

Palestinian Literature After The Postcolonial

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Abstract

This study provides a theoretical and practical framework for the postcolonial's impact on Palestinian literature. Relevant to the subject at hand are the dynamics of colonialism and colonial resistance. The primary characteristic of postcolonial literature is resistance, which transforms it into an instrument for decolonization, combats colonial enculturation, and externalises the native struggle, which is both a political and a cultural conflict. Postcolonial literature examines the results of colonisation. The postcolonial influence of the two novels by Palestinian authors Ghassan Kanafani and Sahar Khalifeh, which are part of Palestinian literature, is highlighted in this study

Keywords: Literature, Palestinian Literature, Ghassan Kanafani and Sahar Khalifeh.

Introduction

Like the history of the Palestinian people, the story of a country in exile covers a wide range of topics, including refugees, forced relocation, destruction, silence, and statelessness (Abu-Remaileh, 2021: 68). The culture in which a piece of postcolonial literature was written is changed in some way. As Wallace (2010) points out, "subject people encounter and reproduce stereotypical representations in the language of dominant forces," and this work often reflects that understanding.

According to postcolonial theory, the shifting power dynamics between different parts of the world and specific territories are crucial to the historical events we are analyzing (Al-Khatib, 2009:1). The word "postcolonial" was used to identify a group that had been historically oppressed or opposed the colonial order. Postcolonial writing is complex, which has led to the growth of postcolonial literary theory. Immigrancy, slavery, repression, resistance, representation, diversity (in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation), geographical dispersion, and reactions to the influential master tongue of imperial Europe are among topics covered. As society has evolved, so too has the field of postcolonial studies. Authors of postcolonial literature should be identified as those who have been historically marginalised.

Used to refer to works written by authors from countries that were once conquered by European powers. Common theme in works of postcolonial literature is the liberation of previously colonised peoples, both politically and culturally. Postcolonial theory rewrites history with a focus on previously silenced groups and identities, giving them more of a central role in the narrative. Slavery, apartheid, and the annihilation of entire human communities are just a few of the topics discussed in this race relations documentary.

Literature Review

There are several excellent studies on postcolonial literature, but I recommend starting with *Post-Colonial Identity: An Analysis* by Mahmoud Darwish and Edward W. Said, which is one of numerous outstanding works on postcolonial literature that relates to Palestinian literature. *A Thematic and Stylistic Analytical Approach*, a Doctoral Dissertation by Suad A. H. S. M. Alenzi. The School of Arts, Languages, and Cultures at the University of Manchester (2015) (2010) *Poetry by selected modern Palestinian poets from 1948 to 1993*, from Bridget Wallace's "A Postcolonial Perspective on Selected Modern Palestinian Poetry, 1948-1993" (A Postcolonial Perspective). Previous studies had focused on how books like "Wild Thorns" by Sahar Khalifeh and "Men in the Sun" by Ghassan Kanafani, both written by Palestinian authors, were influenced by postcolonial literature. However, the focus of the present study is on the impact that "Wild Thorns" and other works of postcolonial literature have had on Palestinian literature.

Methodology

Postcolonial literary theory evaluates the efficacy, validity, and claims to self-determination of the literary strategies and methods employed by writers as symbols of resistance against oppressive regimes, be they colonial hegemonies. It examines how postcolonial authors expose the colonizer's oppression and the colonial power's lies without compromising the integrity of their work. We can learn more about the political and social context in which a work of literature was written, as well as its unique historical and stylistic features, by approaching it from a postcolonial perspective. There has been some research on the ways in which literary works and other cultural artefacts might serve as symbols of national unity in order to mobilise audiences to resist oppression. The Palestinians' awareness of the danger posed by the Zionist project grew.

The poem "Identity Card" by Mahmoud Darwish articulates the vocal political awareness and opposition against the denigration of Arabs. If I told you that I am an Arab with eight children and another due this summer, would you be furious at me? The figure on my identity card is fifty thousand. He is making a declaration to preserve the Palestinian identity and steadfastness initiative in order to keep up appearances. While the poet himself is a part of the Palestinian people's statelessness and exclusion on the border (Wallace, 2010:17), the poem criticises Israel's treatment of the Palestinian Arab population. Here, the postcolonial approach to Palestinian literature is illustrated with examples from the works of Palestinian authors Ghassan Kanafani and Sahar Khalifeh.

Ghassan Kanafani

This 20th-century Palestinian political activist, journalist, and author generated a body of work in the Palestinian resistance that has yet to be matched. He did it "within a specific historical framework" following the tragedy of 1948 and the establishment of Israel. After al Nakbah, he says, Palestinians' sense of self is defined by "the experience of displacement and exile" (Sa'di,2002: 175). In his writing, Kanafani reflected on political engagement and Palestinian nationalism. The concept of national identity is central to his work.

The unique kind of nationalism that characterizes countries that "suffered the experience of colonialism and empire" (1986: 65-69) is endemic to the developing globe. Some works of literature from the developing world have been labelled "national allegories" because of the political undertones in their depiction of individual lives and characters. The novella is a protest against racism and imperialism and is a postcolonial work of Arabic literature. By exposing the reader to the harrowing social and historical circumstances his heroes experience, Kanafani elevates the political significance of works like *Men in the Sun*. *Men in the Sun* is more

of a felt allegory than a conventional one, yet the two works have a common intellectual ground. Kanafani's strong revolutionary outlook is reflected in the novella's socially concerned protagonist. Like Kanafani's short story "The Stolen Shirt," which also depicts the hunger, deprivation, and cold, wet nights of camp life, *Men in the Sun* is a "visceral" rather than abstract allegory because of its realistic depiction of human suffering and death. The novella portrays the refugees' deaths as a fitting punishment for the shame they've brought upon themselves by seeking a better life and sense of dignity elsewhere than in Palestine.

In terms of depicting regional sociopolitical and historical contexts, Kanafani spent time as a refugee in Lebanon and Syria before being killed by the Mossad in a car bombing at a tender age. The fact that he was killed shows that his writings were dangerous to his enemies. *Men in the Sun* were met with lukewarm reviews at best. The novella by Kanafani ends with a powerful protest message: three bodies are dumped on a desert landfill after dying a horrible death inside a closed water tank. Their mangled remains are a grim reminder of their suffering in this eerie narrative. This is because "the body re-emerges as a historical locus of oppression and resistance" (Neimneh, 2014, p. 692). If Kanafani was trying to convey how tough it is for Palestinians to be uprooted from their homes, he did it effectively. We are assaulted by the author's use of horror to drive home the plight of his or her fantasy protagonists in the sun. Kanafani's views can only be understood by looking at his grief and his obsession with the Palestinian dilemma from an ontological and naturalistic perspective, where life and death are inseparable. Kanafani finds renewed inspiration and commitment when reading resistance fiction from an existentialist and naturalist standpoint

Sahar Khalifeh

The novel "Wild Thorns" is about Palestinians who are suffering under Israeli rule. Her protagonists shed light on the core issues of alienation and self-discovery at the heart of the struggle. The intellectual struggle of the Palestinian people is reflected in Wild Thorns, a translation of contemporary Arabic literature. This novel explores Palestinian culture, history, and religion in search of the spiritual, social, and political underpinnings of Palestinian resistance. Palestinians who have been compelled to work in the Gulf States as a result of the occupation must also be allowed to return to their homeland. This essay is about how the Palestinian right of return has been denied. Postcolonial literature often has protagonists who are trying to rediscover their origins.

The protagonist of the novel, the author, struggles with questions of belonging and identity inside his or her native country. It explores how the political and social conditions of colonial control impede the development of individual identities. Usama demonstrates this clearly to the Israeli border guard. This is his first chance to get back into the workforce after such a long absence. Soldiers from Israel quiz Usama, making fun of his answers. Usama's efforts to have the Israeli border patrol stop using the Hebrew names for Palestinian towns were unsuccessful. Usama reveals that his mother has moved to Nablus. The security officer inquires, "What brought your mother to Shekem?" Usama replies, "She likes Nablus." "Why does she admire Shekem?" asks the guard in response. According to (Khalifeh, 2000, p.33) This exchange shows how the occupation rewrites history and erases Palestinian culture. This also demonstrates his determination to check his ID. The occupation hopes to mould many Palestinians like Usama and Adil into formidable foes. This is a prevalent situation in postcolonial societies. Usama also questions the transformations that occurred among his people as a result of the occupation, asking,

"What had happened to these people?" And he has to question why. Obviously, the occupation played a role in this. Where did they put all of their tenacity and determination? "Where's the resistance, then?" he shouted angrily.

Khalifeh (2000), colonial authors are powerless to face their oppressors in person. That's why they're venting their frustration with the current order through works of fiction. Palestinian authors have a long tradition of writing about the resistance to colonialism that their people experienced. Wild Thorns's colonisation process in Israel and its effects on the protagonists' sense of who they are are explored in this analysis. Both protagonists have been uprooted by the colonial roots of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but their experiences of uprooting are distinct. This in no way suggests that the author is attempting to suggest that they are actually two people. Because of this, the author presents the two main characters as independent individuals with opposing worldviews. Adil and Usama's relationship is illustrative of the idea that "self and shadow" are inseparable. Adil's knowledge and reason come together with Usama's actions and violent opposition because he thinks it's the right thing to do to protect his family from the colonizer's plans.

Khalifeh's (2000) cast of characters reflects the economic and political climate of the seized territories. She depicts Palestinians in her work as either slaves, inmates, or freedom fighters. Basil is a belligerent and obstinate character, in contrast to Zuhdi's intelligence and good intentions. He has no qualms about adhering to the customs of his Israeli employer. He has no choice but to resort to violence in order to achieve his goal of obtaining the occupation. Usama is a well-known Palestinian political activist who also studied in Egypt and worked in the Gulf. He was a longtime supporter of the organisation from outside Palestine, but he never established any direct contact with its members there. He

participated in multiple strikes against Israel. According to Othman (2017), Usama's personality has experienced a radical transformation.

The main character of Khalifa's Assabbar, Usama Al-Karmi, is a Palestinian. Usama thinks of himself as a lone volley shot. When he got back to Palestine from training in Jordan, he got a rocket, a guided missile. The Israelis have threatened that Palestinian heroes will act as human rocket launchers, taking their own lives in defiance of the Israeli occupation (p. 15).

Adil, Umar's cousin, is a loyal supporter of the Muslims. He is devoted to his wife and children as well as his job in Israel. He does not think that violent resistance is ever the answer. The story's author addresses a pressing issue, namely, how Palestinians in the occupied areas maintain their standard of living. Usama can't believe how much the occupation and colonisation have changed Palestinian society. "Israeli rice?" he asks the cabbie after noticing that he's lighting up a pack of Israeli cigarettes. Abu Muhammed nodded in agreement. He agreed, saying, "Yeah." "I'm smoking an El Al right now." You may be wondering, "Israeli cigarettes?" Usama asked, incredulous. Khalifeh, 2000, p. 21) and Israeli products (rice, tahini, sugar, etc.). The novel illustrates the plight of Palestinians who accept the realities of the occupation and want to live their lives in peace. Usama began to question the struggle of the Palestinian people because of a breakdown in communication. His people appear to have given up and be willing to submit to the occupier, at least in his eyes. Usama disregarded the population's wish to be left alone during the military occupation. Usama and Adil's constant struggle with each other is a recurrent motif. In this discussion, both idealism and realism are welcome. Usama returns from the Gulf with the idealistic determination to violently resist the oppressors. Adil is a dedicated worker who won't let his family's

financial security take a back seat to anything. Therefore, the issue of the profession needs to be fixed.

"Khalifah" is a term for researching Palestinian divisions on the topic of resistance. While Usama was looking for Adil at home, Basil, Nuwar's younger brother, introduced him to some of his Palestinian friends and they talked about the occupation's educational policies. The fact that young Palestinians who have been displaced and are now seeking sanctuary in the Gulf are cognizant of the reasons for their opposition to the occupiers' rule gives Usama cause for hope. Primary school is where we are first and foremost tamed and subjected to authority. When we got to high school, our identities were shattered. Our parents have put a lot of pressure on us to do well in school and go into medicine or engineering, two fields that have fallen out of favour since we were in high school. As soon as we become successful professionals like doctors and engineers, we are obligated to pay them back for their investment in our education. Furthermore, our families do not risk their lives to fund our education so that we can come back and work for minimum wage. If you want to leave, your only real choice is to go somewhere like Saudi Arabia, Libya, or the Persian Gulf to look for work. What are the repercussions of this? After the educated population has abandoned a city, only the working class and peasants are left. This is exactly what Israel hopes will happen (Khalifeh, 2000, pp. 59-61).

Khalifeh (2000) outlines two strategies for combating colonial rule. To begin, there is Usama's violent detractors, who see fighting the oppressors as the only path to revolution. Adil stands for the Palestinian people's peaceful resistance against colonialism; they believe it is inevitable and must be accepted if they are to live in their homeland in peace. The author successfully establishes a sense of distance between the protagonists. It's logical that Usama would be taken aback by the drastic changes that have taken place in his

homeland during his absence. He did not think that the Israeli economy provided solely for Palestinian employment and subsistence. As a kind of rejection, he casts as traitors and partners with the Israelis those Palestinians who do not take the violent road. After Usama turns down the bread vendor's offer to sell him Israeli goods, the vendor says, "Look, friend; we're not the first to work with them. There was a bread crisis in Nablus while Tel Aviv companies looked for franchising opportunities for your species. Khalifah (2000) states that the protagonist Adil is well-described, and that the author makes an effort to persuade the reader to accept his perspective on nonviolent resistance. To him, it's a form of defiance against having to send his family into poverty by taking a labour job in Israel.

On the other side, Usama is solely focused on revolution and destroying the adversary. Emotional components of people's lives have been ignored in resistance assessments. Even if his cousin Adil is on board, Usama says he will still blow up buses full of Israeli workers. He thinks he has what it takes to give up all he loves.

Usama is portrayed as a tragic hero whose resistance is considered as a sacrifice so that he can become a martyr. Here is how Bernard (2010) characterises Usama's tragic sense: Despite his ignorance of the realities of life under Israeli occupation, he mindlessly praises a general concept of armed resistance and mocks his people for cooperating with the authorities. In a heartbreaking pastiche of the rhetoric of heroic sacrifice, Usama considers his mother and the land of Palestine in his closing moments (P. 352).

Usama talks with his mother. No matter what you do, death is inevitable. Wow, your mum must be a real angel. Let it be known that I was unable to achieve martyrdom for the cause. Respected and admired by the populace. I appreciate everything you've done for me, Mom. The fire in the oven. Stale animal faeces permeated the

air. The harp used by flautists. Scarves.Celebrations, including weddings. The future Mrs. Nour and Salih Nuwar. Weddings. The time to wait is now" (Khalifeh, 2000, p. 185). Despite his tremendous bravery in the face of the colonisers and in defence of his land, Usama is a hopeless romantic at heart who wants to see the world changed. He hopes to create a beautiful, loving world where oppression does not exist. Usama has evolved from a poet into a man who believes in and loves his country deeply. Usama needs to have a romantic side to his personality. To begin, this made-up persona is given a human quality. Second, it bolsters the writer's assertion that the novel is autobiographical. The author accomplishes this by placing her characters in situations as near to actual life as possible. The protagonist, Usama, struggles with his own emotions as he fights off the desire for peace and romance. He never intended to be a dreamer but rather a fighter. If he wants to accomplish his goal, he will have to resort to violence. He denies the fact that he has romantic feelings for anyone. The author intends this as a metaphor for the death of Usama and other Palestinians who support armed resistance because to romanticism. The novel demonstrates Usama's empathy.

FINDINGS

Palestinian Postcolonial Resistance Literature: A Reappraisal Men in the Sun deals largely with naturalistic and existential topics. In this short fiction, two philosophical stances at odds with one another—existentialism and naturalism—meet head-on. The book "reveals an equal devotion to the Palestinian struggle and a development on both political and aesthetic levels" (Kilpatrick, 1999, p.11). Kanafani is able to express his political beliefs while remaining true to his artistic vision. Kanafani communicates a great deal of information quickly and simply: a nation can be formed only through the unity of its people. As their bodies deteriorate, they eventually die horrible deaths. Furthermore, there may be times

when a fight isn't the best course of action. Kanafani conveys these political statements in an allegory that, unlike a fable, does not shy away from the horrific truth and actual conditions of humiliation and death. Kanafani. To effectively express his men's anguish in the Sun, he used a realist method that relies on the concreteness of experience to explain their plight. The deaths of the three Palestinian refugees in the Sun were ironically brought about by the Zionist rule of Palestine and the apathy of Arab governments. The males have been compelled to leave their homes due to poverty, a lack of employment options, and a lack of legal documentation. Ustaz Selim was one of the older generation that stayed to fight for their country. The little ones aren't safe either. The Palestinians' dispossession and subsequent deceit are metaphors in the novel. For example, Abul Khaizuran represents a lack of political courage. The men who have no burial sites also have nowhere to call their own. However, Kanafani's metaphor is a more visceral allegory of death, with underdeveloped bodies in life and rigid and cold bodies in death. Throughout time, allegory has been separated from the truth it hints at. In stark contrast to the immediacy and remove of usual allegory, the novella exposes the materiality of agony and death.

The author's true goal in writing *Wild Thorns* is to deconstruct the Israeli occupation of Palestine. She, like her protagonist Adil, seeks the middle ground. She supports the idea of a nonviolent resistance movement against Israeli occupation. She attributes these societal and political problems to the domain. Therefore, her heroes have proven to be confused by their indecision and emotional instability. The author uses the characters' endearing situations to win over readers to her message. Since there are no hard and fast rules in *Wild Thorns*, it's hard to tell who is on the right side of things. This film depicts the daily lives of Palestinians living under Israeli rule. It takes a Palestinian point of view to reveal the tactics and strategies of armed resistance.

The horrors committed by the occupiers against the occupied people are also made clear. Khalifeh was able to use her portrayals of Usama and Adil to support her claim that two distinct forms of resistance exist. She focused on her characters' humanistic worldviews to show how they really felt.

Conclusion

Palestinian literature was influenced by postcolonial literature. As can be seen from the aforementioned works, Palestinian writing has developed into a literary method of resistance. This has led to a plethora of postcolonial criticisms of resistance that can be applied to the field. The emotive aspect of Kanafani's metaphor emphasises the novella's concluding message about the fate of persons who forsake their home in quest of dignity elsewhere. While the odds of dying in one's own country are extremely low, doing so may bring a greater sense of pride. Because of the association of resistance literature with the Palestinian people and their struggle under Israeli rule, *Wild Thorn* is a book about that battle. The novel's author portrays Palestinians living under occupation through a wide range of characters. Works like "Men in the Sun" and "Wild Thorns" by postcolonial Palestinian authors are often interpreted as acts of resistance.

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