



**An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**GHASSAN KANAFANI'S LITERATURE AND
THE CONTEMPORARY PALESTINIAN CRISIS**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to those who survived to tell their stories, to the nation
where I belong.

Acknowledgments

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Gracious, and Merciful

I want to express my gratitude to my family: my mother, father, and siblings, for always being by my side. I'm also grateful to my husband and son for giving me the strength to achieve my dreams; your support means everything to me, so thank you very much!

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

GHASSAN KANAFANI'S LITERATURE AND THE CONTEMPORARY PALESTINIAN CRISIS

I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

Student's Name

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05/03/2025

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Abstract

This study examines symbolism in Ghassan Kanafani's literature and the ongoing Palestinian refugee crisis. It mainly aims to compare the symbols and signs used in Kanafani's literary works and the Palestinians' daily struggles under the military force of Israeli occupation. It also debates the language of resistance, themes, and symbols in Kanafani's novels and short stories as a predictable image of Palestinians' future after 1948. It further debates Ghassan Kanfani's prediction of the contemporary Palestinian crisis, which depicts the refugee crisis after 1948 and the collective memory of return to Palestine. The thesis employs an up-to-date postcolonial reading of the novels and short stories to indicate that the current *nakbas* in Palestine and the crisis of refuge for Palestinians have continued after 1948, not only in refugee camps but also in their homeland Palestine.

This study falls into two parts: the first compares the national allegories in Kanafani's literary works with the contemporary Palestinian situation and contemporary Palestinian literature inspired by Kanafani, like Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. The second part explores the attitude that Kanafani's literary allegories mirror in the Palestinian contemporary issue and contemporary works of literature that draw from Kanafani's symbolism. These two parts will conclude by proving the prophecy of the continuous crises of Palestinians in Kanafani's literature. The thesis concludes that the voices of writers in novels and short stories could predict the future of their nations, and this has been proven by taking Ghassan Kanafani's literature as a base of this study.

Keywords: symbolism; home, refugees, Palestinian crisis, ongoing *Nakbas*; Ghassan Kanafani

Chapter One

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Home is where humans discover and realize their identity, create their memory, and build their future. In the land of Palestine (home), thousands of Palestinians are prevented from their rights of being at home, creating good memories, and building their future. In 1948, which marked the birth of *Nakba* in Palestine, Palestinians were expelled from their homeland and uprooted by force; According to the data documentation of www.palestineremembered.com, 800,000 Palestinian people were evacuated from their lands and lived in exile inside and outside Palestine. In my thesis, I illustrate the continuous *nakbas*, after 1948, of Palestinians and the *urbicide* [*The concept refers to the premeditated and deliberate destruction of cities, their iconic architecture, and their identity*] of Palestine through contemporary critical and analytical reading of Ghassan Kanafani's literature. As an example, I explore what is happening currently with Palestinians as Israel demolished any sign of civilization or identity in Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip, to explore the powerful symbols, vivid imagery, and poignant allegories of Palestinian anguish as depicted in literature, and to critically examine how these representations reflect the harsh realities Palestinians endure today. The thesis also shows that the *Nakba* of 1948 wasn't the only *Nakba* Palestinians have faced, and the misery of it didn't end but continued. Like the author of *Imagining Palestine*, the thesis explains that Palestinians "re-lived in ... daily *nakbas*" (Hamdi, 2023, p. 33). So, the main point here is to focus on the re-lived daily *nakbas* in contemporary Palestinian situations by considering Ghassan Kanafani's literature as a prediction of the Palestinians' *nakbas* today.

Ghassan Kanafani is a Palestinian intellectual, journalist, and writer. He was born in Acre in 1936. Kanafani left Palestine in 1948 with many other Palestinians who were evacuated and expelled from their lands. He had lived with his family in Syria as a refugee before moving to Kuwait and Lebanon. He edited and wrote many short stories, novels, and political articles. In his literature, Kanafani represents the pain of displacement for a

Palestinian man who experienced the *Nakba* in his childhood. Due to that, Kanafani relived the *Nakba* of his nation and rebelled against it in every short story or novel he wrote. As written about him in his obituary in Lebanon's *Daily Star*, "he was a writer, a commando who never fired a gun, whose weapon was a ball-point pen" (MEM, 2020). In these words, one can realize the power of his writings as a revolutionary writer and how a pen could be more powerful than a gun. For that reason, Kanafani was assassinated in Beirut on 8 July 1972; the Israeli Mossad had placed an explosive charge in his car, which killed him and his niece Lamees. By doing so, the Israeli Mossad thought they got rid of the truth. However, Kanafani's literature became more popular, translated into 16 languages, and adapted into plays and films.

Kanafani, as a writer, was distinctive in portraying the violations of Zionist occupation in Palestine; he was the first to allocate and deploy the notion of resistance literature ("*adab al-muqawama*"). In his literary works, he uses metaphors and signs to portray the atrocities the Israeli occupation committed against the indigenous Palestinians. He further documents the historical exodus of the indigenous Palestinians and transforms the traumatic memory of the past as part of the living present by using fiction and symbols. The thesis places Kanafani's literature in comparison with the contemporary Palestinian situation and contemporary literature, drawing from his works to show the predictable imagination of the writer as part of the present time.

Out of my critical point of view, which I built based on Ghassan Kanafani's literature and the contemporary Palestinian crisis, the study argues that the checkpoints Palestinians cross daily, the contemporary violations they've faced every moment, and the destructions of their lands are portrayed and predicted in Kanafani's short stories and novels. All the events from 2019 to 2024 are predictable in his literature. In his novel *Men in the Sun* (1962), for instance, Kanafani represents the crisis of exodus by three characters who are allegories of all Palestinians after 1948, since the representation of the three refugees is a representation of Palestinian people as children, men and women. In the story, one can realize that the journey of the three refugees reflects the journey of the exodus that Palestinians have lived in their homeland under the military force of occupation from

1948 till now. Abu Qais, Marwan, and Asaad are representations of the Palestinians' crises nowadays inside and outside Palestine. They are reflections of the reality of Palestinians' current time under the power of occupation in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. I argue in Chapter 2 that the representation of the characters in the novella and other short stories is a continuous prediction of the Palestinian contemporary crisis at home and I illustrate more how Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* & other literary works indicate the situation of Palestinians nowadays as a continuous journey of refuge in their homeland Palestine.

The *Nakba* and the crisis of refugees didn't end after 1948, it's not just part of Palestinians' past but it is part of the everyday present (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007) argue that:

The *Nakba* is not just something of the past. It continues into the present in every house demolished by an Israeli bulldozer, with every village divided from its fields by the 'separation' wall, and with every Palestinian who still longs to return to a home that is no more (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007, p. 103).

The contemporary situation in Palestine is unstable and insecure. Palestinians experience the *Nakba* today with every house demolished and every village occupied by the Israeli Occupation. The land is divided into districts by the apartheid separation wall, and such a division separates the indigenous Palestinians from each other and their lands. It also makes Palestinians refugees at home since the word "refugee" in the Palestinian context in the current time doesn't mean leaving the homeland by force; it further means living as a *nazih* (refugee by force) inside the homeland. (Fox & Qabaha, 2021) argue that:

Occupied Palestinians live in increasingly fragmented and isolated enclaves, separated by checkpoints, roadblocks, walls, and fences. As Israeli settlements continue to increase and expand, Palestinian territory shrinks. Different forms of confinement and restriction have come to define what it means to be Palestinian today: Gaza is an open-air prison and the West Bank is a collection of Bantustans (Fox & Qabaha, 2021, p. 4).

The violations these words represent, reflect the images of *nozoo* (imposed displacement) that Kanafani portrays in his novels and short stories; since in such symbols and images of thousands of Palestinians in the past, Kanafani mirrors the true images of

today. In which the shrinking of Palestinian territory and the hegemony of the occupation make occupied Palestinians live in exile at home. Every checkpoint, roadblock, wall, and fence the occupation imposes on Palestinians' lives controls their movements and isolates them from each other; whenever the Israeli settlements expand, the Palestinian crisis increases, and the indigenous Palestinians become refugees at home. At the current time, every part of Occupied Palestine is a territory of itself and its people. Hence, people who live in Jerusalem can't freely come to the West Bank without any restriction, and people in the West Bank can't visit Jerusalem without obtaining permission from the Israeli occupation. Not only that, but also Palestinian citizens of the Gaza Strip can't move out of its borders at all; it's an-open-air prison (and currently becomes a collective cemetery), like the tank that imprisons the three refugees inside it until they die in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*. In this case, we can notice that the contemporary Palestinian situation proves that the massive destruction of Palestinian territories did not end with the end of 1948, and the crisis of *Nakba* that Kanafani portrays in his literature, of which *Men in the Sun* is one, anticipates the continuity of Palestinian *nakbas* at home.

Inspired by Kanfani's literature, this thesis compares the ongoing socio-political effects of the *Nakba* of 1948, with the historical representation of the exodus Palestinian crisis in Kanafani's works of literature, and the contemporary Palestinian crises in Palestine. This thesis places in Chapters 2 and 3, the contemporary atrocities that the Israeli occupation has committed against the indigenous Palestinians; starting with borders, separation walls, and checkpoints, and ending with ethnic cleansing. It further discusses works that draw on Kanafani's literature to represent the continuity of the predictable images in contemporary writings and reality.

Many writers and researchers have tackled Kanafani as a revolutionary figure in their studies and others describe his literature as part of the resistance force. Bashir Abu-Manneh discusses Kanafani's theory of resistance and liberation by representing the thoughts Kanafani used in his novella *Men in the Sun* (1962). The same can be seen in Hamdi (2023) since her book "proposes to imagine Palestine post the 1948 catastrophe, an imagining that means to reconstruct after catastrophe, after rupture, after annihilation,

a picking up the pieces and beginning –again" (p. 2). In the book, the writer uses Kanafani's resistance theory by depending on Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* and *Returning to Haifa* to represent the imagining *nakbas* of Palestinians after 1948. She also focuses on the reconstruction of Palestine after the catastrophe by depending on these novellas and other literary works for other Palestinian writers. However, I realized that no one predicted "the destiny of the young man from Akka who died a martyr was that his fiction would usher in the future" (Khoury, 2013, p. 89). As can be indicated, researchers didn't fully explain the connotations in Kanafani's novels and short stories as a prophecy of the present misery of Palestinians. They even focused on specific literary works in Kanafani's literature and didn't focus that much on his short stories. In addition, the main focus was on representing Kanafani's resistance theory as a general theme, not as a significant piece of art that influences writers and predicts the contemporary Palestinian situation.

That's to argue that the major thematic explanations of resistance theory were taken from *Men in the Sun*, *Returning to Haifa*, and other books. Based on that, I argue that works such as *Men in the Sun*, and *Returning to Haifa* are not the only works of literature that portray the anguish of Palestinians, but also *Letters from Gaza*, *Om Assad*, and some short stories like "The Stolen Shirt", "Until We Return" and "The Cannon" are representations of Kanafani's future prediction of the contemporary crisis in Palestine. From this point, I aim to compare some of the previously mentioned works and others with the present Palestinian crises by focusing on some hidden symbols and connotations that have not been discussed. I also depend on other literature and fiction drawn on Kanafani's literature to represent how Kanafani's prediction is portrayed in modern literature and how it's inspiring other writers to describe the continuous misery of Palestine.

In Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), which draws on Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (1969), the writer continues to build on the *Nakba* that Safia has faced in Haifa and the loss of her child, to represent the continuous *nakbas* of other Palestinian families and cities, same as Abulheja family in Jenin. As can be noticed, the loss of Khaldoon in *Returning to Haifa*, who becomes David later on, is the same as the loss of Ismael, who becomes another David and belongs to another family. At this point, I argue that

Abulhawa mirrors an intelligent representation of the story of Khaldoon and Ismael's loss. Thus, the children's names and the time of the anguish are different, but both Ismael & Khaldoon at the end become David. This illustrates that while the times may change, the incidents remain the same. Thousands of Palestinian children, despite having different names, share a similar fate in their occupied homeland. Most of them bear the scars of the David as they face daily struggles, violations, and restrictions on their movement by the Israeli occupation (the Star of David).

The scar and the name of David, as the thesis argues in Chapter 3, symbolize and portray the scar of many Palestinian children whose childhood has been stolen from them. Also, it focuses on the trauma of Palestinian refugee children, the question of identity formation and how Palestinian identity is facing the danger of obliteration and the different kinds of absence and genocides Palestinian children face. The characters of Ismael in Abulhawa's novel & Khaldoon in Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (1969), represent Gazans' children and predict the contemporary re-lived nakba, displacement, and expulsion of more than 1.5 million of them. Add to that, Khaldoon and Ismael's stories, are similar to many Gazans' children stories who witnessed different kinds of atrocities after October 7th. Many Palestinian children after this date, have been kidnapped, killed, and detained. As explored by media, (according to Israeli channel news), an Israeli soldier took a newborn baby from Gaza after killing the family and bombing the entire house. The soldier who died after taking the child to Israel was telling the story to other soldiers, and one of them told the story to news channels (Trtarabi, 2024). The baby who was kidnapped disappeared, and no one knows anything about him now. Based on my argument, such a story was predictable and portrayed in Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* & continued in Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin*. As pointed out in Abulhawa's portrayal in these lines

While Dalia lay heartbroken, delirious with the loss of Ismael, Jolanta rocked David to sleep. While Hasan tended to his family's survival, Moshe sang in drunken revelry with his fellow soldiers. And while Yehya and the others moved in anguished steps away from their land, the usurpers sang "Hatikva" and shouted, "Long live Israel!" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 37).

The same as Safia and Dalia, thousands of parents in Gaza, and the West Bank are waiting in bitterness for their children to come back home, while the Israeli Zionist families are hugging their children and sleeping safely at home. While thousands of Gazans' children were slaughtered, turned into parts, and died under the rubble, thousands of Israeli Zionist children sang "Hatikva, all Palestinian children are terrorists and must die", As in 2023 during the massive genocide in Gaza, Kan-Israel Public Broadcasting uploaded an Israeli children's song entitled "Children of the Generation of Victory", which was written by Ofer Rosenbaum and Shulamit Stolero. As expressed in *The Palestine Chronicle* (2023) (November 20)," Kan aired the song under the title "We will annihilate everyone in Gaza," but was later forced to remove the clip after it sparked angry global responses" (*Palestine Chronicle*, 2023). Thus the lyrics of the song were full of racist violations toward Palestinians. It calls for eliminating and annihilating Palestinians in Gaza, which is not new for Zionism since the song is an adaptation of the song "Evils," written by Haim Ghouri in 1948 *Nakba*. This takes the argument back to the point that emphasizes Kanafani's prediction of the contemporary crises in Palestine and Abulhawa's portrayal of the scar of David. As predicted in literature, while children everywhere live in peace, Gazan children are kidnapped and eliminated by the Zionist army, those who kidnapped a newborn baby to Israel and annihilated others under the rubble. Not only this incident, but also people have caught a soldier kidnapping a 10-year-old girl, her name is Doha, and the last time she was seen in a photo with the Israeli soldier on his Instagram. The story of these children is the same as that of Ismael and Khaldoon; they are kidnapped and disappear; in other words, no one knows what happened to them. They are taken to Israel and maybe they'll go back one day with another identity they've created for them, to be the real image of David.

Inspired by contemporary Palestinian literature, which draws from Kanafani's literature, like Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin*, I also investigate symbols, images, and connotations the writers portray in their literature, in comparison to the contemporary situation in Palestine, particularly after the 7th of October, to point out the impact of the current Palestinian crisis and the potential future *nakbas* as reflected in Kanafani's works.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Because of the contemporary Palestinian crisis that began 77 years ago, and because of the unrelieved pain of thousands of innocent children, women, and men in Palestine, (and in Gaza at this moment of writing this thesis), this study is timely, original, and significant, as it discusses the loss of children, the loss of identity, and the struggles Palestinian people experience daily while they are always trying to reassert their identity. This study is important and original since it is based on real-life struggles and literary works compared to each other. The study aims to explain the future vision of Kanafani and how he anticipates what happens in Palestine based on the nature of the conflict in which children are the first victims. Therefore, the study comes from a new comparison of the unmentioned literary connotations Kanafani represents in his literature, which the thesis aims to discuss based on a contemporary Palestinian reading of the Palestinian crisis today.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is expected to achieve the following objectives: it shows that the signs in Kanafani's literature are reflections of the contemporary Palestinian crisis at home. It further represents the connotations behind some symbols in Kanafani's literary works as predictable images of real struggles Palestinians faced in Palestine. The study also explores literary works that have not been mentioned or discussed before by Ghassan Kanafani, to link with the current atrocities of the occupation and the difficulties Palestinians come through daily. Moreover, it discusses other literary works drawing on Kanafani's literature, to argue that the prophecy of the contemporary situation in Palestine is also part of contemporary Palestinian literature and reality. In short, this study falls into two parts; the first is comparing the national allegories like Khaldoon's name and scar, and its relation of the representation of Palestine in Kanafani's literary works with the contemporary Palestinian situation by having further readings of contemporary literary works that draw on Kanafani's literature and Palestinian reality, such as Abulhawa's *Morning in Jenin*. The second is the attitude that Kanafani's literary allegories mirror in the Palestinian contemporary issue and contemporary works of literature which draw on

Kanafani's symbolism. These two sections will conclude by manifesting the future prophecy of Kanafani's symbols, images, and allegories, which significantly influence this study as it interprets the ongoing Palestinian crisis faced by the indigenous Palestinians in Kanafani's literature and exposes the iniquity of the occupation.

1.4 Questions of the Study

This study seeks to answer these questions:

1. How do Kanafani's literary works predict the Palestinian contemporary issue?
2. What are the resonances in Kanafani's literature and the Palestinians' contemporary situation?
3. What images and connotations are portrayed in Kanafani's literature and that mirror the contemporary Palestinian crises?
4. In what ways can modern literature leverage Kanafani's literature to establish a link between literature and real life?

1.5 Methodologies of the Study

To answer these questions, this study uses post-colonial theory to debate the allegories and connotations Ghassan Kanafani portrays in his novels and short stories by employing a comparative approach in analyzing texts and real current situations in Palestine that represent the ongoing occupation in the land today. It further depends on the analytical approach to compare the contemporary Palestinians' crisis with Kanafani's literature. It also tackles books and studies discussing the Palestinian refugee crisis and the atrocities they experienced from the Zionist occupation. The study depends on these books and theoretical frames to discuss the Palestinian situation and link it with predictable images written in Kanafani's novels and short stories to show how the writer had a future prophecy about the contemporary Palestinian crisis for thousands of Palestinians in their homeland, Palestine. For this purpose, I employ diverse approaches, including comparative and analytical.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

In trying to employ the contemporary Palestinian situation and literature, in comparison with Ghassan Kanafani's literature, the researcher faces challenges in approving a comprehensive theory that confines all the related issues representing the ongoing Palestinian crisis from 2019 to 2024. The atrocities Palestinians faced were not new, but it has been ongoing for more than 77 years. Kanafani's literature divulged these atrocities by using signs, connotations, and symbols. The challenge is how to prove the prediction of the ongoing Palestinian crisis in Kanafani's literature and choose suitable literary works that mirror the real situation in Palestine. Interpretations of such a subject matter need a serious analytical reading and careful understanding of the interrelated topics.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

In his book Bashir Abu-Manneh clarifies that "His [Kanafani's] literary engagement with Palestinian realities of dispossession pushed him to act politically" (Abu-Manneh, 2016, p. 72), and this is what Kanafani himself explained in an interview before:

My political position springs from my being a novelist. In so far as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite. I started writing the story of my Palestinian life before I found a clear political position or joined any organization (Stefan Wild, 1975).

According to his words, one realized that literature is the reason behind making Kanafani politically committed, as his novels were his sound of politics when he described the misery of his people in Palestine. So, the main purpose of literature for him is writing the story of Palestinian people, and representing their displacement and their pain without following any political organization. In this thesis, I explain that Kanafani has not only been writing about the Palestinian past anguish, and his literature can't be just part of the past in a time when the Palestinian *nakbas* in Palestine are continued. So, it is considered in this study a predictable resource for the contemporary Palestinian crises today, especially during the current genocide in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The thesis also depends on Edward Said's, Nur Masalha's, and Ilan Pape's contributions to Palestine studies. For instance, it tackles Pape's book to compare the ethnic cleansing that is part of the Zionist Israeli plans against Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem, with Kanafani's literary connotations that reflect the Palestinian reality. Additionally, I emphasize the description of the Palestinian displacement and expulsion by referring to Nur Massalha's book (1957). Massalha's descriptions of the concept of "transfer", as I understand, stand against the image of victimizing the occupation atrocities against Palestinian people and bringing to light the real misery of them in Palestine today. Moreover, I include Qabaha's and Fox's book (2021), which describes the daily limitations on people's movements and lives in the land of Palestine, and clarifies that "contemporary Palestinian literature is shaped out of cultural memory, historical socio-political (and geographical) paradigms are continually being reformulated by the ongoing conflict" (Fox & Qabaha, 2021, p. 15). As I noticed, the writers represent the Palestinian cause in a way that helps in using it as a reference to the argument for this thesis, which transfers Palestinians' daily struggles based on literary connotations taken from Kanafani's literature. I also rely on Edward Said's book (1994), to articulate the Palestinians' right to return to their villages, cities, and land. I further tackled Said's theoretical points because I realized that Said's experience with exile was different from Kanafani's experience, the same as other Palestinians who had the same cause, which was the Zionist occupation. So, I believe that both of them mirrored the current Palestinian cause based on his experience and vision, the thing that insight underscores the claim and significance of this study.

1.8 Literature Reviews

This section shows how this study differs from other critical contributions of the Palestinian contemporary crisis based on Kanafani's literary predictions. The study's contribution differs on many levels in treating crucial issues related to the occupational hegemonic regime against Palestine and Palestinians as aboriginal civilians.

In their study "Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa*: tracing Memory beyond the Rubble", Sumaya Alhaj Mohammed & Dania Meryan represent a new conception of

home that Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* portrays, from a postcolonial point of view (2019). The writers explore the chasm between the imaginary utopian territory that's part of the Palestinian memory and the real site that exists geographically. They also argued that Kanafani's allegorical journey of *Returning to Haifa* transcends the indigenous Palestinians from the memory of the victimhood to that of resistance. The writers in their article depend on three physical sites to explore body, land, and text, which they described as "opened to the process of becoming"; the idea of becoming that they explored here is related to the imaginary part that is portrayed in the characters' minds inside the novella. Due to that, I see that Kanafani's portrayal of some characters transcends the anguish that Palestinians are living daily, and it also carries many meanings that can't be just related to the image of home and the idea of return that the article has discussed.

In his study, "The Symbolism of the Sun in Ghassan Kanafani's Fiction: A Political Critique" (2017), Shadi Neimneh shows the negative symbolism of the sun's portrayal in Kanafani's fiction, especially *Men in the Sun* (1963). As he mentioned "the sun is a naturalistic emblem standing for the harsh realities encountered by Palestinian refugees", and it is employed in the cited articles as a political metaphor for the "hellish" life of exiled Palestinians. As can be noticed, the writer describes one symbol of Kanafani's famous fiction that illustrates the negative image of the refugee crisis after the 1948 *Nakba* and points out the hard reality of Palestinians. Similarly, in other articles, the writer argued about one symbol of one of Kanafani's well-known fiction and specified the argument to discuss one to two symbols or ideas related to the refugee crisis of 1948 *Nakba*.

Add to that, in her article, "The Spatial Symbolism in Ghassan Kanafani's Novel 'Three Letters from Palestine': An Analytical Study", Al-Sheikh (2021) explores the spatial symbolism in Kanafani's *Three Letters from Palestine*, depending on the qualitative approach "in attempt to examine the symbolism of the spatial element in *Three Letters from Palestine* and its significant, and deep meaning behind the literal meaning of these symbols" (p.2). The writer depends on an analytical study to explain the meaning behind the three places Kanafani represents in his novel, and how Kanafani intends to link the

reader's imagination with the three places he portrays in his book. She also explains how the places in the novel have deep meanings concerning the Palestinian heritage and identity.

Not only these articles but also El-Hussari's (2009) "The Symbolic Conflation of Space and Time in Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Ma. Tabaqqa La-kum (All that's Left to You)*", argues the confluences between time and space in Kanafani's *All That's Left to You*, explains the composites between place and time for the characters, and debates how such combination creates the protagonist's human experience that builds his individual experience. So the writer of this article contends that the time and space in Kanafani's novel are not personal, but national, since the protagonist is used "to produce an orderly historical but critical interpretation of the Palestinian national plight, where the characters speaking for their people", and there they find themselves looking for their national identity, which has no sense except in time and space. However, time and space are taking place in other articles that talk about the Palestinian situation separate from Kanafani's literature or fictional books.

In their article, "The *Nakba* Continues: The Palestinian Crisis from the Past to the Present", Ahmad Qabaha and Bilal Hamamra argue the continuity of the *Nakba* of 1948 from the past to the present time by depending on the evidence that shows the continuous anguish that Palestinians live inside their homeland; "Palestinian *Nakba* is a living presence that is communicated and enacted through the ongoing Israeli displacement and expulsion of Palestinians who share the scars of collective memory" (32). Thus Palestinians are living the same *Nakba* their ancestors were living in 1948. They faced the same struggles and shared "the scars of the collective trauma" that they have experienced daily. The writers also explain that "the affirmation of the Jewish identity and home is based on the negation of the Palestinian identity, an identity deemed the other to the Israeli and Jewish one" (32) since the Zionist law has given the right of residence for those who have the Israeli identity. To reach their goals, the occupation also displaced thousands of Palestinians, deprived their rights of return, and demolished their identity to establish their own identity "the Israeli one" on the rubble of the Palestinian inhabitants.

Based on my research, I realize that no academic or professional study has yet compared Kanafani's literature and the contemporary Palestinian situation from 2019 to 2024, especially in the West Bank (and Gaza while I'm working on this thesis) although they are highly comparable in terms of the issues they portray, the experiences between reality & the characters, and the symbolic connotations in which they are mirrored. So to the best of my knowledge, the studies that I previously tackled discussed Ghassan Kanafani's fiction separated from the contemporary Palestinian situation and literature, and other academic articles tackled the continued *Nakba* in Palestine as a study from the past to the present based on a political point of view to represent the Palestinian refugee crisis. However, they didn't study Kanafani's literature as a prophecy of the contemporary Palestinians' struggles at home. Even though some articles discussed some symbols in Kanafani's fiction, like the sun, they discussed it as a metaphorical image without linking it to real current situations concerning the Indigenous people.

That's to point out the originality of this thesis since it's the first academic study that compares images, symbols, and plots in Kanafani's literature with other contemporary literature that draws on it, and the real current atrocities in Palestine. The difference between this study and the previous ones is the representation of Kanafani's short stories and novels as predictable images that Kanafani predicts in his writings about the contemporary Palestinian situation. In the study, I transcended and adapted images from short stories and novels and compared them with real events in the land of Palestine to prove the prophecy about the continuous Palestinian crisis at home.

The study based on this view is divided into three Chapters: "Introduction & Background," "The Symbolic Connotation in Kanafani's Literature and the Contemporary Palestinian Crisis," and "Contemporary Literature and Activists that Draw on Kanafani's Literary Works".

Chapter Two

The Role of Ghassan Kanafani's Literature in the Contemporary Palestinian Crises: A Critical Reading of Symbolic Connotations

2.1 The Contemporary Palestinian Nakba: A Journey of Exodus, or a Dream of Return

Literature is a simulation of the reality of nations' contemporary issues, and it is an important point that writers tackle in their studies to focus on the struggles of the indigenous inside and outside the land of origin. The role of resistance literature took place in the Palestinians' lives after the 1948 *Nakba*; writers depend on it to rebel against the displacement they've lived through and to document the misery of Palestinian people who are facing the occupation's atrocities. In their article, Qabaha & Hamamra (2021) argue that "the Israeli military occupation has been striving to wrest control from Palestinians over Palestine physically and linguistically. Israel has the advantage of controlling narratives, which cast Palestinians outside public discourse and history" (p. 5). Unlike the writers and despite the fact of Occupation control of the Palestinian narratives, I argue in the following chapter that Kanafani in his literature wrested control back from the occupation and documented the collective Palestinian narratives in his short stories & novellas. Additionally, his works of literature were not only documentation of the past but also predictable documentation of the contemporary anguish in Palestine.

Kanafani's literature, such as *Men in the Sun* (1962) mirrors incidents Palestinians witnessed from 2019 to 2024, in which the refugee crisis was one of them. As Ibrahim A. El-Hussari explores " Kanafani's narrative art makes use of the crowded memories, released by principal characters under manifold obligations, not excluding stress, to produce an orderly historical but critical interpretation of the Palestinian national plight where characters, speaking for their people" (El-Hussari, 2009, p. 1007). Like El-Hussari, I believe that Kanafani's literature speaks for his people through words, which, in my point of view, are not only about the characters but are also related to signs and images. Kanafani himself aims to use it to reflect the national anguish of his people. For example,

Kanafani describes the route of the three refugees in *Men in the Sun* after 1948 as " the road of black destiny" (Kanafani G. , 1962, p. 21) since the three men have no one to help or a place to stay in, and they struggle in movement from one place to another. They are so much like Palestinians who face the ongoing struggles at checkpoints while they are going to their work or universities; both the characters and Palestinians experience the same situation, but the only difference here is that the three refugees are allegories of the true ongoing Palestinian *nakba* for Palestinians. So, the story reflects the suffering of Palestinian people since 1948 in refugee camps, highlighting the socio-political challenges faced by the three refugees as Palestinians, which parallels the current situation of Palestinians in Palestine in a time when thousands of Palestinians experience socio-political challenges daily with the ongoing occupation in the land of Palestine. From this point, I argue that Kanafani's description was not a matter of fiction but a future prediction that drew on his childhood experience & other Palestinians during the 1948 *Nakba*. As I also contend that *Men in the Sun* is not confined to the three refugees' economic or political crises after 1948. It's a story of the collective memory of occupied Palestinians, who are experiencing the refugee crisis at home nowadays.

Due to that, I contend that the plot and symbols in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* (1962) are a portrayal of the contemporary Palestinian crises at home. The journey of the three refugees mirrors the journey of many Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. The same as the three refugees, the vast majority of Palestinians have limitations on movements from one Palestinian territory to another. Many of them move with their identification cards or passports to prove their belonging to the land at every checkpoint they have to cross. Yet, sometimes passports and identification cards are not useful to cross Israeli borders, since one of the greatest obstacles that Palestinians face nowadays is being politically rejected by the Israeli occupation. The same as *Men in the Sun*, Palestinians who are politically rejected become refugees at home and start to think of solutions to their miserable situation as refugees. In the end, they face this kind of rejection in two ways; the first one is avoiding any movement out of their country or village; the second is crossing some Israeli borders illegally. In both, Palestinians struggle

and put themselves in danger so much like Abu Qais, Marwan, and Assad, who struggle and die at the end of their journey.

The journey of exodus within Palestine was fraught with dangers, just like the journey outside the land of Palestine. In *Men in the Sun*, the characters embark on their journey in search of a better life for their families following the crisis of 1948. During their journey, they encounter smugglers, including one known as the Fat Man, and another named Abul Khaizuran. Throughout the story, one notices that these smugglers are human traffickers, and they are driven solely by greed. Abul Khaizuran, in particular, shows no concern beyond his desire for money. This scenario reflects similar situations currently happening in Palestine. Hence the representation of the smugglers in Kanafani's novella mirrors the experience of many Palestinian workers during the pandemic from 2019 to 2021. Throughout COVID-19, numerous Palestinians faced significant economic and social challenges, promoting them to seek alternative income sources to support their families. For that reason, they try to take permits from the Israeli settlers in occupied Palestine (Israel), to work and get some money. However, many of these permits that Palestinian workers buy from other Palestinian smugglers have been rejected by the Israeli occupation. So, Palestinian workers decided to cross the Israeli borders and enter the countries of the 1948 *Nakba* through some Israeli gaps (holes) in the separation wall. These gaps in the separation wall were kept open for Palestinians to enter the other side of occupied Palestine easily. Anyhow, this is how it looks for the first time, but that was not the case for many Palestinians. The journey of Palestinian workers was not easy, it was as portrayed in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* (1962), "a journey to nowhere". On the road of their journey, every night was full of fear, darkness, and danger "(they) he could not tell exactly whether (they) he was trembling because of the desert cold, or from fear, or exhaustion" (p. 34). The guides of their journey were not there, they left them alone as many guides and smugglers Kanafani portrayed in the novella. They "took advantage of (their) innocence and ignorance, tricking (them)" and left them in front of a dark gap in the separation wall surrounded by barbed wire. They all talked about roads and how it is easy to cross a border in the separation wall "They said: "You will find yourself on the road!" And all they knew of the road was its blackness and its pavements"(Kanafani,

1962, p.30). In this dark road of departure, many Palestinian workers have been assassinated, humiliated, and imprisoned at the hands of Israeli forces.

Picture (1)

"Pharaoh" Hatch in the Separation Wall, August 2020



Picture (2)

The occupation army detains many Palestinian workers at the "Pharaoh" Hatch leading to the occupied interior



By exploring the incidents that Palestinian workers have faced in Palestine from the Israeli military force, one can point out that Kanafani's portrayal in *Men in the Sun* predicts the continuity of the refugee crisis for many Palestinians in occupied Palestine.

The continuity of the refugee crisis imposed on Palestinians to relive the *Nakba* of 1948 in the present time. As Tahrir Hamdi argues.

This repetition of catastrophe enables Palestinian youth who have experienced numerous horrors, to re-live and re-imagine the Nakba, a memory that is more than a memory as it is lived and re-lived in the daily *nakbas* of the Palestinian people (Hamdi, 2023, p. 11).

The daily *nakbas* of the Palestinian people, the violations they faced from the Israeli settlers, and the dream of return, have been imposed on Palestinians to re-live the 1948 *Nakba* and the exodus currently. These words shed light on the point that this thesis aims to explore, which is the daily *nakbas* that young Palestinians re-live, and the future imagination in Kanafani's literature that is built from the experience with the repetition of catastrophe years ago.

The symbolic prediction in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* is not limited to the contemporary refugee crisis for Palestinians in Palestine. It also predicts the journey of return for Palestinians through Pharaoh's Hatch. The journey of return that's lived in the contemporary time in Palestine by Palestinians who depend on smugglers to return to the countries of 1948, was mentioned in different parts of the novella, especially in a conversation between Abul Khiuzuran and Assad "Haj Rida believes that smuggling people on the return journey is a trivial matter, so he leaves it to you" (Kanafani G. , 1962, p. 50)." Or do you think he doesn't know you smuggle people on the return journey?" (p. 51). Kanafani's repetition of the "different route on the return journey" (p. 48) that Haj Rida or Abul Khaizuran decided to follow in smuggling refugees is a prediction of the different routes that Palestinians are using to return to the occupied Palestinian territory. In other words; these routes are predictions of the current routes Palestinians cross to return to the areas of 1948 today. Haj Rida and Abul Khaizuran are similar to the Palestinian smugglers who are "smuggling people on the return journey" (Kanafani G. , 1962, p. 50) and transporting them to Pharaoh's Hatch.

As can be realized, the nostalgic feeling for the land makes Palestinians ready to cross the illegal Israeli borders that have distanced them from their land since 1948. So, regardless of the fear of being murdered by Israeli Zionist forces many Palestinians cross the separation wall and return to the land of their ancestors as tourists for the first time in 2019. According to the *Al-ayyam* newspaper, "Pharaoh's Hatch gave Palestinians a chance to come from the West Bank, Gaza, and even Jerusalem to visit occupied Palestine (Israel) without permits from the Israeli government". Pharaoh's hatch was a good chance, especially for Palestinian refugees who are on the black list and dream of returning to their occupied lands, the same as Abu Qais who dreams of a "return to the ten olive trees that (he) you once owned in (his) your village" (Kanafani G. , 1962, p. 29). For instance, the same portrayal of Abu Qais can be realized in an interview with Said Khalid, a 44 year- old Palestinian man from the West Bank, who says" I wasn't allowed to return to the land of my grandfather in Haifa, even as a visitor because I spent half of my life in the Israeli prisons and that was enough to be politically rejected" (Khalid, 2022). Khalid adds that "the first time I was allowed to return to my grandfather's land in Hifa was in 2019 through Pharaoh's hatch, I was happy with this return even though it was for a short time but I've returned" (Khalid, 2022). In a few sentences, he describes the contemporary Palestinians' dream of return that was predicted and portrayed in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*. Khalid's dream is similar to many other Palestinians' dream of return, which is not only for Palestinian refugees outside Palestine but also for Palestinian refugees inside Palestine. That's to conclude, the dream of return is a human right for Palestinian refugees inside and outside Palestine". No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country" (Said E. W., 1980, p. 47), and "everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (p. 47). So, the contemporary atrocities the Israeli settlers have committed against many Palestinians to deprive them of their right of return are considered a violation of human rights that Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* predicted part of them. From this point, I consider Kanafani's literature a speech of resistance that indicates the journey of exodus for the three refugees in *Men in the Sun* as a map line of the contemporary journey of return for Palestinian people in Palestine.

2.2 Kanafani's Symbolic Connotations & the Current Genocide in the Gaza Strip

In this section, I argue that the images portrayed in *Men in the Sun* (1962), can be read as a prediction of the contemporary Palestinian situation in the Gaza Strip. During the contemporary genocide in Gaza, the smugglers took advantage of their nation's misery. In the land of Palestine, several dealers are the same as the smugglers in *Men in the Sun*, and they are blood dealers because, in any genocide of Palestinians, you find them silent, telling nothing and doing nothing except watching and listening to the pain of their nation. They get benefits from the land without any fight, they let thousands of innocent Indigenous people be slaughtered and killed while they are just commenting and writing messages about them. They are blood dealers, and none of them is clean-handed; Abul Khaizuran helps the three men by putting them in the tank to be transferred, but then, he takes money from them as a price of their survival, and during the journey, he forgets about them in the office while he was talking with other Arabs in the building at the borders between Kuwait and Iraq. He was worried about the three men, but he said to himself they would knock the tank if needed.

The same story is seen today in the Gaza Strip. Innocent Gazans are under attack, their houses are bombed, their dreams are faded, and more than 44.000 of them (up to this moment) were brutally killed by the Israeli occupation. On the other side, people in the Arab countries act the same as the dealers did; they are waiting for Palestinians to knock on the tank. Even when they knock on the tank and call for help, no one is there for them since the rest of the Arab nations, as mentioned by Kanafani, didn't accept Gazans crossing any borders to enter their countries; that makes Gaza for Gazan people, as the tank for the three refugees. They are stuck inside it (Gaza) without any exit, surrounded by heat, thirst, hunger, and death.

Similar to the three men who hid in the tank to cross the borders and find anything that helped them in their struggle, Palestinians hid from the Arab border crossing and tried to find any sign of help, but they wouldn't open for any chance of survival. For instance, today in the Gaza Strip, some injuries need emergency transforming in Egypt due to medical conditions, but Egyptian smugglers ask people to pay too much money just to

write their names on a survival list. They did so at a time when the Rafah border crossing had been closed in front of the Gazan people since the very beginning of the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip. So, even though when people wanted to leave Gaza, that was impossible, since brokers had asked them to pay a high amount of money that Gazans couldn't even afford in such a condition to pay for their survival (Ahmed & Michaelson, 2024). Based on The Guardian investigations on the 8th of January, 2024, "Palestinians desperate to leave Gaza are paying bribes to brokers of up to \$10,000 (£7,850) to help them exit the territory through Egypt". Yet, very few Palestinians had the chance to leave Gaza through the Rafah border crossing. Add to that, "those [who are] trying to get their names on the list of people permitted to exit daily say they are being asked to pay large "coordination fees" by a network of brokers and couriers with alleged links to the Egyptian intelligence services". In other words, in the story of *Men in the Sun*, the three men were not allowed to cross any Arab borders, and smugglers from different origins asked them for money to let them go, however, they took them down a dark road that led to their deaths.

Similarly, Gazans today, after the 7th of October struggle inside Gaza and no Arab country helps them to avoid death from hunger, thirst, and bombings, but instead, they normalized with the Occupier and helped it to kill more and more Palestinians. They dragged Palestinian civilians inside the tank, the same as the three men who were suffering from thirst, hunger, and heat, and lost their lives in the darkness of the tank. Even when they tried to transfer the atrocities they've faced to the world the occupation hid their crimes by cutting off the internet connection, and electricity to let 2.3 million Gazans be buried like the three Palestinians in *Men in the Sun*, who were buried in the tank, to commit massive destruction towards civilians without letting the world see their crimes as they did before for 77 years of occupation. In short, this evidence ends up with the fact that in such cruel atrocities, the Gazan people are facing today, one can realize that the power of the Arab countries was misused during the Israeli genocide in Gaza, as thousands of Gazans left alone inside the Strip to face their destiny. This leads to the fact that fear is the author of misery in both cases.

At the end of the story, when exploring *Men in the Sun*, one also notices the words "Why they didn't knock the tank " and links to the fact that in the Gaza Strip today, all the Palestinian people who are under air strikes, calling for help and knocking on the door of the tank thousands of times but all they find are deaf ears and blind eyes to see the misery of their nation. Hence, in *Men in the Sun*, the three refugees were afraid of knocking on the tank, but today, 2.3 million Palestinians knock on the blackness of the tank with their cries for help to open it but nothing except murdering and torturing they get. Moreover, smugglers in *Men in the Sun*, are similar to the smugglers of Arabs (Arab countries) who refused to help Gaza but helped Israel by " alternative overland routes to transport goods from the Far East to Israel via Saudi Arabia and Jordan", to avoid any attacks on the Israeli ships from Yemen (The Houthis). As Mentfield CEO Omer Izhari told *The Times of Israel* "Ships coming from China and India unload containers in the ports of Bahrain and Dubai, and then the cargo is loaded onto Jordanian trucks and is transferred overland to Israel via the King Hussein border crossing with Jordan, where Israeli trucks await the goods", and that was depending on normalizing agreements between these countries and Israel, as was exploring by *The Times of Israel* (Wrobel, 2024); "Jordan has had a peace agreement with Israel since 1994, and the UAE and Bahrain signed the Abraham Accords normalizing ties with Israel in 2020, Saudi Arabia has no diplomatic relations with Israel — though some progress has been made in that direction under US auspices". The thing that flagged up another misused power by the Arabs during the genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Not only that but also Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* mirrors the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people in Palestine. Pappé explores ethnic cleansing as an inhuman act committed by a racist group of people to expel them from their lands and turn them into refugees or corpses. Pappé (2006) mentions in his book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* that "ethnic cleansing is designated as a crime against humanity in international treaties, such as that which created the International Criminal Court (ICC), and whether 'alleged' or fully recognized, it is subject to adjudication under international law"(p. 23). He further argues that "the Hutchinson encyclopedia defines ethnic cleansing as expulsion by force to homogenize the ethnically mixed population of a particular region or territory" (p. 40).

Also, he mentions that " ethnic cleansing is an effort to render an ethnically mixed country homogenous by expelling a particular group of people and turning them into refugees while demolishing the homes they were driven out from" (p. 25). All of these definitions mirror the Palestinian genocidal crises and the destruction that they have experienced because of the hegemonic Israeli Occupation. For many years Palestinians have suffered from the atrocities of the Israeli occupation; many houses were demolished, thousands of lands were confiscated, and hundreds of innocents were murdered. The criminal machine began its cruelty toward Palestinians in the 1948 *Nakba* and continues with its murderers and humiliations till today. Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* flags up the criminal side of the Israeli occupation after 1948 and predicts the continuity of the criminal acts toward the indigenous Palestinians today. From this point, I argue that the Israeli settler force committed illegal massacres for 77 years against Palestinians, and aims to demolish any sign of Palestinians' authority over the land. I also debate the ethnic cleansing that Zionist settlers currently committed against Palestinians and the portrayal of it in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*.

In his famous book, *The Pen and the Sword: Conversations with David Barsamian* (1994), Edward Said says that:

This is a unique colonialism that we've been subjected to where they have no use for us. The best Palestinian for them is either dead or gone. It's not that they want to exploit us, or that they need to keep us there in the way in Algeria or South Africa as a subclass. They do that in the West Bank and Gaza (p. 54).

Israeli Occupation is a hegemonic power that wants to get rid of Palestinians inside and outside their homeland. Zionist settlers played a big role in the cleansing of Palestinians for years. Not only that, "but also (they) took part in some of the worst atrocities that accompanied the systematic dispossession of the Palestinians" (Pappe, 2006, p. 28). Said in his words clarifies the role of occupation in the land of Palestine for years. The same Kanafani in his literature shows that the purpose of the occupation is not just the land but getting rid of all the Palestinians in and outside Palestine, since the best Palestinian for them is either dead or gone.

Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* has transmitted this cruelty and how it affected the collective memory of Palestinians. Abu Qais, Marwan, and Assad were driven by the painful memories that captured their imagination during their journey of refuge. In the novella, the characters always remember the violations that the Israeli settler army has caused to them. The land of Abu Qais, for instance, was taken and demolished by Zionist settler gangs in 1948. The scene itself is seen thousands of times in Palestine today. On the 11th of May 2022, a Zionist settler gang attacked a Palestinian house in Nablus city and drove its people out of it by force. Yet, the Israeli occupation demolished several houses in Silwan, Jerusalem, Al-Esawea, and Beit-Hanina from 2019 to 2022; they further completed their atrocious acts in Gaza and the West Bank that started on October 7th, 2023, and continue at this moment while this thesis is being written. Not only that but also they've executed many Palestinians, one of them was the famous Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a veteran Al Jazeera correspondent in Palestine; Israeli forces shot and killed her with live fire as she was reporting from Jenin, and she was wearing a press vest and helmet. Her colleague and eyewitness to her murder said that an Israeli sniper directly targeted Shireen, shooting her near her ear, which was not covered by the helmet. The way that Abu Akleh was killed reflects the racist ways of ethnic cleansing which were used with the indigenous Palestinians to silence the voice of truth. The assassination of Shireen Abu Akleh wasn't the only one, an unlimited number of activists and journalists were and are targeted by the Israeli occupation. At the time of the 7th of October, the occupation committed genocidal crimes toward the Gazan people, as many young journalists raised their voices and documented their crimes. The thing that made the occupation did its best to silence their voices by targeting them since they were the only eyewitnesses of their atrocities inside Gaza. In explaining this point, I aim to argue that history repeats itself, and the assassination of Ghassan Kanafani in 1972, is re-imagining the contemporary assassination of Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip during the Israeli genocidal war on Palestine. The same as Kanafani's assassination, in 2023 Hamzah Dahdoh (a young Palestinian journalist from Gaza) and other Journalists were targeted and murdered in car explosions. That concludes the fact that, the massacres that the occupation committed in 1948 *Nakba*, which stuck in Marwan, Assad, and Abu

Qais's minds continued after this date against the Palestinians in their homeland Palestine. Add to that, the same act that was committed against Ghassan Kanafani in 1972 was committed over again toward Palestinian journalists in 2020/2024.

Apart from that, the contemporary Israeli massacres against Palestinians are different from the old ones, Palestinian people in the past experienced the *Nakba* of 1948 and left their homeland by force while Palestinians today re-live the *Nakba* inside Palestine at every checkpoint might be crossed, every house might be demolished, and at every Palestinian might be killed. The *Nakba* of today is more dangerous, and cruel than before, since in contemporary times Palestinians refused to be silent in front of the hegemonic Israeli acts. People began to resist through social media to give the Palestinian issue a clear voice, and of course, this is something the Israeli occupation can't accept. For that reason, the occupation has used violence against many Palestinians to give up their issue. From May 2021 to the first of October 2024, more than 50,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were executed with no mercy, and many buildings were demolished. The Israeli military force attacked the innocents there; they killed more than 60,000 children, women, and men; many children lost their families and others lost parts of their bodies the same as Shafiqa in *Men in the Sun*," who had lost her right leg during the bombardment of Jaffa" (Kanafani G. , 1962, p. 40). It's a bloody ethnic cleansing war against the indigenous Palestinians in their place of origin. This genocidal war and the other crimes that the Israeli occupation committed against the citizens in the Gaza Strip ascertain that the Israeli Occupation doesn't ask or care about your gender, race, age, or religion, it's enough to be Palestinian or support Palestine to be killed.

Kanafani's symbolic connotations were not just part of his representation of the refugee crisis and the dream of return in *Men in the Sun*. Still, it is also portrayed in other literature that was not fully discussed in different studies. In his short story "The Stolen Shirt" (1958) & his novellas *Om Saad* (1969) and *Returning to Haifa* (1969), Kanafani predicts and mirrors the current crises that Palestinian people underwent, especially in the Gaza Strip. These literary works carry symbols and images that I debate in this Chapter as connotations of the ongoing Palestinian crisis in Palestine. On October 7th, 2023 Gazans

and Palestinians' lives changed forever; an act of armed resistance happened from *Hamas* (a resistance group that was founded in 1987) in the Gaza Strip, and it was the first time that Palestinians invaded the borders and entered the Zionist settlements (the occupied land) since 1948. This act of resistance threatened Israel, which made them go into the most cruel war weapons to get rid of Gazans. So, on October 9th, 2023, the Defense Minister of Israel Yoav Gallant announced a full blockade siege of Gaza, as published in *The Times of Israel* by Emanuel Fabian, Gallant said "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip (Fabian, 2023). There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed". He also added that "[They]...we are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly", which means that they are going to use whatever it costs to destroy Palestinians and so they did. The same as the story portrayed in *Returning to Haifa*, Gazans were forced to be displaced, "the streets in Haifa [Gaza]... turned into a disarray, and the horror surrounded the city" (Kanafani G. , 1969, p. 14). Gazan people have been expelled "*Nozoo*" (imposed displacement) from their houses and moved from Northern Gaza to the South. However, none of the places were safe for them, since the Israeli occupation used intensive bombardments all over Gaza and bulldozed any sign of civilization on the ground. According to The Electronic Intifada (2023), "The health Ministry said on Tuesday that 3,000 people, including at least 850 children, have been killed in Gaza since 7 October" and these numbers were just a few days after the incident happened. In other words; the number of Palestinians who were killed or been missed under the rubble today -after a year of the genocide- is more than 48,000, and yet, the contemporary genocide is still ongoing in the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank. In this part, I argue that "The Stolen Shirt", which was written in 1958 by Kanafani predicts and mirrors the contemporary exodus "*Nozoo*" (imposed displacement) of Palestinians from their houses to settle in tents and experience hunger and thirst under massive airplane strikes and bombardment. I also shed light on the representation of the missing human aid and the role of Human Organizations that should be available for people who are living in displacement "*Nozoo*" (imposed displacement) with no food, no electricity, or fuel for a year in the Gaza Strip, based on signs that Kanafani portrayed in his story, which I indicate as a prediction of the contemporary crises in Gaza and the West Bank today.

Picture (3)

Tents and the Contemporary Misery of Palestinians in winter, in the Gaza Strip during the Genocide of 2023



The scenes of the contemporary images of exodus "*Nozoo*" (imposed displacement), tents, flour, and children's hunger or fear in Palestine are mirrored and portrayed in Kanafani's "*The Stolen Shirt*". The story, written in 1958, represents a story of exodus for a young man named Abu-Alabed and his family, it begins with darkness on a cold rainy night, and Abu-alabed's trembling hands while he is digging the ground to make a canal around the tent to save his family from the rain and the mud outside, "he feels the darkness in the clouds as they gather and break apart. It looks like a night filled with heavy rain and he should stay outside digging the ground for a while" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 7). The place, as is noticed, was unknown and full of darkness as if Kanafani didn't want it to be confined to a specific time, to make it symbolize the misery of refuge for every Palestinian who experienced the forced evacuation inside and outside Palestine. So, I consider the story of Abu –Al abed sitting outside the tent thinking of a way to feed his family, to be

the same as the story of many Gazan men today, who experience the same struggles during the massive attack on the Gaza Strip.

After the 9 of October, 2.3 million Gazans were forced to evacuate their houses and crowded in a small area in Southern Gaza, as they were expelled and set in tents, which they made of whatever material they had. The current tents where they've lived in, are similar to Abu-Alabed's tent which is portrayed and closely identified in Kanafani's "The Stolen Shirt", as well as the plot mirrors the living genocide and the collective punishment of Gazans today. It must be known that Palestinians lately have suffered from the cruelty of war in the Gaza Strip. 2.3 million Gazans are starving as many people ran out of food and began to live in refugee tents without flour or any supplements, while the UN places during that were crowded with supplements and people couldn't reach them. The starving of Palestinian children makes them go to these places to take some supplements to feed their families and help them survive. In Kanafani's story, the same portrayal can be seen when Abu-Alabed talks to himself and says "The UN places are close to the tents, it full of rice and flour so if he wanted to steal some flour he can...these things can not be for anyone" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 8). By analyzing that, I contend that Kanafani's portrayals of Abu-Alabed, flour, and the tent in the story mirror the image of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip when they looked for some flour in the UN repository to feed their children who had been starving for months. I further believe that the characters of Abu Sameer, Abu-Alabed's wife, and son were described and mirrored the Palestinians' situation now in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Picture (4)

Refugee Camps in the Southern Gaza (Imposed displacements)



By investigating that, I've noticed that previous studies and research indicated that the main purpose of the Zionist forces was to demolish the signs of authority and *israeling* the land of Palestine (Itchybutt68, 2023). As pointed out in Nur Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, "[Zionism] did not mean that there were no people in Palestine, but that there were no people worth considering within the framework of the notions of European supremacy that then held sway" (Masalha, 1992, p. 6). So, for the Zionists, it was and still is easy to *urbicide* the land and murder thousands of aboriginal civilians who were considered within the framework of European supremacy worthless. The symbol of the tent and the image of Abu-Alabed's son "trembling from the cold as a wet cat" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 8), mirror this fact of hegemony and predict it as part of the contemporary time of Palestine and Palestinians. As today the same suffer from cold and fear, Gazan children have experienced with their families after the exodus from their homes in Northern Gaza. Families after the evacuation were not able to save their bodies, or even children from the rain and cold. Tents were full of water and many Gazan men began

making canals around the tents to save their families, too much like the image transferred through Abu - Alabed's character and his suffering. On the other hand, one can see another greedy image in the story, for a man named Abu Sameer. The image of this man is the same image of the greedy dealers in the Gaza Strip, those who use the genocide of their nation as a credit to collect more money. So, they stole the trucks of supplements and sold them to people at high prices, they also acted the same as Abu Sameer when they stole the flour that came to Gazans for free after months of hunger and sold it for high prices.

Abu Sameer who is dealing with "the white-blond American man" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 12), as described, was a hand for the West and the occupation force in the hunger crime against innocent civilians, most of them children. His character is seen today, not only in the greedy dealers but also in the Arab countries that throw humans aids from the sky of Gaza after months of the Israeli collective punishment against Palestinians. Abu Sameer as well as the white man metaphorically reflect an inhumane image, since they were the reason that "makes some children had to wait in the refugee camp for more than ten days to eat a piece of bread" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 12). The white man in the story is a symbol today of the double standard in the USA, during the genocide in Gaza. Thus, the same Western governments that gave the occupation many cruel weapons, warplanes, and missiles, bring flour as a source (aid) for Gazans who are facing death a year from now. Such an image was described by Kanafani when he mentioned people who offered aid "They are this kind of people (western governments) who kill the one and then came to his funeral" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 8), which means they are the reason behind the Palestinian misery. At one point, all they gave as help was some food while the Israeli occupation was killing and torturing Palestinians. In other words, they helped the occupation with their crimes, and all they brought for Palestinians in Gaza was some coffins to bury their dead bodies (which is not available at the moment in Gaza as the genocide continues). Similarly, Arab human aids that fly in the air for thousands of Palestinians who are facing collective execution today, are considered meaningless and inhumane since many of these aids carry coffins and some flour for people, which most of them couldn't even touch. Add to that, at some points, these aids proved to be death aids since some of the heavy wooden boxes fell on people and killed them. The same as

what happened on the 19th of October 2024 for a Gazan child, as announced in everyday Palestine , " Sami Mohammad Ayyad died after a box of human aids fell on him in Khan Younis city in the southern Gaza Strip, and such an incident was not the only one. As the vast majority of Palestinians, a year from now, were facing death from hunger, thirst, airstrikes, and tanks, add to them the human aid which became death aid for most of them. In short, Kanafani's "The Stolen Shirt", as analyzed, predicts and reflects the struggles Gazans witnessed at the current time, during the ongoing Israeli genocidal war in Gaza.

2.3 Kanafani's "The Canon" & the Current Acts of Resistance in Palestine

This chapter also debates another short story that reflects the prediction in Kanafani's literature about Palestine, namely "The Cannon" (1957). The previously mentioned literary works portrayed symbols that reflect the forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, and *urbicide* crises due to the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Palestine. But, "The Cannon" mirrors new symbols that portray the act of resistance against the occupation atrocities, which I consider a reflection of the contemporary armed resistance in Palestine. Sa'ed al-Hemdane, the man who was detained before by the Zionist occupation, has decided to complete his resilience in front of Zionist atrocities to keep his people inside their land of origin (alSalamah, a village close to Yafa). The story as it represented the village, was not controlled by the Zionist gangs as Haifa, Yafa, and other Palestinian cities which were controlled and destroyed in 1948 by the occupation. At a point all of these places were *got israeled* (occupied), alSalamah was fighting to survive and get rid of the Zionist control in their land and houses. Looking closely at the incidents in the story, the image of alSalamah and the symbols of resilience mirror the same signs of resilience in the Gaza Strip today. Whereas many Palestinian cities, as been known, were controlled in 1948 *Nakba* by Zionist occupation, Gaza was fighting to keep itself free from any Zionist control, and they did so for years. It has been clear that, despite the fact of full siege, (*almoqawama*) kept Gaza free from any Zionist borders, fences, or tanks inside the strip itself.

By exploring the historical facts, I've realized that alSalameh was destroyed and its people were forced to evacuate their houses and lands. The Zionist gangs occupied the village

and settled in the homes, hospitals, and schools as their own. But, Kanafani in his story, as I explained, portrayed a new different image that stands against the historical reality. Therefore, I debate the image that he mirrors as a prediction of the future resilience of many Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip currently. Closely I argue that the representation of Sa'ed al-Hamdane is a prediction of Yahya Al-Sinwar's birth and the current armed resistance in the Gaza Strip by depending on critical analysis of the images portrayed in the story in comparison with facts Al-Sinwar and Gazans have experienced these days until his death. I also debate that the story transfers an image of armed resistance that mirrors the power of *Somoud* (an Arabic word means strength and resistance) for the Palestinian people in Gaza. Also, I argue that al-Hamdane's act of armed resistance and his journey in prison are pre-prediction by Kanafani of Yahya Al-Sinwar's resistance story.

Al-Hamdane was a symbol of resistance in people's eyes. Young youths "see in his face all the feelings that they imagine of a great man", who saved the land and the village. He was "like a newborn man created from the cruel experience" (Kanafani G. , 1958, p. 25). He was a leader of the revolution for which he was detained for years, and then he was released from prison and back to the revolution battle over again. Similarly, Yahya Al-Sinwar, the man who was born from the womb of suffering, was a Palestinian leader of the armed revolution for Hamas in Gaza. He originated from Majdal Ashkelon, located northeast of the Gaza Strip, occupied by the Israeli occupation in 1948, and changed its name to Ashkelon. Al-Sinwar was born in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in 1962. His life journey was not that easy as a Palestinian revolutionary man, hence he was detained by the Israeli occupation for 22 years, then he was released from prison in 2011 "as part of the Wafa Al-Ahrar deal, in which Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was released in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners" (TRT, October 17, 2024). After being in Gaza again, Al-Sinwar went back to the leadership of a revolution against the Israeli occupation. He and a group of young men begin to prepare for an act of armed resistance to get the freedom of Palestine from the ongoing atrocities against the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. This act of armed resistance took place on 7 October, a year from now.

In the story, Kanafani also portrays the Cannon as part of the revolutionary body. It is the hope they have to liberate the land. Al-Hamdane and the Cannon, as Kanafani mirrored, are not separate and can't be "Sa'ed Al-Hamdane completed the Cannon now when people talk about Sa'ed, they feel as if he's part of the Cannon, as its Cascable or Barrel" (Kanafani G. , 1957, p. 27). The Cannon here symbolizes the armed revolution against the occupation and reflects the power of the collective national memory of resistance in Palestinian literature and reality. Such an image is proven when Al-Hamdane integrates with the Cannon as a body in front of the Zionist gangs " The Cannon was sleeping as a dead child on the branch, everything was calm except weak bullets come from the old weapons that did the best to face the Zionist cruel attacks" (Kanafani G. , 1957, p. 29). The Cannon was not as strong as before, and it needed to be part of a powerful body like Al-Hamdane, so he decided to use the power of his hand as a Cascable in the Cannon. "Listen, I'll drag the cascabel to the Cannon middle by my hand, and you shoot" (Kanafani G. , 1957, p. 29). He was not afraid of the Zionist settlers who shot at them, or the hot bullets that burned his hand, all he was saying was, "Shoot... shoot!" (p. 30). The image of Al- Hamdane as I analyzed, mirrored Al- Sinwar and Gazans' armed resistance, especially in the last battle he had with the Israeli soldiers that led to his execution on October 17, 2024.

Al-Sinwar was the same as Al-Hamdane, strong and fought to the end without fear, he spent most of his life underground tunnels with many other men from Hamas, those who couldn't see their families or stay at home because of the Israeli occupation who killed anyone of their families if they know their places. Al-Hamdane as Kanafani portrayed, is a man who has a cause to fight for, and that was as he mirrored in Al-Hamdane's words "The Palestinian blood is good, I bought the Cannon with my blood, if you want to keep it yours, ask Hassan and Hoseen, my children. They know how to go to give their blood there" (Kanafani G. , 1957, p. 31). The image of blood stands for the armed resistance which never ends until the land is liberated. I indicate that Kanafani's words are prediction messages for the young generation to complete the armed resistance in the land of Palestine. As he mentioned, "The cause is a cause of the milk we took, a cause" (p. 32), if one is dead or killed, thousands will come again out of the rubble to fight for their rights

of being safe, and free. For that reason, Al-Hamdane mentioned his children those who are reflections of the present armed revolution for Hamas in the Gaza Strip currently. Yet, another prediction of Kanafani's words in the story reflects the fact that Palestinians witness today, which is the attacks of the Zionist Israeli occupation in the Northern Gaza Strip. As Al-Hamdane said to his people before his death " If the Zionist gangs left now, they will be afraid to be back from this side again, you have to move the Cannon to the North... since their next attack will come from the North" (Kanafani G. , 1957, p. 32). In the present time, the prediction messages from Kanafani's "The Cannon" have come true, since the Israeli occupation attacks in the North of the Gaza Strip began a year ago on October 7, 2023, and are still ongoing. Hence, the atrocities against Palestinian Gazans who are living there never end. Also, the armed resistance of Al-Sinwar and Gazans young men came out from the North of Gaza and this is something all the world witnessed when the occupation documented their execution of the Palestinian leader Al- Sinwar who had fought the drone at the end of his battle, with a stick he has thrown in the air as a last symbol of resistance. I conclude by considering the old Cannon of Al-Hamdane, the same as Al-Sinwar's stick, both would never touch the ground. In the story, the Cannon was taken from Al-Hamdane after his death, to the North, which was mirrored in reality as northern Gaza witnessed an act of armed resistance on the 7th of October. Similarly, Al-Sinwar's stick was also taken after his revolutionary hand to the young generation who will continue the armed resistance against the occupation until they've got their land and people's freedom.

Chapter Three

Abullhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa*: A Comparison with Palestinian Current Crises

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the Palestinian cause currently based on modern novels drawn from Kanafani's literature. The chapter aims to point out the continuous Palestinian anguish through modern literature that represents truths about Palestine and Palestinians after the *Nakba* of 1948. It also discusses that Palestinian writers merge the images of the Palestinian crises, which were portrayed in Kanafani's literature as it was happening in the occupied Palestinian cities in the past, with the current crises but in other Palestinian towns and cities today. Such a thing transfers Kanafani's prediction messages from the past to the present of literature and awakens the Palestinian collective memory of return. Yet, it mirrors the fact that Palestinians witness hard conditions because of the Zionist occupation, which is part of every city and village in Palestine till today.

To explain it in more detail, I analyze Abullhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, as an example of modern literature that's drawn from Kanafani's famous work of literature, *Returning to Haifa*, to discuss symbols that carry different connotations, I see it as reflecting on the Palestinian current time. Based on that, I'm focusing on the core of the two literary works, *The Scar of David*, and how it could reflect today's crises for many Palestinian families in Palestine. I also argue that this symbol mirrors several issues in Palestinian lives that should be taken into a serious analytical study by shedding light on important metaphors such a symbol points out.

3.2 The Scar (Star) of David and the Contemporary Crises in Palestine: Prognostication from the Past to the Present

The scar of David mirrors the Star of David that represents the state of Israel today, as it can be noticed that the portrayal of the scar of David in *Returning to Haifa* (1969), which was also literarily portrayed in Abullhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) was not out of the blue. It comes as a representation of the continuous Israeli atrocities over the land of

Palestine. It also portrayed the Zionist control over Palestinians' identity, rights of movement, and the power of resilience since childhood. The image as it was seen, is not part of the past and not related to specific horrific issues the occupation committed against Palestinians, but emerges from the current living time of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, as in every country, Palestinians carry this scar but differently. In this chapter, I explore the connotations behind this symbol in the two literary works and compare it with the current Palestinian crises.

Palestinians' identity contains many important things that prove their belonging to their origin, starting with the land, and ending with children who are the seed of freedom. The scar of David came to put a sign of change in Palestinians' identity and created a gap between the nation and the land to make it easy for them to control the land and displace the indigenous Palestinians.

Starting with *Returning to Haifa* (1969), Kanafani mirrors this scar in an explicit portrayal with the image that it was representing when the Zionist family settled in Said & Safia's house, then they kidnapped Khaldoun to be their David. The idea of occupation has been summarized in these two acts by the Zionist family that imagined the same atrocities Palestinians came through for more than 77 years of occupation. As in the land of Palestine, Palestinians in the occupied land (the land of 1948 *Nakba*), lose their Palestinian identity by force. Hence, every place after the *Nakba* became Zionist property, as well as Palestinians, were not allowed to have their own houses or land. Not only that, but they also lost their identification cards and carried blue identification cards that symbolized their belonging to the new government (Israel). I argue that this blue identification card is a scar imported by the Star of David to demolish Palestinians' roots and rights in Palestine. Yet, the scar that the Star of David caused on Palestinians aims to destroy any sign of Palestinian authority over the land and change the land of Palestine to become the land of Israel. For that reason, Palestinians are not allowed to access their roots which may make any of them a landowner again. In *Returning to Haifa*, Said described this loss as can't be cured if Palestinians have a picture of their places or a memory carried in their heart to return when he said: "I'm looking for the real Palestine.

Palestine that's more than a photo or a memory, it's more than a feather or even a son ..." (Kanafani G. , 1969, p. 73). The picture, the son, or the memory Palestinians had in their hearts or minds can't be the home. Palestine is not a memory or an imaginary land that people dream of being in again, it's a cause for a nation deprived of their rights of peace and safety, in the story, Said was looking for Palestine as it was before without the Scar of David in its lands, homes, or children. So, unlike the thoughts that have been explored in Hamdi's *Imagining Palestine*, I explain that Palestinians especially writers who wrote about Palestine didn't look for "a utopian future or hope" (p. 75). But they are mirroring and predicting living atrocities in their land of origin by portraying images of people looking for a free Palestine and wishing all of that did not happen. This image was exemplified by Kanafani's character Said when said: " Did you know what home is, Ya Safia? Home is where that has never happened" (p.73). Since home is not an imaginary thought of utopic land, it is more than a picture or a house, it is a scar that marked the land and people, and it has been translated into literature and reality for years. In other words; unlike Hamdi's *Imagining Palestine*, I realized that the Palestinians' cause as represented by Kanafani and continued to be represented by Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, was not by imagining Palestine as a utopian place that contradicts the facts that Palestinians have lived, but instead it was via imagining the current *Nakba* with a clear belief that imagining and having the old photos didn't help in finding a solution for the real struggles in daily life. These struggles, as seen, have been portrayed in parts of these works as "*The Scar of David*" and it's been predicted currently in modern literature as well as reality based on Kanfani's works of literature.

Similarly, the scar that the Star of David caused for Palestinians in 1948, as portrayed by Kanafani, is also drawn on Abulhawa's *Mornings of Jenin*, to represent the atrocious pain the scar continues to cause for Palestinian cities in the West Bank. This pain is as Amal described when she witnessed Haj Salem's anguish after his loss;

They kicked us off the land and they took all the furniture I had made.” Then he would walk away, leaving us to the nagging of curiosity. But in our camp, his story was everyone’s story, a single tale of dispossession, of being stripped to the bones of one’s

humanity, of being dumped like rubbish into refugee camps unfit for rats. Of being left without rights, home, or nation while the world turned its back to watch or cheer the jubilation of the usurpers proclaiming a new state they called Israel (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 66).

In the land of Palestine today, thousands of Palestinians experience the same experience Haj Salem has with the occupation. A large number of Palestinians evacuated their houses in Tulkarem, Jenin, and Gaza. So, in this part the writer brings to light the image of destruction, which is drawn from previous images Kanafani also portrayed of the land of Palestine in 1948, to show the continuity of the *Nakba* and to prove that the scar of David continues in different parts of Palestine. Abulhawa's contemporary literature, as I debate in this study, continues to predict new crises Palestinians have lived these days in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nablus, especially in the refugee camps of these cities. Additionally, it reflects and portrays incidents and characters that mirror the same incidents that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have witnessed and experienced. As of this day (while this thesis is written), many youths have been killed by bombing their cars, more than 48,000 Gazans have been assassinated, large numbers of Palestinians in Jenin and Tulkarem have been displaced, and several houses and buildings have been demolished. That makes one conclude that the scar of David was not portrayed as a physical mark on a hand or a face and it was portrayed to carry deep meanings related to the Palestinian crises over the years of occupation.

In *Returning to Haifa*, one can realize that Khaldoon as a name carries a deep meaning in Arabic, "eternity," which contradicts the changes he faces in his life or personality as a reflection of the scar the Zionist occupation made on the Palestinian people and land. The choice of the name for the character, which later changes to David, highlights the ongoing atrocities that have left deep scars on Palestinians. These scars impose limitations on their lives and reflect the power dynamics established by Israel in occupied Palestine. Khaldoon, as a Palestinian child, lost his childhood and became another person molded by circumstances. He carried a new name, which symbolizes the loss of his identity, much like many other Palestinians who experience similar fates. This transformation renders

him a hybrid identity and prevents him from being his true self again. This is exactly what the Zionist occupation meant to be, not only for Khaldoon but also for all the Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. That is evident in Kanafani's description of this hybridity when Khaldoon, now known as Dov, becomes a soldier for a home that is not truly his and for a family that is not his real family. Kanafani (1969) shows how this character illegally loses his national roots when portraying the image of Said looking at "Dov" and thinking that "it is impossible for this boy "Dov", to be Safia's son... he closely looks at him to catch any sign of similarity between Khalid and him... but he found nothing common between these young men... they are the opposite of each other" (p. 70). Khaldoon is no more existing in this young man's identity; all he has is a memory of a child that his name was one-day "Khaldoon". The same image appears in the character of Ismael in *Mornings in Jenin* (Abulhawa, 2010). Ismael loses his inherited identity, becoming a hybrid of himself, and he is left feeling unknown. This transformation is highlighted in Yousef's description of his encounter with Ismael, who is referred to as David and is portrayed as both a soldier and a Yehudi (Jew). Their meeting in this way mirrors the images that picture the relationship between Said and Khaldoon, and reflects the ongoing story of Palestinians' misery in Palestine for years.

The swelling has lessened and the electric bulb seeps into my eyes. I find light for the first time in an eternity and it illuminates a scar from another life. The scar I drew with carelessness onto the face of my brother, Ismael. But Ismael is dead. A Jewish soldier, whose face is mine, has taken my brother's scar. I think I am dreaming. I reach my hand to touch. But he backs away. Later, not now, I am sure that it was not a dream. Ismael lives. My brother is a Jew. He is an Israeli soldier (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 85).

Yousef, in these words, reflects the hybridity of his brother as a person who lives in an identity that's not his own and does not realize what happened to him. Ismael, who was taken from his family since childhood, likewise Khaldoon, in *Returning to Haifa*, lived with his scar for years. I argue that the scar that they have affected their national identity, and the change in names (of Ismael and Khaldoon) created a gap (divide) between their bodies, families, and national roots to the inherited home. Such a thing has imposed on

them an alternative identity that marks their belonging with the symbol of a scar, represented by the (Star) of David. On top of that, when closely looking it can be realized that Abulhawa's description of the scar continued after Kanafani to add a point to this part, Ismael as a Palestinian child has had a scar on his face since childhood, and it was because of his brother Yousef. The same scar which was in the past the Scar of Ismael, has been taken off to be the Scar of David, for the same person. It can also be debated that Abulhawa has drawn from Kanafani's literature this predictability to represent an additional point of the continuous *Nakba* of Palestinians today. She gives an updated prediction for the contemporary Palestinian crises in Palestine by moving the scar from *Returning to Haifa* (1969) and portraying it as a new image but in Ismael's face. I argue that the scar in both characters is a prophecy of the ongoing scars on Palestinians' identities, lands, and heritage committed and inflicted by the Zionist Occupation.

The scar of David, as I explore, also predicts and mirrors the atrocities in the Gaza Strip today. In Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), which is originally published as *The Scar of David*, (2006), and draws from Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (1969), the writer continues to build on the *Nakba* that Safia has faced in Haifa and the loss of her child, to represent the continuous nakbas of other Palestinian families and cities, same as Abulheja family in Jenin. As can be noticed, the loss of Khaldoon in *Returning to Haifa*, who becomes David later on, is the same as the loss of Ismael, who becomes another David and belongs to another family. At this point, I argue that Abulhawa mirrors an intelligent representation of the story of Khaldoon and Ismael's loss. Thus, the children's names and the time of the anguish could be different, but both (Ismael and Khaldoon) became David in the end. That's to show that the time might be different, but the incident repeats itself, since thousands of Palestinian children whose names are different, share the same destiny in their occupied land, and most of them face the scar of David.

Add to that, the scar and the name of David, as I argue, symbolize and portray the wounds of many Palestinian children whose childhood has been stolen from them. The characters of Ismael in Abulhawa's novel & Khaldoon in Kanafan's *Returning to Haifa* (1969), represent Gazans' children and predict the contemporary re-lived nakba, displacement,

and expulsion of more than 1.5 million of them. As Khaldoun and Ismael's stories, so many Gazan children's stories portray witnessing different kinds of atrocities after October 7th. Many Palestinian children after this date, have been kidnapped, killed, and detained. As explored by media, (according to Israeli channel news), an Israeli soldier took a newborn baby from Gaza after killing the family and bombing the entire house. The soldier who died after taking the child to Israel was telling the story to other soldiers & one of them told the story to news channels. The baby who was kidnapped disappeared, and no one knows anything about him now. Based on my argument, such a story was predictable and portrayed in Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* & continued in Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*. As pointed out in Abulhawa's portrayal in these lines, Palestinian children and families experience the trauma of loss and displacement.

While Dalia lay heartbroken, delirious with the loss of Ismael, Jolanta rocked David to sleep. While Hasan tended to his family's survival, Moshe sang in drunken revelry with his fellow soldiers. And while Yehya and the others moved in anguished steps away from their land, the usurpers sang "Hatikva" and shouted, "Long live Israel!" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 37).

The same as Safia and Dalia, thousands of parents in Gaza, and the West Bank are waiting in bitterness for their children to come back home, while the Israeli Zionist families are hugging their children and sleeping safely at home. While thousands of Gazans' children were slaughtered, turned into parts, and died under the rubble, thousands of Israeli Zionist children sang and shouted, "All Palestinian children are terrorists and must die". In 2023 during the massive genocide in Gaza, Kan-Israel Public Broadcasting uploaded an Israeli children's song entitled "Children of the Generation of Victory", which was written by Rosenbaum and Shulamit Stolero. As expressed in *The Palestine Chronicle* (November 20, 2023), "Kan aired the song under the title "We will annihilate everyone in Gaza," but was later forced to remove the clip after it sparked angry global responses"ⁱ. Thus the lyrics of the song were full of racist violations and hatred toward Palestinians. It calls for eliminating and annihilating Palestinians in Gaza, which is not new for Zionism since the song is an adaptation of the song "Evils," written by Haim Ghouri in 1948 *Nakba*. This

takes the argument back to the point that emphasizes Kanafani's prediction of the contemporary crises in Palestine and Abulhawa's portrayal of the scar of David. As predicted in literature, while children everywhere live in peace, Gazan children are kidnapped and eliminated by the Zionist army, those who kidnapped a newborn baby to Israel and annihilated others under the rubble. Not only this incident but also people have caught a soldier kidnapping a 10-year-old -girl, her name is Doha, and the last time she was seen in a photo with the Israeli soldier on his Instagram (*social media platform for sharing photos and videos*). The story of these children is the same as Ismael and Khaldoon, they are kidnapped and disappeared; in other words, no one knows what portrayals and Abulhawa's symbolizations of this specific point, to represent predictable signs of the current Palestinian crises that the Israeli occupation caused for Palestinians.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

The thesis concludes that Ghassan Kanafani's novels and short stories reflect the ongoing Palestinian crisis, which I've discussed as continuous *nakbas* in Palestine today. It also expresses symbolic connotations/ meanings within the works, which I interpret as predictions of the current atrocities committed by the occupation against Palestinians. The thesis complies with various novels and short stories by Kanafani to clarify the significance of the study and support the main argument. Several symbols discussed in the previous chapters represent the Palestinian cause, drawing a comparison between the text and reality. However, not all symbols were covered in earlier chapters, as some were selected to reinforce the thesis' main argument. Therefore, this conclusion aims to clarify a couple of symbols that have not yet been discussed, concluding the study as planned.

The tank, as depicted in various parts of Kanafani's novels and short stories, is a symbol of death as the darkness associated with the tank has profound significance within the narratives that reflect several meanings, death is one of them. According to the study, the portrayal of the tank in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* wasn't the only representation; the author utilized the symbol in other short stories, which can be interpreted as a prediction of the current situation in Palestine. The tank that I interpreted in chapter 2 as a symbol of death, resembles the cemetery I described with the Gaza Strip, reflecting the current crisis in Gaza, and the West Bank. Thus it looks so, for the three Palestinian refugees in *Men in the Sun*, who were forced to face such a dark destiny because of the Zionist Occupation and restrictions placed on Palestinian refugees in the Arab countries.

In this section, I also end up with the fact that the portrayal of "the tank" regarding meaning death, means "the killing of the city", which reflects the devastation and eradication of the Palestinian land, to change it into another land. Consequently, I debate that Kanafani predicts and portrays the image of "*Urbicide*" and "*Domicide*" in his short story "Until We Back" (Kanafani, 1957) through his metaphorical representation of the

tank in the story, which I interpret as a prediction of "the killing of the city" by the Zionist military Occupation in the Gaza Strip, which has persisted from 2023 till the present time.

"Until We Back", portrays an anonymous character on his journey back to the Naqab desert, now referred to as "The Negev desert" following Israeli control. Driven by memories of his past, the character longs for the land of his origin before his displacement. Throughout the story, an inner dialogue unfolds inside the character as he reflects on the destruction in Palestine, expressing his thoughts and emotions about the challenges faced in his homeland. During the journey of the character, Kanafani reflects on the image of destruction portraying it as the Zionist tank," This is your land...the Jew built a tank to irrigate the Zionist settlement", and " he felt of bitterness seeing the tank deform his land", even" the land rejects the tank...it's not something to water the land, it's a bloody thing, huge enough as a catastrophe" (Kanafani, 1957, pp.19-20). The image of a tank deforming the occupied land reflects the ongoing destruction that the occupation committed in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip. This destruction reflects the plans of *urbiciding* and *domiciding* the land and city, to annihilate any sign of Palestinian authority in Palestine. Aljazeera mentioned that "Between October 7 and May 31, [2024], Israel damaged or destroyed about 55 percent (or 137,297 structures) in Gaza, according to a report by the UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)" (Salhani, 2024). Nowadays, after 15 months of eradication, Northern Gaza faced the complete deliberate destruction of cities, iconic architecture, and identity. The north became a ghost land, with no buildings or civilians, even those who tried to survive in the north and look for water, the Occupation was trapping them by their needs of survival; the tanks that could have watered the land now serve as instruments of death, killing and annihilating Palestinians.

Blackbirds in Kanafani's narratives also took place to reflect war instruments against Palestinians. The movement of the blackbird in circles, and the way it followed Palestinians from one place to another as death, mirrors drones and quadcopters that hunt Palestinians whenever they are in cars, houses, or streets today. Since the occupation depends on these black birds to follow Palestinians inside the cities and blow up the places

they are inside to kill them. The blackbird in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun & Other short stories*, is a symbol of the SR-71 warplane known unofficially as the "Blackbird" (The Museum of Flight, 2025), and it was used in wars to destroy the cities. The same warplane (Blackbird) that was used in the past, is now replaced with other (Blackbirds), which are drones and quadcopters, to destroy the land and kill Palestinians (Al-Halabi, 2025). The tank and the blackbirds (warplanes), at a point, were used together as a reflection of cruel weapons towards Palestinian civilians, as the occupation relied on quadcopter drones carrying tanks full of missiles that they were throwing at people or buildings in the Gaza Strip. Add to it, they also left some tanks inside the obliterated buildings and lands to attack people who were looking for water by bombing the tanks with anyone open to drink some water after months of thirst. It's clear here that the tank loses its identity as a thing that waters people and becomes an instrument to destroy Palestinian people and land. It changes from a way of survival to a way of destruction. This is exactly reflected in the definition of *urbicide* the city (killing the city) which is also connected with the symbol of drones that were used as blackbirds to hunt Palestinians. One of the ways Israeli soldiers used was to depend on records of crying babies and connect them with drones to let Gazan people think that there were babies under the rubble, and when they went out looking for the voices, they killed them with tons of missiles (Palpostn, 2025). The missiles used in both the tanks and drones are internationally prohibited, as highlighted in various reports, news channels, and on activists' pages. These sources explain that the missiles made the buildings and the people evaporate; after destruction, there is often no trace of the Palestinian individuals who were inside these buildings. This hegemony is represented in different literary works by Kanafani, symbolizing the loss of land, the longing to return, and the devastation committed by the Israeli Occupation of Palestine. These symbols and images serve to underscore the current anguish experienced in Palestine.

To end, Kanafani's literature portrays symbols that thoughtfully predict the contemporary Palestinian crisis. Some novels also inspired by Kanafani, such as Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, continued to reflect these predictions, as clarified in the previous chapters. So,

the thesis represents the contemporary Palestinian situation, depending on literature to argue that the voice of writers in novels and short stories could predict the future of their nations. The thesis explored these predictions by relying on various theories, news sources, and factual information about the contemporary situation in Palestine.

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جامعة النجاح الوطنية
كلية الدراسات العليا

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الرسالة الى مناقشة الصور والدلالات الرمزية في أعمال غسان كنفاني الأدبية و الواقع الفلسطيني المعاصر من وجهة نظر تحليلية نقدية معاصرة ، تعتمد في سياقها النظري على نظريات ومنهجية أدب ما بعد الإستعمار . حيث يتم مناقشة وعرض الدلالات الرمزية في بعض أعمال كنفاني على أنها تتبؤ بالنكبات الفلسطينية المستمرة بعد نكبة ال48 على أرض فلسطين . كما وتناقش الدراسة الواقع الفلسطيني المعاش بشكل تحليلي يعكس في طياته إنعكاس المعاناة والتهجير القسري تجاه الفلسطينيين كما تم تمثيله في الأعمال الأدبية لغسان كنفاني والمتمثلة بمجموعة من الروايات والقصص القصيرة. أضف لذلك ، مناقشة أعمال أدبية مستمدة ومبنية على بعض روايات غسان كنفاني مثل: رواية سوزان أبو الهوى "الصباح في جنين" والتي عرفت سابقاً "بندبة داوو". حيث تناقش الرسالة في هذه الجزئية إستمرارية التمثيل الأدبي المعاصر لرمزية الفكرة الرئيسية التي إنبتقت عنها أعمال كنفاني السابقة وكيفية إرتباطها بالواقع الفلسطيني المعاش . تعتمد الدراسة على ربط الأدب بالواقع من خلال مناقشة تمثيل الصور المجازية والرموز المستخدمة في القصص القصيرة والروايات للكاتب وإسقاطها على الواقع الفلسطيني المعاصر من حيث الفكرة والرمزية والشخص.

تتقسم أجزاء الرسالة الى قسمين رئيسين : الأول يتمثل بعرض أعمال كنفاني الأدبية المراد إعتادها في الدراسة من خلال إستخدام بعض الدلالات والرموز التي تحويها ومقارنتها بواقع فلسطين الحالي أرضاً وشعباً. والثاني يتمثل بمناقشة هذه المقارنة في نطاق الأدب المعاصر كجزء من الوضع الفلسطيني

الحاضر و كيفية إستمرارية تمثيله للصعوبات الفلسطينية حتى وقتنا هذا. حيث تقضي هذه الدراسة إلى خاتمة تهدف الى إثبات الفكرة الرئيسية والتي تلخص أن أعمال غسان كنفاني عكست صورة مستقبلية عن الواقع الفلسطيني المعاصر والمتمثل بإستمرارية النكبة والمنفى في أرض الوطن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: رمزية؛ الوطن، اللاجئين؛ الأزمة الفلسطينية؛ النكبات المستمرة؛ غسان كنفاني