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**The Resistance Literature in Ghassan Kanafani's Novels: *Men in the Sun*
and *Returning to Haifa***

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree of Arts in Anglo-American Studies**

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Candidate Declaration Form

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Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M'hidi University, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitles: Revisiting The Resistance Literature in Ghassan Kanafani's Novels: *Men in the Sun* and *Returning to Haifa* in partial fulfillment of Master Degree in Anglo-American Studies is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university.

Date: September, 16th 2021

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Signature of the candidate

Dedication

To family, future self, stone-throwers and Him

Acknowledgment

All gratitude to Allah, that in his name all my work is done.

This could not be achieved without the support and supervision of my teachers, members of jury and supervisor.

I am sincerely indebted to my family for their love and support.

And to the vibes of my friends that kept me forever going.

Abstract

This study analyses two novels by a Palestinian writer, Ghassan Kanafani, in an attempt to explore the themes of resistance. The two novels are: *Men in the Sun* (1963) and *Return to Haifa* (1969). An explanation of the novelist's awareness of the role of literature is enhanced by a discussion on the concept of resistance literature. It identifies various elements that regulate the borders and scope of such a literature. Its emphasis is on scrutinizing historical, cultural and socio-political, critical and generic dimensions of the term “resistance literature” as well as its significance in the context of Palestine and in particular of Ghassan Kanafani. Views and examples of such literature developed in other parts of the world are also brought into discussion to measure the influence of it in contemporary literary scenarios.

Moreover, this thesis mainly investigates the role of literature in the struggle of Palestine and its involvement in assisting to awaken nationalistic feelings among the people. For this purpose it analyses real life situations and images of suffering projected in everyday Palestinian life and issues related to the identity of Palestinians as the people of the land. It focuses on the theme of resistance in each of the novels: *Returning to Haifa* and *Men in the Sun*. In addition, it explores how the tone, style and structure have been employed by the novelist to signify the circumstances of the Palestinians. Therefore, Kanafani’s literature defines the feature of an “authentic” Palestinian culture.

As for the methodology, this study uses textual and critical analysis for themes of resistance literature. A close reading to the socio-historical contexts is essential as well as a methodology. The point of view of the author and his progress are also paid attention to.

keywords: Resistance, Resistance Literature, Ghassan Kanafani, Palestinians, *The Men in the Sun*, *Return to Haifa*.

ملخص

تحلل هذه الدراسة روايتين للكاتب الفلسطيني غسان كنفاني في محاولة لاستكشاف مواضيع المقاومة. الروايتان هما: رجال في الشمس (1963) والعودة إلى حيفا (1969). يتم تعزيز تفسير إدراك الروائي لدور الأدب من خلال مناقشة مفهوم أدب المقاومة. يحدد العناصر المختلفة التي تنظم حدود ونطاق مثل هذه الأدبيات. ينصب تركيزها على تمحيص الأبعاد التاريخية والثقافية والاجتماعية السياسية والنقدية والعامية لمصطلح "أدب المقاومة" بالإضافة إلى أهميته في سياق فلسطين وخاصة غسان كنفاني. يتم أيضًا مناقشة آراء وأمثلة مثل هذه الأدبيات التي تم تطويرها في أجزاء أخرى من العالم لقياس تأثيرها في السيناريوهات الأدبية المعاصرة.

علاوة على ذلك، تبحث هذه الأطروحة بشكل أساسي في دور الأدب في نضال فلسطين وانخراطه في المساعدة على إيقاظ المشاعر القومية بين الناس. لهذا الغرض، يحلل مواقف الحياة الواقعية وصور المعاناة المتوقعة في الحياة اليومية الفلسطينية والقضايا المتعلقة بهوية الفلسطينيين كأهل الأرض. ويركز على موضوع المقاومة في كل روايتين: العودة إلى حيفا ورجال في الشمس. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يستكشف كيف استخدم الروائي النبرة والأسلوب والبنية للدلالة على ظروف الفلسطينيين. لذلك، فإن أدب كنفاني يحدد سمة الثقافة الفلسطينية "الأصيلة".

بالنسبة للمنهجية، تستخدم هذه الدراسة التحليل النصي والنقدي لموضوعات أدبيات المقاومة. القراءة عن كثب للسياقات الاجتماعية والتاريخية ضرورية وكذلك منهجية. يتم الاهتمام أيضًا بوجهة نظر المؤلف والتقدم الذي أحرزه. الكلمات الدلالية: مقاومة، أدب مقاومة، غسان كنفاني، فلسطينيون، رجال في الشمس، عودة إلى حيفا.

Resumé

Cette étude analyse deux romans d'un écrivain palestinien, Ghassan Kanafani, dans une tentative d'explorer les thèmes de la résistance. Les deux romans sont : *Men in the Sun* (1963) et *Return to Haifa* (1969). Une explication de la conscience du romancier du rôle de la littérature est renforcée par une discussion sur le concept de littérature de résistance. Il identifie divers éléments qui règlent les frontières et la portée d'une telle littérature. Son accent est mis sur l'examen des dimensions historiques, culturelles et sociopolitiques, critiques et génériques du terme « littérature de résistance » ainsi que sa signification dans le contexte de la Palestine et en particulier de Ghassan Kanafani. Des points de vue et des exemples d'une telle littérature développés dans d'autres parties du monde sont également mis en discussion pour mesurer l'influence de celle-ci dans les scénarios littéraires contemporains.

De plus, cette thèse étudie principalement le rôle de la littérature dans la lutte de Palestine et son implication dans l'aide à l'éveil des sentiments nationalistes parmi le peuple. À cette fin, il analyse des situations réelles et des images de souffrance projetées dans la vie palestinienne quotidienne et des problèmes liés à l'identité des Palestiniens en tant que peuple de la terre. Il se concentre sur le thème de la résistance dans chacun des romans : *Returning to Haifa* et *Men in the Sun*. En outre, il explore comment le ton, le style et la structure ont été employés par le romancier pour signifier la situation des Palestiniens. Par conséquent, la littérature de Kanafani définit la caractéristique d'une culture palestinienne «authentique».

Quant à la méthodologie, cette étude utilise une analyse textuelle et critique pour des thèmes de la littérature de résistance. Une lecture attentive des contextes socio-historiques est indispensable ainsi qu'une méthodologie. Le point de vue de l'auteur et sa progression sont également pris en compte

Mots-clés : Résistance, littérature de résistance, Ghassan Kanafani, Palestiniens, *Les Hommes au soleil*, *Retour à Haïfa*.

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General Introduction

The creation of Israel is referred to as “the catastrophe” (nakbah) in Palestinian history, while ironically, it is called in Israel the “War of Independence.” Since the catastrophe, the major concern of every Palestinian is to assert the Palestinian identity. As pointed out by Norah Ismail, “The search for collective and personal identity that the fictional representations have undertaken is the specificity of Palestinian literature” (10). It involves creating an agency for the Palestinians to rediscover their lost voices against the Western denial of the entity of Palestinians' history, existence and literature. It, in the words of Edward Said, “...accurately and poignantly dramatizes the precise nature of Palestinian survival in the Arab setting” (152).

Ghassan Kanafani's pioneering to introduce this literature along with Barbara Harlow's, the first to ever translate his works, support to widen its message, to reach the western reader and critic, is appreciated by the present thesis, titled *Revisiting The Resistance Literature in Ghassan Kanafani's Novels: Men in the Sun and Returning to Haifa*. These novels have been translated into English though they were originally written in Arabic.

The involvement of the Palestinian writers with the resistance has incredibly influenced the Palestinian literature. It is because the word “resistance” in Palestinian writings is very significant; hence, the study will focus on characters as portrayed in the selected novels so far; as they attempt to -discover themes of resistance found in these works.

In an attempt to single out the themes of resistance, the two novels will be analyzed thoroughly based on plot, characterization and setting. As an

introduction, the term “resistance literature,” in general, as well as its significance in the context of Palestine and in particular of Ghassan Kanafani is going to be presented in a form of a background to the study. The study also would measure other themes related to resistance of Palestinians as the people of the land, which are projected in the novels, and establish its role in stimulating the Palestinians vigor towards the struggle. Style and structure, which are stiffly bound to the Palestinian situation and gradual political transformation in its political scenario, will be explored accordingly, relating it to historical relevance and narrations made of real incidents.

The study would also specifically address questions like:

- 1- How does the term “resistance” apply to the selected novels and to what extent does the everyday Palestinian scenario reflect itself in the settings, characters and plots of the novels?
- 2- To what extent are characters resisting any form of cultural and physical expulsion and questioning why they had become refugees?
- 3- To what extent are the themes of resistance prevalent in assigning the flow of theme of each novel and how can the writer tie the issues and Palestinian dilemma as an epitome of human suffering?
- 4- How does each novel vary from the others while showing the growth of the writer’s mind and political consciousness?
- 5- And finally, what are the techniques adopted or invented by the author, which took him to literary prominence in the world of Arabic fiction?

The study in scrutinizing the themes of resistance in Kanafani’s selected novels entails a significant role since it would serve his goal of educating both

Palestinians and others of the issue and drawing a universal attention to politics of writing, which is reflected in Kanafani's words: "Politics and the novel are inseparable case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite" (138). Therefore, in general, the present study will focus on the theme of resistance in Kanafani's selected two novels.

This thesis, while focusing on the theme of resistance, tries to define the parameters of "resistance literature." The literature review will highlight what is still lacking in studies on Kanafani:

As primary sources, the two selected novels are the base of the study for the entire concern is about the themes, techniques and characters presented by the writer. Kanafani's approaches and ideas about resistance literature are to be depended on throughout this work.

Adil A. Ahmad in "Theme and Technique in Ghassan Kanafani's Short Fictions" (1989) considers short stories from one of Kanafani's earlier collections on Palestine's Children, and stories *The Death of Bed Number 12* and *Men in the Sun* with particular attention to investigating the beginnings and the development of his technique. He concludes the study with the finding that Kanafani's contributions to the development of the tradition of Arabic literature are truly significant. However, it is different from the present study, because his main focus is on Kanafani's unique style and techniques of writing placed in the Palestinian context, which Ahmad sees as modern and specifically Arab. The present study examines the setting and style of Kanafani's selected novels in order to explore the theme of resistance at the first hand.

Bassam Khalil Frangieh in “The Theme of Alienation in the Palestinian Novel” (1986) examines in particular how the theme of alienation is treated in selected works of Palestinian novelists. Frangeih also examined aspects of historical and thematic development of Palestinian fiction. The present study looks for socio-historic impacts of the creation of Israel in narrative literature of Palestine, while Frangeih's study seeks the theme of individual alienation in Palestinian writers.

Norah Ismail in “The Story’s Horizon is Death: The Palestinian Short Story as Minor Writing” (1997) deals with modern Palestinian short fictions, arguably the most popular genre of Palestinian literature. It presents a historical, political as well as a literary background to the texts and deals with the ontology of the Palestinian short story. The present study clarifies the influence of Palestinian situations in its literature and hence further explores Norah Ismail's assumption.

The methodology of the present study is based on textual analysis. It involves critical analysis of the theme of resistance and the theory of “resistance literature” in general. Its significance is in the context Ghassan Kanafani's interpretation of “Palestinian resistance literature” outlined in his literary and critical studies. Each novel will be examined according to the contemporary incidents, which might have influenced it. Hence, the study would engage in a close reading of the text and the socio-historic contexts. In the effort to trace the progress of the author and explore the relationship between “resistance” and themes, this method is inevitably needed.

The study is divided into three chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction justifies the background, objectives, literature reviews on the

subject and significance of the study. The first chapter correlates literature and resistance. In the first section, a general background of Palestinian resistance literature is provided. The second section connects the cords of correspondence between this kind of literature and Ghassan Kanafani after providing a brief biography. Chapters two and three are respectively engaged with issues raised in “*Men in the Sun*” (1963), and “*Returning to Haifa*” (1969). Themes of resistance singled out in the first chapter are elaborated through each novel. An attempt is also made to measure the transformation of the author’s mental and political development, and its influence on each novel in terms of its style, plot and characterization. The concluding part of the thesis verifies this development and it asserts Kanafani's vision and further stresses the need of translating Palestinian literature into English to promote and create awareness of the justice and the Palestinian cause.

The fact that not much research has been done on identifying such a type of literature adds to the limitation of the study. Since the concern of the study is more with analyzing and identifying aspects of the resistance themes which promote the concerns of “identity” as the people of land in each novel, the study does not involve in exploring or defending the ideological slants Kanafani may have on any parties or concentrate on intricacies that might emerge out of it. Obtaining secondary sources written in English is one of the difficulties faced in conducting this study, since most of the studies are available only in Arabic.

Chapter One: Ghassan Kanafani's Resistance Literature

Introduction

Ghassan Kanafani is among the pioneering Palestinian writers who occupy an indisputable position in the Palestinian literary resistance history. In launching a new type of literature, which he called "resistance literature", he left behind a universal recognition for the Palestinian literature and also for the people whom he represents. As an influential political writer, he also propounded that there is an integral relationship between the cultural resistance and literature. Historical, cultural and political elements of such a literature are significantly important when the resistance theme is defined (Hussain 12).

Introduction to Palestinian Resistance Literature

To start with, resistance literature is basically originated out of a conflict between nationalist movements and the colonial powers. It is of paramount importance for it helps differentiating view points and the messages needed to be conveyed on many spectrums; politics, gender roles in war, culture, history, identity, defense mechanisms, ideological identity and physical existence.)Hussain 16). It tells the story of their day-to-day life and their continuous struggle to freedom. According to Kanafani, this form of literature is a basic tool to make the natives' voices heard by the world. He believed that the role of literature in the transformation of society was different from that of other forms of writing, and it should therefore not be subjected to rigid rules applicable elsewhere (Kilpatrick 15).

The term "resistance literature" (Adab al-Muqawamah) was first used by Ghassan Kanafani while speaking of Palestinian literature. He looked for themes of resistance in other Palestinian works and connected their narrative lines to the Palestinian struggle for Liberation, freedom and identity. In his introduction to his second book on the subject, *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968* (1972) (*al-Adab Filastini*

al-Muqawim Taht al-Ihtilal: 1948-1968), Kanafani sets the paradigms of "resistance literature". Barbara Harlow then took the lead from Kanafani and explored various critical commentaries, theories and literary materials from numerous genres including novel, poetry, prison memoirs and biographies from many other third world countries, has extensively studied its applications and various theoretical questions it poses in her book, *Resistance Literature* published in 1987. The study has evidently shown that this literature ascertains its domination in its relationship with national liberation movements in the countries where it originated (Hussain 17).

Palestinian literature is the result of prolonged political and cultural conflict of Palestinians with a strange imperialist power. It remains profoundly nationalistic and aims at rediscovering the very identity of Palestinians. The long and harsh confrontation between Palestinians and institutionalized endeavors of Israel gave their literature a strong historical, religious and political touch. It has grown to gain universal recognition due to themes of resistance and liberation. Its cultural and political aspects made it grow to become the imperative symbol for the third-world literature in general and contemporary Arabic literature in particular, especially at that time of history. But as a literature of intrinsically political nature, it is not yet mature and may have to be articulated more systematically and more forcefully, especially since the barricade put against its growth is so hard and strong (Hussain 38).

Kanafani's Resistance Literature

Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre, the northern Mediterranean coast of Palestine, on 9th April, 1936, into a middle class family. He studied at a French missionary elementary school in Yaffa, where his father worked as a lawyer. When the brutal massacre of Deir Yassin occurred on 9th April, 1948 and the city of Acre fell to the Zionist forces, his

family escaped first to a Syrian mountain village and then to refugee camps in Damascus. He was just twelve then (Riley 2). His family's story is not unusual to Palestinians who outlived displacement, oppression, exile and loss. These families were banished from home in order to make a room for the new state of Israel in 1948. Ghassan Kanafani distinguished himself from camp young men or children to become mature very soon as a Palestinian phenomenon. He defied every challenge, the chaos of displacement from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait and the depressed alienation in camps. He didn't fail resisting the pressures of poverty and expulsion. But instead, he found a room to represent Palestine's struggle of statehood through his writings.

Ghassan Kanafani's life and career was determined by the political, social, and human circumstances that characterized lives of Palestinians at a highly critical period in world history. Life in refugee camps was a turning point in his life, which determined his political direction even at an early age. An activist, a teacher, an artist, an employee, a journalist, a critic, a social worker, a literary writer, a freedom fighter, a revolutionary and a socialist; Kanafani was all of these. He began to speak not only of the Palestinian sufferings and Israeli oppressions, but also about the worries of Arabs in general. He kept faith all along his life journey that one day; his land is going to be restored. To prove himself and to fight for nationalism, he did what he knew best; Kanafani started writing about Palestine. Fadl al-Naqib writes in Kanafani's memoir "He wrote the Palestinian story, then he was written by it" (Hussain 54).

Kanafani's commitment would develop through his life experiences in his literature and political visions, which would encompass universally as the cause of all oppressed people seeking freedom. Not only made his memory alive after him but also gave impetus for others to continue with such writings. His short novels, short stories, stories for children, poems composed for his niece Lamees and his critical works represent a major

contribution to modern Arabic literature (Riley 3). His later affiliation with Arab National Movement (ANM) was aimed at the revival of Arab world in general. In 1952, he enrolled in the Department of Arabic Literature at Damascus University. During this time he met Dr. George Habash, the leader of the Arab Nationalists' Movement. In 1955, he joined his brother and sister in Kuwait, where there was a large exiled Palestinian community, and worked as a teacher and journalist for about five years. He was barely twenty then. His brother in law, who was a prominent member of a communist organization, influenced him and since then his affiliation to socialist movements of Lenin began to shape. His roommates were also members of a communist cell. For the next five years, he read a lot of Marxist literature, which he found full of scenes he used to see in Palestine (Fadl al-Naqib 194). The defeat of Egypt in its attempts to nationalize Suez Canal in 1956 against Israel and its allies of Britain and France, intensified waves of Arab nationalist sentiments, which gave Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) a boost. During this time, Kanafani served *al-Ra'y*, the ANM newspaper, as an editor and publisher. In 1960, he left for Beirut, again to work in ANM newspaper there, *al-Hurriyyah*. At the same time he continued his study of Arabic Literature, returning to Damascus each summer for examinations. He joined a literary society called the League of Literature and Life, by university students, and started writing short stories. In 1961, he met a Danish peace activist, Anni and they married soon after. Later in 1963, he became editor-in-chief of the new daily *al-Muharrir* and edited its weekly supplement *Filastin* until 1967 (Riley 4).

The formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 boosted his interest. Later in 1965, as the first armed struggle by *al-Fatah* was launched, it exhorted in Kanafani a relatively optimistic outlook. Because it was for the first time since 1948, the Palestinians were taking their struggle and their future into their own hands, neither relying on external Arab armies nor allowing their history and identity to die silently in exile. Soon

his dreams shattered as Israel defeated Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967 (Riley 8). Anni Kanafani, his wife, described the shocking news of Arab's defeat in the Six Day disastrous war of 1967: "This moment being the first time in his life that he lost the ability to write." She continues: "But he remained optimistic throughout his life. In critical moments, he was unbelievably strong and tried to give some of that strength to others.

Later on he would express his feelings in political and literary writings. In the past, Palestinians would wait to read the news and then react to it with optimism or pessimism. But now, for the first time, Palestinians could be optimistic because they knew in advance what the news would say "They already knew that they are traveling on a path for which there is no alternative" (1973 3-4). In 1967, he participated in the founding of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which emerged as the radical Marxist branch of the defunct Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN). In 1969, Kanafani became spokesperson for the PFLP and editor-in-chief of its weekly *al-Hadaf*. The PFLP was committed not only to regain the homeland in Palestine, but also to the establishment of a new secular society based on social reform and social justice both in Palestine and throughout the Arab world (Riley 8).

From Nasirite pan-Arabism he transferred to revolutionary Palestinian Nationalism in 1969. In 1971, Kanafani was imprisoned in Lebanon for the articles he wrote deploring an unnamed reactionary Arab regime. The identity that Kanafani kept along with him, and his lifelong fight for the aspirations of his people and generation whom he represented, made rare bravado in Kanafani. He resisted the occupation physically and intellectually and his words were as strong as bullets which made his enemy so furious, which raised him to be called "a Commando who fought with pen" (Lubna Khader 5). His mind evolved regularly, and concurrently this development was witnessed both in his political and fictional writings.

Ghassan Kanafani was a great personality, easy to deal with. He sought a linkage between the past and the miserable Palestinian present. His stories, however, like his other writings and paintings, address specifically every detail of significant moments in Palestinians' lives and their miseries in camps. He portrayed, through drawings and writings, the enraged community of Palestine, a community which denied submission to the oppressors and who not only outlived the sever challenges, but also confronted them with might, and entered the world of writing very bravely. He approached the word "Palestine" positively. He lived for it, wrote about it and at last, fell and died for it. It was his spirit, punishment and everlasting pain. He recorded all this feelings in his own way in writing, which was yet to flourish. His experiences in refugee camps inspired a unique unrelenting commitment in him, which affected not only in his literary writing but even triggered changes in his techniques, style and tone. He took a keen interest in everything around him in the camps and noted the difference between his actual surroundings and his yearned past (Kilpatrick 5).

Personal experiences while he was teaching the "children of camps", according to him, "open up our eyes to the root of the problems." The children were sleepy in the class. He continues, "The children's drowsiness did not stem from scorn for me or dislike of their studies.... It was simply the reflection of a political problem. "They were engaged in selling sweets in markets in late night to support their families" (137).

He recalled another incident, which was a "decisive turning point" in his life. Once he asked students, in accordance with the official curriculum, to draw an apple and a banana. These children had never seen either an apple or a banana; such things had no real bearing on their lives. They couldn't draw it. So he erased his drawings and asked them to draw pictures of the refugee camp instead. Many such silly incidents, according to Kanafani,

naturally twist the flow of people's life in Palestine and change their outlooks about life. And it is how the political transformations occur in Palestinian mindsets (Kilpatrick 7).

Like the writings of the French critic Hippolyte Taine, the writings of socially oriented followers of Marx and Engels, Kanafani had to keep track with changes in the social, political atmosphere of his time. He was much influenced by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, Maksim Gorky and others and he found his prototype characters in their works (Fadl al-Naqib 195). As a writer, he was admired by American writer William Faulkner. Unlike his companions, who were idealists and for whom writing was a romanticized activity detached from everyday life, Kanafani, as Fadl al-Naqib, who later wrote memoirs of Kanafani, described, lived without dreams (13).

Story like *The Child Goes to the Camp* portrays the historical significance of the camp life. It was a “time of hostilities”, Kanafani writes in the story. Conflicts existed within the society and inside the traditional order. Few lines from the story read as follows: The whole thing is that there were eighteen people from different generations living in one house, which would have been more than enough at any time. We fought for our food and then fought each other over how it would be distributed amongst us. Then we fought again (23). Historical time has collapsed into hostile disorder, and past, present, and future generations vie with each other for immediate control over the administration of five pounds (Riley & Harlow 23). He further stresses these points in the interview: My writings were depictions of realities, of my experience with friends, my family, students and the wretched life of poverty and misery in the camps.

At the beginning, I took an emotional stance when I was writing. As I contemplate all the stories I ever wrote, it seems that a harder or a softer thread connects everything to my personal experiences in life (Kanafani138.) Kanafani’s novels and short stories have been published in sixteen languages. The first collection of his short stories *Death of Bed No. 12*

(*Mawt Sarir Raqm 12*) was published in 1961. As Muhammad Siddiq noted, the political consciousness we find in these stories is rather rudimentary (5). The second collection, *Land of Sad Oranges (Ard al-Burtuqal al-Hazin)* published in 1963, shows an increased consciousness and deal mostly with Palestinian subject matter, while only five of the first collection directly imparts a specific Palestinian consciousness. Human sufferings on a universal scale and Palestinian sufferings as an epitome of it, was the subject matter of the first collection (Riley & Harlow 17).

He used many symbols like desert and its heat, trees, sun, children and men in camps and hearts of people for the purpose. Olive trees are particular reminders of the attachment of the Palestinians to their land. Olive and orange are especially rich in symbolism throughout his literary writings. Another collection of short stories, *A World not for Us (Alam Laysa Lana)*, was published in 1965. And *Of Men and Rifles ('An al-Rijal wa al-Banadiq)* came out in 1968. It contains eight stories, divided evenly into two groups; the setting of first four stories, written in 1965, is in 1948 while the setting of four stories of second part, written in between March 1967 and February 1968, is contemporaneous with the time of writing (Kilpatrick 23).

According to Muahmmad Siddiq, "The overall impression the whole collection leaves is that, the resumption of the armed Palestinian resistance after the Six-Days War is at the same time a continuation of the armed resistance from earlier period" (48). He published *The Door (Al-Bab)* in 1964. It was the only drama published while he was alive, but could gain much name since it followed his famous novel, *Men in the Sun*. Though both novel and drama were symbolic, the former actively participates in representation of reality while the latter is more rhetorical and stronger in symbols. The other two dramas he wrote are *Al-Qubba wa al-Nabi*, which was written in 1967, and *Jisr ila al-Abad* (Kilpatrick 23). In 1963, the publication of the first novel, *Men in the Sun*, gained Kanafani very wide

popularity, which acted as a turning point in his later literary career. Later he was awarded the Lebanese Literature Prize for *All That's Left to You* in 1975. It is considered as one of the most successful modernist experiments in Arabic fiction. In the novel, Kanafani used multiple narrators; two of them, the clock and the desert, were inanimate.

The protagonist in the novel experiences the first impetus to resistance and armed confrontation both with his enemy inside and outside and the theme reflects the change in political climate, and the initiation of the Palestinian armed struggle. On the other hand, the protagonist of *Umm Sa'ad*, written in 1969, represents dispossessed classes in the war against the hegemonic institutions and regimes which have confiscated not only their right to a livelihood but also their claim to a historical existence.

In 1970, the talented writer wrote his *Returning to Haifa (A'id Ila Haifa)*, which gained him more fame. Kanafani was inspired to write this novel, following his experience during a tour of *Sabra* and *Shatila* refugee camps. According to Muhammad Siddiq, the first two novels experimented with language and form, and rank among the most complex in all of Arabic fiction at that time. Both reflect the supremacy of the literary imperative, while last two reflect its strict subordination to a strict political agenda. Both *Umm Sa'd* and *Returning to Haifa* were written as a direct political message. In both, Kanafani had abandoned interior monologues, flashbacks, and other complex techniques and used straightforward narrative and dialogue. The novels marked the shift from nationalist ideals to a more pronounced Marxist ideology (50).

Kanafani's constant experimentation with narrative possibilities, like the epic flashback, the sense of historical date, time and place etc. were largely means motivated by the desire to make the narrative lines yield optimal political results. In response to these clear priorities, his fiction grew progressively simpler in form, and more direct and discursive in style. At a later stage, Kanafani even disregarded the literary devices so as to make the

message he wanted to give more direct (Muhammad Siddiq 69). Thus he brought the works of literature, stories and novels, to participate in the historical context, which challenges the traditionally set parameters of the art of storytelling. Through these stories, perhaps even more importantly than through the imageries, Kanafani is retelling the history and re-establishing its chronology (Riley & Harlow 17-18). A thorough scanning of the themes of his stories and novels evidently brings to the light the serial development of Palestinian political scenario and accordingly the development of his political consciousness. Of his own relationship to literature and politics, Kanafani had said, “My political position springs from my being a novelist. In so far as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite. I started writing the story of my Palestinian life before I found a clear political position or joined any organization” (140).

As a journalist and critic, Kanafani frequently wrote under pen-names like Ginkaf or Faris Faris. He played an important role in introducing new authors and their works to Arab readers. More to the point, he sought the theme of resistance in their works, connected the narrative lines to the Palestinian struggle for identity and used the term “resistance literature” to describe their writings. He published three critical studies, which are *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948-1966 (Adab al-Muqawamah fi-Filastin al-Muhtalla 1948-1966*, published in 1966, *On Zionist Literature (Fi al-Abab al-Sahyuni)*, published in 1967.

In his *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968 (al-Adab al-Filastini al-Muqawin tahta al-Ihtilal 1948-1968)*, published in 1968, he wrote about Palestinian poets, poems and poetical nights which were attended well, and brought into light problems that Palestinian literary figures are facing, like imprisonment and forced

exile. He also had included in it selected poems of Mahmud Darwish, Thoufiq Zayad, Samih al Qasim and Salim Jabran. His thesis, "Race and Religion in Zionist Literature", formed the basis for his study *On Zionist Literature*. His journalistic or political essays are *Thoughts on Change and the 'Blind Languages'*, published in *al-Hadaf* in 1988, *The 1936-1939 Revolution in Palestine*, published in *Shu'un Filastiniyah* in 1972, *On the Abu Hamidu and the Issue of Cultural 'Cooperation' with the Enemy*, published in *Shu'un Filastiniyah* in 1972 and other additional essays in *al-Hadaf*, *al-Hurriyyah*, and *Shu'un Filastiniyah*. His children's story, *The Little Lamp (al-Qanadil al-Saghir)* was published in 1980. He left behind fragments of three novels, which were published posthumously. Those are: *The Lover (al-Ashiq)*, *April Anemones (Barquq Nisan)* and *the Blind and the Deaf (al-A'ma wa-al-Atrash)*. The only historical study, *The 1936-1939 Revolution in Palestine*, conducted by him, was published posthumously (Lubna Khader 4).

Kanafani's works are critically analyzed and studied throughout the Arab world as well as other parts of the world. In his lifelong journalist career starting from *al-Muharrir*, he began to contribute articles and critical essays to many daily and weekly publications. He evoked a sense of solidarity with other national liberation movements, and asserted the essential unity of Palestinian Arab concerns, both inside and outside the occupied land. On the other hand, he attacked the official Arab impotence and increased Palestinians dependency on them. His works have been criticized of having poor ascription towards the Islamic identity of the Palestinians and being evenly loaded with satirical comments of religious beliefs. This is why, sometimes, he is being read with contempt and caution, and viewed as Islamically offensive, especially when he is viewed first as a Marxist. Despite his ideological subscription to Marxism, which represents only a minority of the Palestinian elite, he was an open-minded and independent person which is proved through his literary works.

Neither the writers of his time nor political leadership was successful at raising the Palestinian problem as an Islamic issue, which if it had happened should have given him a wide appraisal. However, instead of writing for excitement of the reader, he considered his writings as part of collective resistance to the Israeli occupation. For him both political and cultural struggles were analogous to the paramilitary programs, since all of these pursue a unifying objective. In short, Kanafani remained as a revolutionary in every area he entered. At a certain moment, it seemed that he prefigured death and went for the best means to carry his struggle for survival of the Palestinian people. This may be the reason for the enemy's rage that wiped him out with five kilograms of dynamite in the same frenzy of destroying a whole army base. What else can be expected from such a savage enemy, who is not just a colonizer, and who is used to destroy houses and wage war against a community, their existence, identity, culture, history, traditions and faiths and is used to massacre brutally the children and women? They want the writers to be dead as much as their writings and revolutions to end, to be buried in history, and imprisoned in silence. They annihilated him as they eliminated the historical archives of *Palestinian Affairs* during their attack on Lebanon in 1982.

Even the school established for the children of martyrs in Beirut by Anni Kanafani to commemorate Kanafani, was destroyed by the Israelis in 1982, during their invasion of the country. As Barbara Harlow points out, they failed to understand that "the assassination of a writer is a historical and political event with very tangible cultural, critical and material consequences for theorizing the subsequent participation in and reclamation of the work of intellectual figures who have been instrumental in organizing resistance to systems and discourses of domination, and whose life work had been committed to redefining the very "politics of shed blood" (26).

Conclusion

Although Kanafani spent most his life in exile, he lived only for Palestine and its people. The uniqueness of the Palestinian issue and his distinctive inexorable loyalty, gave him a vantage point to be remembered by everybody who cares about the Palestinian people, their culture, history, art and literature. He didn't separate a politician and a literary or cultural worker or a paramilitary in their role while fighting against the common oppressor. He raised the question of both solidarity and rights of Palestinians.

The task of revolutionary writing that he undertook was as dangerous as that of a guerilla fighter. His revolutionary themes frequently evolved and were depicted clearly throughout his political, journalistic, critical and narrative works. Rather he formulated alternative strategies, rhetorical, political and theoretical for reconstruction of the resistance movements. He edited magazines and worked as spokesman for PFLP.

Kanafani experimented with innovative techniques and his writings were elevated to the status of historicity. He introduced the term "resistance literature", and figured out certain parameters for it, which in one way or other, was challenged by some critics in the West. He explored resistance themes in Arab writers. He not only contributed to the Arabic literature, but also lived fighting for their cultural existence and identity. He believed that the literary career would serve as an appropriate tool to solve the problem and he was always "on his way somewhere." But unfortunately, before he could complete his dreams, his body was shattered, and along with it, his mission. However, Kanafani's works continue to characterize much of contemporary Arab cultural production.

Chapter Two: The Theme of Resistance in *Men in the Sun*

Introduction

"Do we exist? What proof do we have? The further we get from the Palestine of ourpast, the

more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence. When did we become a people? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one?" (Said 108).

Men in the Sun is the first of Ghassan Kanafani's published novels. It is the most accomplished novel inspired by the Palestinian tragedy and deals with the Palestinians' search for identity in a hostile world, where their very existence was being challenged. The novel sets the starting point of Kanafani's literary journey to participate in the battle for history and it gained him reputation which persuaded him to pursue the literary path to serve his people, who were scattered everywhere, struggling to make a living. Kanafani's skills as a critic of the society and leadership, and his visions and outlooks are noticeably present in the novel.

Summary of the Novel

In the short novel, Kanafani recalls the miserable journey his companions and he had in their attempt to sneak into Kuwait. It tells the story of three Palestinians, who are seeking an alternative to the abject sufferings of refugee camps and making a futile attempt to illegally cross the Iraqi-Kuwait borders in search of a better future. Each of them represents a different generation and signifies the prolonged history of suffering of the Palestinians. They do not know one another. Abu Qais, the old man, As'ad, the young man and Marwan, the youth, meet with Abul Khaizuran, a self-appointed smuggler and driver of a water carrier. The water truck belonged to a wealthy Kuwaiti merchant and it is not subjected to a search at the border. For Abul Khaizuran, the plan to smuggle them into Kuwait was simple. Since the tank is empty, he can take all of them with him until just before two borders, where they will hide inside the empty water tank. The trick succeeds in the first checking point in Safwan, but in the second, their luck turns bad. Bureaucrats at the second border, Mutlaa, delayed to sign papers, making unnecessary obscene jokes of

Abul Khaizuran, who is a eunuch. By the time he returns to open the tank they were suffocated to death in the scorching heat of the sun.

Then, Abul Khaizuran drives out the dead bodies to one of Kuwait's garbage dumps. Finally he justifies his stand, when he lost resistance, shouting: "Why didn't they bang on the walls of the truck?" (Kanafani 65). In order to come up with the elements of resistance theme, analyzing the following is necessary: firstly, the characters, who bespeak the real Palestinian dilemma; secondly, the Palestinian land and the Palestinian space and time, around which resistance themes are evolving and thirdly, the novel as an organic whole describing the vulnerable Palestinian situation and urgently demanding a human solution and resisting the present situations (Hussain 58).

Kanafani's integrated approach of dealing with reality and symbolism, gives the novel a specific literary power, which operates upon various political and ethical levels. Characters in the novel are fully drawn from the weaknesses and sufferings of camps. Kanafani's criticism of the contemporary Palestinian reality has been carried out in the story of *Men in the Sun* Abu Qais, As'ad and Marwan. They better represent Palestinians, who overwhelmed with passivity and overdependence on others, dream of a future which they have neither the knowledge nor the power to bring into being. They no more belong to the past, because they have been disconnected from the land with the catastrophe of 1948.

Their present is meager, because they are non-entities without an identity. Only the future holds any hope or promise to them. Portraying their past, present and future, Kanafani narrates the puzzled Palestinian situation from 1948 until early stages of 1960. Palestinians were lost in hope. Their past remained bitter and the present meager. They were passive, inactive and pessimistic. They dreamed of a colorful future, but they are misled by the futility of their belief in impotent leadership. Moreover, the quest for the individual salvation overwhelmed their nationalistic feeling. In other words, Kanafani's

matter-of-fact portrayal of the characters adds to the social realism in the novel (Hussain 62).

Elements of Resistance Theme in the Novel

Characters

Characters better represent the intended resistant theme of the novel. Their total dependence on hypocritical leadership for a solution, their resigned passivity of accepting fate's ultimatum, and their blindness about the political reality are gravely addressed by in the novel. They stand for Palestinians who are being humiliated in other countries and thrown out like disposables once benefit out of them are finished. Though they are deeply attached to the homeland, their existence and identity as the people of the land remains only in their memories. In other words, the futile attempt of three Palestinians to seek a personal security, free from the bitterness of present and bright with promises for a secure future opposed Kanafani's historical attempt of re-gaining identity for Palestinians as people of the land. It is this dream that set their direction away from the homeland. Such an attempt, according to

Kanafani, should end in disaster or a tragic death. Their relationship and longings towards Palestine are superficial (Hussain 66). For example, Abu Qais's commitment to the homeland and his memory about it are confined in "ten trees with twisted trunks which shed olives and prosperity" (Kanafani 26). Since last ten years, he has done nothing but wait. Even to be convinced that he has lost his youth, home, his whole village and olive trees, he needed ten big hungry years. Abu Qais proudly remembers the fate of Ustaz Salim, his son's schoolteacher in their village, who died one night before their village was attacked by the Jews. For him, dying in the homeland is a blessing from God and Ustaz Salim was certainly lucky for he died "one night before the wretched village fell into the hands of the Jews" (Kanafani 23).

Moreover, according to Abu Qais, it is really a divine favor to Ustaz Salim that he was buried in the homeland;

... all the same you stayed there ... you saved yourself humiliation and wretchedness The mercy of God be upon you, Ustaz Salim. If you had lived, if you had been drowned by poverty as I have... would you have been willing to carry all your years on your shoulders and flee across the desert to Kuwait to find a crust of bread? (Kanafani 23)

Though Abu Qais is inspired by Ustaz Salim, people like him, instead of advancing further towards the goal, were engulfed in tragic passivity. Though he is unenthusiastic about the future, he dreams of the other side,

Just the other side, where there are all the things he had been deprived of. Over there was Kuwait. What only lived in his mind as a dream and a fantasy existed there. It was certainly something real, of stones, earth, water, and sky, not as it slumbered in his troubled mind. There must be lanes and streets, men and women, and children. (Kanafani 25)

In Kuwait, Abu Qais hopes to find money to send his children to school, to buy a small house and perhaps even one or two olive shoots. On the other hand, Marwan the young man who left school wants to get some education and experience. He has mixed feelings and is unable to make up his mind. His father is like Abu Qais, another symbol of laziness and passivity. Life, for him, "is an extraordinary business". As an old man, he just wants to settle down, and not

find himself obliged to feed his children.... His old friend, Shafiq's father, suggested that he marry her. She owned a three-roomed house on the edge of the town, which she had bought with the money collected for her by a charity (Kanafani 40). Marwan's father thought about the matter; if he let two rooms and lived with his lame wife in the third, he

would live out the rest of his life in security, untroubled by anything, and more important than that, under a concrete roof. It is upon Marwan, who is just sixteen, the responsibility of feeding his four siblings. "Who else will buy May's clothes, and bring back bread for Riyadh, Salma, and Hasan? Who?" He must find in Kuwait the means to provide for his mother, who has been deserted not only by her husband for another woman, but by her eldest son who, already working in the Gulf, has ceased sending the remittances necessary to support the family he left behind (Kanafani 41). Finally, As'ad represents the young generation.

He is fleeing from the cultural traditions of conservative Palestinian society, which insists on arranging the marriages for their children based on few superstitions. For him, Kuwait means freedom; freedom from his uncle, who gave fifty dinars, and wants him to marry his daughter. Again his uncle, like Abu Qais, represents the old folk who do not possess any dream, but profess to superstitions. He thinks that just because he had recited the Fatihah with As'ad's uncle and for Nada and As'ad were born on the same day, he should marry her off As'ad. He considered that was fate and he had refused a hundred suitors who had asked for his daughter's hand and told them she was engaged. As'ad is very angry with him, "O! God of devils! Who told him that he, Assad, wanted to marry her? Who told him that he ever wanted to get married?" (Kanafani 33). Through the dispossessed "men in the sun," Kanafani represents the real events and attacks the Palestinian mentality. In a way of defying the loss of their country, they were led by impotent leaders to further misery. Abu Khaizuran, the impotent driver was carrying them in the huge lorry, "Together with their dreams, their failures, their hopes and ambitions, their misery and despair, their strength and weakness, their past and future, as it were pushing against the immense door to a new, unknown destiny..." (Kanafani 61).

Instead of prosperous future, they were engulfed in the tragedy of poor and anonymous death, in the burning heat of water tank and without even banging on its walls. This symbolizes the silence pervaded in the refugee camps during 1960s. This hapless situation of the camps invoked Kanafani to write about death. Death is the enemy of any virility. It stands for frustration, and symbolizes bad supervision.

Land

Kanafani spoke of death in *Men in the Sun* stronger than ever before. Neither Kuwait nor a “Promised Land” answered their demands. That is because they didn't prepare themselves for a self-determined place in history nor they protested against the corrupted leadership (Hussain 70). Sa'd's, another young man who has made his fortune, should be in this of this. He scorn Abu Qais, “People have been making their own way during these long years, while you have been squatting like an old dog in a miserable hut. What do you think you were waiting for?” (Kanafani 26). Kanafani's sentiments towards the homeland are very obvious in the novel, to the extent that it stands up as an historic and cultural statue. It is as pertinent as the PLO Research Center, the film and photographic archives of the Palestine cinema organization in the “struggle for re-discovering identity and history.”

For him, the core of the conflict is in their attachment to the land and the “success must start at home from one’s own country.” Hence according to him, every Palestinian urges, hopes and desires should be encircled with Palestine. Even death, far from Palestine, is devalued. Thus Kanafani participates, in defying the Palestinians' identity as people of land and waging a great struggle against the “historical myth” which calls that “Palestine was a land without people for a people without land”. This was the justification hailed by the colonial British Empire and the Zionist lobbies, to establish a Jewish colony in Palestine (Hussain 71).

Hence, according to Kanafani, the relationship with the land should be maintained all the time, to defy any “cultural siege”. Any effort to forget it or any move on the opposite direction will collapse in tragic failure. Thus, Kanafani relates the struggles he wages through literature with the national struggle of Palestinians to reclaim their homeland. The treatment of the novel of Palestinian time and space, hence, is adjusted to convey this message, which is obviously clear in the novel. The “men in the sun” dreamed of alternative future and unreal space - a space where they will fulfill their ambitions, out of their homeland.

The hundred and fifty kilometers between Basra and Kuwait, for them are a space, which leads to failure. Abul Khaizuran puts it in his words, “Just imagine! In my own mind I compare these hundred and fifty kilometers to the path that God in the Qur'an promised his creatures they must cross before being directed either to Paradise or to Hell. If anyone falls he goes to Hell, and if anyone crosses safely he reaches Paradise. Here the angels are the frontier guards" (Kanafani 29). And at last the desert became their grave. They were ambitious, and preferred personal prosperity to the national interest. Hence they were trapped in the burning heat of the water tank. The desert was full of fatal signs. Their dreams were fated to die with them in the scorching heat of the sun.

Another novel published just after this, *All That is Left to You (Ma Tabaqqa Lakum)*, in contrary to the *Men in the Sun*, uses the symbols of Palestinian land, space and time positively. The desert in the novel is kind enough to protagonist, Hamid since his movements were towards the land and his mother. Even as dead bodies they were humiliated. They were thrown to the garbage, somewhere in the desert. This unnoticed death, without an identity is a result of their self-centered ambitions of personal security. Here, individualism is portrayed as the antithesis of nationalism. Through this image, Kanafani seemed to be articulating his vision of the Palestinian national movement.

According to him, all the revolutionary movements should set forth for the sole direction, towards Palestine.

Also, at the same time, he applauds the heroic attempts made by Palestinians. The Palestinian hero moves between new geographies of the struggle. He bears with him Palestinian victory, loss, happiness and sorrow. All along the history, there were many such heroes. They outlived, after their heroic fall, in the minds of the people. Ustaz Salim in the novel is a hero. But then he couldn't survive much. In the world of Abu Qais: "It is true that the men were too busy to bury you and honor you in your death. But all the same you stayed there. You saved yourself humiliation and wretchedness, and you preserved your old age from shame. The mercy of God be upon you, Ustaz Salim" (Kanafani 10).

Abu Qais recalls his son's schoolteacher, Ustaz Salim. Here Kanafani radically challenges the dominant authority of the traditional leaders and the cultural and political institutions they represent (Hussain 77). He seems to be suggesting that the traditional leadership of Palestine, the imams, like the heads of the family and the nobles of the clan, must give way to a new organization, and a new generation. Only then should the revolution come true and successful. In his later writings, both narrative and journalistic, he manipulates to figure out further ideologies for such a movement. It is often in the novel, that either a child or a youngster introduces discrepancy and play the role of an intellectual, who sometimes challenges the familial authorities and raises question about faults. It is young Saa'd who forces Abu Qais to end up the ten years long futile dreams: "There are no trees in Kuwait, Sa'd said so. You must believe Sa'd, because he knows more than you, although he is younger than you. All of them know more than you all of them" (Kanafani 12). All these reveal Kanafani's interest in a nascent Palestinian resistance movement. While he wrote the story, there were no political organizations solely formed by Palestinians. And the traditional Palestinian and Arab leadership, which has been

emasculated in 1948, cannot do anything for them. Like Abul Khaizuran, their personal despair and moral weakness had corrupted them (Hussain 77).

Abul Khaizuran bargains over rates with “men of the sun”. Once they are dead, he avails him of their wristwatches and takes money from their pockets. The leadership is like Abul Khaizuran, who believes that he is doing a service to the others, by smuggling those unfortunates to Kuwait. The impotent and passive leaders are also made to believe that these illegal businesses, which provide them a part of the profit, are the best of sacrifices they do for Palestinians (Kilpatrick 11). Their capitalist ambitions are portrayed through Hajj Rida. Hajj Rida, who owns the truck and many professional smugglers in Basra, who over charges their clients and refuse to guarantee their journey, exemplifies the Arab leaders and regimes who, all the while pretend to support the Palestinians in their struggle to secure their national future. They, in fact, exploit them for their own opportunistic ends. In short, Abul Khaizuran and Hajj Rida represent the unsympathetic Arab authorities, by whom Palestinians were betrayed.

According to an allegorical reading, the novel is an attack on the corruption of the Arab regimes in particular and Muslim countries in general which still could do hardly anything to get the Palestinians out of the suffocating airless marginal world of the refugee camps. It is as if the Arab officialdom, who created the Palestinian Diaspora wants to perpetuate it for their interest, if Palestinians don't beat the walls of the refugee camps. As long as they don't bang they won't be set free (Hussain 78). The emasculated authorities are justified if they don't do so. And Palestinian issue will remain to be exploited like "Uthman's shirt." Ironically for Israel, the shirt should be kept without being worn out, so as to get its favors from the West forever.

In other words, Kanafani thought of Arab officialdom, as perpetrators of the problems. In addition, the Arab impotency, the Palestinian passivity, their overdependence on Arabs

or external forces and their search for personal security worsen the situation (Hussain 70). Hypocrisy of “the international community” towards Palestinians and mercantile mentality of Muslim rulers have kept the problem unresolved.

Organic Whole

The novel, as an organic whole, participates in the political war, or resistance struggle as it seeks the reader for a critical assessment of the concrete possibilities within historically determined circumstances. It resists against the sordid situations in the camps. It also evidently encourages the reader to engage in the persistent struggle against the imperialistic interests of Israel, who is uprooting and destroying a whole culture and distorting the very established history, trying to establish certain myths.

The contextual relevance of the novel and its participation in the history of the resistance struggle is further confirmed when we see the question pending at the end of it (Hussain 77). This allegorical interpretation is not made for the purpose of the discussion of resistance ingredients in the novel, but taking into consideration the fact that Kanafani was involved in a historical project, a critical interpretation of the question, "Why didn't they bang on the walls of the truck?" The question is reverberated by the desert, "Why didn't they ... why, why..." alludes to Kanafani's visions about the creation of an authority among themselves to take care of their own affairs, both internal strife and control external exploitation. It represents the disavowal of careless leadership of its responsibility.

What is ironic here is, the officers at the Mutlaa checkpoint were teasing Abu Khaizuran, who is a eunuch, for relationship with belly dancers in Iraq. They even invited him for a drink in air-conditioned office while their fellow brothers were suffering in the scorching heat of the sun at mid noon. This clarifies Kanafani's stand towards fellow Arab officials and carries to his criticism of their attitude towards the Palestinians. They are just careless of the issue and for them, as it mentioned earlier, it is a device to get their favors

approved from the authority. Banging on the tank in which three Palestinians were choked to death because of their inactivity symbolically suggests the need for revolutionary movement for Palestinians.

The question remains as the major question in the whole course of Kanafani's life and determines his movement in the direction of Palestine. It also determines the main theme of the novel. For fear of drawing attention of the outside world to their existence inside the tank where they were hidden, they didn't bang on the wall. An in-depth scrutiny of the question would enable the interpretation of it as Kanafani's voice (al-Mansur 220).

Accordingly, banging on the wall means challenging the historical pressures, and political tenets of patriarchal authority. Palestinians were entrapped in a cultural siege. They have been portrayed by the enemy as scapegoat of certain stereotypes. Internally, they were blocked to be impotent. Thus telling their story, Kanafani is attempting to create such a place for Palestinians, through which they can attain their dreams. Though, it assumed the shape by the creation of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, he was not satisfied with its nature.

He always subscribed to the revolutionary movements and insisted that the movement should proceed towards a right direction. This may be because he learned “the story from the beginning to the end.” In other words, Kanafani started a historical project by the novel. His later dissatisfaction—which was further brought to light through many other literary, journalistic, historical and political works—with PLO, which was mainly built by the Arab League to prevent the emergence of any independent or autonomous Palestinian resistance organization, points out towards the historical project, that Kanafani launched with the novel. As is evident today, for him the creation of PLO was not a move towards the solution and alleviation of the suffering of Palestinians.

The later formation of PFLP and Fatah's takeover of the PLO administration after the 1967 war, the extermination of Palestinians from their territories by neighboring Arab countries testifies to the success of political visions. Of course, he was not the only person who promoted the ideas. But he is among many others, who cursed publicly the ignorance of Palestinians and their blind political subjection and dared the tenets of patriarchal authority. This also adds to the claim of Barbara Harlow that the resistance literature is a politicized activity by itself (28).

The Palestinian Literature of Resistance: Kanafani's Writing Style

In terms of literary value, the novel was written in a poetic style. It is rich with symbolism. The tank, sun, desert, rats, and death can be read symbolically and literally as well. The huge water tank, in which three generations of Palestinians are forced to die, stands for the camps, where Palestinians are fated to suffer and the gloomy ending refers to the end of the Palestinian people. Trees are a particularly effective reminder of the attachment of these peasants to their land, and the olive tree is especially rich in symbolism. Death, once it is used as a symbol of virility as well as impotency. Death was chosen by the hero of the novel, not for individualistic reason, but in order to further the struggle of his people, where as 'men in the sun' were forced to die for they were ambitious. This illustrates Kanafani's attitude towards self-sacrifice, within the context of revolutionary action. According to him it is an expression of the very highest understanding of life. The love of life for a person becomes a love for the life of his people's masses, and his rejection that their life persists in being full of continuous misery, suffering and hardship (Kilpatrick 14-15).

In one way or other, it uses several aspects of modernist narrative techniques like flashback and streams of consciousness. With the novel, Kanafani began to propose alternative forms and outline new narrative possibilities. Rather than transferring

experiences directly from reality, he worked to give it a more profound, universal meaning. Children's loss of innocence, youths annoying pessimism stands as universal symbols in the novel. More to the point, the novel, raises the abject Palestinians suffering as a symbol for universal suffering of human being. Kanafani's successful adaptation of the narrative techniques of the western psychological novel, especially as practiced by William Faulkner, to the specifically Palestinian subject matter is projected in the novel. The psychological motivation of the characters has been sketched using the third-person omniscient narration to stream of consciousness and interior monologue. Phrases like "Oh! God of devil" found in the novel should be read as part of this.

This also points towards the poor religious background of the period which might have been resulted from the poor level of literacy as well as lack of religious awareness in the war condition. Should the novel mirror social realism, Kanafani shouldn't be criticized for the poor religious ascription. The allegorical reading of the novel elevates the organic symbolical meaning of the novel. Referring to *Men in the Sun (1963)* Edward Said writes:

Kanafani's very sentences express instability and fluctuation - the present tense is subject to echoes from the past, verbs of sight give way to verbs of sound or smell, and one sense interweaves with another - in an effort to defend against the harsh present and to protect some particularly cherished fragment of the past. (Said 38)

The novel specifically focuses on the Palestinian issue, to the extent that few critics suggest that it lessens its power as a novel.

According to Fadl al-Naquib, Kanafani's friend and critic, the successful reputation of the novella is not really because of the narrative techniques he use, but is just because it reveals the secrets of each four Palestinians, which makes the story so realistic. To situate the literary text to the events of upheaval gives the story and its criticism a new

significance, especially when the resistance literature is taken into consideration (Fadl al-Naqib 195). Moreover, the main characters in the novel act as universal symbols of human suffering and destitution of families, for which Palestinians' dilemma is a prototype. In short, the duality of Palestinians' psychological and political exile has been projected by Kanafani's new narrative invention. Hardly any reference to Israel or Jew is made in the novel. It is almost as if he has accepted the indifference of the Arabs and the humane world at large to the issue as well as the passivity and over dependence of Palestinians on the fellow Arabs which really matter to him.

Conclusion

Kanafani's first novel, *Men in the Sun* raises the issue of the Palestinian suffering as a universal symbol of human suffering, while cursing the impotent passivity of Palestinians in the refugee camps. Kanafani's criticism of exploitive response of the Arab authorities to the issue, his proposal for a new responsible Palestinian authority, and his directives on its movement determine the novel's involvement in the liberation struggle as a political activity. The settings and plot of the novel revolve around Palestinian land, hero, time and space which determine its role in resisting against certain "historical myths" established by the Zionist propaganda. Incorporating many modern techniques in the novel, Kanafani has not only assured the narrative's participation in the resistance history of Palestinian struggle, but also introduced a new kind of narrative writing.

Chapter three: Resistance, Return, and Homeland in *Returning to Haifa*

Introduction

Ghassan Kanafani's third novel, *Returning to Haifa* (1969), tackles many questions which are politically significant. This includes what the Palestinian issue is all about, who its perpetrators are and what is so important about Palestine that pushes children, born in refugee camps and in the Diaspora, into taking arms or later even turning themselves into human bombs. At the wake of establishment of the Jewish country, the Palestinians were forced to flee the country and were scattered all over the world. Their identity, existence, history and culture, physical and material properties were confiscated forever.

Since the catastrophe, every Palestinian holds romantic feelings and sentimental thoughts about Palestine and yearns every minute he will be able to return to the homeland. For Ghassan Kanafani, "homeland" is more than memories of the past. Throughout the novel, he conveyed a strong political message while trying to explore the definition of "homeland." The inherent Palestinian right of return to the homeland is its main theme. Kanafani's political thought, as a responsible activist of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), can be obviously traced out in its characters. Hence *Returning to Haifa* for many critics is a realistic appreciation of the Palestinian situation, but for Kanafani it presents, like all his stories, something unseen (Fadl al-Naqib 27).

Summary of the Novel

Returning to Haifa was written in 1967 and was published in 1969. Events in the novel are related to the aftermath incidents of the Six Days War of June 1967 in which the Palestinians were allowed to visit their homes, in what is now Israel, just to see but not to touch. It narrates the story of an Arab couple, Sa'id and Safiyya, who traveled from Ramallah to Haifa to see their home and know whereabouts of their baby they left behind almost twenty years ago in 1948, in the chaos surrounding the evacuation of Haifa. From

1948 to 1967, they stayed in a refugee camp in the West Bank of the Jordan River. They heard nothing about the fate of their first born, Khaldun.

At last they assumed that he must have died in the turmoil of the war. Back home, to their surprise, they learnt that their son was raised by an elderly Jewish couple, Miriam and Iphrat, who arrived in Israel after a brief stop in Italy from Germany's concentration camps, and that his name was Dov. At twenty, he was a soldier in the Israeli army. He failed to recognize his parents. Shocked by this painful reality, the family left the city and their son behind. In the end, the father hoped that his second son Khalid disobeyed his order to stay out of trouble with the new occupying forces and had instead left to join the *fidayeen*.

Kanafani was inspired to write the novel, following his experience during a tour of Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, scenes of the premeditated massacres of the war. The consciousness about the vulnerability of the Palestinian situation was at stake during that time. Written after the 1967 War, the novel measures the impact of the defeat in the Palestinian political scenario (Hussain 80). The defeat of the Arab Army in the 1967 war, invoked pessimistic feelings in Kanafani as well as evoked an intellectual and literary boost which burst throughout the novel. Later he became an active member and spokesperson of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which brought more radical ideas to the political forefront. During the time he served as editor of PFLP's mouthpiece *al-Hadaf*. The creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) under the auspicious of the Arab League in January 1964 did not give him much hope. Palestinians' faith in pan-Arabism proposed by Egypt's President, Gamal Abdel Nasser as savior also had started to deteriorate that time.

Kanafani, as a political activist hence had developed his own revolutionary outlooks on the issue, which are well represented in the novel. A comparison of the political themes of

the first novel *Men in the Sun*, published in 1963, and *Returning to Haifa*, published in 1969 would evidently bring to light the transformations occurred in the development of political consciousness in Palestine (Hussain 88). While the creation of an authority for the Palestinians was the primary concern of the former novel, the later describes further attributes of such an authority, while defining various approaches to be undertaken. In short, the novel participates in the real world of Palestinians, and records the consequences and impacts of certain historical events that occur in course of resistance struggle waged by the people against the oppressor. People's intimate longing for and relationship with their homeland, the historical passivity which was prolonged for twenty years, revolutionary alternatives towards attaining the goal of liberation, the barricades in the way of negotiations with the enemy, various pretexts of failure of such negotiations are other significant factors that are raised in a moving and concise manner in the novel.

According to few critics, based on feedback given of the technical novel *All That Is Left for You*, Kanafani wrote the next one straightforwardly. Reality in relation to the theme of resistance is evident in the novel. To make such an interaction possible or more direct, he even ignored certain characteristics assigned to the novel as a literary product. Just like many of twentieth century authors he was committed to social reforms (Adil 5). The characters and setting of the novel centered on what happened in the real Palestinian world. It dealt with the history, past, present and future and hence the time and space are factual and carry realistic denotations. Annotations for the texts, names of places, dates of incidents and events make the novel participate in the historical project or, in words of Muhammad Siddiq, "abolishes the artificial boundaries between fiction and reality" (1984 60-61). Examples of these are many throughout the novel. While driving to Haifa, Sa'id recognized each place and name. Wadi Nisnas, King Faisal Street, Hanatir Square... etc, which were real names of places but "israelization" of the country has altered everything.

Annotations, that translator provides to these places, give the novel a real touch. There are many such narrative paragraphs inside the novel itself. For example, the inserted story of Faris al-Lubda which reads as follows:

Of course, a week ago I think. He hired a car from Jerusalem. He went straight to the Ajami quarter. Twenty years ago he lived in a two-story house behind the Orthodox school in Ajami. Remember the school? It's behind the Freres School, heading left, toward Jabaliyya, after about two hundred meters the Orthodox school is on the right. It's got a large playground. There's an alley just beyond the playground. Faris al-Lubda lived in the middle of that alley with his family. (Kanafani 173)

The footnote to Feres School reads as follows: "Convent and School of the Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes, French missionary schools located in several cities in Palestine" (Kanafani 194).

Analysis of the Novel

Returning to Haifa further explores the attributes of the Palestinians' relationship with their land. The intimate relationship the Palestinians keep with their homeland is better represented in Sa'id and his wife's intense longing and subsequent journey, to renew their contact, to see their home and certainly to look for their child. This stark intimacy and ever-green memory is part of an identity that they keep as people of the land. All their feelings are encircled to it. This attachment has grown in every cell of their body. Sa'id knows Haifa, stone by stone and intersection-by-intersection. In Haifa, he hears the roar of the sea, as he used to hear, twenty years ago. And he succumbs to the memory, "Oh no, the memory did not return to him little by little. Instead, it rained down inside his head the way a stone wall collapses, the stones piling up, one upon another" (Kanafani 149). The suffering of loss was buried in Safiyya: "in the wrinkles of her face and in her eyes and in

her mind. It was with her in every bite of food she took and in every hut where she had lied and in every look she cast at her children and at him and at herself" (Kanafani 152). Contrary to the Israeli expectations, the opening of the Mandelbaum Gate had caused a strong negative reaction among Palestinians. Though its opening from the other side seemed to Sa'id frightening and absurd and to a great degree humiliating, he didn't miss the chance to renew his contact. Sa'id tells his wife, "I think they're going to issue an order prohibiting it soon. Their calculations were wrong" (Kanafani 159).

Thus, Kanafani explains the Palestinian closeness to land and at the same time, through the feelings of Sa'id, investigates the depths of their powerlessness, which lasted for twenty years in the Palestinian refugee camps. That is why Haifa, which they knew for long, refuses to acknowledge them. The last twenty years away from Haifa and home didn't make any serious changes in him. They spend twenty years just inactively with overwhelming pessimism (Adil 16). But, alas! by then the enemy's tireless and fruitful activities have made them powerful, not only on the military level, but also on economic, material, political, strategic and international levels. The land they dreamed of it for twenty years has changed a lot, to the extent that it doesn't acknowledge them. It is through Dov, Kanafani, instigates the wounds of their miserable waiting and inactivity.

Dov, abandoned by Sa'id and Safiyya in Haifa, stands for the miserable past. The past always carries not only loss and pain, but represents the great drawback of inactivity and powerlessness. Only when men have learnt from the past would the future be better managed. The "men in the sun" didn't learn from it. They preferred their personal prosperity and safety. They didn't try to solve the plight of the nation. For Sa'id, his relationship with the land, home and child in the past was totally unexciting (Adil 18). They all refused to recognize him. More importantly, even his fatherhood and bloody relationship with Dov had discredited him.

Another point that Kanafani puts before in the readers is regarding the journey of Sa'id and Safiyya. It was directed towards the homeland, whereas the journey of the three men in *Men in the Sun* was away from homeland. That's why they come to a good end. They decided to send their second child to join the *fidayeen*. In the last paragraph of the novel the alteration in Sa'id's perspective is better represented:

He stared down the stairs, looking at everything carefully. It all seemed less important than it had a few hours earlier, incapable of arousing any deep feeling in

him. He heard the sound of Safiyya's footsteps behind him, more confident than

before... . They were silent all the way. They didn't utter a word until they reached the edge of Ramallah. Only then did he look at his wife and say, "I pray that Khalid will have gone—while we were away! (Kanafani 187-88)

He starts to think critically. Only now the homeland becomes worthy of fighting for him. Dov, who appears in front of Sa'id and Safiyya in Israeli military uniform, is a new version of Frankenstein, emerged out of Palestinian weakness and "creativity" of Miriam and Iphrat. He was born as a Palestinian and was nurtured as a Jew. For Miriam, it was for him to decide who he was, "I know who his father is, and also know that he is our son. Still, though, let him decide for himself" (Kanafani 172). For Dove, who was Khaldun, the matter was very easy:

I know no other mother besides you. As for my father, he died in Sinai eleven years ago. I have no other parents. I have been a Jew since childhood: going to the synagogue, eating kosher food and studying Hebrew. When they told me that they were not my biological parents, nothing changed. Nor did anything

change when they told me, later on, that my original parents were Arabs. Nothing changed, that's certain" (Kanafani, 179-181).

It is Dov, who reads Sa'id and Safiyya a lesson on their weakness. It is he who teaches them that "man is a cause." It is he who inspires them to realize what homeland is and what fatherhood means (Adil 18). It is their passivity that turns Dov, their first born Khaldun, to deny his parenthood of Sa'id and Safiyya. He justifies his stand saying:

You should not have left Haifa. If that wasn't possible... you should not have left an infant in its crib. And if that was also impossible, then you should never have stopped trying to return. You say that too was impossible? Twenty years have passed, sir! Twenty years! What did you do during that time to reclaim your son? ... Is there any stronger motive? You're all weak! Weak! You're bound by heavy chains of backwardness and paralysis! Don't tell me you spent twenty years crying! Tears won't bring back the missing or the lost. Tears won't work miracles! All the tears in the world won't carry a small boat holding two parents searching for their lost child. So you spent twenty years crying... Is this your dull, worn-out weapon? (Kanafani 185)

But again men like Sa'id are not only a cause; they are impediments towards Palestine's liberation. The tireless efforts of the enemy always induced Kanafani to tell his people to assess the material and political strengths of the "enemy," as well as one's own concrete possibilities within historically determined circumstances. When Sa'id was defending himself against Dov's reprimands, he was actually lying. Khalid hadn't joined the *fidayeen*. In fact, he himself was the one who had forbidden it (Hussain,82). He had even gone so far as to threaten to disown Khalid if he defied him and joined the *fidayeen*. But the humiliating response from Dov, made him think of altering his choice and he wanted an immediate atonement of the sin by sacrificing his child for the cause. Thus their journey

towards Palestine ended in good results (Adil 20). Contrary to Dov, Khalid, their second son represented a new generation, a generation which was born away from Palestine, after 1948. Palestine for this generation was more than just memories and emotional ties while for Sa'id and Safiyyah it was only a search for something buried beneath the dust of memories (Adil 22).

Sa'id made his assertion about Khalid, "he doesn't know the vase or the picture or the stairs or Halisa or Khaldun. And yet for him, Palestine is something worthy of a man bearing arms for, dying for... We were mistaken when we thought the homeland was only the past. For Khalid, the homeland is the future. That's how we differed and that's why Khalid wants to carry arms" (Kanafani 187). Men like Khalid, Sa'id figured out, not only represented the present but also they were future leaders of Palestine. They "are looking toward the future, so they can put right our mistakes and the mistakes of the whole world" (Kanafani 187). Unlike "men in the sun," "tens of thousands like Khalid", had set their goal and future in Palestine. In other words, Kanafani tried to say that Palestinians actually began to think about their inactivity and Arab nations' incapacity only after the war of 1967 (Hussain 88). After the war they were allowed to see developments in Israel. But by then, the whole world had grown to compromise with Israel, including Arab states, in one or another way. All these happened because of their negligence of their past.

A generation expelled from the land, thus stands for defunct notions. Home and properties, including Dove, which were left behind by them represent their shame, inherited by others with whom they don't have anything else to discuss. Kanafani here obviously explores all negative points only to provide a strong political message. A war is required to settle these vulnerable matters. By this he proposes a meaningful political action and vehemently tries to inculcate such a feeling among the Palestinians. This stand is quite clear in the next novel he wrote, *Umm Sa'd*, where mothers are supplying food for

the *fidayeen* and characters see victorious sacrifices of their children to the Palestinian cause. The fragment of *April Anemones* again is fluent with such themes (Hussain 80).

Faris al-Lubda's story, inserted in-between, again noted the development of political consciousness in Palestinians. He had left his home in Jaffa during 1948 and, like Sa'id and returned to claim the picture of his brother Badr which was hung on the wall in their home. Badr was the first one who carried arms to defend his country in 1947. To Faris' great surprise, however, he discovered that his home had been inhabited by a fellow Arab from Jaffa, whose home had been destroyed by the Israelis during the war of 1948. Overwhelmed by the feeling that he had no right to keep the picture, he returned the picture back and made his decision to join in guerilla struggle for the land (Hussain 80). For that Arab and his family also, Badr had become an ideal hero and part of their family. His wife cried and two children were panicked when Faris took the picture. Badr was their pride like Ustaz Salim for Abu Qais in *Men in the Sun*.

They fought for their country and passed away in pride. For that Arab man, the image of Badr on the wall gave him confidence in having a companion who bears arms. The concept of "people of the land" is stressed here further by elaborating the historical relations between the characters, which bear witness to the fact that Arabs lived in Palestine before the Zionist invasion and that at least some of them stayed there during it to affirm this national historical right to the country (Adil 22). For each Palestinian, hence, to defend that right is personal and national. When all the doors towards its achievement is strategically closed by the enemy, when his very existence is challenged, when he is isolated in a different part of a large world, with no support for the cause, not even from the neighbors, it is his choice to make a decision whether he wanted to die for it or not. When children in the camps are mercilessly killed and his sisters are humiliated it his right to decide whether he should blow up himself killing the perpetrators of the problem.

Whoever lives in his home is his enemy. In short, thematically the conclusion of the inserted story reinforces the main plot. Both assert the inescapable need to resort to arms in order to recover the lost national homeland.

Another focal issue put forth by the novel, which is related to the theme of resistance is the political sympathy that Sa'id showed towards Miriam. Miriam's admirable character and her sympathy towards a Palestinian child who was mercilessly killed and hurled into a truck, her decrying of the injustices done to the Palestinians for the realization of the Zionist plan in Palestine, invokes in Sa'id respect for her (Hussain77). But then she, like Dov, who was innocent at the start, was brainwashed by her husband and later on associated her identity with the Jews. In the end she, like Dov, fought for an unjust cause. The suggestion she put forward, despite knowing that Dov was not her natural son, to give him a choice, raised the credibility of her stand. The following excerpt raises the same question:

Finally, Miriam returned and they asked her:

"When will he get here?"

"It is time for him to return now, but he is late. He never was on time getting home. He's just like his father. He was..."

"Like his father!"...Then suddenly he asked himself, "What is fatherhood?"

(Kanafani 171)

For Miriam, Iphrat is Dov's father. This enraged Sa'id and his sympathy towards her was abated or completely rebutted. Kanafani's stand is clear here. Both Sa'id and Safiyya stand as symbols for the rest of the Palestinians, in making such a miserable end to the issue. For Kanafani an armed struggle would be the only solution to defend against the sin perpetuated against them. It is noteworthy here, to analyze why Kanafani might have come to such a conclusion (Adil 7).

As we pointed out earlier, his deep-rooted understanding of the problem and nature of the Zionist project, might not have allowed him going for another option. The complexity of the issue and genuine support that the Jew earned throughout the centuries was completely at odd with Palestine and the Palestinians. The people who lived in the land for centuries evacuated from Israeli version of history and they were denied even the right to live as human beings. In other words, the whole world in one way or another was against the Palestinians. It is natural that the world responds so, since the propaganda of the Zionists throughout the media, international lobbies, institutions and universities have gained them much support.

Now the world views Palestinians as troublemakers, terrorist, propagandists, militants, etc. There is no hope left for them, to trust neighbors, Muslim countries, international bodies like United Nations, and others, which work under various umbrellas in specific. There is no room for them in the world to exist as they are. The only way left for them is to sacrifice their lives for the nation, since the propaganda of enemy has gained the attention, even if the country is founded on injustice and negligence of others rights. For Kanafani, the only solution for the issue was a war or an armed struggle. He put the words in mouth of Sa'id, "Naturally we didn't come to tell you to get out of here. That would take a war" (Kanafani 164). The problem of Jewish settlements and the Palestinians' right of return, according to Kanafani and to the PFLP, whose ideology he subscribed could not be settled without a war.

It is Kanafani's realization that Israel is a country established on certain myths, has instigated him to refute such myths. For the purpose he worked through real personalities, place and space. The issue addressed by Kanafani here is how such myths and propaganda gained credibility in the minds of people. The media controlled by the enemy has impeded the dissemination of any facts (Hussain 77). People are either denied of it, or by the time

they know it, it is too late. Even Iphrat Kosher didn't fully believe that the land was only a desert rediscovered by the Jewish Agency after two thousand years, but that was not what mattered most to him then. Here, Kanafani points out to one of such myths, which though were unbelievable, new emigrants, were forced to believe it. Sa'id aware of the cultural invasion, and fallacy of the solution put forward by Miriam questions her, "Maybe that child was Khaldun!" Here he is referring to that child that Miriam saw being hurled into a truck by Israeli soldiers. He continues, "Maybe the small thing that died that wretched day was Khaldun. Yes, it was Khaldun. You lied to us. It was Khaldun. He died. This young man is none other than an orphan child you found in Poland or England" (Kanafani 183).

The symbolical reading of the paragraph, hence points how myths are attracting the minds.

According to Sa'id, "A human being made up of what's injected into him hour after hour, day after day, and year after year. If I regret anything, it's that I believed the opposite for twenty years!" (Kanafani 184). In other words, the crime against Palestinians didn't start just from 1948. It started long before. But the world never knew about it. Only once the child was born, "the world" knew that it was a "bastard child." No sooner everybody was aware who "the pimps" were. Palestinians were deceived by the British.

Kanafani seems to be denying the possibility of democratic solution to the issue, which was forwarded by *al-Fatah* during that time. Even if there are people who support peace and decry the exclusivist Zionist character of the new state, which put an end to the coexistence of the three monotheistic religions in Palestine, the Israeli invective hurdle any such possibilities. Sa'id defends this stand as he explains to his wife, about Khaldun,

What Khaldun are you talking about, Safiyya? What bond of flesh and blood?

You say it is a just choice! For twenty years they have been teaching him how to be, day after day, hour after hour, with his food, drinks, and sleep and you still say a just choice! Khaldun, or Dov, or the devil, if you wish, will not

recognize us. If you want my true opinion, let's get out of here and return to the past. Everything is over. They have stolen him. (Kanafani 172)

The question of parenthood of Dov, and the right he is given to select, though in fact he was born to Palestinian parents, points towards the fallacy of a democratic solution to the Palestinian issue (Hussain 80). Miriam, who stands for innocent or religious Jew, says: "But let's call on him to decide. Let's call on him to choose. He's of age and we must recognize that he's the only one who has the right to choose. Do you agree?" (Kanafani 172). This shows how a wrong is being accepted as "right" in a democratic system, when supported by more people. Many other theoretical themes prescribed by PFLP are also found throughout the novel. For Kanafani, Israel was established on the Arabs' failure to unite. But this in any case would not justify the wrongdoings and oppressions of the Israel. The land belongs to the Palestinians (Said 55). They have been denied of it for a long time. The wrong done to them cannot be corrected unless they are allowed to return to their homeland. It is here, Sa'id's definition of the "homeland" becomes clearer as he says, "I'm looking for the true Palestine, the Palestine that's more than memories, more than peacock feathers, more than a son, more than scars written by bullets on the stairs"(Kanafani 184). Instead of looking for Khaldun, Sa'id thinks that the only way left for him to do is, to strengthen the Palestinian resistance movement. He says, "What is going on now is nothing, more than an absurd talk" (Kanafani 165). It is just like hanging on the invisible thread of hope. He hurls his words at Dov's face,

There's no need for you to describe your feelings to me later on. Maybe your first battle will be with a *fiday'* I named Khalid. Khalid is my son. I beg you to notice that I did not say he's your brother. As you said, man is a cause. Last week Khalid joined the *fidayeen*. Do you know why we named him Khalid and not Khaldun? Because we always thought we'd find you, even if it took twenty

years. But it didn't happen. We didn't find you, and I don't believe we will find you. (Kanafani 166).

Kanafani's views about the cultural invasion or the method of confrontation with enemy resonate here. Sa'id believes that the only option to settle the issue is an armed struggle. The author puts the words in the mouth of Sa'id, "Naturally we didn't come to tell you to get out of here. That would take a war" (Kanafani 164). By the time Kanafani wrote the novel he had lost his belief in any international body or Arab Authority. It is as if the whole world has grown to believe that a Palestinian martyr is a "terrorist." In the words of Sa'id, Kanafani challenges Dov and the world, "And you, do you believe we'll continue making mistakes? If we should stop making mistakes one day, what would be left for you then?" (Kanafani 186).

Kanafani, through presumption of Sa'id, has inserted the well-established ideological stand of PFLP. Said says,

Yes, sure. We shouldn't have left anything. Not Khaldun, not the house, not Haifa! Didn't the same frightening feeling come over you that came over me while I was driving through the streets of Haifa? I felt as though I knew Haifa, yet the city refused to acknowledge me. I had the same feeling in this house, here, in our house. Can you imagine that? That our house would refuse to acknowledge us? Don't you feel it? I believe the same thing will happen with Khaldun. You'll see! (Kanafani 173)

Another question which is very relevant in today's international political arena is that whether a *fida'i* or "suicide bomber," as termed by the Western media and imitated by the whole world, is a terrorist? For Kanafani a *fida'i* is inevitably a child of the dilemma. He is not born, but made (Hussain 77). As an entry of a diary by Kanafani in early 1960 reads, "The only thing Palestinian knew about tomorrow is that it will be no better than today."

Kanafani further scribes in his diary "...and we are waiting on the banks, yearning, for a boat that will not come. We are sentenced to be separated from everything— except from our own destruction..." (Kanafani 242). To regain their home, every Palestinian, according to him, should be aware of the cause and it is necessary for them to take arm. "You may remain in house", Sa'id on the story confirmed his stand again, "temporarily. It will take a war to settle it" (Kanafani 187).

Even for Dov, "perhaps none of that would have happened if you'd behaved the way a civilized and careful man should behave" (Kanafani 184). In other words, he calls for an armed strike to solve the issue. This highlights Kanafani's later stand regarding the issue. He might be of the opinion that the call of the enemy for an international conference for peace from the terrain of his home is nothing but a joke. "What was going on now was nothing more than absurd talk" (Kanafani 165). At that point of time, the PFLP position was the same. They even rejected the efforts of a few Israeli writers for peace and solving the issue of settlement. In other words, Miriam, just like Dov, was an innocent victim of "Israelization."

Conclusion

In short, *Returning to Haifa* covers many issues in a precise manner. In the novel, Kanafani has expressed his political feelings directly. It more or less deals with real events, to the extent that many literary technicalities have been abandoned. The novel not only plays a great role in raising the political awareness of Palestinians, it also articulates new directives for the resistant movement. Various themes related to the resistance, like people's closeness to the land, realistic representations of everyday events are ample in the novel. Again it demarcates a democratic solution and Palestinians' inherent right of return, defines their right while at the same time decrying the inactivity prevailed for long in the refugee camps. The past, present and future have been intermixed in the narrative.

Palestinian time and space are unavoidable elements of the novel. The solution put forth by Kanafani, “an armed struggle,” definitely subscribes to the revolutionary line adopted by the PFLP at the point of his writing the novel. It thus, participates in the historical struggle of Palestinian resistance against the settler colonial oppressors, and confirms the position of the novel in the resistance literature.

General Conclusion

It has been the aim of the study to analyze the theme of resistance in Ghassan Kanafani's two novels *Men in the Sun* (1963), and *Returning to Haifa* (1969). The study has briefly highlighted, for the purpose of defining the term "resistance literature," how such literature took its shape and form. The defining parameters of the literature were found overtly in the Palestinian resistance literature. It emerged as part of the Palestinian defiant struggle against the oppressions of the settler colonialist Israeli forces. Hence, it was mainly occupied with politically significant tone, setting, symbols and characters. It has not only carried political messages to the people, but represented the genuineness of the native history and culture of the Palestinians as well. It was the institutionalized endeavors of Israel to uproot Palestinians from history, denying their identity as people of the land, rebuffing all their attempts to return to the homeland, establishing historical myths and labeling them with certain stereotypes that made the Palestinian literary confrontation very stiff. Literary writers, who witnessed and grew in such a harsh situation, naturally wrote for the people. They scanned everyday events, and national concerns grew to be the overwhelming themes of their writing. It sketched every detail of the stiff Palestinian struggle to rediscover the very identity and re-establish their historical relationship with the homeland. Its themes, plots, settings and even the style were much influenced by the social changes and transformation in the Palestinian political scenario. In other words, it has grown to be the imperative symbol for "third-world literature".

As the initiator of the term "resistance literature", Ghassan Kanafani's political affiliations, his sincere commitment and keen desire to find a political solution for the Palestinian dilemma are discussed widely in this study. His feelings of hope and depression, visions about the attributes of national movements, accumulated at different stages of his life and accordingly with the eventful happenings in the Palestinian scenario

were expressed through his novels and other literary works. Hence, the study has been exploring such themes and examining how Kanafani's narratives became effective in conveying strong messages of the Palestinian struggle.

The study can be concluded with Kanafani's assumption that literature is not alienated from the collective resistance to the Israeli occupation. With his literary contributions, he participated in the Palestinian culture of resistance to the political dilemma imposed upon them by the dangerous global Zionist strategy. He managed to utilize the tools of literature and brought a deeper insight to the public about the Zionist conspiracy and the dilemmas that surrounded the Palestinian life through most of the twentieth century.

His works remained the product and expression of the Palestinian physical and social environment dominated by the Palestinian national theme. The study verifies these developments and asserts Kanafani's vision regarding them. Hence, it is an attempt to translate Palestinian literature into English and to re-read Kanafani who is often misread as not representing the Muslim Palestinian identity but as someone more concerned with transforming the Palestinian plight into a nationalist cause.

Without doubt, Kanafani's writings emerged to be an extraordinary opus. His first novel, *Men in the Sun* (1963), was an experiment and was successful. The novel was written amidst the Palestinian struggle for liberation and it maximized the Palestinian suffering as the symbol of universal human suffering. It also served to be a self-criticism of the Palestinian and Arab community for their lack of commitment to solve the Palestinian problem. Kanafani made it his platform to convey his political message. *Returning to Haifa* (1969) even directly expressed his political feelings and on many occasions he abandoned literary devices in his writing just to serve his political concerns.

Kanafani experimented with new vistas of the literary tradition. He tried not to confine the issue as a Palestinian or Arab problem but failed to raise the Islamic profile of the

conflict. In resisting and writing about resistance in his works, an identity and voice of courage and determination emerged. The Mossad might have been afraid of this identity triggered by Kanafani's work, because it would raise the Palestinian plight towards a universal recognition. Kanafani was just 36 when he was assassinated. Any further attempt to convey his messages through academic researches would be a bold step taken towards the realization of his dreams, and especially when the deteriorating situation in Palestine is taken into consideration.

Since the study relied solely on his novels for the resistance themes, it was impossible to draw any comparison between related themes found in the works of other literary writers who followed his path. Therefore, any research to study similar themes or to compare works by different writers should be welcomed. Any attempts to study the resistance themes found in the works of other Palestinian, Arab, Muslim or non-Muslim creative writers, would further help promote the idea that literature in itself is an activity to highlight the problems of the oppressed in different parts of the world. This would also create the awareness in the international community and persuade them to address the injustice done in Palestine. The western world is always ill-informed of the plight of the oppressed and the marginalized in Palestine. This study confirms that literature can cross any political and geographical boundaries and gather universal support against activities harmful to humanity in general. Kanafani's novels have shown us that this is not impossible.

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