



FEATURES OF RESISTANCE LITERATURE IN THE PALESTINIAN LITERATURE: GHASSAN KANAFANI'S WORKS AS EXAMPLES

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to explore resistance in Palestinian literature and its impacts on various aspects of colonized people's lives and interpretations in the field of literature. The paper focuses on Ghassan Kanafani's perspectives for the simple reason that he is recognized as the one who laid the foundation of resistance literature in Palestine. Ghassan Kanafani (1941-2008) was one of the lofty figures who believed in the importance of the word and transformed it into a resistance weapon. Kanafani is a well-known contemporary Palestinian writer and genius author who made a great contribution to the literature of Palestinian resistance against colonialism and the Israeli occupation. He loved his country with all of his heart. As the results, his novels served as a luminous flame to awaken the subconscious and remind the patriots of the Palestinians or all the Arabs of their usurped rights. Therefore, his novels and short stories also spilled like thunder on the Zionist forces. They stirred human emotions and shocked the minds of the international community.*

Keywords: *Resistance-Literature, Palestinian Literature, Ghassan Kanafani, Features, Land Right*

INTRODUCTION

Resistance culture and resistance literature have always been a weapon in the hand of the oppressed people whose countries are invaded and their history is obliterated, and which is the last castle to protect their heritage, history, and culture from obliteration and distortion, in defense of their existence and their right to live in freedom and dignity, and the mobilization of the masses and urging them to resist. Thus, local powers are challenged to manage a balance between preserving traditions and maintaining the pace of development, and also dealing with globalization (Riyanto, 2017). In the life of the

Palestinian people, the word, literature, and resistance culture are its weapon in response, confrontation, and arousal of motivation.

This article indicates that Ghassan's resistance expressions can be interpreted in terms of positive self-representation and negative self-representation with various references (i.e., Palestine, Palestinians, Israelis, or Zionist occupation). As in the works of Ghassan Kanafani, he revealed that the author's political status influenced their speech of resistance and their perceptions of themselves in relation to Palestine, the



Palestinians, and the Israeli aggression (Kilpatrick, 1976).

Therefore, the current article attempts to address the following inquiries:

1. As a Palestinian author, how does Ghassan Kanafani characterize his resistance in his writing?

2. Do Ghassan Kanafani's political beliefs and life experiences shape his idea of resistance and his self-perception of Palestine, Palestinians, and the Israeli occupation?

Resistance was born with people and has remained with them since the inception of creation because they are resistant creatures by nature and innate to everything that they consider an element that works against them, whether this element belongs to their environment, or it is from other different people or groups.

Whereas language was and still is a tool for communication and confrontation; Man used it as an influential component of self-defense. We find in history many evidences of its influence, which later turned into literature, poetry, rhetoric, and others. Therefore, it is possible to say that the literature of resistance is an expression through language that has become a text and a platform for defending a person in his battle with the aggressor other, with the multiplicity and diversity of this other and its characteristics. Therefore, the subject does not deviate from this formative historical path.

Definitions of Resistance Literature:

Edward Said's interpretations in his study of Intellectuals in *the Post-Colonial World* are widely influential, and his critical analysis of the idea of intellectual resistance holds much more importance and meaning than many practicing theorists in the field (Said, 1986). According to Said's theory of cultural resistance, the intellectual's role in public life is important because the intellectual should reflect "*liberation, enlightenment, and the experiences of the oppressed, those who are incapable of being represented, and those who are powerless.*" (Said & Barsamian, 2003).

Researchers have come up with multiple definitions that define the literature of resistance, the following concepts are some definitions of resistance literature:

Barbara Harlow in *Resistance Literature* points out that the literature which emerges under or as a result of any kind of colonization or oppression falls under the category of 'resistance literature' (Harlow, 1996). Resistance literature was born as a result of and as an answer to the attempts made by Western Europe and the United States to dominate economically and politically not only the lands of other nations but their culture and beliefs as well (Harlow, 1987).

- It may be every word, text, poem, novel, article, song, cultural, intellectual and literary position facing the occupier, the oppressor, and his aides. This occupier may not only manifest

itself in the external enemy, through military occupations, displacement, demolition of homes, and the killing of people through the bullet and the shell, but may be formed by confronting the injustice inflicted on the individual, and the group, by an authority, ruler, or class that crushes a society.

- The literature of resistance is considered a literature of awareness and urging to overcome popular crises, wars and oppression, and it tries to mobilize the desire for jihad, self-awareness and identity, and deals with the themes of heroism in the face of aggression, injustice and occupation. The mechanisms of resistance differ in different eras among writers, some of them take the story or the novel as a tool for calling for resistance, and some of them use poetry as a means of urging defense. As poetry was more widespread and influential in stirring up motivation, as it occupied a wide space in the concept of Resistance Literature.
- It is literature that talks about unknown and known collective and individual heroisms against invaders and dictators, and the social dimension in resistance literature is one of the important dimensions that are added to both the human and national dimension, and the literature of resistance focuses on contemporary popular struggle (Jayyusi, 1992).

Biography of Ghassan Kanafani:

Ghassan Kanafani is considered one of the most important writers of the resistance literature in Palestine, and his importance as an activist writer may have led to his assassination in Beirut in 1972, according to the orders of Golda Meir, the former prime minister of the Zionist enemy. Ghassan's literature and literary production was always interacting with his life and the lives of people, and in everything he wrote he depicted a reality he lived or was affected by. In his novel, *Returning To Haifa*, he described the journey of the citizens of Haifa as they moved to Acre, and he was aware of this, and he was still a child sitting, watching and listening. *The Land of Sad Oranges* tells the story of his family's journey from Acre. *The death of Bed No. 12*, which was inspired by his stay in the hospital, due to illness. Then, Dora of his fictional works, *Men in the Sun*, in which he talked about Palestinian men who were pushed by oppression to try to sneak into Kuwait inside an empty water tank to end their lives on its borders with Iraq, the burning sun, which was widely known, and later turned into a cinematic work. Ghassan was an artist whose eye was clear and delicate.

Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre on April 9, 1936, and lived his childhood in Jaffa, from which he was forced to flee, as thousands were displaced after the 1948 Nakba, and he began his working life as an art education teacher in the schools of the Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA. He moved to Kuwait in 1956, where he worked as a teacher of drawing and sports in its official schools. Meanwhile, he worked in

journalism and the beginnings of his literary works appeared.

In 1969, he founded Al-Hadaf newspaper, which he remained editor-in-chief until the day of his death on July 8, 1972, after a mine exploded in his car, killing 17-year-old daughter of his sister Lamis Negm, along with him. His books include: *Death of Bed 12* (1961), *Land of Sad Oranges* (1963), *A World Not for Us* (1965), *Of Men and Rifles* (1968), *Um saad* (1969), *Men under the sun* (1963), and *If You Were a Horse . . .*" (1961). In the unsparing clarity of his writing, Kanafani offers the reader a gritty look at the agonized world of Palestine and the adjoining Middle East (Abd Al-Hadi, 1990).

His other works are a study entitled "*Literature of Resistance in Palestine*" (1982) and another entitled "*Zionist Literature and Study of Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation and Resistance and its dilemmas*" (Ghassan Kanafani, 1982). In addition to another group of political, intellectual, historical and critical novels and studies that were not published in books. His work has been translated into sixteen languages and published in twenty countries.

Ghassan, the son of the generation of the Nakba, witnessed the loss of the homeland and the transformation of its people into a distressed refugee, and this stage was dug deep in his conscience, and he did not find this creative person except his pen to fight with it early, as Ghassan's literature was born from the womb of the Nakba, so he was destined to be a fighter and a fighter

and always engaged as if the stage had chosen Ghassan and her children to raise the banner of resistance literature that witnessed the Nakba, accompanied the journey of loss and witnessed the birth of the revolution.

METHOD

This study deployed a qualitative approach to explore the themes of resistance literature in the works of Kanafani as a Palestinian literature. The paper is concerned with interpretations of Ghassan Kanafani works (G. Kanafani, 1966; G. Kanafani, 1968, 1969, 2000), besides his novels also the concept of resistance literature in his book (*Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948-1966*) and mainly Three of his novels; (*Um saad, All that's left to you, and Men under the sun*). This paper largely uses primary data from the selected works of Kanafani. Deliberately, I focus on the language of resistance, the way Kanafani embodied resistance in his works. Also, this study uses secondary data to supplement primary data. These include literary books, journal articles, previous thesis, and other useful sources to the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This paper aims to analyze the theory of resistance literature in an attempt to show how ideas about Palestinian identity are expressed in Kanafani's novels. The study also examines the role of resistance literature in the Palestinian struggle and how it has encouraged the awakening of nationalistic thoughts and emotions among the people. The study investigates the concepts,

effect, and scope of Kanafani's letter and ideologies in literature.

Features of Resistance in Kanafani's Literature:

The first point relates to Ghassan Kanafani's theoretical conceptions, or his theoretical awareness, about the concept of resistance in literature. The second point is related to representations of resistance in Ghassan Kanafani's creativity, which is varied as we all know, between the novel, the short story and the play. The third and final point is related to the example of resistance that can be learned from Ghassan Kanafani's experience.

First, with regard to the first point, aesthetic knowledge of the idea of resistance, several dimensions can be sought in this direction through Kanafani's book entitled (*Palestinian Resistance Literature Under Occupation 1948-1968*), in which he dealt with the cultural situation of the Arabs of occupied Palestine, and stopped at the literature of Palestinian resistance, then presented Multiple models of poetry and stories from this Palestinian literature (Ghassan Kanafani, 1982).

In the introduction of the book, he put forward a group of important perceptions about the concept of resistance literature and culture, and saw that this culture is no less valuable - in his words - than the armed resistance itself. He also saw that the literature of resistance during the period covered by it after 1948 represents a new episode of previous episodes associated with the first half of the twentieth century.

In his book "*Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine 1948*", in three chapters he dealt with the literature of resistance after the Nakba, and the Arab hero in the Zionist novel, and then presented various models of resistance poetry. Ghassan Kanafani set out in this book from a clear position and clear affiliation to the Palestinian struggle, without claiming alleged neutrality, or without resorting to what he calls "objective coldness" (Ghassan Kanafani, 1982).

He also recorded in the book a group of observations about the poetry of the Palestinian resistance, including that - in his own words - "*it is not crying, nor mourning or despair, but a constant revolutionary radiance and a hope that arouses admiration.*"

In this early book, Ghassan picked up important dimensions in Palestinian resistance poetry, including the deep mixing of the person and the land, the individual relationship and the relationship with the homeland, and linking the literature of resistance with two important elements: the depth of awareness and its decisive brevity. Finally, he believed that Palestinian resistance literature provides an advanced model for the history of resistance literature in the world.

The second point that can be stopped is related to representations of resistance in Ghassan Kanafani's literary creativity, and we know that he has many important, varied and abundant works, all of which he wrote despite the short life he lived, represented in his important novels, including "*Men in the Sun*", "*Umm Saad*", "*What remains for you*", "*Who*

Killed Laila Hayek”, and “*Returning to Haifa*,” in addition to his important story collections, including “*Sad Land of Oranges*,” “*A World We Have No*,” “*On Men and Guns*,” in addition to his plays: “*The Door*” , “*The Hat and the Prophet*”, and “*Forever Bridge*” (G Kanafani, 2008).

In all of these works, despite their diversity and the diversity of the destinations in which they have travelled and explored, it is possible to find clear and fixed features coupled with the meaning of resistance. Some of these features are:

1. Features that related to the basic deals in these works, all of which are linked to the embodiment of the suffering of the Palestinians inside and outside Palestine due to the crippling occupation.
2. Features that related to the idea of "chronological order", meaning that the fictional, narrative and theatrical works of Ghassan Kanafani always refer to circumstances and details related to a specific period or periods of history, so that these works on a certain level appear as a kind of history of Palestinian suffering and a history of Palestinian resistance methods.
3. The capture of very many details, abundant, varied, and accurate at the same time, of the ways of life that the Palestinians lived in various forms, which is a kind of preserving the Palestinian memory, and this is also a form of resistance.

4. The amazing ability to spread the spirit of resistance by capturing specific personalities and specific experiences, and embodying them with artistic creativity without raising resonant slogans, and without resorting to bullying rhetorical methods.

5. The ability to represent and present a clear, firm and stable position on the grievances and crimes of the occupation, and not to stand on alleged neutrality, and not to be convinced of that cold objectivity, with the expression that Ghassan Kanafani gave in his book and referred to it.

6. Features that represent the dimensions of resistance in the works of Ghassan Kanafani, are related to the use of simple and profound artistic methods and frameworks in his novels, stories and theatre, in a way that makes all his works stem from a clear ability to reach his recipients simply without complication.

The other third and final point: With regard to Ghassan Kanafani's experience associated with resistance, it is represented in his embodiment of the meaning of the parable of resistance, or the meaning of the "lesson of resistance". This view in which I overlooked some of his perceptions about the meaning of resistance, and about the representations of resistance in his works, all of which are inseparable from the practices that Ghassan practiced during his life. There is no distance at any level between the experience of Ghassan Kanafani in his life and that of Ghassan in his

writings. There is no separation between the individual and the group, and there are no allegations at any level. He performed his role that was portrayed with nobility and honour. He played this role in his writings, and he played this role in his practices, and he played this role in the creative texts and in the political writings he wrote, and he remained committed to this role until his last martyrdom. Indeed, his martyrdom could be the culmination of this parable. Which Ghassan Kanafani embodied eloquently, easily and simply. Thus, I think that Ghassan Kanafani was, is and will remain the embodiment of this example of the resistance.

Themes of resistance in the characters of Kanafani's novels:

Among the above features is the approach to methods of resistance and their embodiment in new, non-traditional and superficial literary forms. For example, at the level of Ghassan Kanafani's business figures, it can be seen that some of these characters are somewhat close to the concept of the "positive hero" that was promoted and popularized in some period, but Ghassan embodies this meaning of the positive hero without resorting to the ready-made descriptions surrounding this concept in Propaganda writings. Ghassan Kanafani's positive heroes and heroines to the positive point and point to a bright future, and are characterized and characterized by the capacity for patience and full of open hope for a future, but without resorting to the traditional formulas that surrounded these meanings, among stereotypical figures, in many other writings.

An example of this meaning can be found in the character of "Umm Saad" in the novel which this character gave her title. "Umm Saad" is not a single woman in the clear phrase in the novel, and we can stop at a set of important values that characterized this character: honour, toughness, patience, steadfastness, respect for work, simplicity, wisdom, and utterance in a collective popular tongue, and a simple and deep awareness. All values and qualities associated with these the character in whom we can smell the phrase "*the scent of the deep countryside.*"

Kanafani's work has shifted away from portraying individuals as allegories of the Palestinian struggle (as in *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You*) and instead focuses on the heroism of a whole class of Palestinians, rather than just individuals.

Unlike Hamid and Miryam from Jaffa, or Mansur from Majd al Kurum, who happens in many stories in *Of Men and Guns*, Umm Sa'd is never associated with a particular Palestinian region, nor is she given a specific personal history? Despite the fact that we've been told she now lives in Lebanon's Burj al-Barajna camp. In the same way that Miryam is portrayed as "a fertile land" (Coffin, 1996).

Umm Sa'd has a bond to the land as well, but it is more organic and absolute in her case. While the land is depicted as giving and fruitful in *All That's Left to You*, it is also unquenchable and disturbing: "*the desert swallows up ten like [Hamid] in one night.*" Although, the land in Umm

Sa'd has no such negative or harmful implications (Coffin, 1996).

Another aspect of the resistance that is connected with the characters of Ghassan's novels is that all of Ghassan Kanafani's works are betting and succeeding in their bets, on an extended influence after the completion of their reading, which means that the impact of these works is not limited to a specific period, nor on the time of its reading, but rather This influence extends after the completion of its reading, and extends to other, distant times to come to the last tragic shout that we heard at the end of the novel "*Men in the Sun*": "*Why did they not knock the walls of the tank?*" (G Kanafani & Kilpatrick, 1999). This shout continued to resonate with everyone who read and recited this novel after reading it, and other later ones continued after reading it.

CONCLUSION

Palestinian literature, until this tragic downfall caused by political conflicts, was part of the mainstream of the Arab literary movement that flourished during the first half of the century. Its sources were drawn from Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese writers who led the literary movement and were influenced by it. Even the famous Palestinian writers owed their fame mostly to the Arab capitals that received them, sponsored and published their works. In fact, several factors contributed to the diminution of the value of Palestinian literature at a time when Palestine was enjoying a prominent position in the political arena and the struggle for Arab nationalism and patriotism. After 1948, Palestinian

literature succeeded in laying the foundations for a new literary movement that could be better described as literature in exile rather than Palestinian or refugee literature.

Poetry was the main component of this movement, and in recent years it was able to witness remarkable advances in quality and technique. The short period of silence that followed the 1948 war was followed by a great awakening, and the scattering of patriotic poetry that reflected the patriotic fervour of the Palestinian people. It interacted with Arab and foreign literary currents, gradually breaking the traditional rules of literary technology, rejecting the old emotional outbursts and emerging with a unique feeling of deep sadness commensurate with the reality of the situation regarding Palestine.

In translating his political commitment to liberating Palestine into his art, Kanafani was not simply making a general call to revolutionary violence. Instead, he sought to portray a specific vision of collective and collective resistance at every level of society. Violence, for Kanafani, was a necessary and inevitable part of that resistance, but ideally, it should be goal-oriented and executed with a clear sense of commitment to the common cause. In general, he believed that the revolution would be brought about by those whom he considered the most who suffered and tasted pain. For Said, *'the intellectual ought neither to be so uncontroversial and safe a figure as to be just a friendly technician nor should the intellectual try to be a full-time Cassandra, who was not only righteously unpleasant but also*

unheard... But the alternatives are not total quiescence or total rebelliousness' (Said, 1994). Ghassan Kanafani proved to be one of the important Palestinian intellectuals, over the years. This is to say, the implications of resistance literature are clearly embodied in Palestinian literature especially Ghassan Kanafani's works.

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