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POSTCOLONIAL PALESTINIANS IN GHASSAN KANAFANI'S WORKS: *MEN IN THE SUN, ALL THAT'S LEFT TO YOU* AND *RETURNING TO HAIFA* (127 PP.)

Dissertation Advisor: Babacar M'Baye

This dissertation is a postcolonial study of selected writings of the Palestinian intellectual, journalist, political activist, and author, Ghassan Kanafani. Using postcolonial theory to create a single framework for the study of selected writings of Kanafani, this dissertation will also contribute to the analysis of the postcolonial Palestinian novel. This study hopes to achieve these goals by investigating the ways in which Kanafani's literary works can serve as means to explore the importance that Palestinians attach to the history of their struggle for freedom and cultural preservation. It is within this postcolonial context that *Men in the Sun* (1963), *All That's Left to You* (1966), and *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* (1969) will be discussed in this dissertation. The novellas and short stories are prime examples of traumatic experiences that Palestinian refugees faced during Kanafani's lifetime. The writings reflect Kanafani's understanding of the permanent exile, fear, isolation, loneliness, and despair that he and many Palestinians experienced during major parts of the twentieth century as results of Zionist occupation of Palestine. Kanafani's realistic depictions of these harsh situations are key factors that make his works ideal for postcolonialist analysis.

# POSTCOLONIAL PALESTINIANS IN GHASSAN KANAFANI'S WORKS: *MEN IN THE SUN, ALL THAT'S LEFT TO YOU* AND *RETURNING TO HAIFA*

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by

Hanan Hindi

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Dissertation written by

Hanan Hindi

B.A., University of Akron, 2006

M.A., University of Akron, 2008

Ph.D., Kent State University, 2018

Approved by

Dr. Babacar M'Baye, Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Dr. Ali Erritouni, Members, Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Dr. Ryan Miller

Dr. Joshua Stacher

Dr. Ann Heiss

Accepted by

Dr. Robert W. Trogdon, Chair, Department of English

Dr. James L. Blank, Dean, College of Arts and Science

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# INTRODUCTION

Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun,* (1962), *All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories* (1966) and *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* (1969) are key writings that examine Palestinian resistances against the Zionist colonialist oppression that began after World War II. These texts explore the anxieties Palestinians have experienced as a result of this tragic history and propose ways in which Palestinians can maintain their humanity and identity in spite of this tragic history. In doing so, Kanafani preserves Palestine and its geographical and cultural identity. In addition, he highlights the shortcomings of Palestinians who left their homeland in search for individual self-fulfillment, emphasizing their lack of identity in such a situation and, most importantly, defining national identity through active resistance. Chapters 1 and 2 will conduct an analysis of *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You* to underscore Kanafani's criticism of Palestinians who left their homeland. Chapter 3 discusses Kanafani's solution to such predicaments and calls upon the postcolonial's obligations to the Palestinian homeland. On a larger scale, Kanafani's writings suggest the importance of postcolonial Arabic literature as a form of resistance, and in the preservation and creation of imagined communities.

A key concept in this dissertation is the term "*Al Nakba*", defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the "Arabic term for the events of 1948, when many Palestinians were displaced from their homeland by the creation of the new state of Israel." In Arabic, the word literally means "disaster." The word is apt, as the Palestinian displacement has drastically transformed the lives of thousands of Palestinians who have been dispersed around the world for many

decades, leaving only a third of the population in the Palestinian homeland, where they continue to struggle for survival. The events of 1947–1949 resulted in two-thirds of the Palestinian population being defeated, deprived, and scattered across the globe by Zionist oppression.

Yet, while the term "*Al Nakba*" marks a crucial turning point in the history of Palestinians, it is not the starting point of these people's disastrous journey. Al *Nakba* represents only a fraction of a predetermined plan that was initiated during the British colonial rulers. Maha Nassar's book *Brother's Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* contributes to our understanding of the permutations of Palestinian history and the crucial role of the circulation of written text in decolonizing Palestine. Nassar sheds light on the historical events that took place prior to Al Nakba and paved the way for the establishment of Israel. According to Nassar, Zionist leaders implemented colonial ideology to justify the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine (22). The Zionist idea that Palestine was "a land without a people for a people without a land" (Nassar 22) contributed to Zionist immigration to Palestine from 1905 until 1914 (Nassar 22). British policymakers implemented in Palestine the same colonial ideology that was utilized in India and Egypt and "portrayed the native population as being backward, hostile, and unfit to rule themselves" (Nassar 23). When Herbert Samuel, an Anglo-Zionist activist, provided a report to the British endorsing the idea of establishing a home for the Jewish people, he was in fact contributing to the 1917 Balfour Declaration (Nassar 23). Arthur James Balfour, a British foreign secretary, exhibited a species of Zionism in the way in which he supported his country's colonization of Palestine. According to Nassar, Balfour officially revealed Britain's intention to establish a Jewish home in Palestine (Nassar 23). Thus, Zionism became a form of colonialism.

A second critical book that substantially contributes to the study of the history of Palestine is Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Pappé asserts that "Zionism emerged

in the late 1880s in central Europe as a national revival movement, prompted by the growing pressure on Jews in those regions either to assimilate totally or risk continuing persecution" (11). According to Pappé,

> Palestine was not even an 'occupied' land when they [Zionists] first arrived there in 1882, but rather an 'empty' one: the native Palestinians who lived there were largely invisible to them or, if not, were part of nature's hardship and as such were to be conquered and removed. Nothing, neither rocks nor Palestinians, was to stand in the way of the national 'redemption' of the land the Zionist movement coveted (11).

Zionism, which is at the root of *Al Nakba*, is a political ideology established in the 19th century urging for the establishment of a nation for the Jews (Al Jazeera). Jewish settlement commenced in 1882, when Theodor Herzl published what soon became the basis of Zionism. In his study, "Herzl concluded that the remedy to centuries-old anti-Semitic sentiments and attacks in Europe was the creation of a Jewish state (Al Jazeera). When the Balfour Declaration was issued, Chaim Weizmann, a Russian Zionist based in Britain, a former prime minister of Britain, and Arthur Balfour were united in their commitment to the establishment of a Jewish state (Al Jazeera). This commitment led to an increase in the Jewish population residing in Palestine from 9 percent to almost 27 percent (Al Jazeera). When the Arab Revolt against the "Zionist settler-colonialism" took place in 1936, the British authorities crushed it, causing the destruction of "at least 2,000 Palestinian homes" and the removal of "9,000 Palestinians in concentration camps" where they were subjected "to violent interrogation, including torture" before 200 of them were deported as "nationalist leaders" (Al Jazeera).

Concerned about the extreme violence between the Zionists and the Palestinians, British officials attempted to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine; however, militant Zionist groups

refused, declaring war on Britain in 1944. After Zionist organizations led various attacks against it, the British government handed the "disaster it had created in Palestine to the United Nations and end[ed] its colonial project there" (Al Jazeera). Shortly thereafter, the UN initiated Resolution 181, giving 55 percent of the land, including key cities populated by Palestinian Arabs, to Zionists. The consequence was a series of vicious attacks aimed at expelling Palestinians from their lands, leading up to *Al Nakba* on May 15, 1948 (Al Jazeera). When the British authorities officially ended their mandate in Palestine on May 15, 1948, Israel's Prime Minister declared the independence of Tel Aviv, marking the official creation of the Israeli state (Al Jazeera). As a direct consequence, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from the state, while 150,000 remained in occupied areas and a further 40,000 were internally displaced (Al Jazeera).

The Zionist project did not end there: the 1967 Arab–Israeli War, *Al Naksa* (in Arabic, "Setback"), resulted in the occupation of East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank (Al Jazeera). A total of 430,000 Palestinians originally displaced from the occupied lands in 1948 became displaced once again (Al Jazeera). These tragic experiences, along with the others explored by Nassar, suggest the importance of understanding Palestinian history. They speak to the central objective of this dissertation, which is to examine Kanafani's works through a postcolonial lens, and to establish the contribution of their narratives to the decolonization of Palestine.

With a clear understanding of the key events of Palestinian history, it becomes possible to outline the main issues and questions addressed by this dissertation. The aim of this dissertation is to explore various Palestinian struggles as depicted in Kanafani's works through a postcolonial lens. In order to achieve this goal, this research will define postcolonialism's relevance to this project, outline how Palestine fits into this definition, highlight the importance of viewing this

land from a postcolonial perspective and, finally, discuss how and why Kanafani's texts fit into postcolonialism.

As a result of the key historical events outlined above, Palestinians are dispersed across the globe. Key intellectuals, including Kanafani, have contested the various deliberate means used by Israeli leaders to dismantle Palestinian history and culture. As mentioned before, Nassar's *Brothers Apart* plays a critical role in elucidating the "several strategies that multiple generations of Palestinians in Israel deployed between 1948 and 1971 to foster a sense of connection with those living beyond their border" (181). These dimensions are apparent in Kanafani's works, which, on one level, symbolize an essential connection between Palestinians across the globe while, on another, portraying the Palestinian struggles as a result of the catastrophic events of the creation of the State of Israel. Thus, Kanafani's writings are critical: they provide us with insight into the resistance and solidarity of Palestinians, who have maintained their humanity even as they have witnessed the dismantlement of their culture and the dispersal of their people due to colonization.

As previously stated, Palestinians are a group without a land to call home and are spread across the globe. These two factors complicate their attempts to keep their culture alive and undiluted by other traditions. The dominant cultures of Europe and America make it even more difficult for Palestinians to maintain a unified culture, especially in light of the recent rise of globalization. In spite of these dynamics, Palestinians remain committed to their culture and keep working to preserve their belief structures and keep alive other aspects of their traditions. They do so despite the socio-political climate, despite the changes that have occurred within their lives, despite the transition of Palestine to Israel and the manner in which Israelis have treated Palestinians since the middle of the twentieth century. Kanafani's writings reflect all of these

dilemmas and the Palestinians' attachments to their culture, their struggle, and their continued hope for liberation from Israeli domination.

This dissertation is also indebted to other key scholarly studies. One of these is Linda Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Smith describes how developing questions framed within the context of the study of a specific group can help a project focus on what is necessary to complete the research (26–29). She states,

> The survival of peoples, cultures and languages; the struggle to become self-determining, the need to take back control of our identities. These imperatives have demanded more than a rhetoric and acts of defiance. The acts of reclaiming, reformulating and reconstituting indigenous cultures and languages have required the mounting of an ambitious research programme, one that is very strategic in its purpose and activities and relentless in its pursuit of social justice (143).

Using Smith's rationale, this dissertation will study Kanafani's life and works from the postcolonial perspective in an attempt to improve our understanding of Palestinian struggles against Zionist oppression.

Smith identifies key questions to ask in the process of research and breaks down how the completion of a study of this nature may provide a means of analyzing texts to answer questions that are asked during the initial stages of the research process (142–60). These themes include the following:

- Claiming: This refers to claiming the elements of culture that are unique to that specific group, "resulting in the writing of a nation, tribe and family histories. These 'histories' have a focus and a purpose; that is, to establish the legitimacy of the claims being asserted for the rest of time" (144).

- Testimonies: statements of members of the group, “Indigenous testimonies are a way of talking about an extremely painful event or series of events” (145).
- Story-telling: stories about the traditions and beliefs of the group, which “contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. For many indigenous writers, stories are ways of passing down beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further” (145–46).
- Celebrating survival through a study of the extent to which “indigenous peoples and communities have retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity in resisting colonialism” (146).
- Remembering: personal memories of the group traditions that are “crucial strategies in any approach that asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget” (147).
- Connecting through sharing with other members of the group: “To be connected is to be whole” (149).
- Reading: going over documents and stories to expose realities, “It is no longer the single narrative story of important white imperial figures, adventurers and heroes who fought their way through undiscovered lands to establish imperial rule and bring civilization and salvation to ‘barbaric savages’ who lived in ‘utter degradation’” (150).
- Writing: putting stories on paper for future generations. The employment of writing in “imaginative, critical and also quite functional ways” (151).
- Representing: studying what is unique to the group because “The representing project spans both the notion of representation as a political concept and representation as a form of voice and expression” (151).

- Reframing: taking control over the ways in which history and the present is perceived, "The framing of an issue is about making decisions about its parameters, about what is in the foreground, what is in the background, and what shadings or complexities exist within the frame" (154).
- Restoring: ensuring the well-being of individuals in terms of health, as well as emotionally, spiritually, and materially.
- Returning: giving relics, lands and homes back to their owners.
- Networking: seeking other group members and "making contacts between marginalized communities" (158).
- Protecting: protection of history, communities and identities, "The need to protect a way of life, language and the right to make our own history" (159).
- Discovering: seeking and "discovering our own indigenous knowledge" (161).
- Sharing: performed with other group members, "sharing contains views about knowledge being a collective benefit and knowledge being a form of resistance" (162).

These themes and research processes are applicable to the study of Palestinian literary works, especially those of Kanafani. With reference to these elements, a case can be made for the inclusion of the Palestinian culture in the context of postcolonial studies in order for the culture to be viewed as relevant to the field of humanities on the global stage, as other cultures are (Smith 161). In addition to discovering the history, social aspects, political dimensions, and other components of Palestinian culture so that individuals of the current generation may be able to gain a better grasp of what it means to be Palestinian, the presentation of such information has the potential to liberate Palestinians as a current society while providing an avenue for future generations of Palestinian descent to maintain resistance. Even though Palestine no longer exists

geographically, it still exists as the homeland of a people and a culture, and as a valid contributor to the humanities in general. Therefore, Palestine ought to be validated by the academic world as a legitimate society that continues to contribute to the world stage so that its people can begin to take their place in postcolonial discourse in the Western world as well as across the globe.

Another aspect associated with the employment of a methodology is the application of the methodology itself. This is a process that, according to Smith, reminds readers that the task of research in projects such as this dissertation is a process that is typically thought of as a Western ideation (42). However, Smith argues that this is not always the case, and that the rules and regulations that serve to govern the application of a methodology, thought to have been conceptualized by Western scholars, were originally devised in other, older societies. Methodology as a practice thus arose when scholars first started analyzing texts (42). While the rules of research may have been development and refined, and while certain protocols, practices, and procedures may vary based on the institution under which such a study is conducted, the basic methodology that is employed has remained the same and is far older that one may think (Smith 42). Smith has revolutionized certain methodologies used in the study of different types of people by employing a unique and highly specific approach designed to assist in understanding the experiences of different groups of people (52–57). These practices are easily translatable to the study of Palestinian culture.

Since postcolonialism is one of the main theoretical frameworks utilized in this project, it is vital not only that the concept is defined in clear and concise manner, but also that it is demonstrated to be relevant to the proposed topic. Many authorities in the humanities are referred to as experts in postcolonialism and postcolonial studies. Foremost among these are Bill Ashcroft and the other co-editors of *Postcolonial Studies*, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin.

According to Ashcroft and his fellow authors, postcolonial literature from any region of the world consists of material dealing with the topics of hegemony, language, place, and displacement, as well as the conclusion of post-coloniality for the society comprising the focus of the study (*The Empire Writes Back* 4–13). These terms have been defined in such a way as to provide a larger, more multi-dimensional picture when analyzing a specific dominant–submissive cultural relationship through the postcolonial lens. Hegemony, in particular, is a concept that must be treated with caution when the postcolonial methodology is being employed, especially when it comes to ensuring an objective analysis of a given culture, specifically one such as Palestine, wherein the culture has had its land expropriated and is left without any true recourse or the potential to retain or reclaim it.

Ashcroft and his co-authors' definition of hegemony as dominance over a specific group by another (*The Empire Writes Back* 4–13) fits the Palestinian post-World War II experience. In a similar vein, in *Postcolonial Studies,* Ashcroft et al. provide a definition of postcolonialism that can be applied to the literature of Palestine because it sheds light on the cultural effects of the Israeli occupation:

> As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, 'postcolonial' had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. (204)

This quotation suggests that the term "postcolonial" is subject to scholarly interpretation when it is used in reference to a person or a group of people. As such, applying Ashcroft et al.'s definition enables this study to situate both Palestine and Kanafani's selected works within the postcolonial context as they shed light on the cultural effects of the Israeli occupation of

Palestine. It is important to point out that the hegemonic dynamic persists in the occupied Palestinian territories, which calls into question whether or not Palestinians can truly refer to themselves as a post-colonial culture. In light of the prevailing political and social circumstances, the answer to this question, unfortunately, must be "no." Still, in communities across the globe that are composed of exiled Palestinians struggling to find a voice that can reverse this condition, the study of the writings of authors such as Kanafani would be beneficial, as it provides a medium through which to connect the various Palestinian cultures spread across the globe to those remaining under occupation (Nassar 186).

Ashcroft et al. further note that the term "postcolonial", when used in reference to a person or a group of people, is subject to scholarly interpretation. While these authors argue for the need to differentiate between groups who are and who are not postcolonial, they do admit that there is a requirement for further study in this area as postcolonial studies broaden over the next few decades (200–03). As the body of literature continues to grow, and as the field of postcolonial studies continues to expand, further definitions will emerge within the context of the literature, allowing for additional interpretation and unification within the field of study itself. Ashcroft and his co-authors have remained firm in their opinions, stating that postcolonial studies are a sound method for the analysis of a culture through the exploration of its literary works (*The Empire Writes Back* 36). According to these scholars, postcolonial studies enable researchers to demonstrate how a given culture has been influenced by the master culture that dominated it for a defined period of time (*The Empire Writes Back* 36). The one difficulty with the application of this theory is to know what specific society or culture dominated Palestine to the extent of leaving its people with no land to call home and so far scattered across the globe that they have been forced to assimilate themselves into other cultures. One could argue that the

Israelis are exclusively responsible for the current situation, or that the collective West, who forced Palestine to surrender its homeland to Israel, bears principal responsibility therefor. One may even argue that the United Nations was responsible, or that another party was at fault. Regardless of who is blamed, the fact remains that the dissolution of Palestine constitutes a significant part of the history of the Palestinian people, being an occurrence that is not only the basis of the work of Kanafani but is also part of the history of their culture and land.

Leelah Gandhi's work *Postcolonial Theory* is also fundamental to understanding why a postcolonial perspective is key to the study of Palestinian literature. Gandhi draws upon the shortcomings of postcolonialism and states, "What postcolonialism fails to recognise is that what counts as 'marginal' in relation to the West has often been central and foundational in the non-West" (ix). By drawing on the failure of postcolonialism to encompass the "marginal," Gandhi offers a holistic definition of postcolonialism that helps to "diversify its mode of address and learn to speak more adequately to the world which it speaks for" since it requires "the capacity to facilitate a democratic colloquium between antagonistic inheritors of the colonial aftermath" (x). With this definition, it becomes possible to apply postcolonialism to Palestinian literature. According to Gandhi, the postcolonial lens allows literary critics to take the characters out of a story and allow readers to identify with those specific individuals in order to connect with their cultural identity (58–60). Reading Kanafani's writings enables the reader to logically conclude that there is a distinct absence of cultural stability for Palestinians. In addition, one finds that there is little hope of Palestinians regaining a stable geographical land base to call home or reacquiring the land they previously called their own. Yet, if Palestinians must remain a people without a homeland, this does not entail that they should be deprived of insight into their cultural heritage.

Expanding on Gandhi's definition of postcolonialism, Ania Loomba's book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* highlights another dimension of postcolonialism. Loomba argues that the "different understandings of colonialism and imperialism complicate the meaning of the term 'postcolonialism,' a term that is the subject of an ongoing debate" (28). Loomba carefully highlights the complications of the term "postcolonial", which are relevant to the study of Palestine through a postcolonial lens:

> To begin with, the prefix 'post' complicates matters because it implies an 'aftermath' in two senses—temporal, as in coming after, and ideological, as in supplanting. It is the second implication which critics of the term found contestable: if the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism. (28)

In response to these complications, Loomba argues that "Postcolonialism, then, is a word that is useful only if we use it with caution and qualifications" (38). With that in mind, postcolonialism becomes "useful as a generalisation to the extent that 'it refers to a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome" (38). As such, Palestinian literature and the analysis thereof become the process of disengagement. Israel was created out of land that at the time housed a legitimate country with a real culture and people that were displaced as a result of that creation. However, the creation of Israel does not negate the history of the Palestinian people, despite the fact that its very formation has seemed to lead inexorably towards the destruction of the Palestinian lifestyle and culture. Indeed, since Palestinians have resiliently maintained their traditions and fought for the liberation of their homeland, their culture must be perceived as dominant or resistant rather than submissive. According to Loomba, when a culture continues to

play an active role in shaping the socio-political climate within the global landscape, it has in fact embarked on a process of "disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome (38).

Other critical works relevant to this dissertation include those of Chantal Zabus, according to whom the majority of "independent nation-states (currently in existence in the world today) and…the world's languages have had their history shaped by colonialism. Therefore, looking at the effects of colonialism in postcolonial texts written not only in English, but other world languages in a world where the notion of "one language, one nation" no longer …is an urgent task" (Zabus 1). While it should be noted that postcolonial studies and the application of postcolonialism as a tool of analysis are still germane, scholars have shifted to a "way of reading and a critical method (of) anticipating a future beyond colonialism in all its forms. Especially in its literary guise, it is an anticipatory discourse of liberation and justice" (Zabus 1). In this sense, any analysis of Palestinian culture through the frameworks of postcolonial studies and postcolonialism must explore the history of the events that led up to the dissolution of Palestine as a nation while, at the same time, lending further insight into the ways in which this culture and others like it may be able to adapt and move forward.

Zabus furthermore argues that postcolonial studies have served as a means of analyzing literature since the decline of colonialism (3). While there has been some question in recent years as to whether or not postcolonial studies and postcolonialism have reached "the inevitable expiry date of the 'postcolonial' label," it must be argued that this means of analysis is centrifugal in its nature, continuing to spin and separate out new ideas from which it is possible to gain a greater understanding of both the world and its history (Zabus 2). As a result, postcolonialism's continued exploration of the same issues has extended its reach to conceptual categories that could not have been imagined at the time of the discipline's first adoption, allowing for an

improved understanding of globalization, transnational ideations, sustainability, and even matters of sexuality (Zabus 2). These areas of analysis have also resulted in an increased focus on the geographical territories once referred to as "the Arab world." As Zabus has shown, the inclusion of "Palestine and the Balkans", in addition to a radical shift in the nature of such explorations, has resulted in the presence of additional colonial perspectives outside of the predominant European perspective so commonly found in more traditional explorations within this field of study (2). Although the geographical context of Palestine is no longer recognized in the sense of a physical country, the people of Palestine are still recognized as a unique culture, and out of a desire to preserve this culture has arisen the increased focus on this region (Zabus 2–3). The application of postcolonialism and postcolonial studies within the aforementioned contexts has become known as work completed by "second-generation postcolonial scholars" (Zabus 5). These are individuals who take the essence of postcolonial study and look beyond it in order to extract information that is pertinent to a specific culture while remaining relevant to groups of people in today's modern age, targeting matters of political, social, and sexual identity as a further lens through which such postcolonial explorations are possible (Zabus 5).

A number of related topics are pertinent to this discussion regarding postcolonialism as a literary theory. Elements such as orientalism, nationalism, imperialism, and hegemony all form part of the larger picture. The noted scholar Edward Said, whose work is still widely cited in the academic world, wrote about many of the aforementioned elements in one form or another. In *Orientalism,* Said defined this concept as the representation of the concept of Asia, specifically the geographical area known as the Middle East, in a manner that reflects colonial attitudes as described by both colonial and postcolonial scholars (33). It is perhaps this major endeavor that

has made the work of Said, Ashcroft, Gandhi, and other noteworthy scholars in the field of postcolonial studies so unique.

Said's *Culture and Imperialism* is another text of critical importance to this dissertation. Although Said's text does not directly address the question of the Middle East or its connection to imperialism or postcolonialism, the information contained therein is still pertinent to the topic at hand. Said argues that many European writers such as Austin and Camus who, in addition to Conrad, also wrote about these topics, failed to include Arabic writers in their analysis. Said wrote several other volumes, including *The Question of Palestine*, wherein he argues for the necessity of the existence of Palestinian, using examples found within popular and classic literature. The book discusses the use of politics through writing to make a case for allowing Palestine to exist and the positive impact it would have on the region as a whole. In addition, *The Question of Palestine* further asserts that, despite the associated benefits, outside influences will not allow for the existence of the state of Palestine.

Another key author referenced in this dissertation is Benedict Anderson, who defines a nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). The breakdown Anderson offers of the definition of the concept of "nation" is applicable to this study because Palestinians are dispersed across the globe and, as a result, are members who "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). However, "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community" (46). Such imagined communities offer a foundation upon which Palestinians can build an image of themselves as nationals (140). An analysis of Palestinian literature contributes to the imagined communities that provide Palestinians with a

base from which to connect. As argued by Anderson, these so-called imagined communities who hold national pride and a sense of identity can claim such a right in part because of the work of postcolonial scholars and other individuals who have painstakingly worked to tease out the knowledge from available texts in order to create a pictorial representation of a culture and of a society. As Anderson has demonstrated, this joint effort has provided renewed hope and belief to people, allowing for the further fostering and nurturing of a sense of pride within individual societies.

Another crucial question is whether postcolonialism applies to the study of Palestine and its literature since Israeli occupation persists to this day. Yahya Hassan Al Wadhaf, in his article "Narrating the Nation and its Other: The Emergence of Palestine in the Postcolonial Arabic Novel," that the Palestinian novel is Palestinians' form of resistance against the occupation (111). Reiterating Anderson's representation of nation in *Imagined Communities*, Wadhaf notes, "The idea of the nation as an imagined community is at the center of the relationship between nation and narration in the context of postcolonial Arabic novel in general and in the Palestinian novel in particular. The centrality of the concept of nation springs from the fact that the Palestinian people were not permitted to tell their story and to narrate the reality of their nation to the world" (109). Since its inception, Zionism has "attempted to legitimize the occupation of Palestine and to rewrite the history of the land from its own perspective" (110). Therefore, Palestinian literature is both a form of resistance and a medium for the creation of imagined communities for Palestinians. Both elements are part of the core of Palestinian literature, which can thus be regarded as postcolonial given its nature as a form of resistance against domination. Resistance literature, a term coined by Kanafani, (111) "enjoys a crucial importance in the field of postcolonial studies" (111). Based on the aforementioned rationales put forward by Anderson

and other postcolonial theorists, it would be safe to argue that Kanafani's works embody the resistance and imagination of the Palestinian nation. In addition, viewing Kanafani's work from a postcolonial perspective helps to reasserts its crucial role as a medium for literary resistance.

Before we proceed, it is crucial to provide a brief biography of Kanafani and how his writings have contributed to the postcolonial Arabic novel. Roger Allen, in *The Arabic Novel*, states, "No modern Arab novelist has been able to project the tragedy of the Palestinian people in fiction with greater impact than Ghassan Kanafani" (147). From birth, Kanafani's circumstances were intertwined with his resistance efforts (Riley 1). Born in Akka, Kanafani was twelve years old when the catastrophic events of Al Nakbah took place. He and his family moved to Beirut, then Damascus, and, shortly after, to Kuwait (Allen X). While in exile, Kanafani "took a keen interest in everything around him in the camps and noted the differences between his actual surroundings and his yearned-for past" (Riley 2). At a young age, Kanafani became involved in politics. At the age of 16, while teaching at a school for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, he witnessed first-hand the sheer oppression and agonizing consequences of the Zionist attack on Palestine (Riley 3).

While studying in the Department of Arabic Literature at Damascus University, Kanafani's political involvement connected him to the leader of the Arab Nationalists' Movement, Dr. George Habash (Riley 4). This connection would soon contribute to Kanafani's journalistic career (Riley 4). In 1955, he moved to Kuwait to join his brother and sister, only to be confronted by a "feeling of isolation, strangeness and exile" (Riley 4). His experience in Kuwait is also reflected in the short stories discussed later in this dissertation. During his time in Kuwait, Kanafani was diagnosed with diabetes, which added to his pessimistic outlook on the Palestinian situation, as well as his own. In a diary entry quoted by Riley, Kanafani states,

> The only thing we know is that tomorrow will be no better that today, and that 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. (5)

In 1960, Kanafani followed Dr. Habash to join the editorial staff of the political magazine *Al-Hurriya* in Beirut (5). In 1962, Kanafani became the editor-in-chief of *Al Muharrir*, another daily newspaper that discussed issues related to Palestine (Riley 7). In 1969, Kanafani cofounded *Al-Hadaf*, a political newspaper that became a vehicle for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PELP). Sadly, Kanafani's intense political involvement in these key newspapers led to his assassination, together with his niece Lamees, on July 8, 1972. Following the explosion of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Movement) from Jordan, someone claimed responsibility for an attack on Lord Airport outside of Tel Aviv on behalf of the PELP, resulting in the bombing of Kanafani's car (Riley 9). Despite his tragic death, Kanafani's devotion to the Palestinian cause remains pertinent to the postcolonial Arabic novel, Palestinians, and scholars around the world. As Riley states, "Kanafani's unconditional commitment to the survival of the Palestinian people and his tremendous journalistic and literary output made it possible for him not just to write stories, but to write the Palestinian story, made it possible for that story to continue to be written, and lived, today" (10–11).

By interpreting Kanafani's selected writings through a postcolonial framework, this dissertation hopes to uncover the ways in which these texts explore the harsh realities experienced by Palestinians since the inception of the Zionist movement. It is within this postcolonial context that *Men in the Sun* (1963), *All That's Left to You* (1966), and *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* (1969) will be discussed. These novellas and short stories epitomize the traumatic conditions faced by Palestinian refugees during Kanafani's

lifetime. The harshness of those realities and Kanafani's realistic depiction of these situations are the dominant considerations rendering his works ideal for postcolonial analysis. The manner in which Kanafani sheds light on not only the relationships between Palestinians and the state of Israel, but also on the importance of cultural identity for Palestinians, is another factor that influenced the selection of these texts. Each of Kanafani's selected works displays distinctive elements that prove that the Palestinian people are postcolonials and ought to be further examined through the postcolonial lens (Smith 162).

Another important element that readers may take away from reading Kanafani's writings is the way he is able to express the basic human experience through his narratives. The intensity with which the full range of human emotions is described within Kanafani's stories provides a medium through which it is possible for the reader to relate to the characters and events presented within his writing, thus creating imagined communities. Indeed, it is this ability to convey emotion that makes Kanafani's works the ideal means of exploring Palestinian literature within postcolonial contexts and frameworks.

Another aspect that makes Kanafani's works crucial at this juncture in history is the necessity to implement a new approach to understand the Palestinian situation. In the book *On Palestine*, co-authored with Noam Chomsky, Ilan Pappé proposes "a paradigm shift" which

> offers a new analysis for the present situation and proposes a different vision for the future. Many elements in this new paradigm are old ideas that can be found in the PLO 1968 charter and in the platforms of activist groups…the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. These positions have been updated and adapted to the current reality. (21)

According to Pappé, adopting this new approach and "paradigm shift" strengthens the resistance and commitment towards a liberated Palestine. Since the proposed shift carries elements of both the PLO and the PELP, two key organizations in which Kanafani was involved, this author's writings, especially the journalistic ones, become important sources that can be understood through the use of Pappé's approach to Palestine's history.

Like Pappé, Chomsky highlights the importance of understanding and remembering the past (49). Chomsky asserts, "To forget about the past means forgetting about the future because the past involves aspirations, hopes, many of them entirely justified" (49). In this sense, an analysis of Kanafani's selected works contributes to the understanding and remembering of the past.

Kanafani's works can also be used as means to connect Palestinians across the globe with each other, including with those who possess Israeli citizenship. According to Nassar, Kanafani's writings are forms of resistance literature since they "began to draw attention to the presence of literary and cultural resistance in Israel" (184). During the mid-1960s, the crucial question being debated was "the role that literature should play in mobilizing people to the cause of justice at home and abroad" (Nassar 6). Kanafani's involvement in newspapers and literary publications was the answer to that question. At the time, Kanafani's work was "crucial to exposing a younger generation of Palestinians educated in Israeli school system to alternative viewpoints that celebrated their cultural heritage and political outlook (Nassar 6). Today, Kanafani's work contributes to our understanding of Palestinian history and the establishment of an imagined community.

# CHAPTER 1:

## "Why Didn't They Knock?" The Passive Postcolonial in *Men in the Sun*

Kanafani's works are unique in that they clearly demonstrate the struggles of the Palestinian people from a point of view that many other writers do not share; Kanafani's stories provide insights into the traumatic experiences of Palestinians in search of a better life. He understood these experiences due to his presence within Palestine prior to Israel's occupation of the territory. *Men in the Sun*, one of Kanafani's better-known works, is a classic allegory of the struggle endured by Palestinian refugees during a time when they were not recognized as citizens of any country nor, in many cases, as human beings. This novella serves as Kanafani's portrayal of the Palestinian struggle as well as a criticism of the lack of action taken by Palestinians to regain Palestine. As Al Wadhaf argues in his essay "Narrating the Nation and its Other: The Emergence of Palestine in the Postcolonial Arabic Novel," *Men in the Sun*

> is a powerful contribution to the corpus of literature that aimed at rewriting the Palestinian nation not only in modern contemporary postcolonial Arabic literature, but also to carve the name of Palestine and the Palestinians into the hearts and minds of many freedom fighters and supporters of the Palestinian cause all over the world via the English version of the text. (118)

In addition, *Men in the Sun* highlights Palestinians' passivity in choosing to leave Palestine in search of self-fulfillment. This passiveness is depicted in Kanafani's representation of the experiences of three Palestinian refugees who choose to die in the heat rather than actively fight for their existence. In Kanafani's book, the acquiescence of the postcolonial subject is

underscored by the smuggler's attempt to understand why the three refugees failed to "knock" before they suffocated.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is crucial to provide a brief summary and a historical context of *Men in the Sun*. The book narrates the story of three Palestinian men attempting to reach Kuwait with the aid of a smuggler. The men must travel through the desert under the merciless sun confined in a water tank. Abu Khayzuran, the smuggler, is a driver wounded in an earlier war. Each of the men attempting to escape is driven by personal reasons; however, a quest for financial security is the common motivation binding the three men together. At the Iraqi border, the smuggler is able get through smoothly and in a timely manner. However, at the Kuwaiti post, the smuggler is delayed while the security guards tease him about his girlfriend in Basra. The delay causes the three men in the water tank to slowly suffocate. When the smuggler eventually opens the tank, he discovers the three corpses and abandons them in the communal garbage dump after taking their valuables. The novella ends with a crucial question that resonates in the minds of both the smuggler and the reader: "Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank" (*Men in the Sun* 74). The narrative structure of the novella consists of seven parts, the first three of which are named after the three stowaways (Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan). The last four parts are entitled "The Deal," "The Road," "The Sun and the Shade," and "The Grave." The narrative structure gives importance to each aspect of the Palestinian occupation and gives voice to the different generations affected by it. As Al Wadhaf points out, the Importance of *Men in the Sun* is that "The Setting, the people, land, the desert, borderlines, the oppressor and certain critical events (the *nakbah*) collaborate to narrate the Palestinian-ness of the land and its inhabitants" (113).

Temporally, the novella is set in 1958, ten years after the occurrence of *Al Nakba*, leading to the displacement of three-quarters of the Palestinian population in refugee camps and other countries. Those in refugee camps consistently searched for alternative means to secure a better future or provide for their families. As Hilary Kiplatrick states in her introduction to *Men in the Sun*, "On one level it can be read as an exposé of their weakness in preferring the search for material security over the fight to regain their land, and also as an attack on the corruption of the Arab regimes that allowed them to suffocate in an airless, marginal world of refugee camps" (11). Kanafani wrote *Men in the Sun* in Beirut when "he was forced to go underground in early 1962" because he did not have a passport (Riley 6). His circumstances and involvement with George Habash's political magazine led to the narration of *Men in the Sun*, which echoed "in the ears of the entire Palestinian community like a provocation" (Riley 6). According to Maha Nassar, the events that took place during the second half of the 1950s, the "fallout between the communist and nationalist in the Arab world" (5) contributed to frequent "acrimonious exchanges on the pages of their respective publications, their shared political vocabulary stressing cultural emancipation and dignity for all linked them discursively to the region and to the broader decolonizing world" (5). Thus, Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* and its deliberate ending calls for "a cultural emancipation and dignity for all" to create a common denominator among various generations of Palestinians and the wider Arab world.

Creating a common denominator among the various generations is crucial especially considering the number of refugees. Focusing on the context of Arabic literature, E. Valentine Daniel, in *Mistrusting Refugees*, explains the meaning of the term "refugee" as follows:

> The term 'refugee' is associated…with the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the resultant decimation of Palestinian culture and society…After 1948, the Palestinians

> became ‘a refugee nation.’ Paradoxically, perhaps, the refugee experience has since served as a major catalyst for the consolidation and development of the Palestinian …consciousness and national identity. (87)

The perspectives provided by Kanafani’s experiences expand the definition of “refugee” and allow the reader to gain unique insight into what life was like for a population who had literally everything stripped from it. Drawing on the experiences and conceptualization of Palestinian refugees, Kanafani attempts to create for the Palestinian people a national identity.

While there are Palestinians who continued to live their lives despite the changes to the geographical lines upon the map of their locations, many other populations who also identified as Palestinian were unable to do so. Many members of the latter group felt as though they were unable to remain in their homeland, based upon either their location within the former state of Palestine or their political beliefs. Consequently, most of the latter populations moved beyond the redrawn boundaries of their prior homeland and considered themselves to be refugees for that reason. Irrespective of the reasons behind their refugee status, Palestinians in general came to be perceived as part of the larger pool of global refugees. It should be noted that, while there are certain exceptions to the rule, most of the Palestinian population come from the locations where their cultural identity originated. It is for this reason that Palestinians’ status as refugees became so inextricably entwined with the cultural identity of this group of individuals. Teasing out the various aspects of the plight of Palestinians that are portrayed within the novella, this chapter will examine Kanafani’s representation of the passive postcolonial Palestinian and highlight the reasons for Kanafani’s decision to end the novella with “Why didn’t you knock?” (74).

It is crucial to keep in mind that Kanafani’s works, especially *Men in the Sun,* are based on his own life and experiences. Kanafani lived through the dissolution of Palestine, and his

family, like many others, strove to make their way in a world in which all that they had known as children no longer existed (Khoury 85). One of the many places Kanafani lived and wrote was Kuwait (Al-Nakib 88). While "his specific location in Kuwait at a key period of its development is generally overlooked…his clinical diagnosis of the relationship between Kuwait and Palestinians in the 1940s and 1950s can provoke a reconsideration of that early period" (Al-Nakib 88). Kanafani's presence "in Kuwait in the second half of the 1950s expresses an early promise of Kuwait as an open and cosmopolitan place" (Al-Nakib 88). Living in Palestine afforded Kanafani the perspective of a Palestinian who was born and raised in his homeland. Experiencing the dissolution of Palestine gave Kanafani the perspective of a man without a country, whose life in Kuwait gave him the hope for a nation that he expresses in *Men in the Sun.*

One of the central issues discussed in *Men in the Sun* is the arduous journey undertaken by the three refugees and their passive death in the water tank in which they were being smuggled. The confinement of these men in a stifling, hot, narrow container as the vehicle approaches each of the various checkpoints reflects the agony the Palestinians experienced in the course of their journey across the border to a promised new life. One of the men admits that he knows it to take several minutes to pass through the checkpoints even if the driver has the necessary paperwork. The delay at the last checkpoint leads to the men's death, an ironic development given its occurrence so close to their final destination. Sadly, the death of the refugees is a passive act ending the active pursuit of a better life, a search for self-fulfillment that Kanafani criticizes, suggesting that self-fulfillment cannot be achieved individually. As Shadi Saleh Neimneh argues in "Postcolonial Arabic Fiction Revisited: Naturalism and Existentialism in Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*," Kanafani's critique of self-fulfillment is made apparent by "the men not shouting in the tank or banging[, which] also indicates their passive nature and

lack of revolutionary potential. In this regard, the men in the sun gave up the fight for their country and simultaneously accepted a quiet death outside Palestine" (478). The death of these three men can be interpreted as an ironic play of fate that they were so willing to experience since they risked their lives to seek material stability that costs the ultimate price. While the novella presents several themes, it is important to briefly discuss the concept of allegory, which is central to the study of literature and to understanding the overall themes of *Men in the Sun.*

The use of allegory within the context of literature, particularly older literature, is far from uncommon. Brenda Machosky writes, "There is general agreement that the term allegory refers to a way of saying or showing one thing and meaning another. This very definition reveals the particular phenomenology of allegory, an artistic or poetic structure in which some 'other thing' appears in the 'thing appearing' without being the same thing" (1). In an allegory, the author presents "a phenomenologically simultaneous appearance of two things in the same image, in the same 'space' at the same time" (Machosky 1). *Men in the Sun* uses allegories to describe the post-war Palestinian refugees' experience of humiliation and their attempts to escape from oppression. Within this context, the three protagonists of *Men in the Sun* are not simply refugees striving to make a better life for themselves and their families; they are simultaneously a representation of the oppressive experiences confronting the whole community of Palestinians living at home. The experiences that Kanafani allegorically describes to represent the difficulties faced by Palestinians include, inter alia, passing through checkpoints. These and other hurdles must be overcome in the task of working toward the creation of a unified home life, by whatever means necessary, even at the risk of an early death. Thus, from an allegorical standpoint, the death of the men, whilst passive and also apparently pointless, represents a

desperate effort to attain freedom at any cost and a final reckless attempt at regaining all that has been lost:

> The huge lorry was carrying them along the road, together with their dreams, their families, their hopes and ambitions, their misery and despair, their strength and weakness, their past and future, as if it were pushing against the immense door to a new, unknown destiny, and all eyes were fixed on the door's surface as if though bound to it by invisible threads" (*Men in the Sun* 63).

Although the three men fail to knock on the wall of the tank in extremis, signifying their passivity, their efforts in the search for a new beginning at all costs make plain their desperation.

Another allegorical feature used by Kanafani in the story is the presentation of time. The pointed attention paid to the use of time in the story reflects the precarious situation in which the refugees finds themselves. For instance, the time spent at each checkpoint on the way to the border is meticulously calculated and appraised, so that each minute is counted either toward the refugees' survival or untimely demise. When the characters emerge safely the first time, they discuss the period of their submergence in the airtight container with a great deal of anxiety. The moment is both brief and absolute since it could last for mere minutes or be never-ending. At each checkpoint, the brief stretch of time seems to elongate, and the relief of the men grows more palpable. This cyclical presentation of tension and relief becomes even more rending when presented from Abul Khaizuran's perspective at the conclusion of the final checkpoint: "As he let go of the disk he caught sight of the heads of the watch on his wrist. They pointed to nine minutes to twelve…Abdul Khaizuran's face, drawn to it, twitched compulsively, his lower lip trembling as he panted for breath, overcome with terror" (*Men in the Sun* 71). The watch on his wrist signifies the three men's destiny—a destiny determined by time. Therefore, Kanafani

utilizes time as factor controlling the three men's chances of survival. The longer the men remained in the tanker, the more remote became their chances of emerging alive.

While each of the men in the novella must repeatedly face this duality, where time is concerned, at each checkpoint, the presence of the same dilemma faced by those left behind undergirds the narrative. Kanafani shifts to the first-person point of view to depict the voice of the three characters and portray their dilemma:

> We'll be able to send Qais to school and buy one or two olive shoots. Perhaps we'll build a cottage to live in, which will be ours. I'm an old man; I may arrive or I may not. And do you think that the life you lead here is better than death? Why don't you try, as we do? Why don't you get up off that cushion and set out through God's world in search of a living? Will you spend the whole of your life eating the flour ration for one kilo of which you sacrifice all your honor at the doors of officials? (63)

In this crucial segment of the novella, Kanafani combines the points of view of the three characters through the first person. The reader has insight into the thoughts of Marwan, Abu Qais, and Assad and the motive behind their deadly journey. Each family left behind by each of the men must live days, moments, as though nothing has changed, yet the time spent waiting in the tank stretches into an eternity of not knowing, of wondering, of uncertainty. As argued by Muhsin Musawi in *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence*, "Ghassan Kanafani's downtrodden Palestinians who suffer the aftermath of Israeli occupation are in desperate need for survival. *In Rijal fi al-shams* (*Men in the Sun*), these people leave their families behind to find jobs and to sustain others back in refugee camps and occupied lands" (122). The decision to pursue such a journey signifies the extent of the desperation Kanafani depicts in the book. Throughout the journey, time passes differently for each individual. These time periods, these

moments, must be taken both within and out of context in order to fully grasp the enormity of what is being attempted, and the presentation of these moments through the eyes of a range of literary characters ensures that such an exploration may be conducted. While the allegorical nature of time in *Men in the Sun* is not absolute, this aspect is a means through which it becomes possible to recognize that the story is about more than just the dilemma of three Palestinian men, reflecting, instead, the plight of the entire Palestinian people. For some, it has been but an instant since Palestine was a country; for others, a span of almost seventy years has passed since Palestine was a nation. Still others reading *Men in the Sun* and Kanafani's other works would not yet have been born when Palestine was still in existence. In fact, some may be the children of individuals for whom the very concept of Palestine is an idea from a history book, as opposed to a factual country that existed during their lifetime. This juxtaposition of time is necessary to understand the true nature of what it means to be Palestinian, and this concept of time will continue to arise in the exploration and analysis of *Men in the Sun.*

In addition, the very nature of allegory is suggestive of the duality that one faces when examining the history of the Palestinian people. As Neimneh points out, "The viscerality of Kanafani's allegory underscores the novella's ultimate message about the fate of those who desert their homeland and try to find dignity elsewhere. At least, there might be more dignity to dying in one's country even if the odds are great" (484). This assertion reflects Kanafani's denunciation of the passiveness that can lead to the failure of resistance. The passiveness is portrayed on "another allegorical level, a visceral one in its shocking naturalistic end about the three corpses being thrown on a garbage heap in a desert dump after a horrible death inside a closed water tank. In this unconventional allegory, it is the bodies of the Palestinian men that serve as a witness to suffering" (Neimneh 484). While depicting and humanizing the plight of

Palestinians, Kanafani criticizes any form of settlement that does not involve resistance against the Zionist occupation.

Moreover, while some argue that *Men in the Sun* serves as a criticism of the silence of Arab leaders in relation to the situation in Palestine, this argument is not always supported by the evidence in the text. Kanafani may himself have been political in nature since the text serves as a means of shedding light on some of the circumstances Palestinians had to endure at the time. Yet nowhere in the text is there an indication of a judgment directed at those occupying positions of power who would not speak out regarding the situation of the Palestinians; however, "the underlying and subtle implication is his [Kanafani's] critique of any settlement other than struggle against occupation" (Musawi 122). By the same token, the novella is not political in nature in the sense that it neither deals with a political topic, nor takes a political position. The novella instead works to present information, allowing its readers to take from it what they will. Similarly, Al-Wadhaf sees *Men in the Sun* as a form of resistance that narrates the catastrophic events of a nation (111): "Kanafani had great faith in the need to narrate the story of his nation to resist the Zionists' constant efforts to eradicate Palestine from the global map and to erase the Palestinians from the international community" (111). Some will only look at the surface of the text, calling *Men in the Sun* a scathing indictment of the treatment of refugees. Others will view it as political in nature and call it a condemnation of those in power who would do nothing. Those who are willing to look beyond the surface of the text, viewing the themes and the story, seeing what is being presented instead of simply reading it, will look to the themes of the text and be able to decipher Kanafani's real intent in writing the novella.

Another unique characteristic of *Men in the Sun* is worthy of notice. While reading Kanafani's writings, one would have to logically conclude that there is a distinct absence of

cultural stability or hope of regaining a stable geographical land base to call home. In essence, even if Palestinians are a people without a homeland, this does not justify depriving them of their cultural heritage or history. In this sense, studying *Men in the Sun* through a postcolonial lens helps in "constructing national histories, or in suggesting comparative studies between stages in those histories" (Ashcroft et al. 2). That being said, there is a stark reality present in the works of Kanafani, including *Men in the Sun,* which is often characterized as a real, honest depiction of the Palestinian plight, "In a work of comparative brevity Kanafani manages to capture to the full the combination of anger and despair with which different generations of Palestinians confronted their bleak fate, either within the boundaries of the new Zionist state or in the diaspora of exile from their homeland" (Allen xi). There is a need for not only the historical recognition of Palestinians, but also for further understanding and education for many groups of Palestinian people.

Furthermore, as stated in the introduction, Smith identifies a number of specific aspects within postcolonial texts, including the claiming of cultural elements, the testimonies of members of the group, the practice of storytelling, the celebration of survival, remembrance, the ability to connect with other members of the group by reading through documents, writing down one's own stories for future generations, working to represent the group, and reframing the context in a way that makes it easier for younger generations to understand their histories (142–60). Kanafani's works corroborate Smith's arguments since they incorporate each of the specific elements mentioned above, constructing a medium through which it becomes possible for Palestinians to create imagined communities and preserve their history and traditions: "tradition survives in the form of indigenous ways of life, including story telling" (Musawi 123). In order

to explore such matter, it is first necessary to further explore the themes present in *Men in the Sun*. Land, opportunity, the road, the end, and hope are all strong themes within the text.

Land is a central theme in *Men in the Sun.* As Musawi states, "The postcolonial novel takes the land as trope and subject because the whole scope of the struggle revolves around the human and the land. Such is the case with…the Palestinian Ghassan Kanafani" (122). Kanafani complicates the definition of land by portraying the many roles played thereby: "The land, which the human fights for, may turn into a mother, a womb, or a purgatory" (Musawi 122). Abu Qais describes to his friend what he feels when he lies on the ground, "and the earth began to throb under him with tired heartbeats, which trembled through the grains of sand and penetrated the cells of his body" (*Men in the Sun* 21), personifying the earth as a living and breathing entity. However, his friend's response echoes Kanafani's attempt to internalize the land within characters, "It's the sound of your own heart" (*Men in the Sun* 21). The complexity of Abu Qais's description of the earth betrays how he has internalized "the land he left ten years ago" (*Men in the Sun* 21). While Abu Qais debates his reasons for having left his own land a decade ago, envying Ustaz Selim for having died the night before the occupation and calling it a "divine favor" (*Men in the Sun* 23), land becomes an internal purgatory "pushing its difficult way towards the light" (*Men in the Sun* 21). As is the case with many Palestinians, Abu Qais lost everything in the aftermath of *Al Nakbah*. He lost both the land and its trees that he recalls as symbols of the Palestinian identity. Al-Wadhaf asserts, "The presence of this symbol in the narrative and its existence in the memory of Abu Qais has a thematic function with regards to the creation of the Palestinian imagine community" (113). By narrating the importance of land, Kanafani contributes to the creation of an imagined community and Palestinian identity.

Another central theme in *Men in the Sun* is home. Each of the characters has a clear and definite picture of what home means to them, and the idea of home plays heavily into their testimonies, not only in the first few chapters as it provides the motivation for locating a people smuggler, but also in the later chapters where it serves as a means of fostering hope. The latter concept is the aim underlying every action taken by the characters in the novel. In one sense, the three men are fleeing their home—the land formerly known as Palestine—in an effort to reach Kuwait. In another sense, the men are fleeing that which is no longer their home, investing the sum of 15 dinars in a new land and a better life: "he felt he was holding the keys of his whole future" (*Men in the Sun* 33). In yet another sense, the only home that the men are concerned with is the one made with their families, and their efforts are directed toward the removal and betterment of that home to and in a new location, the attainment of items for their dwellings and families that could no longer be found in their former homeland. The final dimension of the home theme can also be linked to an additional theme: homelessness (Gunaydin 1247). The idea of homelessness is one that *Men in the Sun* resists by suggesting how Kanafani's main protagonist, Abu Qais, remains connected to his homeland even when he has been physically distant from it. Abu Qais may be hearing his own heart; but the land that was his home is a rhythm that beats within his heart so strongly it is transmuted into the pulsations of the very ground he lies on. He is one with his land, since the land was his home. However, in reality, Abu Qais is homeless even if he regards the ground as an extension of his home. This homelessness stems from the fact that the home of the three men in Kanafani's novella – and indeed that of all the populations who lived in the former land of Palestine – has been ripped away, creating a break between where they reside and what it means to be at home. Palestinians, in this sense, are "the victims of victims," as they have lost their homes and, in some cases, their lives, to those of

Jewish decent who so recently lost the same thing in World War II (Gunaydin 1247). Yet, though they have lost their home, Palestinians, like the three men in Kanafani's book, are still working toward the betterment of their lives.

Another major theme in *Men in the Sun* is opportunity. This theme must be viewed not only within the context of the Palestinian people on whom the story focuses, but in the context of other populations as well. Given the political climate and the events following World War II, the opportunity arose for those of the Jewish faith to take jobs within the region from the Palestinian population. Scholars such as Edward Said have defined such opportunity as Zionism, or the "unchanging idea that expresses the yearning for Jewish political and religious self--determination—for Jewish national selfhood—to be exercised on the promised land" (1). These Jewish individuals, who had everything taken from them, jumped at the opportunity for new jobs, to hold positions of leadership, and to gain political sway in the country after years of being without such advantage. Ignoring the fact that they were perpetrating on Palestinians the same kind of oppression to which they had been subjected in the recent past, these Jews took advantage of the economic opportunities in Palestine to the detriment of the other populations in the country. Therefore, "To the Palestinian…Zionism was somebody else's idea imported into Palestine and for which in a very concrete way he or she was made to pay and suffer" (Said 1). Zionism caused opportunity to dwindle for Palestine's native population, while creating the potential for new and awkward opportunities for Palestinians, such as those witnessed in *Men in the Sun*. Therefore, as Neimneh explains, "The Zionist occupation of Palestine…contributed to the ironic death of the three Palestinian refugees in the sun" (484). These opportunities were non-traditional ones, and, as *Men in the Sun* shows, were not always safe. Yet, by the same token, the riskier the opportunity, especially if it were taken, the greater its potential to lead to even less

safe opportunities both within and outside the new country. One of these opportunities was the potential to lure desperate Palestinian men to immigrate to foreign lands in search of better lives: "The men do leave their land, but they are driven by forces beyond their control, like poverty and lack of chances or official paperwork" (Neimneh 484). The lack of opportunity led many migrants to believe that, once they reached Kuwait, they would be able to provide substantial benefits not only for themselves, but for their families as well.

In addition to land, home and opportunity, the road is another central theme of critical importance in *Men in the Sun*. The road signifies the way in which the characters choose to resist the occupation: a passive act towards a future for themselves and families. While, as discussed previously, the three characters are willing to risk their lives for a better future, their choice is driven by self-interest rather than a desire for the collective liberation of Palestine. In this novella, Kanafani is keen on drawing attention to the passive postcolonial act of many Palestinians whose silence resulted in not only their own deaths, but also the death of the hope that Palestine might be regained. The three characters' acquiescence at the end of their road is portrayed through their choice to remain silent in the tank. Abul Khaizuran's rhetorical question, "Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you say anything? Why?", underscores the characters' passivity and failure to mount any resistance. By choosing this road and thereby ending their lives, Kanafani is "Suggesting that passivity is no longer tenable… the question rhetorically suggests a call for purposeful resistance that brings life in death" (Musawi123). The road taken by the three characters, while risky, is not a road towards purposeful resistance. The novella's closure marks the end of the road for the three characters. Neimneh asserts, "The novella makes the despicable end that the refugees face a 'just' punishment for the disgrace and humiliation they bring to their lives in trying to find life/dignity

outside Palestine" (477). Consequently, the road is crucial because it signifies Kanafani's lamentation about the existence of a road towards a passive acceptance of death.

To further demonstrate the submission of the three characters, their choice to remain silent is juxtaposed with the driver's cynicism. Abul Khaizuran had lost his manhood and fertility: "He and a number of armed men were running along when all hell exploded in front of him and he fell forward on his face" (*Men in the Sun* 53). Even after ten years, Abul Khaizuran has not succeeded in reconciling himself to the event that robbed him of his manhood and only admits to it via rhetorical questions:

> He had swallowed it with his pride, and examined it every moment of those ten years. And still he hadn't yet got used to it, he hadn't accepted it. For ten long years he had been trying to accept the situation? But what situation? To confess quite simply that he had lost his manhood while fighting for his country? And what good had it done? He had lost his manhood and his country, and damn everything else in this bloody world. (*Men in the Sun* 53)

Hence, Abul Khaizuran turns to trafficking people to Kuwait to make money in his own individual interest. Kanafani's description of Abul Khaizuran's experience isn't intended to contradict his critique of passive postcolonials, but to juxtapose the three men's death at the end with Abul Khaizuran's experience and to emphasize the questions raised by those deaths. For Abul Khaizuran, the three men's deaths "raise more questions that defy the driver's nihilism, his sense of futility and despair [and] awaken another consciousness that subsumes his nihilism, while propelling questioning" (Musawi123). It is these questions that Kanafani raises, calling attention to the postcolonial character whose choice of road signifies lassitude and the pursuit of individual interest rather than collective resistance.

As stated previously, Smith identified specific aspects within the text that could be applied within the context of the postcolonial analysis, including the claiming of cultural elements, the testimonies of members of the group, the practice of storytelling, the celebration of survival, remembrance, the ability to connect with other members of the group, reading through documents, writing down one's own stories for future generations, working to represent the group and reframing the context in a way that makes it easier for younger generations to understand, restoring histories, returning that which belongs to the group, creating a unified network, ensuring that relics are protected, identifying new relics, and sharing what one knows with other members of the given group (142–60). Within the context of *Men in the Sun*, looking at the matter from a postcolonial viewpoint, each of these elements is present.

The testimonies of the group members and the practice of storytelling are intertwined in *Men in the Sun*. While some of these testimonies are internally presented, as is the case with Abul Khaizuran's reflections on his lost manhood and his lamentations over his deceased passengers, others are shared among the individuals prior to their journey through the checkpoints. The presence of testimonies and storytelling is crucial to situating *Men in the Sun* within postcolonial theory. Musawi reiterates Smith's perspective on storytelling, concurring that "The practice is one of survival, and…is also one way of holding communal customs" (123); the testimonies and stories narrated in the text enable the characters to go forth with the journey. They also enable Kanafani to tell the stories of Palestinians and their struggles and, most importantly, maintain a record of their past and present through the *Men in the Sun*. By utilizing the three refugees, Kanafani establishes an important record and account of Palestinian misery following the occupation: "Using the three exiles as narrators along with the driver Abu al-

Khayzaran, the writer manipulates the past and the present to their lives so as to account for their present misery and misfortune" (Musawi 122).

The issue of remembrance within *Men in the Sun* is multifaceted. The men, including the trafficker, not only remember each step of the way on their journey towards Kuwait, but also remember what life was like prior to the occupation of Palestine. As Al-Wadhaf argues, "Memory plays a significant role in shaping [characters'] sense of identity as a Palestinian" (113). Each has his own memories, and each of those memories is tied to the reasons motivating the individual to complete the task of reaching Kuwait. In addition, memory travels with the characters as they narrate various incidents, such as that concerning Shafiqa, who "was an adolescent when a mortar bomb smashed her leg and the doctors amputated it from the top of the thigh" and Abul Khaizuran who lay with "His legs…suspended in the air…the terrible pain…still plunging between his thighs" and Assad, who encounters an officer who "[spits] in his face...and the saliva ran slowly down his forehead and fathered on the tip of his nose in a nasty viscous mess" (*Men in the Sun* 64). The narrator presents each of these memories as the truck continues to travel. Kanafani utilizes narrative techniques as he presents each of these memories, starting and ending each memory by repeating, "The lorry traveled on over the burning earth" (*Men in the Sun* 64), to create a parallel between the movement of the memories and the movement of the truck. Therefore, memory becomes a living, breathing entity travelling alongside each character.

*Men in the Sun* demonstrates the ability of all three men being trafficked to connect with one another, allowing for the formation of a bond with other members of the group, in line with what Smith identifies as a definitive aspect of postcolonial literature. The individuals being smuggled are even able to connect with Abul Khaizuran, the smuggler. Through the

aforementioned testimonies, established connections become essential for survival: "The practice is one of survival, and it is also one way of holding communal customs" (Musawi 123). From an alternative perspective, it can be argued that *Men in the Sun* itself is a means through which Kanafani was able to connect with other Palestinians. By presenting a shared story and working to foster an additional sense of community, he projects the idea that he sees the plight of Palestinians, that he acknowledges that plight, and that, through his writing, he is working to make that plight heard. In addition, Kanafani's works contributed to answering a crucial question during the 1960s. Nassar explains, "A central question being debated throughout this period was the role that literature should play in mobilizing people to the cause of justice at home and abroad" (6). In this sense, Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* serves to connect and mobilize Palestinians both within the occupied territory and displaced therefrom. Through reading the story, the reader is likewise able to connect with others through the deeper understanding of the Palestinian culture afforded by the story itself, thus creating an imagined community.

Returning to the more traditional analysis of the text itself, the representation of the Palestinian people is clear within the context of *Men in the Sun*. Aspects of what it means to be Palestinian are present on each page: in each action taken by each character, "Ghassan Kanafani prophetically sums up the Palestinian ordeal in its postcolonial ramifications…" (Musawi 123). Given the continued relevance of this text, there is a need to reframe the material for younger generations to understand. Since the translation of the text into English and other languages has served to increase its accessibility, it has allowed for a presentation of the information in a manner more readily understood by younger generations. It has also opened the text to a far larger audience than the very narrow and specific one presupposed by the original Arabic. This additional translation should not be seen as a departure from Palestinian culture. Instead, it

should be perceived as a desire for those of the Palestinian culture to make the subject matter more accessible to others, while providing a way for those who have left the region to maintain aspects of their own heritage and history that may otherwise have been lost in an attempt to assimilate into their new homes. When looking at the retention of one's ancestral language, "just four in ten second generation Asian Americans [are able to speak] their parents' native tongue" (Pew Research Center 1). This loss of language works to contribute to the loss of other cultural aspects; in translating Kanafani's tales to English, that loss can be ameliorated, allowing younger generations to understand what it means to be Palestinian. Through a translated version of *Men in the Sun*, new generations are able to understand the plight of Palestinians and the aftermath of *Al Nakbah*. As argued by Al-Wadhaf,

> through his depiction of war victims, displaced people, orphan children born and growing up in refugee camps, and women without their men, Kanafani proposes a national narrative of loss, humiliation and exploitation. It is not the narrative of Abu Qais, Assad, Marwan, Shafiqa or Abul Khaizuran, but also the narrative of all the Palestinians. (117)

Through the act of translating Kanafani's work to English, it becomes possible for *Men in the Sun* to maintain history, portray real aspects thereof, and establish a national narrative that transcends time and place.

The question of returning what belongs to the group is likewise present in this regard through something that is now referred to as the Kanafani Effect (Abu-Remaileh 190). The Kanafani effect refers to studies of Palestinian literature and history through his works, exploring both his journalistic articles and his books in addition to the translations of those works to the silver screen. The presentation afforded as a result of the Kanafani Effect is what it means to be Palestinian. With reference to the Kanafani Effect, Palestinians have been described through

"everyday resistance …expressions of freedom, satire, self-criticism and humor," allowing for an interpretation of the "multilayered images" present within Kanafani's works "so as to construct meanings that cannot be hijacked by language or confined by oppression" (Abu-Remaileh 190). Through the operation of the Kanafani Effect, Kanafani's work is able to return the cultural sense of what it means to be Palestinian to Palestinians. His work, including *Men in the Sun*, serves as a means of creating a unified network of people intent on preserving Palestinian culture. Through this network, those interested in Palestinian culture and those of the Palestinian culture are able to learn and explore what it means to be of that culture, which in turn allows for the sustainment of the culture itself.

In conclusion, while *Men in the Sun* can be viewed as a classical postcolonial literary work, the novella provides a clear sense of Kanafani's mission through his writing. While depicting the struggles of Palestinians, he also offers a frank assessment of the destiny awaiting those who seek self-fulfillment and do not actively fight for the land. As seen in the end, the three characters are dumped in the garbage, without an identity, home, or solution, "Holding them by their feet, he dragged the corpses one by one threw them onto the end of the road, where the municipality's dustcarts usually stopped to dump their rubbish" (*Men in the Sun* 73). The ending presented here, which stands in contrast to the endings discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, is purposeful. In *Men in the Sun,* "the three Palestinian generations, the persona of the driver, and the water tanker…are not mere narrative devices but are inherent to the story of Palestine itself. In other words, there is no identity outside the framework of the relationship to the land" (Khoury 87). Thus, while Kanafani depicts the struggle of the postcolonial Palestinian, he also offers a strong critique of those who have detached themselves from their homeland—Palestine—in pursuit of individual opportunity. The question "Why didn't they knock" suggests

not only the ending of the novella, but also the acquiescence of the three characters to their fate in their lack of resistance in pursuit of liberation for themselves and their country. Furthermore, and most importantly, Al-Wadhaf asserts,

> It is important to mention that Kanafani, by writing such fiction, deconstructs the Israeli master narrative that negates and annihilates the Palestinians. Such deconstructionist approach on the part of the writer and his text reflects a great believe in the power of narrating one's history and nation to claim and re-assert one's deprived rights in country, land, nation and above all in survival" (117).

Kanafani's masterful narration of a nation and critique of the passive postcolonial is what renders him a strong writer.

# CHAPTER 2:

## The Postcolonial Identity in All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories

Following the success of *Men in the Sun*, Kanafani published *All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories*. The collection includes a novella and several short stories in which Kanafani employs his creative literary techniques to explore the notion of identity. What readers observe through this collection are the effects of occupation and exile on individuals in search of a better life and the fatal search for individual identity. Kanafani depicts the unsuccessful journey taken by many Palestinian characters towards the attainment of identity and self-fulfillment. The journey each character takes portrays the various and difficult paths faced by many Palestinians after the occupation as they were confronted with disappointments and failures that compromised their lives. Kanafani's *All That's Left to You* is a portrayal of Kanafani's call for the creation of a national identity rather than the pursuit of self-fulfillment.

*All That's Left to You* is a novella about a young Palestinian, Hamid, who lives in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip with his sister and aunt. Hamid decides to travel through the desert to find his mother after learning that his unmarried older sister (Maryam) disgraced the family by sleeping with Zakaria, who conspires with the enemy. Hamid's family has been scattered in the aftermath of the 1948 war: his father has been killed and his mother has been displaced in Jordan. The narrative structure and point of view shifts throughout the novella and even within paragraphs, creating a masterpiece of literary complexity.

The novella takes place over a period of eighteen hours during which both Hamid and Maryam undergo an identity shift by having to confront their enemies. Having allowed Zakaria to impregnate her, Maryam sits facing a ticking wall clock, signifying the passage of time throughout the night while her mind is occupied with her brother. The crisis of the novella occurs

when Hamid and Maryam simultaneously face their enemies: Hamid runs into an Israeli soldier and Maryam confronts Zakaria, who wants her to abort their unborn child.

*All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories* is set in 1956 and sheds light on the life of Palestinians in refugee camps and those scattered throughout neighboring countries. As Ibrahim El-Hussari argues in "The Symbolic Conflation of Space and Time in Ghassan Kanafani's Novel *Ma Tabaqqa la-Kum (All That's Left to You*)," Hamid is "Disgraced by the Israeli occupation humiliating his people in 1956" (1008) as well as by the traitor's impregnation of his sister and, therefore, decides to seek both identity and refuge by crossing the desert in search of his mother.

Within another crucial historical context, it is important to note that, while *Men in the Sun* ends with a call "for a change at the national project level" (1013) rather than a "silently and cheaply" passive death (1013), *All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories* portrays a hopeful attempt that does not fully materialize, because Palestinians are still searching for an individual identity rather than a national one. While the Palestine Liberation Movement was gaining a tremendous amount of support in 1967, "The gap between dreams and aspirations nourished on past memories and the immediacy of the present situation, viewed in *Men in the Sun* as too wide for a significant transformation to take final shape in space and time, is in *All That's Left to You* a shot in the dark stirring the quiet of the timeless space where the national project is supposed to thrive" (El-Hussari 1013). Kanafani communicates his message clearly. The message is that "individuals not united into a nation cannot achieve anything. They grow weaker and seek individual salvation, only to wretchedly die in the process" (Neimneh 483). The following analysis of *All That's Left to You* and selected short stories will show how those who seek individual identity and salvation will end up paying a great price.

In *All That's Left to You* and the short stories included in the collection, Kanafani develops various characters in order to portray the journey they take when there is nothing left to them except an identity that may perhaps provide temporary solace amongst inexorable circumstances. Within a postcolonial framework, the issue of identity is critical. As Dizayi states, "The question of identity in postcolonial novel is a focal point in which imaging the crisis and the conflict of the colonized's struggle to find a way for the identification between the previous native heritage and history and the power of dominant culture that's imposed by the colonizers" (1002). However, the journey towards individual identity, as depicted by Kanafani, is a fatal one because it is not a struggle towards a collective national identity. Furthermore, Kanafani is not concerned with the conclusion of the journey as much as the journey itself. In this vein, Muhsin Al Musawi, in *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel,* argues that "In postcolonial narratives, the national issue is there, but it is mostly posited in a relational nexus whereby the need for individual freedom is highlighted and the counter-assertion of identity takes place in the most unexpected manner. The human agent assumes significance and secures a position even in the most disturbing sites" (33). As witnessed in the novella and the various short stories discussed in this chapter, the characters' voyage in search of self-identity is the focus within these texts, as their consummation is always presented abruptly and without much detail. In the novella, *All That's Left to You,* Kanafani employs several techniques to present the journey of a character attempting to uphold his dignity and identity. In other words, the character's attempt to define himself through his passage across the desert confers on him a newfound sense of sovereignty after he has lost everything he had possessed. However, this character's attempt is met with failure and an abrupt death, revealing Kanafani's underlying belief that the search for self-identity rather than collective identity is futile.

Moreover, *All That's Left to You* and the short stories that accompany the novella feature one major theme that Kanafani brilliantly illustrates through various techniques. Discussing Kanafani's use of these techniques, Al Musawi states, "The postcolonial's search for one's individual identity is counterproductive as it does not uphold or value a collective Palestinian identity." Rather, the characters surrender to a reality imposed by occupation and choose to search for self-identity "in the most disturbing sites" (Al Musawi 33). Since "identity undergoes challenge whenever there is an immediate encounter," (Al Musawi 32) Kanafani portrays the consequences of occupation and the struggles of the postcolonial Palestinians who were either exiled or displaced from their homeland through the placement of the short stories that accompany the novella. The title, *All That's Left to You*, highlights the thread that binds the novella to the other stories in Kanafani's collection, which also depict the plight of Palestinians who have nothing left to them aside from an identity that they can govern within their bodies and minds.

## *All That's Left to You*

A beautifully crafted novella, *All That's Left to You* reflects Kanafani's most mature literary techniques as he applies elements such as symbolism, setting, characters, and point of view to situate the reader in the minds of those displaced characters whose lives reflect the defeat that many Palestinians witnessed in 1967. The attention received by *Men in the Sun* has left *All That's Left to You* "somewhat in the shadow of the earlier work… [although *All That's Left to You* is] an equally successful essay in fiction, and indeed, from the point of view of modern experimental techniques in Arabic fiction, a distinct advance" (Allen xii). *All That's Left to You* tells the story of Maryam, who has shamed her brother Hamid by engaging in a sexual relationship with Zakaria, whom she later marries, and Hamid himself, whose dignity and honor

have been compromised by her actions. The novella is set in a period of approximately 18 hours during which the reader is taken through the minds of each character. Kanafani switches between the narrations of five main characters: Hamid, Maryam, Zakaria, Time and the Desert. These switches, which are at times abrupt, serve a variety of purposes. In using this narrative strategy in *All That's Left to You*, Kanafani aims to portray the uncertainties and disorientation in the lives of Palestinians, the disconnection in their sense of community, and the fact that solely the connections between individuals hold the society together.

As the reader journeys through the complexities of narrations in this novella, he or she is often forced to stop and wonder who's telling the story. One example of the uncertainty created by the complex narrative structure is as follows:

> A dog started howling, and before long the noise was coming from all directions, an extended sequence of howls. Through it all I could hear a fiendish roar, but it was impossible to pinpoint the direction it came from…/Suddenly it moved for the third time. The tiny double movement inside me felt like a shudder, then it moved downwards to my thighs and knees. I closed my eyes for an instant. Then he started up again, mercilessly: "Did you hear what I said to you?" He shook me repeatedly, reiterating, "Tell me you've understood." Abruptly he pulled me to him then flung me towards the wall. Before he could turn round I'd crashed into it. / With its long glowing blade, the knife flashed in front of me…/There it is, on the table. I came bouncing off the wall towards it, like a rubber doll. My fists grabbed the knife, each hand pressing on the handle, tense and sure of purpose. We rushed together in a head-on confrontation, each looking the other straight in the eye. The blade projected from my tightly closed hands. /I felt it plunging into him as we collided together. (49)

The abrupt narrative transition and the depiction of parallel and simultaneous events leading to the climax of the novella are both appropriate to and effective in portraying the situation of Palestinians. As Abu-Manneh argues in *The Palestinian Novel*, "doubt and disorientation are experienced and embodied in the text's form not just realistically narrated" (81). To paint a true reflection of the Palestinian situation, Kanafani refrains from using traditional narrative techniques. Instead, "Narrative causality and development is replaced by the intersectionality and the constellation of unrelated events happening simultaneously that need to be understood in relation to each other" (Abu-Manneh 81). Consequently, in each of Kanafani's dual narrations, the protagonist confronts an antagonist. In Maryam's case, her husband becomes the enemy, as he is the one who seduces her and, in turn, causes her to bring shame on her brother. This develops into the physical fight depicted in the quotation above, wherein Maryam struggles against her husband who's attempting to force her to abort the "little bastard." Before discussing the importance and symbolism of the altercation over aborting the child, it must be noted that the abrupt changes in narration, time, and place reflect two important points that Kanafani aims to make: firstly, in a state of displacement and exile, time and place are not important; and, secondly, uncertainty, confusion, and lack of coherence form an integral part of the daily reality facing Palestinians. Describing the lives of Palestinians in similar ways, Roger Allen writes,

> In the wake of the appalling defeat of 1967, the so-called naksa ('setback'), many things were changed for ever in the Arab World. A period of intense and agonizing soul-searching, settling of the accounts with both present and past and plotting of future developments was the result of this wholesale disaster. (xiv)

The inner uncertainty faced by the Palestinian people is highlighted through the narrative techniques that Kanafani employs in *All That's Left to You.* In many ways, the switch between

narrators leaves the reader uncertain at various times, reflecting the uncertainty experienced the characters themselves. Other than the feeling of uncertainty, the narration leads the reader to question the identity of the storyteller and the true sequence of events. The reader also notices that all of the characters are involved in concurrent struggles. These impressions are congruent with Kanafani's argument that knowing where, when, and for whom a story is written is not essential. For Kanafani, what is important is that his stories reflect the situation of displaced Palestinians who are involved in a struggle against an enemy. While Kanafani states in the 'Clarification' section of the novella that the transition between narrators is marked, "it gives the impression of assigning a deliberate order to a world which actually has none" (xxi). Out of a world in which nothing is left and "All that is left…are pieces and events, fragments to relate to one another" (Abu-Manneh 81), Kanafani creates an organized chaos.

In addition to its narrative complexity, another quality of *All That's Left to You* is the manner in which Kanafani presents Hamid, whose journey in search of identity, dignity, and self-fulfillment commences at the beginning of the novella. We quickly learn that, despite feeling strong, Hamid has embarked on his path through the desert with an overwhelming sense of helplessness. These feelings are apparent in the following passage of the novella: "He [Hamid] continued on his way, hearing the stifled swish of his feet as they met the sand, and, as he did so, he recalled the feelings that always filled his breast whenever he threw himself into the waves: strong, immense, utterly solid, and yet at the same time possessed of a total and shattering impotence" (*All That's Left to You* 1–2). The notion of being possessed with a sense of helplessness at the outset of a journey reiterates Kanafani's point regarding the search for identity. While all that's left for Hamid is this journey, a part of him recognizes the vulnerability that accompanies his decision to depart from his homeland. As Hilary Kilpatrick argues in

"Tradition and Innovation in the Fiction of Ghassan Kanafani", Hamid's complex reality as an exile is portrayed through "his helplessness and insignificance against the forces of nature, and at the same time his courage in going unarmed and unguided into the trackless wastes" (60).

It is worth noting that the events preceding Hamid's journey had given him nothing but the hope of finding himself or regaining a sense of control by choosing to leave everything behind and venture into the desert. The ensuing events themselves function as symbols of a Palestinian land that has been colonized. In this case, Hamid's sister, Maryam, has been taken advantage of— colonized—by Zakaria, who has impregnated her. Kanafani writes, "Everyone there knew very well that it wasn't that he was giving her away, but that she was pregnant, and that the swine who was to be his brother-in-law was sitting next to him, audibly laughing inside" (*All That's Left to You* 2). Hamid, in utter despair, dishonored by his sister, and finding nothing left for himself in Gaza, decides to journey through the desert towards Jordan despite the danger the voyage presents. "Hamid's despair has its origins in the Palestinian crisis, beginning with the death of his father, who was killed during the armed resistance that preceded the war of 1948" (Azouqa 163). Although a part of him wishes that his sister would call for him to return as he walks out, Hamid hears nothing. His sister's silence symbolizes Palestinians' inability to call back those who have left in search of dignity or identity:

> As he went down the steps, he wanted to hear a sound, to hear his sister's voice calling out to him—'Hamid, come back.' He wanted her to cry out, to say something. But the only sound he heard was the sound of his own footsteps clattering down the stairs. Even before he'd reached the street, he heard the door slam behind him. No solicitous word broke the silence. (*All That's Left to You* 5)

The silence that greets Hamid's departure contributes to this character's function as a symbol of Palestine. To understand how Maryam herself is a symbol of Palestine, one must pay attention to how her character perceives herself and most importantly, how she is regarded by Zakaria. Maryam laments her inability to view her body in its entirety because there isn't a mirror large enough to reflect her whole physique:

> There wasn't a single large mirror in the house in which I could look at all my body at once. All I could see was my face. When I moved the mirror, the images of my breasts, my belly, my thighs, would appear as a series of disconnected parts belonging to the disembodied figure of a girl being paid the last rites by the merciless mocking beat of the clock's pendulum against the wall. (*All That's Left to You* 11–12)

The description of Maryam's physique as a series of disconnected parts and a figure without a body provides a true reflection of Palestine and the way it has been fragmented by colonization. Kanafani's use of a female body to represent Palestine is effective as it further emphasizes the idea of a fruitful land through the trope of an expectant woman. As persuasively argued by Amy Zalman in "Gender and the Palestinian Narrative of Return in Two Novels by Ghassan Kanafani," Kanafani intertwines Palestine with the female body (32). "In the process of telling this story [*All That's Left to You*], Kanafani rendered both the female body and Palestine as interchangeable metaphors of a 'fertile land,' whose fecundity must be yoked to the national cause" (32).

Moreover, while Kanafani's revolutionary characters are most often male, in *All That's Left to You*, the role of women is highlighted. In "Engendering Resistance in the Work of Ghassan Kanafani: *All That's Left to You*, *Of Men and Guns*, and *Umm Sa'D*" Nancy Coffin reiterates Zalman's view, arguing that Kanafani "hints that the role of women in the revolution is

not entirely marginal (101). Maryam's inability to view her full body reflects Palestine's inability to be an intact nation. Kanafani's narrative is clear on the role of women. In the text, "The image of women as 'mother-land' and 'nation' is apparent from the very outset" (Al-Wadhaf 116). As seen in *Men in the Sun*, "Women characters that populate the narrative space of this novel personify the nation better than the male characters do" (Al-Wadhaf 116). The disembodied figure, or nation, symbolizes the ways in which Hamid and many others are unable to attain a sense of nation and therefore, leave it behind: a "fractured body cannot be taken neutrally for it stands for the part of Palestine that was taken and given to the Zionist occupiers in what is politically known as the UN 1947 Partition Resolution" (Al-Wadhaf 116). In having lost a whole nation or an image of completeness (as lamented by Maryam), Hamid is forced to search for identity, dignity and a sense of power by undertaking a journey through which he seeks a means of maintaining control.

Kanafani further extends the symbolism and the correlation between a fruitful land and a coveted woman through Zakaria's words to Maryam: "'your body's a fertile land, you little devil, a fertile land, I tell you!'" (*All That's Left to You* 13). As Maryam recalls what Zakaria whispers in her ears as they engage in another sexual encounter, she realizes that she had surrendered to the "feeling of ecstasy" that had enveloped her body. Zakaria interrupts Maryam's narration to add, "A fertile land, sown with illusion and unknown prospects" (*All That's Left to You* 14). Therefore, one of the most critical depictions of Maryam is through the narration of Zakaria, where strength and power are represented by her fertile body. Zakaria perceives Maryam as a land of opportunity and mystery to be discovered, which is the purpose of his colonization of her. The juxtaposition of Zakaria's character as a traitor with Maryam's position

as a victim highlights her status as a symbol of the Palestinian crisis. As Aida Azouqa points out, "Maryam's personal problems … are a consequence of the Palestinian crisis" (164).

Having conquered Maryam, Zakaria becomes an enemy to Hamid, who defines himself through his sister. Talking about his sister, Hamid says, "You were everything to me" (*All That's Left to You* 2). Once Maryam, who is the symbol of both land and Palestine, has been colonized and impregnated by the enemy, Hamid feels a sense of utter loss. All that is left for him is the choice to journey through the desert in an attempt to regain control, dignity, identity, and an imagined community that could console him through his bereavement. However, while Hamid's journey "is motivated by his anger at Maryam's situation," his motive is not a reflection of "any commitment to the Palestinian cause" (Azouqa166). This is evident in the desert's response to Hamid's journey. Kanafani writes, "[T]he depth of his [Hamid's] feelings was no business of mine. My concern is with direction, and he'd taken the wrong one, to his great disadvantage" (*All That's Left to You* 12). The direction chosen by Hamid is what Kanafani depicts as the search for individual identity rather than a collective one in aid of the Palestinian cause.

In addition, Kanafani's characters reflect a preoccupation with the notion of searching for identity and self-fulfillment away from Palestine. Through their failures, shortcomings, and frequently hopeless journeys, the reader can clearly see that, in order to find an identity, one must embrace and remain rooted in land. This is evident through Hamid's and Maryam's journeys through the 18 hours of the novella; their preoccupation with time "conveys how Palestinians 'are preoccupied with the land and [how] the ticking away of and minutes... [works] to their disadvantage" (Azouqa 168–69). For Kanafani, while the journey out of Palestine might provide temporary fulfillment, it is a false attainment; in contrast, remaining rooted in the land, although deadly, represents true success.

Hamid, having left behind both his sister and Gaza, embraces the desert, which also functions as a character in the novella: "[W]ithout fear and without hesitation, he [Hamid] flung himself to the ground and felt it like a virgin quiver beneath him… He dug his fingers into the flesh of the earth, feeling its heat flowing into his body. If only my mother was here, he reflected" (*All That's Left to You* 6). Here, the reader witnesses how Hamid takes refuge in the desert and conceals his fears of the vast empty place. The desert here is alive; Kanafani personifies the land, writing "flesh of the earth" and "the earth was breathing directly into his face." Yet, the desert neither provides Hamid with an adequate refuge, nor offers him the sense of self and dignity he aspires to. On the contrary, as readers, we know that Hamid's journey through the desert is not fruitful. Through this paradox, "Kanafani depicts the impact of the trauma of exodus on the formation of Hamid's identity" (Azouqa 166). Hamid and the soldier encounter a pack of dogs. Although the Jew is killed, the reader is left uncertain of Hamid's fate.

By contrast, Maryam, who remains in Palestine, fights her battle with the enemy alone: the "bastard" child she carries due to Zakaria's conquest of her body is aborted at the end of the novella: "Suddenly it moved for the third time. The tiny double movement inside me felt like a shudder, then it moved downwards to my thighs and knees" (*All That's Left to You* 49). The imagery utilized to describe the abortion of the child reflects the sudden loss that overcomes Maryam the instant the fetus finds its way out of her body and onto her knees. Maryam's subsequent murder of Zakaria suggests her victory and self-fulfillment. "Maryam kills him [Zakaria] when he demands that she abort her unborn child. In this respect, Maryam represents Palestine, while the elimination of Zakaria represents ridding the nation of its traitors" (Azouqa169). Kanafani uses similar imagery to represent Maryam's fulfillment as a consequence

of the murder; by vanquishing her antagonist, Maryam succeeds in restoring her honor and welcomes a new day:

> But I gripped him by the shoulders; and, placing my knee against his back, I pushed him with all my strength against the wall. I heard the sound of the blade turning in him, together with the noise of the wooden handle as it scraped menacingly against the wall. He snorted as though awakening from sleep, and I could hear the blood hissing out in jets around the blade. Then he shuddered and collapsed heavily at the foot of the table. A narrow band of sunlight came through the window, lighting up a thin trail of blood that zigzagged across the brilliant and white kitchen tiles.

The words, such as "scarped menacingly" and "blood hissing," used to describe Zakaria's death emphasize the ugliness of this character's end. Both the "bastard" child and his father are dead, bringing a new day and "sunlight" into Maryam's home. Meanwhile, Hamid, who abandoned Gaza, his sister, and his land in search of his own self-interest remains helpless and hopeless in the desert. The cliffhanger on which the novella ends reinforces the uncertainty surrounding Hamid's fate. Yet, from her own perspective, Maryam achieves an honorable victory once she is courageous enough to stand up for herself. "By killing Zakariyya, she not only does away with an internal political enemy, but at the same time, she also strikes a blow against patriarchy" (Coffin 108).

In addition, *All That's Left to You* depicts the lives of many Palestinians who remained in their homeland or who walked away therefrom in search of a better world or, at least, a sense of self-identity. The two groups share a common identity in that they are both postcolonial. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that constructing an identity leads to a sense of liberation, even if the postcolonial remains a subject of repression (218). Throughout *All That's Left to You*,

the phrase “If only mother was here” is repeatedly uttered by both Hamid and Maryam. Their mother is discovered in Jordan after having been displaced. Her displacement signifies both her distance from her own children and the similar separations that many Palestinians have experienced due to Israel’s occupation of their homeland. While Hamid decides to cross the desert to reach his mother in Jordan, Maryam remains in Gaza, in the motherland. The absence of mother, home, and land is evident throughout the novella and has drastic consequences on the children’s relations with Palestine. For instance, by leaving Gaza, Hamid abandons the motherland, or the figurative “mother” of the Palestinians. Revealing the parallel between Hamid and Palestinians as a people, Kanafani uses Hamid to suggest the futility of Palestinians searching for temporary fulfillment and Maryam to represent the victory of those who remain in the land. Azouqa asserts, “Maryam’s personal problems, like Hamid’s conflicts, are a consequence of the Palestinian crisis” (164). However, Maryam’s victory reflects her search for a collective national identity, “her status, and her body, are newly yoked to the cyclical time of reproduction” (Zalman 34), while Hamid’s failure in the desert reveals the futility of his search for an individual identity apart from Palestine.

## “In My Funeral”

Kanafani’s characters continue their search for identity in various settings and through different vessels. In the short story “In My Funeral,” the reader learns about the misery of a man dying from a blood disease. Having struggled all his life in hope of a better future, he denies himself everything in the faith that the outcome will surprise him. Having endured a bitter childhood, the man has retained an optimistic hope that the future would repay him all that he had been deprived of as a child. He says,

> I used to go hungry in hope of better days to come. I wanted so much to reach that day in the future, and the insignificance of my life was informed only by the profound hope that heaven was not boundless in its cruelty; and that the child on whose lips the smile of security had died one day would not spend his entire life scattered like an October cloud, grey like a valley riddled with mist, and lost like a sun which cannot break through the obscuring horizon ("In My Funeral" 52).

Deferring hope and meaning to the future, the protagonist of "In My Funeral" believed that what he had diligently worked for during his younger years would ensure him self-satisfaction and gratitude in the long run. Yet, now the future has arrived, and life has proven to be devoid of meaning and value: "Everything in life has proved contrary to a child's expectations. The years have passed slowly and painfully … Everything presented an obstacle, and everyone he encountered contributed to his load and left him oppressed by a bitter feeling of inadequacy and unfulfillment" (52). Kanafani places much importance on the notion of lack of self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction through his description of the protagonist's self-perception. Life has been a complete misery, "scattered like an October cloud, grey like a valley riddled with mist" (51); the man has lived like a "sun which cannot break through the obscuring horizon" (52). This inability to exist, to be, to define oneself is central to Kanafani's purpose as he aims to depict the complexity of identity formation. As discussed by Muhsin Al Musawi in *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel*, "Identity crises is real as it never before, and the challenge to formations and malformations has already worked its way into narrative strategies" (33). Kanafani's narrative techniques are evident when the reader's sympathy is aroused on learning that the speaker has been diagnosed with a disease of the blood that has overcome him both physically and mentally.

Displaced and exiled in "another country," the man has been trying to retain his faith in the future, to gain what he had lost and hoped for as a child. Clearly, this character is a symbol of many Palestinians, especially those living in rural areas, whose identities have been challenged by their socio-political context. Discussing the predicament of these populations, Al Musawi observes, "Societies, and also rural communities, may find it absurd to emphasize the obvious, but identity undergoes challenge whenever there is an immediate encounter" (32). As the reader is taken into the speaker's mind, he or she learns that this displaced character's search for self-fulfillment and a glimpse of happiness is hopeless. As is the case with many other figures presented in Kanafani's collection of short stories, this character, who has lost everything, defines himself in relation to a woman he meets at a party. Kanafani writes, "We met at a small party, and when my eyes first encountered yours, I felt the accumulated sufferings of my childhood disappear" ("In My Funeral" 52). The woman becomes a vessel in which the speaker can define himself, erase all his childhood's miseries and happily relive his early youth. Kanafani juxtaposes the speaker's feelings of inadequacy and lack of self-identity in a climactic encounter with this woman. The protagonist explains, "The more I saw you, the greater was my recognition of self-identity" (52). As he falls in love with the woman, the protagonist begins to define himself through her, hanging his entire being and life on her presence in his life. She becomes the source of his beating heart and the light that has been missing from his life:

> Then I came to love you with the resolution of one who seeks anchorage, and with the throbbing of a heart that has suffered all its life, and with the strength of a man who has undergone vagrancy and privation just for this exultant moment of triumph. You were the lighthouse sighted by a lost boat. I held on to this discovery with the tenacity of one who longs for rest and tranquility. (53)

The speaker depersonalizes himself as having been an object, "a lost boat", and, thus, seems to perceive the woman he loves as the solution to all miseries, the cure for an empty heart, the source of life and the definition of his own being. Examining the importance placed on the woman's appearance in the speaker's life reveals two aims that Kanafani wishes to accomplish: firstly, he wishes to inflate the importance of the empty vessels to which various displaced and exiled characters cling—in this case, the woman, and, secondly, he demonstrates that the act of defining one's self through another human is insufficient and leads only to further misery. Both aims are accomplished through this short story, as the woman's inflated importance is later juxtaposed with her bold gestures and quick departure from the speaker's life: "And then the door swallowed you, the days too, and you disappeared …you left me with an unrelieved torment, faced the naked walls, and hurried away" ("In My Funeral" 57). The speaker faces even greater torment when the woman leaves him as his only attempt at finding dignity has been defeated by the object of his affection's departure, leaving him undefined and without either identity or hope. While the speaker's attachment to the woman's fleeting presence in his life is both unexpected and exaggerated, it makes sense within a postcolonial framework. As Al Musawi states, "In postcolonial narratives, the national issue is there, but it is mostly posited in a relational nexus whereby the need for individual freedom is highlighted and the counter-assertion of identity takes place in the most unexpected manner" (33). The speaker's definition of himself through the woman suggests the extent to which he and other Palestinians are desperate to overcome the misery and emptiness they face due to their displacement from their homeland. Moreover, in "In My Funeral," Kanafani employs other elements to depict the lives of displaced Palestinians and the agony and lack of meaning that accompanies displacement to "another

country." One of these elements is contrast, which is used by the speaker when he refers to his experience of living outside of his homeland:

> It was in another country that I earned my harsh subsistence, a place that had everything and nothing, that same country which gave you everything in order to deny it. In that remote place even the sunsets were colored with a frightening deprivation and the mornings brought the glare of remorseless anxiety. (53)

Through this description, the speaker brings to mind the numberless Palestinians who have sought refuge in "other countries" in the hopes of bettering their lot or, at least, with the wish to redefine themselves. While "the other country" offers everything material, it tends to be void and meaningless for these migrants. While "the other country" gives the Palestinians much, it does so only to deny them these privileges again. This paradox is made apparent through the relationship between the man and the woman he loves. She gives the speaker self-identity, then walks away with it. By representing the man's relationships with this woman in such a hopeless way, Kanafani criticizes those Palestinians who fail to realize that self-identity cannot be sought in empty vessels. In addition, the failed romance portrays the ways in which the postcolonial character "assumes significance and secures a position even in the most disturbing sites" (Al Musawi 33). Kanafani's criticism of those Palestinians who assume that self-identity can be found in the "most disturbing sites" is evident in the speaker's loss of both hope and love.

## "Kafr Al-Manjam"

Kanafani extends his literary artistry to portray the Palestinians' struggle through his strangely crafted short story, "Kafr Al-Manjam." This text combines three stories, each of which represents a search for an ultimate place. The story is about a bored man at a café, who feels that

something strange is about happen to him. This feeling is quickly followed by a premonition regarding an old friend, Ibrahim, who left after failing school. The short story switches narrators between the main character, Ibrahim, and a man who hires boats. While the story is anticlimactic in nature, its depth makes an important claim. The author cleverly utilizes the element of symbolism to represent a place far from reach, which he calls "Kafr Al-Manjam." As described, this place may or may not exist in reality; however, in the mind of the man in the café, it certainly exists:

> Kafr Al-Manjam!
>
> As soon as I glimpsed it on the horizon, its name came instantly to mind, without my having heard the name or read it in any context...Before this, Kafr Al-Manjam had no existence on the illimitable chart of sea, but now it was impossible to tell whether it had been disgorged from the bottom of the sea, or had fallen out the sky—solidified volcanic lava or the meteoric offshoot of a burnt star. (63)

Kafr Al-Manjam's factuality is quite questionable, and the reader is urged to wonder whether this place exists or not, and whether the character's ideas are creating and validating an imagined place. This quandary about the actuality of Kafr Al-Manjam is essential to the overall meaning of the short story as it symbolizes an outlet or dream that gives many displaced and exiled individuals a voice. As Al Musawi points out, "The underprivileged and the marginalized may regain voice only in fantasy" (Al Musawi 34). While many Palestinians fled their homeland in search of a better world, their search was in vain, leading only to failure. Ibrahim gains "entry" to this place, describing it as follows:

> Kafr Al-Manjam afforded me entry, and inside that gigantic rock I selected a cave in which to make my home and began at once to fill my sacks with the copious gold that I'd

> find at the stretch of a hand, or could scratch out with my fingernails. And each time I peeled a gold leaf from the rock, another would grow in its place, before my eyes. (63)

Kanafani gives centrality to the idea that the place known as Kafr Al Manjam, whether imagined or real, has granted Ibrahim entry into a new world along with a never-ending supply of gold. This representation of Kafr Al Manjam as a source of hope resonates with the ways in which many Palestinians found solace in new places after their exile and displacement from their homeland. These places, including the Middle East, the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world, offered Palestinians both a new location and material wealth. However, with material fulfillment comes a loss of collective national identity. An active member of the Arab Nationalist Movement, Kanafani strongly believed that the "solution to the Palestine problem could not be achieved without a social revolution" (Introduction, Kilpatrick 9). Therefore, in "Kafr Al-Manjam," Kanafani suggests that wealth cannot replace the sense of identity required for true liberation. Despite attaining riches in Kafr Al-Manjam, the characters in the story are ultimately unable to find an identity. Moreover, they later find Kafr Al-Manjam to contain abundant solitude and other desolations. In the following passage, Ibrahim describes Kafr Al-Manjam and his feelings while being there:

> On my first night, there I was aware of the enormity of my isolation. The solitude resounded in my ears like the neighing of a dying horse, but the glow of the cave's interior brought solace to the storm inside my heart. Intuitively, I sense that there was something odd about the cave, and when I got up to feel the walls, my palms slid on a liquid oozing out of the pores of the heavy black stone. This saliva moisture exudes from the walls every evening, but one soon gets used to it. (64)

The strangeness depicted in this paragraph leads the reader to wonder if Ibrahim really was in a place of gold. The words Kanafani uses in the passage recall a sense of death, specifically the experience of being buried. The sense of isolation and the simile used to describe that solitude emphasize the idea of a slow, lonely, and painful death: "The solitude resounded in my ears like the neighing of a dying horse" (64). The imagery utilized to describe Kafr Al-Manjam gives the impression that Ibrahim is in a grave rather than a cave full of gold. The motifs of the "black stone" and the "saliva moisture" oozing out of the walls replicate that of an underground tomb where worms are decomposing one's body. The brilliant literary techniques force the reader to question whether Ibrahim is truly alive. Perhaps, having left, as is hinted in Kanafani's story, Ibrahim is a living dead man dwelling in another's land. This kind of perplexity is not uncommon in Kanafani's writings. As Hilary Kilpatrick argues, Kanafani's characters' failure and death are "inevitable once they have abandoned the idea of struggling to regain their land in the hope of making money and attaining material security" (1976: 59). Therefore, Ibrahim's imagined place may symbolize death and failure rather than life and wealth.

Furthermore, in "Kafr Al-Manjam," Kanafani transports the reader to the innermost part of the human psyche and through its many ways of fabricating and creating imagined stories and places in an attempt to find solace, land, and a reason for or meaning in existence in "isolation." Many of Kanafani's characters who leave Palestine in search of fulfillment face isolation. As Al Musawi argues, in postcolonial narrative, the character in search of an identity is "the subject [who] is an actor, even as an outsider or a marginalized human being, for he/she is given a voice to write back, uncovering brutality and absurdity" (33-34). This captures the main characteristic of Kanafani's characters, especially of the speaker in "Kafr Al-Manjam", who has been given a voice to "write back" in service of self-assertion.

## "Death of Bed 12"

Kanafani's stylistic techniques and interest in the structure and narration of a short story are further evident in "Death of Bed 12." Here again, a story is created within a story. This short story "presents the process of compiling a story and then, by telling 'the truth,' revealing the entire first version as pure fantasy" (Allen xviii). Al-Musawi views this act of telling a story within a story as the creation of a "medium" for "both the empowered and powerless on every level of empire, nation, state, class, community, and individuals" (30). In "Death of Bed 12," Kanafani introduces yet another character who dwells in emptiness, this time by fabricating the story of the man in bed 12. Thus, by temporarily occupying himself with a fable, the speaker is able to reflect upon his own state of being. "Death of Bed 12" is one of Kanafani's greatest short stories for its depiction of the extent to which the human mind can travel to comprehend the subject's state of exile. As he does in "Kafr Al-Manjam," Kanafani equips his characters with a sense of control through the creation of imagined stories or imagined communities. In this sense, Kanafani draws upon the importance of imagination in the creation of a collective identity rather than a fragmented individual identity.

In "Death of Bed 12," the speaker writes a letter to his friend describing, in detail, the (invented) situation of the man he witnessed dying in bed 12. His fixation with the man offers him a sense of obsession and control as he fabricates his life story. He describes his state of mind as "impotent to forestall the holes that have begun to open up in [his] head, and helpless to stop the flow of questions that relentlessly beleaguer [him]," (113). In an effort to cope with the sense of distorted ideas, thoughts, and questions, the speaker develops an ulcer:

> The treatment's done nothing except to transfer the ulcer from my intestines to my head. Medicine here, as I told my plain old nurse, is limited strictly to physical ailments, and has never advanced sufficiently to find answers to one's mind. (114)

Kanafani thus sheds light on the state of mind of an exile—the displaced—and the lack of any cure for this "ulcer": the exile's emptiness and inner struggle. As his obsession with the dying man in bed 12 continues, the speaker describes the moment of his death and the instant that awoke his curiosity:

> In the course of their wandering, his eyes had come to rest on my face and I imagined that he was appealing for my help. I tried to think why. Was it because I used to greet him every morning, or because he read in my face a comprehension of the terror he was undergoing? He continued to stare at me, and then quite simply died. (114)

From this passage, we learn that the speaker identifies a commonality between himself and the dying man in bed 12; hence, the man in the bed becomes a reflection of, a mirror for, the speaker. The "comprehension of the terror" that both characters share refers to exile and displacement. In an attempt to draw a past for this man, the speaker creates a story that culminates in the death of the man in bed 12: "By the time day broke over the trees in the hospital garden, I'd formed a complete story about him, for myself" (116). By doing so, Kanafani affirms Al-Musawi's notion that "Narratives restore voice and identity in a number of ways" (30). The act of narrating a story for the dying man thus enables the speaker to restore a sense of identity.

The treatment the narrator observes the dead man enduring arouses sympathy for the deceased and validates his imagined history: "I climbed into bed and heard the nurse's voice in the corridor outside the door, saying matter of factly: 'The occupant of Bed 12 has died'" (115).

Disturbed and puzzled by the realization that the dead man has been stripped of his name, the speaker takes it upon himself to define the deceased by providing him with both a name and a well-crafted history. Thus, the speaker highlights the importance of the dead man possessing a name:

> Perhaps he considered that in laying claims to his rightful name, he was realizing a possession, for he was poor, poorer that you can imagine, idling his time away in cafes. Poverty was pronounced in his face, his hands, his body, in the way he ate, and in the objects that surrounded him. (115)

This passage alludes to the poverty endured by many Palestinians. For these people, name symbolizes identity. In this sense, by stripping the dead man of his name and referring to him simply as "Bed 12," Kanafani highlights the act of taking away the Palestinian's identity. In poverty, one has nothing but one's name. Here, "poverty was pronounced in his face"; thus, he lacks either worldly possessions or identity by which to define himself.

The importance of name and identity is further suggested through the story that the speaker later creates. The reader learns that the man, Muhammad Ali Akbar, loses his chance at marrying the girl with whom he'd fallen in love because his name is mistaken for someone else's. The tragedy of the loss of his name precipitated by this case of mistaken identity leads Muhammad Ali Akbar to leave his home for Kuwait. The events of Muhammad's life that are fabricated by the speaker allude to the circumstances that led to the Palestinians' displacement from their homeland. The woman loved and lost is a symbol of the Palestinian land. Understood in this sense, the loss of land is what compels Muhammad Ali Akbar to set out on a search for a better life: "But first of all he had to acquire a fortune, and it was in pursuit of this that he decided to embark for Kuwait" (120). The notion of gaining material wealth appears once again,

highlighting Kanafani's focus on the individual struggle towards identity. Discussing this aspect of Kanafani's work in "Commitment and Literature: The Case of Ghassan Kanafani", Kilpatrick asserts,

> Kanafani immediately focuses on the individual, who, he says, can be considered as a microcosm within which the same struggle is waged as in the macrocosm, society. In the eternal duel between justice and injustice, the individual is either dominated and submissive, internally in revolt but ignorant of how to change his condition or else openly in revolt and aware of how he can liberate himself. This classification clearly reflects Kanafani's own circumstances and the development in his portrayal of the Palestinian hero. (18)

As an individual, the speaker of the story is a "microcosm"; however, he is ignorant of how to alter his circumstances. Although the speaker attempts to liberate himself through the narration of the story of the man in bed 12; he remains alone in his search for liberation. Through the story fabricated by the speaker, the reader learns that Muhammed's experience in Kuwait is that of many characters portrayed by Kanafani in exile. As in the previously examined stories, Muhammed pays a substantial sum in pursuit of what he believes would bring him happiness, "The fare for the journey on a dilapidated vessel was seventy rupees, but by risking this sum he had the promise of beginning a new life in Kuwait" (120). Yet, once in Kuwait, Muhammed is faced with the realization that his destination is not what he had hoped it would be. Kanafani brilliantly contrasts what Muhammed witnesses upon his arrival in Kuwait with a description of Muhammed's hometown. Describing Muhammed's arrival, the speaker imagines how

> Muhammed Ali Akbar found himself responding ambivalently to a reality now divorced from the color world of his dreams. He searched his mind for the key that had brought

> him here, and it struck him that the fantasies he'd nurtured for so long, of avenging himself on Ibkha, seemed removed and implausible. (121)

At this instant, Muhammed experiences a jarring epiphany that, within seconds, locates him in a new reality: "It seemed to him that the dreams he'd fabricated of acquiring wealth were simply a solace for his unrequited love and bore no practical bearing on reality" (121). While he employs the speaker's imagination to set the events of the story, Kanafani depicts the reality of displaced Palestinians whose search for wealth and a better life is ultimately an empty dream. Ahmad Sa'di argues, in "Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity," that, "dispersed and lacking national institutions…Palestinians have had to resort to different venues of identity reconstruction" (176). One of these venues is the opportunity to achieve material wealth.

Additionally, in "Death of Bed 12," Kanafani portrays through his characters' experiences the Palestinian experience of distortion, incomprehension, loss, and isolation. In this short story, the speaker describes Muhammed's experience in Kuwait as follows:

> Things were not simple as he'd imagined before leaving Ibkha. Nothing appeared to have connectives here or to be sequential. It seemed the roads he walked were without end, and they circled a wall that embraced everything, and when he came upon a road at sunset that led him to the shore, where once again he found the sea, he stood staring at the distant horizon vanishing into the water. (121)

Here, Kanafani reveals the protagonist's sense of loss, isolation, and disconnection from the world. The experiences undergone by this character are also familiar to many Palestinians. A sense of nostalgia overcomes Muhammed as he considers his distance from his hometown and assures himself that "it was dear to his heart" (122). Drowning in nostalgia, Muhammed cries

endlessly. In this sense, as Karen E. Riley argues in "Ghassan Kanafani: A Biographical Essay," Kanafani's work depicts not only the lives of other Palestinians in exile, but also his own lived experience (2). Riley continues, "Ghassan took a keen interest in everything round him in the camps and noted the difference between his actual surrounding and his yearned-for past" (2). Thus, the portrayal of Muhammed's experience upon his arrival in Kuwait is also a depiction of Ghassan's experience.

The act of writing about the man in bed 12, thereby giving him a name and a past, is an attempt to restore the man's inherent rights. This was also a central purpose of Kanafani's writing. Through his writings, Kanafani sought to preserve the past, names, and existence of Palestinians. Imagination played a major part in his writings. As Kanafani shows in this short story, the actuality of the account—its truth and validity—is not of capital importance. In "Death of Bed 12," the narrator quickly writes a second letter to his friend and tells him that the account contained in the earlier letter is untrue. However, the mere act of providing the man in bed 12 – and the Palestinians as a people—with a name and a history, albeit temporarily, is what's most crucial for Kanafani.

## "The Cat"

One of the most crucial and outspoken short stories in *All That's Left to You: A Novella and Other Stories* is the narrative entitled "The Cat," wherein Kanafani's exploration of self-identity and self-fulfillment are impeccably clear. The story is about a man who, after leaving a café where he has been playing cards, suddenly decides to visit Samira, a woman living in an alley and frequented by many men, including the protagonist. In this short story, Kanafani employs a cat as a third vital character to contribute to the overall meaning of the story. Once again,

Kanafani depicts the failure of those seeking self-fulfillment and individual identity rather than a collective national identity.

Using the eponymous character, Kanafani presents a general portrayal of those who search for fulfillment, in this case, a woman whose main job it is to be an object of pleasure to men. Paradoxically, the woman also represents the kind of fulfillment sought by the male character. The reader journeys through the mind of the protagonist as he experiences a protracted constant struggle during the taxi ride to Samira's house. The first element of inner conflict is between the protagonist and a "Voice in his head suggesting the possibility that he was deceiving himself. 'You're a liar, you're just going to see her because you've nowhere else to go. Fear of vacuum is what's driving you towards her'" (89). This inner voice reiterates the notion of being displaced and having nowhere to go as the protagonist turns to a woman for temporary pleasure that is not ultimately attained.

In addition, the fear of being consumed by emptiness, symbolized by the vacuum, is another trope Kanafani utilizes to portray chronic emptiness and fear to which displaced Palestinians are prone. The protagonist resolves this conflict by smiling "proudly to himself, arrogantly dismissing the idea. 'I'm going to her because I want to be with her,' he assured himself" (89). While the protagonist can temporarily resolve the conflict, he continues to agonize over his motivations for visiting Samira. On a larger scale, the protagonist is battling with the notion of exile. As argued by Elisa Khoury, to endure exile "is to recreate the possibilities of life and reformulate the meaning of death, such that it becomes part of life instead of its antithesis" (86). In a sense, the protagonist's trip to Samira is a way of reviving the possibility of life in a world of exile.

During the taxi ride, the protagonist constantly has to reassure himself, for even the purpose of his visit to Samira presents a sense of hesitation of its own. "He began whistling to distract himself, and reassured himself again that the reason for his going to visit Samira was that he really wanted to see her. It wasn't his first visit after all" (89). As a way of consoling himself, he begins to reflect on passersby in the streets and concludes that they are "like a chain of ants," not knowing where they came from or where they are going. This notion gives him a sense of relief that his life, unlike those of the people he passes on the streets, has "passed without any major crisis" (89). Moreover, Kanafani draws our attention to the magnitude of the inner crisis caused by displacement. To Kanafani, the inner crisis is by far larger and more painful than any external crisis one can experience. While Kanafani "does abstract his concern for the plight and the future of the Palestinians" (Azouqa 162–63), his concern with the inner crisis as portrayed in "The Cat" is direct and concrete.

Early in the short story, the reader discovers that Samira is a character through whom the protagonist is known. The reader is told that "in this world, Samira was everything to him. She was the only thing whose beginning and end he knew. When would these ant-like people understand that Samira was the truth, that everything else was just a wrapper around a wrapper, and that there was no truth but her?" (90). As such, the protagonist realizes that having Samira gives him a sense of superiority. Although the protagonist is unable to understand his feelings towards Samira, which presents another inner battle, his gravitation towards her continues to perplex him:

> His frenzied attraction to this bewitching creature was founded on something that remained inexplicable to him. Even though he didn't understand why, he still felt the

> desire to embrace this mountain, in the hope that he would be able to intermingle with it somehow. (92)

Yet, the major character's attempts to 'intermingle with it' are doomed to failure, since he cannot define himself wholly through Samira, nor can he attain the desire he aims for during every visit. While the protagonist has paid previous visits to Samira, they have all ended in vain, as "the act had taken place without any desire" and had always filled him "with a feeling of frustration" (90). Having previously failed numerous times, the protagonist is convinced that this night will see him succeed. Kanafani uses the protagonist's previous failures as a cautionary tale to warn that those who seek fulfillment in places, events, and/or other individuals are doomed to failure. Having no place to go, being exiled and in a sense homeless, forces the main character into homelessness. Said notes that "homelessness" is accompanied by "a deep sense of insecurity" and "has thus become part of the consciousness of exiled Palestinians" (63). The protagonist's sense of insecurity and homelessness is clearly depicted through the third person point of view that is utilized throughout the short story.

The protagonist's journey is a mere consolidation within himself of thoughts that, he hopes, will provide him with a sense of fulfillment at the end. Once he is dropped off, he walks through the "miserable alley" towards Samira. As he approaches her house, the protagonist encounters a cat:

> He came up to the creature, and a violent shudder bristled his spine as he noticed the crushed hind legs of the cat, almost flattened on the ground. The fur was matted with blood that had coagulated, and the legs were so distorted that they seemed to have become dissociated from the body. He looked into the cat's eyes, and found in them a mixture of surrender and anticipation. (91)

The cat's condition is crucial to our understanding of the protagonist. Its physical appearance mirrors the inner struggle of the central character. Furthermore, the emotional content found in the eyes of the cat in the alley reflect that felt by the human protagonist in the alley; throughout the taxi ride, the hero's inner monologue reflects a "mixture of surrender and anticipation." However, the epiphany—that the cat is a reflection of himself—does not materialize until later, when the protagonist is in the "whore's room."

As Samira expresses concern over his pale face, asking whether he is sick, the protagonist questions the capacity of a cat that has been crushed by a car to crawl into the alley. Samira is disturbed at the question, yet entertains him by speculating that "it probably crawled into the alley to die there" (93). It is this statement of hers that precipitates the man's epiphany:

> "So that's how it was?" He said abruptly.
>
> "What? She said, startled.
>
> "He crawled here…the cat…dragging his crushed legs behind him, dragged himself here to die?"

At this, the protagonist realizes that he *is* the cat – that he has, on numerous occasions, dragged his own "crushed legs" here to die in this alley. He leaves the money on the table and walks "out into the miserable alley," emptier than before, having failed once again to accomplish what he had come here to do. Saman Abdulqadir Dizayi, in his article "The Crisis of Identity in Postcolonial Novel [sic]," states that "The issue of identity is not a clear and fixed concept" (1000). Therefore, the protagonist's search for identity and self-assertion results in his realization of himself through the cat in the alley. For Kanafani, without the search for a collective national identity, the issue of identity will remain abstract. Thus, the only fixed identity is a national one.

## "Pearls in the Street"

In "Pearls in the Street," Kanafani also includes a story within a story – what Allen calls a "frame story" (xviii). He uses this technique to draw upon characters who live and die in utter displacement and lack of fulfillment. "Pearls in the Street" is one of the clearest reflections of Kanafani's experience in Kuwait. As noted by Karen E. Riley, in "Ghassan Kanafani: A Biographical Essay," "He [Kanafani] was barely twenty when he went to Kuwait, and despite the fact that his brother and sister were with him, he was beset by feelings of isolation, strangeness, and exile" (2). As is the case with many of his short stories, "Pearls in the Street" is a faithful reflection of Kanafani's life and those of many Palestinians who, "In the wake of the appalling defeat of 1967, the so-called naksa ('setback'), found out that many things were changed forever in the Arab World" (Allen xiv).

In the story, a group of people gather in a room as the New Year is struck, when Hasan recalls and relates the story of his friend Saad, who lived his life in search of gold. Here, Kanafani portrays another displaced character who searches for self-fulfillment in the material world at the cost of everything he has. By situating the narrative about Saad within the wider short story, Kanafani depicts Hasan's clear understanding of the circumstances of displaced Palestinians like himself. Allen describes this time as "A period of intense and agonizing soul-searching, settling of accounts with both present and past and plotting of future developments" (xiv).

Silence plays a central role in the short story as it portrays characters who are engulfed by an inability to speak due to the suffering they had witnessed during the passing year:

> But the room and the people in it remained as silent as before, in a way that was difficult to explain. Were we silent, I wondered, because we'd taken leave of a year heavy with

> suffering, or because we were entering another year apparently no less full of suffering, or for two reasons together? (95)

Silence becomes a symbol for the characters' inability to speak, express themselves, and be whole. It is the muteness of all displaced Palestinians that echoes through the room. Recognizing the agonizing silence in the room, Hasan takes it upon himself to enliven things by suggesting a move outside: "Someone had to clear the suffocating atmosphere, and it was Hasan who suggested we go out onto the balcony and breath in the new year" (95). Once outside, Hasan attempts to comfort the other characters, but his statement serves equally as a depiction of the stark reality faced by many displaced Palestinians:

> 'We earn a lot,' said Hassan, leaning against the railings of the balcony while the rest of us sat down on the low window ledges. 'We really earn a lot. And yet there are people who never get to smell a well-cooked meal.' (95)

Hasan's statements are significant as they contrast the reality of those displaced Palestinians who are "fortunate" enough to earn a living with those who were and are still unable to even "smell a well-cooked meal." Thus, Kanafani highlights the plight of those Palestinians who, while having been lucky enough to attain financial security, remain unhappy and unfulfilled. Kanafani was no stranger to such feelings and predicaments and made sure to reflect them in his work. Kanafani's "experience of exile from his homeland and the conditions, both personal and societal, of his temporary abode are clearly reflected in the fictional work that he produced later in his career" (Allen x). However, Kanafani, unlike his characters in this collection, took his sense of commitment to the cause of Palestinians "to the utmost limit of martyrdom" (Allen x).

Furthermore, as stated earlier, when discussing Kanafani's work, one notices the endless stories his characters have born witness to. For instance, in "Pearls in the Street," Kanafani

recalls, through the speaker's response to Hasan, the endless stories that have emerged from displaced Palestinians.

> We were fed up with moral lessons like this. We knew all about people who wasted away looking for a means of livelihood, and we also knew, in minute detail, about the heroism of those who came from afar to find a living and died from the weary efforts of striving for it. (95)

This response plays a vital role in what Kanafani aims to accomplish: firstly, to portray the reality of the displaced, and, secondly, to provide a critique of those who have left in search of a living or self-fulfillment. As highlighted through the end of his characters' lives, those who seek opportunity away from their land tend to fail. Equally, in the story that Hasan recounts, Saad lives and dies in complete emptiness, failing to gain the "gold" for which he searches. As Allen asserts, "the experiences of [the characters] …reflect the aspirations and hopes … which are united in their loss of roots in place" (xi).

Saad follows his friend Hasan to a place that is not explicitly disclosed to the reader, perhaps in the hope of "[making] something of himself" (96). The reader is once again presented with a character seeking self-fulfillment and is taken through the bleak tale of a man who mistakenly believes that gold awaits him in this "other land." Although Hasan points out that he had tried on numerous occasions to convince Saad to abandon his quest due the harshness of the place, Saad's response is a clear reflection of what many perceive to be fulfillment,

> But Saad al-Din wasn't bothered in the least. He told me once that he couldn't go back with no job and no money; he'd never be able to face anyone, friend or foe, as they asked him (if they didn't simply whisper or point, or say nothing to him at all) how he could possibly return from the valley of gold with no gold. (97)

Placing his hopes on gaining gold and a reputation as a successful man, Saad refuses to listen to his friend and his quest for fulfillment comes to an end before he can return home. Once he realizes that he has not earned any money and that there is no hope for him, on his way to purchase a return ticket, Saad decides to gamble for the chance to afford the cost of a ticket and win a pearl. Kanafani writes, "The luck that's buried under the rubble of ten years of solid suffering. If I put the money I've got left into buying shells, I'm bound to find a pearl" (98). Hasan's perplexity and his response to Saad's situation reflects Kanafani's most strongly expressed critique of his people's empty attempts at reaching fulfillment:

> It seemed as though Saad al-Din lost his better judgment. All the years of suffering, the mental torment, the hopeless attempts to survive had, together, led him to this: the belief that success lay in a trick, the haphazard chance of discovering the rare in the commonplace. He'd convinced himself that the riches and comfort he aspired to reside in the shell of a randomly picked oyster. (98)

Although Kanafani swathes his message within two stories narrated by Hasan, his intent is clear: those who have convinced themselves that their comfort resides in riches, other lands, or individuals removed from their homeland lack judgment, and are doomed to failure, whether they survive or die. "Pearls in the Street" highlights this inexorable reality that Palestinians are likely to face despite their search for progress. Thus, as Allen argues, "The short story is more concerned it seems, with the state than with the process of change" (xvvi). The man who had been incapable of making a living in Kuwait "squanders the money he has been storing up for the journey 'home' on some oysters in the desperate hope that one will contain a pearl" (Allen xvii). Before he can establish whether his luck had indeed turned, Saad dies of a heart attack, and the reader is left wondering about what the last oyster might have contained.

Exchanging his ticket money for a chance to win a pearl, Saad watches as the shucked oysters are tossed into the street. Suddenly, at the last shell, "the ordinary [develops] into the bizarre" (100) when Saad collapses:

> A terrifying glitter flashed, suddenly, in his anxious eyes, and it seemed to me that the whole of life was contained in that one transmission of light. He was starting at the shell and I was looking at his face. Then, before I knew what was happening, Saad al-Din fell on his face in the mud. When I tried to pick him up, I found that he was dead. (100)

Kanafani once again suggests the devastating end that awaits those Palestinians who have placed all of their hope in the hollow belief that the material world may grant them redemption. Like these Palestinians, Kanafani's characters are confronted with silence again as "The silence grew deeper," emphasizing their inability to speak or protest.

"Pearls in the Street" ends with Hasan stating that he cannot decide "whether he [Saad] died from the elation of seeing a pearl in that last shell, or from disappointment because he knew it was empty," (100). The ambiguity surrounding the actual cause of Saad's death signifies the unimportance of establishing whether or not the oyster in reality contained a pearl. Here, death, as Kanafani aims to portray it, results in part from the decision to risk everything in a gamble aimed at material gain. As his wife, Anni Kanafani, stated in a memoir written after his death,

> His inspiration for writing and working unceasingly was the Palestinian-Arab struggle…He always stressed that the Palestine problem could not be solved in isolation from the Arab world's whole social and political situation. (Quoted by Kilpatrick 9)

"Pearls in the Street" is perhaps one of Kanafani's loudest and most overt critiques of Palestinians who seek fulfillment in the imagined foreign lands of gold instead of remaining in

their land. Many Palestinians left to live and work in the Gulf countries in the hope of finding better lives. Yet, as Kanafani implies, life abroad is full of challenges: Hassan tells Saad that,

> the wheel that revolved here was legendary for its harshness and didn't give a damn for individual human beings. Hunger, I told him, was merely an amusing spectacle for people living in luxury; people here were straining after every penny and didn't turn back to look at the others crawling behind them. (97)

Although the Gulf countries held the promise of riches, many attempts to find refuge in them ended in failure due to the harsh working conditions and the local perceptions of displaced Palestinians and other postcolonials.

*All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories* is a poignant portrayal of the plight of Palestinians who fruitlessly sought identity and self-fulfillment through barren means. Failure, disappointment, and death results as each aforementioned character passively accepts the occupation of Palestine and sets about searching for individual identity. As Neimneh points out, "The lives of Palestinian characters are marked by a general state of dislocation and dispossession" (477). Kanafani's activism in service of the liberation of Palestine echoed his loud criticism of Palestinians who did not actively contribute to the attempt to gain a national identity and did not engage in an active struggle towards liberation. As Neimneh argues, "Kanafani was committed to this struggle for national liberation and restoring identity. If his fictions are often read within postcolonial and allegorical parameters" (476), it is because they offer an organized historical account with a critical perspective on the Palestinian plight (477). Thus, the failures and disappointments of Kanafani's characters reflect the author's underlying message: the formation of a collective national identity is the only means by which to liberate Palestine. The next chapter provides a thorough analysis of Kanafani's *Palestine's Children:*

*Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* to examine the author's placement of the hope for a liberated Palestine into the hands of the younger generation, who are engaged in an active struggle and search for a national identity rather than an individual one.

# CHAPTER 3:

## Obligation and Resistance of the Postcolonial Characters in *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*

Kanafani's commitment to the Palestinian people and a collective national identity continued to form the core of his literary work. The previous chapters presented an analysis of Kanafani's initial publications mirroring the failures of characters who seek individual liberation and identity through empty means. The analysis shows that *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You* are Kanafani's clearest depictions of Palestinians' struggle for a better future and an identity after losing nearly everything. After presenting the failures analyzed in the previous chapters, Kanafani later drew upon the importance of a collective struggle, notably through *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*, which was published in 1969. The novella and short stories portray Kanafani's optimism in relation to the Palestinian situation as he places the future of Palestine in the hands of young men, women, and children who are willing to unite their efforts in resistance against Israel's occupation of their homeland. Unlike the characters in *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You*, those in *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* depict Palestinians who, for the first time since 1948, "were taking their struggle and their future into their own hands, neither relying on external Arab armies nor denying their history and identity by dying silently in exile" (Riley 8).

Nassar's book *Brothers Apart* is also crucial in the way it sheds light on the importance of Kanafani's collection, *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*. While Kanafani placed the future of Palestine in the hands of children and those committed to a national cause, he was one of the exiled intellectuals who were drawing attention to the important Palestinian resistance inside the occupied territories. At the time, those Palestinians

inside the occupied territories who had accepted citizenship were perceived as content 'Arab Israelis' due to the "lack of direct contact, coupled with incessant Israeli propaganda" (Nassar 183). Kanafani, through his works, called for a reassessment of the Palestinians remaining in Israel. Nassar writes,

> In this climate of deep suspicion and hostility, Palestinian intellectuals in exile were the first to raise awareness about the growing Palestinian resistance developing inside Israel. Ghassan Kanafani's 1966 groundbreaking study on Palestinian resistance literature in particular began to draw attention to the presence of literary and cultural resistance in Israel. But it was not until Arab intellectuals called for self-introspection and reassessment in the wake of the June 1967 defeat that Kanafani's call to look to the Palestinians in Israel …as a model of cultural resistance in the face of Israeli hegemony gained traction. (184)

The Palestinian resistance inside the occupied territories is celebrated through *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories* in the ways in which the book empowers characters who take the national cause into their own hands. The novella and selected short stories discussed in this chapter reveal a commitment to resistance and the national cause that is absent in Kanafani's works discussed in previous chapters. *Palestine's Children* is set in Palestine, within both occupied and unoccupied areas. It is the only collection that celebrates Palestinians inside the occupied territories by giving prominence to their active resistance; previous collections published by Kanafani are set outside of Palestine and reflect characters who are passive towards resistance.

As the Palestinian situation began to permit a glimmer of hope and Kanafani started to sense optimism following the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964 (Riley

8), his writing followed suit. Having witnessed the "first armed struggle to regain Palestine" through the PLO, Kanafani's literature turned in a more hopeful direction. In her biographical essay in *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*, Karen Riley argues that Kanafani "Places the future in the hands of the new generation of Palestinians, whose commitment and emotional ties to Palestine are stronger than the more concrete connections experienced by their parents" (9). Each element of the collection carries through the idea that the future of Palestine lies in the hands of children. Through the book, Kanafani calls upon the emotional ties of the younger generation to Palestine. In the novella, as well as in each short story in the collection, a child is depicted as the agent working towards a better and more hopeful future for Palestine. Speaking about this aspect of Kanafani's work, Karen Riley and Barbara Harlow write: "Each of the stories here involve in some way a child, a child who, though victimized by the structures of authority that dominate the social and political world he lives in, nonetheless, by assuming new roles, participates personally in the struggle toward a new and different kind of future" (14). Drawing on similar assessments of Kanafani's work, this chapter will provide an analysis of the role of children and the new generation in his literary techniques and the ways in which the author portrays postcolonial characters whose commitment to Palestine is evident in their united resistance against Israel's occupation of their homeland.

## *Returning to Haifa*

"The homeland is the future" is a memorable affirmation made by the character of Said in the novella *Returning to Haifa*, echoing Kanafani's definition of the homeland. In *Returning to Haifa*, Kanafani tackles further pressing postcolonial questions: What is a homeland? What is fatherhood? And what is a man? Such questions appropriately reflect the types of issues that

were raised by Edward Said in relation to the Israeli occupation. Said lamented how the occupation "essentially saw Palestine as the European imperialist did, as an empty territory, paradoxically 'filled' with ignoble or perhaps dispensable natives" (10). Kanafani raises similar concerns about the occupation in a elegantly crafted and narrated story about a Palestinian mother and father who return to their hometown, Haifa, journeying 20 years back in memory in search of their son. At the break of the 1948 occupation, Said and Safiyya leave their 5-month-old infant in his crib. Twenty years later, when the borders are opened, the couple decides to face their ever-looming past and return in the hope of finding their son. On their return, Said and Safiyya face the new realities of the occupation. Upon locating their son, who has been raised by a Jewish family and is part of the Israeli army, Said and Safiyya come to understand that, in order to regain Palestine, they must allow their younger son to join the resistance. The novella exposes a bitter reality, yet one that Said, Safiyya and many Palestinians needed to understand in order to unite in a collective national struggle against the occupation.

Kanafani portrays the whole notion of return as an illusion as he juxtaposes the concepts of illusion with reality and memory with future. Memory is central to the identities of the characters in the novella as well as Palestinians at large. Ahmad Sa'di, in "Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity," argues that "Sites of memory are essential for social cohesion and national identity. They provide the framework, the dimensions, and the points of reference for individual life stories and values" (195). For Said and Safiyya, it is their memory of home that shapes their two decades in exile following the 1948 occupation. In addition, it is memory that takes them back to Haifa to regain a national identity for their future. Through narrative techniques such as irony and the intricate use of imagery,

Kanafani makes his case through the progression of the novella; its setup is carefully constructed to provide the novella's denouement with maximum impact.

First, Kanafani's story suggests that returning to a colonized land as a postcolonial is an illusion, as nothing remains the same; therefore, the notion of 'return' is void of meaning. As Barbra Harlow states in "Return to Haifa: 'Opening the Borders' in Palestine Literature," the couple's return is nothing more than a visit: "Their visit, however, was precisely that, a visit, temporary and strictly delimited, not the long anticipated 'return' or *auda*, to the homeland, which for many, refugees, combatants and ideologues alike, has become consecrated as the vision of the future of Palestine" (3). What the memory holds remains a memory and cannot be retrieved or brought to reality as a result of the changes wrought by colonization.

Furthermore, and most importantly, the hope for the homeland and liberation lies in the future, not in the past. Kanafani portrays characters that, in searching for what lies in their memory, achieve a moment of epiphany regarding their status. In contrast, Said and Safiyya's act of 'returning' is a failure as they prove unable to comprehend that one cannot return to Palestine by journeying twenty years back in time. Harlow concurs, affirming that "The narration of the Palestinian couple's 'return to Haifa,' complicated as it is in Kanafani's text by flashbacks, multiple perspectives, stream of consciousness and other storytelling devices, is conditioned by this devastating defeat in such a way as to provide an ideological framework for the critical re-evaluation of the Palestinian vision and the means to its realization" (5). However, for Said and Safiyya, the journey and the act of returning are essential stages in their development of the understanding that hope lies in the hands of the new generation and their realization of the future symbolized by their son Khalid. Kanafani presents his case through a range of narrative techniques, including an intricate use of imagery, that emphasize irony and the power of

memory.

Memory plays a critical role in *Returning to Haifa*, first as the impetus driving Said and Safiyya's attempts to return to their homeland. Memory is portrayed as an active and natural force that haunts the couple during the twenty-year interval between their departure and their visit, and finally compels them to return to their homeland:

> 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. The incidents and the events came to him suddenly and began to pile up and fill his entire being. (149)

In this passage, memory is depicted as a force of nature to emphasize its power and ability to "fill (an) entire being." The imagery reinforces the essential role that memory plays, in Kanafani's understanding, in helping Palestinians to comprehend the force that drives their relations to their homeland. Kanafani juxtaposes the force of memory against the future to emphasize the importance of the people who carry it. The force and power with which memory is depicted is critical to the reader's understanding of Safiyya and Said's final victory. To strengthen the effect of memory, Kanafani employs time, which contributes to the reader's understanding of the context of the novella. While the temporal setting of the novella is a single twenty-four hour stretch, "The history that the man and woman relive during those hours…is nearly twenty years long, from April 21, 1948, when Haifa was attacked, to June 30, 1967, the date of their return visit" (Harlow 8). Thus, the force of the memory that engulfs Said is tied to the twenty long years since the attack on Haifa. It is those twenty years that have "rained down inside" Said.

As Said and Safiyya enter Haifa, a rush of memories inundates them. The narrator uses a run-on sentence and the repetition of the word "and" (150) to indicate the force of the memories

that flood the couple. Yet, abruptly, the narrator breaks the paragraph to present Haifa: “This is Haifa, then, twenty years later” (150). Similarly, the narrator emphasizes the present time by reporting the exact date and time, as if reporting an event in a paper: “Noon, June 30, 1967” (150). As soon as the couple enters Haifa, the reader is not only taken from the past to the present and back but is also living the experience of both the occupation and the post-occupation.

In addition, while witnessing post-occupation Haifa, the postcolonial perspective on land and the struggle to find land is depicted through Said’s inner thoughts: “I know this Haifa, but it refuses to acknowledge me” (150). This statement alludes to Said’s loss of land and underscores the corruption and cruel changes experienced by Palestinians as a result of occupation. Here, Kanafani draws upon the metaphor of a wall between the man and the land. While Said recognizes the land, the land cannot recognize him. This is important for Kanafani as it offers a criticism for those who expect the land to remember them despite their years-long absence. This reiterates the questions and arguments later posed by Dov, the son they had left behind in his crib during the occupation. This character wonders why and whether he should consider his parents to be his parents when they abandoned him. To further highlight the notion that Haifa does not recognize those who left it, Kanafani shows that, while Said and Safiyya recognize their son, he does not recognize them. Dov asserts, “I belong here, and this woman is my mother. I don’t know the two of you, and I don’t feel anything special toward you” (182). In a similar tone, Al-Musawi, in *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel*, argues that “The subject of land, ways of life, customs, and tradition at large may well relate to the emerging nation-state, with its double discourse of nationalism and authenticity on the one hand and rapid transformation, with possible degeneration and corruption, on the other” (124). This corruption and degeneration are evident in Said’s realization that neither the land nor his son recognizes him and his wife.

The sense of occupation is felt at the beginning of the novella as Said and Safiyya enter Haifa. Said is presented as having a better understanding of the occupation than Safiyya, who simply says, "I never imagined that I would see Haifa again," (151). While her statement portrays naivety towards the realities of occupation, Said's response reflects his clear awareness of this reality: "You're not seeing it. They're showing it to you" (151). Entering occupied Haifa triggers a series of realizations in Said, one of which is his recognition of their error in leaving the land. Through his dialogue with Safiyya, Said confirms, "It was in our power to have done much better than they did" (151). The couple grapple with their feelings of guilt and begin to recognize their own culpability in relation to the occupation as they proceed through Haifa. This realization is a portrayal of the understanding amongst Palestinians that came about only after the 1967 occupation. In the essay "Remembering Ghassan Kanafani, or How a Nation was Born of Story Telling," Elias Khoury suggests that the 1976 Arab defeat led to a necessary clarity: "Only after the 1967 Arab defeat did it become clear that the Palestinians' only alternative was to fight the occupation and rely on their own efforts in the resistance struggle" (87). Said's statement to his wife reveals his understanding that it was and remains the responsibility of Palestinians to fight against Israeli occupation. Said's description of the occupation reflects the sad reality of Palestinians on whose memories, hearts, and minds the oppression has engraved itself. The cold fact is that the Haifa these Palestinians knew is not the Haifa they are returning to.

One tool that Kanafani uses to reflect the atrocious effects of occupation on Palestinians is imagery. For instance, describing the past using imagery that invokes the dreadful force of nature, Kanafani writes: "Now all of it was bursting forth from the wreckage and the oblivion and the pain, to carry away the mass of bitter defeat he had tasted at least twice in his lifetime" (152). In this moment, the reader is introduced to Safiyya's intimate feelings regarding the

occupation. Through this depiction, the reader witnesses the painful and bitter strength of the occupation and its ability to overwhelm the hearts, minds, memories, and future of Palestinians: "Now it was swelling up like some incredible monster inside of her, in her head, in her heart, in her memories, in her imagination, controlling her entire future…it was with her in every bite of food she took and in every hut where she had lived and in every look she cast at her children and at him and at herself" (152). Thus, the occupation is shown to have grown in Safiyya's memory, living alongside and within her. By focusing on the suffering caused by the occupation, Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* becomes an example of postcolonial literature that reflects the inequality between an oppressed, yet resistant, Palestinian people and a ruthless and conquering Israeli state, represented by the occupation. This type of inequity is common in postcolonial literatures in which the resistances of colonized populations "emerged from their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power…It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial (Ashcroft et al. 2).

The pain and suffering depicted through Safiyya's experience provide a similar portrayal of a form of colonization. As Said and Safiyya begin their journey through Haifa, the former character begins to gain a fuller awareness of the mental pain occasioned by the occupation—he carries with him a constant memory of the brutal past: "All at once the past was upon him, sharp as a knife" (152). Kanafani transports the reader back in time to twenty years earlier, detailing the events of the occupation of April 21, 1948, and the turmoil that many Palestinians felt on that day. The force of the occupation had been so great that Said was unable to return home, although he had tried to do so many times: "Over and over as he [Said] tried to return to this real direction, picking out a particular alley, he found himself pushed by an unseen force toward one road only, the road to the coast" (153). As he was propelled away from his home, Said "was swallowed up

in the rushing wave of humanity and lost the ability to direct his own steps" (155). In his attempt to return to his wife and son, Khaldun, Said became "someone [who was] swimming against a torrent of water plummeting down a lofty mountain" (155). This force of nature prevents Said from turning into the proper direction; he is seen fighting against a "wave of humanity." Through this imagery, Kanafani depicts any attempt at returning to the past or a homeland as impossible.

Safiyya suffers comparable torment as a result of the occupation. While she sympathizes with Said, Safiyya is herself overwhelmed by a sense of guilt that she cannot overcome. Her guilt becomes more chaotic as she realizes that if she does not return to Haifa to reclaim their son, she "would never again be able to look Said in the eye, or let him touch her" (157). While "she [Saffiya] resolved to return, no matter what the price" (157) Said's arms held her in a rigid grip. This sense of guilt is emphasized to reveal the baneful consequences of the occupation. Kanafani further depicts the painful nature of the conquest through the dialogue between Miriam (the new occupant of their former home), Said, and Safiyya, which is discussed later in this chapter. First, he draws attention to the effects that the Israeli invasion has had on the memories of Palestinians. For instance, he reveals how, once back in their house in Haifa, Said is able to recall the battle in detail: the memory "falls upon him like a blow from a rock" (161). In this sense, the memory of the battles they have fought stands against Palestinians as a constant reminder of occupation. Said observes the intricate details of the house, everything that is familiar and intimate:

> He saw many things he had once considered—and for that matter still considered—to be intimate and personal, things he believed were sacred and private property which no one had the right to become familiar with, to touch, or even to look at…He looked around,

> rediscovering the items, sometimes little by little and sometimes all at once, like someone recovering from a long period of unconsciousness. (162)

The image of everything that is most intimate and private to them, all of the contents of their house, is juxtaposed with the reality that someone else now occupies the house. The things that have been changed as a result of this woman's occupation of the house are even "crude and out of harmony with the rest of the furnishing" (163). Therefore, Miriam's presence in the house is "out of harmony." Meanwhile, Said notices the peacock feathers, recalling that there had been seven of them, while only five remain. As Harlow states, Said's fixation "throughout the scene on the peacock feathers which he notices in the vase on the table immediately on entering the room resonates with his own nostalgic obsession for a past that has failed him and whose memory he in turn has failed" (16). These minor changes confuse Said and Safiyya as their memories grapple with the realities of the invasion. Said displays an wry understanding of the occupation and the fact that his land and house are now occupied: "Naturally we didn't come to tell you to get out of here. That would take a war…" (164). Thus, at the beginning of the confrontation, Said still displays a sense of ambivalence due to the memories to which he clings. This uncertainty is depicted through Said's fixation on the feathers. He recalls that there were seven, while only five can be seen; however, Miriam's hesitant response to Said's question about the feathers "strikes the first decisive blow to the edifice of twenty years illusion that the Palestinian had been toiling to maintain" (Harlow 17). Said's ambivalence contributes to the critical epiphany he reaches at the end of the novella after his conversation with Khaldun, his son.

One of the most critical moments of the novella is Said and Safiyya's encounter with their biological son, which symbolizes Palestinians' confrontation of the reality of occupation

and their resolution to place their hope for a brighter future into the hands of the youth. Kanafani raises a number of critical questions through the encounter: What is fatherhood? What is homeland? When Miriam says of Dov/Khaldun, "He's just like his father" (171), Said asks himself "What is fatherhood?" (171). These statements lead the reader to question alongside Said, "Is fatherhood the flesh and blood or is it nurturing the child?" In an attempt to address the question, the narrative describes Said's response:

> It was like throwing a window wide open to an unexpected cyclone. He put his head between his hands to try to stop the wild spinning of the question that had been suppressed somewhere in his mind for twenty years, the question he'd never dared to face. (171)

It is essential for the characters to face such unprecedented questions before they can fully recognize their situation and move forward. Despite the enormity of these questions and the pain they carry, Said must now find answers to them. While Safiyya continues to display naivety by thinking that "I'm certain Khaldun will choose his real parents. It's impossible to deny the call of flesh and blood" (172), Said recognizes that Khaldun is now Dov, a son who does not belong to them, as they have not nurtured him in the way they have nurtured their other children. He asks of his wife,

> 'What Khaldun, Safiyya? What Khaldun? What flesh and blood are you talking about? You say this is a fair choice? They've taught him how to be for twenty years, day by day, hour by hour, with his food, his drink, his sleep. And you say, a fair choice! Truly Khaldun, or Dov, or the devil if you like, doesn't know us!' (173)

His words enable Safiyya to finally face the truth and recognize the futility of everything she had constructed in her mind for twenty years. As they finally realize their loss of Khaldun, Said

refers to what had taken place twenty years ago as a "crime" that they had both committed: "The crime began twenty years ago and there's no doubt who paid the price. It began the day we left him here" (173). Through Safiyya and Said's realization of the mistake they had made, Kanafani criticizes the passive Palestinians who left the homeland and reaffirms that Palestine belongs to those who remain in it. Samar Attar, in "Buried in the Deepest Recesses of Memory: A Queen or a Slave? The Vision of Ghassan Kanafani and Emile Habibi of the City of Haifa," affirms Kanafani's criticism against passive Palestinians and states, "It was not only the English, or the Zionists who were responsible for the couple's tragedy. The crime was committed 'before twenty years ago'" (41). Said affirms the self-blame Safiyya expresses:

> We shouldn't have left anything. Not Khaldun, not the house, not 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? (173)

While Said affirms that, by leaving in 1948, he and Safiyya had lost everything, he recalls the story of Faris al-Lubda. The tale concerns Palestinians who had also returned in the hope that they would find their land again. However, they were unable to find anything or even take anything that belonged to the occupants of their former homes. Said recalls how, when Faris removes a picture of his brother from the house (now occupied by another family), he feels that the portrait no longer belongs to him, and the man in the house tells him that he regrets allowing him to take the picture: "In the end, this man is one of us. We lived with him and he lived with us and became part of us…the picture doesn't solve your problem" (177). This highlights Khaldun/Dov's relationship with the Jewish family who nurtured him, and one of whom he has

become. Thus, in this sense, Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* becomes "an exploration of a new notion of Palestine not predicated on the yearning for a lost past" (Khoury 87).

By contrast, the encounter between Dov/Khaldun and his biological parents reveals tension in its depiction of the deep sense of loss felt by Said and Safiyya as they see their son in military uniform. When Said asks Dov "Who are you fighting? Why [?]" Dov's response, "You have no right to ask those questions. You're on the other side" (180) leaves his biological parents first bemused, then wryly amused by the irony:

> And with that explosive laughter, he [Said] felt as if he were pushing out all the pain and tension and fear and anguish in his chest. He wanted to keep on laughing and laughing until the entire world was turned upside down or until he fell asleep or died or raced out to his car. (180)

Here, Said must endure not only the pain of having lost Haifa, his house, and his son, but also the agonizing fact that his own flesh and blood now fights on the side of the oppressor. This irony is crucial for Kanafani as it contributes to the profound failure of the parents' attempt to return. The success of the occupation favors only Miriam and Dov: the power of the Israeli occupation has "produced a prevailing view of the question of Palestine that almost totally favors the victor, and takes hardly any account of the victim" (Said 7). Dov's response to his biological parents serves to justify the Israeli occupation by questioning Said and Safiyya's return and placing victory in the hands of the Israeli military, of which Dov himself is a part.

During their discussion, Dov asks how " a father and a mother [could] leave their five-months-old son behind and run off?" (182) Because of their abandonment, Dov claims the right to be in the Reserves and to belong to Miriam, who is the only mother he has ever known. He says, "I belong here, and this woman is my mother. I don't know the two of you, and I don't feel

anything special toward you" (182). This statement leads Said to further recognize his defeat. Privately, Said experiences a sense of defeat for having urged his other son, Khalid, not to join the *fidayeen* (resistance). Even though he warns Dov that he may one day face Khalid in combat, he is ashamed of himself for having once prevented his other son from doing so: "In fact, he himself was the one who had forbidden it. He'd even gone so far as to threaten to disown Khalid if he defied him and joined the resistance" (182). From this realization, Said begins to understand that preventing Khalid from joining the *fidayeen* because of the "worthless whip he used to call fatherhood" (182) was a major mistake, based on an illusion. Said concludes his internal monologue by thinking, "What a failure his presence here would turn out to be if he returned and found Khalid waiting at home" (182). Khalid's desire to join the *fidayeen* symbolizes the active resistance of the Palestinian youth.

Kanafani maintains the tension throughout the discussion, leading to Said's first crucial realization that "Man, in the final analysis is a cause" (183). This echoes the precise statement made by Dov/Khaldun earlier in their discussion. Here, Said realizes that man is not defined by "flesh and blood and identity card and passports (183). In fact, he asks, "Isn't human being made up of what's injected into him hour after hour, day after day, year after year?" (183). Finally recognizing that man is a causal agent, Said finds a commonality between Dov/Khaldun and himself. He realizes that man, as an individual, is a causal factor responsible for the consequences surrounding him. Hence, Dov, Miriam, Said, Safiyya, and Khalid are all causes. Simultaneously, each character is constituted by that with which they have been "injected." Therefore, for Said, Dov is not to blame, although the father believes that guilt will become his fate. At this realization, Said's perspective of the place is immediately transformed, and his surroundings no longer carry the same image and sense they did when he arrived: "everything

seemed completely changed from when he had first entered the room a few hours before" (184). Now, nostalgia has lost the battle with reality, and Said finally sees things as they are and not as they appear in his memory. Said and Safiyya's journey crosses "ideological and psychological barriers" (Harlow 14), which have been erected "in the service of maintaining an imperialist hegemony in the area with a Zionist Israel as its outpost and custodian of order" (Harlow 14).

Having crossed these psychological borders, Said raises another difficult question: "What is homeland?" (184). For Kanafani, this question aims at the root of occupation to highlight the notion that homeland is neither peacock feathers, nor a picture on the wall, nor a balcony, nor yet Khaldun. Rather, homeland is an active resistance against occupation with the aim of liberation. While the act of returning ends in complete failure, it awakens the couple and leads them to the realization that Palestine does not exist in the past; rather, it is situated in the future, in the hands of their son Khalid, who wants to join the resistance. Dov/Khaldun's response to Said offers a deeper criticism of those who have left Palestine and confirms that the only solution is an active resistance towards liberation, "You should not have left Haifa. If that wasn't possible, then no matter what it took, 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" (185). Dov/Khaldun's statement to his biological father portrays the shortcomings of Palestinians who surrendered to the occupation and assisted the aggressor by allowing Israel to conquer them. Dov/Khaldun asserts that twenty years of tears cannot bring back "the missing or the lost. Tears won't work miracles!" (185). Radwa Ashur's examination of the novella reiterates the vanity of spending twenty years fruitlessly crying over Haifa (139). The couple's inaction makes them "Weak…bound by heavy chains of backwardness and paralysis!" (*Returning to Haifa* 185). This accusation strikes the final blow (Attar 41), criticizing the passive Palestinians whose lack of resistance has made them

weak. Thus, Kanafani sets the stage for the perfect solution: hope lies in the future, in the hands of Khalid and those who join the resistance to fight for Palestine, not in the hands of those who cry over the past. "Many of Kanafani's characters, including the protagonist of *Returning to Haifa,* saw victory in the sacrifice of their sons to the Palestinian cause" (Riley 10). Said finally places hope and victory in his son Khalid.

Said finally fully sympathizes with his son Khalid since his memory of Palestine now includes a newfound definition of the homeland as a site of resistance. Said asserts, "I'm looking for the true Palestine, the Palestine that's more than memories, more than peacock feather, more than a son, more than scars written by bullets on the stairs…Palestine is something worthy of a man bearing arms for, dying for" (186). In this definition, Kanafani succeeds in depicting the difference between the generation that left Palestine and lingered in its memory and the new group that's willing to bear arms for the homeland. "For Khalid, the homeland is the future…Men like Khalid are looking toward the future, so they can put right our mistakes and the mistakes of the whole world" (187). Here Khalid symbolizes the future and hope, while Dov/Khaldun symbolizes the defeat suffered and mistakes made by all Palestinians in leaving the land. "Dov is our shame, but Khalid is our enduring honor" (187). In the end, Dov, who has been stripped of his significance for the father and has lost his status as a locus of hope, is placed in the hands of Khalid, who symbolizes the new generation. Kanafani ends the novella with Said's fervent wish, "I pray that Khalid will have gone—while we were away!" (188), placing his hope for the future of Palestine in the hands of his true son, Khalid.

Returning to Haifa is an essential part of the evolution of the postcolonial Palestinian. While the exiled Palestinians are given the chance to return, they are merely provided with the opportunity to confront their past and their mistakes. In this vein, Riley and Harlow argue,

> The opening of the border between Israel and the newly occupied territories in 1967 allowed the exiled Palestinians to confront physically their past lives, and at the same time forced a psychological confrontation with the reasons for that exile. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ghassan Kanafani should explore this collision within the framework of a novella, since all of his fiction is intimately tied to the emotional heart of the Palestinian community, not just reflecting it but actually constituting a vital part of that community's psychological evolution. (21)

This evolution, for Kanafani, is the gateway to the future. If it weren't for such progress, Palestine would remain a thing of the past. However, Kanafani's aim to create new hope for Palestine is successful when one contrasts Said and Safiyya's memories, the reality of the occupation, and their loss of Khaldun with their gain of Khalid who, like them, defines Palestine through the armed resistance of men who are willing to die for the homeland rather than cry.

## Mansur in a Series of Four Short Stories

In *Palestine's Children*, Kanafani uses the same character as the protagonist of four separate short stories: "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad," "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva About Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," "Abu al-Hassan Ambushes an English Car," and "The Child, His Father, and the Gun Go to the Citadel at Jaddin." While each short story utilizes different literary techniques, they share a common theme and technique to underscore the importance of an active armed resistance for the liberation of Palestine. In these four stories, Kanafani emphasize the import of armed struggle. As Orit Bashkin states in *Nationalism as a Cause: Arab Nationalism in the Writing of Ghassan Kanafani*, "the significance of armed struggle, and the notion that the participation in this struggle consolidates

the subject's national, and often, masculine, identity" (97). The four stories represent the connections between the land and the individual, indicating that these connections and the active struggle they necessitate are what would preserve Palestine and Palestinian identity. Kanafani draws upon the various battles throughout the four short stories to highlight the existence of Palestine through active resistance. Although the success of some of the battles featured in these stories is questionable, the mere act of engaging in armed resistance is an affirmation of the fight for a national cause. As Barbara Harlow argues in "Child and/or Soldier?" the four short stories featuring Mansur "militate narratively on behalf of the political ideal of a democratic secular state in all of Palestine that Kanafani no less militantly championed, an ideal for which, it has been argued, he died" (205). Being considered the "first reader/writer to use the term 'resistance' (*muqawamah*) to refer to Palestinian literature…and its role in the Palestinian struggle for national liberation" (Harlow 206), Kanafani constructs a character that symbolizes a resistance leading to national liberation.

The first story in the series discusses Mansur's coming of age and his desire to join the resistance. Mansur, a 17-year old "child," borrows his uncle's gun to go to Safad. In this short story, Mansur's determination in the face of all obstacles is evident. His age, the gun, and the road he must tread to reach Safad are all complications that Mansur disregards as he is determined to join the rebellion and help liberate his homeland. The first obstacle is evident in the way in which his uncle addresses him, "A child like you will die in the thorns before he gets halfway there" (47). Mansur's age is contrasted with his single-minded determination to liberate his people, a determination that does not acknowledge age: "The 17-year-old Mansur is even more stubbornly fixed on making his own way" (Harlow 207).

The gun presents another obstacle for Mansur and his uncle warns him not to put too much faith in it; however, Mansur personifies the weapon by speaking to it during the journey, "Soon I'll get a special rifle. It will be mine and you'll go back to your house under the woolen mattress" (51). The presence of the weapon serves a literal purpose within the story, symbolizing Mansur's inner desire to be part of the resistance. Whenever Mansur is afraid, he remembers the presence of the gun and describes it as "some legendary thing, quiet and unknown, awakened in the heart of man" (51). The description of the gun as something "awakened" alludes to the revitalization of the desire to fight for Palestine: "Commitment to the cause of the Palestinians is the main aspiration of Kanafani's work" (Kilpatrick 17). Therefore, the presence of an awakened desire for active resistance is what distinguishes *Palestine's Children* from *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You.*

Mansur's uncle has little faith in either his son's weapon or his journey. The uncle tells his nephew, "So with twenty cartridges you're going to attack the citadel at Safad" (53). Mansur's response to his uncle's mocking statement is, "If every man in Galilee took twenty cartridges and went to the citadel in Safad, we'd smash it to pieces in a minute" (53). At this thought, Mansur ponders over the definition of leadership but is unable to find meaning in the concept, continuing to ruminate for hours, until he is beyond the rocks. Mansur's inability to define leadership reflects the lack of direction and commitment to the land that he observes in other Palestinians. In addition, his proposal that the mere presence of "every man" with a gun would lead to success reflects the Palestinian lack of unity; if only "every man" was present and ready to commit (i.e., if there were commitment and leadership), then the battle would be won.

Mansur's determination to prevail stands in contrast to the apathy of his older brother, Dr. Qassim, who takes no interest in the land. Not even wanting to remain in his hometown and open

an office, Dr. Qassim tells his father that he will open a practice in Haifa because he is not the "kind of doctor who treats his patients with leeches…[because] no one in Majd al-Kurum will pay more than a penny" (55). Unlike his brother, Mansur is passionate about the land: "The child loves the fields. As soon as he comes home from school, he plunges straight into the canal up to his knees. He has real farmer's hands" (56). Thus, the land plays an essential role in Mansur's resistance. "The land is never neutral. Whether it is deviled by the aggressors or yearned for by the native, it has a meaning and an impact on the lives of others" (Al-Musawi 35). For Mansur, the land also represents his driving force towards liberation and heavily influences his perspective on the struggle towards resistance. Kanafani juxtaposes the two brothers, drawing upon their polarized perspectives on the land to criticize Palestinians who lack commitment to it and transfer responsibility for the homeland's future to those who are committed. This faith in the committed Palestinians is apparent when, at the end of the short story, the father notices "the look of scorn which flashed in [Dr. Qassim's] eyes" (56), and places his hope of regaining the land in Mansur by saying, "There's still the child" (57).

The second short story in the series, "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva About Mansur" is told from a third-person point of view that contrasts the events taking place around Dr. Qassim and his brother, Mansur. While Dr. Qassim is engaged in conversation with a Jewish girl, Eva, his brother Mansur is about to engage in his first battle in Safad. Dr. Qassim's colloquy with Eva reflects a profound of immaturity of thought. When Eva asks him about the thing that has been on his mind, Dr. Qassim states,

> At the moment I'm thinking about a much smaller matter…Do you see this slice of bread? Well, I spread the jam on top of the butter, I remembered my little brother…He always thought that putting jam on butter was a kind of lack of taste. Either you eat butter

> or you eat jam, but you can't eat them both together. If you do, then it is an expression of disdain either for the honor of the butter or for the honor of the jam. Anyway, my brother believed, and he still does, that butter is a kind of food which contains all the elements which make it valuable in itself and so it shouldn't be underestimated or abused. (60–61)

This quotation highlights two crucial elements in the short story. Firstly, the butter and the jam represent Israel and Palestine, and the piece of bread represents the land; the presence of the two on the same land is a dishonor, just as the presence of butter and jam on the same piece of bread is a dishonor. Secondly, Dr. Qassim's is unable to place Mansur's observation in context. In this sense, Dr. Qassim represents betrayal while Mansur epitomizes loyalty and the hope of a liberated Palestine. As Kilpatrick states, "The farmer's son who goes to Beirut, qualifies as a doctor and prefers to open a practice in Haifa, because the village offers him too little work, betrays his family and the land. It is his younger brother who upholds the authentic values, in spending his free time in the fields, taking part in whatever fighting he can and going to great lengths to borrow a gun with which to do so" (56). Mansur's commitment to Palestine and his vision of regaining it validates this observation. Dr. Qassim's carelessness and apathy limit his understanding of both his brother's observation and of the occupation as a whole, leading one to wonder about his true motives for being present in the Israeli girl's home.

The contrast between Mansur and Dr. Qassim serves as a criticism of nonresistant Palestinians and offers a solution to the occupation through the active resistance of the youth. The contrast is made vivid through the ways in which Kanafani depicts the extreme contrasts between the two brothers. While Dr. Qassim is having tea and eating bread with butter and jam, his brother is "somewhere in the rocky terrain around Safad sprinkling handfuls of rotting wild thyme on half a piece of coarse dark brown bread" (61). In this anecdote, the narrator shifts the

reader's focus from Dr. Qassim to Mansur, who has just met a group of men in a truck heading toward the citadel in Safad with the aim of surrounding it. Mansur's weapon is initially mocked by one of the men, who asks him, "How much did you pay for this stick?" The weapon's presence is critical, especially at the denouement of the short story, when Mansur uses it during an attack to great effect, proving to the men that the gun is a symbol of commitment to the cause of liberating the homeland. Mansur tells his critic, "'You're a lion, you with the stick.'" (73). At this point in the narrative, Mansur has concluded his first battle, and his reaction shows both maturity and confidence, reflecting his status as a leader: "This time, however, Mansur didn't get angry but began to laugh loud and heartily. The death trills inside his head faded away like bits of refuse" (73).

The second pair of short stories in the series accurately reflect Kanafani's involvement with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was the first armed struggle initiated in 1965 to reclaim Palestine (Riley 7). The events surrounding the establishment of the PLO affected the lives of many Palestinians and is reflected in the literature of the time. As key examples of such literature, Kanafani's "Abu al-Hassan Ambushes an English Car" and "The Child, His Father, and the Gun Go to the Citadel" depict Palestinians taking the lead in the fight for the land. As Riley states,

> 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 denying their history and identity by dying silently in exile. (8)

In contrast to the characters featured in the novella and short stories contained in the collection *All That's Left to You: A Novella and Short Stories*, the characters in *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Short Stories* reflect the active resistance of Palestinians. In the

latter volume of stories, the characters voluntarily engage in combat despite the associated hazards.

In "Abu-al Hassan Ambushes an English Car," the reader is presented with two different settings contrasting active characters with passive ones. In the first setting, Mansur returns home and is confronted by his father, who is furious at his extended absence. When his father learns that Mansur had joined the resistance in Safad, Mansur receives the anticipated punishment: "The next minute the blow which he had been expecting landed, but Mansur didn't move" (76). However, his father's disapproval does not rob Mansur of his commitment to the homeland and the struggle. His loyalty and sense of duty to them remain evident in his strong resolve to return to Safad and fight for Palestine. He says, "If you're here and Qassim is in Haifa, one of us three had to go to Safad" (77). Mansur's determination is juxtaposed with his brother's actions, who has been forced by the father to return home because he was "running around with Jewish women" (77). At this revelation, Mansur's reaction to his brother's behavior is depicted through a literary technique in which the point of view shifts and Mansur engages in critical self-reflection:

> He knew that he couldn't be satisfied with depending on his brother, the Doctor Qassim. Hanging around with Jewish women! Doctor Qassim, who wanted to escape his peasantness and become citified. Break the mold, as they say. Hanging around with Jewish women. Jewish women…You're still ashamed of your brother Qassim and you don't want to meet him. Instead of his being ashamed of himself, you're being ashamed for him! (78)

By addressing himself, Mansur criticizes three central aspects of Dr. Qassim's behavior: firstly, his brother is consorting with the enemy; secondly, Mansur reviles his brother's desire to escape

and deny his peasant roots; thirdly, Qassim lacks any sense of shame in relation to his own actions. While Mansur is deeply rooted in the land, actively involved in the armed resistance, and proud of his commitment, Dr. Qassim stands in absolute contrast. Through this relationship, Kanafani reflects a point in time when individuals took it upon themselves to regain their land rather than rely on anyone, even members of their own families, to assist them.

Moreover, Kanafani underscores the notion that Palestine belongs to those who fight for it, reiterating his belief that commitment is what defines homeland. In the second setting presented in "Abu al-Hassan Ambushes an English Car," Kanafani portrays commitment through the event in which Abu al-Hassan and a group of men ambush an English car. Once the narrator begins the story of the men's journey, the names of the men are not mentioned; instead, they're depersonalized, indicating that it is not identity that is important, but the act of commitment itself:

> They were waiting for him behind the house and as soon as he arrived, they all walked off together in silence. With steps recognizable by their softness and without a moment's hesitation, they wandered off through the olive fields to the east. They knew practically every stone and every tree. And not only this, but they knew the history of every tree as well, who had been its previous owner and who owned it now, how much fruit it bore and how much it didn't, what its progress would be this season and what it had been last season. (80)

This passage illustrates a number of critical elements: firstly, the men's intimate knowledge of the land; secondly, their unity in a mission; and thirdly, their level of shared commitment. The intricate details in relation to their knowledge of each tree, its fertility, and its progress every season (past and future) reflects their ownership of the land. Furthermore, their knowledge of the

land serves as a record. Here, "the fictional narrative provides not only a historical account of Palestine, but a topographical record as well. Much of the area and its villages no longer exist as they once did; they have been not only obliterated by the passages of time, but destroyed, rebuilt, and renamed by political events" (Riley & Harlow 19). Their common purpose is reflected through the men's knowledge of the land and their unity in commitment. They know precisely where to wait and which direction to take. The tone in this passage reflects a silent commitment that leads the characters through the olive trees.

To further emphasize the notion of commitment, the gun in the short story is imbued with great importance, almost as if it were a human being: "The old gun stood upright among them. Abu al-Hassan held it in his hands as if it were the fifth member of the party" (81). The Palestinians' act of bearing arms and taking the future of Palestine into their own hands reflects Kanafani's belief in commitment, homeland, and the future of the homeland. As Bashkin states, Kanafani's "stories…often fetishize weapons, especially guns, which accompany many of his protagonists" (97). By placing great emphasis on the weapon, Kanafani reiterates the importance of an armed and active resistance for the liberation of Palestine.

While the men ambushing the English car are not explicitly presented as young people, Kanafani asks who will continue their mission once they are gone. Thus, he emphasizes the significance of the role of young men such as Mansur. Through his description of one of the members, Abu al-Abd, Kanafani underscores the difference between the resistant Palestinians and their enemy, "Poor Abu al-Abd, if you only knew that they keep sending new generations and the old men go back to their homes. We're the only ones who grow old" (81). It is evident here that Kanafani subtly calls on the younger generation to continue the fight. As Harlow states, "The question of armed struggle and the vision of the future of Palestine, vital to the resistance

organization, were furthermore significant in informing the evolution of a Palestinian resistance literature and in theorizing its relation to the struggle for liberation" (5). Thus, Kanafani's literature informs the Palestinian resistance and places the struggle for their liberation in context.

The final story in the series, "The Child, His Father, and the Gun go to the Citadel at Jaddin," concludes the work of the older generation. After his father dies during a confrontation with the enemy, Mansur continues his liberatory mission. Here, Kanafani further stresses the significance of armed struggle and resistance as a solution to Israeli occupation. Bashkin also emphasizes this notion, stating that "Conflict, war, violence, armed struggle, and military combat are seen as the only modes for attaining a just solution for the Palestinian tragedy and solving the Arab-Israeli conflict" (97). Once Mansur discovers that his father has left for the citadel, he quickly joins Shakib, an older man from the village, and follows in his father's footsteps. On arrival, he sees his father amongst a group of men preparing to occupy the citadel. When Mansur attempts to convince his father to give him the gun and return home, his father refuses, stating that "The revolution has begun. That's the whole thing" (91). The degree of unity observed in the presence of various generations (the father, the older men, and the youth, represented by Mansur) and the act of being engaged in the resistance exemplifies the commitment of Palestinians to solidarity and the struggle for freedom. According to Bashkin, "The importance of the citadel, however, does not simply derive from its past, but rather from the commitment of the villagers to defend it at the present, as an emblem of their independence, masculinity, and willingness to fight for their way of life" (99). Although Shakib understands that they may not succeed in occupying the citadel, this understanding does not prevent him or the other characters from pursuing their struggle for freedom:

'Do you really think we can occupy the citadel?'

> ‘No, I don’t really think so, but the attack will be useful, and who knows, a miracle might happen.’ (92)

Again, Kanafani emphasizes the importance of armed resistance through characters who define themselves through their commitment to self-determination. Unlike the characters discussed in the previous chapter, those in *Palestine’s Children* define themselves through their armed and active resistance against occupation.

In the heat of the battle, when Shakib informs Mansur that they have not succeeded in their endeavors, Mansur experiences a moment of maturity and confronts himself. Refusing to give up despite now being unarmed, Mansur decides that he must be more active in his pursuit of what he wants. Here, Kanafani switches from the third-person point of view to allow Mansur to address himself:

> What are you waiting around for, Mr. Mansour? Do you think you’re going to find a rifle or a machine gun on the doorstep of your house some morning? This is the revolution! That’s what everyone says, and you’re not going to know what that means until you sling a gun over your shoulder, a gun that shoots. How long are you going to wait? (94)

Through this switch in point of view and the use of rhetorical questions, Kanafani portrays Mansur’s most important awakening. Here, Mansur gains a full realization of what is required to save his father and carry on the revolution. When a bearded man attempts to prevent him from going to the battle’s front line, Mansur aggressively counters, “If you’re afraid, give me your gun…My father’s still there” (95). Mansur’s resistance and insistence on going to the front line reflect the level of commitment within the younger generation. In “Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948–1966,” Kanafani asserts the importance of armed resistance and argues

that it is not only a cover, but the root forcing itself into the land (13). Through Mansur's character, Kanafani depicts a true form of resistance, one which he calls natural and logical (13).

Once Mansur reaches the front line, he realizes that his father has been shot and could bleed to death. When the bearded man asks him whether he knows a doctor, Mansur hesitates, revealing the distance between him and his brother: "A doctor? My brother Qassim is a doctor. Qassim. Of course …But he…" (98). Kanafani marks Mansur's hesitation through the use of the term 'but' and the insertion of ellipses. Although Mansur does know a doctor, that doctor is not and cannot be of any assistance in this battle because he does not believe in the resistance.

In the end, Mansur is left to watch his father die, symbolizing the demise of the older generation and the beginning of a new generation that carries Palestine's hope in their hands. Yet, Kanafani concludes by allowing for the tree, the man, and the rifle to become one: "Finally they all began to blur together: the tree, the man and the rifle" (98). The blending of these three elements portrays Kanafani's celebration of the unity between land, man, and the weapon: the three elements are all essential to the continuation of the fight.

Through this series of short stories about Mansur, Kanafani also portrays the youth as taking an active and more positive role in the liberation of Palestine, while juxtaposing this activity with the apathy of passive Palestinians. Bashkin states,

> Nationalist intellectuals, in the inter- and postwar periods, expressed concerns about the lack of national commitment on the part of the older generation, and hoped that the new generation would be able, especially with the help of modern education, to overcome the *mentalité* of their parents. In Kanafani's stories, the positive role of the young generation is also positioned vis-à-vis that of their parents. (Bashkin 97)

The depiction of the young generation in the collection examined in this chapter outlines the positive role of the youth and asserts the obligation of the postcolonial individual to assist in finding a solution to the Palestinian problematic and nurturing the hope of regaining the homeland.

*Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Short Stories* is a powerful masterpiece calling for national unity in resistance. Unlike Kanafani's other collections, *Palestine's Children* remains hopeful and offers a solution to Israeli occupation through the active resistance of the youth. These writings could be perceived as being similar to the kinds of anticolonial literature Fanon describes as "a literature of combat, because it molds the national consciousness, giving it new and boundless horizons; it is a literature of combat because it assumes responsibility, and because it is the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space" (193). Kanafani's literature fits this description in its focus on constant battles that demand that Palestinians assume responsibility for protecting their homeland, thereby triggering the national consciousness of its characters and readers. Despite the military losses incurred throughout the short stories and the injury represented by Said and Safiyya's empty-handed return to their homeland, the greater gain is apparent in the characters' engagement in resistance.

# CONCLUSION

When someone asked him "How important is the role of the past in understanding the present?" (*On Palestine* 49), Noam Chomsky gave a response that suggests the crucial importance of this dissertation's topic. Chomsky recalls his response: "To forget about the past means forgetting about the future because the past involves aspirations, hopes, many of them entirely justified, that will be dealt with in the future if you pay attention to them" (49). Thus, Kanafani's works are an essential component of remembering and knowing the past in order to achieve the hopes and aspirations of a people that continues to fight oppression. By exploring the various Palestinian struggles depicted in Kanafani's selected works through a postcolonial lens, this dissertation has attempted to show how Palestine fits into the postcolonial definition and highlight the importance of viewing Palestine from a postcolonial perspective. The analysis of a selection of Kanafani's novellas and short stories has provided an account of the Palestinian occupation and its effect on Palestinians. In addition, the dissertation has attempted to show how Kanafani's narratives serve as a call to extend the Palestinian struggle against Zionist occupation through narratives. As Ilan Pappé argues,

> Edward Said wrote an article titled "Permission to Narrate" in which he called upon Palestinians to extend their struggle into the realm of representation and historical versions of narratives. The actual balance of political, economic, and military powers did not mean, he asserted, that the disempowered did not possess the ability to struggle over the production of knowledge. (Chomsky 14)

Reiterating Said's statement, Pappé recognizes the importance of works, such as Kanafani's, that extend the struggle to ensure that Palestine's harsh historical realities are preserved and known

by people. Such works, analyses and intellectual productions have "succeeded in debunking some of Israel's more absurd claims about what happened in 1948 and to a lesser extent [have] been able to refute the depiction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a purely terrorist organization" (14). Therefore, Kanafani's writings as a journalist for newspapers that were mouthpieces for the PLO and as the author of the works analyzed in this dissertation solidify his role as a key intellectual figure for understanding postcolonial Palestinian literature.

The various aspects that Smith defined as integral to postcolonial studies have been explored within the context of Kanafani's three major works and his life. Smith encourages postcolonial researchers to explore literature when deconstructing a society through this specific academic lens (27–29). With that advice in mind, this dissertation has explored Kanafani's literary work through both the primary means of literary analysis and the identification of themes within the construct of a given perspective. Drawing on Smith's methodology, this dissertation has looked beyond Kanafani's stories to study the motivations of each of the primary characters. This methodology allows us to understand the motivations and actions of these characters and their relations to Palestine. Moreover, drawing on Smith's arguments, this dissertation argues that studying Palestinian literature—as represented by Kanafani's writings – by using a postcolonial lens would benefit scholarship about Palestine and provide people with an understanding of Palestinians and their relationships to their homeland.

As previously outlined, Smith defines specific aspects within postcolonial texts, including the claiming of cultural elements, the practice of storytelling, remembrance and working to represent the group and reframing the context in a way that makes it easier for younger generations to understand their histories. While each of these different aspects of Smith's methodology has a specific role to play in the overall literature review of Kanafani's works, they

all present information that can serve as a basis for answering the questions set forth at the completion of this study. As argued by Benedict Anderson, these so-called imagined communities who serve as the loci of national pride and a sense of identity can claim such right in part because of the work of postcolonial scholars who have contributed to maintaining a national identity (17–18).

Kanafani's life and literature put a more human face on Palestine. His works humanize Palestinians by showing that they, too, are people, much like any other, but with, perhaps, a uniquely resilient core of inner strength. Kanafani also shows that Palestinians are deep-rooted people who are concerned not only with the regaining of their homeland, but also with the continuation of their heritage. As Kanafani's works suggest, Palestinians want to reclaim a place to call their own; this is something that all individuals, regardless of race, creed, or culture, can relate to. In addition, Kanafani's works reflect the pain and sorrow felt over the loss of individualism experienced by Palestinians due to the various consequences of the occupation of their land. Yet, instead of dwelling on that loss, pain, and sorrow, Kanafani's works concentrate on what it means to be Palestinian and use the past in order to build a new identity and liberate the homeland.

The hope remains that Palestinians will be able to witness the liberation described in Kanafani's works over fifty years ago, and that the analysis of his writings will further the insight necessary for that liberation to be understood both within and outside the Palestinian culture. It is through such research and engagement that culture can be identified as the active and persistent mission to maintain a homeland. As proven through Kanafani's work, the homeland is not the physical presence and nationality is not the act of carrying the passport of a given country. As Bashkin writes,

> One does not need to be born in Palestine, to have a passport, or to gain permission from international powers in order to feel that one belongs to this nation. This position is important politically, because it enables Kanafani to present a sense of continuity between homeland and diaspora, and to hypothesize what gives the new generation of Palestinians, born outside Palestine, a sense of identity. (102)

Kanafani's position is crucial, not only for Palestinians, but for all postcolonials. His characters and themes transcend both geographical borders and time. Therefore, the study of Kanafani's work offers continuity beyond restrictions and, most importantly, provides hope for a national identity. As Al Wadhaf states, Kanafani's work can be categorized as resistance literature or "as a narrative of resistance" because

> Kanafani has constructed his characters and themes [to] fit remarkably in the postcolonial discursive strategies of representation. Kanafani believed that literature should respond to the ongoing state of affairs in his occupied land. He gives voice to the muted people instigating them to stand up; break the silence and thereby to let the world hear the voices which Zionist media and warfare machines think that they had ultimately silenced. If the Zionists think that they have succeeded in wiping Palestine from the global map 'temporally', Kanafani's narratives, otherwise, has succeeded in recreating it 'eternally', in the minds and hearts of millions, not only Arabs but also non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims who believe that Palestine will be restored and liberated. (118)

Through his works, Kanafani has empowered Palestinians and provided a voice, a history, and hope to a strong and resilient people that desperately wants to liberate its homeland from Zionist occupation. While Kanafani's life was ultimately short, his literature constitutes an eternal voice and an expression of commitment towards liberation that is indelibly etched in the memory of

the Palestinian people. Kanafani has restored the voices of Palestinians who have lost their relatives, friends, and neighbors as a result of the occupation of their homeland. The hope Kanafani engenders in Palestinians, including those who still await their return to their original land, has its roots in helping them remember that Palestine will continue to exist as long as the unified resistance endures.

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