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The American University in Cairo  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

# **Palestinian Rights: A Literary Multiple-Genre Approach**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of  
English and Comparative Literature  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts

By

**Marwa Sayed Hanafy Mahmoud**

Under the supervision of **Dr. Ferial J. Ghazoul**

**May/ 2016**

The American University in Cairo

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**Marwa Sayed Hanafy Mahmoud**

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Has been approved by

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## **Dedication**

My thesis is dedicated to the Palestinians everywhere for their long history of resistance and *sumud* (steadfastness) in the face of the Israeli occupation that tried but in vain to dehumanize them. The thesis is an attempt to cast light on their variable artistic forms of expression that places emphasis on the Palestinians' humanity and existence. The dream of a free Palestine is concretized by their creative alternative space that was born from suffering and pain. Their way to freedom is guaranteed as it is preceded by their solid achievements in the arena of art and literature which forcibly pave the way to independence no matter how long it takes.

## **Acknowledgments**

What happens to a dream deferred? An existential question posed by Langston Hughes decades ago followed by similar questions in a poem that denotes the complexity of the experience of postponing a dream. However, a deferred dream does not necessarily fester like a sore or stink like a rotten meat; it can blossom like a sunflower that follows the sunlight of hope and persistence. I dreamed of writing this thesis fifteen years ago but the dream was postponed for reasons beyond my capabilities. However, my dream became a living reality through persistence, patience, and perseverance.

No words can express my deepest gratitude to the Department of English and Comparative Literature at American University in Cairo for their collective and sincere efforts in supporting budding scholars. Though a very demanding department, professors do not cease to offer help, support, and guidance throughout the whole program. First and foremost, I would like to extensively thank my supervisor and mentor Professor Ferial Ghazoul for her patience, guidance, constructive feedback and continuous support. She was open to all my suggestions and comments and corrected me whenever I am wrong. She provided me with different materials: reviews, books, newspaper articles, films, documentaries, leaflets about theatrical performances in the States that enlarged the scope of my perception and added a lot to my knowledge of the Palestinian cause. Her thorough and careful revision of the thesis definitely contributed to its overall balanced structure. I would like also to thank the members of my thesis committee, Professors William Melaney and Steven Nimis, for their constructive feedback. My deepest thanks are also due to Professor Ira Dworkin, a former member of ECLT, who supported me during the preliminary stages of my MA program at AUC and whose course of “Research

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## **Abstract**

The American University in Cairo

The Department of English and Comparative Literature

Palestinian Rights: A Literary Multiple-Genre Approach

Marwa Sayed Hanafy Mahmoud

The year 1948 marked a turning point in the Palestinian history and a shift in the process of art production. Nakba constituted drastic changes on the political, social and demographic contexts of the Palestinians. That was necessarily followed by a similar alteration in the forms of expression adopted to articulate the new status quo of the land and its people. The artistry of the Palestinians emerged as surmounting the imposed limitations of Israeli occupation and opened up new spaces for freedom of expression denied to Palestinians. The fragmented Palestinians functioned creatively as they articulated their diverse experiences of displacement and alienation through different modes of art producing a mosaic structure that dynamically served the Palestinian cause.

This thesis attempts to study the variations of the Palestinian cause with special reference to the human rights issues expressed in different genres: novel, novella, poetry, theatrical performance, cartoons and cinema. The various genres examine different authors and different experiences of artistic expression. The voices are Palestinian as in the case of Ghassan Kanafani, Sharif Elmusa, Naji al-Ali, and Hany Abu Assad, and also non-Palestinian as in the case of Egyptian-Italian novelist, Randa Ghazy and the voice of the American Rachel Corrie resurrected in a play edited by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner. These voices adopt different genres -- a novella in Arabic (Kanafani), poetry in English (Elmusa), cartoons (al-Ali), film (Abu Assad), a novel in Italian (Ghazy), and a

play in English (Rickman and Viner). The variety of genres and languages complement each other in drawing a vivid portrait of dispossessed Palestinians, denial of their human rights, and the ways of creatively expressing the Palestinian predicament.



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## **Chapter One: Human Rights and Literary Genres**

The present chapter is structured to examine two important domains of the thesis basic argument. The first has to deal with human rights with special reference to Palestinians and the second has to do with multiple literary genres articulating these rights. The first part of the chapter is intended to shed light on the concept of human rights as implemented by international laws in general and how far these rights are enjoyed by the Palestinians in particular. It focuses on the striking contradiction realized between the universal concept of human rights as an internationally acknowledged set of rights on one hand and its denial to Palestinians on the other hand. The second part of the chapter is to deal with the theory of genre as crucial to the literary multiple-genre approach adopted within the context of the following chapters that cover a wide range of genres including: a novel, a novella, a selection of poems, a play, a selection of cartoons, and a film.

### **Palestinians and Human Rights**

The issue of human rights is a vivid arena of both theory and practice -- when perceived within the scope of world justice and human dignity -- as it blends all humanity into one crucible of sharing and understanding. It draws essential lines through different laws and covenants to organize the relationships among the human race. No one can deny the worth of human rights and the positive outcomes of its practice on both the individual and collective levels. It is the compilation and articulation of all accepted universal values and the point of departure to human growth and development. Speaking of human rights in general, Darren J. O'Byrne in his book *Human Rights* defines them as coming

from 'below', from a universal set of ethical principles which seek to ensure the equal worth of each individual life, and which are applicable to

all peoples at all times and in all places. Thus, in principle, if not in practice, they are not subject to the whims of any political machinery. (26-27)

The definition focuses on the role of people not only in determining their rights but also in implementing and preserving them. The definition stresses the eligibility of all human beings to these rights. It places emphasis on the significance of human rights regardless of political regimes that are implicitly said to manipulate these rights under false pretenses. The negative denotation embedded in the word “whims” reinforces the issue of human rights as it endows it with stability while “machinery” here denotes the difficulty of enjoying individual rights and casts light on the continuous struggle of people to acquire their rights and the kind of opposition they face. However, the definition can only serve as a general one that has to be specified and sounds as an idealistic stance that is difficult to apply in today’s world taking into consideration the on-going political conflicts all over the world especially in the Middle East and Arab countries.

Though fascinating in theory, the issue of human rights is a thorny issue when it comes to practice and certainly raises many concerns, anxieties, and questions. For example: What is the core of human rights? Are human rights a necessity or a luxury? Are they manipulated to beautify the ugly face of countries in power? Why is there always a divide between the theory and practice of human rights not only in developing countries but also in what is called the first world? How do certain ethnicities and religions get dehumanized or even demonized? Why are human rights issues highlighted in some situations and are neglected or discarded in other situations? Why are they used to protect the interests of certain peoples and are ineffective to others? Who is entitled to enjoy the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Why is power a part of the equation

of human rights? What are the factors and forces that render the Palestinians excluded from the arena of human rights? Attempts to find answers to these questions comprise the focal point of this chapter.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) goes back to the year 1948 after the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. It was meant to call for world peace after years of a global war that resulted in millions of victims and the destruction of complete cities and countries. It was intended to offer the world a truce apart from wars and political tension and to focus on life rather than death and devastation. The Declaration was well-received and positively perceived by scholars, thinkers and human rights seekers everywhere. For example, O'Byrne positively comments, saying that:

The writing and subsequent adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was one of the first major achievements of the United Nations, and was seen by many as evidence of the organization's commitment "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." (85)

In addition, Anker comments that: "the proliferation of human rights discourses and norms is often levied as a narrative of triumph – whether of law, of international diplomacy, or of a particular conception of the human" (224). The Declaration was praised and celebrated as it acted as a point of departure for all humanity to act collectively on the road to world peace and justice. In the course of almost seventy years, international organs of the United Nations were created to facilitate its application and numerous conventions and laws have been initiated to face world ordeal of inequality and injustice.

However, the issue of human rights becomes controversial when it is twisted in the favor of powerful countries in order to manipulate less powerful ones. This is totally comprehensible taken into consideration the fact that the United Nations was established to further empower the victorious countries in the Second World War over the defeated countries. The question is: Do we, as human beings, expect a balance of power from an organization that did not respect that balance from its beginning? This question is answered by O'Byrne who sees: “[t]he structure of the United Nations is far from ideal. It is funded primarily by the most powerful nations, which renders it largely reliant upon those countries” (82). So what has proven to be idealistic and promising in theory, seems to suffer weaknesses and drawbacks in real life situations because of reasons that have to deal with interests that serve both authority and money. This is obvious when Anker states:

Our era – while often victoriously deemed that of human rights – has also watched the rhetoric of human rights become ever more sullied by wrongdoing and self-interest. Even while appeals to human rights often resemble little more than opportunistic clichés, the policies of human rights renders their norms and ostensible safeguards casual bedfellows of global capital. Within such a climate, human rights provide the warrant for both the international policing of the global South and its mortgaging to northern economic centers, as well as to the many other instruments of neoimperial hegemony. This syndrome by no means portends the obsolescence or demise of human rights, as some foretell. However, it goes without saying that much of the emancipatory potential of human rights talk has been forfeited, directly eroding the hopes and dreams that spawned the contemporary human rights movement in the middle of the twentieth century. (220-21)

Anker draws the attention to the disparity between the afore-mentioned ideal theory of human rights and its implementation in a world where a balance of power is absent. The case is strikingly clear in the Palestinian situation as there are humans without rights and a nation without an international recognition. Not only that, it seemed that there is a kind

of an inconsistency embedded in the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on one hand and the denial of the Palestinian rights on the other hand.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued the same year of the Palestinian Catastrophe/Nakba (1948). It is released the same year of the establishment of the State of Israel on the already existing Palestinian one. Consequently the Universal Declaration of Human Rights together with the United Nations encountered one of the most difficult challenges since 1948 till now when it comes to supporting the Palestinian rights. Nothing concrete is achieved towards resolving the Palestinian problem which gets more complicated as years pass. It is mainly the Palestinian question as well as other similar cases that provide critique and suspicions not only to the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also it shakes the foundations of human rights all together.

To examine the intricate and well-defined structure of the UN and the way it functions raises many questions regarding the Palestinian cause. Palestine as a nation and as a state suffers from lots of violations of human rights; much of these are sometimes aired on TV channels or documented through unplanned photos that are internationally displayed or presented in human rights reports. These violations make us wonder how the Palestinians survive whether inside the borders of their occupied country, in the refugee camps, or exiled in the diaspora. To start with, Palestinians, inside Palestine, suffer from an Israeli system of apartheid which is defined as:

[S]egregation, the legal and political endorsement and institutionalisation of discrimination. The term derives from the Afrikaans word for separateness. It involves the assigning of an individual at birth into one or another class of citizen. (O'Byrne 241)

Apartheid is practiced everywhere inside occupied Palestine and in Israel. It is obvious in the difficulty of movement between different Palestinian villages and the daily suffering of Palestinians at the checkpoints. It is also concretized in the separation wall that dissects the Palestinian villages. This raises the question of the following: Is there any international law to face the drastic consequence of apartheid? The answer is yes. Actually “[i]n 1973, the International Covenant on the Suppression and Punishment of Apartheid was adopted, which defined apartheid, for the first time, as a crime against humanity” (O’Byrne 246). Therefore there are laws that prohibits such a practice but why is it overlooked in Palestine? Is the separation wall invisible?

Along with the system of apartheid, Palestinians face other kinds of threats within the borders of their country, particularly the regular demolition of the Palestinian houses in order to encourage the expansion of the Israeli settlements. Though such practices are condemned several times by the United Nations, they are still in progress and increasing. As Edward Said points out human rights are for everyone and cannot be applied selectively:

I take it for granted morally that human beings individually and selectively are entitled to fundamental rights, of which self-determination is one. By this I mean that no human being should be threatened with “transfer” out of his or her home or land; no human being should be discriminated against because he or she is not of an X or a Y religion; no human being should be stripped of his or her land, national identity, or culture, no matter the cause. (Said, *The Question* xlii)

Said draws the attention to the different specters of apartheid including racial discrimination practiced against Palestinians because of their ethnicity, religion, and collective cultural history. Palestinians, inside historical Palestine, are stripped of their national identity and are rendered a minority within Israel. As for the Palestinians whose

houses have been demolished, they are rendered refugees inside their country and they keep moving from village to another in order to seek shelter in a safe place. Others left Palestine and kept their identity as refugees in other Arab countries or new citizens of the vast world. The issue of refugees is one of the miseries inflicted upon the Palestinians by the Israeli occupation. Within this regard, there is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that

claims that its primary purpose is to “safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees,” and to “ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, and to return home voluntarily.” (O’Byrne 339)

The Palestinian exodus was beyond remedy as Palestinians were forced to leave their lands and houses because of the atrocities committed by the Zionist forces. Documented reports of massacres that are listed under crimes against humanity are overlooked by the international community. These massacres committed against entire Palestinian villages are regarded as arranged acts of genocide which is defined as “the planned denial of the right to existence to entire groups of people” (O’Byrne 389). The right to exist coincides with the notion of Edward Said that Palestinians for Israelis “do not exist” (“Peoples’ Rights” 182), and so how can we elaborate on the issue of human rights of Palestinians if they do not exist in the first place? The shocking notion of invisibility of the Palestinians as a people, according to Said, has its historical basis:

In the case of Palestine . . . one of the main arguments in early Zionist writing – and not early Zionist writing, but early European writing about Palestine in the twentieth century – was that it was uninhabited, and if it was not uninhabited, it was full of neglect . . . it was simply an empty land. (“Peoples’ Rights” 185-86)

It is a typical colonial perspective that justifies both geographical violation of the native land and the atrocities done to its inhabitants. The colonizer arrives to the native land



with the basic assumption that it is an act of exploration and discovery. But what if Palestinians do exist and the land is inhabited? The colonizer's reaction is: Make them invisible or force them to be invisible. Consequently, Palestinians went through forced displacement in fear of their lives and those of their families. It is worth mentioning that in the Palestinian case, there are two types of refugees; those who live inside Palestine and those who are in the diaspora. Whether inside Palestine or outside, the majority of these Palestinians suffer the humiliation of living in inhuman refugee camps:

These camps [Palestinian refugee camps] were first created in 1950 in order to provide temporary shelter and sustenance for those people who were obliged to flee their homes in Palestine in 1948. They were further populated by another generation of refugees in 1967, following the June War, when the areas now known as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were occupied by Israel. Life in the camps thus acquired a significance over time and a history that has become crucial to the Palestinian experience. (Harlow et al. 15)

Besides the inhuman conditions of the refugee camps, the new title a Palestinian acquires as a refugee brings forth a new type of humiliation as “the experience of displacement is an experience of the stripping of identity. One is no longer a doctor, a teacher, or a father able to support his children. One is merely ‘a refugee’, as if such a category is homogenous” (O'Byrne 359). Though Palestinians started to build new lives away from their homelands, they still ask for their right to return back to Palestine. The right to return is again one of the rights secured by the UNHCR with other partners “to assist in the returning and reintegration of refugees into their countries of origin” (O'Byrne 339), but it is evidently a right that is denied to Palestinians.

In addition, Palestinians who choose to stay in Palestine were subjected to different threats. Besides the demolished houses and confiscated lands, the Palestinians were denied access by the Israeli occupation to their natural resources like water wells for

the benefit of the Israeli settlers. Palestinians suffer from severe shortage of water and sometimes the absence of running water. The problem adds to other forms of energy shortage such as lack of electricity and gas. In this respect, Israel violates one of the crucial rights secured by the international community:

Environmental rights, controversially, grant each individual the right to exist in a clean and healthy environment, and duly charge the state (among other political actors) with the task of ensuring that environmental conditions are kept in a way suitable for human existence. (O'Byrne 387)

Environmental rights are one of those rights that are generally underestimated, not specifically in the Palestinian case, compared to other human rights because they are related to the quality of life. This is totally unacceptable and in fact, environmental rights prove to be a necessity and not a luxury, because their neglect can eventually lead to drastic consequences like illness and/or death. For example, Palestinian patients especially children may die in hospitals due to accidental cut of power.

Besides the Israeli manipulation of the Palestinian natural resources, Palestinians are randomly arrested by Israeli soldiers. Children are sometimes the victims of such random arrests. In addition, there are acts of torture of Palestinians inside Israeli prisons. Torture is regarded by international law as one of the grave violations of human rights; it is defined as

the imposition of physical suffering upon others through violence, for various reasons usually pertaining to the extraction of information or confession of guilt, but possibly simply for the pleasure of being cruel. Power describes it as “the systematized use of violence to inflict the maximum amount of pain in order to extract information, to break resistance, or simply to intimidate.” (O'Byrne 164-65)

The compilation of the previous violations of human rights is important in so far as it casts light on the misery of the Palestinians. The irony is that Israel is listed in O'Byrne's

book as one of the “democratic states” that violates human rights by practicing torture in its prisons against Palestinians who are labeled as “terrorists”:

Torture practices continued to be tolerated, in some cases sanctioned, not only in repressive regimes but in supposedly democratic ones as well. In Israel, the report of the judicial Landau Commission in 1987 justified the use by security forces upon suspected terrorists of ‘moderate physical pressure’. Needless to say, this is an elastic term, and agents of the state have stretched it into considerable lengths. On at least three occasions in 1996, the Israeli Supreme Court passed decisions justifying the use of physical force during the interrogation of suspected terrorists. (O’Byrne 170-71)

Thus Palestinians are set as a striking example for the ill-performance of the United Nations in general and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights in particular. Palestinians suffer as human beings due to the Israeli occupation and are denied a bundle of human rights such as free movement inside their country that is rendered impossible because of the separation wall and the frequent checkpoints. They are denied access to natural sources of their country such as water, electricity, gas, petrol, etc., that are controlled by forces of occupation for the benefit of the settlers. They are subjected to random arrests and to torture inside the Israeli prisons for defending any of their rights and are labeled as terrorists. They are denied safety inside their homes because they can be demolished for the establishment of more Israeli settlements. They are rendered refugees inside and outside Palestine as they live in fear of their lives or are forced to leave by forces of occupation which alter their status from citizens to refugees. They suffer from the inhuman conditions of the refugee camps which turn into a permanent situation instead of being a temporary one. They are denied the right to return back to Palestine. The persistent question becomes: Why?

There are certain allegations articulated by Zionism when it comes to the eligibility of Palestinians to human rights. These allegations are meant to denounce the rights of Palestinians on both the individual and collective levels. First, there is the aforementioned colonial notion of the uninhabited land of Palestine, “a land without people, for a people without land,” as stated by the Zionist slogan toward the end of the nineteenth century (Said, *The Question* 9). Edward Said, the mouthpiece of the Palestinian cause, dedicated a chapter entitled “Palestinian Rights” partly to refute that allegation in particular that denies Palestinians historical rights in the land of Palestine:

Before 1948, the majority of the territory called Palestine was inhabited beyond any doubt by a majority of Arabs, who after Israel came into being were either dispersed (they left, or made to leave) or were enfolded within the state as a non-Jewish minority. (*The Question* 46)

Said draws his evidence from the Orientalists’ accounts of their visits to the Orient centuries before the Israeli occupation. The fact that Arabs were a majority and the Jews were a minority overshadows the demographic reality of the inhabitants in Palestine before occupation. It also refutes the afore-mentioned allegation that there were no Arab Palestinians before the arrival of the Zionists. Said emphasizes:

I refer to the plain and irreducible core of the Palestinian experience for the last hundred years: that on the land called Palestine there existed a huge majority for hundreds of years a largely pastoral, a nevertheless socially, culturally, politically, economically identifiable people whose language and religion were (for a huge majority) Arabic and Islam, respectively. (*The Question* 7)

The second of the Zionist allegations is structured on their perceptions of the Palestinians as lesser human beings. This is the core of the Zionist system of thought that draws heavily on the former European system of thought entitled Orientalism that perceives the Orient as inferior when compared to the Occident. Orientalism, as a system of thought,

lasted for centuries and paved the way for the imperial and colonial practices of the Europeans in three quarters of the world including Africa, Asia, the Americas and Australia. Zionism, similarly and cunningly, built on Orientalism to justify their colonial practices in the land of Palestine (*The Question* 26).

Likewise Zionists perceive Palestinians as inferior and degenerate who do not deserve to be treated as equal human beings which foreshadow an inherent racial perspective. It is an allegation intended to dehumanize the Palestinians and constrict them in a fixed system of stereotypes in order to legitimize the Israeli manipulation of the Palestinians as a nation and to lessen their adherence and eligibility to human rights. Said states:

Most of all, I think, there is the entrenched *cultural* attitude toward Palestinians deriving from old-age Western prejudices about Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient. This attitude, from which in its turn Zionism drew for its view of the Palestinians, dehumanized us, reduced us to the barely tolerated status of a nuisance. (Said, *The Question* xl; emphasis in the original)

Though it was undemanding for Westerners to draw a dividing line between themselves as a race and the Orientals as the Other due to comprehensible facts of different geography, history, culture, language, religion, etc., the case was challenging when it comes to drawing the same line between the Jews and the Palestinians since they both share common origins and history and both are grouped under the title of being “Eastern.” Therefore, Zionists who mainly built on Orientalist system of thought extensively added to that system of thought in order to tailor it to their own case (Said, *The Question* 26).

In that tactful way, not only did Zionists escape the logical notion of regarding them as Orientals but also managed to acquire authority over the Palestinians themselves. Therefore, the preceding allegations are structured in a way that first negates the existence of the Palestinians, and if they are present, they are a set of unrecognized people who are awaiting the civilization brought to them first by the British Empire and then by the superior Zionists.

In addition, Zionists made use of their historical trauma of the Holocaust to arouse world sympathy for their right to have a national homeland – no matter the price of that national homeland. Anyone who denies their access to the Promised Land is immediately accused of being anti-Semitic – the most infamous accusation in the international community. The Holocaust, as always propagated by Israelis, acts as a barrier that blinds the international community from seeing the atrocities committed to the Palestinians on daily basis and their on-going misery. Because of the Holocaust, it is always the Jews and no one but the Jews who suffer. In that respect, Said explains:

I have tried to show that the Muslim and Christian Palestinians who lived in Palestine for hundreds of years until they were driven out in 1948, were unhappy victims of the same movement whose whole aim had been to end the victimization of Jews by Christian Europe. Yet it is precisely because Zionism was so admirably successful in bringing Jews to Palestine and constructing a nation for them, that the world has not been concerned with what the enterprise meant in loss, dispersion, and catastrophe for the Palestinian natives. (Said, *The Question* xxxix)

This brings us back to the irony that underlies the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Palestinian rights. In the face of the well-structured and well-defined international organizations of human rights, Israel has established an equally well-structured hierarchy of oppression that systematically denies Palestinians their rights as human beings. If the theory and practice of human rights are not compatible, is it time to announce the demise

of human rights as dysfunctional in today's world and begin to look for a new formula that keeps human life and dignity? Is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights inaugurated in 1948 still applicable up until now? Is there an alternative discourse than human rights to address the substantial needs of the Palestinians to human dignity and justice? If yes, how could Palestinians create a new reality to face the imposed reality by the Israeli occupier?

The Palestinians did not, still do not, and will never accept the Zionist machinery or the world compliance as a matter of fact. Though their response to trauma differs from one individual to another and from one generation to the other, they collectively made the one choice they believe in which is the choice of resistance. They rejected attempts at making them invisible. They similarly resisted attempts of dehumanizing them. And whenever, they are denied one right, they tightly hold to another to the very end (Said, *The Question* 8).

If the Palestinians were and are still denied their rights that are evidently acknowledged by the international community, they were able to create an alternative by holding on to the right to resist. Resistance for Palestinians becomes the right that equates all the usurped rights. If the Palestinian is denied the right to life, he/she will resist. The negation of Palestinian rights is only countered by the right to resist. Resistance keeps the balance of power and deconstructs the imposed reality of occupation and oppression. Palestinians have not lost hope for their demolished houses or confiscated lands; they still have their property documents even if they were forced into exile and they are keen to pass these documents from one generation to another. Does their awareness render them hopeless of reclaiming the lost land? The answer is in the negative and they continue to

resist. Palestinians annually celebrate the Day of the Land (Yawm al-Ard) on March 30, 1976. That kind of celebration grows year after year and attracts more international solidarity from different organizations and individuals. Even though they are denied access to their land and property, they aspire to have them back through that symbolic celebration.

Resistance takes different forms and different shapes for Palestinians. Resistance takes the form of clinging to the Palestinian land no matter what threats the Palestinians are subjected to. It takes the form of protests, throwing stones at the occupier, chanting national slogans, and going on strikes. No doubt the subsequent Palestinian Intifadas forced a new reality on the Israelis and the international community alike. It altered the balance of power in favor of the Palestinians and rendered them undeniably visible.

The choice of resistance for Palestinians is as old as the British occupation of Palestine and continues till the present moment. However, the Zionists who have built on Orientalism to legitimize their presence in Palestine have to find an alternative to the Palestinian legitimate notion of resistance as it decomposes Zionism from its roots. Subsequently, Israelis entitled Palestinian resistance as terrorism. The Palestinian resistance has been propagated in the Western mass media as terrorism and freedom fighters became violent terrorists.

The newly created category of Palestinians as terrorists deprived the Palestinians their rights to defend what is inherently theirs. They are seized, especially in the western mass media, within the frame of the Israeli demonization that endangers their status as human rights seekers to those of violating Israeli rights. Therefore, whenever a



Palestinian rises to defend his land or house or family, he/she is immediately labeled as a terrorist.

Pertinent to the Israeli interplay of the unrelated concepts of resistance and terrorism, the role of art rises to bring that controversy into a new light. Ideally speaking, the only arena of resistance that Palestinians can securely practice without ready-made accusations of terrorism is the arena of artistic expression. A Palestinian novelist, for instance, cannot be accused of being a terrorist if he/she writes a novel about the Palestinian cause and similarly, the dramatist, the cartoonist, the poet or the film director. However, artistic expression calls for other extreme measures of eradication best represented in censorship, life threats, and eventually assassinations.

Though wrapped in danger, artistic resistance reclaims the Palestinians a set of rights -- especially the right to freedom, freedom of expression, a way to surmount the separation wall and the checkpoints. Nothing can work more effectively than the artistic expression that functions on different levels. Palestinian art played a pivotal role as the most vivid manifestation of culture and the outstanding articulation of its particularities. It preserves the idea of the Palestinian home the occupier is more persistently trying to erase. Palestine is preserved in the works of different artists and is reclaimed on the artistic level. It preserves different cultural expressions that are threatened by extinction due to the interference of the occupier. In other words, art helps to keep the Palestinian identity. The different artistic expressions act effectively to raise the international awareness of the Palestinian cause and fills in the gap caused by the constricting political arena. Literature and art appeal to the human psyche, to all human beings in all the corners of the world and thus succeeds in bringing another form of solidarity to the

Palestinian cause. It surmounts sophisticated ideologies and self-interest and calculations of power and authority. The oppressed everywhere can easily identify with each other, bringing forth a new reality that might change the imposed reality of the occupier (Said, *The Question* 234).

### **The Theory of Genre**

I am concerned with the reading of the different forms of artistic expression, especially different literary genres as a preliminary for future change not only as a register of past history. Any change on the political level, in order to be successful and functional, must be preceded by an intellectual body of works that empowers change and secures its stability for a longer period. That is why I perceive the study of different genres discussed within the scope of this thesis in terms of the future -- as the driving force for a coming change that will grant the Palestinians their lands and secure them their long-usurped rights.

At that crucial point of continuous struggle, the role of art rises as voicing the agonies of the natives in defiance of the Israeli occupation on one hand and the international silence on the other hand. By examining different forms of literature and visual arts, the thesis seeks to elucidate the significant role played by different genres to articulate the unsayable and to draw the international attention to the Palestinian cause. The thesis elucidates how the different artistic forms contribute a coherent discourse that calls for perceiving the Palestinian question from different angles and in the light of different genres.

To start with, what is a genre? Genre is a term, French in origin, “that denotes types or classes of *literature*” (Abrams 115). Rosmarin states that “‘genre’ comes from

the Greek *genus*, meaning ‘kind’ or ‘sort’” (23). According to John Frow, “[g]enre is . . . a matter of discrimination and taxonomy: of organising things into recognizable classes” (51). Thus genre is perceived as an organizational framework and a regulating tool that shapes the act of production of different works of art and facilitates their reception. Genre, thus, influences both the content, the function of the work of art and its receptive attitude:

Genre . . . is a set of conventional and highly organised constraints on the production and interpretation of meaning. In using the word “constraint” I don’t mean to say that genre is simply a restriction. Rather, its structuring effects are productive of meaning; they shape and guide . . . . Generic structure both enables and restricts meaning, and is a basic condition for the meaning to take place. (Frow 10)

Rosmarin further elaborates on the idea of genre as means of criticizing, comparing and contrasting different works of art within the scope of its genre. The case then will be whether to critique works of the same genre and therefore apply the set of rules and regulations that control that genre in particular or to critique works of different genres adopting a cross-generic examination or a multiple-genre approach:

For “schemata” or “premises” or “models” are general terms for what in literary studies we call “genres.” Or: a genre is a kind of schema, a way of discussing a literary text in terms that link it with other texts and, finally, phrase it in terms of those texts. (21)

The idea of the genre is complex because of its manifold dimensions. Genre plays on multiple levels; first the author and how he/she structures and formulates their ideas within the borders of a specific regulating genre. The author has to select a genre that suits the articulation of those ideas. As the idea of the genre is a preoccupation to the author, it becomes a similar concern to the audience who holds a set of expectations the

genre should meet. Genre also deals with the influence of a certain work of art enclosed within a certain genre:

Far from being merely 'stylistic' devices, genres create effects of reality and truth, authority and plausibility, which are central to the different ways the world is understood in the writing of history or of philosophy or of science, or in painting, or in everyday talk. (Frow 19)

The complexity of the idea of genre goes beyond the author, the text and the reader to include other supporting factors that secure the existence of a certain genre, maintain its continuation and assure its popularity:

In thinking about genre as a process it becomes important to think about the conditions that sustain it: the institutional forces that govern the determination and distribution of classification and value. Genres emerge and survive because they meet a demand, because they can be materially supported, because there are readers and appropriate conditions of reading (literacy, affordable texts), writers or producers with the means to generate those texts, and institutions to circulate and channel them. (Frow 137)

Examples of determining factors that I regard as important in encouraging the rise of a certain genre are the awards offered to creative writers. The prestigious awards offered to novelists, for example, encourage other creative writers to adopt the novel as a genre and consequently develop their techniques and skills to receive recognition and appreciation. Poetry once flourished in ancient times because kings and monarchs used to reward poets for their artistry and eloquence.

Besides the afore-mentioned factors, there is the nature of a certain genre that renders it more suitable to encompass certain meanings and values. The novel, for example, as a western genre was adopted by non-western cultures all over the world because of its flexibility as a form that meets the needs of authors and readers for a new form of expression and it easily replaced a very well-established genre as poetry.

Questions regarding the complexity of choosing a certain genre are posed: Is it the genre that makes the content or is it the content that necessitates the adoption of a certain genre? What makes an author use a certain genre to express his/her topic and how far does it influence the issue of representation on one hand and the experience of reading on the other hand? There is an answer that suggests that “[t]he medium is indeed the message” (Dubrow 11). However, that does not completely answer the question of choosing a particular genre because a multiple of genres may suit the articulation of certain ideas. The idea of the genre also has the audience as a decisive factor in the equation of creativity. The genres

offer frameworks for constructing meaning and value in one or another medium. These frameworks are alternative to each other, and choices between them have to do with my valuing of certain expressive qualities over others in particular set of circumstances: I choose to make or to watch a documentary rather than a feature film, or rather than writing or reading a newspaper article, because that genre allows me to activate certain possibilities of meaning and value rather than others. (Frow 72)

With regards to literary genres, the thesis deals with a novel, novella, poetry and drama. This study deals with visual arts as cartoons and films. The novelist provides a detailed account of the story and therefore pays due attention to different aspects of the story. The novel covers a wide range of details including the place, different protagonists and their inner and outer conflicts. It provides a wider space for the articulation of the story if compared to other genres as the novella, poem, or a play for instance. It has the privilege of thorough narration and delivers the message extensively. However, it requires a patient reader who is capable of pursuing the different threads of the story. The reader of the novel is a meticulous reader who looks for details and is capable of assembling the different plots together and grasping the message.

The novella, on the other hand, is characterized by its considerably short length that necessitates a very tactful writer who is able to condense the elements of narration. The artist is to rely on lesser numbers of protagonists and on less complicated types of plots and resort to fewer numbers of places. The novelist is, therefore, offered less space but enjoys the privilege of preciseness that directly captures the reader's attention. A novella is most adequate for a fast reader who lacks the patience and perseverance of the reader of a novel.

Similarly compared to the conciseness of the novella is that of poetry. Poetry is, par excellence, the oldest literary genre in history and across different cultures. The poet delivers his/her creative experience in a limited numbers of lines. The poet is in no need of numerous pages to express his/her ideas. However, the highly poetic language used by the poet is what makes it relatively difficult to grasp by the ordinary reader at the first reading. Sometimes, the highly metaphoric language used by the poet necessitates several attempts of reading in order to understand the poet's message. But what makes poetry attractive to the reader is its musicality that makes it easy to remember. It is also to be remembered because of its relative short length.

Drama is the most live genre studied within the scope of the present thesis. The performance calls for the interaction of the audience in the theater. The audience is faced with flesh and blood characters which add more vividness to the story if compared to the act of reading a novel or a novella or a poem. The play does not necessitate the full attention of the audience as the reader of the afore-mentioned genres. It just needs the attendance of the spectator in the theater and once the performance starts, the audience gets involved. Drama draws the attention of the audience because it has glamorous

elements as the costumes and make-up of the characters. It also relies on the lights, sound effects and decorations of the stage. Sometimes, music and songs can be used to add more liveliness to the dramatic performance. The influence of the play, if successful, in my opinion, has a strong everlasting impact as it works on the different senses of the spectator. It is also a time saving form of art compared to reading a novel, for example. Theatrical performances usually do not exceed three hours in order to deliver the message.

Closely related to the visual effects of the theatrical performance are the visual arts such as cartoons. The cartoons are the least discussed literary genres and require time and effort in grasping their message. They are mainly intended for the unspecialized reader as they do not require any kind of literacy. However, they need certain knowledge of the culture and the context of the topic presented. This kind of genre requires a very talented artist who can deliver through a few lines a meaningful message that is understood by the majority of his/ her audience. The task becomes more sophisticated when it comes to political cartoons as the artist has to touch upon a critical situation that both arouses laughter and contemplation. It is not an easy genre and it really needs a very well-informed artist that can capture the attention of the audience and activate his/her imagination in a very short interval of time. In my opinion, the cartoons are one of the most popular genres and enjoy a wide range of audience. Finally, film is the most recent genre. It is based on team work and it requires a huge budget and diverse technology and preparation. It resembles drama as it needs the compilation of different efforts for its production; besides, it is financially demanding. Opposite to the theatrical performance

that is characterized by its liveliness, the films are screened within enclosed movie theatres that lack the mutual interaction between the actors and the audience.

The coming chapters cast light on the richness of the Palestinian cause and its openness to different forms of representations. It can be articulated through multiple genres and in each time, the cause can be told and retold with a high degree of freshness and vitality that corresponds to the creativity of its authors and appeals to the different sensibilities of the audience.



## Chapter Two: Narratives of Palestinian Rights

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part studies the novel, *Dreaming of Palestine* (2002), by Egyptian-Italian novelist, Randa Ghazy (1986- ). The novel is originally written in Italian and was translated to English by Marguerite Shore. The second part examines the novella written by the renowned Palestinian author, Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972), *Men in the Sun* (*Rijāl fī al-shams*, 1962), written in Arabic and translated to English by Hilary Kilpatrick.

### *Dreaming of Palestine* (2002)

Randa Ghazy wrote her novel, while a teenager, in response to the on-air brutal murder of the Palestinian child, Mohamed Gamal Aldorra, by the soldiers of the Israeli occupation even after the repeated pleading of his father not to shoot his child. The son was mercilessly shot and died in the arms of his father (30 September 2000). The incident was accidentally shot by a correspondent who happened to eye-witness the crime while the Israeli soldiers were oblivious of his presence in the crime scene:

Caught in the crossfire were Jamal al-Durrah and his son Muhammad. French television filmed Jamal's vain attempt to shield his son from the gunfire behind a steel drum. The broadcast of Muhammad al-Durrah lying dead in his father's lap electrified Palestinian anger and resentment. The scene encapsulated the feeling of impotence and vulnerability held by many Palestinians as well as Israeli's disregard for Palestinian life. (Danjoux 58)

The video and afterwards the photos were widely distributed and circulated in the international community, bringing about world-wide condemnation. It was by all measures a crime against an innocent child that exposed the Israeli cruelty against Palestinians. The incident that brought anger and rage fueled the second Palestinian

Intifada in occupied Palestine and inspired Ghazy to write her novel. Ghazy's dedication at the end of her novel is to the young child. She says:

I dedicate this story . . . to Mohamed Gamal Aldorra, twelve years old, dead like Ahmed, like Walid, without reason, with courage. I dedicate this story to him and pray for him because wherever he is now, wherever he might be, he has something better than the hatred and death of this war.  
(183)

The young novelist was motivated by that single act of Israeli inhumanity to write a novel of friendship, love, and war as subtitled on its cover page. In the light of the previous dedication and the subtitle, the novel's narrative of murders can be read as a series of variations on the single act of killing a son in the arms of his father by the Israeli soldiers. It is a pattern adopted in the novel; it is either a son or a daughter who is killed or a father or a mother who is murdered. The final outcome is a fragmented Palestinian family. Through characterization, the novelist grounds her fictional world on young/teenage protagonists. There is neither a nuclear family nor an extended family, just older children taking care of younger ones. The fragmentation of the novel is reflected in the fragmentation of its protagonists as none of them is actually living with a normal family whether nuclear or extended.

In the context of Palestinian rights, Ghazy writes a novel about the Palestinian right to live. The immediacy of life loss captured in the scene of killing Aldorra symbolized the wasted lives of the Palestinians. The shocking ease with which Israelis took the lives of the Palestinians can be regarded as a motif recurrent in the novel among its major and minor characters. The novel has multiple teenage protagonists and these protagonists' lives are always challenged by the presence of the Israeli occupation which constitutes the backbone of the narrative.

Through her fictional world, the novelist gives names and identity to the nameless and faceless martyrs or freedom fighters of Palestine. The reader is engaged with multiple protagonists of the novel; Ibrahim, Gihad, Ramy, Nedal, Ahmed, Walid, Mohammad, Gamal, and Riham together they form a coherent group that acts as one family. It defies the traditional concept and structure of a family that consists of a father, mother, sons and daughters. However, the structure of the group is not stable all the time because of the unstable atmosphere imposed by the Israeli presence. Sometimes the group gains a member and at other times it loses one. For example, Gamal is abruptly introduced to the novel and to the group and is similarly lost because of war. The structure is always threatened by war. Newcomers join the group as they lose their parents or other guardians in their families and find refuge in the company of the group. One wonders how a group of teenagers can manage to replace the traditional unit of a family. The author provides the implicit question:

All together, like that, they give each other strength. They laugh at their own nonsense, they laugh, they must, that they should be serious in a situation like this; it's wartime, nothing more, there are people dying, lives shattered, destinies, lives, understand? Lives, but there is strength to laugh over something funny – there is – maybe to keep from crying, maybe because they want to convince themselves that there is something normal in their lives, because they want to reclaim the tranquility of everyday things and domestic banalities. And that's why, they know it, they are grown men against the war, boys who play at being grown-ups because someone is forcing them to play grown-ups, who would like to be young, while the bodies and ideals of grown-ups but the feelings, weaknesses, fears of children. (*Dreaming* 19)

It is obvious how the life of the Palestinian is shaped by war. The absurd structure of the group suggested by the novelist is meant to reflect not only the fragmentation of the Palestinian experience but also foreshadows how Palestinians succeed in creating a response for that imposed fragmentation that secures them the right to live and enjoy life

despite Israeli occupation. The members of the group are children and simultaneously enjoy the qualities of the grown-ups. They act as grown-ups in order to survive the subsequent hardships they face. For example, some have to drop school and to work in order to acquire their living. The group is composed of a majority of boys and only one female member represented by the character of Riham. She is the only female protagonist in the novel among the group of male protagonists. She takes care of the household, cleaning and cooking meals for the group. She acts as the mother of the family and she is a matriarch. She argues and no one can oblige her to do anything she does not want to do. She automatically acts like a mother after the death of her mother in an Israeli brutal attack on their village and succeeds to protect her youngest brother and the other members of the group. Ghazy names that parallel structure as friendship:

it seemed absurd, but in wartime, there,  
with no more parents, without a family,  
without any pretext, without anything solid and secure,  
the thing he was left with,  
the most important thing,  
was friendship (*Dreaming* 100)

In the novel, the accidental murder of one or more of the members of a family fictionally works to replicate the single act of killing Aldorra on one hand and reflects the organized and systematic Israeli act of annihilation and genocide directed towards Palestinians on the other hand. Gihad and Riham joined Ibrahim and Nedal in 1995 as Palestinian refugees after the Israelis had demolished their houses in a neighboring village. They ran in fear of their lives and found refuge in the company of Nedal and Ibrahim. Riham was twenty-one years old and Gihad was nineteen. They are both orphans as their parents and siblings were murdered by the Israelis in a massacre that targeted their native village years before. Riham was eight years old and Gihad was six at

the time of the massacre and they were at school. That's how they survived the genocide. Thus the novelist, in her novel, voices major human rights violations against Palestinians.

There are other kinds of violations mentioned within the scope of the novel that are related to the quality of life. These violations are referred to in my introductory chapter as "environmental rights" and are conceived as fundamentals and not luxury. One of these rights is the access to water supply in the Palestinian villages in favor of neighboring Israeli settlements. Walid, fifteen years old and one of the protagonists of the novel, fears to go to the well to bring water to meet the needs of the group. There is this fear of getting shot by Israeli soldiers while going to the well. Not only that, Ahmed, one of the members of the group, "had read that in Gaza the six thousand five hundred Jews in the settlements were each consuming seven times the water that each of the million and two hundred thousand Palestinians consumed" (*Dreaming* 116). The problem is that Palestinians do not have running water inside their houses and resort to use rudimentary ways of acquiring water. And even so, they are threatened to lose their lives, when seeking water.

The novelist resorts to the techniques of comparing and contrasting the quality of the Palestinian life to the Israeli one when two members of the group passed by a nearby Israeli settlement and were shocked by the presence of a peaceful ordinary life they are forcibly deprived of. The shift from one place to another marked the shift from one reality to a totally different one:

They [Ramy and Ibrahim] passed by a couple of Jewish settlements, full of life, with shops, little gardens, people who were buying things, going in and out of shops, young boys on skateboards, young couples in restaurants, families on the street.

There the war seemed only like a distant event; a word without meaning, a problem that didn't concern them. People were well dressed and had the air of

those who have everything, money, health, power [;] it almost didn't seem real that a few kilometers away there were such poor villages, where people were suffering and dying of hunger, of cold, or even worse shot by rifles [;] it didn't seem real that the good life of these people and the poverty of a people ripped apart by wounds and sorrow could coexist. (*Dreaming* 121-122)

The two different states of the two neighboring places together with their inhabitants reflect the inhumanity of the Israeli occupation that deprives Palestinians of their basic rights and human dignity. Dehumanization of the Palestinians calls to the front feelings of bitterness and questions about Israelis and why they inflict misery on Palestinians when they, themselves, used to be oppressed at one point of their collective history. According to Nedal:

They [Israelis] have suffered, they have been persecuted, and instead of learning from this, instead of having pity on us since they know pain, they inflict upon us the same tortures that were inflicted upon them. Instead of trying a bit of peace, for us, for them they come to occupy our lands and open fire without even looking their victims in the face. (*Dreaming* 79)

The absurdity of the Israeli situation is incomprehensible to the young Palestinians in the novel and they found the Israeli brutality unjustified. It was previously mentioned in my introductory chapter how Zionism manipulated the Holocaust in their favor to distract the world from sympathizing with the Palestinian cause. The novelist, on the tongue of her young characters, questions the absurdity of the Israeli situation that calls for world-wide sympathy as victims of the Holocaust and their inhumanity towards Palestinians:

Ibrahim knows what will happen, this is the second genocide in history. Those who hold power, those who are responsible for these deaths, have chosen not to learn from their sorrow, no, they have decided to torture another people just as they have been tortured, to make a desperate, unfortunate people pay for what they have suffered. People who have lost everything, except perhaps one thing, their faith, and this is why they are criticized, because they have given a name to their war, Jihad, because they have decided to not lose faith in Allah, and this is why they are criticized and killed and tormented. (*Dreaming* 128)

The novelist, as a distant observer of the Palestinian cause, is aware of the alternative offered by the choice of resistance – the only right the Palestinians cling to in order to assert their existence as human beings. Her novel is divided into three main parts but these parts are preceded by a poem. The poem is written by an anonymous Palestinian poet and has no title which suggests that it might be a poem derived from Palestinian folklore. The poem is mainly about resistance as the word “resist” is repeated seventeen times in order to accentuate the Palestinian right to resist the Israeli occupation. This act of resistance which is read by the Israeli counterpart as a terroristic act of violence is justified by the poet against his/her violations of the right to live. Violations of the Palestinian right in the poem include but are not limited to: land usurping, killing children, shelling and bombing of houses, etc. These violations of the Palestinian right have only one answer which is resistance. The poem may be entitled “I Shall Resist” as this is the most recurrent verse uttered during the poem. The narrative follows a pattern of telling the story of the refrain in one act of resistance after another. Within that context of resistance, the reader comes to pose questions like: Do you blame Gamal? His mother had been raped by Israelis and his father killed her and later he strangled himself and the entire family was shattered. Gamal, the son, blew himself in an Israeli checkpoint killing five of the Israeli soldiers and injuring others. Can we blame Gamal for either his life or death?

Similarly can we blame Ibrahim for his frustration and anger? Ibrahim is the central figure of all the protagonists as he acts as the father of the group. He is half Palestinian, half Jordanian; he is the only son of his parents. Ibrahim’s mother was Jordanian and met his Palestinian/Gazan father in a conference about atoms as both of

them were engineers. He lost his mother dying from leukemia when he was only five. Out of agony, the father, Fathi, neglected the child for years. He became the muezzin and imam of a nearby mosque where he preached especially about the importance of resistance against the oppressor. He always told his son: “You have to fight, Ibrahim, you must be worthy, this is your house, this is your earth, this is the only thing you have. Defend it. At the cost of your life” (*Dreaming* 27). Ibrahim’s father propagated the idea of resistance to the people attending the prayers in the mosque, saying: “There is no peace without justice” (*Dreaming* 28). Ibrahim’s father was killed by Israeli soldiers after he recited verses from the Quran that kindled anger in the hearts of the people attending the mosque leading to the formation of a demonstration against the Israeli occupation. The Israeli soldiers shot Ibrahim’s father dead who consequently fell on the ground with the Quran beside him. Ibrahim had joined the Law program at the university in order “to defend the rights of his people, not only with violence, but also with diplomacy” (*Dreaming* 26), but after the murder of his father, he left university and began wandering through the villages of Gaza, for years, the Quran in hand and a single idea in mind, namely, to be a man: “To be the man that his father had been, and to defend his own land, to give peace to his own people, to vindicate all those deaths, all that sorrow” (*Dreaming* 32). The grown-up child also thinks about death:

Ibrahim wanted to die as well, if this meant defending his own land,  
gaining a place next to God, and life and material possessions no longer  
mattered to him at all.

He only wanted to find peace, the peace of his own people  
And that inner peace that he had been lacking for many  
years now,  
but he could not forget that phrase,  
he could not  
there is no peace without justice. (*Dreaming* 33)



Nedal met Ibrahim by coincidence at a mosque while Ibrahim was roaming aimlessly in the different villages of Gaza after the brutal murder of Ibrahim's father. At that time, Nedal was twenty years old and he acted as a brother to lonely Ibrahim. Nedal "had to give up his studies in order to work" (*Dreaming* 38) and support his mother and sister who have been deserted by his father. The remarkable aspect of the absurd structure of the group is how they intuitively play their roles as family members. They just fit into that structure, holding each other together from falling apart.

The novelist criticizes the international indifference or silence towards what is happening inside Palestine. It causes a kind of pain for the protagonists as they feel completely alone facing the viciousness of the Israelis. This international silence multiplies the protagonists' feelings of dehumanization. There is a kind of ambiguity that comes from the shift between the third-person narrator and the second-person narrator, who directly addresses the reader as "you." The persona of the novelist is obvious in the narration and clearly and directly expresses her opinion in long paragraphs to show her complete belief and support for the Palestinian cause and her rebuke of the international renaming of the Palestinian resistance as acts of terrorism. These opinions held by the novelist are articulated with much cynicism and irony:

Mama America calls them terrorists (really?), the world watches, it's obvious that the Israelis aren't terrorists – nooooo – they're only poor soldiers with some little machine guns and a few tanks. Instead look at the Palestinians, what assassins, with those advanced weapons, those oh-so-sophisticated and modern devices – are those stones? – those powerful and well-aimed rocks, with their superorganized military forces, the world watches. (*Dreaming* 17)

The direct intrusion of the novelist in the narration motivated by her feelings of anger is partly comprehensible, taking into consideration the novelist's young age and her emerging experience in creative writing.

Ghazy's novel is a passionate narration of Palestinian rights in which she sheds light on the reality inside occupied Palestine. She succeeded in providing an authentic representation of the Palestinians and in grasping many of the controversial aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The novel uses directness of narration but becomes relatively complex in its use of multiple plots and different protagonists. The reader finds difficulty in tracing the plot of one protagonist which intersects with that of another protagonist. Reading needs considerable attentiveness to grasp the overall structure and message of the entire work.

***Men in the Sun (Rijāl fī al-shams, 1962)***

Ghassān Kanafānī is a Palestinian prolific writer whose artistic production ranges from novels, novellas, short stories, and essays. *Men in the Sun* is the most famous of his works and was adapted as a film directed by Tawfiq Saleh and entitled *The Dupes*. The novella involves the reader in another dimension of the Palestinian story. If Ghazy's novel is concerned with Palestinians who suffer deprivation and loss inside Palestine, Kanafani's novella touches upon their suffering in neighboring Arab countries. The reader who reads Ghazy's novel may pose the following question: Why didn't the protagonists in the novel leave their misery and pursue a new beginning outside the confining Palestinian territories? Ghazy's protagonists can simply leave for another Arab country, which sounds like a good alternative, hence Kanafani's novella comes to respond as it were to this perennial question.

Kanafani narrates the story of the Palestinians who were forced to leave their homelands at the historical moment following the Nakba in 1948. No one can rival Kanafani in narrating that kind of tragedy since he had undergone the episodes of its plot: “At the age of twelve, Kanafani went through the trauma of becoming a refugee, and thereafter he lived in exile in various Arab countries, not always with official approval” (Kilpatrick 10). The novella narrates the story of three Palestinian men who were rendered refugees because of the Nakba. The main plot revolves around their desperate attempt to illegally cross the desert to Kuwait in search for a better life.

The novella, *Men in the Sun*, belongs to what Nadia Yaqub calls the “road narrative” where “references to the road have the potential of evoking the 1948 war and the concomitant exodus of Palestinians from their homes and homeland” (306). Yaqub emphasizes that not all Palestinians are considered as refugees but “all . . . remain ‘on the road’ in that there has not yet been a resolution to the historical events that led to their dispossession” (306). Yaqub also divides such narratives into “narratives of departure” to which *Men in the Sun* belongs (306) and “narratives of return” to which *Returning to Haifa*, for example, belongs (307).

The novella starts with the story of Abu Qais, an old Palestinian farmer, who left his Palestinian village in 1948 because of the Israeli occupation. He left his village and lived with his wife and children as refugees in a refugee camp. He leads a life of grinding poverty. Abu Qais represents the old generation of Palestinian refugees, the generation that faced the original trauma of occupation and dislocation. He finds difficulty in grasping the consequences of occupation and his life is ruled by his inner desire to come back though ten years have passed and nothing could be done (*Men* 26; *Rijāl* 15). This

desire to return to his native Palestinian village hinders his ability to coexist with his new state as a refugee and hinders his taking seriously the issue of migration to Kuwait. He yearns to return to his field. To die in the desert in August during the journey to Kuwait is a concern which reflects the protagonist's deeper feelings and anxieties about distancing himself from Palestine. His narration is fragmented as it is interrupted by flashbacks and memories of the past. Abu Qais identifies himself with the black bird traveling aimlessly in the sky above him, which not only reflects his state of mind but also the unclear future that awaits him in the extended desert of Basra. Abu Qais is disturbed with the idea that Kuwait has no trees. Kuwait should be the new haven for him and why it doesn't have trees? This attitude reflects the pastoral worldview of a peasant.

The second episode of the novella is about the second of the three protagonists, Assad from Ramleh, Palestine. Assad seems to be in his twenties or early thirties and represents the middle generation that faced the trauma of occupation but was relatively quick in responding to the new reality. He is not overwhelmed by feelings of loss and does not yearn for a lost home. He always remembers his flight from Amman, Jordan to Basra in Iraq and is cunning enough to negotiate and bargain the terms of his clandestine crossing, derived from his awareness of the dilemma that dictates his life as a Palestinian refugee. He stands in juxtaposition to Abu Qais who seems more helpless in facing his new reality.

The third protagonist is Marwan, who is only sixteen years old. He is the youngest of the three protagonists and seems to be the most energetic. He is full of life and full of hope for a better future. He wanted to be a doctor but he abandoned school in order to find work in Kuwait so as to be able to support his family. As a Palestinian refugee, he

has to work and not to study at school and to be “plunged in the frying pan” (*Ghās fī al-mīqlāt*) (*Men* 43; *Rijāl* 48) as his brother Zakaria used to tell him. Marwan is travelling for the welfare of his mother and brothers and sisters after they were abandoned by the father.

The stories of the three protagonists are seen as disconnected stories of three different generations of Palestinian refugees at first glance. But on a deeper level, the three stories can be read as one coherent story narrated by different characters. First Abu Qais can be seen as telling his story as well as that of Marwan’s father if the latter did not abandon his family to marry the disabled Shafiqā. That reading can be proven by Marwan’s attachment to Abu Qais throughout their journey from Basra to Kuwait. The young boy can be seen as close to the old man who seems to replace Marwan’s father. Marwan’s father represents the alternative to the choice Abu Qais has made when he decided to stay in the refugee camp and not to migrate to Kuwait, by seeking material welfare by marrying Shafiqā. Assad and Marwan can be read as the future of what Abu Qais’s son might experience after the disappearance of his father; he might chose to migrate to Kuwait in order to support his mother and baby brother. Assad’s story can be read as that of Marwan’s brother Zakaria who has chosen to leave for Kuwait to support his family. So the three seemingly fragmented stories can be read as one coherent story of Palestinian alienation, casting light on the hard choices Palestinians have to make in order to face the new inhuman reality imposed on them by the Israeli occupation.

The fourth character in the novella is Abul Khaizuran and it was highly problematic for me to decide whether or not to regard him as the fourth protagonist of the novella. At certain points in the narrative, the reader feels sympathetic towards him as a

Palestinian refugee and deeply believes in his sincere efforts to assist the other three protagonists to cross the Iraqi desert to Kuwait. The reader starts to pose questions about the true identity of Abul Khaizuran: Who is he? Is he a professional or an amateur smuggler? Is he a regular smuggler or was it his first time to carry people with him? In the first part of the novella, he seems as a human being who shares his agonies with the three protagonists. Long before he meets the three protagonists, he was part of the Palestinian resistance that fought the Israeli occupation but lost his manhood during the struggle:

In *Men in the Sun*, the man's ability to protect his family as well as the nation is related to his potency. Abu al Khayzran, the water-tank carrier, lost his manhood in the war, with the loss of homeland, and has become impotent. As a replacement for homeland and manhood, he dreams of monetary profits. (Gertz & Khleifi 124)

It can be said that what happened to Abul Khaizuran can be read symbolically as marking the end of the war between Israelis and Palestinians by the defeat of the latter. The replacement of resistance with desire to amass material goods became more persistent. It seems that Abul Khaizuran did not only lose his manhood but also his humanity because by the end of the novella, he seems heartless as he abandons the three dead bodies of the protagonists at the garbage dump in Kuwait and steals all their valuables. He seems keen to rescue them in the first part and dumps them in the very end. For these reasons, I discarded the notion of regarding him as one of the protagonists of the novella, though he cannot be classified as an antagonist.

How can the novella be read in the framework of human rights? The novella reflects the miserable Palestinian status quo after their forced departure from Palestine. The different characters in the novella, whether major or minor, seem to be stripped of

their humanity (as in the case of Abul Khaizuran) in different ways that forces them to undergo different kinds of humiliation, obligating them to make decisions that they do not prefer. Some of the characters are veered away from humane conduct that makes act wickedly. Such behavior might not be inherent in their inner selves but is imposed on them through the new reality of occupation and dislocation. This shows how the Palestinian character was deformed through occupation and displacement. Thus Kanafani implicitly points to the ravages that deprives Palestinians of their sense of self and compromises their character.

Kanafani criticizes the international silence, especially the Arab one that is symbolically represented in the novella by the overwhelming silence of the desert. The desert also seems to symbolize Arab desertion of the Palestinian cause. Silence also prevails even after the unexpected death of the three protagonists at the end of the novella. It seems that Kanafani is posing the question: Why do Palestinians have to be smuggled into Kuwait and denied legal access to the Arab country? The reader finds difficulty in escaping the pessimistic worldview of the novella especially at the point of its closure. The stillness of the three men inside the lorry after they passed away is disturbing. Their death is abrupt and shocking and leaves the reader confused. When they were about to reach Kuwait, they reached death. None of them survived the symbolical and actual frying pan. The three generations of Palestinian refugees could not make it inside the desert in the scorching heat of August.

The final notion that brings the human rights issue to the core of the novella is its title. It seems that Kanafani, through the title of his novella, preserves the dignity of the three protagonists. It is as if Kanafani wants to say that the three protagonists, despite all

the humiliation they encountered, are men – true men. They are men who have been mistreated and abandoned by the scorching sun of occupation on one hand and the scorching sun of the Arab silence on the other hand.



### **Chapter Three: Palestinian Rights in Poetry and Performance**

Chapter three examines the issue of Palestinian rights as articulated in the genres of poetry and drama. Thus the chapter is divided into two parts; the first is to deal with selected poems by the Palestinian poet, Sharif Elmusa, and the second part examines the play, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, edited by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner. The shift from the Palestinian voice in poetry to the American one in drama is intended to provide a varying perspective of the Palestinian cause and to answer the basic question of the unjustified international silence when it comes to violations of Palestinian rights. The two genres examined within the scope of this chapter are mainly directed to a western audience. In both cases a dramatic text becomes alive when performed and a poem becomes animated when recited.

#### **Poems by Sharif Elmusa**

The first part of chapter three carries on with the Palestinian voice articulating agony as in Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* through the genre of poetry. Poetry is the oldest of genres in almost every culture worldwide. It is the most established genre par excellence and the carrier of Palestinian anguish:

Poetry was the form least encumbered in travelling across the occupation's barbed wire fences and pitilessly policed frontiers of Arab states. Palestinian and Arab poets were thus foundational in shaping the nation's narrative and representational imaginary. (Salti 39)

Palestinians enjoy a very rich legacy of what is known as "resistance poetry" which is "often composed on the battlefield or commemorating its casualties, the losses to the community" (Harlow 35). Internationally renowned Palestinian poets such as Mahmoud Darwish, Rashid Husayn, Fadwa Tuqan, Jabra Jabra, Samih al-Qasim, Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, Salma Jayyusi, etc., are but a few representatives of this rich legacy. It

seems that poetry is the most immediate genre which encompasses the Palestinian experience: “Poetry is capable not only of serving as a means for the expression of personal identity or even nationalist sentiment. Poetry, as a part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people, is itself an arena of struggle” (Harlow 33). Accordingly, poetry proves to be an appropriate genre to eloquently express human rights in general and those of Palestinians in particular.

Chapter three deals with the poetry of Sharif Elmusa (1947- ) who was born in the Palestinian village of Al-Abbasiya, near the city of Jaffa, and his family fled during the Nakba to a refugee camp near the town of Jericho in 1948 (“Sharif S. Elmusa: Poet and Environmental Scholar” n.pag.). The poet who is a university professor, a researcher in environmental sciences, and as a translator, has already edited an anthology of American-Palestinian poetry, *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab-American Poetry*, 1988.

What is noticeable about Elmusa’s collection, *Flawed Landscape*, is that it is written within roughly twenty years, from 1987 to 2008, documenting lyrically the victimization of Palestine. Elmusa’s poetry explores “new areas hidden deep in the human psyche” which makes it most suitable to the present study (Abou El Naga 86). This is evident in his recurrent use of the subject pronoun “I” which emphasizes that “Elmusa’s point of departure is the self” (Abou El Naga 100); but here it is also the expression of the communal self, the collective experience of the Palestinians.

What also makes the voice of Sharif Elmusa different from that of Ghassan Kanafani as examined in this thesis is that he writes down his poetry in the English language. The use of a foreign language is a double-edged weapon as it carries the literary production to wider circles of readership across the world; however, it is rarely

accessible to the Palestinians themselves. Abou El Naga sees the bright side of using the English language in the poetry of Elmusa as she points out: “From within the English language, he highlights the margin: the indigenous and the authentic. To achieve this, he employs various techniques ranging from recalling history – personal and public – to inserting Koranic references” (100); in certain instances he refers to Genesis pointing out the archetypal exile of the first couple (Ghazoul n. pag.).

This chapter examines a selection of poems by Sharif Elmusa in his collection, *Flawed Landscape*. These poems are: “What Makes the Man?” (3), “In the Refugee Camp” (8), “To Feel the Humiliation” (10), “The Eraser” (13), and “Flawed Landscape” (6). The poems specifically belong to the genre of lyrical poetry as they are short, concise and condensed. They are collectively grouped under the first part of the book of poetry that is related to the political paradigm as it discusses different aspects of the Palestinian cause.

“What Makes the Man?” (3) is the opening poem of Elmusa’s book and according to Ghazoul, it is a “philosophical poem” which questions the absurdity of a human being when he/she decides to surrender his/her humanity and becomes an animal (n.pag.). The poem can be divided into two parts. The first part poetically describes the particularities of an everyday life which makes the reader feel at ease with that human being in the poem. The poet shows how that man performs the ordinary routine: “what to have for dinner/ which film to see/ when he last had a haircut” (3). It is a poem that asserts the humanity of a person who practices, enjoys, and shares the particularities of everyday life with his/her fellow human beings and then all of a sudden decides to turn into a savage by killing others. The poet asks: “what makes this man/ close one eye/ aim

intently/ through the scope of his rifle/ and become the most precise,/ the most direct of animals” (3). The persona who addresses the question is not necessarily Palestinian but it is the voice of any human being who can see traces of humanity in an assassin – possibly an Israeli soldier. The poem embodies a philosophical point of view and points to deep human contradictions. The poet addresses the man with his concerns before he is transformed into a monster killing the innocent. The poem recalls the recurrent scenes of killing portrayed in Randa Ghazy’s novel of Palestinian people.

The second poem, “Flawed Landscape,” (6) is mainly about “forced migration as a lived experience” (Ghazoul n. pag.) and thus it addresses individual human rights as well as the rights of the Palestinians during the historical moment of the Nakba. The poem assumes in the form of a story as the poetic persona speaks of his father who decided to leave the land after the defeat and joined a refugee camp. In her analysis, Hassan emphasizes the central role played by the image of the desert in the poem as it “ties the Arab desert to the bitter sense of dislocation” (101). She also connects the title of the poem “Flawed Landscape” to the image of the desert, echoing its aridity (101). The scorching sun of the desert in Elmusa’s poem brings forth the scorching sun of August in Kanafani’s novella, *Men in the Sun*.

Hassan also points to the sharp contrast set in the poem between the native village of the poet/persona and the flawed landscape of the desert as “[t]he enlightening, nourishing, and healing olives trees are the ultimate opposite of the desert with its dark rocks, bad meals, and flawed physical topography” (102). The father of the poetic persona reminisces over the “olive trees” which again duplicates in a lyrical mode the way Abu Qais in *Men in the Sun* views past and present.

The poet is certain to shatter the false assumption that his father is the legendary Ulysses as the latter was able to go back home after years of displacement whereas the poet's father remained exiled till the very end. The poem moves from the father figure to that of the mother in order to trace different reactions to the original trauma of the Nakba. The mother was worried about her children and house while the father was worried about his field of olive trees. But both are summoned at the brutal murder of their relative by the British soldiers: "how they found/ the body of her brother soaked/ in sweet-scented blood . . . after he had been killed by the discriminate bullets/ of the British soldiers" (7). There is an inference here to the role played by the British occupation in the Palestinian Nakba. Back to the issue of human rights, the poem ridicules the role played by the United Nations that fed Palestinians without allowing them to go home: "The United Nations, our godfather;/ doled our flour and rice and cheddar;/ 'yellow,' cheese – sharp beyond our palettes" (6).

The poem smoothly moves from the individual to the collective. The memory of the Nakba (1948) brings Palestinians face to face with the state of forced dislocation ending in refugee camps. The poem compares and contrasts the past Palestinian landscape before occupation, comparing it to the present one in the refugee camp. The past landscape seems to be perfect when compared to the present deformed one. The landscape is seen through the eyes of the son who was not totally aware of the calamity but can witness its repercussions in the eyes of the father and the mother. They do not just retain the memory of the Nakba but that of the British mandate. The poem is replete with beautiful images of the past like those of the "twelve olive trees" of the father and the

“new house” both the father and the mother have just built (6-7). It ends with life in the refugee camp where the radio becomes “the hearth” and the news “the oracle” (7).

The third poem, “In the Refugee Camp,” (8) can be regarded as a continuation of the previous poem as it focuses on the imperfections of the present landscape best represented in the refugee camp which suggests a continuation of the pervasive flawed landscape imposed on the Palestinians. The refugee camp here is unnamed and thus becomes a symbol of all the refugee camps. The poem seems to question the issue of human rights and peoples’ rights in distorted places like refugee camps where one is left only with the sight of the perfect sky. The vastness of the sky is sharply contrasted to the confining and restricting architecture of the refugee camp. It also stands for the only place a Palestinian refugee can look and question the fate that rendered them refugees. The poem ends with two short verses with great significance. There is a reference to the story of Adam and Eve who were expelled from heaven to suggest that there is a kind of parallelism between their expulsion and the Palestinians’ exile. Though Adam and Eve are promised to go back to heaven, it seems that Palestinians are incapable of going back to their lost paradise in Palestine.

The fourth poem, “To Feel the Humiliation” (10), is eloquent as it registers snapshots summarizing the atrocities of the war in occupied Palestine. The series of scenes mentioned in the poem illustrate the inhumanity of the Israeli occupation and how dehumanized the Palestinians are in their homelands: “A young boy stays home/ for five days, alone, with the corpses of his family” (10). The poet is keen to enumerate the harshest scenes suffered by Palestinians, whether men, women or young children with a message that human rights are violated in a wide range. The poem ends with the essence

of the Palestinian situation where inhumanity prevails: “To feel the humiliation,/ to touch the grief of each/ I would have to become a monster/ with many hearts” (10). The poet speaks to Kanafani’s protagonists in his novella who were dehumanized because of their collective trauma, and thus to empathize with the many, one needs many hearts.

The fifth poem, “The Eraser” (13), unites all the Israelis in one person called the Eraser. That Eraser is the protagonist and the doer of all the atrocities committed to Palestinians. He is the subject and thus the doer of all the negative verbs mentioned in the poems. He is the driving force of all the destruction brought to the Palestinian landscape and stand as responsible for the flawed landscape mentioned before. The poet writes the “Eraser” with a capital “E” and always refers to him with the subject pronoun “He” in a capital letter all over the poem. The Eraser not only erased the physical manifestations of the Palestinian existence, but also erased the Palestinian culture by replacing the Palestinian system of names by an Israeli one. The Erasure of one culture and the establishment of another one on its ruins needed seven days with the ultimate announcement of the Eraser claiming to be a god.

Though the poetry of Elmusa is a verbal mode of expression, it is highly visual in its effect because of the images used in his poems. The reader can see the displacement of the Palestinians after the Nakba. He/she can also visualize the inhuman conditions of the refugee camps and the helplessness of the people. In addition, the highly metaphoric language rises in the reader feelings of sadness, sympathy and profound grief for the Palestinian calamity.

### *My Name is Rachel Corrie*

The issue of the international silence towards the misery of the Palestinians has been addressed and questioned by the authors already mentioned. The idea of tracing the Palestinian rights was complicated by the international indifference towards crimes against humanity committed against Palestinians. That is why, in this section, I bring in the concerned international dimension, as expressed by supporters of Palestinian rights. In other words, this section examines the issue of human rights on two levels; those of the Palestinians as well as those who defend them, namely in this case a young American, and the question becomes: What about the human rights of an American citizen defending Palestinian rights? On a deeper level, the section examines the representation of the Palestinian cause within the scope of drama as a genre on one hand and the specificity of the play studied as documentary, on the other hand.

This part examines the Palestinian rights in the drama genre represented by the play, *My name is Rachel Corrie* (2005), written in the English language and based on a real incident in the life of a young American woman, who supported the rights of Palestinians. Similar to the novel by Randa Ghazy, *Dreaming of Palestine*, and unlike the literary genres listed in this thesis, the Palestinian cause here is presented by a non-Palestinian. Rachel Corrie provides the outlook of an outsider which provides an understanding of the Palestinian story. Rachel Corrie (1979-2003) was an American peace activist who was killed in the Gaza Strip by an Israeli bulldozer while defending a Palestinian house from being demolished. Her writings have been transformed into a play that narrates her life, ideas and convictions. The play is based on the construction and reconstruction of the tragedy of Rachel Corrie, essentially extracted from her personal



diaries and e-mails and put together in the form of a play through the editors Alan Rickman and Katherine Viner. Compiling, selecting, and constructing a theatrical performance out of the remarks, notes and diaries of Corrie were not an easy task:

The challenge, then, was trying to construct a piece of theatre from fragments of journals, letters and e-mails, none of which was written with performance in mind. It helped, as Rickman says, that Rachel's writing "has a kind of theatricality. The images jump off the page." As the process went on, the difference between my usual job, journalism, and theatre, became obvious: stagecraft is what makes theatre what it is, and there was no point creating scenes that read well on the page if the actor playing Rachel, Megan Dodds, could not perform them. (Viner 57)

The editors answer the pivotal question of the genre and see in the compiled writings of Rachel Corrie the qualities of a theatrical performance. The editors see that the liveliness of the real character of Rachel Corrie could not be encompassed in any genre but in a performed play. There is also the nature of compiled writings that include e-mails sent to her parents and friends which bring forth the epistolary form of literature as noticed by El Lozy if we can consider e-mails as the modern equivalent of letters used years ago:

To begin with, we are dealing here with a play whose generic identity represents a challenge to anyone wishing to classify it neatly into a well-established critical niche. The play is constructed of various entries from Rachel's diaries and e-mails from Gaza, and therefore, falls partly under the category of epistolary literature . . . In addition, part of the novelty in this particular case is the medium through which the letters have been produced and transmitted. *My Name is Rachel Corrie* is probably one of the first plays whose source material comes from the age of electronic mail and cyberspace. Having said that, one should recognize that this is now one of the principal ways through which a growing number of people communicate and write to each other on a personal basis. (El Lozy 110)

The notion of epistolary literature adds complexity to the issue of genre and makes it much more difficult to identify than it seems. Though the editors and co-authors of the play relied heavily on her written material kept by her parents, they also consulted

other sources in order to fill in the gaps they might find while trying to authentically structure the real or at least appropriate picture of Rachel Corrie:

And what about the voices of Rachel's friends? I interviewed many fellow ISM [International Solidarity Movement] activists, most of whom have been deported from Israel after her death. We [editors] watched tapes of the two of the moving memorial services: one in Gaza, which was shot at by the Israeli army, another in Olympia [the home town of Rachel Corrie in Washington State]. We viewed documentaries on the subject, most notably Sandra Jordan's powerful *Killing Zone*, and considered using video grabs. But in the end the power of Rachel's writing meant that, apart from a few short passages quoting her parents and an eyewitness report of her death, her words were strong enough to stand alone. (Viner 57)

The previous attempts of the editors and co-authors of the play is what places it within the scope of experimental theater and adds to its uniqueness and distinctiveness. The editors' clarification of their relentless efforts to be as even-handed as possible in depicting the character of Corrie is functional in so far as refuting the many accusations that they encountered in depicting a character who is only drawn to raise sympathy for the Palestinian cause. The severest of these accusations mentioned that the "standard response of Zionist supporters to the death of Rachel Corrie has not been limited to casting doubts on her integrity, but also to assigning her a conspiratorial role as an accomplice of organized terrorism" (El Lozy 103). This is closely related to what has been mentioned in the introductory chapter, namely, whenever the Palestinians are referred to as human beings who have rights, the ready-made accusations of Zionism are raised to stop the international community from sympathizing with the Palestinians.

That the aspect of constructing an authentic portrayal of Rachel Corrie raises a more serious issue of human rights is related to the idea of censorship. The play, as a performance, faced strict measures of censorship when it came to its live production on stage both in the United States and in England – the well-established democracies of the

Western world as is claimed. El Lozy draws the attention to two practices that prevailed in controlling the production of the play. One is related to the repeated postponement and even cancellations of the theatrical performance in the US. The other practice is related to the limitations imposed on the passages selected to be performed. Though the two editors exerted much effort to be as faithful as possible in depicting the heroine of the real drama, acts of omission eventually occurred:

The sections that have been omitted are the ones in which Rachel provides specific details of some of Israel's most destructive and inhuman activities in Gaza. One of the most salient Israeli activities referred to by Rachel is their systematic and organized stealing of Palestinian water. She refers in that e-mail to the role played by internationals in protecting those wells "since the Israeli army destroyed the two largest wells" that Rachel says "provided half of Rafah's water supply." (El Lozy 108)

It is really important to state that El Lozy would have selected other revealing passages from Rachel's writing if he were to edit the e-mails and diaries of the late peace activist in order to fulfill two objectives: one to do justice to the Palestinian cause that has been undermined by Western audience, and second to do justice for Rachel Corrie herself, who was enormously attacked after her death more than she was in her life.

Whether the acts of selection and compilation of the material were satisfactory or not for different parties on the Zionist side or the pro-Palestinian ones, it is important to refer to Rachel Corrie's father, Craig Corrie, who testifies, after the death of Alan Rickman (who inscribed the drama of Rachel Corrie into a text to be performed), commenting on what he perceives as Rickman's achievement: "The care Alan took for our family, his courage to take on this particular project and, most of all, the respect he showed for Rachel and her writing, impress me still as truly extraordinary" (n. pag.). Craig Corrie praises the bravery of Alan Rickman who ventured by transforming the life

of his daughter into a live performance. Craig Corrie adds that Rickman and Katharine Viner have transformed the former's daughter into an iconic figure as

they managed to capture Rachel's energy, her humour and her ability to question herself, as well as her world. For those who did not know Rachel but only knew of her, the play gave back to my daughter her humanity – no small achievement (n. pag.)

As a genre, this literary work is a one-character play where Rachel Corrie plays the central role and therefore El Lozy perceives it as a “monodrama” (105), and since it is structured from documentary evidence connected with her diaries and notes, he “could loosely place *My Name is Rachel Corrie* within the relatively recent genre of documentary drama” (112). The play develops chronologically from Corrie's life in her native town in the United States until her untimely death in occupied Palestine, specifically, in Gaza Strip. The play helps to revive and bring to life the character of Rachel Corrie who was most violently killed and silenced. By bringing her back to life every night through the theatrical performance, resistance to oppression is at work. Corrie, as a free spirit and a defender of the Palestinian cause, is resurrected as a symbol of the vitality and the continuity of the cause.

The play continues to retain its controversial quality when it comes to an integral constituent of any theatrical performance, namely, the audience. *My Name is Rachel Corrie* was shocking to the Western audience as it calls attention to the Palestinian cause that has always been minimized by their media. But now the Western spectator's convictions become shaky as he or she has to question the authenticity of the official story about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and particularly when it comes from an American standpoint:

Theater audiences are usually timid and prefer to know the acceptable opinion on a given subject rather than be placed in a situation where they have to make an individual choice. It is definitely much easier and unequivocally morally rewarding to take a stand, even a tough one, over an issue that has already been resolved. It is usually comforting for most people to know that they are on the right side of history. (El Lozy 112)

Rachel Corrie, in her accounts of Palestinian life during her stay in Gaza, functioned on different levels. First she deconstructed the well-established Zionist system of dehumanization as applied to Palestinians. This is clarified in one her e-mails to her mother, who was worried about Rachel's stay in Gaza Strip. She says, addressing her mother:

Who do you think these [Palestinian] families are that I tell you about, who won't take any money from us even though they are very, very poor, and who say to us: 'We are not a hotel. We help you because we think maybe you will go and tell people in your country that you lived with Muslims. We think they will know that we are good people. We are quiet people. We just want peace'? (*My Name* 48)

Not only that, she was impressed by the Palestinians exceptional ability to survive the on-going hardships inflicted on them by the Israeli occupation. Corrie presented the Palestinians as good human beings with rights to be acknowledged:

The Palestine that emerges from her e-mails is a social, political, and historical landscape that has been methodically shielded from Western eyes through the good offices of the corporate media. Rachel has uncovered Palestine to her own people, and the Palestine she has uncovered is not the one Zionists wish the world to know of. In doing so, she has undermined some of the principal myths through which Zionists maintain their stranglehold over Western public opinion. (El Lozy 113-4)

The play is double-fold in nature as it narrates the calamities of the Palestinians together with that of Rachel Corrie as a peace activist. The title is revealing in so far that it commemorates the memory of Rachel Corrie who becomes a symbol for international pacifists who defend the Palestinian cause. The recurrent utterance of the name defies the

death/disappearance of its owner. The name, here, means the survival of Rachel Corrie in a dramatic afterlife.

The play was a great success and “has flown to every continent except Antarctica and has been translated into more than a dozen languages” (Corrie n. pag.), but the question remains: What about the Palestinians who die on a daily basis, unrecognized because of the Israeli occupation? How is it possible to tell their story, commemorate their memory, and do justice to their cause? *My Name is Rachel Corrie* is not the only foreign theatrical performance that deals with the Palestinian rights; there are many others, among which is the play, *“It is What We Do”*: *A Play about the Occupation* which is based on the testimonies of former Israeli soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces who narrated the atrocities of the Israeli occupation. The testimonies were originally published as a book and were transformed into a play. In her note on the choice of drama, the playwright and director, Pamela Nice, states: “[b]eing a theater person, I immediately imagined a theatrical production that might bring these soldiers’ testimonies to a wider audience” (n. pag.).

Attempts to create theatrical performances in the refugee camps by the Palestinians about the Palestinians are also recognized. In Aida Refugee Camp, near Jerusalem, volunteers have established the al-Rowad cultural center that offers plays for children of the refugee camp as a form of peaceful resistance (Abusurour 29). Abusurour, the founder of the center and the author of the study, explains why he together with the group of volunteers chose drama in particular: “drama is one of the most powerful and influential of civilized arts affecting both the actor and audience on an international scale” (29). Abusurour emphasizes that the main role of these plays that eventually were

performed in different corners of the world is to introduce the human side of the Palestinians and raise awareness of Palestinian rights (30).

The musicality of poetry together with its vivid imagery and the narratives of Palestinian stories are carried further when the genre of drama gives way to the visual arts as elaborated in the following chapter that focuses on cartoons and a film.

## **Chapter Four: Palestinian Rights in Cartoons and Cinema**

Chapter four extends the liveliness of theatrical performance discussed in chapter three to cartoons and film. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part has to deal with a selection of cartoons by the famous Palestinian cartoonist, Naji al-Ali, and the second part examines the Palestinian film *Omar* by the Palestinian director, Hany Abu Assad. The arena of human rights together with the function of each genre will be similarly explored within the scope of the current chapter.

### **Cartoons of Naji al-Ali (1936-1987)**

In order to deal with the art of cartoons as an artistic genre, there are a set of sweeping generalizations, assumptions, and propositions to be examined. The art of cartoons is generally regarded as one of the most interesting, vivid, compact, direct ways of sending a message to its recipients. A cartoon can eloquently summarize ideas thoroughly expressed in articles and even in books on a certain problematic issue; it takes little time and effort to be received, analyzed and understood. The notion of instant response to cartoons can be a double-edged weapon. It is advantageous in so far as it directly and instantly delivers a certain message, but its effect can be superficial as the message can be either easily neglected or forgotten. However, there is more in the art of cartoons than what has been generally regarded.

The art of cartoons is identified by Victor S. Navasky in the title of his book, “Art of Controversy,” as provocative in its nature and effect. When it comes to cartoons as a genre, Navasky challenges an important allegation, saying that “[i]mages (especially when they are cartoons) are second-class citizens in the lands of words, and that ought not to be the case” (51). Accordingly, it is assumed that the impact of words are more



powerful than that of cartoons, but this is refuted by Navasky, who asserts the powerful effect of the cartoons as modes of expression. He offers the proposition that “[i]mages can speak louder than words, and one caricature may indeed be worth more than ten thousand words” (51). In addition, Navasky frequently proposes that “[c]artoons ... are totems, which once unleashed are not merely uncontrollable themselves but can have uncontrollable and in this case deadly consequences for their creators” (153). Navasky’s propositions uncover the profound nature and influence of cartoons and calls for a serious reading of that artistic genre.

There is an intricate relationship between the impact of the cartoon on its recipients and their act of reading it. It is presumed that reading a cartoon does not require a lot of effort since it is a simple drawing. That might be true if the cartoon is addressing one of the universal abstract meanings that all people agree upon. However, reading a cartoon needs time and effort to analyze and grasp its message and proves to be a more complex process than what is presumed, especially in the case of political cartoons. The impact of cartoons on their audience is intensified in the case of political cartoons, which are the most controversial types of cartoons. The arena of political cartoons is complex for both the cartoonist and the reader. It is assumed that cartoons are easy to interpret since they rely on images rather than on verbal language. Therefore it is the mode of expression that can suit both literate and illiterate audience. In that respect, Ilan Danjoux casts light on the complexity of reading a political cartoon for certain reasons. The first of these reasons is the need of a certain kind of foundational knowledge, which he refers to as follows:

Without sufficient historical knowledge and cultural background, a cartoon’s message becomes impenetrable. To those that do not recognize the actors or issues portrayed, reading cartoons can feel like looking through the photo albums of strangers. To fully appreciate the depth of knowledge required in

reading cartoons, simply glance at a daily cartoon the next time you find yourself in a foreign country. If you do not know why people in the bus, hotel lobby or coffee shop are laughing, you are a community outsider. (20)

Danjoux points out to one of the significant factors that contribute to an efficient reading of a political cartoon, which is “historical knowledge” and “cultural background.” Both constitute the foundational knowledge previously mentioned. Both are required to familiarize the audience with the context in which the cartoon is produced and to which it is addressed. However, the adjective “sufficient” is misleading because what might be sufficient to one person is not sufficient for another person. Therefore the word “sufficient” has to be specified further. In addition, Danjoux refers to artistic techniques adopted by the cartoonists while drawing a cartoon that renders the act of reading more complex than assumed:

Few people appreciate the skill required to read political cartoons. Unlike the background information that accompanies newspaper articles or the captions that frame newspaper photographs, editorial cartoons provide readers few identifiers or descriptors needed to identify new actors or concepts. Instead, cartoons use a combination of physical distortion, cultural references and visual juxtaposition to comment on current events. (20)

Political cartoons prove therefore to be relatively challenging to read if the audience is not familiar with the political, cultural and historical connotations of the drawing. Reading also proves to be difficult if the recipient is not following up with the latest political occurrences. Some messages can be overlooked and sometimes the cartoon might stand as a coded piece of drawing that is totally incomprehensible. Another source of difficulty resides in the following:

With no visual search engine able to identify political actors by caricature alone, often the only resource available to readers confronted by unknown caricature is to turn to community members who, more often than not, will identify actors with an obviousness that reaffirms the cartoon’s peculiar

dichotomy as an instantly recognizable commentary for insiders and opaque medium to outsiders. (Danjoux 21)

Reading a cartoon therefore is a paradoxical process as it is not related to the degree of literacy of the recipient. In other words, an illiterate person who is aware of the political, cultural and historical background of the cartoon is often better able to read, interpret, and fully understand the different connotations of that cartoon than a literate recipient who lacks the foundational knowledge of the different contexts of the cartoon.

Another aspect that makes reading a political cartoon a complex process is the visual distortion or “exaggerated physical features” (Danjoux 21) adopted by the cartoonist to produce the satirical impact he/she intends. At a certain point, it becomes difficult to identify the figure inside a cartoon:

This type of distortion creates a formidable barrier to comprehension. Distinguishing physical identifiers from character commentary depends entirely upon one’s familiarity with the actual appearance, attire and posture of presidents, warlords and elites. (Danjoux 22)

Knowledge of the physical appearance of a certain individual contributes to the aforementioned foundational “historical knowledge” and “cultural background” required to decode the message behind a certain cartoon. However, reading a cartoon is more demanding than it seems as it requires an element that exceeds knowledge – it requires imagination:

Of all expectations cartoonists place on readers, the most curious is the need for a good imagination. Odd as this may sound, cartoons expect audience to read *beyond* the lines of the single frame to which they are exposed. Regardless of how self-enclosed cartoons may appear to be, their image references ideas, events and personalities beyond the presented frame. (Danjoux 28-29; emphasis in the original)

That might sound complex but that element of imagination is what makes reading a political cartoon more interesting than it seems as different readers may come to different

interpretations of the same cartoon and make the act of reading more challenging and enjoyable simultaneously.

Since the scope of the present study is political cartoons and most specifically the Palestinian cartoons of Naji al-Ali, it is important to point to the beginnings of political cartoons in Palestine. Significantly, the rise of the cartoons as an artistic form of expression in Palestinian history is marked by the trauma of the Nakba (Danjoux 15). The Palestinian political cartoon as a genre therefore came into being in response to the persistent Palestinian cause and directly instigated by the loss of the land and the loss of Palestinian rights. Different cartoonists have been named but the most famous of all is Naji al-Ali for different reasons. First he witnessed the Nakba and was displaced together with his family to a refugee camp in Lebanon (Ibrāhīm 3). Second, al-Ali, throughout his life until his unexpected death, never yielded to the interests of the political regimes he lived under in his different exiles. He was repulsed by the different ways of taming his talents to suit the purposes of different Arab political regimes (Ibrāhīm 9). Third, the character Hanzala created by Naji al-Ali brought him a widespread fame for its child-like innocence and fearlessness in telling the truth. Hanzala is al-Ali's iconic figure par excellence and symbolizes his authentic depiction of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian refugee child:

Among the most famous of these cartoonists was Naji al-Ali, whose character *Handale* resonates across the region decades after his death. This ten-year-old boy first appeared in the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Siyasa* in 1969. Over time, he came to symbolize the plight of all Palestinian refugees. In 1973, he famously turned his back on the world in protest of the international community's abandonment of the Palestinian cause, standing as a witness to the injustice of the scenes depicted before him. Handale's enduring popularity can be seen on T-shirts sold in the old city of Jerusalem, graffiti drawn on the walls of the Aida refugee camp and on the album cover of the Palestinian hip-hop group *The Philistines*. (Danjoux 15-16)

In discussing a selection of cartoons by Naji al-Ali, my argument addresses two aspects of human rights. The first aspect has to deal with the idea of freedom of expression and censorship on one hand and the Palestinian rights depicted in the selected cartoons on the other hand. Freedom of expression was given meaning in the files of the Cartoonists Rights Network International that offer this testimony:

In 1987, Naji al-Ali, the leading Palestinian cartoonist of his day, was murdered in London while on the way to his newspaper office. Ironically, it is still not known whether he was assassinated because he explored the brutality of the Israeli occupation or because he criticized the hypocrisy of Yasser Arafat. Either way, it had to do with the political content of his cartoons. (qtd. in Navasky 4)

It is worth mentioning that Ghassan Kanafani is the one who discovered the artistic talents of Naji al-Ali while Kanafani was visiting the latter's refugee camp. Kanafani was enthusiastic about al-Ali's drawings and offered to publish samples of al-Ali's cartoons (Ibrāhīm 24). The power of words has been acknowledged and writers have been detained, tortured, exiled, or murdered for their writing. With cartoonists, the provocative image is what leads to repressive mechanisms to silence them, one way or the other.

Within that respect, Navasky asserts that

cartoons and caricatures have historically had and continue to have a unique emotional power and capacity to enrage, upset, and disproportionate-to-the-occasion, sometimes violent, emotionally charged behavior. I'm talking about everything from overheated and irrational letters to the editor and subscription cancellations to censorship, prosecution, incarceration, and, as indicated above, violence and murder. (xxi)

That is why Navasky proposes a kind of protection for the cartoonists who work in that dangerous field when he says: "The political cartoon, as a form of expression, deserves constitutional protection" (51). That constitutional protection is required to save the art from intrusion and the cartoonist from threats that impedes his/her acts of creativity. The

cartoonists may be subjected to editorial censorship, persecution, arrests, life threats, and eventually assassination as in the case of Naji al-Ali. The required protection further asserts the powerful impact of cartoons as a genre that deeply influences the audience.

In all his cartoons, Naji al-Ali consistently attacks the Israeli occupation, and the complicit Arab regimes on one hand, and sympathizes with the Palestinians fighting occupation on the other hand. The selection of cartoons by Naji al-Ali is indicated in a separate appendix in this thesis, which includes ten cartoons. The selection is made, focusing on two main themes: the human element and resistance to oppression. One of the remarkable features observed in the cartoons under study is that Naji al-Ali does not rely on the exaggerated portrayal of certain identifiable actors in real life. In other words, al-Ali does not draw certain individuals in particular. But he draws distorted human figures who symbolize the Israelis on one hand and the corrupt members of the Arab political regimes on the other hand:

His style has been described as stark and symbolic. Specific politicians did not appear in any of the more than forty thousand cartons he drew in the course of his life as a political cartoonist. His explanation: "I have a class outlook. That is why my reactions take their form. What is important is drawing situation and realities, not drawing leaders." (Navasky 152)

This aspect of Naji al-Ali's cartoons proves to be advantageous as his cartoons are easily understood if the audience is generally aware of the Palestinian cause and this awareness does not call the need to a detailed knowledge of the identities of the Israeli and Palestinian politicians on the political stage. However, this makes the issue of his assassination incomprehensible since his cartoons did not directly point to specific people, the question becomes: Why did political actors fear the drawings of Naji al-Ali to the extent of killing him if none of his cartoons directly pointed to any specific person?

Another remarkable aspect of al-Ali's cartoons is the persistent presence of the central figure and the well-known character of Hanzala, a ten-year-old child who symbolizes Palestinian childhood in general and Naji al-Ali as a child in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in particular. Al-Ali explained his choice of the heroic character and how he characterized him:

“I drew him as a child who is not beautiful; his hair is like the hair of a hedgehog who uses his thorns as a weapon. Hanzala is not a fat, happy, relaxed, or pampered child. He is barefooted like the refugee camp children, and he is an icon that protects me from making mistakes . . . His hands are clasped behind his backs as a sign of rejection at a time when solutions are presented to us the American way.” (qtd. in Navasky 152)

Though Hanzala stands in what it seems a static pose with his back to the audience and his hands clasped behind his back, that seemingly static posture is, in my opinion, highly dynamic and open to many interpretations.

In analyzing the ten selected cartoons by Naji al-Ali, I will rely on both the Content Theory and the Image Theory mentioned by Navasky together with the foundational knowledge of historical and cultural knowledge besides my imagination as required by Danjoux in order to be able to come up with a new interpretation of what seems static but is highly dynamic. Navasky distinguishes between relevant theories: “If the Content Theory has to do primarily with the rational message of the cartoon, the Image Theory has to do with the cartoon as cartoon, with the look or the visual aspect of the cartoon, the cartoon as totem” (Navasky 17-18).

The first cartoon (Ibrāhīm 167) explicitly discusses the issue of human rights in an ironical way. According to both the Content and Image theories, the cartoon portrays Hanzala who stands with his back to the audience, beside a naked handcuffed Palestinian man whose hands have symbolically turned into a curling wire at a point and a tight rope

at a lower point. The handcuffed figure looks downwards with his back to the audience that entails both feelings of pain and disgrace. The cartoon has four words written in Arabic that can be translated as follows: “The International Day for Human Rights!!” The first two words are on the right hand side of Hanzala and the poor handcuffed man and the two other words are on their left. Therefore this cartoon combines the visual with the verbal to elucidate its message. The irony of the cartoon is derived from the historical fact that the Declaration of Human Rights fell on the same year as the declaration of the State of Israel and the loss of Palestine (1948). The cartoon is a satire on the double standard adopted by the international community that is totally aware of the issue of human rights but surprisingly blind to Palestinian rights. For me, Hanzala seems to stand in solidarity with that dehumanized figure waiting for justice and freedom, waiting for the recognition of the international community in vain. The relatively huge body of the handcuffed man is sharply contrasted to the small size of Hanzala which denotes that injustices are committed to both old and young generations. Both stand in defiance of the claims of the International Day of Human Rights that ignores the rights of Palestinians.

The second cartoon (Ibrāhīm 207) is of Hanzala standing in front of a grave in ultimate darkness. On the tombstone of that grave, the words of Descartes are inscribed: “Je pense, donc je suis” as translated and written in Arabic letters. I expected Hanzala to raise his hands to the sky praying or reciting verses of Quran for the deceased, but he did not. He did not give up his familiar posture with his hands clasped behind his back as he stands both in mourning and in contemplation. Initially, I assumed that Hanzala is standing in front of Ghassan Kanafani’s tomb mourning his untimely death. On second thought, I suspected that Najī al-Ali may be prophesizing his unexpected death because



of the many threats he frequently received. But since the tomb carries no names, it requires a symbolic interpretation. Hanzala here seems to stand in respect for the free souls buried underneath and contemplating the destiny of intellectuals who venture to think in a confined atmosphere. The cartoon ridicules the issue of freedom of expression denied to Arab authors and artists in general and Palestinian ones in particular. It also shows the high price Palestinian writers and artists have to pay for practicing their rights. Palestinians are denied both rights to think and exist, and if they practice these rights, they receive the death penalty. The serene atmosphere of the cartoon and the solitude of Hanzala foreshadow the international silence towards the Palestinian cause. The cartoon carries a note of hope, however, as there is a bright crescent in the dark sky, which reflects its light on the spot where Hanzala stands at the tomb. That can be interpreted as saying that even if these intellectuals have passed away, they will continue to inspire younger generations as Hanzala's.

Speaking of freedom of expression, the third cartoon (Ibrāhīm 211) is about Hanzala standing beside a large pen that is larger than Hanzala himself. But if the reader looks closely at the pen, he/she will discover that it takes the shape of a candle burning in the utter darkness of the night where only traces of the moon can be seen. Here, Naji al-Ali uses metonyms which “function by replacing a subject with a related concept or idea” (Danjoux 23). The pen-candle or the candle-pen symbolizes both writers and artists in enlightening the darkness imposed upon societies by oppression and injustice. The cartoon sends the message that the moment the powers of darkness veil the light of the crescent, writers and artists can function as candles through their works of art. Hanzala stands beside the symbolic pen/candle as if in respect to brave artists and writers who

sacrifice their own lives to secure enlightenment in the dark night of oppression. Because he pays due respect to the candle-pen or the pen-candle, he deserves the light he receives from it.

The fourth cartoon (Ibrāhīm 61) is that of a Palestinian imprisoned inside a cell and the wall paper of that cell is decorated with the Star of David indicating the Israeli occupation. The cartoon is a triptych divided into three adjacent scenes. The first scene is the Palestinian man inside the prison with his hand tied to the bars. He has this sad gloomy look on his face. In the second scene, the man is shocked with an act of kindness directed at him by Hanzala who steps forward toward the imprisoned man and presents a pot with a flower in it. In the third scene, the flower grows to break the upper frame of the window prison and consequently the Palestinian prisoner is capable of breaking the bars looking in the direction of Hanzala. The Palestinian man is depicted looking in gratitude towards Hanzala who has aided him in breaking the bars of his solitary cell. The flower in the pot can be interpreted symbolically as the peaceful ways of resistance Palestinians adopt to face the armed Israeli tyranny, defying the accusation that Palestinians are terrorists. The flower in the pot also carries a note of hope that the resolution of the Palestinian cause and the freedom all Palestinians aspire for can be achieved.

For his bravery, Hanzala is wanted in the fifth cartoon (Ibrāhīm 56) in which a man with a gun in his hand posts the picture of Hanzala wanted alive or dead. This cartoon also blends the visual with the verbal to create a profound effect. The verbal here is represented in the English word “WANTED” written in uppercase on the posted photograph of Hanzala together with its Arabic translation underneath. Accordingly,

Hanzala is wanted by different factions both local and international. In the posted photo, Hanzala keeps his posture standing with his back to his audience and with clasped hands. However, a song is heard from the posted picture where Hanzala sings for his beloved country, Palestine, as he repeats: “my country, my country, I dedicate to you my great love.” The irony in this cartoon lies in the look on the face of the unidentified figure who was posting the poster. He was shocked to find that Hanzala has been multiplied into numerous Hanzalas standing and looking directly to the man with the gun in his hand. The message delivered becomes that even if the corrupt tries to arrest one Hanzala, there are plenty of Hanzalas who are willing to resist oppression and to mock oppressors.

The sixth cartoon (Ibrāhīm 64) is divided into another triptych of three adjacent scenes, showing a series of events happening one after another. In the first scene, Hanzala stands in the scope of a distant Israeli soldier who playfully directs an arrow to an apple over Hanzala’s head. This apple-shot is reminiscent of the Swiss folk hero, William Tell, albeit with a radically different outcome. In the second scene, the arrow stabs Hanzala in his chest and he falls down. In the third scene, the Israeli soldier happily picks up the apple from the ground stained with Hanzala’s blood and eats it, indifferent to the bleeding body of the dead child. The cartoon explicitly addresses the issue of human rights as Palestinian children lose their precious lives just for the sake of the amusement of Israeli soldiers. The cartoon summarizes all the occurrences of killing the different protagonists in Randa Ghazy’s novel, *Dreaming of Palestine*. The international silence is symbolized in the absence of anyone to defend Hanzala while alive or carry his dead body after death.

The seventh cartoon (Ibrāhīm 67) is that of Hanzala looking at a crying mother carrying a baby in her arms and kissing him/her on his/her forehead. Naji al-Ali uses synecdoches which “narrow and widen the representation of actors, issues or events” best represented in the Palestinian Kufia in which the small baby is wrapped (Danjoux 23). Accordingly, both the mother and the baby are Palestinians. The baby is crying and is looking upward to the word “PALESTINE” written in English in uppercase which places emphasis on the Palestinian cause and calls the international attention to its urgency. The mother seems to soothe her baby by doubly covering him/her by her blanket and tries to bring comfort to his/her anxious soul by her loving kiss. The letter “T” in the word “PALESTINE” is drawn as a cross on which Jesus Christ is crucified and besides it is a crescent which symbolizes the unity of both Christians and Muslims in Palestine. The cartoon also suggests Mary with baby Jesus, who was born in Palestine, and the historical rights of Palestinians to their lands. I can also read that cartoon as a response to the sixth one where Palestinian children can be easily killed, and this can decode the depressing atmosphere of the cartoon. The cartoon mirrors the suffering of Palestinians across history to the present moment. It holds past (the crucified Christ), present (the affectionate mother) and future (the baby).

As a Palestinian refugee child, Hanzala, in the eighth cartoon (Ibrāhīm 68) contemplates one of the crucial rights of the Palestinians, which is the right of return. Hanzala is seen in the cartoon thinking of several homes located very close to each other. The architecture of the houses symbolizes those in the Palestinian village. However, his thoughts are challenged by the Israeli wires above him, which symbolize the Israeli occupation. Yet, there are several keys on these wires which depict actual keys

Palestinians keep for the time when they will go back to their homes in Palestine after the end of the Israeli occupation. The keys hanging on the extended wires can also function symbolically to represent the Palestinian right to resist. Whenever, there is a wire, there is a dangling key flying in the air. The symbolic hierarchy of the upward existing wires and the imaginary thought of the Palestinian houses expose the injustices done to the Palestinian cause.

Speaking of lost houses, the ninth cartoon (Ibrāhīm 243) is about an Israeli bulldozer eradicating Palestinian land, leaving a hole in the ground. Upon the bulldozer sits an old Palestinian man trying to protect a plant and at a distant view stands Hanzala witnessing the replacement of the Palestinian houses with Israeli settlements. The horizon behind is dark and has neither a crescent nor a moon to light it up. This cartoon in particular brings alive the sight of Rachel Corrie who lost her life while defending a Palestinian house from being demolished by an Israeli bulldozer – even though it was drawn before Rachel's tragedy. Seeing it post-Rachel's incident, associations synchronize the cartoon with the bulldozing of Palestinian houses. The hole might be perceived as the hole in which Rachel Corrie lost her life. The cartoon is pertinent to the previous one as both question the Palestinian rights to return to their lands within persistent Israeli efforts to demolish Palestinian houses and construct settlements.

The tenth and final cartoon in this selection is published after the death of Najī al-Ali on the fourth of September 1987 and it is divided into two scenes (Ibrāhīm 75). The first scene has an open grave drawn at its center; in the second scene the grave is covered with sand and has a plant on its top. Hanzala stands at the intersecting line between the two halves. Najī al-Ali seems to believe that death does not denote the end but, for him, it is a

rebirth. The plant stands there alone in defiance of the surrounding darkness. It symbolizes Naji al-Ali himself, whose drawings still instigate life and resistance, despite him being dead for almost thirty years.

**Hany Abu Assad's Film: *Omar***

The film, as an artistic form of expression, incorporates different features of the afore-examined genres studied in the previous chapters. It is, for example, similar to the genres of poetry, drama and cartoons when it comes to the condensation of ideas. It also resembles the novel and the novella in structuring a convincing plot and portraying characters that concretize the Palestinian question apart from abstract theorizing. However, it exceeds the other genres, in my opinion, because of its popularity; in approximately ninety minutes, different and complex issues can be presented to reach a wider range of audience.

The film, as a visual genre, pursues the visual quality traced in the previous chapters as in the poetry of Sharif Elmusa, the play, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, and the cartoons of Naji al-Ali. However, the film represents the clearest and most vivid visual manifestation of all genres. The visual quality of the film directly voices the issue of Palestinian rights as expressed in the introductory chapter. Thus such representation undermines what Edward Said has called the invisibility of the Palestinians in the Israeli eye:

It became obvious to me that the relationship of Palestinians to the visible and the visual was deeply problematic. In fact, the whole history of the Palestinian struggle has to deal with the desire to be visible. Remember the early mobilizing phrase of Zionism: "We are a people without a land going to a land without a people?" It pronounced the emptiness of the land and the non-existence of a people. (*Foreword 2*)

The visual quality of the film functions on different levels. First, it sheds light on the Palestinian cause in attractive and lively ways that appeal to the different senses of the audience. It also corresponds to one of the major rights of the Palestinians, which is the right to exist and be visible and thus to resist the Zionist discourse of obliterating Palestinians. In addition, the content of the film foreshadows Palestinian suffering on one hand and defies stereotypical misrepresentations of the Palestinians on the other hand:

Palestinian cinema provides a visual alternative, a visual articulation, a visible incarnation of Palestinian existence in the years 1948, the year of the destruction of Palestine, and the dispersal and dispossession of the Palestinians; and a way of resisting an imposed identity on Palestinians as terrorists, as violent people, by trying to articulate a counter-narrative and a counter identity. These films represent a collective identity. (Said, Foreword 3)

Thus the study of the Palestinian cinema is a study that incorporates both the aesthetic of the industry together with its functionality in the political and cultural contexts. Palestinian cinema can never be separated from the basic constituents of the Palestinian cause. Though the Palestinian cinema is born from the pains and suffering of the Palestinians, it succeeded in powerfully representing the Palestinian cause on the international level and achieved worldwide acclaim for its artistry. It never ceased to effectively function on all levels:

What Palestinian filmmakers have succeeded in doing so far is to deploy and instrumentalize their films as weapons of resistance in the international arena and to infiltrate this bastion of Zionist power slowly. Herein lies their contribution and promise. The hope, however, is that Palestinian cinema will not remain *a weapon of resistance* but that it will also become *a weapon and an act of culture*. As the late French philosopher Gilles Deleuze put it, the cry of the Zionists to justify their racist violence has always been “we are not a people like any other,” while the Palestinian cry of resistance has always been “we are a people like all others.” It is this message that is being communicated most effectively by Palestinian cinema. (Massad 44; emphasis in the original)

The analysis then moves from the exquisiteness of the film as a visual genre to the problematic issue of defining a Palestinian film. The definition of a Palestinian work of art like Kanafani's novella or Sharif Elmusa's poetry or Naji al-Ali's cartoons is easy if it is identified by the nationality of the artist. But it becomes complex when it is related to works like Randa Ghazy's novel or the play, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*. Can we call them Palestinian literature? The emphasis here will be placed on the themes tackled inside the work of art rather than the nationality of its authors. In other words, if the work of art is about the Palestinians, it can be entitled as Palestinian. What about cinema? Any film is a joint work that consists of a director, producer, script writer, actors, etc. What if the film is a joint production? If the borders of Palestine as a country is not well-defined and its nation is scattered everywhere, how can we call cinema Palestinian? Scholars, in the cinematic field, provide the following definitions:

The Palestinian cinema is the documentaries and movies produced by Arab Palestinians in historical Palestine before 1948 or that produced by Palestinians after 1948 in Palestine and diaspora. It includes films produced by the inside Arabs who hold the Israeli nationality especially if it tackled the issue of Palestine. (Barakat 10)

The definition relies on the historic, geographic and demographic aspects of Palestine. On the other hand, thematic issues are also relevant in defining Palestinian cinema. Omar al-Qattan is a Palestinian filmmaker who was born in Lebanon to a rich family and migrated to UK while eleven and stayed there till now. He had not been to Palestine and is well integrated into English society. According to him: "my own preference is to call Palestinian any film engaged with Palestine, and not to limit the name to narrow nationalist boundaries" (al-Qattan 111). The peculiarity of the Palestinian cinema, thus,



can be read within the lens of exile reflecting the status quo of the producers, writers, or directors:

Palestinian cinema is one of the rare cinemas in the world that is structurally exilic, as it is made either in the condition of internal exile in an occupied Palestine or under the erasure and tensions of displacement and external exile in other countries. (Naficy 91)

The exilic structure of the Palestinian cinema as stated by Naficy can be seen as an obstacle that hinders its growth and expansion. I can see it as constructive and enriching since the different filmmakers contributing to the Palestinian cinema are of different backgrounds and affiliations. This endows the Palestinian cinema with profound diversity that adds layers of meaning to the portrayed experience.

The current chapter studies the Palestinian film, *Omar*, by Hany Abu Assad, a distinguished Palestinian filmmaker known for his films, *Ford Transit* (2002), *Paradise Now* (2005), and most recently *The Idol* (2016). With regards to content, the film, *Omar*, is screened in West Bank and confronts many of problematic Palestinian issues and rights such as the Israeli occupation, the separation wall, the imprisoning of Palestinian freedom fighters, etc. It can be called Palestinian for many reasons since it is written and directed by Hany Abu Assad, a well-known Palestinian/Israeli director. As for the production, “*Omar* is also the first commercial film financed almost entirely by Palestinian money” (Adas 34).

The film – in the genre of thrillers -- is a recent production (2013) and received wide international acclaim as it won several awards at international film festivals. Jane Adas states that the main idea of the film revolves around the issue of collaborators (34). The main idea of the film came to Hany Abu Assad while shooting his more famous and Oscar-nominated film, *Paradise Now*:

He thought there must have been an informer among the crew or that his phone was bugged, because everywhere they went to shoot, the Israeli army was already there. He began to feel paranoid, then realized that that is the object of the collaboration system: if you don't trust anyone, you will enslave yourself. (Adas 34)

However, the film is widely recognized for its love story between the protagonist Omar and his beloved Nadia. Apart from the love relationship, the film, in my opinion, touches upon crucial human rights issues such as the dehumanizing conditions of Palestinian life under the Israeli occupation, resistance to oppression, and violation of human rights in the West Bank, especially in the Israeli prisons. It also focuses on the confining atmosphere that envelops the life of a Palestinian in occupied Palestine as the protagonist is deprived of the basic right to love and marry his beloved.

The film starts with Omar, the protagonist, who tries to cross the separation wall through a rope that is hanging on both sides of that wall. To start the film with the separation wall is highly symbolic of the confining atmosphere imposed on the Palestinians by Israeli occupation. The existence of the separation wall touches upon a number of problematic issues regarding Palestinian rights, for example, the manipulation of the Palestinian lands and its dissection into bits and pieces. That type of manipulation restricts the freedom of movement denied to Palestinians while moving from one place to another. The separation wall therefore stands as a very important symbol as it denotes the fragmentation of the Palestinian landscape. In addition, it serves to foreshadow the difficulties faced by Palestinian cinema production:

The New Palestinian Cinema characteristically delineates a fragmented and blocked geography in which the home is cut off from the land and both are diminished and divided by borders and barricades. Therefore, there is an inherent difficulty in the endeavor of this cinema to form a whole imaginary map. It attempts to capture limited places, to elevate the camera in order to

encompass open expanses, or to highlight a specific detail and turn it into a symbol of wholeness. (Gertz & Khleifi 173)

The image of the separation wall allows the film to fall under the category of “Roadblock Movies” (Gertz & Khleifi 134). Omar uses this image to challenge the Israeli authority that fires at him the moment he crosses to the other side of the wall. However, the film crew faced the difficulty of shooting at “Israel’s 8-meter-high separation wall” and the “Israeli authorities gave the crew permission to shoot only the bottom meter of the wall. For other shots they built a wall elsewhere” (Adas 34).

The film begins with the distant sounds of the crows and the determined face of Omar with a sharp look on his face. The wall has graffiti drawings that represent Palestinian resistance. It has the photos of the al-Aqsa mosque and slogans such as “Free Palestine” and the unremarkable rope among these drawings. The protagonist waits for the right moment paradoxically in the broad daylight to climb the wall. The wall bisected the one village into two, and crossing from one end to another becomes the daily routine of Omar in order to meet his beloved Nadia on the other side.

Sometimes Omar safely crosses from one end to another but at other times he is shot at. In a scene after crossing the wall, he is stopped by Israeli soldiers as a suspect. After checking Omar’s ID and asking him few questions, the Israeli soldiers started to humiliate Omar by asking him to stand on a stone in the road. Standing on the stone required a great stamina and ability to stand balanced with his hands clasped behind his neck and his back to them, which recalls the sight of Hanzala in the cartoons of Naji al-Ali. That posture, in particular, brings forth the poem by Sharif Elmusa, “To Feel the Humiliation.” The soldiers then started talking together, listening to music and spending an enjoyable time watching Omar. Spending hours in that painful humiliating inhuman

pose provoked Omar to attack the Israeli soldiers who were chatting and laughing. He challenged their bravery to fight him man to man but armed as they were, they violently attacked him. They asked him to stand, now, with only one leg on the stone.

Omar climbs the wall in order to meet his two friends, Tarek and Amjad, on the other side. The three friends are members of a resistance movement that fights the Israelis. They train themselves in shooting and attacking the enemy. They plan to kill an Israeli soldier in one of the military camps and they succeed in their mission, called Huwara Operation. Tarek planned, Omar stole the car, and Amjad shot the soldier. Omar is arrested by collaborators and put in jail. His presence in jail is one of the most humiliating scenes in the film. His hands were tied up and he was dangled loose and naked, which recalls the sight of the Palestinian in Naji al-Ali's cartoon mocking the International Day of Human Rights. He was interrogated while posing in that humiliating position and since he did not reveal the secrets of his friends, the interrogator kept punching him in the face with an iron rectangular block. Though Omar's face is covered in blood and was in much pain, he refused to reveal the names of his friends. Omar is kept in solitary confinement in complete darkness. Even when he gets outside his cell, he moves in a space resembling a cage where Israeli officers look at him along with other prisoners from the top of that wired cage. His only consolation in the prison was a pen and a notebook where he used to write love letters to Nadia. Dehumanization of the Palestinians inside the prisons is best exemplified in Omar's identification with a bug inside his cell. He dreams of freedom but he feels like an insect that can be crushed at any moment.

The Israeli Intelligence planted doubts among the three close friends, Omar, Tarek and Amjad with the help of Amjad, the traitor. The Israeli officer, Rami, most cunningly succeeded in manipulating the lives of the three friends to his own advantage. Tarek was accidentally killed by his two friends and Amjad married Nadia after convincing Omar that she is pregnant with Amjad's child. After losing both his friends and his beloved Nadia, Omar appears near the end of the film trying to climb the separation wall but unable to do so. He feels defeated, having lost all his former stamina, physical strength, and peace of mind because of his defeated soul. He falls on the floor and cries. An old man passes by and observes Omar crying. The man helps Omar stand up and calms down his devastated self by patting his shoulder and murmuring some relieving words. He even helped him climb the wall by lifting him up and then moved away. Omar discovered the conspiracy at a later phase and decided to plan revenge by killing the Israeli officer, Rami, who shattered his life, the life of his beloved and the lives of his friends. The film is the story of love, friendship, resistance, and betrayal.

Though an academy-nominated film, *Omar* suffers certain shortcomings. First, it is not effective in representing the older generation, especially in the scene where Omar's father and mother appear as marginal characters in the course of the events. They neither support him during his dilemma nor offer him any reconciliation. The idea of an old generation passing on to the younger ones their message of resistance is lacking and for this reason it seems that Omar is a cut off from the entire Palestinian heritage and legacy. The only role played by the elders in the film is that of the totally anonymous old man who accidentally passes by Omar while the latter attempts to climb the separation wall in vain. The older man comes as a comfort to the desolate Omar and succeeds in anchoring

the collapsing protagonist. However, this accidental blurred presence of the old man, though crucial in that point of the film, remains inconsequential when it comes to the representation of the generation of 1948. In addition, no influential political figures or role models appear; so the younger generation looks cut off from the older one, not only on the individual level but also on the communal and political levels.

The second drawback in the film, in my opinion, is the love story between Omar and Nadia which reflects a concession to commercialism. It seems that the director has resorted to that story to attract the western audience to the Palestinian movie and draws his/her attention to the Palestinian cause. The love story is certainly not standard if seen within the context of the conservative Palestinian society, whether its members are Muslims or Christians. This does not mean that there are no love stories but the fact that it is depicted in a blatant way defies Palestinian reality. The poster of the movie that focuses on that love relationship is also commercial in the first place and joins the Palestinian cause with elements of Hollywood movies not common in the Palestinian or Arab communities.

The female protagonist, Nadia, is portrayed in a rather superficial way that denies the Palestinian woman her role in the resistance. Nadia is just a beautiful face that two of the major characters want to marry, and she seems oblivious of that hidden struggle between Omar and Amjad to win her love. She also seems simple minded in accepting the rumors circulated about Omar of his collaboration with the Israelis and never gives the issue a second thought. Furthermore she goes to the extreme of marrying Omar's antagonist without giving herself the chance to investigate the rationale behind such a choice. She is not deeply involved in the Palestinian resistance even though she is the sister of a

freedom fighter. Her depiction lacks the strength and persistence of Palestinian women. Nadia lacks depth and her decisions lack sound judgment. She is not key to the incidents of the movie and does not truly explain why three Palestinians lose their lives. Moreover, there is no other female character who might bridge the gap created by the inconsequential presence of Nadia. The film therefore continues to be ruled by males and contains no trace of a well-developed and fully credible female character.

Finally, the filmmaker resorts to the idea of writing letters and notes between the protagonist and his beloved, which is an old-fashioned technique that does not reflect current practices. While it is justifiably used by the protagonist inside his solitary imprisonment for lack of modern means of communication, it is completely awkward outside the borders of the prison, especially when the film presumably depicts the present moment instead of narrating a certain point in the past. The exchange of the notes between the protagonist and his beloved, though romantic, is a simplistic means of communication that, if avoided, would have spared the two lovers a lot of trouble.

For all of its shortcomings, the film succeeds in clarifying major issues with regards to Palestinian rights such as the unjustified arrests of Palestinian civilians in the streets, incarceration, imprisonment, solitary confinement, and torture. The Palestinian/Israeli conflict is depicted throughout the film by Palestinian/Israeli overlapping spaces. The Israeli space exists side by side with that of the Palestinian, as the protagonist moves between both back and forth. The clearly defined Israeli space is of a confining nature, best represented in the Israeli prison, including solitary cells, caged playground, crowded and narrow dining room and the torture chamber. The Palestinian space includes the West Bank at large with its houses, open landscape, streets, school, etc. But neither space is

entirely pure or exists in isolation from the other. The Palestinian space is spoiled by the Israeli presence and the Palestinian presence is forced within the confines of the ugly Israeli space portrayed inside the film, namely the prison.



## Conclusion

If the conclusion is to sum up the major findings of the thesis, we are left with a rich harvest. Although the artistic voices examined in the thesis are different, the concerns and anxieties are one. The different genres studied provided a panoramic view of the Palestinian cause. They also address the multiple receptive appetites of the audience who are willing to taste the Palestinian sense of artistry. The reader is able to trace the power of both the verbal and the visual. The various genres show that art performed its function in keeping the Palestinian issue alive despite persistent attempts of silencing on the political level. Art voices the agonies and offers a space denied to Palestinians. The works examined within this thesis, while they may seem fragmented, can be seen as complementary, producing a coherent discourse. Echoes of Randa Ghazy's *Dreaming of Palestine* can be traced in the cartoons of Naji al-Ali. Similarly the vivid images discussed in the poetry of Sharif Elmusa can be visualized in the film *Omar* by Hany Abu Assad. The different works and the different genres seem to speak to each other harmoniously. The unifying thread that brought all these works together is the problematic issue of the denial of human rights to Palestinians.

The issue of human rights in general seems to correspond to the persistent worldwide calls for peace, justice and human equality, especially after the world suffered two consecutive world wars that brought destruction, death and devastation to vast areas. The United Nations released a series of rules, regulations and covenants that in principle secure human rights everywhere for everyone. However, its discourse seems to function in certain cases and not in others. One of these is the Palestinian situation where the world witnesses humans without rights. It is significant that the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights was stated in the same year of the Palestinian Nakba (1948). Subsequently, the Palestinians were deprived of every internationally acknowledged human right because of the Zionist discourse that both silenced and dehumanized Palestinians. The Palestinians, on the other hand, innovated in creating alternatives to that discourse. These alternatives are voiced through the different literary genres and by different voices. These alternatives asserted the Palestinians' right to both exist and resist.

The different works of art discussed in the present thesis vary in different ways with regard to the nationalities of the authors, their language of expression, their gender and the historical lapse of time they cover. These works allow us to hear both Palestinian voices such as Ghassan Kanafani, Naji al-Ali, Sharif Elmusa and Hany Abu Assad. By listening to these voices, we learn that each one has articulated the Palestinian cause using different genres such as novella, cartoons, poetry and cinema. Therefore, Palestinians prove to be innovative in their modes of expression. The thesis also examines non-Palestinian voices such as those of the Egyptian-Italian writer, Randa Ghazy, and the American editors of the play, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*. Multiple voices also serve another end. Palestinians, in expressing their feelings of oppression and alienation, are often confronted by the Zionist discourse that ignores the Palestinian experience of dehumanization. But with the non-Palestinian voices (Italian and American) joining in creatively to highlight the Palestinian ongoing demonization, the Palestinian cause becomes a contemporary universal quest that goes beyond the national liberation of an occupied people. This study shows the transformation of the Palestinian issue from being a regional one to an international one that touches concerns all over the world.

The works of art analyzed in this thesis use different languages such as Arabic, English and Italian. Ghassan Kanafani writes in Arabic as he is mainly concerned with his Arabic audience, and his artistry enters the West and the rest of the world through the medium of translation. Kanafani's writing reflects his preoccupation with the message of his works to be delivered to the Arab people and also conveys bitter criticism of the collaborative and cowardly Arab regimes. Similarly, the Egyptian-Italian novelist Randa Ghazy writes in Italian and her novel, *Dreaming of Palestine*, reaches a worldwide audience through the translation of her work into different languages, particularly Arabic and English. The Palestinian artist, Sharif Elmusa, writes his poetry in English, shaping his language in favor of the Palestinian cause and thus addressing the Western audience. The visual language of the cartoons by Naji al-Ali is a worldwide language that requires no knowledge of any particular spoken language. Even when the cartoons mix the visual with the verbal, the irony and satire embodied in them are easy to grasp. It only requires the foundational knowledge of both the historical and cultural contexts of Palestine and the Palestinian cause. The film by the Palestinian-Israeli filmmaker, Hany Abu Assad, appeals to the international worldwide audience by interweaving the Palestinian subjugation with a thriller genre and an unfulfilled romance story. It was nominated for an Oscar, one of the most prestigious cinematic prizes in the world. In addition to the fully acknowledged cinematic language and techniques adopted in the film, its subtitles make it available to different linguistic communities.

In addition, the authors of the works discussed in my thesis are both males and females and therefore offer variety in gender concerning the Palestinian question. The female author, Randa Ghazy, portrays the matriarchal figure of Riham who, though

young in age, manages to keep the group of male protagonists together. She plays the multiple roles of a mother, a sister, and a wife in the novel. However, she is the only female figure portrayed in the novel among a dominant presence of male protagonists. The heroine of the monodrama, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, offers a dynamic female character who fluctuates between different states of liveliness, a sense of responsibility, political activism, love for life, and the embrace of human rights. The centrality of the female figure places emphasis on the pivotal role played by women in resisting oppression and supporting the noble values of human rights. Female characters are almost absent in Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* except for the minor roles played by some female characters that do not strongly influence the course of events. There is a reference to the Palestinian mother figure in Sharif Elmusa's poem "Flawed Landscape"; he dedicates two stanzas to express her personal trauma. Female figures are relatively few in the selection of the cartoons of Naji al-Ali and they are only found in one cartoon out of the ten selected cartoons I referred to in this thesis. The Palestinian woman is represented as the mother figure of a crying child; she closely resembles the soothing figure of Virgin Mary. She can also symbolize the role played by the Palestinian mother in supporting her devastated children. The female figure in Hany Abu Assad's film, *Omar*, is the key to the development of the events. However, she does not represent the Palestinian woman in her struggle against Israeli occupation. She seems detached from the ongoing tension between Palestinians and Israelis. Consequently, the female characters of Riham, Rachel Corrie, and the Palestinian mother figures in Elmusa's poem and in al-Ali's cartoon are the only full-fledged female characters in the selected works

my thesis examines. They reflect the complexity of how the Palestinian cause touches the two genders as well as the different generations of Palestinians.

The multiple voices, studied in the present thesis, also cover a wide period of history. They start with the mid-twentieth century and continue to the early twenty-first century. This historical coverage of several years of the Palestinian-Israeli struggle reflects the development of tension, suppression and resistance. The works of Ghassan Kanafani, Naji al-Ali and Sharif Elmusa, for example, reflect the trauma of the first generation that were born before the Nakba and continue to suffer its drastic consequences. They were born and raised in Palestinian villages before the Israeli occupation and subsequently lost their land and became refugees. Their works document that specific historical moment together with its aftermath. Their works differ from that of Randa Ghazy, a much younger author, who writes in response to a recent historical moment related to the brutal murder of Aldorra during the Palestinian Second Intifada in 2000. This moment differs from that instigated by the brutal murder of Rachel Corrie in Raffah by an Israeli bulldozer in 2003. These moments vary from that filmed in the movie by Hany Abu Assad which reflects a more recent historical moment if compared to the previous works. These varying historical moments reflect the persistence of Israelis to deprive the Palestinians of their rights on one hand, and the equal persistence of the Palestinians to regain their usurped rights.

To sum up, this literary and artistic discourse is a component of resistance. Different genres intersect with each other and complement each other so audiences of various outlooks can relate to the Palestinian cause. Other mediums not analyzed here such as songs, embroidery and the art of cooking join to create a cultural Palestinian

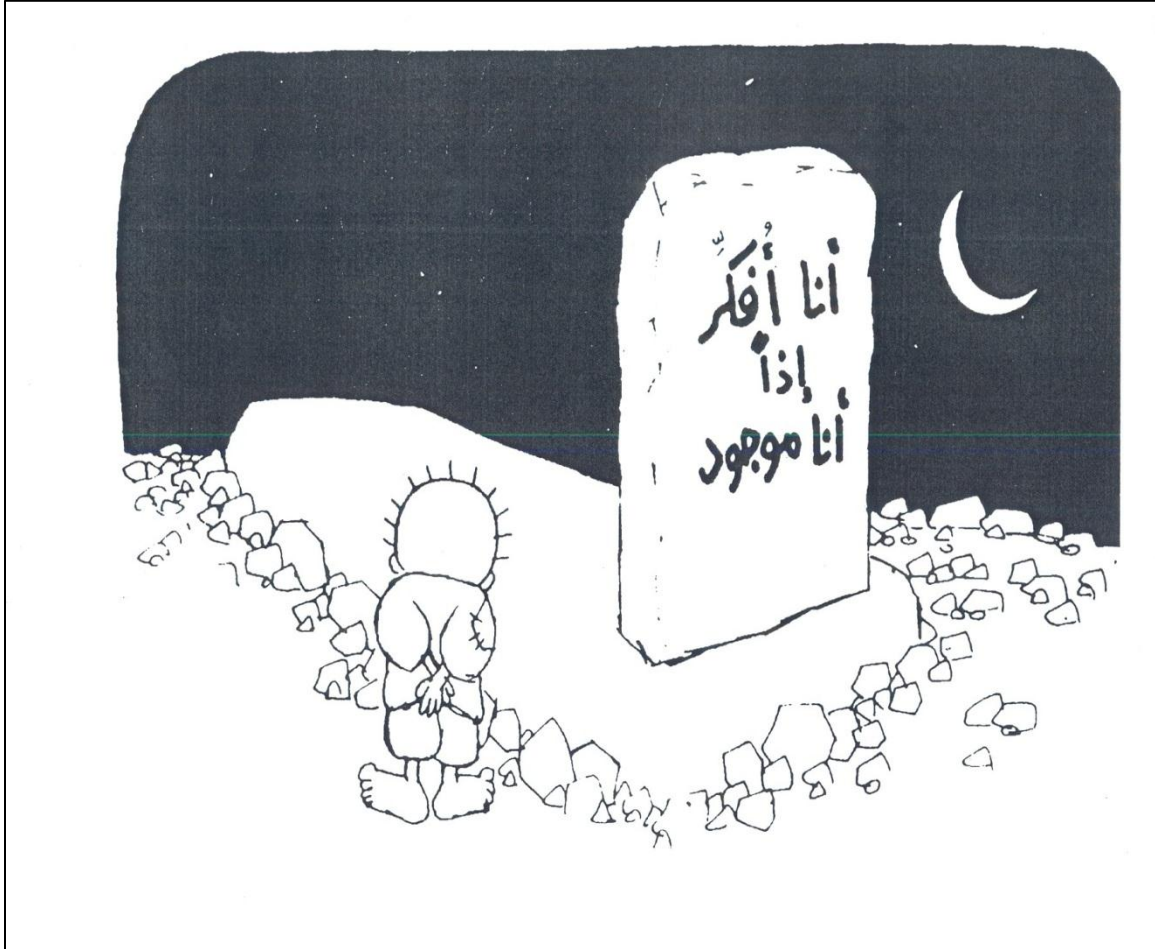
identity that challenges the denial of Palestinian presence and human rights. This resistant activist discourse is the creative face of the academic research undertaken to demonstrate the rights of the Palestinians in historical Palestine. Both activist and academic interfaces are harbingers of change that will come about one day, when the humanity of the Palestinians is fully recognized.

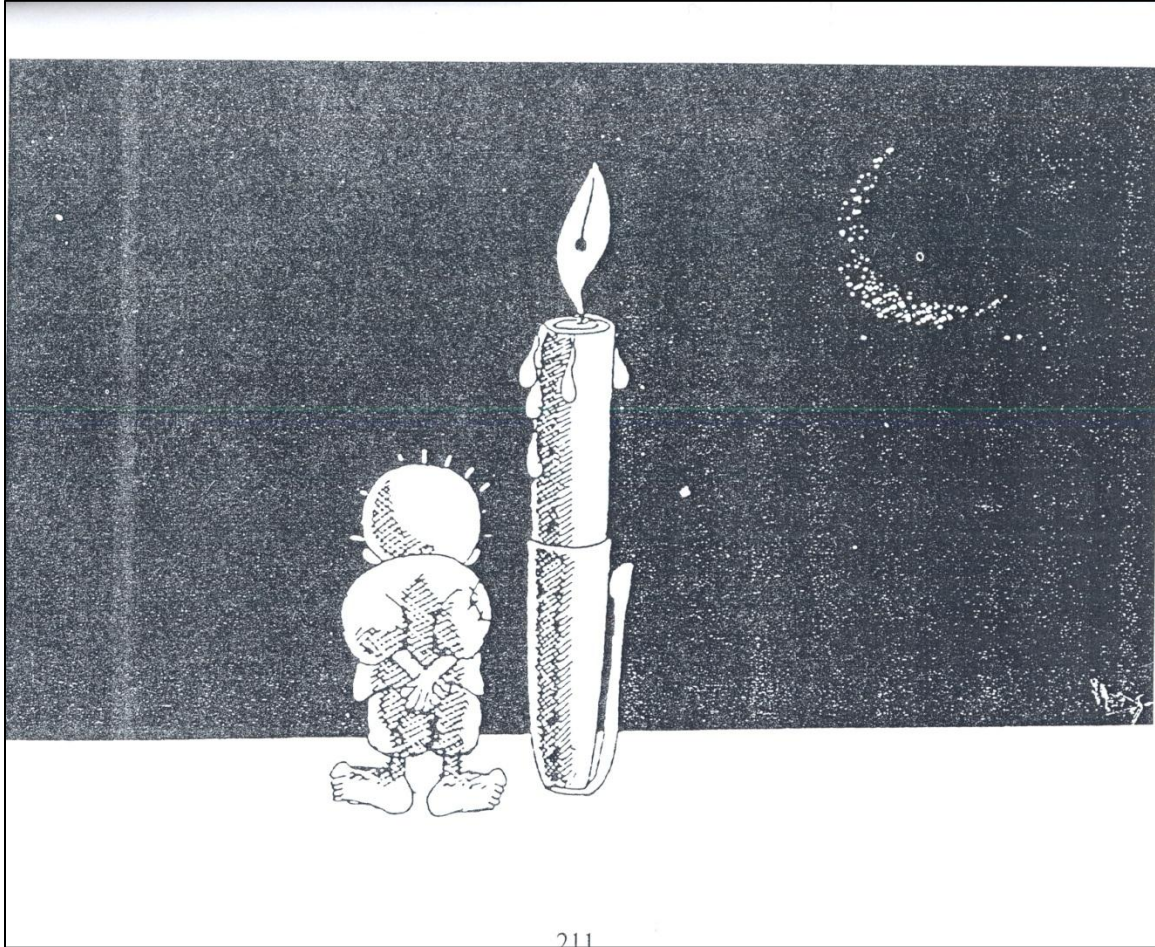
# **Appendix**

## **Naji al-Ali's Cartoons**

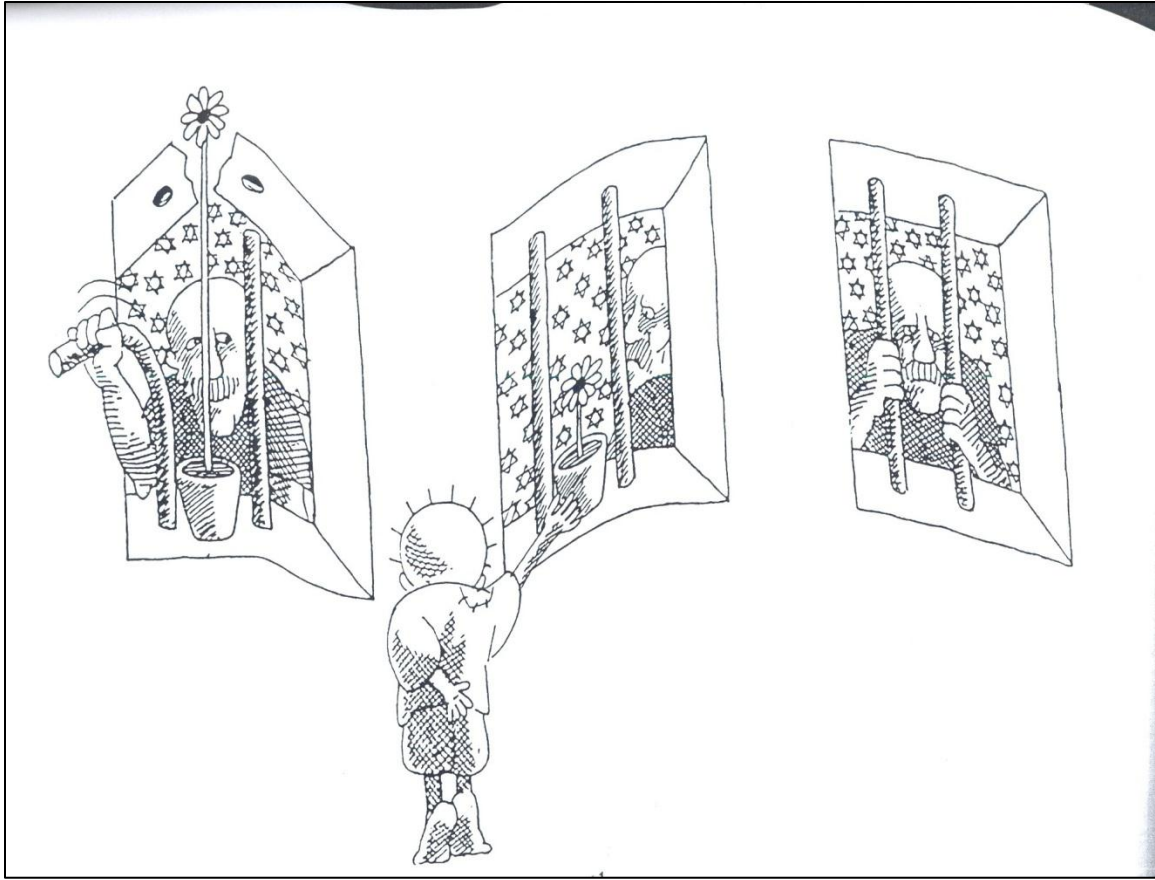


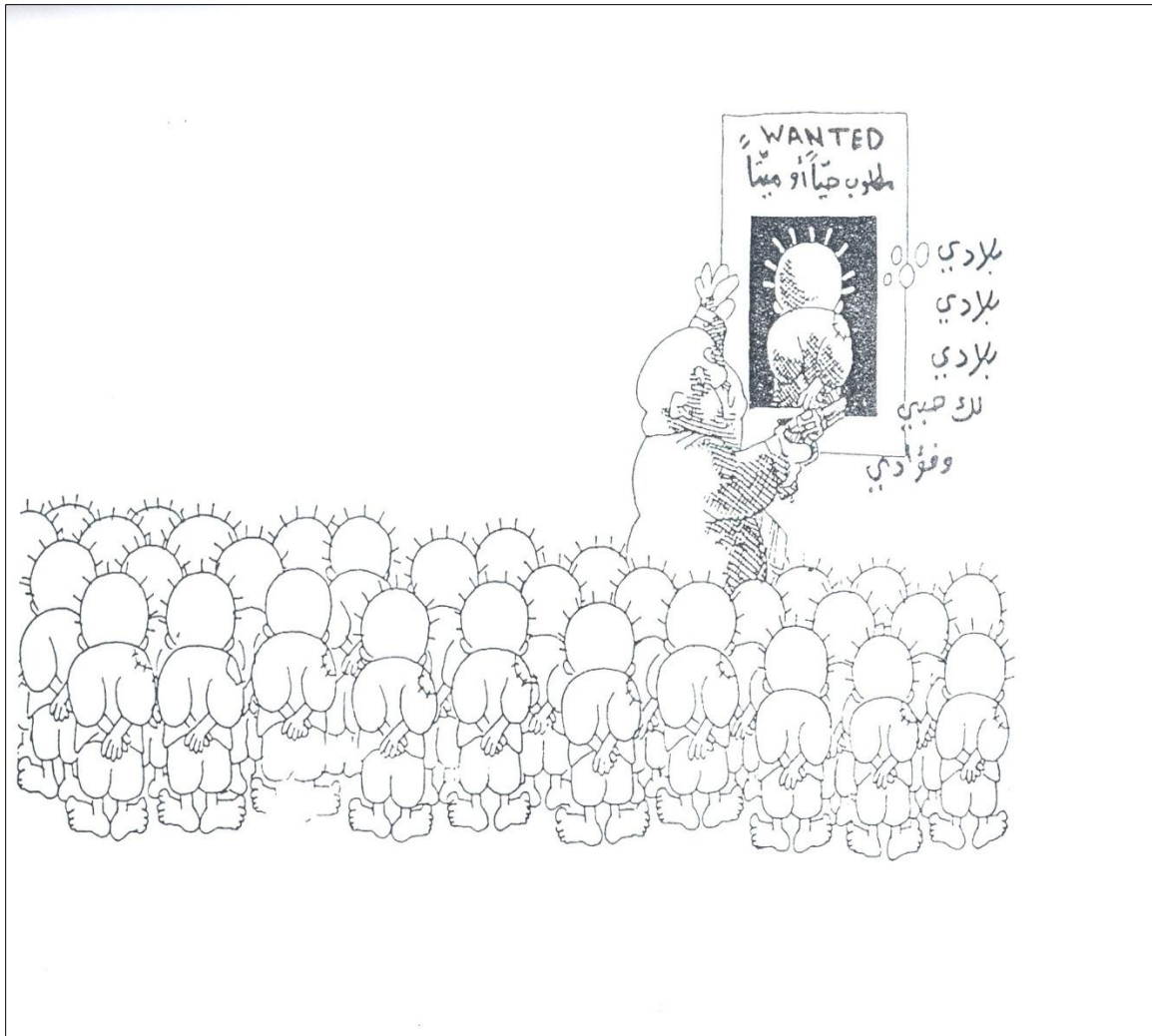




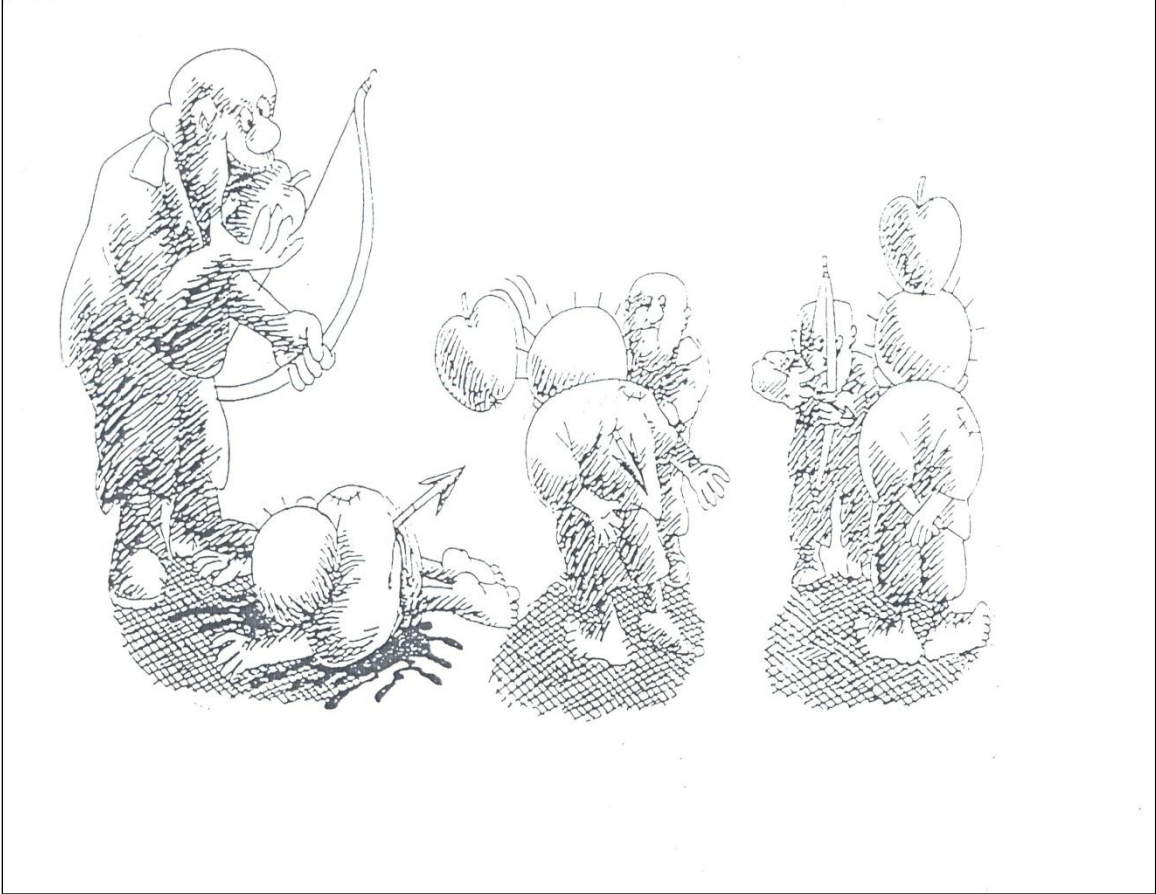


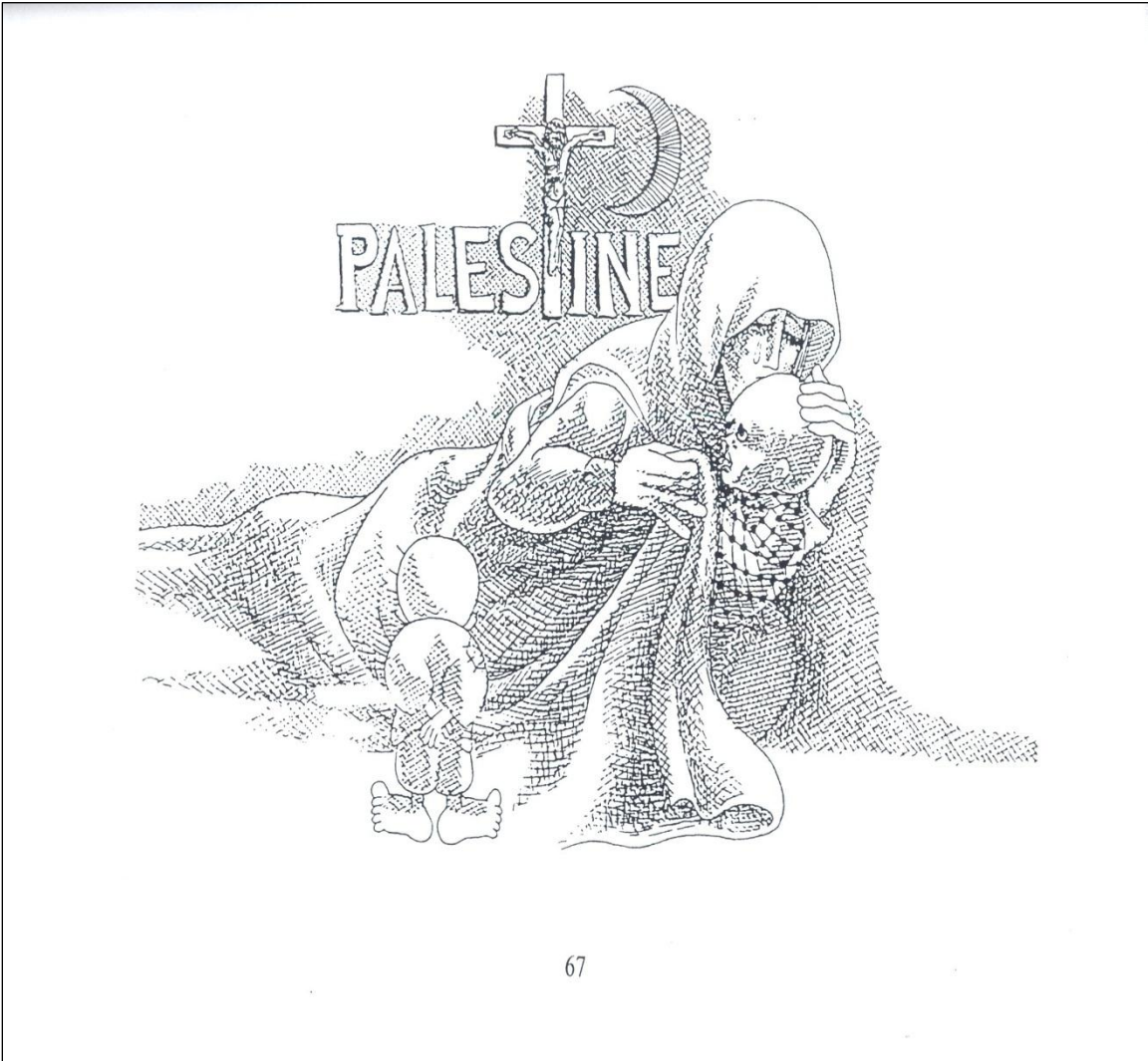
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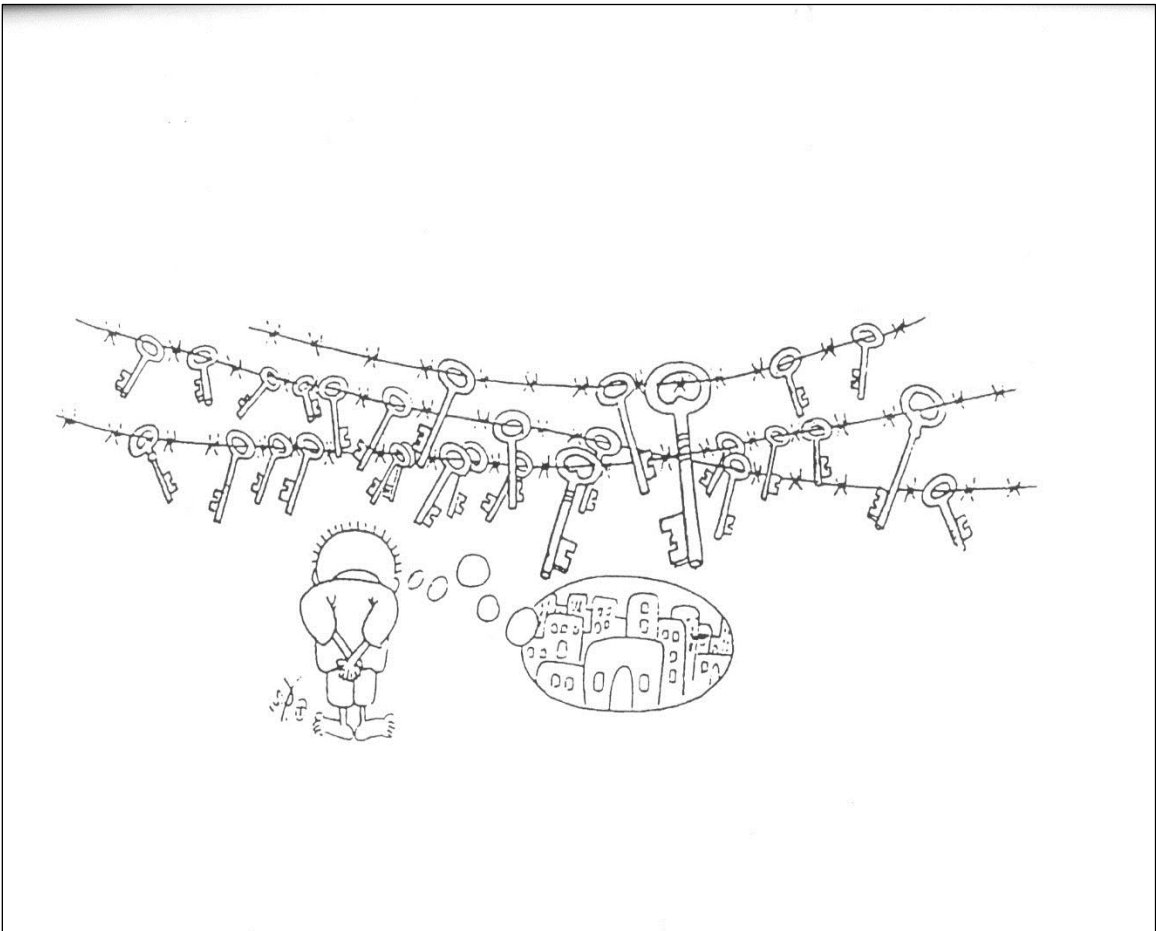






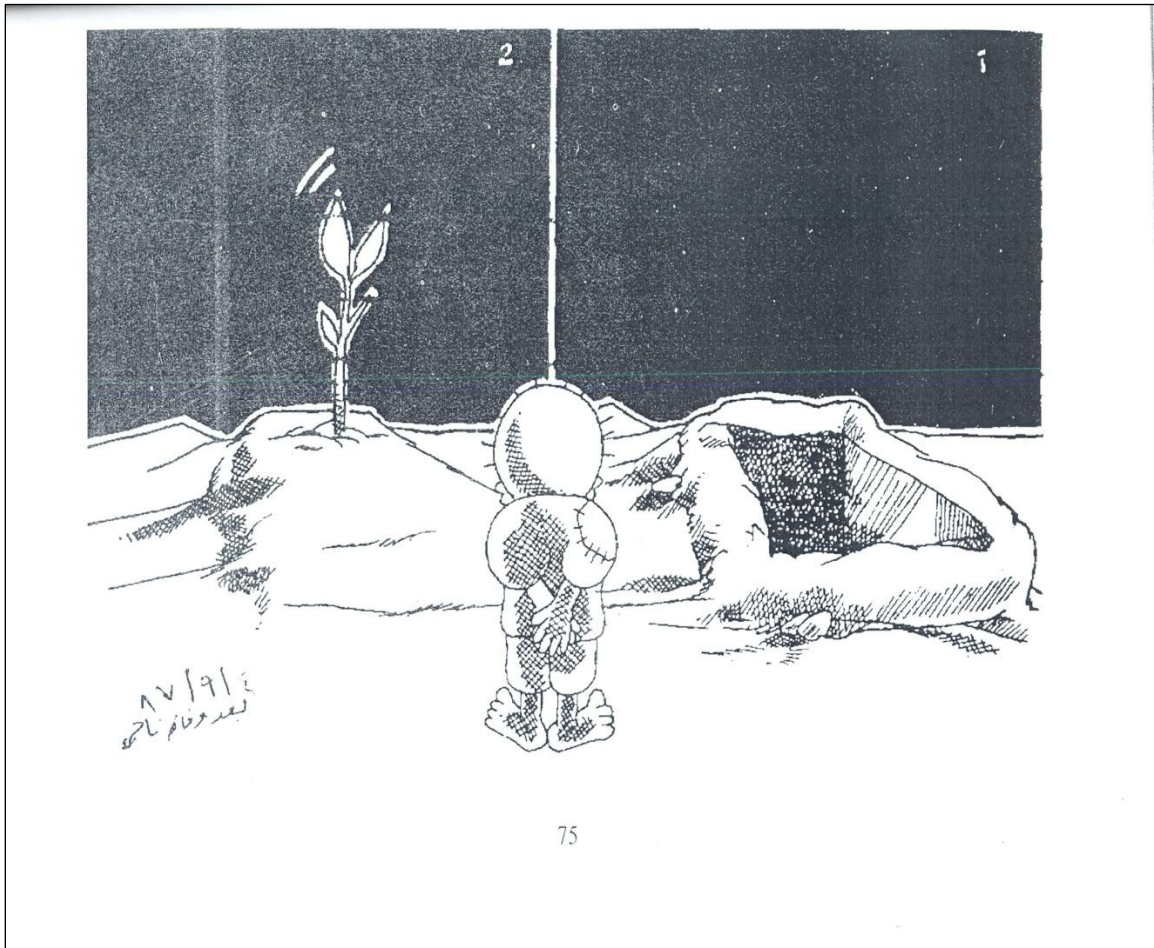












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