



RESEARCH PAPER

Man-Land Equation in Abdel-Fattah's *Where The Streets Had A Name*: An Eco-Critical Study

¹Hamna Wajid, ²Sadia Qamar and ³Aamer Shaheen*

1. M. Phil Scholar, Department of English Literature, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of English Literature, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of English Literature, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author | aamershaheen@gcuf.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This research paper is about the contemporary issues of migration, place-attachment and trauma in Randa Abdel-Fattah's novel *Where The Streets Had A Name* (2008). The novel is centered on the lives of displaced Palestinians from their native land. The novel has been analyzed through Lawrence Buell's concept of space, place and imagination. The theory of Eco-criticism is built in large part around the concept of raising awareness about natural world. The forceful migration of people from their native land causes trauma and constant longing to return to their homeland. The paper illustrates that the displaced Palestinians are connected to their land. They all share same culture, traditions, and history so they feel connected to each other and to their land. The paper is also valuable for social awakening as it aims at sensitizing the human race towards the environment.

KEYWORDS Eco-criticism, Environmental Destruction, Land Loss, Palestinian Displacement, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Trauma, *Where The Streets Had A Name*

Introduction

Randa Abdel-Fattah is a Palestinian-Egyptian-Australian diasporic writer. Her novel *Where the Streets Had a Name* (2008) - a young adult fiction - is dedicated to her grandmother Siti Jamilah who had passed away on 24th April, 2008, aged 98 prior to the publication of the novel. Abdel-Fattah had hoped that through her novel, had her grandmother lived to see it coming, she would have been allowed to touch the soil of her homeland again. However, with the consolation that her grandmother had died surrounded by her son and family and friends who cherished her, Abdel-Fattah also dedicates her novel to her father with the hope that he may see a free Palestine in his lifetime.

A piece of young adult fiction, the novel highlights the real picture of displaced Palestinians. This novel unfolds the journey of a 13-year-old, Muslim Palestinian girl named, Hayaat who lives in Bethlehem. Her family has been uprooted from their Jerusalem and now she is living in a small apartment with her parents, grandmother and brothers. Her father remains sad about the loss of his olive orchard. Her grandmother Siti Zeynab plays an integral role to recall the past. Hayaat is a very strong-minded girl but sometimes she is stubborn. She feels guilty and sad about her past when she lost her best friend Maysaa in a bomb blast. That traumatic incident not only left memories on her mind but also left permanent scars on her face. Her scared face always reminds her of the traumatic past and her best friend. Frequently, she becomes agitated when she hears her grandma and mother conversing, asking, who will marry Hayaat with those scars? The scars on her

face are the reflection of scars on Palestinians' identities. Their scars can be healed but they cannot be removed or forgotten.

When her grandmother becomes ill, she expresses her wish to touch the soil of her homeland. Hayaat with her best friend Samy, a Christian Palestinian, starts on a journey to fulfill her dying grandmother's desire. Hayaat believes that Siti Zeynab's life will be saved in this way. Abdel-Fattah connects the character's life and happiness to their homeland. They start their journey when they have no curfew. Their journey makes them aware of the political conflict. They pass through different checkpoints and obstructions and jump over the West Bank wall. The West Bank wall separates the native Palestinians from Jerusalem. They meet Israeli peace campaigners, a youngster named Waseem who is a refugee, and other Palestinian travellers.

This journey of Hayaat helps her to reconnect to her ancestral land and heal from her trauma. This novel is a true picture of Palestinians' day to day struggle to see Palestine a free land as observed earlier about the dedication part of the novel where the novelist is hoping for her father to see Palestine freed in his lifetime - a hope of every displaced Palestinian. Nature and place play a prominent role in this fiction to show the roots of Palestinians and they have great impact on everyone's mind and body. Abdel-Fattah uses her writing, with the central focus on females to portray strong displaced women. Abdel-Fattah's writing can also be seen as a reflection of her personal journey, being displaced to reconnect to her ancestral roots. She has used her writing as a "tool of resistance" to "challenge the racism" and to reshape Palestinian identities.

This paper aims to highlight the strong relationship of man and land. People treat land as a living body. They share bond with land as they share with the people. It also highlights the disastrous effects of forced migration and exploitation of land on the lives of people and land that cannot be reversed. The happiness and liveliness of people is linked to the land. Forced migration results in trauma and it transfers from generation to generation. This paper also highlights that older generation serves as a window to see the past. The older generation plays an integral role to pass on the history, culture, customs and traditions to the young generation. They serve as a link between past and present which help the young displaced Palestinians to remain connected to the land of their forefathers. This paper also illustrates that displaced Palestinians share the same past and they help each other to heal from their trauma. Abdel-Fattah's use of original Arabic terms highlights that Palestinians have their own distinctive culture and rich history. This paper portrays that Palestinians constantly yearn to go back to their land and Abdel-Fattah through the character of Hayaat also gives the hope to Palestinians that one day they would be able to get back to their native land and they would freely live in their land. Abdel-Fattah, like many other diasporic writers, connects herself to her ancestral land through her writing. Abdel-Fattah's writings play a significant role in presenting the culture, values, traditions, sufferings and losses of the Palestinians to the world.

Literature Review

Raihanah et al. (2014) analyze the novel through Eco-critical perspective as the struggle of a young Palestinian to fulfill her dying grandmother's wish to touch the soil of her homeland. They highlight the "symbiotic" relation between land and humans in Abdel-Fattah's novel. They have discussed three pillars of the eco-critical approach in the analysis, with an emphasis on environmental politics and how they affect the voice, body, and mind (p. 137). Muftah (2022) analyzes the relationship between land and Palestinian diasporic people. There is an inseparable connection between Palestinian's land and identity both mentally and physically. The iconic jar is very significant as it is symbol for

regenerating Hayaat's identity. Nature also plays a very important role in giving hope to Palestinians. Olive trees and palm trees, cucumber plant, mountains and hills play a significant role to remain connected to their past and to their homeland (pp. 87-102).

Aulia (2020) presents a psychosocial study of Abdel-Fattah's novel through her examination of trauma as a result of the conflict between Israelis and the Palestinians for Hayaat (pp. 119-135). Almutairi et al. (2017) analyze Abdel-Fattah's three novels by examining the ways in which identity graft is carried out in the contexts of the host country and its portrayal of homeland through interactions with ideology, culture, and environment (p. 179). Culture is another factor of generating and building the relationship of individuals with their community and ancestors. Halis (2023) studies Abdel-Fattah's novel with Abulhawa's novel *Mornings in Jenin* through the lens of Eco-linguistics using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). She analyzes that characters of both novels develop the connection to their ancestral land through metaphors and personification. Nature is treated as a living creature and humans develop feelings towards nature. In addition to the above mentioned studies of Abdel-Fattah's novel, this paper analyzes the man-land equation in the novel. People treat land as a living creature. The occupants take control of the land which leads to massive forced displacement of people from their native land. The loss of land impacts the people and brings changes in their personality and lifestyle. Due to the loss of land people also suffer from trauma.

Theoretical Framework

The paper presents a qualitative textual analysis of the novel through its focus on the unbreakable man-land relationship, displacement, trauma, and effect of land on man through the lens of eco-criticism. Textual analysis is a useful approach offering an improved understanding of cultural texts by producing meaning through "close and detailed scrutiny" and providing "presentational and structural specifics and subtleties" that may go undetected (Given, 2008, p. 865). William Rueckert's essay: "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism" introduced the term eco-criticism in 1978. But it was in the late 20th century that Eco-criticism emerged as an academic discourse. The main subjects of eco-criticism are representation of nature, degradation of land, interconnectedness of living creature, environmental crisis, and influence of nature on man and man's influence on nature (Rueckert, 1996, pp. 105-123). But now place, displacement, degradation of land, man-land relation, trauma and psychological disturbance are the new emerging phenomenon in the field of eco-criticism. Eco-criticism describes how people behaved towards nature during a specific period in literary history. Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between real and imaginary environments. Eco-criticism is an approach to literature that emphasizes environmental issues. The goal of eco-criticism is to highlight the necessity of reconsidering how humans interact with their surroundings (Singh, 2019).

One of the most prominent intellectuals of recent decades, Lawrence Buell (1995) defines ecocriticism "as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist's praxis" (p. 430). He identified waves of ecocriticism. The Eco critics of the first wave were focused on "nature writing, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction" (p. 138). They used to support the philosophy of organism. Here environment effectively means natural environment (p. 21).

Place holds great significance in literature. But the concept of place is very complex at the same time. The concept of place in literature can be discussed in many diverse ways. Eco critics are of the view that place is not just an area where we live it is more than that. Cresswell (2004) discusses the concept of place from a variety of angles and in a variety of

ways. Among many other things, he talks on place from a philosophical and cultural perspective. Places are associated with human experiences because they have significance independent of human experiences. Buell (1995) debates that eco-criticism is the existing relationship between space and place. He argues that environmental criticism had begun with the transformation of planetary spaces which had continued since human history but it is remarkably increased since the industrial revolution. The term "environment" is simply one of many markers of how rapidly development transforms the sense of belonging and stability of place (p. 62). He analyses that there are at least three aspects to understand the concept of place "toward environmental materiality" how societies see or understand place, and how an individual is connected to the place (p. 63). There is a huge difference between the geographical concept of "space" and "place". These are not mere opposite terms. Space refers to the geographical concept while place refers to the experience. Without any emotional bond to place, places are just spaces or materials. Moreover, Trauma related to the place can be personal as well as cultural. Trauma is triggered by traumatic interaction with unexpected conditions and it impacts individuals with recurring hallucinations and dreams (Caruth, 2016, p. 11).

Nigel C. Hunt is of the view that psychosocial therapy is vital for trauma healing. The memory of individual is linked with society, community, people and history (Hunt, 2010, p. 121). Personal narratives and their integration with social discourses have a crucial role in the formation and modification of memory (p. 160). The role of society is very significant in the lives of traumatized people. And in the case of traumatized communities, people disclose their identities through shared memories. Those people who explain and talk about their painful memories, it helps them to release their trauma (p. 145).

Buell quoting Malpas observes: "To have a sense of one's own past" provides the knowledge of place and experiences shape an individual's relation to the place. Buell shows his concern towards the preservation of place-attachment. Referring to Nicholson Lord, he maintains that there is a dire need to learn how we can "reclaim the land" because exploitation of land has raised migration issue from local level to global level (Buell, 1995, p. 86). The increased displacement of people from their own place is not the problem of any specific area or country rather, it has become from local to a global issue.

Randa Abdel-Fattah presents Palestinian displaced people in *Where the Streets Had a Name*. This novel is a true picture of the struggle of Palestinians to remain connected to their homeland. The land which was originally owned by Palestinians is now owned by Israelis. This novel is not only the struggle of Abdel-Fattah but also the struggle of Palestinian diasporic writers to stay intact to their homeland. Abdel-Fattah in this novel reflects and reshapes the identity of Palestinians. She presents in this fiction that it doesn't matter if Israelis have taken control of their land. Palestinians are inseparable from their land. Land has direct impact on everyone's mind and body.

In Abdel-Fattah's narrative, nature and land play a pivotal role in presenting and restoring the Palestinian identity. Nature and land are also significant to talk about happy memories of past. They are the defenders of Palestinians happy past. Every character of the novel young, adult or old recalls his/her past memories. The nostalgic memories console the characters. At the same time the past memories recall the trauma and sufferings faced by Palestinians every day. The central character of the novel is Hayaat and her grandmother which portrays the fact that even the third generation of Palestinians is displaced. They are internally displaced people and they cannot even move freely in their own country. They are living an unpredictable life under the constant fear of being killed. First generation of IDPs suffer from trauma, even third generation also shows the symptoms of trauma. Through the characters' journey in the novel Abdel-Fattah's reveals

the political conflict. This novel is a future prediction that displaced Palestinians will heal from their trauma and they will remain connected to their original identity and to the land.

Result and Discussion

Displacement, man-land relation, trauma and psychological disturbance are the major issues of the world. What is likely to happen as a result of increased displacement in the world and especially of Palestinians? What is likely to happen as an effect of living in the constant fear of being killed? What is the effect of constant longing to return to the homeland? What it feels to live in your own country under the laws and orders of others? What is the influence of land on human beings? How land gives the identity to human beings. These are few questions that can tangle in anybody's mind. And the answer to all these questions is Abdel-Fattah's *Where the Streets Had a Name*. The concept of Place is not very new in literature. Place studies is an interdisciplinary field as it is connected to geography, architecture, philosophy and literature. Place plays an active role in the lives of individuals, community identities and human experiences. It is natural for people to develop feelings for the place where they were born, grew up and lived.

The story begins as curfew has been lifted for two hours and Hayaat, with her family goes to the grocery store and wears her best suit: "Baba said you never know who you will meet when a curfew is lifted" (Abdel-Fattah, 2008, p. 3). Abdel-Fattah highlights the fact that relationships are like basic needs of people. The displaced people of Palestine are not allowed to even meet their loved ones occasionally. They can spend time with each other when there is no curfew. Every character in the novel wants to remain connected to their fellows. One day while living at home in curfew days, Jihan expresses her desire to meet her fiancé. She considers her existence as tormented. Siti Zeynab remarks: "What would you know about torment, ya Jihan? Such unbridled self-pity." These painful words give a glimpse of Siti Zeynab's painful past. Siti Zeynab throughout the novel acts as a string which connects present generation with the past. She has lost her land, her family and her loved ones.

Hayaat's father had affection for his land as his own child. One day he was sitting in his armchair holding a piece of paper related to their land and caressing it as child strokes his cat. As for him the land was a part of himself, his identity. Hayaat wants to sit in the lap of her father and wants him to tell her a story that would start with "Once Upon a Time." She wants to know about her fathers' grandfather, when people used to sit together, share folk tales and dance together. Hayaat's desire to know about her ancestors reflects the wish of every young Palestinian to connect to their history. As a young child Hayaat used to climb olive trees. "On the twenty dunams of land my father owned in Beit Sahur," this shows that Hayaat has very clear memories of her past life in Beit Sahur. Many summers ago her grandfather Abo Hassan had also scolded her grandfather for climbing on these olive trees. And his grandfather, Abo Murad, had planted olive trees many autumns ago. The land was fertile and green and more than 100 trees had planted there (pp. 14-15). Abdel-Fattah has used the terms "summer" and "autumn" which shows that she values nature and the use of figures for the olive trees paints the fact that how much Palestinians are aware of their land and plantation. Olive trees are also significant as it means "Zaitoon" in Urdu which is a female name. This can be seen as olive trees are like mother figures for Palestinians and they are very concerned about trees. Olive trees are not just ordinary trees for Palestinians they are very sacred to them and they consider them as a part of their legacy because they are the witness of Palestinians' cheerful past, killings, and occupation and also of the degradation of land. Hayaat's father used to say that "They are holy trees, part of our heritage" and he considered that the roots of the land are sacred. Land is a sacred entity for anyone. It is also a source of human identity. Hayaat's father is

separated from his land and due to this he is suffering from loss of identity. Despite the fact that he is in Palestinian land, he is not attached to his new place. Though he is living in his native homeland but he is not free to work on his own land. He is forcefully displaced from his birthplace. This constantly upsets him. The "loss of his olive grove" showcases the loss of culture, history and land. He grieves over this loss just as "a parent mourning a child" (p. 18). Because that place belonged to his forefathers and he treated the land with the same devotion parents give to their children. He remains silent and does not talk to anyone. "When we lost our land, he imploded. We have no way of seeing the evidence of his demolition - the rubble and ruins are inside him - but he no longer talks and laughs and tells stories as he did before [...] He eats with us, but his movements are those of a self-conscious [...] He eats quickly and quietly" (p. 18). This showcases that Hayaat's father has lost part of himself with the loss of land. He has lost his candidness, liveliness and just sits quiet. In the past, he used to tell stories but now even he does not do so. He mourns as "a parent mourning a child" and "rubble and ruins are inside him" implies that loss of land has caused emotional and psychological disturbance. He reflects the emotional and psychological condition of displaced people, especially of Palestine. He has become self-conscious. The loss of land has influenced the relationship of family. In the past, sitting together and sharing stories made them happy, but now they do sit together but do not share anything.

Abdel-Fattah further illustrates the man-land connection as Hayaat describe the scene during the curfew days: "There is a deathly ghost-town kind of silence to the night. There are no cars, footsteps. No bats, owls, or rustling of leaves. Perhaps bats and owls have curfew restrictions too. The soldiers' voices crash against the silent night" (p. 23). This description elaborates that silence is very symbolic in the novel. Palestinian land is occupied by Israelis. They have put restrictions and imposed control on both land and its people. The curfew reflects a disordered balance in the environment as it silences both human and non-human things. The silence of both "nocturnal creatures and leaves" put forward a shared vulnerability of man-land. The response of man, nature, living creatures and land towards occupation of land is same. "The stench of fear is in the air. My fear, their fear, in dangerous competition" (p. 24). The use of metaphor "stench of fear" portrays the fearful environment of Palestine. People are afraid in their own land which is their home. Fear is not only experienced by individuals it has covered the whole environment of Palestine.

There is one more aspect of the man-land interconnection which is discovered when the grandmother, Siti Zeynab, is in the expatriate camp. The voice of the "woman prime minister" that "There were no such thing as Palestinians. They did not exist," is distressing to the amount that it suppresses the voice of Siti Zeynab; it kills her faithfulness, blocks her vocal chords and impairs her vocalization. The act of denying someone's nationality is equal to denying their existence. As Buell discusses that the "Native Americans" lost their space and place and were forced to live in "reservations". They were forced to consider "reservations" as the substitute of "home" (Buell, 1995, p. 64). Abdel-Fattah, in the same way through the grandmother, Siti Zeynab, portrays the exile of Palestinians from their own land. The experience of being banished from the land unconsciously weakens Siti Zeynab's voice, diminishing it into a mere "whisper." Though, even with her low voice, she is determined, her spirit remains fearless by way she exclaims to her granddaughter: "I existed, ya Hayaat. I exist!" (Abdel-Fattah, 2008, p. 46). Siti Zeynab confesses to Hayaat: "Those memories stow themselves in my windpipe until I dare not conjure another memory or I will scarcely be able to breathe" (p. 38). This acceptance illustrates the ever-present connection between humans and their land. The memories of the land have a great influence on her mind which has gone beyond all boundaries of time and space demonstrating the strong interconnection of mind and land.

The grandmother expresses her desire to the granddaughter: "If I could have one wish, Hayaat, it would be to touch the soil of my home one last time before I die" (p. 46). Abdel-Fattah raises ecological awareness through the last desire of the grandmother. It also shows the profound impact of land on individual's identity. It illustrates that the old generation still find roots in their native land. The grandmother tells Hayaat that deeper roots help people grow taller and stronger. When the roots "ripped out" it risks shrinking. It is very much essential to have strong ties with the history, past and culture. Siti Zeynab shows Hayaat the "key" of her home (p. 47). Palestinians have suffered a lot but still they are hopeful to return to their land. Land is very sacred for exiled Palestinians, because they have a deep rooted connection to their land. Hayaat's mother married to her father as he had "land, olive groves and a nice laugh" (p. 48). Abdel-Fattah illustrates that the happiness of people is linked to their land. And Hayaat's father was living a happy life when he was in his own land, where he had olive trees. But, when he was exiled from Beit Sahur, he became voiceless. Hayaat's mother has lost her home also. She has transformed. Displacement has a great influence on everyone and they are no longer affectionate towards each other (p. 52). When Hayaat's grandmother becomes sick she whispers to her "stay alive" and "I'll let you touch that soil again" (p. 53). Abdel-Fattah tries to give the description of the hopeful Palestinians; they will be connected to their land.

On returning home, from Beit Sahur, Hayaat describes the emotional reunification with her grandmother. She endangered her life to get the soil of the land that will heal the sick body of grandmother. "Her eyes are bright and untouched, having never caught up with the wrinkling, shrinking" and she cries, "Hayaat!" The grandmother's "heartbeat and the sound of the bullets firing in my brain, we cry" (p. 173). This shows that Palestinian people have lost their loved ones and now they are scared of losing their family. The "bright" eyes of the grandmother highlight the vitality of the reunion of the family. This also describes that through her journey Hayaat feels the pain which has been suffered by her grandmother and in spite of generational gaps she feels connected to her.

Hayaat opens the jar and gives it to her grandmother. "I take the jar from her. 'Open your hands.' I pour some soil into her open palms. 'Jerusalem soil.' I whisper. I see her eyes and I know that every step of our journey was worth this moment" (p. 176). The subdued tone of Hayaat and the sensory experience of the soil intensely portray the overwhelming emotions caused by the dislocating of the people from their own homeland. Both young and old people feel the same emotion stemming from the displacement. The jar filled with the soil of homeland is representative of the man-land attachment which is portrayed throughout the entire novel. The grandmother's deep connection to her homeland becomes evident when she touches and smells the soil of her homeland.

Emotional scars take longer time to heal than physical scars. In case of the Palestinians, emotional scars are essential part of their lives. Memories of traumatic past do not let them heal. But the society plays a significant role to heal from the trauma. As Hayaat and her friend Samy, continue their journey towards West Jerusalem, they meet Mali and David an Israeli couple. They oppose the occupation, as they are "peace activists." At first Hayaat does not trust them, because since her childhood she has seen Israelis as exploiters, who destroyed the land and demolished her family's house. They have snatched her best friend Maysaa and took away Hayaat's beauty, leaving the permanent marks on her body and memory. But her interaction with peace activists and the driver Yossi, who helped them to reach their home safely, changed her concept about Israelis.

The bond which Hayaat and her grandmother, Siti Zeynab share is very significant. The grandmother represents the displaced old generation and Hayaat represents the displaced young generation. The strong bond of Hayaat and Siti helps them to heal from

their traumatic past. The journey of Hayaat from West Jerusalem gives strength and courage to Nur, the mother of Hayaat to talk about the heart wrenching past. Nigel C. Hunt is of the view that society plays a crucial role in the lives of traumatized people. They help them to deal with their trauma (Hunt, 2010, p. 145). Another aspect of man-land equation is portrayed when Siti Zeyanb compares herself to the mountain: "I am as old as a mountain" (Abdel-Fattah, 2008, p. 41). The comparison of grandmother to the mountain suggests the interdependence of man and environment. It also shows that humans equate nature to themselves. It also suggests that as mountains stand strong under all weather conditions, in the same way, the grandmother has faced all the tragic circumstances bravely and stood determined. The grandmother is a representative of old generation of displaced Palestinians who faced all the chaos, but didn't lose hope and their bond with their land. Occupation of land has resulted in the loss of both the loved ones, and of the land. The discussion of "olive trees and figs" implies that the bond between individuals and their land is unbreakable. Though they are not physically present in their homeland still they are emotionally connected to their land.

The aspect of modernization and exploitation of place-attachment is highlighted by Abdel-Fattah, when Hayaat describes that "The Wall" has cut the land into villages and cities. "The Wall" has cut the families and choked their religious and spiritual connection to their "churches and mosques." It is a symbol of making boundaries and separating native people to their own homeland. It is symbolic of transformation of land and the lives of displaced Palestinians. It terrifies people. It reminds Hayaat of the day when Rawya Amir, lost her brother. "The Wall" symbolizes "loss and death" (p. 30). Buell analyzes that transformation of places change the bonding of people to that place (Buell, 1995, p. 66).

Hayaat is traumatized every second by the horrific, unexpected incident that caused death of Maysaa. Her father agrees to take her to the grave of Maysaa. The following dialogue between Hayaat and her father demonstrates the difference of opinion related to past. He tells her that, he knows that she is going to be alright. He is not as strong as Hayaat. He shares that he feels like he has let down his family sometimes. Even though it's risky, he still clings to the past. He tells her that in Bethlehem, he loved his family because he was in his land but nothing is in his control now. Hayaat feels confident and at ease. She has gone through that day far too often. She relived it on the roadways of Jerusalem, and looking back. This experience lessens Hayaat's pain. She has learned that she has many good memories of Maysaa before the day everything changed and a great deal of time without her. When she remembers Maysaa as the class's second-best dabka dancer rather than a ghost, she knows the haunting is coming to an end (Abdel-Fattah, 2008, pp. 202-205).

Hayaat's father thinks Hayaat is really brave to be alive after what happened to her. Even when Hayaat decides to befriend with Samy, he still loves her and supports her in any way she chooses to deal with her traumatic memory. As he understands the suffering Hayaat experiences after losing her best friend Maysaa, he is happy that she is able to find happiness once more. His encouragement to Hayaat not only enables her to befriend with Samy, who ends up being her best friend, but it also enables her to locate the greatest defender for her trip to West Jerusalem.

Hayaat is lucky to be surrounded by people who play a key role in helping her to deal with the trauma. After being moved to Bethlehem, she befriends with Samy. They spend a lot of time together. Samy does a lot for Hayaat; she doesn't just play with her, rather, protects her from the class fellows. Hayaat shares with her the desire of her grandmother to touch the soil of her land. Samy's presence supports Hayaat in her battle against her horrific memory. Hayaat, also supports Samy and shares with her that she had

lost hope in the past, but she now realizes that it was the wrong decision. In this way characters support each other to heal from their traumas.

Hayaat's parents, grandmother, her friend Samy, Yossi (the Israeli driver) and peace activists play an important role in Hayaat's life to help her heal from her trauma. Hayaat also plays a vital role in the life of her grandmother, because she shares her past traumatic experiences with Hayaat. In this way every character in the novel is linked and plays a key role in the lives of others. The novel ends with Hayaat ultimately managing to transform her horrific memories into a complete memory complete with significance. She chooses to live not just to survive but to do so with respect and dignity, optimism, and meaning because she understands that the past is so powerful it can both upset and heal. Her interaction especially with her mother and grandmother changes her perspective to look at the life.

Conclusion

The paper highlights the man-land equation, trauma, and the impact of forced displacement on the native people. Land holds great significance in the life of people. The occupants have transformed the land, and this transformation has changed the people. The people who have been uprooted from their native land lose their identity and worth. Every character has own memory of "olive trees" which highlights the significance of natural world and land in the lives of people. "Olive trees" are also symbolic in the way they represent the past of the Palestinians and deep rooted "olive trees" present the deep rootedness of the Palestinians. Displaced Palestinians suffer from generational trauma. The old generation narrates the horrific past to the young generation which also serves as a way to pass on the history of past to the young generation. The support of society helps people to deal with the trauma.

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