Najla Al-Yabis

Dr. Mohammad Ganoom

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**The theme of resistance in Khanafani's *Returning to Haifa***

Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre in 1936 and he witnessed the struggle of his people during the Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948 which led to the establishment of the state of Israel, the banishment of over 800,000 Palestinians from their homes and the murder of many thousands. He was a leading member of the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_Front_for_the_Liberation_of_Palestine), (PFLP) and worked as an editor of Al-Hadaf (The Goal) Magazine. Ghassan Kanafani's literary and political career ended abruptly in July 1972, when he was killed in a car-bomb explosion with his niece in Beirut. Mossad, the Israeli secret service, later claimed responsibility for the assassination. At the time, Kanafani was the spokesperson for the most militant wing of the Palestinian fidayeen."Kanafani's obituary in *The Daily Star*, a Beirut English-language newspaper, read: 'Ghassan was the commando who never fired a gun. His weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages. And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos'" (Harlow, *Resistance literature* 11). "Like the children in his stories, Kanafani, writer and combatant, had indeed studied the story, across its multiple determinations, 'from beginning to end.'" (Harlow, *Revolutionary Writing* 57) Throughout his short life, Khanafani remained a powerful voice for armed struggle by Palestinians for Palestine in the face of Israeli occupation and Arabs states' weakness and corruption. Kanafani's novels rank among the most complex in all of Arabic fiction of that time.

What differentiates Kanafani from other Palestinian writers is that his writing urges people to resist their circumstances and employ their capacities to work towards a better future. [Mahmoud Darwish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Darwish), who dedicated one of his own works, The Palestinian Wedding, to Kanafani, writes in an introduction to a volume of Kanafani's literary critical studies that, "It was Ghassan Kanafani who directed Arab public opinion to the literature of the occupied land [...] the term 'resistance' was not associated with the poetry until Ghassan applied it, thereby giving the term its special significance." (Kanafani 152-161) Nadia Alahmed further illustrates Kanafani's accomplishment by saying that "kanafani coined a concept delineating the major literary movement in the Palestinian literature, creating a solid ground not only for the literary mode of resistance, but also for establishing and affirming the entire phenomenon understood as the Palestinian Culture of Resistance." (124-125) Barbara Harlow adds about the significance of the Third World context in Kanafani's work: “Ghassan Kanafani, referring to Palestinian literature as resistance literature, is writing within a historical context, a context which may immediately be situated in the contemporary liberation struggles against Western imperialist domination of Africa, South America, the Middle and the Far East.” She reveals the connection between the armed and artistic struggles by quoting Kanafani: “extreme importance of the cultural form of resistance is no less valuable than armed resistance.” (Harlow, *Opening the Borders* 10) So, Kanafani's name is associated with the culture of resistance. His role in directing the writings of his people in a certain route cannot be denied.

This paper will focus on Kanafani's famous novella *Returning to Haifa*. It is concerned in discussing the theme of resistance in this brilliant work which is a recurrent theme in all of Kanafani's works. The story of *Returning to Haifa* is located at two decisive moments in Haifa's history. The first is during Al-Nakba on Wednesday, 21 April 1948, when the British authorities collaborated with the terrorist Jewish organization, the Haganah, in forcing the Palestinian inhabitants of Haifa to leave their city on board of British crafts to other shores. Palestine at the time was still under the British mandate. The expulsion of the Arab population was a necessary step for the Jews to announce the foundation of a Jewish state on Palestinian soil after less than a month. The second moment described by Kanafani is 30 June 1967 after the expansion of the Jewish state in less than twenty years whereby the whole of Palestine was now occupied in addition to parts of Egypt and Syria. These two decisive and frozen moments in time are linked to the story of Said S. and his wife who were forced to leave their city, their house and their five months-old baby in it on Wednesday 21 April 1948 during the chaos that enveloped Halla. The couple who took refuge in Ramallah for twenty years have become now under Israeli occupation in 1967 when Israel conquered the West Bank and Gaza. At the end of June they were allowed for the first time to visit Halla for a day.

The couple takes advantage of this chance and goes to look for their son. When they reach their old house, they find out, to their ultimate surprise, that their son is still alive. The real shock comes when they know that Khaldun was raised by a Jewish family, named Dov and joined the service of the Jewish army. The story ends with renunciation of blood ties for the cause of resistance and the reclaiming of homeland. The parents go back to Ramallah hoping that their other son, Khalid, has already joined the resistance movement. The confrontation between the son and his parents is the climax of the novel and it is what helps Said to reach his final realization about their current situation. It is through this conversation that Kanafani delivers his message of how resistance should be.

*Retuning to Haifa* at the beginning appears to be a romantic novella. It starts with the couple in their car coming home back and talking about their memories. Homesickness is emphasized as the couple arrives to their original city:

He used to know Haifa stone by stone, intersection by intersection. How often he had crossed that road in his green 1946 Ford! Oh, he knew Haifa well, and now he felt as though he hadn't been away for twenty years. He was driving his car just as he used to, as though he hadn't been absent those twenty bitter years.

The names began to rain down inside his head as though a great layer of dust had been shaken off them: Wadi Nisnas, King Fisal Street, Hanatir Square, Halisa, Hadar. (Kanafani 152)

Resistance is not seen in the beginning. Said and his wife are accepting what happened to them and are trying to adjust with their new situation despite the sadness and bitterness they feel. The scene of their city brings back their old memories and they try to remember the features of their city and recollect their past days.

Although Said does not develop a full understanding of the real meaning of resistance until he confronts his son, we see roots for this concept from the beginning. What Said shares with most of his people is a sense of regret and a hope for return. However, this hope is not turned into real action. This hope of reclaiming the land is best illustrated in Said's speech about the opening of the gate:

"You know for twenty long years I always imagined that the Mandelbaum Gate would be open some day, but I never, never imagined that it would be open from the other side. It never entered my mind. So when they were the ones to open it, it seemed to be frightening and absurd and to a great degree humiliating. Maybe I'd be crazy if I told you that doors should always be open from one side only, and that if they opened from the other side they must still be considered closed. But nevertheless, that's the truth." (kanafani 150)

Here, Kanafani wants to show that Palestinians never stop dreaming about their land. However, these dreams are not enough; there must be an active role in their part. They never thought that their situation will reach this stage. The door that remained closed for many years and which they wished to open gloriously is opened for them by the same enemy they longed to defeat. This represents the ultimate form of defeat and humiliation.

Said's first impression of Haifa was that the city did not change much. "We could have made it better," he said to his wife. Obviously he was trying to dispel the imperialist claim that the Jews migrated from civilized countries to Palestine, and that they were able to make the desert bloom. For Said the whole matter was a myth. '"Why do you think the Israelis let us now visit Haifa?" He asked his wife. "Because they are humane? No. This is part of the war. They want to tell us: Please come in and see for yourselves how we are more civilized than you are. You must accept to become our servants, to admire us. But you saw for yourself. Nothing had changed in Haifa. We could have made it much better" (Kanafani 151). In fact, Said is trying to convince himself before convincing his wife that what Israel did for Haifa was inconsiderable; he wants to believe that they are more civilized than them and calls what the colonizers usually say in justification of their actions a myth. In another passage Said says that "the miracle the Jews talked about is an illusion." This is another form of resistance; the resistance of the other's culture and civilization.

The features of Haifa remained the same for Said as he has known them in the past. For example, the names of the streets as they used to be in 1948 start to come back to him. Also, Palestinians from the past appear in his imagination. The Khuri family, for instance, appears in his mind. They used to own a building south of Stanton Road near Kings Street. In that building, and on the day the inhabitants were forced to leave the city, there were resistance fighters who most likely were killed. Said's house was in a rural setting on al-Jalil mountain, at the bottom of a hill in a district called Halisa. In their living room a picture of Jerusalem and a Damascene carpet decorated the walls. Everything was confused in the Said's mind, but as soon as he enters the city, the past pours in front of his eyes and April 1948 becomes very vivid. These memories conform the nostalgia of the protagonist who comes back to his home after a long period of time. The first pages of the novella convey a romantic view about Palestine; the very thing that Kanafani went against because it weakens the nation's will. At the same time, Said keeps in showing signs of refusal and resistance. Here, the refusal is shown in the fact that he does not want to acknowledge the new names of the streets that are put by the Israelis. Rather his memory works to bring back all the old names in an unconscious way that indicates his dream of returning to the past.

As any colonized people, The Palestinian nation is full of resent and hatred towards the colonizers as well as shame for their own cowardice. Once Said enters Haifa he is notable to say a thing. He feels ashamed. He knows that the city, his house and his son would denounce him. He expresses this fact by saying that "I know this Haifa, but it refuses to acknowledge me." (Kanafani 150) His wife shared his feeling. She never stopped crying. These feelings are made obvious in the novel although it is represented in a passive form. Moreover, after Said encounters the first group of soldiers he looks at them "of the corner of his eye." (Kanafani 152) Kanafani is stressing the idea of passivity on the part of Said by showing that his anger and shame is either expressed by his looks or only in his conversation with his wife. However, these emotions are never realized into action.

The romantic view is further asserted by Kanafani when Said remembers how "the Arab fighters barricaded themselves and fought to their last bullet and may be their last man." (Kanafani 160) It seems that Said is deriving his pride from these memories. He feels proud of his people who were courageous in the face of their enemy. This is a way of escaping self- reproach of not participating with the resistance movement. At least he remembers them and praises their bravery. Also, Said's first impression when he sees his house for the first time after twenty years of absence is very romantic:

Suddenly, the house loomed up, the very house he had first lived in, then kept alive in his memory for so long. Here it was again, its front balcony bearing its coat of yellow paint.

Instantly he imagined that Safiyya, young again with her hair in a long braid, was about to lean over the balcony toward him. There was a new clothesline attached to two pegs on the balcony; new bits of washing, red and white, hung on the line. Safiyya began to cry audibly. He turned to the right and directed the car's wheels up over the low curb, then stopped the car in its old spot. Just like he used to do - exactly - twenty years ago. (Kanafani 161)

So, it is the nostalgia that is most obvious here. Nevertheless, this nostalgia is not accompanied with the means that can bring the past back; resistance.

The scene that describes Said's arrival to his house is highly symbolic. First when Said rings the bell, he notices that they changed it then he adds that the name on the door is, naturally changed. He is depicting every little detail from the moment he arrives there. His annoyance from these changes illustrates his attitude toward any change the enemy makes in his land. For him these things are his and his people's property that the Israelis do not have the right to change: "He saw many things he had once considered- and for that matter still considered- to be intimate and personal, things he believed were sacred and private property which no one had the right to be familiar with, to touch, or even to look at." (Kanafani 162) It hurts him a lot to see that his belongings were used by someone else and he feels humiliated. His feelings toward what happened to his house is just a small picture of what all the Palestinians felt for what happened to their country. The things that were added to the house seemed to be out of place: "the other three chairs were new, and they seemed crude and out of harmony with the rest of the furnishings." (Kanafani 163) These chairs are a symbol of the Israelis and their contributions to the country. Whereas the Jews believe that they are improving the country, the natives feel that these so-called improvements are unharmonious with the land and that they could do better than them. The same reaction comes also when anything is missed form the country or the house. When Said, for example, notices that two of the seven feathers that were in the house are missed, he becomes very irritated and nearly shouts at the lady demanding an answer to the extent that "His entire universe hung in the balance, poised in the tip of her tongue." Also, when Khaldun (or Dov) comes to the house and puts his hat next to the vase full of peacock feathers, it seemed for Said inappropriate and even laughable. This Jewish hat does not match with the Palestinian feathers. This scene represents Kanafani's opinion toward the "two-state solution." Whereas some Israelis insist on this solution, it appears for most Palestinians inappropriate and laughable. So, the things that appear to be trivial in the eyes of the colonizers have a great importance for the natives. So, the resisting feelings are inside Said and he is against anything that is either introduced or missed by the Jews.

This symbol is extended when Said says to himself after he and his wife entered their house "How strange, three pairs of eyes are looking at one thing... but how differently each see it." (Kanafani 164) Each one of these three is, in fact, a symbol of a bigger entity. Said represents all the Palestinian men and he feels as they feel toward the Israelis' invading their land. Safyyia, on her part, is a small image of all the Palestinian women who express their refusal to what is happening to their land and sons by crying. On the other part, Miriam stands for the Jewish population who came in the place of the natives. Each one of these is looking at the furniture of Said's house but each has his own way. Said and Safyyia are regretting that their own belongings and their own rights are taken away from them while Miriam feels that these pieces belong to her and that she deserves what she has got because they were stronger.

The conversation that takes place between the couple and Miriam explains the desperate feelings on the part of Said. He did not come to negotiate the issue of their house although it is their own right because he knows very well that "that would take a war." (Kanafani 164) This feeling of desperation is the reason for Said's passivity. It seems for him that the possibility of gaining victory over the Israelis is very weak so he feels helpless and tries to accept the bitter fact: "your presence here, in this house, our house, Safyya's and my house, is another matter. We only came to look at things, our things." (Kanafani 164) Said stresses all the possessive pronouns in order to remind Miriam that this is ours and we have every right to come, at least, to look at it. The bitterness that Said feels makes him unable to stand any more in the house. Even the main reason that he came for is no more important for him. Because of his helplessness in resisting their enemy, staying inside the house becomes endurable. The same bitterness is felt by Safyyia as she watches Miriam come and go: "As if she's in her own house! She acts as if it's her house!" (Kanafani 171) it arouses her anger seeing a stranger living and using the house she used to own. So, Safyyia does also have the resisting feeling inside her toward their invaders.

One of the difficult moments in the story is when Miriam tells Said and Safyyia that Khaldon (or Dov) will be told about everything and the choice is left for him. As any mother, Safyyia clings to this thread of hope while Said immediately realizes the impossibility of getting his son back. For the first time in twenty years he starts to blame himself for leaving their homeland. Now he understands that it was not only the English, or the Zionists who were responsible for their tragedy:

"The crime began twenty years ago and there's no doubt who paid the price. It began the day we left him here." Said tells his wife.

"But we didn't leave him. You know that," Safiyya protested.

"Yes, sure. We shouldn't have left anything. Not Khaldon, not the house, not Haifa! Didn't the same frightening feeling come over you that came over me while I was driving through the streets of Haifa? I felt as though I knew Haifa, yet the city refused to acknowledge me. I had the same feeling in this house. Can you imagine that? That our house would refuse to acknowledge us? Don't you feel it? I believe the same thing will happen with Khaldun. You'll see." (Kanafani 173)

So, this self-reproach begins with the time of their entering the city. The scene of Haifa reminds Said that it is his duty to defend it and that leaving it is a crime in itself. "Said felt as if all the walls he'd made himself live inside for twenty years had shattered, letting him see things clearly." (Kanafani 173) Thus, the veil that was blinding Said for twenty years is now lifted and the picture becomes clear for him; the truth is presented in front of his eyes. This feeling paves the way for the final realization that Said will reach when he confronts his son.

Kanafani's massage of the Palestinian resistance is further emphasized by the narration of the story of Faris al-Lubda by Said. It gives another picture of the Palestinian state. The speech of Faris shows his determination and confidence in the ultimate victory of the Palestinians: "Your presence here is a sorry comedy that will end one day be the power of the sword." (Kanafani 174) Instead of saying that "that would take a war", Faris intends to go on that war and finally ends the presence of the enemy in their land. The courage of his brother Badr and the struggles he went on is an example that Kanafani wants all the Palestinians to follow. That is why Badr becomes a symbol of resistance and a consolation for those who suffer. Moreover, the man who rents Faris's house is another example that deserves to be proud of. This man did his best to remain in Haifa and he refused to leave in spite of the difficulties he faced. He explains: "I didn't see a single Arab here. I was a tiny island, alone and isolated in a sea of raging hostility. You didn't experience that agony, but I lived it." (Kanafani176) In fact Kanafani is offering alternative solutions for Said and the others. He says that you shouldn't have left Haifa. If everyone stayed and fought with Badr then the situation will be different. Haifa cannot be back unless its natives pay all of what they possess to get it.

Because Badr is a symbol of resistance, his picture has a high significance. When Faris takes the picture from the house, the man who lives inside it becomes very sorry as if this picture was living and feeling. This man delivers Kanafani's message when he says to Faris "that if you want to reclaim him, you'd have to reclaim the house, Jaffa, us… the picture doesn't solve your problem, but with respect to us, it's your bridge to us and our bridge to you." (Kanafani 177) It seems as if this man is referring to Said and the others who focus on trivial issues and memories such as pictures and houses and ignore the bigger and important matter which is how to get the land back. Consequently, Faris understands this message and join the resistance movement. In short, this is what Kanafani wants his readers to understand; that resistance is the only way for reclaiming your rights. Otherwise, you cannot get your country back.

The shock of the parents when seeing their lost son dressed up in an Israeli military suit and defending Israel is the most influential scene in the novel. Kanafani uses the conversation between the father and the son to emphasize his message that what happened in 1948 should not only be remembered romantically.

Said rose heavily. Only now did he feel tired, that he had lived his life in vain. These feelings gave way to an unexpected sorrow, and he felt himself on the verge of tears. He knew it was a lie, that Khalid hadn't joined the *fidayeen*. In fact, he himself was the one who had forbidden it. He'd even gone so far as to threaten to disown Khalid if he defied him and joined the resistance. The few days that had passed since then seemed to him a nightmare that ended in terror. Was it really he who, just a few days ago, threatened to disown his son Khalid? What a strange world! And now, he could find no way to defend himself in the face of this tall young man's disavowal other than boasting of his fatherhood of Khalid - the Khalid whom he prevented from joining the *fidayeen* by means of that worthless whip he used to call fatherhood! Who know? Perhaps Khalid had taken advantage of his being here in Haifa to flee. If only he had! What a failure his presence here would turn out to be if he returned and found Khalid waiting at home. (Kanafani 182)

The appearance of Dov and the conversation that follows are the most disappointing events that the couple ever has. Said does indeed feel helpless and ashamed. Only now, he comes to value the courage of Khalid and the meaning of his principles. Because Khaldun comes to be the Israeli officer, Dov, Said now wants to believe that his real son has died. He cannot accept the fact that his own son is working in the Israeli's army and fighting against his own people for the sake of the Jews. That is why he insists that his son was the dead child whom Miriam saw and felt sorry for. In fact he knows that it is not true but he wishes that this happened. He would rather see his son dead than to see him Jewish. The ties that were attaching Said to Khaldun has gone now: "It amazed him that he'd lost any affection toward Dov" (Kanafani 184) This shock is what awakens the resistance duty in Said and changes his attitude towards a lot of issues.

Moreover, this confrontation between the father and the son leads Said to realize the fact that "man is a cause". This means that the blood relations do not matter in forming the personality of a person. What really matters is what is installed within him and how he is raised. The best example for this statement is the brothers Khalid and Khaldun who becomes Dove. One is defending the Palestinians in claiming their land and the other is fighting against him. Also, it means that every man has a goal that is set in front of his eyes and which he spends his whole life in gaining. Of course the cause that Khalid is working for is the victory of Palestine and achieving the dream of return. Dov, on the other hand has spent his life in keeping Palestine under the Jewish rule. So, this is one of the lessons that Said derives from the encounter between him and Dov. It is what makes him change his mind in the matter of letting Khalid join the resistance movement and regret his refusal.

The final blow comes when Dov accuses the helpless couple of paralysis and backwardness:

"Perhaps non of that would have happened if you'd behaved the way a civilized and careful man should behave" he said.

"You should not have left Haifa. If that wasn't possible, then you should not have left a baby in his cradle. If that was not possible, then no matter what it took, you should not have left an infant in its crib. And if that was also impossible, then you should never have stopped trying to return. You say that too was impossible? Twenty years have passed, sir! Twenty years! What did you do during that time to reclaim your son? If I were you I would've borne arms for that. Is there any stronger motive" (Kanafani 184-185)

Kanafani uses Dov to enlighten Said and all the others to the fact that crying does not get things back. One should never stop trying to take his right. This blow does really change Said and opens his eyes to the fact of their laziness and cowardice. His wife, Safyyia does also acknowledge this fact and she questions if that gives them the right to be this way. So, the couple understands the lesson but at the same time asserts that it does not justify what the Jews do.

As a matter of fact,  *Returning to Haifa* is a progressive novel, inviting Palestinians to get rid of the past and work towards a better future. This is very clearly illustrated when Said asks himself and his wife a crucial question "What is homeland?" and the answer comes from Kanafani's rejection of the reality of Palestinians "Do you know what the homeland is, Safiyya, homeland is where none of this can happen". Said realizes in the end that what he goes for is not strong enough to claim homeland; he goes back searching for his dusty memories and did not find what he expected. "For us, for you and me, it's only a search for something buried beneath the dust of memories. And look what we found beneath that dust. Yet more dust. We were mistaken when we thought the homeland was something of the past. For Khalid, the homeland is the future." (Kanafani 186-187) Although Khalid did not live in Haifa and had any memories there, he knows the true meaning of resistance and understands his duty toward his country. His father, on the other hand, wasted his life dreaming about his land and son and lived in illusions. Only now he does recognize the true meaning of life and homeland and so appreciate his son, Khalid, to whom he was blinded for many years. Instead of forbidding Khalid from joining the *fidayeen*, now he wishes to come back and finds that he has already did. At the end, Said is ashamed that Khalid is better than him in understanding the truth and he regrets the waste of his life.

By the end Said becomes aware of the fact that what is going on is against the normal cycle of history and that it happened only because the Palestinians themselves were going against it. Palestine is their land and is supposed to remain for them forever. They belong to it and have the right to live in it till their death. However, because of their laziness and cowardice, the opposite happened. The land is taken and they are expelled from it. Their leaving, although it was compulsory, contributed to the change of facts; "When we came here, we were resisting it, like we were, I admit, when we left Haifa." (kanafani 187) So the submission of the Palestinians to what is done to them and their acceptance of their present contribute in the change of the truth and lead to their misery.

The conclusion of *Returning to Haifa* is paradoxical with its beginning. When Said first arrives to the house, he says that he did not come to claim his house because that would take a war which shows his despair of getting it back. However, at the end, Said concludes his speech with Miriam and Dove with an encouraging statement that is full of hope and determination: "You two may remain in our house temporarily. It will take a war to settle that." (Kanafani 187) Here, he is not referring to Palestine as a memory any more, but rather a new project. He rejects the idea of nostalgia and replaces it with that of the *fidayee*, the new Palestinian. Although, he adds only one word to what he says before, this word is highly significant. Temporarily means that it is only a matter of time to get the house and the land back. He decides that he and his people will stop making mistakes. Now, Said is more determined to work his best in claiming his rights. He has abandoned his romantic memories and is resolving to turn his dreams into actions; which means joining the resistance movement.

In short, *Returning to Haifa* as described by Elias Khoury "is a kind of theater in which Said faces his abandoned son, who has become an Israeli soldier. The meeting represents not a conflict between opposing sides, but a bridge that leads the Palestinian protagonist to a new self-understanding." In this light, Said sees himself in Dov and Miriam and thinks anew about the meanings of memory and kinship. He imagines his second son Khalid becoming the Palestinian mirror of Dov, inventing a new identity for himself in the struggle for Palestine. Dov accuses the Palestinians of being cowards, and Said does not deny the charge. In the contrary, he admits that he was a coward, and pushes the discussion toward the question of justification. At the end of this conversation, Said announces that he has another son called Khalid who has joined the *Fidayeen*. It is this line that offers hope to Said and to most Palestinians; it is the resistance movement.

The journey back to Haifa was necessary for Said to discover the truth. Before that he did not know the meaning of home, child, or country. For Khanafani, Said is a person who does not understand the meaning of responsibility. At the beginning, he is a lazy dreamer who wanders in the city without knowing where, or why. But now Haifa is beyond his reach. He is unable to walk in its streets or boast about his home, family, work and culture. Unless Said changes, there would be no hope in resolving the tragedy that had befallen him and his people. This explains why he makes Said understands now the necessity of resistance. When Khalid in Ramallah, decides to join the *fidayeen* he has the blessing of his father.

Samar Attar provides a beautiful description of the meaning of Haifa for Kanafani:

Kanafani's city in Returning to Haifa is synonymous to country, home and lost son. In the narrative it acquired the meaning of mother and radiant beloved who was left alone at a time of need. No one defended her. In the past she protected her sons for they protected her. In spite of his difficult circumstances, the protagonist is responsible for her radical transformation from a free woman to a slave. He did not know himself, nor did he understand his responsibility towards her. The discovery of this fact came only after twenty years of absence from his birth place. Those who conquered her in 1948 are now writing a new history and highlighting their own narrative. What is he to do? He is an old man now. But his other son, who was born outside of Haifa, will work with other Palestinians in exile to defend her dignity and free her from imprisonment and slavery.

This depiction of Haifa is extremely significant. What makes it distinguishable is that it takes into consideration the fact that this catastrophe is not the first to pass by the land. In spite of the large number of the attacks on Palestine, it was saved because its people used to be more loyal and brave. Nowadays, when the strong generation is replaced by a weaker one, it becomes possible for the enemy to seize it and expel its sons. Therefore, people must look to their predecessors and learn from them how to protect their property.

Barbara Harlow views the novel as representing "kanafani's effort to project in literature the vision of a "democratic solution" for the future of Palestine." For her *Returning to Haifa* is "a lesson which Kanafani attempted, as writer, critic, and active participant in the Palestinian resistance movement, attempted to elaborate, contributing significantly to the ideological and tactical debates within the resistance organizations." (*Resistance Literature* 173) Moreover she depicts the confrontation between the father and his son as proposing "a radical formulation of the basis to a solution of the Palestinian issue, that of the "democratic secular state." She further illustrates that:

Implied in this meeting between father and son is Kanafani's critique of the controversial formula of a democratic secular state, a critique directed toward the Palestinian resistance movement itself. The basis of this critique, as based by Kanafani in the novel and elsewhere in his theoretical and political writings, is any vision of a democratic secular state as the future of Palestine, …, must be developed and implemented by a progressive and democratic revolutionary movement. Implicit, of course, in such a position is the rejection on ideological grounds of the so-called "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian question. Such a solution, that there be a Palestinian state established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which would co-exist alongside the Israeli state within its pre-1967 borders, seen at the least from the radical perspective of Kanafani and the Marxist-Leninist PFLP, represents, at best, the bourgeois nationalism of AL-Fatah, or, at worst, the racist vision of Zionist ideology. (*Resistance Literature* 175)

Without doubt, Harlow's view of the novel and its representations is unquestionable, but, at the same time, her portrayal of Kanafani as a radical thinker is not accurate. What Kanafani is calling for is his and his people's right. The impossibility of applying the "two-state solution" is obvious and even if that is possible, it is unjust. All of Palestine should be for the Palestinians and no one has any right to come and occupy even a small part of it.

Finally, Ghassan Kanafani is an influential nationalist as well as a talented writer even though his views are translated into literary works and not political agendas. He dedicated his whole life to Palestine, indeed, "…he wrote the Palestinian story, then he was written by it." (Riley 10) For him"Politics and the novel are an indivisible case."In fact, it is because of this that he was able to help the resistance movement become more popular amongst the ordinary people who might not necessarily think of resistance as a way of changing their future. Ghassan Kanafani's contribution to modern Arabic literature lies in his legacy as a founder of the literature of resistance. His works have been translated into many languages worldwide, including English and French. In fact, his assassination by the Mossad is a sufficient evidence of the great influence of his writing on resistance.

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