

Women in the Works of Ghassan Kanafani: A Comparative Reading of Two Novels

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Abstract

This article surveys Ghassan Kanafani's fictions, arguing that his literature of resistance features militant men or ordinary men coping with the consequences of dislocation. Hence, the presence of women is mainly subordinate. Then the article investigates the ambivalent presence of women in two novellas diverging from Kanafani's mainstream texts which marginalize women, offering instead prevailing female figures: All That's Left to You (1966) and Umm Saad (1969). In the former, Maryam loses her honor, getting pregnant out of wedlock just as her people lose Jaffa; the fallen woman allegorically becomes the lost nation, and thus assumes negative attributes of the mother archetype. In the latter, this ancillary presence changes as the titular heroine enacts resistance and attachment to the land. Umm Saad assumes the positive attributes of the mother archetype, figuratively becoming the fertile land to be regained. Using a relevant framework on resistance literature and archetypal criticism on the feminine, this article shows the close association between women and the Palestinian land (the positive ideals of liberty and fertility as well as the negative meanings of loss/disgrace). Such ambivalence can be understood in a range of positive and negative aspects of the mother archetype. Appealing to recurring patterns and primordial aspects of the human psyche, Kanafani asserts the universalism of his committed fiction, the right to regain the land as a basic human need, and the richness of the mother archetype to the collective unconscious of a nation. Hence, this article problematizes traditional gender roles in Kanafani's fiction.

Keywords: Kanafani, feminism/gender, mother archetype, Umm saad, all that's left to you, comparative literature.

المراة في أدب المقاومة للكاتب غسان كنفاني

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ملخص

يناقش هذا البحث وجود المراة في أدب المقاومة للكاتب غسان كنفاني، ويسلط الضوء على الدور الثانوي للمراة في الكثير من أعمال كنفاني التي تقدم الرجل المناضل والذي يتعامل مع تبعات النكبة من تشرد وضياع. وبالمقابل، يرى الباحث أن روايتي ما تبقى لكم (1966) وأم سعد (1969) تقدمان صورة مغايرة للمراة. في الرواية الأولى مثلاً، ترتبط مريم بالعار الناتج عن خسارة الأرض والعرض؛ حيث أن حملها دون زواج يجسد العار المترتب على فقدان الوطن وبالتالي تجسد مريم الصورة السلبية لنمط الأرض الأم. وبالمقابل تجسد أم سعد في الرواية الثانية الارتباط الحقيقي للمراة الفلسطينية بالأرض والمقاومة وبالتالي الصورة الايجابية للنموذج الاساسي الذي يساوي بين الأرض والأم. ويمكن فهم هذه الصورة المتباينة للمراة في أدب كنفاني المقاوم من خلال نظريات التحليل النفسية الخاصة بالمفكر كارل يونغ وتفسيره للرمزية الايجابية أو السلبية للنموذج البدائي للأم، وهو ما يعكس عالمية مغزى الأرض في فكر كنفاني وتواصل هذا الارتباط بالأرض باللاوعي الجمعي للأمم..

الكلمات الدالة: كنفاني، النسوية/الجندرية، النمط الاساسي الأم، أم سعد، ما تبقى لكم الأدب المقارن.



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Introduction

Among modern Palestinian writers, Ghassan Kanafani holds a unique position of a writer politically committed to the cause of national struggle throughout his writing career and until his political assassination in 1972 in Beirut. Hence, one critic has described him as “the one Palestinian writer who had the makings of a Fanon” (Abu-Manneh, 2016, p. 71). As a revolutionary intellectual, Kanafani sought to accomplish at the cultural front what other Palestinians tried to achieve through militant struggle in order to attain justice and liberation for his people within a universal, humanistic vision that rejects oppression regardless of its roots and causes. It is no wonder that his writings became associated among readers and critics with a political genre he helped make famous, namely “resistance literature” ideologically participating in national liberation efforts and independence movements. At the age of twelve, Kanafani experienced the Nakba (catastrophe) events and subsequent dislocation. This event has been described by Joseph Farag (2017) as “indisputably the key event in modern Palestinian history and politics, resulting as it did in the loss of the Palestinian homeland and the dispersal of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian population into exile” (p. 9). Kanafani’s short life witnessed the repercussions of the Nakba of 1948 and the Naksa (setback) of 1967 (following Israel’s victory in the Six Day War and its acquisition of more land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which resulted in a second wave of displacement). Hence, his fiction was a legitimate reaction to this necessary political and historical context.

In Kanafani’s literature of resistance, militant men often assume the stage, relegating women to an ancillary status. Typically, men dominate the public sphere and women are relegated to the private one, cast in the role of mothers, sisters, and wives; it is men who justifiably carry guns (within a traditionally conservative Palestinian culture) and resist the usurpers, both Zionists and the English colonizers. When it comes to ordinary men, they suffer the consequences of dislocation, poverty, and exile and become the focal point of attention. In *Men in the Sun* (1963), for example, men assume the narrative perspective while women, still passive victims of circumstances and oppression, are pushed to the periphery. The story depicts three men desperately trying to reach Kuwait in order to find a better life, taking us through flashbacks and stream of consciousness to their painful past and anxious present. Abu Qais is in the Shatt area years after the loss of his land. His wife, Umm Qais, is a typical mother who urges her husband to provide for his family, to take Qais back to school. She is just “Umm Qais,” with no substantial presence or a life of her own. Another character, Assad, borrowed money from his uncle and wants to work and return the money so that he does not have to marry his uncle’s daughter. The youngest character is Marwan whose father left the family and married a deformed woman (who lost a leg in the 1948 war due to a bomb explosion) because she owns a house, which makes her a desirable marriage “object.” The end features a reference to another woman, a sexual object this time, a dancer named Kawkab whom Abul Khaizuran presumably sleeps with but we never encounter.

Thus, the presence of women in Kanafani’s major work *Men in the Sun* is ancillary. If Kanafani tells a mournful story of national loss, he tells it mainly through male characters and from the traditional perspective of a patriarchal culture. However, it should be conceded that the lives and fate of Kanafani’s men are in one way or another linked to women. The peripheral position of women within the narrative of the story should not be entirely mistaken for a peripheral role played by women in the story’s action. It is one of the enduring ironies of *Men in the Sun* that, while the text focuses almost exclusively on its male characters, most of the actions those men take are at the behest of or otherwise due to a female figure in their lives – be it a mother, step-mother, betrothed, or dancer. The men’s fates are ultimately sealed when Abul Khaizuran (allegorically the weak, infertile nation) is detained by border agents lasciviously curious to know about his sexual relationship with the dancer, Kawkab – a relationship we know to be “impossible” given Abul Khaizuran’s castration. While it should be acknowledged that female figures play a subtle role despite their relative absence from the narrative, it is male characters who are put to the test of survival in a hostile environment and who embody the hopes and derelictions of a nation.

In a collection entitled *The Stolen Shirt* (1958), Umm Al Abd, in the title story, prepares bread and endures refugee camp life. She lives in a tent with her unemployed husband and only child. Abul Abd, trying to provide for his family and protect his tent from the rain, is the point of focalization, and the story is told from his perspective. However, Abul Abd is preoccupied with thoughts about his obligation to his patient wife and by a desire to please his son. In “Until We Return” in

this same collection, a villager gets back to his usurped village to blow up a water tank installed in his stolen land and used to irrigate the Israeli settlements. The story takes us into this militant villager's state of mind as he walks alone in the Naqab (Negev) desert to seek vengeance for his land and his wife who was killed and tortured before his eyes. As in the previous story, woman is a passive victim here, hanged on a tree by the Zionists. It is this woman, however, who reminded her revolutionary husband of their attachment to the land and encouraged him not to flee before she died. The husband carries dynamite and retaliates, while his dead wife fuels his revolutionary consciousness. Moreover, the collection entitled *The Land of Sad Oranges* (1963) makes women pathetic victims of colonial violence. Dalal in "The Horizon behind the Gate" is killed at the age of ten by Israeli soldiers during an attack on Acre. In "Letter from Ramleh," Fatima is another Palestinian girl killed by an Israeli soldier, a female soldier this time. Her old mother is also killed. Abu Othman is made to witness the humiliating killing of his daughter and his wife. The narrator, a child of nine years then, is made to witness this traumatizing violence. In "Letter from Gaza," the narrator tells his friend in America that he is not leaving Gaza despite his feelings of defeat and his poverty. He visits his niece Nadia whose leg was "amputated from the top of the thigh" (p. 68) because she lost it while protecting her little brothers and sisters from Israeli bombs and fires. The narrator learns from her "what life is and what existence is worth" (p. 69). Again, those victimized women are emblematic of suffering and sacrifice. They neither carry guns nor actively follow the path of resistance.

In addition, Kanafani's famous story "The Land of Sad Oranges" (1958) features a father who lost his home and orange grove in Acre under Zionist attacks; he leaves with his family to Lebanon as a refugee. The story traces the tragic life this family leads after forced exile. The nervous father contemplates suicide and even killing his children. His life withers just like the "dried up and shriveled" (p. 80) orange that appears at the end of the story. The women, by contrast, weep at the sight of oranges, protect the children from the frustrations of anxious, broken men, and partake in feelings of defeat. The narrator says to his listener: "Your father was still ill in bed. Your mother was chocking back the tears of a tragedy that has not left her eyes until now" (p. 80). Although both women and men are victims of the tragic loss of land, Kanafani's narrative focuses more on the repercussions of loss on men, who originally owned and cultivated the land. The sad oranges of the title symbolize this lost land but within the patriarchal logic of colonialism and its aftermath whereby men bear the brunt of occupation the most, losing the land of their fathers and grandfathers and much of their personal honor, dignity, and identity. The father in "The Land of Sad Oranges" is like many dominant male figures in Kanafani's fiction: passive, defeated, and despondent. In such cases, the representation of male and female figures intersects.

In Kanafani's novella *A Returnee to Haifa* (1969), Safeyya, Sa'eed's wife, is mainly silent and passive. However, her silence conceals her pain for losing her child during the war of 1948. She feels guilty for having lost Khaldoun due to the panic caused by Zionist attacks on the city. However, her guilt as well as the tears that fill her eyes do not make her the protagonist. Her husband drives her to their old house in Haifa, negotiates with the Zionists who live in it, and decides when to leave. Safeyya turns to the window, hides her face in her palms, and sobs upon seeing her son Khaldoun after twenty years. It is Sa'eed who translates to her what goes on among them and leads her out when they leave. Safeyya, the bereaved mother, is probably Kanafani's most passive, and flat, female character. One story in *A World Not Ours* (1965) has the title "The Bride" whereby a man buys a new gun by paying for its price from the dowry of his only daughter, marrying her off to an old man to get the price. A corrupt officer takes it from the man who was using it to fight the enemy and sells it for money, not fulfilling a promise of returning it to its first owner. As a result, the man could not fight the Zionists attacking his village. The narrator says that he could not know "the name of the bride who was sold as a price for the gun" (p. 187). While eclipsed women seem objectified in such situations and distanced from the arena of action, they are treated as a medium for resistance carried out by men. The namelessness of the bride indicates her instrumental value as a tool in the fight against the usurpers carried out by men. The father in this story lost both daughter and gun, which links women to resistance and sacrifice.

However, Kanafani's unfinished novel *April's Plums* (1972) is an exception to the marginal presence of women in Kanafani's world in that Sua'd is a militant woman, a freedom fighter who is part of a "fida'i" militant organization called "Revenge Youth." She believes in secret resistance, political parties, and Arab nationalism. Hence, she is wanted by the

Israelis. Sua'd differs from the passive women victims populating other Kanafani stories and novellas. She is part of a revolutionary scheme, a "comrade" in other terms. However, she is still absent from the narrative's actions. Being wanted, she hides. We hear about Sua'd more than we actually see her. It is men who try to cover up for her. In this novel, Kanafani's men refuse betraying their female comrade, even if their life is at risk. In fact, Kanafani offers here a brilliant account of gender harmony and cooperation at the level of underground political action.

By contrast, men in Kanafani's literature of resistance seem to have more direct revolutionary potential and more dominant presence. In a story entitled "The Machine-gun" in *The Stolen Shirt* (1958), Sa'eed buys a machine-gun to help his village ward off Zionist attacks. He dies while defending his village, having sold some of his blood to a tuberculosis hospital to pay part of the gun's price, which makes resistance part of man's flesh and blood. The story collection entitled *About Men and Guns* (1968) mainly concerns men trying to acquire or use guns to protect their villages against English and Zionist attacks. The title of the collection makes it clear that women are mainly absent or simply subsidiary here. As for men, they are villagers reacting to the revolution against the Englishmen and the Zionist attacks on their own villages or neighboring ones. Guns reappear throughout the collection as the unifying symbol. On one of the few occasions in which women appear in this collection, Umm al Hassan assumes the traditional roles of baking bread, hanging laundry, cooking and cleaning. She stays at home while men like Mansour's father (Abu Qasim) and Shakib engage in armed revolution against the English. In one instance, Mansour's father is shot in a skirmish with the English, and he bleeds but refuses to abandon his rifle (p. 94). To add a level of complication to this story collection, however, the title might be an ironic ruse as it is primarily boys who take up arms and fight, notably against the wishes of the older protective men (i.e. fathers or uncles). Nevertheless, such "boys" are gaining experience, learning, and growing to be "men" who resist occupation.

Broadly, women are absent or marginal in Kanafani's androcentric fictional world. The world of resistance he depicts is a patriarchal one located in the Palestinian culture of the 1950s and 60s. However, only in few cases do Kanafani's works feature women as major characters, as contributors to the cause of liberation and nation building against dominant male prerogative. In *All That's Left to You* and *Umm Saad*, Kanafani employs major female characters to metaphorically represent the Palestinian homeland in terms of the different aspects of the mother archetype, using the opposite poles of this archetype: the loving/fertile mother as opposed to the fallen/terrible woman. The two novellas reveal this divergent, even contradictory association. Kanafani makes his depiction of the woman figure closely related to the trials and tribulations of the Palestinian national identity, in particular with relation to loss/defeat, on the one hand, and steadfastness/rootedness, on the other hand. Hence, his employment of women is still politically and historically oriented, serving his resistance literature project. In a sense, this article explores and substantiates Coffin's undeveloped assertion on "the explicitly gendered view of armed struggle" in Kanafani's works. Despite his inclination to assume that the protesting fighter is male, "he occasionally hints that the role of women in the revolution is not entirely marginal" (1996, p. 101). The article also examines the political and postcolonial aspects of Alwadhaf and Omar's, still unelaborated claim that Kanafani "feminizes the land/nation and makes it an object of his national consciousness." (2011, p. 117). However, this article shows how women can be vital, elemental figures in resistance literature. Kanafani's gendered, archetypal treatment of national politics has not received adequate attention so far, which is a critical gap this article is expected to fill. Moreover, the ambivalent terms through which he conceived the role of woman/mother in national struggle and the deviation of *All That's Left to You* and *Umm Saad* from Kanafani's otherwise "androcentric" world also deserve critical attention.

Kanafani once made the following assertion on the relationship between art and politics in his works, which should serve as a starting point for our examination of women and gender issues in his works:

My political position springs from my being a novelist. In so far as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite. I started writing the story of my Palestinian life before I formed a clear political position or joined any organization. I do not find any duality between my commitment and the writing of novels because I feel something very important would be missing if I were not politically involved and I would feel greatly diminished if I had not been a novelist at the same time. (in Coffin, 1996, p. 98)

Kanafani clearly makes politics a legitimate end without sacrificing his autonomy as a writer. In his fictions, interviews, essays, and political writings, he advocated national liberation movements. This association between woman and the land in his writings is a natural reaction to being uprooted. And it comes from a political leader and activist, who was a spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the editor of *Al-Hadaf* political magazine. Kanafani used literature as a political tool against British colonialism and Israeli occupation. In his political treatise *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation, 1948-1968*, he establishes the connection between this literature and the working class of peasants who bear the burden of carrying guns (1968, p.108). He speaks of faith in “the sanctity of the word, and an unstaggering faith in its role and value and an adherence to its responsibilities as a vital political weapon in the resistance movement which is far broader in conception than mere armed resistance” (p. 109). It is within this political framework that we should understand the ambivalent archetypal depiction of women (in particular mother figures) in Kanafani’s novellas *All That’s Left to You* and *Umm Saad*: the positive depiction (the care-giving mother) entails inspiration and hope of return to the land, while the negative depiction (the destructive mother) entails outrage and dismay at national loss and betrayal. Both positions are rooted in an unconscious (hence archetypal) conception of femininity that this article problematizes and politicizes.

Literature Review

Compared with those written and published in Arabic, scholarly studies on Kanafani’s fiction in English are less available. Those published in English have mainly focused on his masterpiece *Men in the Sun*. Nasser Abufarha (2008) discusses dominant symbols in Palestinian culture like cactus, orange, olive, and poppies. He views such symbols as dominant national symbols considering the political realities and power relations dominating the Palestinian landscape. Since such symbols revolve around the land, he argues that this land “persists as a constant dominant feature of Palestinian identity construction and transformation” (p. 344). Hence, such symbols are rooted in Palestinian representations of “peoplehood and nationness” (p. 344) and express “the rootedness of the Palestinian people in the land of Palestine” (p. 366). The approach used in Abufarha’s article also employs dominant national symbols, but they are not aspects of the mother archetype, be they negative or positive. Nevertheless, Abufarha’s article uses a different set of symbols and does not discuss them with relation to Kanafani’s texts. Rather, his argument is a general one about Palestinian art and culture. This current article can be seen as a reaction to and an extension of Abufarha’s article but within the specific context of some Kanafani works and the more specific context of the psychological implications of such symbols, namely mother symbols.

In a Jungian reading of *All That’s Left to You*, Ahmad Harb (2004) looks at the embedded mythical structure of the novella and discusses the sea and desert imagery in terms of the devouring and nourishing attributes of the great mother archetype. However, this valuable study does not project Maryam’s role as a mother figure against the political realities of the loss of Jaffa during and after the catastrophic events of 1948. Harb gives more emphasis to Hamid’s night journey across the desert to search for his mother in Jordan. He contends that the novel “celebrates the rebirth of a revolution as represented in the action of Hamid, the protagonist, at the end of the novel, a hope that emanates from death which is in itself a part of life” (p. 66). In Harb’s words, the novella is a dramatization of “the theme of death and rebirth by Hamid’s search for his mother, which is acted out through a series of identifications with the mother-archetypes” (p. 67). Surprisingly, Harb concludes that “Hamid’s night journey of rebirth or self-realization is a successful and positive one” (p. 75). Although this last assertion might need some qualification in light of the novella’s indeterminate end (with Hamid still lost in a blazing desert, not reaching Jordan or finding his mother and at risk of being exposed by Israeli border patrol units), more attention should be given to the allegorical presence of Maryam as the violated homeland and usurped Palestinian city. My discussion of her archetypally figurative presence as the negative form of the Earth Mother archetype is framed within the political realities of al-Nakba that led to the loss of many Palestinian cities and villages, including Jaffa in this novella.

Hosam Aboul-Ela (2003), in a study on the geohistorical context of the post-1948 Arabic novel, argues that the structure of the post-1948 Arabic novel “suggests a generic form simultaneously oppositional to the historiography underpinning the European *Bildungsroman* and rooted in Arab geohistorical location, in the series of military defeats, in the disappointments of unequal development and failed decolonization programs, and in the cynicism regarding history and the future that the

Arab politics of space instilled in the Arab artist” (p. 11). Specifically referring to Kanafani’s *All That’s Left to You*, Aboul-Ela maintains: “Again the author takes the effects of defeat and displacement on ordinary Palestinians as his subject matter, and again he mixes up chronology in an expression of opposition to the monolithic historiography of the triumphalist” (p. 14). What concerns us in this article is not the jumbled chronology Kanafani uses or the constant flashbacks countering traditional narration, but the way he reacts to such effects of “defeat and displacement on ordinary Palestinians” through the employment of the diverse symbolism of the mother archetype to show outrage/frustration and equally relatedness and hope of return. This is not a study on Kanafani’s experimental style or the novelistic genre; it is rather a thematic analysis of recurring and universal imagery on the association between women in Kanafani’s two novellas and political symbolism.

Ahmad Sa’di (2002), in a discussion of al-Nakba as a formative element of Palestinian identity, argues that one consequence of al-Nakbah for Palestinians was “an estrangement from their physical and symbolic environment and landscape. Only memory has been able to save them from alienation and self-estrangement” (p. 184). Sa’di also contends that another result was “the confiscation of Palestinian-owned land by the Israeli state. The land, which had for centuries been considered by Palestinians to be a major source of wealth, influence, status, and dignity, was transferred to Jewish ownership and use” (p. 184). Thus, Kanafani’s depiction of Umm Saad and Maryam in the novellas under discussion revolves around the mother archetype because of the rootedness of this archetype in earth-related symbolism. While one mother (Maryam) stands for the loss of this land, the other (Umm Saad), with the grape vine she plants, becomes an evident symbol for return, fertility, and rootedness.

Aida Azouqa (2000) examines the tension in Kanafani’s novella *All That’s Left to You* between commitment to the national cause of Palestine and sociopolitical realities on the one hand and the modernist techniques used in the novella like stream of consciousness and the Faulknerian multiple narrators. Kanafani’s anti-realist technique and stylistic innovations, she points out, resulted in a controversial reception for the novella for the supporters of politically committed literature (p. 147). Azouqa acknowledges that Kanafani’s innovations “enable a writer to abstract his socio-political concerns through appearing to limit his focus on the sensibilities of his protagonists, which, in turn, reveal the universal struggle of the individual with himself and with the world that surrounds him” (p. 152). She asserts, however, that Kanafani maintains a necessary “balance between artistic innovations and his commitment to national issues” (p. 153). Although this study examines Kanafani in terms of the “poetics of modernism” (p. 155) he embraces and the influence of Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* on him, it still proves that Kanafani tried to represent “the chaos that pervades the lives of Palestinians” (p. 169) and to establish “a protest against the status quo” (p. 169) through abandoning the conventions of realism. For Azouqa, then, the modernist form serves content, allowing Kanafani “to exercise autonomy of artistic expression” without “uprooting himself” (p. 170). This article’s approach is similar to Azouqa’s in that it explains the value of archetypal symbols in documenting national crisis and attachment to the Palestinian land through the (earth) mother archetype. However, Kanafani’s modernist narrative structure is not projected as it is beyond the scope of this article. Hence, Kanafani used universal symbols (and modernist techniques as Azouqa argues) not simply to abstract sociopolitical and historical realities, but to make them more appealing for us and to endow his commitment with universal, recurring metaphors. With Kanafani, art and politics augment each other, never sacrificing each other.

Discussion: An Archetypal Reading of *All That’s Left to You* and *Umm Saad*

A. Theoretical Framework: Jung and Archetypes

The Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1964) defines archetypes as “universal and inherited patterns which, taken together, constitute the structure of the unconscious” (p. 332). Those patterns for Jung (1969) are mainly psychic, with a “numinous character which can only be described as ‘spiritual’” (p. 136). In a relevant line of thought, the Canadian critic Northrop Frye (1957) views archetypes as “associative clusters” and “complex variables” (p. 102) with communicable associations. Archetypes are abundant in world literature, and established examples include the Caregiver as in *Umm Saad*, the Explorer as in Odysseus (Homer’s *Odyssey*), the Hero as in Achilles (Homer’s *Iliad*), and the Jester/Trickster as in King Lear’s Fool in Shakespeare’s play. In addition, universal symbols like the snake, the owl, the evil stepmother, and the rose are available

in literatures of different cultures and ages. However, and despite such rich meanings/associations of archetypes, Jungian critics often refer to the ambivalent nature of the mother archetype, its paradoxical aspects and contradictory features. Jung (1982) states that the “primordial image of the mother” is “pre-existent and supraordinate to all phenomena in which ‘the maternal,’ in the broadest sense of the term, is manifest” (p. 103). For Jung, an archetype can have “an invariable nucleus of meaning—but always only in principle, never as regards its concrete manifestation” (p. 108). Accordingly, the mother archetype can appear “under an almost infinite variety of aspects” (p. 109). It can take the form of the personal mother or figurative, symbolic mothers like the earth, the woods, the church, and the garden. Jung explains the positive associations of this archetype: “The archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness: the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden. It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well, or to various vessels such as the baptismal font, or to vessel-shaped flowers like the rose or the lotus” (p. 109). Significantly, Jung articulates the positive and negative qualities as well as the multiple projections of this archetype:

The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark: the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate. (p. 110)

Similarly, a comparative mythology critic like Joseph Campbell (2004) argues that the cosmic female is ambivalently depicted in world mythologies. The virgin/harlot dichotomy is one instance. Campbell writes: “The universal goddess makes her appearance to men under a multitude of guises; for the effects of creation are multitudinous, complex, and of mutually contradictory kind when experienced from the viewpoint of the created world. The mother of life is at the same time the mother of death; she is masked in the ugly demonesses of famine and disease” (p. 280). The universally versatile projections of the mother archetype can be traced in the two novellas under discussion, and the ambivalent depiction of the archetypal mother (having the attributes of life and death) is essential for understanding the incongruous depiction of Maryam and Umm Saad in Kanafani’s two novellas under discussion. Such ambivalence serves a political end ranging from rage at the loss of land/honor to a celebration of the fertile/abiding earth to which return is possible.

In *Man and His Symbols*, Jung (1964) discusses major dream symbols as revealing the unconscious in a certain “symbolic image” (p. 5). He sees archetypes as “archaic remnants” or “primordial images” (p. 57, p. 67) and “instinctive” trends too (p. 69). For Jung, archetypes are symbols with meanings existing in dreams, mythologies, and world literature. In the same work, Jung explains that archetypes are the manifestations of instincts and— as basic patterns— are “without known origin” reproducing themselves in any time or part of the world (p. 58). Jung asserts the multiple projections of archetypes we have stressed above, i.e. their “variable representations” (p. 57). According to Jung, archetypal representations “can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern” (p. 58). In *Four Archetypes*, Jung (1970), while discussing the symbolism of the mother archetype, makes the distinction between “the personal mother and grandmother, stepmother and mother-in-law; then any woman with whom a relation exists,” on the one hand, and, on the other hand, “mothers in a figurative sense” like the Church, the Virgin, Paradise, cities, woods, earth, the sea, the underworld etc. (p. 15). Just like the distinction between the positive and negative forms of the mother archetype, this differentiation between the personal and figurative mother will be used in the examination of the two novellas to substantiate the presence of the mother archetype in different manifestations. Northrop Frye (1957) has defined an archetype as a “communicable symbol” and archetypal criticism as being “primarily concerned with literature as a social fact and as a mode of communication” (p. 99). On another occasion, Frye highlighted not the communicable function of archetypes but the blatant meanings some archetypes have. Frye contends: “Some archetypes are so deeply rooted in conventional association that they can hardly avoid suggesting that association, as the geometrical figure of the cross inevitably suggests the death of Christ” (p. 102). Via the pivotal mother figure, Kanafani chose to appeal to a primordial image and a significant figure we encounter in stories, novels, poems, fairy tales, and myths. Taking the Jungian premise that archetypes function at the level of the collective unconscious of nations

and humanity in general, this universal image of the mother Kanafani chose makes his message (about the paramount relation between man and his land) more universal and with wider political appeal. A committed writer, Kanafani saw Palestinian nationalism as part of a universal struggle for liberation, which is why many of his stories and novels can be read as national allegories functioning within the Palestinian context and beyond. Of course, the universal Jungian model might have some contextual limitations when applied to the local Palestinian one, but this European model is still relevant due to the historical attachment of Palestinians to their (mother)land and the troubled politics in the region following the Balfour declaration of 1917 which facilitated the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine and the repercussions of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. Using the archetypal approach or the mother-archetype as a mode of analysis of all women characters can be reductive sometimes, but the analysis employed in this article is adopted because it is relevant. It by no way implies that it fits all female characters in Kanafani's oeuvre or Palestinian literature of resistance.

B. *All That's Left to You* and Negative Forms of the Mother Archetype

In *All That's Left to You* (1966), Kanafani uses an intricate narrative structure of intersecting overlapping stories, memories, and characters and conflates time and space to juxtapose the loss of Jaffa (a symbolic mother) against the disintegration of family relations and loss of the personal mother, mainly Hamid and Maryam's mother. The narrative has multiple narrators and depicts a confused world of a tragic past and a bitter present. It abruptly shifts among different places and times, changing font type by way of indicating such shifts and different layers of stream of consciousness. It is a story of interior, introverted lives, yet it connects personal issues and problems to historical and political realities in the wake of the 1948 war. Among all Kanafani novellas, *All That's Left to You* is the most interspersed with various mother figures and thus has a dominant presence for the feminine tweaked for an allegorically political end. However, available and recent readings of the novella still focus on the emotional and psychological impact of the exodus on Palestinians in terms of guilt, shame, and trauma (Waleed & Muhaidat, 2017, p. 26). More emphasis should now be placed on gender relations and the role of woman/mother in national politics.

In his prologue to the novella, Kanafani identifies five main characters as: Hamid, Maryam, Zakaria, Time, and the Desert. Since the last two (Time and the Desert) are symbolic characters and more of abstractions rather than dynamic, interacting characters, more attention will be given in this article to the first three characters. One of the main characters, Hamid, bitterly leaves Gaza (after sixteen years of stay there as a refugee) to Jordan through the Desert, thus escaping from the dishonor brought about by his sister Maryam immediately after her sham marriage to the man who stained the family honor. When his sister asks him if he is running away from her, he answers: "You were everything, and now you are stained and I am duped, if your mother were here!" (1966, p. 11). In losing an important female figure in his life and a surrogate mother, Hamid is rendered impotent and "duped" like the powerless and deceived men of Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*. In Hamid's mind, Maryam allowed a betrayer named Zakaria to "pollute her, giving herself to him in stolen fifteen minutes" (p. 14). Just as the colonizer stains the colonized land, the adulterer stains the virgin body of Maryam. Hamid remembers how his dying aunt urged him to find Maryam a husband because she was reaching young age. He has a flash while in the Desert about that scene. His thoughts are triggered by his expulsion from the family house to the Desert and the recent marriage contract he witnessed: "But the cursed one did not wait. She came to me with a fetus floating in her womb; and his father? That filthy dog, Zakaria. They both duped me then expelled me, and I am now sinking in her disgrace" (p. 24). The pregnant Maryam is a substitute mother for Hamid, carrying, however, infamy and spiritual death rather than life or hope. In both capacities, as the mother of Zakaria's illegitimate son and a substitute mother for Hamid whose personal mother is lost, Maryam manifests negative symbolism of the archetypal mother. While in *Men in the Sun* Kanafani made an emasculated man figuratively represent the lost nation, in *All That's Left to You* he assigns the same task to a sexually disgraced woman, thus conflating national identity with a gendered one.

This man who defiled Maryam, Zakaria, is not a patriotic Palestinian but a traitor who exposed a comrade named Salem. Zakaria is complicit with the colonizer who appropriated the land. He is a collaborator, and the novella portrays him as a coward and a scoundrel—betraying both the Palestinian resistance as well as his first wife. In truth, the fact that he is a

Palestinian might complicate any facile symbolism of the "rape of the land" by a colonizer. Zakaria's presence must be read simultaneously as an internal critique of Palestinian society as well as an allegory for colonization. In addition, he is married to another woman and has many children, which makes Maryam's infamy more intense and the defeat she stands for more humiliating. Zakaria not only sexually spoiled Maryam but also appropriated the house in which she and Hamid lived in Gaza and behaves as if it were his, which again replicates the logic of colonization when it comes to appropriating or confiscating land and casts Maryam in the role of the lost (mother)land. Hamid's escape to the Desert makes this appropriation a clear case. A postcolonial critic like Albert Memmi (1974) in his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized* has argued that the colonialist "accepting the reality of being a colonizer means agreeing to be a nonlegitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper" (p. 96). As a "usurper," the colonialist disowns the colonized yet takes their land. Zakaria usurps Hamid and Maryam's house just as the colonizer usurped Hamid's home in Jaffa and forced the whole family to leave. Moreover, Maryam's reluctant consensual sex with Zakaria complicates her role in the narrative. While she accepts Zakaria's sexual advances and the disgraceful consequences of her complicity, she loses the sympathy of her brother and accepts another reality contra that articulated by Memmi, that of being a colonized who accepts violation and appropriation by those perpetuating colonial oppression. Through Maryam, Kanafani was able to depict an enduring picture of a lost nation and equally communicate a sense of dismay and rage at tragic political realities.

The text dramatizes the disintegration of the traditional Palestinian family with Hamid's mother getting lost during the exodus and being reportedly in Jordan and the rest of the family relocating to Gaza after the death of Hamid's father in the events of 1948. The loss of Hamid's mother as well as his sister's disgrace are interrelated and can be understood in terms of national loss and disaster, in particular the loss of Jaffa to the Zionists. His sister is four months pregnant by a married man, and she even kills her abusive husband at the end of the novella, adding more dishonor to the family and assuming more negative attributes of the mother archetype, the seductive femme fatale. In this climactic scene and while Hamid is struggling with an Israeli soldier in the Desert, Maryam symbolically stabs Zakaria in his groin, right above his thighs (p. 86), which is itself a travesty of colonialism with the fertile mother/earth rejecting the usurper, the complicit patriarchal enemy. The narrative abruptly cuts back and forth between Hamid's and Maryam's mirrored actions, with the reader often only able to infer what has happened in one locale by the actions depicted in the other. Simultaneously, Maryam's act is a self-assertive one and a gendered act with liberating potential. The death of the complicit Palestinian, i.e. the betrayer of the nation, signals the traumatizing birth of a new nation. Maryam becomes a dark emblem of death and destruction, just like the abyss symbolized by the terrifying Desert Hamid is trying to cross. Like the Desert, Maryam partakes in the negative yet ambivalent symbolism of the mother archetype. Just as she is a source of (illegitimate) life, she is equally a source of death. In her capacity as a mother figure, she carries the potential for life within her body or at the emotional level of empathy. Thus, her attempt to save the life of her fetus is symbolically a wish to preserve the life of her brother too. The struggle between Maryam and Zakaria is instigated by the fact that Zakaria insists Maryam abort her unborn child, which she decided to name Hamid, after her brother. Her struggle with Zakaria is intended to save Hamid the fetus while Hamid (her brother and surrogate "son") struggles for his life in the Desert.

In the meantime, Hamid is trying to secretly enter Jordan and is lonely in the Desert, an alternative mother figure. Essentially, Hamid has a mother-complex; his frequent complaint to his sister when they argue or when he finds work or loses a job is: "if your mother were here!" (p. 12). In moving between Gaza and the Desert, Hamid is moving from one mother symbol (the city) to another, the Desert. According to Jung, "The city is a maternal symbol, a woman who harbours the inhabitants in herself like children" (1964, p. 307). Jung's claim can be more sympathetically considered if we envision an agrarian, rural-based Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century and thus ponder the frustrations Palestinians had when seeing this "bucolic" Palestine go to waste and loss. Jung establishes this relation between women and cities. The city and the Desert assume the role of what Jung calls "the mother or mother-imago" (p. 319). Hamid lost both cities, Jaffa and Gaza just as he lost his personal mother during the exodus. Like cities, the Desert carries aspects of mother symbolism. The Desert and the city can, however, embody extreme forms. As Jung (1964) explains, "The mother then appears on the one hand as the supreme goal, and on the other as the most frightful danger –the 'Terrible Mother'" (p. 343). The nourishing

earth-mother differs from the devouring terrible mother, a role often assumed by the Desert and Maryam.

Significantly, the Desert is personified, given a speaking role and a fully-fledged character in its own right. Moreover, the sexualization of the Desert and her relationship with Hamid echoes the incestuous sexual tension that exists between Hamid and Maryam, which is itself a significant reason for Maryam to seek sexual gratification with Zakaria. It was Hamid and Maryam's father who forbade Maryam's marriage—or indeed any talk of marriage—before the Palestinian national cause is decided. This diktat from the family patriarch essentially places all "legitimate" (i.e. within the bounds of marriage) sexual activities on indefinite hold, which is itself a path to national self-destruction. Maryam's act of sexual agency must be seen through these multiple facets to be understood, and viewing it as a "violation" of the family's "honor" or allegorically interpreting it in terms of national loss should not eclipse Maryam's nuanced presence in the novel and her complex motivations as daughter, sister, mother, and wife.

The ambivalent logic of life/death or protection/annihilation characteristic of the mother archetype and applicable to Maryam also applies to the Desert which, as Zakaria thinks, can devour ten men like Hamid in a single night (p. 15). When Hamid gets to the Desert, he sees it as a living creature that audibly breathes everywhere, that is "simultaneously mysterious, terrible, and tame" (p. 9). The spacious, dark Desert is reminiscent of the black void of the sea the family uses to flee Jaffa. For Hamid, the Desert serves as a surrogate mother figure with all the ambivalent attributes of the mother archetype. His retreat to the mysterious Desert for protection is framed in terms of an archetypal return to the mother's womb. The personification of the Desert makes it a woman with the ability to protect and simultaneously kill. This anthropomorphism in the description of the Desert makes it an escape from the shame brought by Hamid's "defiled" sister and still the grave that obliterates him, which also makes the Desert assume negative aspects of the mother archetype, i.e. the terrible, devouring mother. Hamid feels the body of the Desert breathe and heave under him as he delves more into it away from Gaza city (p. 10). When a passing car threatens to expose him, he lies on the ground feeling the Desert "quiver under him like a virgin" (p. 17). As the car approaches, he fastens himself more to the Desert, feeling its warmth and softness as he passes his lips over its surface (p. 17). This Desert which can annihilate Hamid also provides protection for him. Reflecting on the Desert, he thinks: "I cannot hate you, but can I love you? You swallow ten men like me in one night—yet I choose to love you, I am forced to love you, there is nothing left to me but you" (p. 17). And it is the Desert that makes him hide and surprise the lost Israeli soldier who seems to be one of those who participated in the war and in subduing Jaffa as indicated by the word "Jaffa" stamped on his military ID card (p. 82). Therefore, the Desert is depicted in ambivalent terms, taking on positive and negative associations of the mother archetype to enhance/parallel the potentially nurturing yet actually fatalistic role Maryam symbolically has.

On the other hand, Zakaria views Maryam in negative terms of the earth mother archetype, telling her "you are a fertile land you devilish woman, a fertile land I tell you" (p. 30). While the Desert can provide protection, Maryam becomes a source of infamy, getting pregnant out of wedlock and thus disgracing her family. Nonetheless, the fertile land she represents is one implanted with "delusion and the unknown" (p. 31) just like the Desert Hamid inhabits. This story of loss of family honor is juxtaposed against Hamid's memories of the loss of land in a burning Jaffa attacked and bombed by the Zionists. His mother was left behind on the beach while men and women fled the city in boats. The boat he and Maryam and their aunt took was filled and then moved to Gaza. Just as Jaffa was given up to the colonizer, Hamid's mother was abandoned. Such heavy losses left characters with nothing but crippling grief, hesitation, and nostalgic memories about life before the war. Thinking about Hamid's weakness and his preoccupation with his mother as a resort from life problems, Maryam reflects on his limited perspectives, "What have you thought poor Hamid? That the plough would remain forbidden for this fertile land? That I would spend my life under your shadow waiting for a man from Jaffa named Fathi silently preparing a decent dowry for the daughter of abu Hamid? Jaffa has been lost you wretched one, lost, lost, and Fathi too, everything is lost" (p. 46). Maryam lost her honor, youth, ambition, mother, and Jaffa too. She lost her chance in life (i.e. getting married to a decent man and establishing a family) just as she lost her city to the Zionists and lost her mother in the confusion that ensued. Still a spinster at the age of thirty five and in a traditionally patriarchal society, Maryam was symbolically dead before her illicit pregnancy meant another death blow to her. Hence, she purposefully makes a link between her personal

blight and national loss/disaster. The loss of a city, Jaffa, becomes tantamount to the loss of Maryam's honor. The view that cities are figurative mother symbols is confirmed by Jung (1970) when he makes the following claim: "Many things arousing devotion or feelings of awe, as for instance the Church, university, city or country, heaven, earth, the woods, the sea or any still waters, matter even, the underworld and the moon, can be mother-symbols" (p. 15). Jung's claim asserts the richness of mother symbolism in myth and culture as well as the array of positive and negative associations of this symbolism.

Maryam's reminiscences of the past when Hamid was ten years old and they left Jaffa through the sea in a black night intersect with her thoughts about her lost honor and her brother's reaction to such loss. Hamid looks back bitterly on personal and political losses: "And Jaffa was sinking like a torch in the waters of distant horizon and gradually fading in our eyes. I cared about you just as I cared about my life you cow, I spent all my days tirelessly serving you day and night. I wanted you a pure woman marrying a pure man one day, but you opened your legs for the first stinking man and got pregnant without caring about me for a second, without caring about him even" (pp. 36-37). In this regard, Maryam failed to embody Hamid's wishful fantasy of the unblighted nation. Hamid's aunt asked him before she died to marry Maryam to a man, implicitly warning him against the dangers of extramarital sex and the unbridled female sexuality. Hamid's thoughts reveal how Maryam, however, did not wait for the right occasion, getting pregnant and leaving Hamid duped, cast out, and "sinking in her disgrace" (p. 24). This negative depiction of the fallen woman corresponds to the loss of land. It is no wonder that Maryam's account of the loss of Jaffa is conflated with Hamid's thoughts (stream of consciousness) about her loss of her honor. These two losses (the personal and the political) are symbolically intertwined. Therefore, Maryam is endowed with negative attributes of the mother archetype, and Kanafani communicates a political message through this archetypal mother symbol.

Both Hamid and Maryam seem to be living under the influence of the mother-complex, not being able to escape her lasting influence. For Jung (1982), some manifestations of the mother-complex on the son include "homosexuality and Don Juanism, and sometimes also impotence. In homosexuality, the son's entire heterosexuality is tied to the mother in an unconscious form; in Don Juanism, he unconsciously seeks his mother in every woman he meets" (p. 113). In the daughter, the mother-complex "either unduly stimulates or else inhibits the feminine instinct" (p. 114). Hamid wastes his youth looking for his mother and not marrying. He answers Maryam, for instance, that he will get married only when he gathers the scattered family in a better house (p. 51). When she asks him whether he knew a woman before, he relates the traumatic story of his father's death and his entering his parents' bedroom one day to find them both naked in bed and to see his father's strong, brown arm embracing his mother's white waist (p. 52). His relationship with his parents, foremost with his mother, seems to have made marriage a difficult choice. Moreover, his mother-complex seems to indicate an unconscious link between the usurpation of his city by the colonizer and the sexual subjugation of his mother and his sister afterwards. His sister, by contrast, wastes her intensified maternal instinct in an illicit sexual relation with a stranger and becomes a would-be-mother. Both the anima and the related mother-complex testify to the power of the mother archetype over characters. Hamid and Maryam seek their lost mother and live under her influence, one refusing to marry before he is reunited with his mother and one losing her maternal instinct to the wrong man. One is an immature dreamer nostalgic for the past and one seeking personal salvation. However, both should deal with a distressing past and an uncertain future without the promise of the mother's actual presence.

Adopting Hamid's narrative perspective might make readers prejudiced against Maryam. However, adopting Maryam's perspective might yield in sympathetic readings of her character or simply overshadow Kanafani's allegorical conception of Maryam as the lost, defiled nation. For example, Amy Zalman (2002) has argued that in *All That's Left to You*, Kanafani "rendered both the female body and Palestine as interchangeable metaphors of a 'fertile land' whose fecundity must be yoked to the national cause" (p. 32). Zalman has also argued that in moving between *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You*, Kanafani moved between "male deficiency (castration) that was associated with the land, and its men, in his first novel, into female potential (fertility)" (p. 25). This depiction of Maryam's character in terms of reproduction, fertility, domesticity and rebirth weighs more toward a favorable conception of her presence yet risks overseeing any negative implications of her symbolic actions. Understanding her in light of the positive as well as negative symbolism of the mother archetype helps

readers better appreciate her nuanced allegorical presence. For Hamid, Maryam becomes a fallen ideal of the unadulterated nation of his childhood and his adult wishful thinking.

C. *Umm Saad* and Positive Forms of the Mother Archetype

Kanafani allegorizes national loss in *All That's Left to You* with relation to absent or fallen mothers. In *Umm Saad* (1969), his engagement with the significance of women and motherly figures is more directly articulated. As opposed to the negative depiction of Maryam in *All That's Left to You* who represents "motherland" in the passive sense of loss and shame, Umm Saad's positive portrayal in Kanafani's novella with that title is justified because she is supposed to mean resistance and possible return to the land rather than eternal exile. While Hamid essentially loses his mother and his sister just as he lost his nation, the narrator of *Umm Saad* gains a teacher and a role model in the maternal figure of the titular heroine. If we take a chronological approach to Kanafani's fiction and the development of his "political consciousness" like that adopted by Muhammad Siddiq (1984), we can argue that this novella was written late in Kanafani's short writing career, few years before his assassination. This third, and last, stage for Siddiq covered the years 1968-1972 and was generally marked by maturity, optimism and self-confidence. In the words of Hilary Kilpatrick (1999), Umm Saad is "the most memorable in a gallery of peasant characters" in Kanafani's novels and stories (p. 12). She realistically resists defeat through her "fundamental goodness, generosity, and willingness to stand out against the system" (p. 12). She is the uneducated yet dedicated revolutionary consciousness enveloping the novel and a positive counterpart for the fallen Maryam. Kanafani dedicates this book to her in the following fashion: "To Umm Saad, the nation and the school." This apparently casts her in the roles of "wisdom" and "authority" Jung (1970) ascribed to the positive mother archetype (p. 16). Kanafani's introduction to *Umm Saad* states that she is closely connected to that "brave, downtrodden, and impoverished class in miserable camps" (p. 7). Thus, she is an essential part of the masses who form the crux of revolution in Kanafani's political thought. It is no wonder that Kanafani makes her not a single woman but the masses, i.e. "that Palestinian class which highly paid for the loss" (p. 8). This generalized image of her as the peasant class of Palestinian workers fits her depiction in terms of the positive symbolism of the mother archetype.

Kanafani repeatedly uses this positive symbolism of the mother archetype to depict Umm Saad because he wants to make her an essential and active part of the struggle for liberation. By the time the novella begins, she emerges from a path surrounded by olive trees as if, for the narrator watching her against a background of misery, silence and emptiness, "sprouting from the womb of the earth" (p. 9). Describing her, the narrator says: "Umm Saad has disappeared since fighting broke out. And now she returns as if on the repercussions of loss..they have fought for her and when they lost she lost twice" (p. 10). She has absorbed the Nakba and Naksa defeats of 1948 and 1967, yet she embodies Kanafani's hope in the peasant class of refugees and workers as agents of change in the struggle to regain their land. Aside from such associations between her and the Palestinian nation in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba, the narrator also links her to the enduring Palestinian land and hope for return.

Umm Saad has lived in refugee camps for about twenty years now, but her life instinct is never beaten. When this peasant woman enters his house, the smell of the country exudes everywhere in the room (p. 10, p. 40). She enters the narrator's house carrying a dry, brown grape twig, promising to plant it and to make him eat grapes in few years (p. 11). For Jung (1964), we should remember, the tree is "predominantly a mother-symbol" (p. 340). Within the Palestinian context, trees like orange and olive trees have been employed as national symbols and associated with certain cities like Jaffa and Jerusalem. Due to their rootedness in the Palestinian land, trees have acted as fit symbols for the nation and productiveness. Hence, fertility and attachment are material attributes. In her capacity as a peasant woman, Umm Saad represents the positive aspects of the mother archetype, the earth mother archetype in particular. Her forehead has the color of soil (p. 12), her brown arms have the color of the earth (p. 34), and her cracked palms look like the surface of a thirsty land (p. 41) and a cracked old trunk (p. 22). When she cries, due to miserable camp conditions, her tears "come suddenly, bursting like a long-awaited fountain from the earth" (p. 28). And when she walks in the rain on a Tuesday morning, she enters the narrator's house "with her wet hair dripping on her face, looking like watered earth" (p. 27). Kanafani mythologizes motherhood, bridging the gap between the personal mother (Umm Saad the dedicated mother and wife) and the earth mother symbolism,

i.e. the figurative level of motherhood. In Jungian terms, both stand for fertility, growth, and rebirth within the positive spectrum of associations.

The narrator describes her as an honest, hard-working, and middle-aged woman: “She is a woman of forty, as it seems to me, stronger than a rock, more patient than patience, spending her days back and forth, living her age tens of times in toil and strife to feed herself and her children in dignity” (p. 21). A refugee living in the poor conditions of camps, she is yet a militant woman rather than a passive victim. She leads camp women and children to clean the area from metal pieces after an air raid to prevent damage to car tires (p. 34). This particular event prefigures a transformation in resistance and gender roles that was manifested in the Intifada (uprising) of 1987 in Gaza and the West Bank after decades of military occupation, denial of basic human rights, and suppression of the right to self-determination. In the words of Joseph Farag (2017), resistance became “democratized... from being limited largely to armed men of fighting age to the whole of Palestinian society, including women and children, as Palestinians aired their grievances and confronted Israeli injustices en masse.” (pp. 10-11). Hence, TV footage of this Intifada often featured children and young adults throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Moreover, interviews with and media coverage of Palestinian mothers of “martyred” Palestinian youths often showed them as resilient mothers accepting the loss of their children for the national cause. Umm Saad conforms to this new conception of Palestinian womanhood, taking the initiative and organizing resistance. In his introductory note to the novella, Kanafani asserts that Umm Saad’s portrayal is based on a real woman he knew and who is even a relation to him (p. 7). Consequently, the novella’s realism acquires socialist meanings about the value of class consciousness in political strife.

Despite the harsh camp life and as a caregiver, Umm Saad nurtured her son “in the way the earth nurtures the stem of a delicate plant, and now that her hands unfolded, the bird that dwelled there for twenty years has flown” to join the fida’i groups, i.e. comrades (p. 22). Thus, she fulfills the role of what Jung (1970) calls “the loving mother” rather than “the terrible mother” (p. 16) we can ascribe to Maryam. On her chest, she wears a chain with machine-gun bullet for jewelry (p. 64). In her cracked, wounded, rough hands, the narrator smells brave resistance being an essential part of man’s “flesh and blood” (p. 46). Twenty years of camp life never made her lose her will or survival instinct. This caring, protective mother has the attributes of sympathy, fertility, and wisdom that Jung attributed to the mother archetype in its positive manifestations. She cleans people’s buildings to honestly provide for her family, not staining her personal virtue in the process or losing family honor as Maryam did. At one instance, Umm Saad discovers that her greedy employers dismissed the former cleaning lady because they found a cheaper option. Umm Saad, in reaction, gives up cleaning their building and waives her wage for two weeks to this cleaning woman (p. 60). Such an act not only exposes the ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy which made the lives of Palestinian refugees (especially women) more miserable, but it also signals a level of intra-female sympathy and support.

Since brave resistance is contagious, her husband Abu Saad gains hope and faith in the revolution pervading the camp. Describing Umm Saad to an old man in the camp while witnessing a military parade, her husband says: “This woman delivers children to become fedayeen; she delivers and Palestine claims” (p. 73). This pivotal image of a fertile woman begetting resistance is the exact opposite of the image of Maryam in *All That’s Left to You* who bears an illegitimate fetus and kills his father by the end of the novella. Thus, Coffin’s assertion (1996) that Umm Saad’s association with the fertile land of Palestine “is more organic and complete” (p. 112) is a legitimate one. As in *All That’s Left to You*, Kanafani makes us reconsider the notion of “homeland” to include not only a geographical space or a collective discursive memory but also the (female)body, with such overlapping conceptions being “opened to the processes of becoming” (Mohammad & Meryan, 2019, p. 65). Motherhood and womanhood stand figuratively with relation to the homeland.

In an anthropological and sociological study on Palestinian women in Israel entitled *Birthing the Nation*, Kanaaneh (2002) tackles this analogy between women’s bodies and a contested national identity. Presenting the female body as a potential site for the struggle between the colonizer and the colonized, Kanaaneh asserts the intersecting “fields of meaning and power in which reproduction is caught up and constructed: nation, economy, difference, body, and gender” (2). Abu Saad’s pronouncement regarding his wife’s fertile body conflates nationalism with body and gender issues. Kanaaneh has argued that in political discussions women’s bodies can be encoded “for state power” (p. 65). Hence, Abu Saad

acknowledges the contribution of Umm Saad to the fight against the colonizer due to her capacity as a wife and a mother. And since she provides resistance with the zealous fida'i youth ready to fight the Zionists, she "mothers" resistance and "births" the Palestinian nation, to draw on Kanaaneh's book title. In fact, many Kanafani works can be read in light of gender issues and feminist concerns supplementing the broader political/ideological contexts and adding a nuanced subtext to most stories and novellas traditionally assumed to conform to patriarchal norms.

While *All That's Left to You* ends in death and loss, *Umm Saad* ends with life and hope. It ends with the grape vine sprouting, with that dry brown twig having a green head and penetrating the earth solemnly (p. 75). For Jung (1964), it should be re-emphasized, trees are common mother-symbols (p. 321). What is common about them is their capacity to give life. The sprouting of the tree at the end of *Umm Saad* also entails rebirth or triumph after defeat. It signifies rootedness in this land, hope of return one day, and patient acceptance of what is little. Before she plants the grape vine, Umm Saad asserts that it might seem a brown, dry twig but it is full of life, giving abundantly without needing much water (p. 11). As a peasant woman who lived with the narrator's family before depopulation in a village in north Palestine named Ghabeseyya, she knows that grapevines, like olive trees, squeeze moisture from the depth of the earth and have a strong survival instinct (p. 12). Hence, the choice of this particular plant, the grapevine, is symbolic since it can be deemed as a national symbol of the land of Palestine. Since the Zionist occupation and acquisition of the Palestinian land posed a threat to the Palestinian peasants, Kanafani elevated the status of the Palestinian cause to an existential one.

In depicting Umm Saad in terms of the mother archetype and endowing her with positive symbolism, Kanafani makes her a symbol for the fecund Palestinian land and the potent Palestinian nation. Understandably, the role assumed by Umm Saad as an archetypal mother can be transposed by other mother figures in the novella because she is more of a type than an individual mother. When Saad and his comrades are ambushed by Israeli soldiers, for example, it is another Palestinian woman—wearing a country dress and carrying a parcel of green stalk and even looking in the same age of Umm Saad and having her tall, solid figure (p. 36)—who comes to their aid. Hence, Umm Saad becomes all Palestinian mothers who beget and support resistance. Kanafani bridges the gap between the archetypal symbol and its meaning, between the personal mother and the figurative mother as the Palestinian land/nation. In *All That's Left to You*, Maryam, who lost her honor, stands for the lost land, thus allowing for negative archetypal symbolism between her and the Earth Mother. In *Umm Saad*, Kanafani gives an alternative view of womanhood, making the title character correspond to the fertile, enduring land that will ultimately reject the colonizer and promise return. In each case, the depiction of the dominant female figure is directly related to the Palestinian crisis after 1948, to what one critic has described as "a long narrative of massacres, land confiscation, dispossession, deportation, and assassination" (Hamdi, 2011, p. 22). Coffin (1996) has argued that *Umm Saad* demonstrates "the transformative power of collective action" and that "the figure of the armed commando fighter is not, however, the sole example of heroic action. Although his role in the struggle for liberation is important, it cannot and will not succeed without the active support of the general population" (p. 114).

Conclusion

Kanafani often assigns women marginal roles. However, he employs two extreme versions of womanhood in his depiction of Maryam and Umm Saad in *All That's Left to You* and *Umm Saad* respectively. While one projection of the mother archetype (the negative one) was used to depict the loss of land and the disintegration of the Palestinian family life, the other projection (the positive one) is still related to that loss of land in the wake of the 1948 catastrophe, but it is one rooted in attachment to the land. If the depiction of Maryam entails bondage and submission to the usurper and violator, the depiction of Umm Saad signifies resistance and liberation. When Kanafani wanted to represent the Palestinian land and the essential dependence of the Palestinian identity on this land, he drew on elemental female figures due to the universal association between women and the (home)land—which is a pivotal image rooted in our deepest fears, anxieties, and hopes. Nonetheless, Kanafani steered his depiction of women toward a politically committed end, which shows the value of women for the national cause, or their essential correspondence to it, rather than exclusion from resistance politics.

Kanafani employed common archetypes for thematic ends—social, political, and historical—to offer commentary on

Arab politics. The conventional analogy between woman and the homeland that he employed in his fictions is recurring in world literature and universal myths. Through positive symbolism of the mother archetype, Kanafani makes Umm Saad the enduring land to which return is inevitable and from which rebirth is possible. And through the negative symbolism of the same archetype, he makes Maryam the violated dispossessed land and makes the Desert the evil, devouring land. This association between woman and the land is a natural reaction to being uprooted and forced to live in refugee camps. While Kanafani's ambivalent archetypal treatment of the female figures in both novellas should be understood within a necessary historical context rooted in the loss of land, dispossession, and exile, his appeal to the mother archetype testifies to the enduring presence of the feminine in the collective unconscious of both individuals and nations. In other words, personal honor, honesty, dignity, patience, and attachment to the land are as important as revolutionary struggle to regain the land. Holding on to such values (Umm Saad's model) or abandoning them to seek individual salvation (Maryam's model) are the heart of the matter for Kanafani. And although Saad, the "fida'i" comrade, is essential to the fight against the colonizer, his mother as the land and the nation is equally important. Saad fights for her and, whether victorious or defeated, returns to her. In a nutshell, Umm Saad and Maryam can be viewed as Kanafani's vehicle for allegorically representing not only the Palestinian land but also the trials and tribulations of the Palestinian nation.

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