

NATIONALISM AND POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM: A LITERARY APPROACH TO
PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Liberal Studies.

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents,
I appreciate all of your love and unconditional support.

And to my Rose,
thank you for inspiring me every day.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine Palestinian women writers and their contributions to resistance writing. I argue that contemporary Palestinian women's writings significantly contribute to social justice movements concerned with “*resistance*.” This thesis defines *resistance* as a continual political movement that calls upon the oppressed people to unite and fight against social injustices and imperialism. While coming out of Palestinian women's writing, this definition is not limited to just the struggle for Palestinian justice but may be applicable across the current movement for social justice. I also argue that women’s contributions to resistance writing are greatly underrepresented by scholars who analyze and produce publications on the topic of resistance literature, primarily focusing their analyses on men’s writings and how they contribute to the movement. This thesis expands on the notion that Third World feminist consciousness was able to advance and thrive with nationalism. In doing so, I argue against Western assumptions that feminism cannot coincide with nationalism in a society that practices patriarchal traditions. Resistance literature written by women not only reinforces the idea of liberation and nationalism as seen in writings by their male counterparts, but it expands and reconfigures this literary form by combining their patriarchal oppressions and feminist perspectives with their anti-colonial agendas. I analyze the literary works of two Palestinian women novelists, Sahar Khalifeh and Susan Abulhawa, and how their novels promote nationalism and feminism, campaigning for displaced Palestinians affected by colonial-induced conflict. By highlighting these key issues Palestinians faced during the diaspora, both authors successfully advocate for women's empowerment and the Palestinian people's liberation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 1948 establishment of Israel in Palestinian Territories induced a whirlwind of conflict and dissolution, causing the displacement of an entire nation and the expulsion of a native people. The Zionist settlement and conquest of Palestine generated a violent path that would come to be associated with decades of ongoing turmoil and destruction. Millions of Palestinians lost their homes, lives, and families during the expulsion of 700,000 plus Palestinians during Israel's war with the surrounding Arab states. The British and Zionist imperial forces ejected Palestinians from their land, stripping away their national identities and struggle for independence from the British Mandate forces. Since the 1948 Palestinian catastrophe (nakba), Palestinians have been dispersed worldwide, living in exile as stateless persons. Refugee camps have become homes to millions of Palestinians, hoping to transform what little land they could obtain into a strong community wanting to liberate their land that Israel now ruled.

The 1967 Six-Day war was a bloody battle between The Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria against Israeli forces. Palestinians joined guerrilla groups to counterattack the Zionist militia, allying themselves with the Arab countries for the return of Palestine. Israel's victory in the war allowed it to seize the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. After several failed peace plans and more territories confiscated by Israel, Palestinian refugees remain stateless, waiting to return to their homeland. In the decades following this war, Palestinians within the occupied territories lost more land and resources to Israeli settlers. As of 2019, According to Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, there are an estimated 622, 670

settlers in the West Bank. Palestinians and the Israeli settlers who are Israeli citizens live under two different legal systems; the Israeli military is stationed in the West Bank to enforce the dual jurisdictional status of Palestinians and Israeli Jews. Palestinians cannot move freely within their Israeli-designated geographic and jurisdictional areas. They are met with checkpoints, occupied by armed forces, and denied fundamental human rights daily. As years have gone by, the international community has shunned the Palestinians and condemned their resistance to occupation as terrorism.

Over the last seventy years, Palestinians have been silenced and persecuted, longing for their voices to be heard on a global scale. Exiled Palestinians have turned to different expressive models to convey the grief and trauma they have endured over the decades. With the political and social changes came a need for an outlet to explore these adjustments in a freeing, intellectual manner. Writers produced literature that expressed their people's oppressions and strife, hoping to spread the anti-colonial message they wanted to convey. By recording the historical occurrences during the Palestinians' mass exodus, writers resisted imperialism and the occupation through fiction, poetry, and the short story. Writers utilized the demand for national resistance to illustrate the Palestinian struggle, creating a greater need for a new literary mode. Hamdi asserts that “writers were called upon to ‘create’ and that their people needed a kind of literature that communicates to the present about a past that is unthinkable and which, in the case of the Palestinian narrative, has been intentionally suppressed by the dominant narrative” (Hamdi, 2011, p.23). The Palestinians' experiences promoted Palestinian novelist, Ghassan Kanafani, to produce literature that resisted the imperial induced silencing and suffering of his people, coining the term “resistance literature.”

Supporting Kanafani's message, Barbara Harlow expanded on the Palestinian resistance writer's notion that resistance writing not only reflects the national movement but challenges the domination of Western influences (Al-Hudawi, 2003). Traditionally, resistance literature analyzes Third World liberation movements, exploring the movement's political, cultural, and social aspects. While Kanafani and Harlow's definition includes other forms of oppression, it mainly focuses on the colonial oppressions inflicted upon the Palestinian people. This thesis will attempt to relate resistance literature to the national movement, while also including the internal struggle against the patriarchal system that has oppressed Palestinian women. I treat "resistance" as both a national and anti-patriarchal project, following Palestinian women writers' efforts.

This thesis analyzes and reflects Palestinian writers' literary works who dedicated their literature to the Palestinian cause. In Chapter One, I examine literature written before the 1948 nakba. Various Palestinian authors and literary forms contributed to the history and advancement of Arab literature. I explore the history of Arab literature and the Palestinian novel. The first section of this thesis focuses on influential poets, storytellers, and novelists who broke through the literary scene for their creativity and political message.

I examine the rise of both Arab and, specifically, Palestinian women writers in Chapter Two. This thesis analyses Palestinian Literature produced after 1948, concentrating on life within the Zionist conquest and how Palestinians managed life as stateless refugees. I specifically highlight the literary works and achievements of Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan. Tuqan was regarded as an eminent writer who used her recollections and feelings towards Zionism and the state of Israel to fuel her political message through poetry. By illustrating Tuqan's influence on

Palestinian resistance writing, I argue that she was an elite writer that should be on the same national and literary pedestal as the men who traditionally dominated the literary scene.

I explore Postcolonial Feminist Theory and the relationship it has to women and nationalism in Chapter Three. This section highlights women's contributions to the survival of the Palestinian people and how Palestinian women entered the male-dominated world of politics and combat. Chapter Four delves into the literary works of award-winning Palestinian novelists Sahar Khalifeh and Susan Abulhawa. Both novelists take on similar approaches to shed light on the Palestinian cause, incorporating nationalistic tones with a feminist consciousness.

The Arab world and the international community have recognized and praised the works of both Abulhawa and Khalifeh. I chose to analyze Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* (1976) and Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) because both novels support women's empowerment, the national cause, and prove women resistance novelists overcome the limits of male-dominated resistance writing by contesting multiple streams of oppressions. This thesis aims not to favor one novel or author over the other but instead highlight the different perspectives and traumas the occupation has inflicted upon the people of Palestine. Both novelists delve into the historical aspects of the conflict and how it has completely shifted the colonized Palestinians' identities. By comprehending the struggle and empathizing with the oppressed, Abulhawa and Khalifeh not only represent their people but give them a voice.

Although I used literature to highlight the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the traumatic effects on the Palestinians, the goal is to reach the international community to bring awareness to the national cause. Using literature to express the oppression of war and society is logical because it explores the idea of self-identity and home, invoking a national, political, and feminist consciousness. Peace plans and meetings have been broadcasted for the entire world to see, yet

Palestinians are still mistreated and remain refugees. The Palestinians are denied their right to return, being silenced and shunned by the international community. Postcolonial literature is a progressive form of combating imperial oppressions by participating in liberation movements and joining the national cause. Not only is this form of literature pertinent in the resistance movement, but it acts as a nonviolent gateway to social change.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A History of Arab Literature

The Arab community has always regarded literature as an integral part of Arab culture. Arab literature dates back to the fifth century, before the rise of Islam. The earliest forms of Arab literature were unrecorded and nomadic, passed down from one generation to another. The advent of Islam greatly influenced the development of the Arabic language and literature because Arab literature was recorded with the introduction of the Qur'an. Before the Qur'an, poetry was the dominant form of literature in the Arab world and began to be written down by the end of the seventh century (Allen & Moosa, 1984). Early Arab poets spoke of life in the desert, animals, and humanity. By the ninth century, the spread of Arab cultural expression soon came into contact with other cultures and their literature, molding the old Arab poetic tradition into a new practice centered around Islamic teachings. A new group of young and sophisticated Arab poets emerged from this new practice of Arabic poetry during the late eighth century. Poets such as Abu Nuwas and Mutanabbi are considered two of the greatest classical Arab poets, producing some of the most complex in advanced poetry of their time (Badawi, 1992).

By the 19th century, the Arab world had begun to modernize, competing with the rest of the world. During this time, Arab literary centers like Damascus and Cairo developed the printing press. Arab writers began to turn to Western models for new literary styles. These foreign literature techniques started developing the novel, the short story, and drama in the Arab

world. The first modern Arabic language novel to be *Zaynab* by Egyptian author, Muhammad Husayn Hakal, published in 1913 (Badawi, 1992). Although Westerners knew very little of Arab fiction during the ninetieth and early 20th century, several Western novels and dramas were translated into Arabic (Moosa,1983). The Western model was not the sole influence on modern Arab literature. Much like the contemporary Arab novel, ancient Arab narrative tales were fantastical and episodic sequences that impacted Arab Literature. By the 20th century, the modern Arab novel began to grow and develop, causing a rapid increase of interest from the West.

2.2 The Exploration of the Palestinian Novel

Although Jerusalem was a major religious center for the Middle East, it was not considered a thriving literary center like Beirut, Cairo, and Damascus were during the early 20th century (Mir,2013). Jerusalem did not host any central political figures in the way that other Arab cities had. With no aristocratic figures to influence their art and writings, Palestinians did not have the writing prose to establish themselves as literary competitors in the Arab world. During the early 20th century, Palestinian authors did not touch on contemporary political and social issues but instead continued to write in the traditional Arab writing style. Before 1948, Palestinian writers dabbled in fiction and dramas, but their main literary form was poetry. Ibrahim Tuqan was a notable Palestinian nationalist poet. Tuqan broke away from traditional Palestinian poetry and wrote on social issues Arabs faced in resisting the British Empire.

Before 1948, much like other Arab literature, Palestinian fiction struggled to adapt to the new literary art form of the novel. In 1920, the first known Palestinian novel, *Al-Warith* (The Heir), was written by Baydas. *The Heir* tells the love story of a beautiful Jewish girl and a Syrian orphan boy. The novel indirectly touches on the conflict between European Jews, settling in

Palestine, and Arabs but fails to send a strong political message through fiction (Mir, 2013). Political fiction would not be a focus for Palestinian writers until after the 1948 Palestinian exodus. With the emergence of the modern Arab novel in the 1950s and 1960s, the contemporary Palestinian novelist came to be. After the 1948 exodus, Palestinian writers living in the diaspora wrote contemporary styled literature (Jayyusi, 1992.) With the rise of a political consciousness, Palestinian writers could connect their writings with their lived experiences.

According to Jayyusi (1992), a scholar and compiler of Palestinian authors and literary history, Ghassan Kanafani was a notable Palestinian contemporary novelist during the 1960s. In her study she argues Kanafani, a political activist living in Lebanon, was one of the leading Palestinian political novelists who wrote about the injustices against the Zionist aggressors. In 1962, Kanafani published the novel, *Men in the Sun*. *Men in the Sun* describes the lived experiences of Palestinians surviving the different challenges of the diaspora. The novel tells of three Palestinian men searching to make a life for themselves after the Palestinian Nakba. The three protagonists are refugees living in a Lebanese refugee camp, searching for work in Kuwait. Throughout the novel, the three Palestinians are mistreated by Israeli forces, showing the harsh realities of life as a Palestinian after the creation of Israel. The men arrange for travel to Kuwait and locate a driver to help them reach their final destination. To transport them, the driver places the men in a water tank on a hot day. The novel ends with the driver opening the tank when the truck arrives in Kuwait to discover that the three men have died from the heat. Being a refugee himself, Kanafani depicted his experience of misfortune, exploitation, and turmoil through this farcical tragic tale.

Modern Arab literature valued Palestinian writings as more Palestinian novelists appeared in the literary scene. Emile Habiby, a Palestinian political writer and former leader of

the Palestinian Communist Party, emerged during the late 1960s. Jayyusi considers Habiby to be one of the most influential fiction writers within the Arab community (Jayyusi, 1992). After his political career, Habiby began writing short stories, and by the 1970s, he wrote his first novel, *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist*. Habiby's first novel tells the tale of a Palestinian fool, Saeed, who works as an Israeli informer living in occupied Palestine. Unhappy with the Zionist state, Saeed decides to become part of the Palestinian Resistance. This classic Arab novel displays the author's negative views on the ill-treatment by the Israeli forces told through fiction.

Palestinian literature began to change from the traditional Arab style to a more contemporary literary mode during the 20th century. Modern Palestinian literature began to focus more on social and political issues after the Zionist movement in Palestine. Palestinian writers of the diaspora spent their lives in exile, coping with being violated and stateless. After 1948, Palestinians lived in foreign countries as refugees, living in exile, or living under Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza as second-class citizens (Jayyusi, 1992). Palestinian writers turned to a political model because their lived experiences as exiles became their reality and, ultimately, their identity. The 21st-century continues to see an increase in Palestinian politicized literature. Not only is it their history, but events of mistreatment from Zionist supporters and other Arab nations continue to deprive Palestinians of their fundamental human rights and their quest to reclaim their country. By telling their stories through fiction and short story, Palestinian novelists can share their political message with the world.

2.3 Arab Women Writers

In this section, I draw heavily on Ashour's (2008) critical reference guide of Arab women's literature. In her overview of this critical background to Palestinian women's writing, she argues Arab women writers are significant and extraordinary because their writings stem from a thriving historical, literary culture dating back to pre-Islamic times. There has been an immense number

of Arab women writers that have emerged since the sixth century. The number of contemporary Arab women writers breaking into the literary field continues to flourish, proving their place in the literary world. The surge of Arab women writers came with increasing literary works published and translated into various languages. One of the earliest recorded Arab women poets was a woman named al-Khansa. Al-Khansa was a seventh century Arab woman poet who was dubbed one of the greatest Arab poets to have ever lived by the Prophet Mohammad (Ashour, 2008). Renowned for her elegies, al-Khansa performed to her fellow tribe members in inner-city competitions. The increase of Arab women writers during the 20th century was a remarkable phenomenon that initially shocked the male-dominated field of Arab literature. The ever-changing political and social world greatly influenced women writers. Women's rights issues dominated the themes for women's writings during the beginning of the modern period. This contemporary styled writing drew on ancient Arab culture while imitating modern European writing style, literary modernism (Ashour, 2008). During the 20th century, women not only wrote about their status in a male-dominated society but began writing about nationalism, oppression, and war.

A large number of women writers emerged from Lebanon and Egypt. Being dominant literary centers, Beirut and Cairo produced some of the most influential Arab women writers to date. Lebanon saw an increase in scholarly contributions from women during the late 19th century. Amongst these contributors was Lebanese novelist Zaynab Fawwaz. Zaynab Fawwaz was a pioneering poet and was one of the first to write on women's social issues (Booth, 1995, pg. 122). Towards the end of the 19th century, Fawwaz's literary works encouraged the public to re-evaluate women's roles in the male-dominated society and pressed for gender equality (Booth, 1995). During the early 1900s, Lebanon went through a drastic change in government and socio-

political structure. In 1920, the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon created the State of Greater Lebanon. The new mandate redrew borders, adding southern Syrian villages to Lebanon, making Beirut the new state capital. The nation's devastating change left Lebanon with a national identity shift that caused its people to battle and struggle until after its independence in 1943. These changes and questions with identity would later become a driving theme for contemporary Arab writers.

Although women did not contribute to the writing of novels during this time, they still participated in national and social issues (Ashour, 2008). The return of the novel during the 1950s allowed this new literary form to thrive for both male and female writers. The Lebanese Civil War brought forth many women novelists, causing the novel to dominate Lebanon's literary field. The civil war of 1975 prompted many writers to use the narrative of war and displacement to weave their personal experiences of chaos and discord with fiction to create a breathtaking tale that would combat the civil conflict. By creating a new literary style that explored their realities from a woman's perspective, Lebanese women novelists could write on their most personal and traumatic experiences of the war, using literature to denounce warfare, political corruption, and exile. Women writers continue to dominate the Lebanese novel, exploring liberation, nationalism, and feminism themes.

2.4 Palestinian Women Writers

Ashour also documents that before the 1948 Palestinian diaspora, major cities such as Nablus and Jerusalem were busy centers with newspapers, education institutions, and presses. The occupation of Palestine influenced writers of all genres to come together and craft a new literary trend that would reflect the Palestinians' realities. The mass exodus affected Palestinian writers, changing the way they identified themselves. An increase of women writers entered the

writing scene after the invasion of Palestine in 1948. Palestinian women gained educational opportunities during the late 19th century. During the early 20th century, Palestinian women writers wrote speeches, essays, and articles on every topic (Ashour, 2008).

The number of Arab women writers from all backgrounds increased tremendously since the 1960s, and a new generation of Palestinian women writers emerged during the 1970s. Securing their place within the literary world, these women dominated the novel, a relatively new literary model introduced to the Arab world. Contemporary Palestinian women novelist wrote on the Palestinian struggle against the new state of Israel and their neighboring Arab allies' lack of support. Liyana Badr, Soraya Antonius, and Sahar Khalifeh composed stunning novels that would later pave the way for future Palestinian women novelists. While this section will briefly examine Ashour's interpretation of Liyana Badr and Soraya Antonius's works, this thesis will explore a detailed analysis of Sahar Khalifeh and her literary works in the following chapters.

Liyana Badr was born in 1950 in Jerusalem, shortly after the nakba of 1948. Badr was raised in Jericho but later relocated to Jordan to attend the University of Jordan. The novelist obtained a Bachelor's degree in philosophy and psychology from the Beirut Arab University. Badr worked as a volunteer for numerous Palestinian women's organizations and became an editor for the Palestinian political newspaper, *Al Hurriyya*. Liyana Badr relocated to Damascus after the 1982 Palestinian exodus from Lebanon before returning to Palestine in 1994. In 1979, Badr published her first novel, *A Compass for the Sunflower*. The novel depicts the bitter life of Palestinians under occupation and in exile during the late 20th century. *A Compass for the Sunflower* follows the life of a young Palestinian woman, Jinan, and her accounts of the various conflicts that Palestinians encountered after the occupation of Palestine. Badr's first novel

addresses tragic events such as the defeat of the Palestinian resistance in September 1970 against the Jordanian regime, the West Banks' occupation, and the Lebanese civil war. Badr broke away from the traditional Palestinian novel, focusing on a woman's perspective on Palestinian women's struggles and their determination to fight alongside their male counterparts against their oppressors. One of Badr's most notable works, *The Eye of the Mirror*, tells the story of the heroine, Aisha, and her struggle as a Palestinian woman during the war and living in a patriarchal society. This gripping narrative depicts the devastating historical realities of Palestinian citizens residing in the Tall al-Za 'tar refugee camp (Mehta, 2004, p.811.) Badr exhibits the Palestinian struggle and their heroic efforts throughout this epic novel. Women's roles during the war, time, and place are consistent themes throughout Badr's novels. Liyana Badr's lyrical styled literature deconstructs traditional literary models while depicting the Palestinian victim's daily struggle.

Palestinian novelist, Soraya Antonius, broke into the literary world during the late 1980s. Using the literary resistance model to convey her political message, Antonius uses her novels to recount the hardships of the Palestinian diaspora. The Palestinian novelist focuses on how the British mandate and the establishment of Israel devastated the people of Palestine, forcing them into exile or refugee camps (Sabbagh, 2008). *The Lord*, published in 1986, was the author's first published novel. This national story follows a Palestinian magician's life, Tareq, who is eventually hanged by the British for insubordination. The novel is filled with Christian themes, comparing the suffering of Jesus of Nazareth against the Romans to the protagonist's woes and the Palestinian people against the British. The author's second novel, *Where the Jinn Consult*, published in 1987, is a sequel to *The Lord*. *Where the Jinn Consult* follows the tragic events that led to the fall of Palestine. The novel covers the 1936 rebellion against the British, World War II in Europe, and Palestinians' lives after the illegitimate occupation of Israel's new state. Antonius

allows the reader to see into the world of Palestine before its occupation. The author uses colorful descriptive words to highlight the nation's beauty before tragedy turned Palestine into a dark world with destroyed villages and lives. By placing historical events in her novel, Antonius allows the reader to truly grasp how the British and the new state of Israel devastated the nation of Palestine.

2.5 A New Literary Form

In 1948, Palestine witnessed significant political, social, and demographic transformations after the creation of Israel. Palestinian writers looked to a new literary model to express their discontent with the illegitimate occupation of Palestine and the mistreatment of their people. After 1948, Palestinian literature spoke of exile and the suppression of the people of Palestine. Poetry was the first form of literature to emerge from the new literary mode after the 1948 Palestinian exodus. This unique literary form, which would become known as "Poetry of the Resistance" or "Resistance Poetry," fought against oppression and refused to accept defeat against the Zionist nation. Rejecting traditional Arabic poetic forms, Palestinian resistance poetry not only embraced modern techniques but adopted a new form of expression (Hijawi, 1968, p6.) By the end of the sixties, other themes disappeared from Palestinian poetry, making resistance poetry the dominant form of expressive literature used by Palestinian poets (Jayyusi, 1992). Mahmoud Darwish was a notable Palestinian resistance poet during the initial occupation of Palestine. In 1942, Darwish was born and raised in al-Birwa. Until the young age of 6, he lived as a refugee in Israel. The poet's village was destroyed by the conflict of 1948, forcing him and his mother to seek refuge in Lebanon. Darwish was introduced to politics at a young age. He joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization and fought for the return of Palestine. Mahmoud Darwish highlighted the Palestinian struggle throughout his poetry. Understanding the

Palestinians' need to rise against their oppressors, Darwish advocated for his people's rights, using poetry to spread his political message. Darwish's resistance poetry is shown below in his poem 'Those Who Pass Between Fleeting Words':

O those who pass between fleeting words
Pile your illusions in a deserted pit, and be gone
Return the hand of time to the law of the golden calf
Or to the time of the revolver's music!
For we have that which does not please you here, so be gone
And we have what you lack: a bleeding homeland of a bleeding people
A homeland fit for oblivion or memory.

O those who pass between fleeting words
It is time for you to be gone
Live wherever you like, but do not live among us
It is time for you to be gone
Die wherever you like, but do not die among us
For we have work to do in our land.

We have the past here
We have the first cry of life
We have the present, the present and the future
We have this world here, and the hereafter
So leave our country
Our land, our sea
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds
Everything, and leave
The memories of memory
O those who pass between fleeting words!

(Darwish, 1988, p.1)

Fadwa Tuqan was an eminent Palestinian resistance poet during the twentieth century. Mahmoud Darwish and her brother, Ibrahim Tuqan, also a famous Palestinian resistance poet, inspired Tuqan. During her earlier works, Tuqan was proficient in the traditional Arabic forms of poetry. The poet turned to a modern resistance-themed writing style after being affected by the aftermath of the 1967 War (Jayyusi, 1994). Using her poetry to express her displeasure with the occupation of Palestine, Tuqan became skilled in the use of free verse, paving the way for other

Arab writers. The poet highlights the loss of Palestinian land and other misfortunes that Palestinians faced after Israel's creation. The harsh realities of Palestinian life are shown below in her poem 'Hamza':

Hamza — sixty-five — weighs
heavy like a rock on his own back.
'Burn, burn his house,'
a command screamed,
'and tie his son in a cell.'
The military ruler of our town later explained:
it was necessary for law and order,
that is, for love and peace!

Armed soldiers gheraoed his house:
the serpent's coil came full circle.
The bang at the door was but an order —
'evacuate, damn it!'
And generous as they were with time, they could say:
'in an hour, yes!'

Hamza opened the window.
Face to face with the sun blazing outside,
he cried: 'in this house my children
and I will live and die
for Palestine.'
Hamza's voice echoed clean
across the bleeding silence of the town.

An hour later, impeccably,
the house came crumbling down,
the rooms were blown to pieces in the sky,
and the bricks and the stones all burst forth,
burying dreams and memories of a lifetime

(Tuqan, 1978).

Here a Palestinian man and his family, like so many other Palestinian families, are being forced out of their home by Israeli armed forces. After refusing to leave, Hamza and his children were set aflame in their home by the Zionist intruders. The reader witnesses the tragic losses that

Palestinians endured with the forced occupation of Israel. Tuqan's resistant poetry consistently depicts the harsh, daily realities of her people.

Inspired by earlier forms of resistance poetry, Palestinian writers began writing what has become known as resistance literature. In her book, *Resistance Literature*, Barbara Harlow highlights contemporary literature's role in Third World social movements. Harlow illustrates how Israel's occupation of Palestine has subjugated Palestinians and intervened in its people's literary and cultural development (Harlow, 1987, p.2). In her study, Harlow credits Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani for being the first writer to apply the term "resistance" to describe literature. Kanafani's study, *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*, touches on distinguishing between literature written in occupied Palestine and literature produced by writers living in exile (Harlow, 1987, p.2). Kanafani suggests that the constant struggle for Palestinians to preserve their culture and language affects Palestinian writers living in Israel (Hanna, 2010, p.229). Kanafani's resistant-themed novels encouraged Palestinians to become active and rise against their Israeli oppressors. The resistance novelist succeeded in using fiction to convey his political and social views on the illegitimate occupation of Palestine.

Resistance literature is so intriguing and influential to the reader because of its ability to incorporate its subjects' realities and hardships into fictional tales. Although fiction was a new medium for Palestinians during the early 20th century, it soon found its place deep within the Palestinian struggle. Recurring resistance themes such as Israeli authorities imprisoning Palestinians, the bombing of Palestinian homes and land, and the denial of fundamental human rights are notable realities that influenced fiction literature. Palestinian resistance literature, like other Third World resistance models, was not a coincidence. This new form of literature emerged in the Arab world to combat the Zionist enemy and attempt to preserve Palestinian culture.

Resistance writers attempted to invoke a political consciousness and promote nationalism for the people of Palestine. Resistance critics, living in occupied territories and the diaspora, developed new genres and styles to voice their discontent with the occupation of Palestine. Still attached to their lost land, writers living in the diaspora wrote on their ideologies, maintaining the connection with their fellow professionals residing in occupied territories. The reoccurring themes of resistance in Palestinian literature show the indivisible ties that Palestinian writers have with the occupied land. Before the Catastrophe of 1948, Arab writers were mainly composed of intellectuals and notable professionals. After the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, writers of all backgrounds entered the literary scene. New writers consisting of merchants, peasants, and artisans found their place in the literary world (Husain, 2003). Palestinian resistance literature began to dominate the Arab literary world, proving that Palestinian writers were fierce adversaries against the Zionist enemy.

2.6 Fadwa Tuqan

Historically, male writers have dominated the Arab literary scene. It is commonly theorized that Mahmoud Darwish and Ghassan Kanafani are the main contributors to Palestinian resistance literature. Barbra Harlow credits Ghassan Kanafani as the first writer to apply the term resistance in the description of Palestinian literature in her study, *Resistance Literature*. Kanafani wrote on Israel's illegitimate occupation in Palestine in his critical essay, *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*. In his study, he detests the Israeli occupation and the need for Palestinians and the international community to combat and resist the imperialist invasion. In reference to Palestinian resistance poetry, Harlow only mentions Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish in her critical study on Palestinian resistance literature. Harlow credits Darwish as a dominant Palestinian resistance poet and critically analyzes his contributions to resistance

literature. The author fails to mention other contributions made by female poets and novelists who had an equally dominant role in the production of Palestinian resistance literature. The lack of literary critical studies done on the contributions made by Palestinian women on Palestinian resistance literature hinders the Western world from acknowledging women writer's vital roles in the resistance movement.

In this section, I argue that Fadwa Tuqan contributed to the resistance writing movement as Ghassan Kanafani did. Fadwa Tuqan did not gain the recognition and fame for her contributions to resistance literature in the same ways that Ghassan Kanafani received. It is essential to recognize the women of resistance literature across the board. The use of feminism and resistance literature creates a contemporary literary form produced to combat and highlight the Israeli occupation's harsh realities. Although Kanafani wrote on resistance-themed literature before the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the resistance literature produced after 1967 should still be considered robust and moving literature enriched with nationalism that sought liberation from the imperialist grip it had on Palestinian territory. Fadwa Tuqan's poetry after 1967 demonstrated her quest for independence and her position in the national struggle. Resistance to Palestinian literature from a woman's perspective is critical because it proves that women shared a vital role in the resistance movement alongside the men who fought against the Zionist occupiers.

Fadwa Tuqan began writing resistance poetry during the late 1940s during the British occupation of Palestine. The Palestinian's passion for political writing would not take place until after the June War. The poet detested writing on political topics, resisting her father's requests to write political poetry. In her publication, *A Mountainous Journey, An Autobiography*, Fadwa Tuqan describes the animosity she had for political writing when her father suggested she

followed her brother's footsteps and craft political poetry: "...Father often came and asked me to write political poetry. He wanted me to fill the empty place Ibrahim left behind. Whenever a national or political occasion arose, he would ask me to write something on the subject. A voice from within would rise up in silent protest: How and with what right or logic does father ask me to compose political poetry, when I am shut up inside these walls? I don't sit with men, I don't listen to their heated discussions, nor do I participate in the turmoil of life on the outside" (Jayyusi, 1992, p.712). The threat of Israel's new state and her father's death caused the sudden increase of interest in politics and world events for the young poet after 1967. Like Ghassan Kanafani, Fadwa Tuqan also participated in political activism. After her hometown's Israeli occupation, Nablus, in 1967, Tuqan's poetry solely focused on the national struggle and resisting the Zionist movement. The poet's poems touched on the destruction of the villages and homes of Palestinians, borders, and various demonstrations against the Zionist intruders. The international community critically recognized Tuqan's work, and her works were translated into English during the 1980s.

Tuqan's nationalistic writing style exhibits liberation against Israel and fights for a voice for Arab women in a complex patriarchal society. The poet allied herself with educated women in the West Bank, discussing both literature and liberation (Tuqan,1990, p. 122-123.) Tuqan does not fully submerge herself with the political world until Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. The 1967 occupation drove the Palestinian poet to dedicate her poetry to the resistance movement. Her poetry acted as a voice for her people and her beloved nation, Palestine. Tuqan's poem, "Enough for Me" describes her love and connection to her homeland:

Enough for me to die on her earth
be buried in her
to melt and vanish into her soil

then sprout forth as a flower
played with by a child of my country.
Enough for me to remain
in my country's embrace
to be in her close as a handful of dust
a sprig of grass
a flower

(Jayyusi, 1992, p.314).

The poet's deep and emotional lyrics depict her attachment to Palestine and her courage to remain on the land despite the occupation's chaos and turmoil. The 1967 occupation transformed the poet into a political writer who crafted a new form of resistance literature. Fadwa Tuqan's poetry is full of political passion, further fueled as her political consciousness increased during the occupation. Tuqan began to freely express her discontent with the Israeli invasion and her desire for her people and her nation's freedom through her literature.

Tuqan's shift in writing styles is quite evident in her poem *Song of Becoming*. The poem describes young Palestinian boys who have to grow up too quickly and fight during the resistance:

They're only boys
who used to frolic and play
launching rainbow kites
on the western wind,
their blue-red-green kites
whistling, leaping,
trading easy laughter and jokes
duelling with branches, pretending to be
great heroes in history.

Suddenly now they're grown,
grown more than the years of a normal life,
merged with secret and passionate words,
carried love's messages like the Bible or Quran,
to be read in whispers.

(Jayyusi, 1992, p.314)

The poem illustrates the grim realities of conflict yet shows appreciation for the resistance movement. Tuqan's poem devotes the haunting lyrics to the young martyrs who gave their lives to protect their families and their nation: "When their torn limbs merged with the stuff of our earth, they became legends." The poet's explicit and eerie lyrics display a nationalistic consciousness and devotion to Palestine. With the June War of 1967, the poet understood the pain of a nation's loss and resistance. By merging her poetic thoughts with her hatred of the occupation, the Palestinian poet's writing about her nation's resistance took priority over all other themes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Within the last century, the examination of the treatment and roles of women has been imperative in the quest for equality and progression in colonized territories. This thesis uses postcolonial feminist theory to explore the significance of feminism in Third World countries to analyze postcolonial literature through women's voices. Rojan & Park (2000) defines Postcolonial feminism as an “exploration of and at the intersections of colonialism and neocolonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women’s lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights” (p.53). Postcolonial feminism looks into the oppressions and societal issues women living in Third World countries face and should not be viewed as simply feminism or post-colonialism. Third World feminism contrasts Western feminism’s assumption that all women worldwide face the same oppression because of their gender. Postcolonial feminist theory also challenges postcolonial theory by reiterating the necessity to consider gender issues (Tyagi, 2014). Western feminism’s ideas on gender and class do not reflect the realities and experiences of women living in colonized nations. First World feminism is simply one branch of feminist perspective and cannot represent an entire progressive movement. Postcolonial feminism challenges the assumptions of Western feminists in regards to the racialized and paternalistic characterizations of the “Third World woman.” (Piedalue&Rishi,

2017, p.550). By imposing Western feminism styles on marginalized women, Western feminists attribute to Third World women's oppressions.

Women living in colonized territories experience oppression from imperialism and encounter challenges imposed by a patriarchal society. The two forms of oppression simultaneously disregard women's positions within politics, war, and the home. Feminist critics have suggested that postcolonial theory is male-driven, failing to include women's issues in postcolonial scholarship. According to Tyagi (2014), "Postcolonial feminist theorists have accused postcolonial theorists not only of obliterating the role of women from the struggle for independence, but also of misrepresenting them in the nationalist discourses" (p.46). Postcolonial feminist fights against the harsh Western assumptions of Third World women as victims and uneducated homemakers, bound to traditions imposed by a patriarchal society. Progressive feminist theories call for the need for the representation of marginalized women. Postcolonial feminism does not aim to divide feminist theory but promotes expanding the types of oppression in colonized societies. By combining postcolonial and feminist theory, postcolonial feminism addresses crucial gender and imperial issues that neither theory models could analyze independently.

3.2 Textual Analysis

This thesis uses textual analysis to analyze the literary works of Palestinian novelists Sahar Khalifeh and Susan Abulhawa. This method is not strictly literary; it uses these novelists to explore the lived experiences and cultural aspects of Palestinian life to understand the oppressions and barriers they face as exiled persons. The differences in nationalist and feminist themes will be studied through textual analysis. To link resistance themes with literature, this method of analysis is inevitable for this study.

3.3 Arab Feminism and Women within Conflict

European states effectively colonized Arab countries during the 18th century, setting up mandates in Palestine, Lebanon, and Transjordan. In response to Western colonialism, national consciousness arose within the Arab world, leading to mass national movements across the regions. This liberation movement stemmed from the national desire for economic, social, and political freedom from their imperial colonizers. With this new perspective of liberation emerged a similar consciousness for Arab women. Arab women developed a feminist consciousness as their community continued to embrace nationalism. The emergence of this new feminist nationalism raised the question if women's liberation was relevant or possible within the Arab world during these national changes. Many critics argue that Arab feminism cannot exist or is inferior to the nationalistic cause and must take a back seat to the national movement (Golley, 2004, p.521.) This women's movement, "arguably defined as feminist, has served as a highly provocative challenge to theories and politics of the Middle East, exposing structures and ideologies of power, privilege, and exclusion" (Jacoby, 2019, p.512). Although national struggles in the Middle East had granted Arab women the platform to challenge their nation's traditional cultural norms, discussions about gender inequality and patriarchy were still crucial topics to the national cause.

Arab feminism evolved from the context of nationalism because social changes arose from the individual struggle women faced in response to colonialism. Although early Arab feminism emerged from the desire for women's empowerment, it quickly morphed into a slew of social changes that dominated the Arab World. Arab feminism during the early 20th century was remarkably politically militant as the nationalist movements intensified. Egypt, who arguably started the rise of a feminist consciousness within the Arab World, witnessed women from all

classes contribute to the national cause (Golley, 2004). Egyptian women participated in demonstrations and assassinations as their contribution to gaining independence from the British. In response to the national cause, leading Egyptian activist, Huda Shaarawi, formed and founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923. The EFU fought for women's education and amending the status laws on marriage, divorce, and other women's status issues. According to Golley (2004), "early Arab feminists entered the male-dominated public spheres by entering the realm of writing, rejecting arranged marriages, and becoming political activists" (p.522).

The concept of Arab feminism did not emerge from a single liberation movement. Arab feminism developed from a series of political actions and social movements that helped shape the global phenomenon over time. During the 1980s, Arab feminist discussions centered around the critique of Islam, women's experiences, and the nationalistic response to colonialism (Saliba, 2000). Arab feminism debates extended beyond the realm of the traditional Western feminist school of thought. Middle Eastern feminism did not seek to attain the same goals or interests as the Western feminism model. The idea that the women's liberation movement stemmed from nationalism set Arab Feminism apart from Western feminism. Tami Jacoby asserts that "many non- Western women reject feminism as a self-representative label for their struggles and that they may perceive feminism as radical by creating social stigmas that seem threatening to group identify in terms of nation, ethnicity, and race" (Jacoby, 1999, p.512). Susan Muaddi Darraj also examined Arab feminism from the perspective of Arab women writers and notes how it differs from the Western feminism perspective. Darraj explains that "the majority of Arab women writers reject the idea that feminism is exclusive to the West and how a feminist conscience can arise from and concretize within the soul of any Arab woman" (Darraj, 2003, p.1). The relationship between Middle Eastern feminism and Western feminism has become more

complicated over the years due to the increasing intrusion of ideologies the West has imposed on the Arab World. By breaking through the barriers of Western ideologies, Arab women evolved and explored feminism in their way. This form of liberation allowed Arab women to redefine themselves without completely relinquishing their cultural and religious ideologies.

3.4 Palestinian Women's Roles within the Resistance

Much like other Arab nations, Palestinian political and national consciousness grew with the British colonization and rise of the state of Israel. During times where the Palestinians were going through a nationalist struggle, women's national identity began to evolve, creating a new role for women within the conflict. With the continual conflict with the Zionist militia, women not only supported men during this period, but they were responsible for maintaining the home while the men were imprisoned, in combat, or exiled. Women were left widowed or single during these times, completely changing the dynamic of the traditional female roles within the home. The rise of nationalism in Palestine provoked a new women's liberation movement. Like the men, Palestinian women joined the resistance and opposed the Israeli occupation. Women instigated the boycott of foreign and Zionist products, organized demonstrations against the British Mandate and Zionist immigration, and even participated in transferring and smuggling weapons past British Army checkpoints (Kuttab, 1993, p.1). Despite sharing the exact cause, women were not considered equal to men within society. Palestinian women faced the challenging position of being oppressed by their colonial invaders and battling their patriarchal oppressions.

Although exile, war, and displacement were dramatic experiences for the Palestinians, Palestinian women found empowerment within the refugee camps. Taking on new roles within their community created a need for women to help bind their people together during times of

war. With the increasing demand for Palestinian unity to combat their oppressors, the Palestinian community incorporated women into the national movement in many different ways. Arguably, women would not have been allowed to enter the male-dominated sphere without the national struggle due to the traditional patriarchal structure and ideologies within the environment (Kuttab,1993, p.1). The nation's political struggle called upon women to strengthen the Palestinian forces against their Zionist oppressors. Palestinian women's political participation increased and was essential during the *Intifada*. In the *Intifada*, women organized resistance strategies and engaged in leadership positions that would have traditionally been male-dominated tasks. Women organized committees, lead marches, and were participants in political parties during the Intifada. Although women were heavily involved in the national struggle and participated in demonstrations, they made it clear that they would no longer place the nation's quest for liberation over their commitment to social change.

The idea of separating women's issues from national affairs blossomed during the late 1980s. Palestinian women, who once had to choose between prioritizing nationalism or feminism, were allowed to participate in both causes, strengthening the concept of Palestinian liberation within the occupied territories. Women's organizations and committees assembled with the idea of combining women's rights with Palestinian politics, expanding on the quest for social change. The General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was a prominent women's organization formed under the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The goal of the GUPW was to give status to Palestinian women by increasing their participation in social and political affairs. By raising women's political awareness, the GUPW aimed to increase the national ammunition against their colonial oppressors. NGOs and research centres for women emerged in cities like Ramallah and Nablus after forming women's committees. These NGOs

aided women by promoting democracy, advocating to end violence against women, and providing legal aid to those in need. Modern-day feminism in Palestinian includes women combating the current occupation and segregation induced by the state of Israel. Over the recent years, Palestinian women have battled colonialism through literature, politics, and social movements. The women of Palestinian, both inside and outside of the occupied territories, have shown determination and dedication in the fight against annihilation. Women's aggressive participation in Palestinian political and social issues proved feminism could not only exist during the national movement but thrive in a male-dominated environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

4.1 Sahar Khalifeh: The Rise of Nationalist Feminism

Palestinian resistance literature would not be the widely recognized literary form today without the infamous Palestinian novelist Sahar Khalifeh. Khalifeh addresses issues on the national cause and divulges into the social and gender issues within Palestinian society. The feminist novelist incorporates social issues into her novels, creating strong female characters who fight against the patriarchal system and imperial oppressions. Khalifeh has received praise from literary critics who applauded the author's progressive use of feminism and nationalism. The female characters in Khalifeh's novels evolve throughout the series, realizing their place in society and advocating to exchange their patriarchal environment for a free and equal climate. By attacking the oppressive powers who have influenced her work, Khalifeh successfully combats the internal and external factors that suppress the Palestinians.

Khalifeh draws on her experiences living in the West Bank as a woman throughout her literary works. Being raised in a conservative home of nine siblings, only one being a boy, Khalifeh saw firsthand how women were mistreated and seen as inferior to men within her community. The author recalled when her relatives were relieved at her two sisters' deaths because of the "burden" they bared by being girls. At the age of eighteen, Khalifeh attempted to turn to writing as a creative outlet. Still, her family would not allow her to attend university to

pursue a career in literature. In one of her interviews, Khalifeh expressed her discontent with the oppressions she faced as a young woman, "My crime was a familiar one to every girl and woman in my society. I am a girl; this was the crime. How I hated my sex! How I despised femininity and its weakness, how I tried to act like men in walking and talking and behavior! And yet, nobody was convinced that I was like men and that I deserved their rights and privileges and freedom" (Nazareth, 1980, p.70).

Sahar Khalifeh's first novel, *We Are No Longer Your Slaves* (1974), depicts liberated women exploring their freedoms from the patriarchal system that oppressed them for centuries. Although the novel was powerful and inspirational, it lacked feminist awareness, failing to address women's experiences outside of the home (Ismail, 1997, p.26). Khalifeh's vision of women's liberation evolved when writing her third novel, *Sunflower*. *Sunflower* highlights women in the national cause, giving them purpose and prestige within their community. The author uses feminist awareness and nationalism to fight against the oppressions Palestinian women faced. Khalifeh's evolution of writing evoked a new feminist consciousness that strengthened her political and social agenda. The Palestinian writer's literary works support the notion that feminism can coincide with the national cause and suggests that nationalism cannot exist without gender equality.

4.1.1 Wild Thorns Plot Summary

In 1976, Khalifeh's novel, *Al-Sabbar* was first published and in 1985, the novel was translated into English as *Wild Thorns*. The novel is set in Nablus after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. *Wild Thorns* depicts the economic, political, and social changes in occupied Palestine during the initial occupation by Israel. The novel opens with Usama, a young Palestinian man, returning to Nablus from the Gulf where he

worked as a translator. Usama supported the Palestinian resistance movement and was trained as a resistance fighter to combat the Israeli forces. His mission was to return home and blow up Israeli ran buses that transported Palestinian workers into Israel. On his way to visit his mother, Usama reaches an Israeli checkpoint when he returns to the West Bank. At the checkpoint, Usama is harassed by an Israeli soldier and forced to answer repetitive questions about returning to the West Bank. During the interaction scene at the checkpoint, the reader can see the daily hardships that the Palestinians face against their Israeli oppressors, especially the constant inability to move freely within their land. The persecution by the Israeli soldier at checkpoint against Usama represents the colonial violence between the Palestinians and the Israelis. As Usama went through the checkpoint, the cries of an Arab woman who Israeli officers had arrested terrorized Usama.

Upon Usama's return, he becomes disgusted with his homeland. Although the town did not seem to change physically, the social and economic structure of the town changed. Returning home after five years, the young Palestinian is upset to see his people working in Israeli factories and indulging in Israeli-owned products. The people of Palestine had seemed to become complacent with the occupation, having no choice but to accept the Israeli occupants. Usama constantly finds himself infuriated with his people for not boycotting and rejecting Israeli products and the presence of the Israeli invaders. Even his mother was oblivious to the occupied world around her, having been more concerned about her son marrying his cousin rather than concerning herself with stability and liberation.

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories shifted the previous economic and social structure of Palestine, causing the higher class to fall under the poverty line. The fourth chapter introduces Usama's cousin, Adil. Adil came from a once-wealthy family who owned a

thriving farm before the occupation. The al-Karmi farm workers left the farm after the occupation when working in Israeli factories for better wages became available. Having no one to assist him on the farm, Adil had to find work in Israel to support a large family and his ill father, who was dying of kidney failure. Adil can then support and form friendships with the lower-class Palestinian factory workers he would not have had the chance to bond with before the occupation. The reader is introduced to Adil's connection with the Palestinian workers when his colleague, Abu Sabir, was in an accident at work that caused him to lose his fingers on his right hand. Fearing for his friend, Adil called for an ambulance. The Jewish worker who ran the information desk informed Adil that since Abu Sabir did not have a work permit, he could not seek medical attention in Israel. Adil journeys an hour away to Nablus to seek medical attention for his injured friend.

The women of *Wild Thorns* play a vital role in the economic and social structure of the novel. Usama's cousin and Adil's sister, Nuwar, is introduced as an attractive woman who is helping take care of her family within the home. Nuwar's character exemplifies what it is like to be both a woman and a Palestinian living in the occupied territories. Nuwar's mission is to complete her schooling to find work and assist her family during their economic depression. The beautiful Palestinian girl is met with an arranged marriage proposal but rejects these ancient traditions to one day marry her lover, Salih, an imprisoned resistance fighter.

Khalifeh highlights women's roles and attributes to society throughout her novel. The young, boyish-looking girl, Lina, is introduced to the novel as Basil's companion. She is described as short and slender who displayed male-like attributes. Lina is a part of the resistance and is ultimately arrested for her involvement in the bus attacks with Basil and Usama. Khalifeh highlights traditional Palestinian women's roles when she introduces Um Usama and Um Sabir.

These women within the narrative do not veer from their conventional maternal responsibilities. Um Usama seems uninterested in resisting the occupation, only concerning herself with arranging a marriage for her son and prayers to Allah. Both Um Sabir and Um Usama's characters change throughout the novel when they protect their families from Israeli soldiers, displaying signs of resistance. Israeli soldiers barged into Um Usama's home in the middle of the night to locate her son, humiliating the older woman. Um Usama defends her son to the Israeli authority figures, refusing to tarnish his name. Um Sabir, once only concerned with how her husband was going to find work with his injured hand, shifted focus when she violently exchanged words with an Israeli soldier and his family for denying Palestinian fruit. The woman cursed the Israeli soldier and all of his Zionist companions, finding her voice within the resistance.

Wild Thorns enters the heart of the resistance by highlighting the mistreatment of the Palestinians against the Israeli's and the imprisonment of the Palestinian resistance fighters. Usama's cousin, Basil, is a young boy who decides to join the resistance. Basil is arrested and imprisoned for his participation in an occupation protest. Basil entered prison as a shy boy, intimidated by the other prisoners of war. Basil's fellow inmates take the young Palestinian in and educate him on the resistance and Israeli occupation, raising his political awareness of the occupied world around him. After Basil is released from prison, he joins a group of resistance fighters and helps carry out plans to combat the Zionist oppressors.

The narrative also highlights Zuhdi's haunting tale of life in prison. Zuhdi is a close friend of Adil's, and despite his disgust with the occupation, he wants to go on with life, making an honest living. During a heated conversation with a racist Israeli coworker, the offended Zuhdi lashes out and gets into a physical altercation with the Israelis, resulting in the imprisonment of

the Palestinian worker for the murder of an Israeli. While in prison, Zuhdi is educated on the resistance movement and is forced to explore the political realities around him. The cold realities of life in prison and emotional family visits torments Zuhdi.

During Um Sabir's altercation with the Israeli soldier and his family, a man with a kufiya masking his identity stuck a dagger into the officer's neck. The officer dies from the blow in front of his wife and child. The masked man runs off, leaving the family to grieve. Shocked, Um Sabir finds herself grieving for the poor wife of the fallen Israeli soldier. Adil is placed at the scene after the horrific incident. Despite people's urges for him to flee, the noble Adil stays behind to comfort and assist the Israeli family.

After the incident with a high-ranking Israeli officer, a guerrilla resistance fighter blew up an Israeli-owned bus, injuring Palestinian civilians. Zuhdi was ejected from the bus with an injured shoulder. Zuhdi curses the guerrilla fighter and Usama for his involvement in the violent attack. Israeli soldiers swarmed the scene, attacking the resistance fighters with machine guns. Usama and Zuhdi, finally on the same side of the battle, came together to combat the Israeli military. The Zionist army kills both Zuhdi and Usama during the violent attack. As Usama lay dying of his injuries, he reminisced about his mother and his beloved nation, Palestine.

In the Adil home in Nablus, Basil becomes panicked about his involvement with the resistance movement. During dinner with his family, Basil's father harasses him and his sister, imposing his patriarchal ways on them. Frustrated and fed up, Basil lashes out and reveals Nuwar's romance with a guerrilla fighter and Adil's work in Israeli factories. After Basil's shocking announcement, Israeli soldiers burst into the family home. Basil flees from the commotion, later joining the Palestinian military. The novel ends with the Israeli army blowing up Adil family home, causing them to evacuate the house. After packing up the home, Adil's

mother reminds him to bring his father's kidney dialysis machine. Adil becomes conflicted with choosing to leave the device behind or retrieve the machine to keep his father alive. Feeling liberated, Adil decides to leave the machine behind to be blown up with the home, rejecting his father's overbearing financial and patriarchal hold on him and his family.

4.1.2 Wild Thorns Analysis

Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* directly addresses many obstacles that the Palestinians face under the Israeli occupation. This postcolonial novel deals with exile, discrimination, patriarchy, persecution, and the threat of imprisonment. Resistance, national liberation, and steadfastness are running themes throughout the novel. The political and social factors of living under occupation heavily influence the characters' actions in the novel. The Israeli occupation shifts the identity of the main characters, both within themselves and their perspectives of their homeland. This section serves as a literary critical analysis that explores Khalifeh's different themes of resistance, the treatment and expectations of women within the occupied territories, and the underlying effects of living under occupation.

By opening the novel up with the main character, Usama, being interrogated at an Israeli checkpoint, the author allows the reader to understand how post-colonialism changed the land of Palestine. The Palestinians going in and out of the checkpoints face harassment from the Israeli soldiers. The soldiers search, frisk, and question the Palestinians and impose radical taxes and customs duties on clothes and watches. The Israeli merchants sell their goods in Palestinian markets at lower prices, taking advantage of the Palestinians living in poverty who can only afford items at a discounted rate. This section is important to highlight because it shows the Palestinian's need for survival is being challenged by their imperialist oppressors, halting their

desires to resist. Usama is furious when he witnesses the new imperialistic changes made to his homeland and questions his people's complacency:

"Usama glared into the rear-view mirror, staring furiously into the driver's dull eyes. What happened to these people? Was this what the occupation had done to them? Where was their will to resist, their steadfastness?" (Khalifeh, 2003, p.21)

Khalifeh explores both nonviolent and violent resistance throughout her novel.

The two protagonists, Usama and Adil, have different views on national resistance and how to achieve Palestinian liberation. Usama is a rebellious freedom fighter that resorts to violence against the Israeli occupiers. The fighter carries out a plan to bomb the busses that transports Palestinian workers to the Israeli capital, Tel Aviv. Usama is ignited with rage as he witnesses the Israeli forces subject his family and friends to discrimination and humiliation. Usama believes that proper resistance can only be achieved through violence. The Israeli domination took Usama, a well-educated family man, to a dark place fueled by anger and resentment. Usama nonchalantly cautions Adil about his ploy to bomb the busses. A baffled Adil questioned his cousin's decision and addressed the negative consequences of his violent actions. Usama responds to his cousin, saying, ' ... "So what good are their fathers anyway? They're making a pretty poor job of bringing up the new generation, distorting the glories of the resistance." ' (Khalifeh, 2003, p.65) Usama attempts to justify his outrageous actions, believing that war casualties are vital for the resistance movement.

Usama's cousin, Adil, does not concern himself with military-styled resistance but instead focuses on his family's health, well-being, and stability. Adil, whose family was once wealthy Palestinians before the Israeli occupation, works under Israeli employers. Adil's

methods of resistance are less radical than Usama's more unorthodox approach. Adil contributes to the Palestinian cause by keeping his community out of poverty, preventing them from being separated or displaced. Although Adil is devoted to Palestine, his loyalty and dedication lie with his coworkers and family. By taking care of his family and surviving the occupation, Adil is exhibiting signs of resistance by not giving up and persevering through even the darkest times.

It is crucial to note Adil's method of resistance. Khalifeh encourages the reader to understand the difference in perspectives of Palestinians living in the diaspora and the Palestinians living under direct Israeli occupation. Unlike Usama, who moved away to Kuwait for five years, Adil never left the Palestinian territories. Living in the diaspora, Usama despises that his people appear to be comfortable living under Israeli rule. Adil and Usama's ideologies clash because Usama does not understand the Palestinian's lack of resistance. Adil disagrees with Usama's radical philosophies. Adil believes that for the Palestinian people to live peacefully within the territories, they must accept the presence of their occupiers. His nonviolent approach to resistance stems from the reality that the Palestinians all have the same goals as colonized people, survival. Khalifeh invites the reader to recognize Adil's nonviolent, compassionate approach when Adil comforts the mother and young daughter of the Israeli officer whom Um Sabir struck down with a dagger:

Adil spoke to the Israeli woman. She rested her head on Adil's shoulder,
moaning to herself,

"Calm yourself," he said gently in Hebrew. He splashed water on the little girl's
face, who stirred.

A man rushed past, yelling, "Leave them alone, Adil. The patrol cars are coming."

He ignored the warning, moved over towards the body, and took the man's wrist to examine his pulse... Adil tore the star off and tossed them to the ground. Then he picked up the little girl, hoisted her onto his shoulders, and walked off down the empty street. Her mother followed behind, silently weeping." (Khalifeh, 2003, p.160)

Adil's act of compassion is significant because he is denouncing violence and displaying empathy to the family of the colonial victim.

Adil's gets into an explosive argument with Usama over his nonviolent path, showing his desire for harmony. Adil sobs and shouts, "convince me that what I am doing isn't part of the struggle, that the fight has fixed ground rules... You can have my life, Usama, if you can only convince me that freedom means that people who can't defend themselves go hungry. And that there's happiness in hunger." (Khalifeh, 2003, p.63) Adil's views depict the struggles of the working class to choose to revolt against their colonial oppressors or work and live under occupation to fend for themselves and their families.

By exploring both violent and nonviolent forms of resistance, Khalifeh illustrates two routes Palestinians take to achieve liberation. The two types of views towards resistance initiate discussions of the different models of resistance used against colonialism. The author does not favor or denounce either form of resistance but instead explores each resistance technique executed by Palestinians. Eyo (2017) observed the works of postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon and claims "colonialism itself is an act of complete violence and thus can only be overcome by revolutionary and spontaneous violence, which is the violence of liberation and emancipation" (p.1) Usama manifests his aggression towards his oppressors by concluding that violence was the route he would take to achieve social freedom for the people of Palestine. Fanon (1963) states that "when the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension" (p.36). This type of tension can be seen in the novel when Usama witnesses

his people conform to the demands of the Israeli forces. To Usama, Adil, along with the other Palestinians, accepted their fate as conquered subjects. Usama refuses to comply with the Israeli troops and subject himself to servitude. Usama is passionate about Palestine and how life was before the occupation. His hate towards Israel stems from his love of the land he had lost. Usama's love for Palestine is so strong that he is willing to sacrifice his own life to defend his nation's honor. During Usama's final moments, he thinks about his mother and the self-sacrifice he made for Palestine:

“You, mother, you're an angel. And me, I'm a real lion, mother; tell everyone I died a martyr, a martyr to the cause. A martyr to the land.” (Khalifeh, 2003. p.185)

Usama accepted his fate as a violent resistance fighter, believing there was no other way to achieve true liberation. Khalifeh chose to depict the realities of violent resistance to highlight the lived experiences of Palestinians living under Israeli governance.

Wild Thorns thoroughly examines and depicts the mistreatment of Palestinians throughout the novel. Themes such as class struggle and Israeli ran prisons are key struggles highlighted by Khalifeh. The lack of job opportunities within the occupation forced Palestinians living in the occupied territories to work in Israeli factories for financial survival. The Palestinians working in Israeli factories faced poor working conditions such as low wages, lack of health care, and being overworked. Adil and his coworkers worked long, grueling hours to support their families. The number of resources for Palestinian workers is limited and made a challenge to obtain by their oppressors. Adil's close coworker, Abu Sabir, loses his finger from an on-the-job injury while working in the factory. Abu Sabir did not have a work permit, leaving him without compensation or medical attention from the Israeli factory. His injury left him without work, forcing his son to drop out of school to work so that he can support his family.

Adil believes that Abu Sabir's right to be awarded compensation encourages him to work alongside the occupying forces and seek compensation despite his previous claim denial. With encouragement from Adil, Abu Sabir sought compensation for his injury. Although the Israeli factory awarded his claim, Abu Sabir could not collect his compensation because the factory filed for bankruptcy. Abu Sabir is left feeling defeated and helpless, causing him to become more jaded by the occupation. By highlighting the ill-treatment of the Palestinian workers, the author invites the reader to witness the discrimination and cruelty the Palestinians face against their employers.

Khalifeh depicts the realities of the Israeli prisons and the experiences of the Palestinian prisoners. The Palestinians experienced metaphoric prison by living under occupation but are physically detained and imprisoned by Israeli forces. Basil and his friend's conversation on the lack of opportunities for Palestinians living in the occupied territories promote the ideology of a metaphoric prison:

“Look, this is the situation. First, at elementary school, we're repressed and tamed. Then, at secondary school, our personalities are crushed. In high school, they foist an obsolete curriculum on us and our families begin pressuring us to get the highest grades so we can become doctors and engineers, they demand that we pay them back for the cost of our studies. And our parents don't work their fingers to the bone paying for our education so that we'll return and work for peanuts at home. So the only solution is emigration, which means working in Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Gulf. What's the result of all this? Educated people leave the country, and only workers and peasants remain. And that's exactly what Israel wants to happen.” (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 59)

Basil and his friend maintain that the social and education systems work to oppress the younger generations, preventing them from thriving and leading their communities. The educated youth migrating to neighboring countries for better opportunities increase the notion that the occupation cripples the Palestinian economy, further strengthening the Israeli force's hold on the land.

Although the Israeli militia imprisoned Palestinians for various reasons, the author highlights prisoners in the novel that Israeli forces detained for their involvement in the resistance movement. The physical prison is illustrated as a place of liberation and rebellion. Jail does not deter many of the prisoners from their quest for resistance; it encourages the evolving idea of revolution and freedom. Basil witnesses the revolutionary spirits of the prisoners while he is in prison. The prison cells are filled with chants and clapping, showing continual resistance while in prison. The freedom fighters can be heard yelling, “Revolution! Revolution until victory!” (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 119) Feeling the revolutionary spirit, the Palestinian prisoners recite a poem by Kamal Nasser, a Palestinian poet and activist assassinated in Beirut in 1972 by an Israeli hit squad.

Strike, executioner, we're not afraid.
These dark brows
Beaded with sweat
Are burned with chains
So the nation will live
Strike then, and have no fear! (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 119)

Confinement could not eradicate the revolutionary spirits of the Palestinian freedom fighters.

Nuwar's lover, Salih, is introduced to the novel as a political prisoner in the Israeli prison. Salih's political intelligence and leadership skills threatened the Israeli forces, causing his capture and detainment. Salih has an advanced understanding of the political world around him, fueling his desire for national liberation. The freedom fighter's knowledge of politics and literacy leads him to create the “people's school” where he educates the prisoners on various topics. Basil, along with the other prisoners, gains some insight from Salih's teachings, expanding their social and political awareness. Salih's comprehension of Israel's economic and political hold over the Palestinians helps drive his dedication to the Palestinian revolutionary group to rise above their Israeli oppressors.

Adil's comrade, Zuhdi, was not well received by the other prisoners when he arrives at the prison for assaulting an Israeli factory worker after he called him a "dirty Arab" (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 112). Unlike Basil and Salih, who were respected and accepted by the Palestinian prisoners, Zuhdi is alienated and misunderstood due to his position within the Israeli owned factories. The other prisoners believe that Zuhdi may be an Israeli informant and avoid interacting with the prisoner. The alienation from the other prisoners made Zuhdi feel lonelier than the five days of solitary confinement he endured. Confused by the separation, Zuhdi asks, "What's going on? Doesn't anybody care about me? Even the Jews didn't act like this. Their blows, their interrogations, were easier to take than this terrible indifference. At least with them, you still had some sense of worth, of being a man, of having important information Israel was trying to get at." (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 127) It was not until the prisoners discovered that Zuhdi was not an informant that they accepted Zuhdi and considered him a comrade. Zuhdi's initial alienation illustrates the division and skepticism of Palestinians because of Israeli corruption and manipulation.

Although the author features male characters as the protagonists, she highlights the female characters and their contributions to the resistance movement throughout the novel. *Wild Thorns* illustrates the Palestinian society during the Israeli occupation. During the occupation, men took on more dominant positions, leaving women to support the home. The five main women characters range from having a strong sense of nationalism and resisting imperialism to having a passive attitude towards the occupation, accepting their fate. Khalifeh explores women's roles within the family and the daunting task of maintaining a familial structure in a patriarchal society. The female characters evolve throughout the novel, shifting from a complacent and fearful mindset to a more confident role, committing to the national movement.

The older women in the novel appeared to be more apathetic towards the occupation and their roles in the resistance. Usama's mother is portrayed as a passive character, having concerned herself more with Usama's future marriage than rebelling against her oppressors. The widow relies heavily on her nephew, Adil, having him help with all of her financial and familial obligations. Although Usama's mother is concerned with society and bonds with her neighbors, she does not involve herself with the politics of the land. Usama addresses his mother's lack of political drive, "Mother, 'he said, 'you arrange marriages and deaths and plan other people's lives. But when real crises come, you say it's God who'll solve it all!'" (p.37) Usama's mother appeared to want to distract herself from the occupation and carry on with traditional roles, fulfilling her motherly duties. Usama's mother's passive attitude changes towards the end of the novel when Israeli soldiers barge into her home looking for her son.

She gazed coolly at the machine-gun.

"Put that thing away, please, 'she said, 'and stop your silly games. I want to put my dressing gown on.'

She reached out to the machine-gun, pushed it out of her way and walked over to the wardrobe. He kept close behind her, his gun still at the ready.

"You seem to have been expecting our visit!"

She didn't answer, but put on her dressing gown and covered her hair with her prayer scarf.

"Well, weren't you expecting us to come?"

"No," she replied coldly.

"You act as though you're used to our presence in your home!" said the soldier.

"I'm used to your presence in my neighbors' homes... and who doesn't expect your visit these days? We're under occupation. What else should we expect?" (Khalifeh, 2003, p.

166)

Usama's mother's resilience and strength during times of threat and uncertainty showed the importance of alliances during the occupation.

Nawar's introduction to the novel highlights the patriarchal issues within the Palestinian society. Nawar, Adil's sister, is described as a timid girl who denounces the Israeli occupation and participates as an activist in the resistance. Nuwar is in a secret relationship with a resistance fighter, Salih, despite having been in an arranged marriage set up by her father. Nuwar and Salih communicate through letters because he is in Israeli prison. Nuwar's father cannot know of her relationship because he will denounce her as his daughter, disowning her entirely. Nuwar rejects her father's fiancé selection, refusing to marry anyone else but the man she chooses for herself. When defending her desire to choose her suitor, Nuwar decided she would be the family's sole financial provider. Nuwar planned on getting a well-paying job after graduating, helping to persuade her father into allowing her to marry at her own free will. Nuwar and her brother, Basil, discuss her father's plans for his daughter:

“Now if I were you, ‘Basil went on frankly, ‘I wouldn't have kept the whole thing a secret. It's not a secret anyway. Everyone knows except Mother and Father.’

“But what if Father finds out?” she whispered fearfully.

“Well, so what if he does? Why shouldn't he know? Why should you always be on the defensive? And what if some “good prospect” came along and asked to marry you and father agreed without discussing it with you?”

“Well, she replied hesitantly, ‘I'd refuse.’

“But what if Father agreed despite your refusal?”

“I'd go on saying no.”

“Even if Father had already agreed? The day's coming, Nuwar, when he'll insist on

making a profitable match. Then you'll be forced to face the situation.” (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 187)

Nuwar's inability to rise against her father's demands and choose her own destiny allows the reader to gain some insight as to how patriarchy still dominated Palestine, despite its occupation.

Nuwar's father is infuriated when Basil announces that Nuwar is secretly involved with a freedom fighter. Terrified, Nuwar admits her truth and defends her position:

Nuwar jumped to her feet and burst out,

“Yes, yes! I will marry him. I won't marry

anyone but Salih. No one else... I'll never marry anyone except Salih, even if I have to wait a hundred years.” (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 200.)

Nuwar's prideful father asks, “She visits him in public?” he gasped. “What must people be saying about the venerable house of al-Karmi, and about me?” (Khalifeh, 2003, p. 200) Although Nuwar is initially considered a weak character, unable to stand up to her father and reject his arranged marriage proposal to a wealthy physician, she ultimately advocates for her rights, setting new boundaries and opposing the traditional patriarchal society.

4.2 Susan Abulhawa: A Generational View on Palestinian Nationalism

Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian American writer, activist, and founder of a nonprofit organization, *Playgrounds for Palestine*. Abulhawa is a bestselling author, having multiple novels published and translated into 25 languages. The Palestinian writer published her first novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, in 2006 and then wrote her second novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, in 2013. Finding love for poetry, Abulhawa published a poetry collection, *My Voice Sought the Wind* (2013). Abulhawa uses nationalism and feminist consciousness to illustrate the Palestinian struggle within the occupied territories. Being a Palestinian American, the author's

literary works depict the idea of "home" and the dramatic experiences of living in exile. By highlighting the generational effects the Nakba had on the Palestinian people and illustrating their perseverance and resistance, Abulhawa sheds light and the mistreatment of the Palestinian people by the Israeli government.

Being born to refugees of the 1967 Six-Day War, Abulhawa understood what it meant to be a stateless person living in exile. In one of her interviews, Abulhawa revisits the initial inspiration for her first novel. After hearing about the horrific results of the aftermath of the massacre in the refugee camp of *Jenin*, Abulhawa decided to travel to the camp to witness the immediate impact the massacre left on the camp. Upon returning to the states, the author began writing about what she had seen and her experience in the occupied territories. Abulhawa's writings of the massacre turned into her best-selling novel, *Mornings in Jenin*. Abulhawa suggests that the Palestinian narrative from the Palestinians' perspective has been a recent phenomenon, claiming that the Palestinian narrative has traditionally been told by Israelis and Westerners (Shannon,2012). The Palestinian American writer wanted the chance to tell the Palestinian narrative from the Palestinian people's perspective. By using Western language and culture to reach a broader audience, Abulhawa successfully allowed the Palestinians' voices to be heard through her literary works.

4.2.1 Mornings in Jenin Plot Summary

Susan Abulhawa's novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, was first published in 2006 under the title *The Scar of David*. The novel was later translated to French and published as *Les Matins de Jenin*. Abulhawa's work is translated into 20 languages, and the novel was eventually published in 2010 as *Mornings in Jenin* (Abulhawa, 2010, p.323). In her novel, Abulhawa explores the lived experiences and traumas of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's initial occupation

from the perspective of a Palestinian refugee, Amal. Abulhawa's main objective is to broadcast and educate the reader on the realities of this conflict that have devastated the Palestinian people for decades.

The novel follows the Abulheja family, telling the hardships of the occupation from four generations of Palestinians from 1941 to the present day. Already threatened by the Zionist invaders, the novel introduces Amal's grandparents, exploring life before the first occupation, followed by the lived experiences of Amal's parents, learning to survive the 1948 Nakba. Amal is introduced as a Palestinian refugee, having been thrust into conflict from the moment she was born. By the end of the novel, Amal becomes a Palestinian American who eventually gives birth to her Palestinian daughter, who, like her mother, develops a nationalistic attitude, fueling their exilic consciousness. Abualhawa's novel is filled with oppressive and patriarchal undertones, creating a quest for liberation for the protagonist and her family. The concept of "self-discovery" and identity is a running theme throughout the entire novel. Each character struggles with identity at some point in the narrative, attempting to morph and keep up with their ever-changing environments from the occupation.

The novel opens in the Palestinian village of Ein Hod. Yehya, a decisive family man, and his charming wife, Basima are introduced to the reader. Basima is depicted as a traditional Palestinian housewife, cooking, cleaning, and ensuring her sons gave Allah thanks. Yehya's two sons, Hasan and Darweesh, are introduced to the reader. Both sons are depicted as kind, gentle individuals, wanting to work hard to impress their parents. As the narrative shifts, the author introduces a young Bedouin girl by the name of Dalia. Dalia is described as willful and holding

unconventional ideologies, often seen when she is in public, without wearing her hijab and exploring the world around her, dirtying her dress.

Hasan, infatuated with Dalia's beauty and drive, falls in love with her and asks for her hand in marriage. Within a year of the wedding, Dalia gave birth to her firstborn son, Yousef, and years later, another son named Ismael.

Tragedy would soon strike the Abulheja family, sending them into turmoil. Basima suffered a heart attack after a loud explosion from a bomb went off near their village. A year later, Israel declared its independence, marking the start of the Palestinian catastrophe. Following the new state of Israel's announcement, Arab forces from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq formed together. They invaded the new state, creating an entire war between the Zionist army and the Arab nations. Communities were forced out of their homes, having to flee to nearby villages and other countries. The Abulheja family, along with many other families, was dispersed and left with little to nothing. Israel's occupation sends the family to a refugee camp in Jenin, located in the West Bank. While living in the Jenin camp in the West Bank, the Israeli forces created uncertainties and obstacles for the Palestinian family. Amid the chaos and mayhem caused by the Israeli army's invasion, an Israeli soldier takes Ismael. The abduction happened so quickly that the panicked Dalia did not realize her son was missing from her arms until it was too late. Years after the disappearance of Ismael, the family welcomes a baby girl, Amal. Amal becomes the main narrator and protagonist of the Abulheja family tale.

The novel introduces Amal as a curious and wild soul. On one hot evening in June of 1967, the Abulheja family would soon face another round of strife and turmoil. The Zionist army attacked Egypt, calling for the Arab nations to unite against Israel through combat. The men in Jenin geared up for war. Amal's father distributed hidden weapons to his Palestinian allies in the

camp. The women and children in the camp were ordered to “stay put while the men were to hunker into defensive positions” (Abulhawa, 2010, p.66). The refugee camp in Jenin confronted the wrath of the Israeli invasion. Unlike many other families, Dalia refused to leave the camp and instead hid Amal, Huda, and her infant niece in a secret hole under their kitchen floor. The aftermath of the invasion sends Dalia into a state of shock that she cannot recover from for over a month. Amal always thought Dalia to be cold and distant towards her because of all the losses she faced with the war, but the 1967 conflict made Amal feel like she would never get the affectionate mother she longed to have.

The Israeli army captured Yosef, the eldest of Dalia’s three children, and took him as a prisoner of war for six months. A young Yousef, along with so many other young Palestinian boys, would be victimized and at the mercy of the Zionist army. In captivity, a delusional and overpowered Yousef encountered an Israeli soldier who resembled his lost brother, Ismael. Ismael was indeed an Israeli soldier that went by the name of David. David was raised as an Israeli Jew by his captor, Mooshe, who led David to believe he was his son. His whole life, David grew up learning to despise the Palestinians and fight for Israel's new state. During the war of 1967, David is working a checkpoint where his superior invites him to “come see this son-of-a-whore Arab” and goes on to say, “He looks just like your fucking twin!” (Abulhawa, 2010, p.105) The encounter was not a joyous moment as David slapped Yousef when he asked if his name was Ismael. David’s abuse towards his brother went on as he repeatedly kicked Yousef in the groin until Yousef was unconscious. David’s violent behavior illustrates a hovering a secret he did not want to know.

With her mother's death, her father's departure, and Yousef joining the Palestinian resistance, Amal is sent to an all-girls orphanage in Jerusalem, leaving behind the only home she has ever known. The young Palestinian would spend four years receiving an education and growing close with her new companions. Excelling in school, Amal received a scholarship and the opportunity to study in the United States. Amal welcomed the unique and thrilling opportunity that would change her life and take her away from the threat of war. In America, Amal initially struggles with fitting in, conflicted with issues of personal and national identity. While living in America, Amal changes her name to Amy and becomes immersed in American culture.

It was 1978 when Yousef reached out to Amal, hoping to reunite with her in the Middle East. Amal reunites with her older brother living with his pregnant wife, Fatima, in Lebanon. Amal when meets and falls in love with Yousef's comrade, Majid. The pair married soon after their initial romance, and Amal became pregnant with her first child. However, due to Israeli forces threatening a full-scale military attack on Beirut as a response to its border war with the PLO, Majid and Amal decide she should go back to America. Accepting her husband's decision to stay in Beirut, Amal returned to America alone. When Amal returned to the states, she found out she would have a little girl, Sara. Amal shared the news with her husband before Israel attacked Lebanon, leaving the nation ravaged with thousands of casualties. Abulhawa uses the historical events from the Sabra and Shatila massacre of 1982 to illustrate the devastation Israel caused the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon:

By August, the results were 17,500 civilians killed, 40,000 wounded, 400,000 homeless, and 100,000 without shelter. Prostrate, Lebanon lay devastated and raped, with no infrastructure for food or water. Israel claimed it had been forced to invade for peace (Abulhawa, 2010, p.219).

Amal lost both Majid and her sister-in-law, Fatima, during the Israeli invasion. After the massacre, Amal gives birth to her daughter, Sarah. Although Amal claimed she was a better mother during her daughter's first few years, Amal still isolated her feelings, fearing she would get too close and risk losing another family member she loved.

In 2001, Amal received a phone call from a man named David Avaram. Shocked by the call, Amal entertains the phone conversation and is open to the idea of meeting her long-lost brother. Amal invited David to visit her in the United States to reconcile and become the siblings the war would not allow in their youth. Despite David's previous alliance with the imperial army, Amal accepted David as her brother and loved him unconditionally. David's identity quest leads him, Amal, and Sara to voyage back to the Middle East. After their trip to Jerusalem, Amal and her teenage daughter journeyed to her childhood camp, Jenin. Amal navigates to her neighborhood, where she locates her dear friend, Huda. On the third night in Jenin, Amal was with Huda when Israeli tanks and bullets woke them from their slumber. As Amal and Sara lay hiding, waiting for the commotion to end, the mother and daughter reconciled. With the fear of death hovering over them, Sara apologized for her insensitivity towards Amal's cold demeanor, and Amal embraced her daughter in a way she had never done before this moment. On the seventh day in Jenin, the camp is still under attack, and Amal is still in the presence of her daughter and best friend. Amal goes outside to witness the camp's destruction when an armed Israeli soldier approaches her. The young soldier freezes as he makes eye contact with his potential victim.

As the soldier points his rifle at Amal's head, she notices snipers aiming their weapons at her daughter. Selflessly, Amal throws herself onto Sara's body, shielding her from the sniper's

bullet. The bullet had pierced through Amal, killing her on impact. Amal had died happily, knowing that she was able to protect her daughter. Devastated, Sara begged the young soldier to shoot her. Refusing to kill anymore, the young soldier took Sara back to Huda's home and buried Amal's corpse under a shallow tree. Amal was buried in Jenin, being sent off by David, Huda, and Sara. After the burial, Ari takes Sara and David on a tour of Ein Hod. Ari takes the pair to the family home but cannot go inside because a Jewish family occupied the house and refused them entry. Sara would sponsor a visa for Huda's son and invites him to live with her in her family home in Pennsylvania. In the final chapter, 'Yousef, the Cost of Palestine,' the novel ends with Yousef hiding, contemplating suicide. The reader learns that Yousef did not commit the terrorist attack. Although he was filled with hatred and sought revenge, he could not bring himself to continue the violence.

4.2.2 Mornings in Jenin Analysis

Mornings in Jenin is a form of resistance literature that depicts the Palestinian struggle of displacement and self-identity. The introduction of colonialism shifts the political and social experiences of the characters. Abulhawa explores the themes of nationalism, exile, and liberation throughout the novel. Each character faces loss and tragedy while living under the mandate of their oppressors. The characters in the novel have to adapt to their unstable environment to survive the turmoil brought on by the occupation. The experience of displacement and destruction helped shape the Palestinians' ideologies, forcing them to reconfigure their notion of identity and definition of "home."

Dalia's character is one of the most captivating characters in the novel. Her resilience and dedication to her family demonstrated the magnitude of strength and will it takes to be a

Palestinian mother during war times. Dalia's depiction as a young and wild soul in her youth continued throughout her mature years as a mother and wife. Before taking a revolutionary stance against her Israeli oppressors, Dalia was viewed as a rebellious girl who opposed ancient patriarchal traditions. When a young Dalia is caught stealing Darweesh's horse, Dalia's disgraced father publicly branded her hand to punish her for her crimes and antics:

Dalia made no sound as the burning metal seared the skin of her right palm. The crowd gasped.

"How cruel the Bedouins are," said a woman, and some people implored Dalia's father to stop in the name of Allah, to have mercy because Allah is Merciful. Al Rahma.

But a man must be the ruler of his home."

"My honor shall have no blemish. Step back; this is my right," the Bedouin demanded.

It was his right." (Abulhawa, 2010, p.15)

Dalia's father's selfish and abusive behavior sheds light on the patriarchal society embedded into the culture of many families in this region. Family members who do not live by the Bedouins' cultural expectations are deemed to be bringing shame and dishonor to the whole family unit (Abu-rabia, et al, 2005). Family honor is a crucial feature within the traditional Bedouin society. Although Dalia's father's actions seemed cruel, he practiced their traditional honor system ingrained into their Bedouin society.

Abulhawa revisits family honor when Huda's abuse gets brought up when Amal recalls the events that led up to Huda living with her and her family. The reader can witness the flaws of living in a patriarchal society when Huda divulges the real reason she came to live with Amal. Huda is molested and assaulted by her father while under his care.

Huda's father was the reason she came to live with us. He was a dreadful man who beat her, and when she was eight, *It* happened. He did *It* to her. It would be an unforgivable betrayal to utter the word. After *It* happened the first and only time, she confessed to me as if *It* were her disgrace, and she allowed me to tell Baba. Alarm had concentrated in Baba's eyes when I relayed the heavy secret, which I did not fully understand. With firm caution, Baba ordered me to honor Huda's confidence with discretion. If people knew, it would have been *fadeeha*. Such scandal involving a girl's virginity was of serious consequences in our culture. (Abulhawa , 2010, p.84)

Interestingly, Abulhawa does not use the term "rape" when illustrating the horrific act Huda's father committed and instead refers to it as "*It*." It is important to note that the author tells the story from Amal's viewpoint as a child, someone who did not fully comprehend what had indeed happened to her dear friend. Amal's naiveté demonstrates the limitations of knowledge on sexuality within their society. It is also important to note how faulty the patriarchal system is. Amal's father prohibits her from speaking about the rape incident, as it would be taboo in their culture. In this society, the female victim would be seen as an outcast and brought shame to her family because of her disgusting acts. Females who are sexually assaulted are always perceived as causing shame and dishonor to the collective (family and society), in addition to upsetting social equilibrium and stability (Shalhoub-Kevorkain,1999). Within their community, there is no law criminalizing paternal sexual abuse. Shalhoub-Kevorkain (1999) claims that "the complexity of rape crime increases when dealing with more traditional and patriarchal societies. She explains how females' low status, coupled with their social powerlessness, economic dependency, gender inequality, and system inequality, reinforces the patriarchal nature of society, which depends on the subjection and control of women" (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999, p.191). Although Amal's father saves Huda from living with her abusive father, Huda's father faces no consequences for the crimes against his daughter. Even though there is no criminalization of child molestation by a father of his daughter, the author highlights the

importance of Amal's father rescuing Huda and making her a part of his family. Hasan's act of heroism is the author's way of showing resistance towards the traditional patriarchal society.

Mornings in Jenin thoroughly explores the concept of nationalism. Whether Yousef decides to fight for his country or Dalia refusing to flee her community while under attack, each Palestinian character carries a strong sense of nationalism throughout the novel. Unlike many other families, Dalia refused to leave the camp when Israel attacked Jenin during the 1967 Six-Day War. Instead of fleeing with her family, Dalia hid Amal, Huda, and her infant niece in a secret hole under their kitchen floor. The mother was without the protection of her husband and son. Dalia's resilience is critical to note because so much had been taken away from her in the diaspora; she refused to give in to her oppressors. The Palestinian mother is attempting to keep her family and community safe while simultaneously challenging the imperialist army. Palestinian women living in the diaspora had to take on the role of mother and father during war times. The men took up arms with the invasions, leaving the women and children behind to fend for themselves. The presence of women was prevalent in the occupied territories of Palestine. Dalia protecting her family is an actual act of heroism. Dalia's courage and determination proved liberation and resistance could be achieved in a way that does not reflect militarism.

The characters in *Mornings in Jenin* are constantly on a quest for identity. The traumatic changes to their environment placed a continual shift on their personal and national identity. Amal's brother, David, struggles with personal identity, being conflicted as an Israeli soldier and a Palestinian descendant. Amal struggles with diasporic identity when she arrives in America for her education.

“But my foreignness showed in my brown skin and accent. Statelessness clung to me like bad perfume and the airplane hijackings of the seventies trailed my Arabic Surname.”
(Abulhawa, 2010, p.169)

As years pass while living in America, Amal fully submerges herself within American society and culture. Amal even changes her name to Amy, attempting to detach from her Palestinian roots.

“For the first time, I lived without threats and the sediments of war. I lived free of soldiers, free from inherited dreams and martyrs tugging at my hands. But every house has its demons. I metamorphosed into an unclassified Arab-Western hybrid, unrooted and unknown. I drank alcohol and dated several men- acts that would have earned me repudiation in Jenin.” (Abulhawa, 2010, p.173)

Amal is often met with guilt by her attempts to suppress her Palestinian identity. She feels as though she betrayed not only her family but herself. Amal claims that she needed physical distance to remove herself from those haunting realities she left in Jenin. Amal’s guilt is vital to highlight because although Amal “escaped” warfare and constant intimidation, the author invites the reader to understand that Palestinians living in the diaspora never genuinely lose the sense of “home.” Amal may have settled into America with the hopes of escaping her past, but her heart will forever belong to Palestine

The author highlights the cruelties of the Israeli military throughout the novel. The Israeli army captured Yousef, the eldest of Dalia’s three children, and took him as a prisoner of war for six months. During his captivity, Yousef’s captors severely battered and humiliated him. During his confinement, the young Palestinian fighter recalls the first week of his detention.

“‘Example ’was but a pebble. I had heard and said it countless times before: ‘for example. ’Such an insignificant and mediocre word invades the happy days of my youth and steals the memory of playing soccer with young Jamal, whom the Jews make an ‘ example ’right before my eyes. I watch life trickle from the bullet wound of a sixteen-year-old ‘example ’and marvel how things weak, even words, will turn vicious and merciless to gain power, despite reason or history.’” (Abulhawa, 2010, p.101)

A young Yousef, along with so many other youthful Palestinian boys, would be victimized and at the mercy of the Zionist army. Their youth and bliss were stripped from them, forcing them to mature rapidly during a time of hostility and bloodshed.

During the section where the Israeli army attacks the camp where the pregnant Amal and her family reside, the author describes the raid's severity. Abulhawa uses the historical events from the Sabra and Shatila massacre of 1982 to illustrate the devastation Israel caused the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon:

By August, the results were 17,500 civilians killed, 40,000 wounded, 400,000 homeless, and 100,000 without shelter. Prostrate, Lebanon lay devastated and raped, with no infrastructure for food or water. Israel claimed it had been forced to invade for peace (Abulhawa, 2010, p.219).

Amal lost both Majid and her sister-in-law, Fatima, during the Israeli invasion. The author highlights the cruelties of the Israeli attacks when describing the events of Fatima and her unborn child's death:

On the other side of the main road, up a track through the debris, we found the bodies of five women and several children. The women were middle-aged, and their corpses lay draped over a pile of rubble (Abulhawa, 2010, p.226).

Yousef calls Amal to tell her the horrible news:

"How much must we endure and how much must we give?"

he wailed like a child.

"Fatima! My darling, Fatima! Did you see what they did?"

he asked, screamed, and he answered himself, "They ripped her bell, Amal."

I had no words.

"They ripped my Fatima's belly with a Knife!...They killed my babies." He screamed more. "They killed my babies, Amal. Oh, God! Oh God..." (Abulhawa, 2010, p.227)

The Israeli forces had once again stripped Amal from the joys of her family. Amal could not escape the bloodshed, no matter how hard she tried. Not even the young and innocent were victims of the ruthless invaders.

Although Abulhawa depicts the Israeli army as colonial oppressors, she humanizes the individual Jewish characters in her novel. The Jewish characters are empathetic towards the Palestinian protagonists and help support and aid them throughout the novel. The author acknowledges the pain and loss of both the Palestinians and the Jewish people. These positive attributes are essential to note because although the author addresses colonialism and oppression, she can still illustrate the compassion Jewish people can still have for the Palestinians. The reader can witness the Jewish characters' kindness when an armed Israeli soldier approaches Amal after breaking a curfew. The armed soldier points his gun at Amal when she comes outside. The young soldier freezes as he makes eye contact with his potential victim. In this instance, Amal sympathizes with the young soldier.

“I feel sad for him. Sad for the boy bound to the killer. I am sad for the youth betrayed by their leaders for symbols and flags and war and power.”

Amal goes on to have a revelation about her dear brother, David:

“Is this how Yousef saw David? With inexplicable love?

Oh, David! Brother. I see you so clearly now. You have lived a stranger in your own skin. You searched for years to find me, never giving up when each lead to your family sent you to a grave or morbid headline.” (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 306)

Amal’s soliloquy is important to highlight because it is as though the author is humanizing the soldiers of war instead of depicting them as monsters. Although the Abulhawa herself has experienced the traumas of living in exile, she does not allow her vendettas to interrupt the

message she is trying to send. The individual Israeli characters portrayed in the novel show humanistic qualities that are not poisoned by political ideologies. Amal showing sympathy towards the soldier and her brother demonstrates her abilities to forgive the imperial forces who caused so much pain and suffering to her people. Amal realizes that both sides of the conflict have suffered tremendous losses, and with warfare, no party comes out victorious. The soldier goes against his colonial commanders and refuses to kill anyone else after Amal's death. The young soldier offers Sara and Huda water after burying Amal's body to shield her from the fallout. The soldier's act of kindness shows that not all Israeli citizens despise the Palestinians and seek peace.

The author explores Palestinian humanity when she revisits Yousef after the U.S bombing accusations. Abulhawa intentionally ends the novel with Yousef alone, in hiding. Although Yousef is accused of bombing the U.S. embassy, he could not bring himself to commit any more violence and refused to attack the U.S. embassy. With the loss of his wife and sister, Yousef is overwhelmed with grief and isolation. Despite Yousef going to war and fighting as a soldier against Israel in his youth, Yousef chooses to end his quest for revenge and regain humanity. The author suggests that the cost of being Palestinian is to be left with memories that could no longer be attainable. In his letter to Amal, Yousef closes with a line that describes his fate as a Palestinian:

“For I'll keep my humanity, though I did not keep my promises...and Love shall not be wrested from my veins.” (Abulhawa, 2010.)

Despite the tragedies and anguish Yousef encountered, he still held on to his humanity.

4.3 Limitations and Future Studies

Although this study mainly focused on analyzing two novels, *Wild Thorns* and *Mornings in Jenin*, other novels and writers contribute to women's resistance writing. Resistance literature is a broad genre, but this thesis limits the analysis to women's contributions to the literary theme.

Not much research on women writers' contributions to resistance writing adds to the study's limitations. Another limitation this thesis faced was the lack of literary works translated to English. Some of the novels I would have liked to use during my research was not available in the English language, limiting the novel selection to analyze potentially.

If I could expand on this thesis' analysis, I would explore all literary works from Sahar Khalifeh and Susan Abulhawa and attempt to apply them to my findings. I would like to explore contemporary Palestinian novelists with writings during the 21st century. Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still an ongoing dilemma, the Palestinian diaspora took place in 1948. Progressive peace plans and treaties have occurred over the years, attempting to resolve the prolonged conflict. It would be interesting to see what lies ahead for Palestine's future and what contributes future Palestinian writers will make towards the national cause.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

By highlighting women's contributions in colonial societies, Khalifeh and Abulhawa support postcolonial, strengthening the need for equality in Third World gender studies. This study aimed to explore and analyze how resistance and feminist-themed literature promote the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's understanding and perception from a Third World women's perspective. This thesis highlighted the realm of resistance literature and the contributions Palestinian writers made to the contemporary literary mode. Resistance literature emerged from the Palestinian struggle against imperial forces who confiscated and ravaged their land. The

ongoing battle against colonial oppressors evoked a social and political consciousness within the Palestinian people that promoted nationalism within their community. The attitude on conflict from women's perspective is imperative because women are underrepresented in male-dominated scholarship, failing to analyze the multitude of contributes women have made to Third World societies.

Palestinian Resistance literature took national movements and created a platform for the oppressed to be heard globally. This literary phenomenon reached the international community, challenging negative Western stereotypes and assumptions about Third World resistance. Resistance writers from both inside and outside of the occupied territories shared their experiences that promoted the themes of their literary works. The uprooting of communities and denial of fundamental human rights made Palestinian resistance inevitable. The social and political changes forced upon the Palestinians influenced the transformation of writing themes within the region. Palestinian resistance writers were committed to the Palestinian cause and set out to explore solutions to their imperial issues. Resistance poets such as Mahmoud Darwish and Fadwa Tuqan took the darkest times of colonized life and turned it into a lyrical, political message for the people. By utilizing her oppressions as a woman and refugee in occupied Palestine, Fadwa openly expressed her right to resist. The Palestinian poet's nationalistic writing style made her a prevalent force in the literary scene.

Although Ghassan Kanafani coined the term "resistance literature" and paved the way for future Palestinian resistance writers, he is not the sole contributor to resistance writings. This study heavily emphasized women in Palestinian societies because women not only contributed to the political and social development after the creation of Israel, but women were the backbones of the familial structure during times of war and displacement. Mothers and wives were

responsible for supporting the men and maintaining a solid household, despite being oppressed by Zionist militia. Palestinian women writers recognized these contributions made by women and advocated for their voices to be heard. Postcolonial literature from women is imperative because it calls for gender equality and the recognition of women in a Third World society.

The analysis of the novels *Wild Thorns* (1976) and *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) delves into the types of oppressions Palestinians faced as women in occupied territories. Khalifeh, a Palestinian novelist who grew up in the Israeli-occupied territories, depicted life after Israel's invasion and how the Palestinian refugees had to cope with imperial imposed restrictions. Khalifeh understood the oppressions of being both a Palestinian living in occupied Palestine and as a woman living in a patriarchal society. Abulhawa, a Palestinian American raised in the United States, encouraged the Palestinian people's voices to be heard by the international community. Although the two novelists grew up in separate countries and lived different experiences, their literary works provide an insight into how the ongoing conflict has devastated their people, seemingly rendering the Palestinian people powerless. Both Abulhawa and Khalifeh did not see the Palestinian people as victims or voiceless. Instead, they drew from the Palestinian's energy and potential, expanding the voices of the oppressed. The two Palestinian novelists used their feminist consciousness to convey their nationalistic message for exploited and marginalized Palestinians by imperial forces. Using the resistance-themed literary model, Khalifeh and Abulhawa created an alternative resistance mode that promoted change and empowered voiceless women.

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