of a bystander in this conflict, addressing only the aspects they found relevant, which too faded sooner than they appeared.

Barakat's recollection of her school days in the memoir briefly throws light on the limited coverage done by the media houses in Palestine-covering only the tip of the ice-berg such as funded schools and charity works carried out by the super powers. Abulhawa, on the other hand, addresses the unabashed misreporting that has become quite the norm in Palestine. She also highlights the role media can have in bringing forwards accounts of mistreatment and suffering by showing Amal's daughter Sara publishing letters documenting her time in Palestine that gain a global audience. With this turn towards Digital and its easy access, the role in the conflict-that begs to be reported with utmost sincerity and gravity- has become ever more important. The recent times have witnessed increased human rights violations in the region as well as the xenophobic discourse in the global geo-politics as a result of civil wars across a number of nations and their

effect on the already deteriorating diplomatic ties between multiple nations of global importance; therefore, a collective effort from the people, their leaders and organizations in understanding one's Self and Other is more imperative than ever.

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