



Spreading the Wings and the Words: Hybridization & Dissemination of Palestinian Literature

Dima M.T. Tahboub^{[a],*}

^[a]Arab Open University, Palestinian.
 *Corresponding author.

Received 28 March 2016; accepted 18 May 2016
 Published online 26 June 2016

Tahboub, D. M. T. (2016). Spreading the Wings and the Words: Hybridization & Dissemination of Palestinian Literature. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 12(6), 1-9. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/8478> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/8478>

Abstract

The paper presents Palestinian literature as a unique example of nationalistic literature inspired by the political milieu and historical context, aimed at reviving and regaining the lost essence of the Palestinian identity. It argues that there are supra-literary factors involved in writing about Palestine adhered to, more or less, by most writers. It explains that writers who write about Palestine, as well as readers, do not start with a blank page; writers have a set of themes to choose from, readers, moreover, expect to read a story along the lines of an optimistic and futuristic framework: A positive hero(ine) with a positive conclusion beyond all odds.

The paper also discusses the general characteristics of Palestinian literature and its various subgenres, titles and their thematic implications on writers, stories and readers. The paper provides a brief critical overview on how writing about Palestine is viewed as part of the resistance and a contribution to the national cause. The paper presents a real life example in the biography of Ghada al-Karmi, the typical hybrid Palestinian refugee stressing that it is not the “whereabouts” of the Palestinian authors which shape their literary vision, it is legacy of their Palestinian origin and identity that is nurtured in their being but ceased to exist in real life.

It concludes with stressing that the particular and unique nature of Palestinian literature should not hinder the audience from appreciating its value. National and ideological literature, unlike the stereotypical belief, can still walk hand in hand with creativity, both sharing in the presentation of a memorable human suffering.

Key words: Hybridization & Dissemination; Literature; Wings and words

“If this is your land, where are your stories?”

(Chamberlin, 2006)

INTRODUCTION

As a representative of the Palestinian cause, Palestinian literature seeks to present, preserve and spread the story of the people and the land by generating a multitude of genres and subgenres that convey the message of steadfastness and remembrance. To achieve this end, writers resort to hybridization, mixing some forms of classical realist literature with new forms unique to resistance literature. Literary hybridization as coined by Bakhtin is a creative literary technique to introduce multiple thoughts, feelings and genres. Hybridization is a means of joining various literary labels, creating a dialogue between them and presenting them as having a similar message but with different titles (Bakhtin, 1981). This is considered favorable in Palestinian literature which aims to find a place in the arena of world literature by creating voices and genres that speak for the cause and allying with existing patterns and movements. By copying existing genres and creating new literary forms, Palestinian literature wants to reach a stage of acceptance and believability as part and parcel of human suffering and legitimate struggle and add to the world of resistance literature some distinctive categories. “No one ever wanted to believe the Palestinians. All too often, we found ourselves the victims of Israeli and Western stereotypes of ‘Orientals’ with over fertile imaginations;” (Tawil, 1980, p.157) and Palestinian writers has seen it as their duty to produce the counter story.

In the process of hybridization and dissemination, Palestinian literature has generated varied styles of

writing, moving from narrow nationalism to wide internationalism by embracing or contradicting views on Marxism, feminism, imperialism...etc. and uniting with other revolutions such as the ones in Latin America, South Africa, and Algeria, giving way to reading other revolutionary experiences within the Palestinian tragedy.

1. THE SUB-GENRES OF PALESTINIAN LITERATURE: LABELS AND THEMATIC IMPLICATIONS

There is an abundance of Arabic terminology used by Arab critics to describe Palestinian literature. This cataloguing of genres helps in following up the development of Palestinian literature from its early stages of didacticism and commitment to its more adult creative forms. It is especially beneficial for critics and students as it provides some form of standardization to unusual themes as war and resistance which by nature are chaotic and messy. These genres are not merely theoretical categories, but they provide a frame of reference that helps in understanding and anticipating the pattern of characterization, setting and themes of the literary work. Most critical writings deal with these genres, the classics and the hybrids, individually or in period groups but few study them in their totality as a continuum of connectedness and interlocking frames. Some categories are conventional and have been coined in correspondence to political events as in the literature of the *nakba* (the catastrophe of 1948), the literature of the *naksa* (the setback of 1967), and the literature of the *intifada* (the uprising). They all fall under the all-encompassing heading of literature under occupation (*Adab Taht al-Ihtilal*).

The novel coinages and hybrids are more specific in conveying a clear message about the nature of the literary work. Being able to place the work in a suitable category is half way to understanding its literary elements. New subgenres have presented the status and aspirations of the return of the writer or the Palestinian people outside Palestine. These include the literature of exile (*Adab al-Manfa*) or alternatively (*Adab al-Tashrid*), the literature of the diaspora (*Adab al-Shatat*), the literature of return (*Adab al-'Awda*) and these follow after the leading term of the literature of the refugees (*Adab al-Muhajarin*) or the literature reflecting the lives of Palestinians in refugee camps (*Adab al-Mukhayyat*). Works under this category utter the suffering of Palestinians outside Palestine, longing for Palestine and their past lives that ceased to be. The literature of the refugees (*Adab al-Muhajarin*) or exile literature (*Adab al-Manfa*) are used interchangeably to describe the literary works, which reveal the destitution and shock suffered by stateless Palestinians in refugee camps after the expulsion in 1948. Still, the term diaspora is largely contested in the Palestinian context. Some

writers and critics believe it is used loosely to describe all forms of dislocation, migration, immigration and exile and doesn't correspond to the Palestinian situation (Harlow, 1998; Said, 1991). They prefer the word refugee as it signals a problem requiring a solution while to label Palestinians as "a diaspora is to eliminate by the very language the need to change their situation" (Harlow, 1998, p.81) since etymologically, the word diaspora is derived from the Greek term *diasperien*, form dia-meaning "across" and -sperien, "to sow or scatter seeds". This definition of the diaspora doesn't reflect any political or humanistic connotations; it may even convey a positive state of expansion. On the other hand, the UNRWA also uses the word refugees to describe the dispossessed Palestinians (www.unrwa.org). In *Palestinians born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for Homeland*, Hammer notes that the term "refugee" dominates the discourse on the Palestinian problem because it expresses political claims, the right to return to Palestine to as a homeland and to have sovereignty as a Palestinian people (Hammer, 2005).

These various subgenres depict the story of dislocation and displacement, the inability of Palestinians to fit anywhere except in Palestine, and their sordid living conditions. This form of writing is practiced by writers residing outside Palestine, who are trying to fulfill what Benedict Anderson terms as "long-distance nationalism" (<http://newleftreview.org>). These classifications infiltrate all periods of Palestinian literary history starting from the 1948 war onwards, since the issue of exile and refugees are pending and so far unsolvable. The similarity in stories, themes and genres prove that it is not the whereabouts of the writer that affects the story, it is who s/he are, the Palestinian identity with its package of suffering accompanies the writer everywhere and grows more intense and dramatic with time and distance.

The mentality of exile and refuge generated a new romantic approach in Palestinian literature, especially after the unexpected defeat in the war of 1967. The romantic escape to the past through heritage and literature became the author's getaway from loathsome reality. Writers were trapped in the past trying to cling to the last straw left of their drowning country and identity. Exile literature explodes with nostalgia, which is prescribed as an antidote to amnesia. Exiled writers behold "nostalgia as the beginning of ... the cultivation of the past, the way of entry into a dialogue with and an understanding of history" (Levine, 1994, p.31) In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, the editors argue that exile is only the loss of one possible home, which leads from belonging nowhere to becoming at home everywhere (Lentricchia & Maclaughlin, 1995). This description does not fit the Palestinian context. For Palestinians, exile adds to their sense of estrangement creating a refugee complex that will only be healed through return. The Palestinian literature of exile is seen more committed to nurturing the

future generations on the love of Palestine and stressing the unique Palestinian heritage and identity. This means of desperate articulation finds a lingua franca in the literature of return (*Adab al-'Awda*), which paves the route of return. "In these returns, the returnee is unable to locate himself in any space or time except that of his country, everything seems alienated" (Cleary, 2002, p.90). Exile literature also focuses on image presentation and preservation to present the nation to insiders and outsiders against image distortion by the opposition or the enemy, because to quote Marx "those who cannot represent themselves must be represented" (qtd. Baker, 1985, p.4) and Palestinians writers couldn't allow the image to be tarnished by others.

Some sub-genres are named after the message or the intended effect they are supposed to have on the audience. Such include the literature of resistance (*Adab al-Muqawama*), the literature of the revolt (*Adab al-Thawra*), the literature of armed struggle (*Adab al-Kifah al-Musallah*), the literature of incitement (*Adab al-Tahrid*) which sides with revolution and encourages militarism. All of the above genres can be analyzed in terms of a mother concept known as the literature of combat (*Adab al-Muwajaha*) or (*Adab al-Qital*) defined as the literature which calls on people to fight as a nation. It promotes a state of collective consciousness and empowers it with the will to liberate in a specific time and space. In works of armed struggle, novelists write about actual or envisioned combat and resistance operations against the enemy.

There is also the title of the literature of propaganda (*al-Adab al-I'lami*, *al-Tarwiji*) which is a stigma that belittles the artistic value of Palestinian literature as a means of political proliferation for different political factions. Still, to accuse Palestinian literature of propaganda merely because it takes on a cause is an unsubstantiated claim. The absence of a state in the Palestinian context has freed literature from having to succumb to the official voice or view of the government. Even with the presence of political factions and the involvement of their members in literature, the national ideology or commitment discourse is not unique or dominated by any of these factions be they Marxist or Islamist, but shared among all of them. Rather than propaganda, some writers resort to the beautification of the national cause, meaning the celebration of homeland and people, unity to achieve freedom, self evaluation and constructive criticism with solutions. This code of writing works to solidify concepts of patriotism, sacrifice, and martyrdom as a Palestinian life pattern under war until Palestine is regained.

There is also the literature of the occupied land (*Adab al-Ard al-Muhtalla*) written by writers residing in the West Bank or the occupied territories, including works written by Palestinians living in Israel, known as "Arab Israelis". This literature reflects a symbolic diaspora of living in a hostile community and the double predicament

of the writers being unable to connect physically to fellow Palestinians and Arabs. The stories show how these Arab Israelis are treated as "second class citizens" in the state of Israel, trying to acquit themselves of accusations of disloyalty and collaboration with the enemy that occupied Palestine, and practicing a sort of "apologist" and confessional literature as a testimony to their integrity.

In the chronology of appearance on the literary arena and precedence of subject matter, the literature of the *nakba* (catastrophe) was the first to come to life following the defeat and expulsion of the Palestinian people from their lands after the 1948 war, which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel on usurped Palestinian territory. After the devastating war, Palestinians suffered from a lack of security and stability, without which literature could not prosper; therefore, many years passed before the detailed story of the *nakba* took its turn for literary dramatization. Poetry, with its emotional propensity for lamentation and easiness of oral transmission preceded the more subtle categories of literature, novels and plays. The reason behind the delay in producing a comprehensive and reflective literary version is attributed to socio-political factors rather than to literary production. Ahmad Abu Matar (2003) describes the *nakba* as being

the ultimate catastrophe. Its unbearable consequences of displacement, diaspora, illnesses and famine haunted the lives, feelings and minds of the Palestinians specifically and the Arabs in general. It was impossible, at the time, to go back in time and memory to reflect upon the hows and whys of the *nakba* and the 1948 war. (p.13)

The early recordings of the story of the *nakba* are dominated by a sense of romantic nostalgia, a sense of mourning, expressing a state of denial and disbelief towards this unprecedented reality in the course of human history. The literature of 1948 describes

the refugee life in refugee camps outside Palestine in neighbouring countries namely, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and the refugee life of the remnants of Palestinians in the Palestinian lands occupied in 1948, on which Israel was established, who became a minor ethnicity among the Israelis. (Ballas 1984, p.64)

The narration of the story of the *nakba* is a recurrent theme in the course of Palestinian literature. Time has long passed the event, but literature still reincarnates the experience again and again giving different visions, extracting various morals each time.

Literary works presenting the period express an unrestrained attachment to the past reviving every minute aspect, each tiny morsel of the Palestinian way of life including memories of weddings ceremonies, births, folk songs, Palestinian cuisine, agriculture and names of Arab villages destroyed by the Israelis, Palestinian embroidery, customs and traditions. The authoress tried to engrave in words what has been abolished in reality, to preserve the collective memory for the coming generations, searching earnestly for redemption, salvation and survival.

Unlike the defensive nature of the *nakba* literature, the *naksa* literature (setback) following the 1967 war, in which Israel occupied the rest of the Palestinian land, did not reflect the same emotions of reverie and shock. Some Palestinians saw the *naksa* coming as a natural culmination of the deteriorating military situation on the side of both Palestinians and Arabs. The setback bred an exceptionally unpredictable literary response rejecting “the 1948 tone of self-pity and victimization. The new attitude was one of pride, dignity and extreme self-trust in oneself and people cloistered with unyielding patience and faith” (Khalifa, 1999, p.13). It is at this period of time in particular when one can sense the effect of the political over the literary Palestinian arena, as found in the post 1967 works of Kanafani and Habibi. Writers in exile like Kanafani adopted an optimistic tone about the revolution that will free Palestine, while writers in the occupied territories conveyed to their audience the good tidings of reunion.

Moreover, the year 1967 witnessed the birth of several leftist and right wing resistance movements under the wing of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization).. The charter of the PLO declared the responsibility of all Palestinians, regardless of their occupations and whereabouts to make the Palestinian suffering known worldwide. Professional writers and journalists formulated the literature of political factions, such as Ghassan Kanafani, who wrote much of the literature of the PFLP. The political programs were also translated into literature, reflecting different definitions of nationalism than those written at the time of the *nakba*, all directed to reshaping the new Palestinian identity, that of the resisting soldier and freedom fighter. The main message of the literature of the *naksa* was to resist all forms of weakness and defeat and empower the people for resistance and victory, brought about this time by Palestinians themselves, rather than depending on Arab assistance.

The *naksa* literature often lingered over this second blow of defeat, but with rejection and the resolution to overcome the former catastrophe and latter setback. Many felt that “the 1967 defeat marked the legendary rebirth of Palestinian literature, which shed the shackles of aesthetics to baptize with blood the new beginning” (Barada, 1980, p.30). This stage witnessed the inauguration of a new artistic literary trend, the literature of resistance. It was Ghassan Kanafani who first applied the term “literature of resistance” *Adab al-Muqawama* in 1968 to describe every work with a patriotic or political stance in his study, *Adab al-Muqawama fi Filastin al-Muhtalla 1948-1966 (The Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948-1966)*. For Kanafani, resistance literature is meant to exercise a resisting effect, resisting the status quo that is imposed on Palestine and Palestinians, resisting all forms of weakness and retreat, resisting the inhuman atrocities of the Israeli army, resisting the enemies’ allegations of the sacred right and

promised land, resisting all calls for anything other than resistance.

The literature of resistance was viewed as one of the weapons of armed struggle “calling explicitly and implicitly on Palestinians to support and join the resistance movements.” (Abu Matar, 1994, p.138). It was looked upon to produce the antithesis of Zionist literature. In his study, *Fi al-Adab al-Suhyuni* (On Zionist Literature) published in 1967, Ghassan Kanafani points out the double jeopardy of Zionist Literature, which has a twofold mission of allying the Israelis to support the Zionist dream of creating the Greater Israel and gaining international sympathy to their cause, by intensifying the injustices from which the “Jewish” people have suffered. He explains that the Israeli military battle went hand in hand with the literary to guarantee the spread of Zionist convictions and a reformed world image. He discusses in length the novel of the founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, *Altneuland* (The Old-New Land) (1902) with its racist calls of Jewish superiority, and religious claims to Palestine. In retaliation, Palestinian literature worked on a counter-narrative endorsing unreservedly the value of struggle, and that Palestine has belonged, belongs, and will always belong to its people, the Palestinians. Political and apolitical writers mobilized to support the resistance and wrote about nothing else except the Palestinian suffering, giving Palestinian literature its reputation of being a war literature. Palestinian life was depicted as revolving around Palestine; love became love of the homeland, giving birth was to provide soldiers for Palestine, and death was in its name and for its freedom.

The literature of resistance mirrored public rejection of any settlement, which ignores the rights of Palestinians to reclaim their lands. There was no compensation for the ‘Paradise Lost’ except the paradise regained. Although Israel was a state then, Ghassan Kanafani was still dreaming of going back to Haifa in his novel *Aid ila Hayfa* (Back to Haifa) (1969), as if nothing has happened, because none accepted the status quo. Even works by non-Palestinian writers state clearly the common consensus of the 1948-1967 period, which is best summarized by the words of the Irish novelist Ethel Mannin, who has written on the Palestinian catastrophe: “The way to liberation is the way of blood and fire. As a Palestinian you should know” (Mannin, 1967, p.233).

The literature of the *intifada* (uprising) signals a turning point in Palestinian literature from 1987 onwards. Palestinian literature reached adulthood laying aside the old pattern of didacticism, empowering descriptive language and real life tragedies to speak for themselves. Authorial intervention was greatly minimized allowing, with open ended works, the readership to choose and decide. The literature of the *intifada* “changed the tragic into heroic. People had hope once more, the tone of frustration disappeared although the sacrifices continued” (Jayyusi, 1992, p.3). The *intifada* became the prime

concern and sole interest of the Palestinians. It ruled every walk of life in occupied Palestine and exiled Palestine (i.e. Palestinians living in exile). It created its own diction and terminology. It is easy to recognize the literature of the *intifada* with vocabulary such as *atfal al-hijara* (stone throwers), *taksir al-itham* (bone-breaking), and tear gas (*al-ghaz al-musil li-al-dumu*).

On the other hand, there is a message and sometimes a radical one in the literature of the *intifada*, but it is implicit in the layers of visual pictures, which try to bring bloody events to the readers' eyes. Writers do not directly spell out their hearts and minds as in the literature of the *nakba* and *naksa*. They voice their opinions through the characters and descriptive scenes, and present opposing characters to discuss and negotiate ideas. This gives the readership some space for evaluation and critical thinking. Along this trend, there persisted a literature no different in approach than that of the previous periods. Emphasizing the national overtones is depicted as justified. These works call for incriminating any transaction with occupation forces, cleansing society of all collaborators and reviving the historical experience of the Palestinian struggle. The literature of the *intifada* is free from the reflective and defensive tones dominant in the *nakba* and *naksa* literature. This line of literary dramatization takes the initiative of endorsing resistance whole heartedly without fear or inhibition of being stereotyped as the literature of provocation and incitement.

In modern novels, aspects of hybridization and multi-genres are even more evident as writers like Ibrahim Nasrallah combine many subgenres in their novels to record the Palestinian epic which covers all the stages of the *nakba*, *naksa* and *intifada* and the literary genres that developed during them. In such works which relate the Palestinian story from its early beginnings to its current state, writers present the patriotic, nationalistic, and nostalgic elements of each genre leaving way for an open ending for a history and a story still in the making.

These categories are not in any way discrete or mutually exclusive. There are undoubtedly points of stylistic difference in themes and depiction of human roles and characterization between writers. Nonetheless, there are common grounds in terms of message and dramatization and whatever the divisions may be, Palestinian literature works on producing a counter-narrative to that of the enemy, to uplift the spirits of the defeated for the coming battle, to build a heaven in hell's despair.

2. AN IMAGE OF THE HYBRID REFUGEE AND THE PALESTINIAN MOTHER IN EXILE

Factual historicity in Ghada al-Karmi's English autobiography, *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story*

(2002), parallels the events and characters fictionalized in literature. The autobiography belongs to the genre of *Adab al-Shatat* (the literature of exile) discussing the lives of Palestinians outside Palestine. The uniqueness of al-Karmi's experience is that it brings all the adversaries together. Born in Palestine, brought up in England and befriended by Jewish girls and neighbors all through her life, al-Karmi presents a multi-cultural and hybrid political point of view. The autobiography presents the image of motherland in the character of Fatima, the Palestinian mother in the character of Ghada's mother, the hybrid refugee in the character of Ghada herself.

Fatima, to whom the book is dedicated, was al-Karmi's beloved nanny, the most typical of elderly Palestinian women, with her passionate heart and traditional embroidered dress. Ghada is very much attached to this woman, who is a symbol of her lost beloved family memories in Palestine, for Palestine the motherland, for which she continues in agonizing longing, for the rest of her life. al-Karmi, a physician herself, writes much of the psychological factors that have shaped her upbringing and that of fellow Palestinian children. These factors that affected them consciously and subconsciously, leaving them with unforgettable horror and loss that has grown into hostility towards the aggressor. In the first chapter, entitled Palestine, al-Karmi describes, in the third person, how the abrupt evacuation from her home stands painfully in her memory.

A mighty crash... shook the house. Something...exploded with a deafening bang. The little girl could feel it right inside her head. She puts her hands to her ears and automatically got down onto the cold...floor...the taxi stood waiting outside...to take them away to where she did not want to go. The little girl wanted to stay right here at home...doing all the familiar things, which had made the fabric of her long life. Not this madness, not this abandoning of everything she knew and loved. (al-Karmi, 2002, p.1).

Then, she moves to describe herself in the first person, bouncing back and forth, mixing her childhood memory with her recent adult recollections. Commenting on the same incident with an adult's view, Ghada says:

To me, this was terrifying and bewildering, so far removed from anything I recognized as normality that I think I became a little shell-shocked. After a while, I accepted each blow silently without protest as if we were fated to live like that...the fearful days and nights continued, and all the time the things which were familiar in our lives receded. (Ibid., p.111)

With the eyes and the memory of a young Palestinian child, the critique and pen of a British subject, al-Karmi, with an air of pride, describes Palestinian women in the aftermath of the *nakba* as showing themselves

steadfast and stoic...Having worked hard all their lives in the home and on the land, these women soldiered on in their tents in much the same way. One can see them...angrily berating Israeli soldiers or demonstrating outside the Israeli prisons where their men folk are held. (Ibid., p.21)

al-Karmi, on other issues, sometimes overdoes the criticism of Palestinian society, because she sees it in comparison with British society, which she believes is more progressive on women's issues. At various stages of her life, her Palestinian origin has become a bundle of old stories and memories while her Britishness became a *fait accompli*. She could not believe that the British could commit such injustice. "How strange and almost unbelievable to hear such terrible things said about the British, so many of whom I later grew to love and respect when I went to live among them" (Ibid., p.12). al-Karmi also exposes the double standards of Palestinian society, which stresses education as a weapon to empower its men in the upcoming battles with the occupation, but deprives its women of the same opportunity,

as was custom, women only had had an elementary education, enough to read...and be able to write in a rudimentary way. Girls were only there to get married, went the prevailing wisdom, so why waste too much effort teaching them what they would never use. (Ibid., p.133)

Ghada's mother resists any form of stability in her life in England. She always believes the illusion of going back to Palestine. She refuses to learn English or improve the family house and cocoons herself amongst Palestinian and Arab friends. The departure from Palestine devitalizes her, she loses her stamina, which she has left behind in Palestine to become a day-by-day woman, taking each day as it comes. With her coming to London, MrsKarmi has changed;

Whereas in Jerusalem, she had been house-proud and energetic, rushing noisily round the house in the mornings, organizing the cooking and cleaning, here in London, she sometimes found it hard to get out of bed...She took no interest in the house... did not bother to clean it at all. No one understood what had happened to her or why she had changed so. Perhaps we should have realized that her whole life had collapsed around her. (Ibid., p.182)

When Ghada grows up, she joins the political wing of the PLO, acting relentlessly as a mediator on a three dimensional ground including her Palestinian origin, her English identity and her Jewish affinity. On her return to Palestine in the eighties, she returns as a tourist visiting all the sites of her childhood, walking the *Via Dolorosa* once again, but not to find Fatima or even her beloved Palestine.

CONCLUSION

Spreading the wings and the story of Palestine and its people has been the goal of Palestinian writers; therefore, they tailored the story to fit the existing genres and created new genres to depict the unique Palestinian context. New genres have been created to address different periods of history and different Palestinian and international audiences and gauge their understanding, support and involvement. The canon of Palestinian literature testifies

that because war is in progress, literature mostly assumes a supporting role, aiming to implant a collective sense of nationalism and nationhood through all its different subgenres and configurations in different times and places. Literature calls on individuals for an engagement in the public, and a delay of private rights. It has the effect of psychological conditioning, bringing the people at war, under occupation or in exile to believe in their unity, uniqueness, and common cause. In the early stages of Palestinian literature, some degree of propaganda can be traced. This propaganda lessened as war progressed and writers grew more critical and questioning. The continuation of the Palestinian war on ground ushered its continuation in literature, giving way in contemporary times for a degree of variance and split opinions, unimagined in the early stages of Palestinian literature. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the attempt to canonize and categorize Palestinian literature may be viewed as a subjective undertaking, because the non-literary concepts that shape the war story such as nationalism, patriotism and social community are also subjective and contested by writers, each claiming to convey the public sentiment and in tune with the national pulse. Taking into consideration these confining factors, the important thing to underscore is that the national story should neither be propagandistic nor alienated, as in the words of Terry Eagleton "a nation, like an individual, has to be able to recount a reasonable story of itself, one without despair or presumption" (Eagleton, 2005, p.ix).

It is not the genre of the work that gears the depiction and themes of the Palestinian story; it is the story that haunts the writer, regardless of place, time and genre. Place, outside Palestine, and time, prolonging the suffering and exile, serve, if anything, as inciters to further attachment and remembrance. Wearing in exile becomes synonymous to the impossible. It is not the whereabouts of the writers that decides the ideas and the pattern of literature; it is the framework of the Palestinian identity and cause which is claimed by most writers to be the same everywhere and at different times. Maybe, when Palestine is liberated, Palestinian literature will tell different stories, revise the existing heritage, and question the numerous aspects of documenting the story and preserving the memory. Until then, Palestinian literature in no different than any other national literature worldwide battling for survival and for voicing its case.

REFERENCES

- Abu Matar, A. (1994). *al-Riwaya wa-al-Harb* (p.138). Beirut: al-Muassasa al-Arabiyya li-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr.
- Abu Matar, A. (2003). *Ufuq al-Tahawulat fi al-Riwaya al-Arabiyya*. Beirut: al-Muassasa al-Arabiyya li-Dirasat wa al-Nashr.
- al-Karmi, G. (2002). *In search of Fatima: A Palestinian story*. London: Verso.

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans., M. Holquist, Ed.). University of Texas Press.
- Ballas, S. (1984). *al-Adab al-Arabi fi Thill al-Harb 1948-1973*. Tel-Aviv: Dar al-Mashriq.
- Barada, M. (1980). *Riwaya Arabiyya Jadida*. Beirut: al-Muassasa al-Arabiyya li Dirasat wa-al-Nashr.
- Barker, F., et al. (Eds.). (1985). *Europe and its others: Proceedings of the Essex conference on the sociology of literature* (Vol. I, p.4). Colchester: University of Essex.
- Cleary, J. (2002). *Literature, Partition, and the Nation State: Culture and conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2005). *Holy terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hammer, J. (2005). *Palestinians born in Exile: Diaspora and the search for homeland*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Harlow, B. (1998). *Resistance literature*. New York: Methuen.
- Jayyusi, S. (Ed.). (1992). *Anthology of modern Palestinian literature*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Khalifa, S., et al. (1999). *Shuun al-Mar'a* (Vol.1). Nablus: Mudiriyyat al-Matbuat.
- Lentricchia, F., & Maclaughlin, T. (Eds.). (1995). *Critical terms for literary study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levine, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Aesthetics and ideology*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Mannin, E. (1967). *The night and its homing*. London: Hutchinson.
- Said, E. (1991). On palestinian identity: A conversation with Edward Said. In *imaginary homelands: Essays and criticism 1981-1991* (pp.166-84). Granta Books.
- Tawil, R. (1980). *My home, my prison*. New York: Rinehart and Winston.