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The Bionic Self: Unveiling the Phantom of the East

Christopher J. Jarmark
State University of New York College at Buffalo, ChristopherJarmark@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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The existence of Palestine is a question that has haunted the East ever since Israel's occupation laid roots there in the mid-twentieth century. Occupation allowed for Israel not only to conquer the land of Palestine for itself but also, through bloodied battles and harsh socio-political expectations, to squeeze the essence of cultural identity from the Palestinians. As the occupation stripped the cultural heritage from the Palestinians, they were placed into roles of refugees and exiles, leaving them to wander blankly with only the painfully scarred memories of what used to be their home and culture. Ghassan Kanafani and Sahar Khalifeh use their works *Men in the Sun* and *Wild Thorns* to expose the depths to which the enforcement of the occupation maimed Palestinians, illuminating the amputation of these people from their homeland. Both Kanafani and Khalifeh's texts explore the phantasmal memories of Palestine, while forging tales of Palestinians who are forced to either assimilate with the vision of the occupation or stand tall against it. This thesis argues that the occupation orders Palestinians to adapt to occupied life through a prosthetic process that allowed them to survive within the confines of occupation while granting them the possibility of resurrecting Palestine once again. Examining these texts through the lens of prosthesis and amputation, this paper illuminates the scars that were left by the occupation on the Palestinians and investigates how these scars work as phantom pains that remind the Palestinians of their natural identity within the world.

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Approved by:

Barish Ali, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Thesis Advisor

Ralph L. Wahlstrom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Chairperson of the Department of English

Kevin J. Railey, Ph.D.
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

THESIS COMMITTEE

Barish Ali, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Thesis Advisor

Aimable Twagilimana, Ph.D.
Professor of English

To my mother

for instilling within me a world of endless possibilities.

Thank you for teaching me to dream without ends.

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-Introduction-

When thinking of the self and of an individual's personal relation with the world, Westerners can be quick to think of three key attributes that have driven their histories for centuries: the freedom from oppression, freedom of existence, and the overwhelming sense of pride that comes with knowing one is at home. They can get into their cars and travel the streets of their old neighborhoods, while reminiscing about their many joys of childhood and the dreams that actually came true. They can cover themselves in the exported cultures of other worlds, while proclaiming their American or European heritage without facing or paying any attention to anyone's notions of prejudice for their exploitative nature. On a global scale Westerners live the lives that dreams are made of. They face very little resistance or oppression and their cultural identities are known no matter where they travel. The world to the West is a land of opportunity, a place where great minds and dreams can flourish. Due to their natural position of power within the world, it is hard as a Westerner to believe that people can lack the cultural strength needed to be able to claim a land and a group of people as their own nation with its own cultural heritage. To the West the mysteries of the world are merely adventures waiting to be conquered and infused with new beliefs and passions.

After closely examining two well-known Palestinian texts, Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* and Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns*, it has become quite apparent to me as to how much struggle the Palestinians have had to face throughout history and how much they are still struggling today. Coming from a world where our battles for freedom were fought and won centuries ago it is hard for me as a Westerner to imagine the pains of occupation and oppression, or to understand what it is like to have to abandon one's own identity for another that politics has deemed to be both culturally and politically correct. Both Kanafani and Khalifeh, coming from a

world where oppression and occupation are in fact very real, use their positions as authors to shine a light on the Palestinian struggle and illuminate the pain of being stripped of one's identity and heritage by others in the name of a religious birth right.

Although both stories seem to deal with very different aspects of Palestinian life, both authors appear to be addressing the same issue, that is, how a culture and a people can survive within a nation— and a world— that refuses to notice and accept them as equals. Although both texts seem to evolve around Palestinians searching for national identity in the face of the Israeli occupation, they do not focus on images of naturally healthy Palestinian men and women, but instead seem to focus on the journeys of Palestinians who have been maimed and scarred by the destructive consequences of having their culture occupied and suppressed by Israel. Through these intense images readers can see how existence moves from a natural state into something artificial or prosthetic as these scars begin to redefine the Palestinians in ways that either further break them away from their national identity, causing them to amputate their Palestinian roots in order to conform and assimilate with Israel and the West, or become redefined or recreated Palestinians whose hearts and souls are more deeply and passionately rooted in Palestine and within the Palestinian culture. Through an application of theories on amputation and prosthesis in conjunction with various writings on resistance and occupation, I work to illuminate how Kanafani and Khalifeh use their literature to both recreate Palestine for the Palestinians and present Palestine in a way that challenges the Western world to acknowledge the struggles that Palestinians have faced for several years.

When we think of the term "self," or when we think of our own personal self, rarely are we thinking of the ways we change in relation to the world around us. Typically we tell stories of how we were born a certain way or how our parents raised us to be who we are, but, as Susan

Stuart explains, this response is not as natural as we may feel it to be. Stuart reveals that due to changes in the world around us, human beings are forced into various directions that nature would not have considered on its own, claiming: "What we call the 'self,' the object of our self-consciousness, is neither solely the mind nor the body, nor is it some amalgam of the two. The self is a prosthesis. It is the result of an agent's action within its complex and changing world" (164). Ramesh Kumar Sharma also acknowledges this to be true when arguing that the self is more than just physical, spiritual, or emotional, but rather is some mixture of all three of these: "We will miss the whole point of our initial seemingly casual remark if we construe it to mean either (1) that all experience is of the body, or (2) that all experience is merely sense experience, or (3) that we cannot conceive of experience (of whatever sort) without having the present body or a body analogous to the present one" (1). Nodding to history and the numerous struggles that human beings have faced throughout their existence Stuart continues, "It is an extension of the agent as an embodied system embedded within its world: adaptable and technological, able to enhance and reconfigure itself to replace and augment its capabilities" (164). Sharma credits the body, or physical self, for this responsive nature, arguing that it is the body's ability to interact with the world that allows the self to make contact with history: "Embodiment is thus a necessary condition for there to be not only manifestation of the self but also knowledge of the world other than the self" (2). Although Stuart and Sharma are working to create an example of how the self is formed, their work appears to lay out a formula for a greater understanding of how a culture is actually formed. If the self is created or established by its interaction with the world, then it would appear that a culture—a group of many selves—must establish its own placement within the world in very similar ways. Considering a culture as a body that houses its people—the acting inner belief system, if you will—as its vital essence while allowing its

sociopolitical actions to work as ways of interacting with the rest of the world, it places itself in the same position as the human self, thus allowing it to establish its own personal-identity.

It is this interaction between the self, or body, and the world around it that allows for national identity to form. Edward Said urges that "human identity is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright" (*Orientalism* 332). This removes nature from being solely responsible for human action and instead replaces it with social expectation and circumstance. Stuart attempts to clarify this notion by acknowledging that "The self is not the body. The self is not the mind. The self is active agency within the world; it is prosthesis" (164), proposing what I believe to be the prosthetic nature of identity. Identity is not simply natural, but is instead a response to the way human beings interact with the world around them. For the self identity is based on the values we cherish and the pieces of culture that we most relate with within our lives. To view the self on a purely nationalistic plane Stuart notes that "our environment must be sufficiently complex and challenging for us to be capable of complex responses" (165). Unfortunately one of the major fears that comes with this type of complex interaction is that if something can be interacted with, then it must be physical and capable of being conquered: "Now it is clear, from the idea that the body is an object, as mine, I cannot regard it as me. I can possess it or regard myself as possessing it as I regard myself as possessing other objects, but I cannot strictly identify myself with it" (Sharma 4). More specifically, we are not merely born, but are instead forged from the demands placed upon our bodies by the world around us. Said builds on this by declaring that "identity is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society" (*Orientalism* 332). It is for this reason that the self has to be regarded as more than just the body—if the self is just the body, then it ceases to exist once someone or something else imposes their selves on it. If a culture is

capable of gaining selfhood within the world then it too can fall victim to this same notion. As the culture interacts with the rest of the world, whether through exploration, colonialism, political cleansing, and religious exercise, its position within the world is forged, establishing its stance as not simply a culture, but a nation. Viewing national identity as an extension of the self, a body of sorts, it is safe to claim that if another nation imposes its beliefs onto this body, then it would simply cease to exist without the extension of its people, or spiritual essence. Due to this extension people thus take on a greater role in relation to selfhood; no longer is a person just his or her self, but he or she are instead an amalgamation of his or her own self—the physical—and of their culture—the spiritual—establishing a relationship that can be read as—the prosthetic nation.

The prosthetic nation is a state of selfhood that can only be fully aware of its self-identity so long as it's actively partaking in a relationship with an individual, a culture, and a nation. Through this state of being, a prosthetic nation grants an individual the ability to interact with other cultures while moving within other nations. Although the individual can be persuaded by the influences of other nations to abandon its immediate relationship with his or her home nation, their seemingly divine position as the vitality—or essence—of their culture keeps them from permanently severing their bond with that nation. Although an individual can be forced into the state of being a refugee, the individual's national claim may be compromised while his or her cultural claim is never completely removed.

Thinking of this prosthetic self-identity in relation to Palestine and the occupation we must consider how people are used as prosthetic extensions of a nation. Merleau-Ponty clarifies that "there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself" (xii), proposing that true existence for man is directly relative to man's connection with not

merely his self, but more so the relationship between his self and the world around him. Jacques Lacan echoes this claim, stating that, “Undoubtedly every manifestation of the ego is compounded equally of good intentions and bad faith and the usual idealistic protest against the chaos of the world only betrays, inversely, the very way in which he who has a part to play in it manages to survive” (12), arguing that the chaotic state of the world places man in a position where he must either flow with the current of the world—accepting the norm—or against this current—challenging what is accepted as the norm. Without the many influences of the world, man is left with limitations—he can neither have good nor bad intentions. This also breaks man from being able to forge bonds with others—if life is without trials and tribulations, then opinion cannot be formed, thus man cannot find similarities and community amongst his own kind. It is in this that we can see the codependent nature that each one of us wishes to relate to as we mention our national identity to the world around us. Merleau-Ponty further exposes this, explaining that “We must discover the origin of the object at the very centre of our experience; we must describe the emergence of being and we must understand how, paradoxically, there is for us an in-itself” (82-83). National identity in this way is dependent on the self, both the nation and the human being, and its interaction with the world. To understand cultural heritage, the nation must interact with its people; only in this interaction—political, economic, social—can a bond between the two be fully established. Without a nation, people are just their selves—body, emotion, spirit—lacking any real definition within the world; conversely without people, a nation is without a body and in essence without self. For example, Westerners claim their allegiance to America or Europe, expressing how they exist to serve each other as citizens and in essence as representations of these nations. Rarely do the countries of the Western world find their selves in situations that make one national group threaten its position within this relationship, as Israel

threatens the existence of Palestine. The Israeli occupation of Palestine exploits the lack of permanence of national identity—national selfhood—exposing how one nation's radical imposition of self onto another nation and its body—people—can eliminate the weaker nation, reclaiming its people as an extension of the conqueror or occupier.

Palestine: The Phantom of the East

Speaking on *The Question of Palestine* Edward Said further explains Palestinians' struggle to be noticed as their relationship with their nation is stolen away from them by Israel. Said writes, "In Israel today it is the custom officially to refer to the Palestinians as 'so-called Palestinians,' which is a somewhat gentler phrase than Golda Meir's flat assertion in 1969 that the Palestinians did not exist" (*Question of Palestine* 4-5), suggesting that even within a land that at one time belonged to the Palestinians, these people no longer have a recognized relationship with it due to its socio-political relationship with Israel. These feelings of disgust towards the Palestinian people come after Israel takes ownership of Palestine, post 1948. Elias Sanbar explains, "The contemporary history of the Palestinians turns on a key date: 1948. That year, a country and its people disappeared from maps and dictionaries" (175), exposing the abrupt nature of Israel's occupation over Palestine. Not only did they make claim on Palestine, but by doing so they made claim to its people, stripping them of their national identities and branding them as past-tense beings.

This ruthless imposition brings forth a damaging characteristic of prosthesis, illuminating that if something is prosthetic it can therefore be removed or amputated from its host. Ahmad H. Sa'di recognizes this amputation process, writing that Palestinian people had to witness "among many other things, the loss of the homeland, the disintegration of society, the frustration of national aspirations, and the beginning of a hasty process of destruction of their culture" (175).

Not only did these people have to live through the destruction of their nation, but they also had to helplessly bear witness to it. Said also speaks on this removal, or amputation, of the Palestinian people as he talks about them no longer existing, but instead becoming memories or something of the past: "The fact of the matter is that today, Palestine does not exist, except as a memory or, more importantly, as an idea, a political and human experience" (*Question of Palestine* 5). Pain researcher Annie Woodhouse, of the University of Sydney and Royal North Shore Hospital, speaks of amputation in a similar sense as Said speaks of the removal of the Palestinians from Palestine, defining this memory as what is known as Phantom limb pain or Phantom limb sensation. She defines these feelings as follows: "Phantom limb pain is any painful sensations that are referred to the absent limb" (132) and "Phantom limb sensation is any sensation in the absent limb, except pain" (132). It is this similar sensation of loss, or memory of what once was, that drives the Palestinian people to continue searching for recognition, or recognized selfhood. Understanding that Palestinians once had a recognized existence makes them desire for its resurrection even more.

Douwe Tiemersma further explains this phantom phenomena in his book *Body Schema and Body Image*, suggesting that this ghostly sensation is common among "practically 100 percent of amputation cases" (25). Tiemersma continues, "The phantom limb spontaneously moves in accordance with the rest of the body and sometimes voluntary control is possible. It is experienced as real in almost the same sense as the material body, particularly in voluntary movements" (26), suggesting that the body, whether present or not, is something that can be controlled and felt as real. If Palestine is a memory, something that has been removed from its physical position in relation to its people, then according to Tiemersma Palestine can and will be infused within a Palestinian's being. Palestine for a Palestinian is something that can be both felt

and controlled through their intense memories of its position and relationship with them. Shawn Huffman suggests that "the amputated subject retains a sense of ownership with respect to the missing limb" (69) alluding to what Elizabeth Grosz claims is "the refusal of an experience to enter into the past [and] the tenacity of a present that remains immutable" (89). If the connection once existed, then naturally the self will look for it to remain there. Lacan theorizes that "The aspect which seems to me especially worthy of notice is that such experiences are essentially related to the continuation of a pain which can no longer be explained by local irritation; it is as if one caught a glimpse here of the existential relation of a man with his body-image in this relationship with such a narcissistic object as the lack of a limb" (14), urging that this pain comes from the inability of man to be able to recognize his self without the missing appendage. Palestinians are not whole without Palestine, thus a painful void is formed. As long as Palestinians are able to remember the connection that they once shared with Palestine, then these memories will continue to pulse through them, creating sensations that work to reestablish the connection that was believed to have been lost between the two.

Said echoes Huffman, Grosz, and Lacan as he further equates Palestine and Palestinians with this sensation of Phantom limb pain—arguing that they are memories that exist to be known to Israel, which act as reminders of the pain that Israel has placed upon their nation. He explains that "the Palestinians remain so *specialized* a people as to serve essentially as a synonym for trouble—rootless, mindless, gratuitous trouble. They will not go away as they ought to, they will not accept the fate of other refugees (who have, apparently, simply resigned themselves to being refugees and therefore are contented as such), they cause trouble" (*Question of Palestine* 7). Said's illuminating of Palestine and the Palestinians as being burdens or painful reminders to Israel further exposes their relationship with phantom pain. Elizabeth Grosz's assertion that "In

traditional psychological and physiological terms, the phantom limb is treated as a memory, a past experience reactivated in the present" (86) works to solidify this position as the Palestinian as an extension of Palestine must work to keep Palestine known within a world that threatens to leave Palestine forgotten in the past. Lacan gives reason for this reactivation as simply being the self's ability to see the presence of one appendage next to the absence of the other—"the strange fact of the persistence of the pain with the removal of the subjective element of distress in such conditions, leads us to suspect that the cerebral cortex functions like a mirror" (14)—suggesting that the brain mirrors the healthy feeling of the present with the pain that must come with absence. If there are Palestinians, then there must have been a host—Palestine must have existed. This statement echoes Said's earlier feeling that it is ignorant for Israel to pretend that Palestinians do not exist, claiming, "But what is most important is the continuing avoidance or ignorance of the existence today of about four million Muslim and Christian Arabs who are known to themselves and to others as Palestinians" (*Question of Palestine* 5). It is this "alienating perspective" (*After the Last Sky* 40) as Said comes to call it that forces Palestine into this position of painful memory or painful other. With both the Palestinians and the Israelis claiming Palestine as their own they drive the opposing culture into a painful state of otherness. For both of these peoples, as the prosthetic relationship that they share with the land grows stronger, they each feel a painful reaction of sorts—for one the painful feeling of loss and the other the painful feeling of resistance, rejection, and retaliation.

Said refers to this feeling as Palestine's being "so charged with significance for others that Palestinians cannot perceive it as intimately theirs without a simultaneous sense of its urgent importance to others as well" (*After the Last Sky* 40), further referring to it as this feeling of being "'Ours', but not fully 'ours'" (*After The Last Sky* 40). According to Said Palestinians have

been placed in such a cultural bind that they are unable to think of Palestine without thinking of Israel, thus they are unable to look at Palestine as belonging solely to the Palestinians anymore—it has become impossible for them to ignore the presence of Israelis within occupied Palestine. Speaking of the prosthesis of self in relation to the theory of the other Stuart explains that "Self is not possible without other. They are not simply interrelated; they are interdependent" (167), suggesting that existence for Palestine as well as any other nation comes from being noticed by other nations. James Krasner further suggests this as he writes, "Any theory of embodied grief . . . must situate the survivor's body in a particular place and position. A child no longer accompanied by a mother still reaches a hand toward where hers should be" (219), in essence implying that it is the Palestinians' relationship with their occupier that entices them to search for their roots. As long as something is known by an individual as being removed there will be a sensation of loss and memory surrounding that removal. Krasner continues, "losing a loved one means losing not just a body but also one's bodily engagements with it" (222), proposing that it is not simply the loss of a life that an individual grieves over, but is instead their interaction with that being that they are truly grieving. Considering land as a mother, a place where a nation is born and people are literarily supported, it is truly possible to see how an individual, such as a Palestinian, can feel a sense of grief and a phantom sense or memory for it when it is taken over by another people.

Unfortunately when dealing with land one must be considerate of the other inhabitants' feelings. Israel occupying Palestine allows them to feel an embodied relationship with the land in a similar way that a Palestinian might. Thus they too would feel a prosthetic bond between themselves and the land, a bond that they can and will defend in the face of adversity. Israel's occupation over Palestine acts as a reaction to the Palestinians' claim to their nation. Israel may

use this occupation to try to silence Palestine, but this backfires as it fuels the Palestinians to resist and in essence thrust their selves back into known existence. Israel and Palestine, the land, acts as a host for a deadly symbiotic relationship. For a Palestinian it is a battlefield, a place where dreams linger just long enough to instill feelings of grief and retribution. It is a place where these two entities will constantly struggle for control so long as there are two minds or bodies wishing to connect with it. Stuart further notes that "Within this complex environment we are adaptable, using tools to change our relationship with the world, using technology to extend ourselves and augment our capabilities but also restore lost functions, replace damaged parts, and even replace or alter our physical features" (165), exposing that in harsh times, like those of occupation people are forced to use their advanced nature of being, their self, to redefine their position with the world. Either a Palestinian can conform to new beliefs and a new identity, or they can work against their occupiers and keep their cultural heritage, the memory of their people alive.

It is in this advanced nature of the self and human nature that Kanafani and Khalifeh's visions of occupied Palestine are able to truly shine. Kanafani himself relates to this feeling as he speaks of the thought of his son being born within an occupied world, proclaiming within a letter to his son that "I heard you crying. I could not move. There was something bigger than my awareness being born in the other room through your bewildered sobbing. It was as if a blessed scalpel was cutting up your chest and putting there the heart that belongs to you" (10), exposing a visceral feeling of prosthesis taking over during the time of his son's birth. Through the figurative placement of this Palestinian heart within his son, Kanafani "knew. . . that a distant homeland was being born again; hills, plains, olive groves, dead people, torn banners, and folded ones, all cutting their way into a future of flesh and blood and being born in the heart of another

child" (10). Here Kanafani not only acknowledges his spiritual awareness of his and his son's Palestinian roots, but also acknowledges that Palestine, despite being under the occupation of Israel is still very much alive within its people.

Although the child has yet to grow and enter life, making his own decisions and relationship with the land, Kanafani is certain that his son is feeling Palestine within him and will continue to throughout his life. Tiemersma exposes that "For a long time neurologists presumed that young children never experience phantom limbs, but there are findings of phantom limb sensations in children with limbs missing since birth and with early amputation" (26). Understanding that this sensation stems from memory of the removed appendage Tiemersma further explains "By new stimulation of the stump there is a chance, however, of the original phantom limb being restored" (26) implying that Kanafani's feelings about Palestine can, if imposed on him, awaken his son's connection to Palestine through him. Kanafani acknowledges this awakening as he proclaims "Do not believe that man grows. No; he is born suddenly—a word, in a moment, penetrates his heart to a new throb" (10), echoing what Diana Almeida calls "a Biblical quotation about human frailty ['man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live,' Job 14: 1]" (165), while suggesting that the deadened nature of the prosthetic Palestinian self is called into working function as Palestine amputates outside forces and instead replaces them with its own notion of identity, resulting in a rebirth of Palestine and its people. By acknowledging this deep sense of connection that Palestinians have to this land, as exposed within both Kanafani and Khalifeh's texts, I find it increasingly important to clear the rubble of the occupier, Israel, from the beautiful culture that lives beneath it. It is in this fashion that I will rely on various instances within their texts that employ images that are tightly laced with the memories of the land, which they have lost to occupation in order to redefine and reclaim the

land as Palestine, breaking them free from their symbiotic relationship with Israel and allowing them to be recognized as an independent nation once again.

-Chapter One-

Men in the Sun and the Mirage of Being

Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* at first glance appears to be nothing more than a story about the depths to which individuals are willing to go in order to achieve a higher sense of being within a society that is based on strict laws, harsh punishment, and crippling torment imposed by both human beings and nature. An intimate reading of this novella quickly proves this notion to be merely a thread within the tapestry that is Kanafani's writing and the world he is defining. Although Kanafani seems to be writing of four people with similar wishes, he does so in a way that works to layer the contrasting necessity for the spiritual with that of the physical. By closely examining Kanafani's four main characters, Abu Qais, Assad, Marwan, and Abul Khaizuran, readers are able to see how action or desire within this text is unable to fully work without some kind of spiritual or natural force acting as a catalyst. This relationship between the natural or spiritual and the material or human allows Kanafani to suggest that in order for man to understand a sense of true reality they must be able to identify not merely with their material desires, but also with their spiritual desires or oneness with the world around them.

Reading through Ghassan Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun* it is hard to miss Kanafani's undeniable awareness of being— his notion of how it should feel to be fully existent within a world. To exist within *Men in the Sun* does not mean to exist with a solid notion of what the future holds for an individual, but to instead exist with an unease for what should be familiar. Each page presents images of common familiarity—houses, land, family— yet each image seems to be consumed with negative notions of nostalgia. For example, rather than allowing his character Abu Qais to think of the birth of one of his children as a time of great pride, it instead acts as a constant reminder that with life can, and most definitely will, come death: ". . . she gave

birth to a girl he [Abu Qais] named Hosna, who died two months later" (Kanafani 25). This image allows Kanafani to immediately begin playing with the notion of the phantom, allowing Hosna to become a daughter while also allowing her to become nonexistent. Hosna is Abu Qais's daughter, but she is also a ghostly apparition, or *phantom* as Annie Woodhouse claims—a pain or sensation referring to the absent or dead (132)—which, reminds Abu Qais of loss and attacks his position of father, or protector, forcing him to view his self as a failure. Kanafani is sure to point this out to readers as he explains, "The doctor said distastefully: 'She was extremely emaciated'" (25), suggesting Abu Qais's inability to care for her. It is with this that Kanafani also seems to be hinting at Abu Qais's possible inability to care for the future, whether it is his own future, his family's future, or the future of his heritage— the future of Palestine.

Staying true to what he revealed in his letter to his son, Kanafani wrote *Men in the Sun* in a way that challenges the idea of being, suggesting that there is much more to vitality than simply existing within a world. Kanafani explains to his son that birth may grant a person life, but they do not begin truly living until something is awakened within them, whether it comes from trauma, joy, or grief: "Do not believe that man grows. No; he is born suddenly—a word, in a moment, penetrates his heart to a new throb" (10). The characters within Kanafani's novella embody this sense of being as they take readers on a journey from stagnation to spiritual enlightenment, each with his own driving force yet all traveling down the same path. Although each of the men within Kanafani's text appears to be traveling down the same path he is quick to expose their inability to fully take notice of each other's commonalities. It is in this that Kanafani appears to be building a world of mirage for his readers, a world where each individual is unable to see past their own view due to the phantoms that have brought them to life, haunting them in ways that act as reminders for them to claim a hold on life and live for those that cannot live for

themselves. I will argue that it is not simply an arrogance or ignorance that fuels this inability for one to take notice of the other, but it is in fact a mirage or a hallucinatory way of being that forces these men to not be able to see anything except for the world that appears to be threatening them— this being a world under occupation. Living under occupation these men have no choice, but to see what they have lost on their own. With each personal loss comes an awareness of the loss of something much greater. Loss within this text acts as a spiritual force that conjures up an awareness of the loss of their cultural heritage, their people, and their claim to the positive feelings that one is entitled to as they assimilate with the notion of being home. Loss is also what makes these characters come to an understanding of their individual place within an occupied world.

It is this awakening or self-awareness that fuels the characters of his text to not simply sit stagnant in a depressed existence, but to instead leave their comfort zone in order to seek refuge and a sense of accomplished identity outside of their currently occupied lives. Each guided by their individual phantoms Abu Qais, Assad, Marwan, and Abul Khaizuran form prosthetic bonds with these beings, allowing their selves to forge bonds with these memories, using them for strength as they are used by their phantoms as tools for accomplishing what life under occupation simply will not allow. As each individual within the text interacts with his phantom memories they do so in a way that awakens their self identity, exhibiting the prosthetic relationship that the self holds with the world around it. As these phantasmal memories refuse to diminish into the past, as Elizabeth Grosz claims, they resurrect an urgency within these characters to reunite with what they feel is missing—in this case Palestine. In order to better understand how Kanafani uses these phantoms to create prosthetic bonds between his four main characters and Palestine it is important to define the relationships that each character has with

Palestine as well as the one that they share with the occupied world in which they are living. To do this I will turn to various images of nature within the text while also examining the roles of several secondary characters, investigating their representative qualities, while also shedding illumination on their key role as spiritual guides. In an attempt to do Kanafani and this text as much justice as possible, I will further break this analysis down into five parts, one for each of Kanafani's four main characters, and lastly one for what feels like the most forgotten being within the text—the woman. Within each section I will define the mirage or phantom being(s) that seem to be working to awaken the Palestinian identity that has lain suppressed and dormant within each of these characters. In order to best do this I will rely on Kanafani's notion that one is not born at birth, but is instead born at a turning point within his or her life, exposing how and why each of these particular moments would awaken a sense of urgency within these characters. Lastly in the final part of this chapter I will work to define the role of women within this text and why I feel Kanafani is working to expose an inability for them to flourish on their own as extensions of Palestinians.

Abu Qais and the Pulse of Palestine

"It's the sound of your own heart. You can hear it when you lay your chest close to the ground"— Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in the Sun*

Perhaps of all of the chapters within Kanafani's novella, the chapter simply referred to as "Abu Qais" appears to be the most infused with nature and the importance of establishing a bond between man and the land that surrounds him. Noting what Hilary Kilpatrick claims within the introduction to this novella, it becomes apparent as to why Kanafani decides to begin his novella with such a magnified connection between man and nature. Introducing the novella Kilpatrick explains that "The novella tells of four Palestinians in exile struggling to build, or rebuild, a

future" (Kanafani 11), forcing the attention of readers away from simply focusing on why these men have been exiled and placing attention onto what exactly it is that they have been exiled from. For Kanafani the use of exile clearly refers to the relationship between man, these four Palestinians, and the land, Palestine. Although Kanafani could easily begin his novella with the struggle of a man, Abu Qais, attempting to make sense of home life—contemplating what it is he can possibly do to better provide his family with what they need to survive—Kanafani breaks from material necessity and instead brings forward culture and heritage, placing it into a magnified position that indeed fuels the novella. In doing this Kanafani is placing a sense of curiosity within his readers, one that leaves them begging to better understand why these men, if all exiles, were removed from such a beautiful bond as what Abu Qais shares with the land beneath him. In other words, why would someone want to amputate an individual from his or her bond with nature?

Immediately as we enter Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun* we are met with an image of Palestine establishing a prosthetic bond between itself and one of its people. Kanafani writes of Abu Qais a Palestinian man having a similar awakening as he previously depicted within his letter to his son, writing: "Abu Qais rested on the damp ground, and the earth began to throb under him with tired heartbeats, which trembled through the grains of sand and penetrated the cells of his body" (21). Not only does this image suggest that earth, Palestine, itself has a similar essence of life as Abu Qais, but it also proposes that this essence is merging with the cellular structure of Abu Qais creating a hybridity or cohesive relationship between the two, similar to a prosthetic limb. Elaborating further, Kanafani continues "Every time he threw himself down with his chest to the ground he sensed that throbbing, as though the heart of the earth had been pushing its difficult way towards the light from the utmost depths of hell, ever since the first time

he had lain there" (21), implying that as Abu Qais's heart pulses life through his veins, so does the Palestinian earth. It is this connection that is shared between Abu Qais and the land that allows Palestine to uncover itself from the rubble of occupation, releasing it from its condemned nonexistence so it can claim its being once again through its relation with its people. Although Kanafani appears to be making this connection seem completely undeniable, he allows for the scrutiny of occupation to rear its head as Abu Qais speaks of this connection to his neighbor. Kanafani writes, "the man answered mockingly: 'It's the sound of your own heart. You can hear it when you lay your chest close to the ground'" (21), attempting to expose how an outside force, like the occupation, might look to shutdown or dismiss these feelings before they become too strong to control. Amal Amireh validates the old man's response, claiming, "The land Abu Qais is lying on is not Palestine: for he has lost his land in 1948 and is now a refugee trying to cross the border illegally from Iraq into Kuwait. So the passage is really about the frustration of desire, a frustration that represents the loss of his very identity as a displaced Palestinian peasant" (752). Although Palestine is lost, as Amal Amireh states, I feel that this image does in fact relate directly to Palestine—the apparition—allowing Abu Qais to connect with the memory of the land that once belonged to him. This image does not work to solidify Abu Qais's displaced nature, but instead challenges it in a way that allows Palestine to be resurrected through his memory, feelings, and lastly his body—creating a full prosthetic bond between the two as it becomes a part of his self.

Despite the fact that Kanafani appears to be using the old man as a way to hinder the bond that Abu Qais shares with the land that once was Palestine, he proves to be a master of manipulating conversations as he allows this dismissal to uncover a kind of truth that lays beneath it. Similar to the pulse of Palestine's heart breaking free from the hell that it has been

condemned to, this statement, when cleared of its mocking tone only echoes the strength of the bond that Abu Qais is already beginning to feel with Palestine. Although the neighbor is attempting to mock Abu Qais, Kanafani is in fact claiming that "It's the sound of your own heart" (21). Abu Qais is not simply living in a mindset of delusion, but is in fact truly becoming at one with something that was once actually a part of him— summoning his Palestinian heritage. He goes on to echo this awakening as he claims, "And the smell, then? The smell that, when he sniffed it, surged into his head and then poured down into his veins. Every time he breathed the scent of the earth, as he lay on it, he imagined that he was sniffing his wife's hair when she had just walked out of the bathroom, after washing with cold water" (Kanafani 21). This image works to expose how Palestine not only is taking over Abu Qais's body, but is becoming so awakened within him that his entire life is beginning to become laced with his Palestinian heritage. Now when he breathes in the remains of Palestine he is breathing in his wife, granting Palestine an even stronger sense of vitality within a world that previously worked to deny it. Kanafani here appears to be suggesting that there is a kind of shared spiritual connection between man and nature, making the spiritual essence of nature responsible for the happiness that warms man's soul or his self. It is in this image that readers can also see that man not only acts to please his self, but he seems to also act to please the spiritual order of life. Speaking on the issues that modernity forces onto nature Laura L. Behling acknowledges and critiques this feeling of natural shared responsibility as she argues, "With today's technology, the prosthetic has taken over entirely; nothing organic remains" (59), signifying the total resurrection that humanity faces as it becomes self aware and makes a connection with the world. Although this bond between man and nature—self and the world—appears to be natural, it has been so far displaced by the intrusions of other cultures that when man seeks to reestablish this connection it

becomes nothing short of a sensationalized rebirth. Although occupation exists, Abu Qais's awakening of Palestine within him and the land allows for the occupation to be cast aside while Palestine comes forward to claim what historically belongs to it.

In an attempt to echo this mass take over by Palestine Kanafani motions for Abu Qais to further explain his connection with the past. Thinking to himself, Abu Qais reveals that "The damp earth, he thought, was no doubt the remains of yesterday's rain. No, yesterday it had not rained. The sky now could rain nothing but scorching heat and dust" (Kanafani 21). This image allows readers to understand how Palestine, the nourishing rain of yesterday, allowed Abu Qais just long enough to bring him peace within his existence. Unfortunately Kanafani reveals that although Abu Qais could escape his current conditions for some time, it is impossible to deny the current conditions of occupation forever. This can be seen as Abu Qais questions himself, "Have you forgotten where you are? Have you forgotten?" (Kanafani 21). Although he has not forgotten where he is, Abu Qais's questioning allows him to begin to hope that he can be removed from the pains of occupation. If he can escape himself and become one with the land, then perhaps he can escape the brutality of a reality without Palestine. His connection with the previously dead or forgotten Palestine seems to transport him from his previous position of product of occupation and instead places him in the role of the other—a stranger within a world that once was so close. Kanafani writes, "He did not know why, but he was suddenly filled with a bitter feeling of being a stranger, and for a moment he thought he was on the point of weeping" (22), placing Abu Qais in the role of prosthetic eye, viewing the world in its current position for Palestine. Although the world was familiar to him, the world was not as Palestine would have envisioned itself. Looking through Abu Qais's eyes it becomes clear to Palestine that it no longer

exists outside of those who allow themselves to reach out toward it and create a bond of strength, community, and heritage.

Having created this prosthetic relationship with his Palestinian roots, Abu Qais not only is forced to view the world that he is in with a new cultural understanding, but he is also forced to view his own life and family through this same lens. It is with this that Kanafani introduces readers to a kind of reevaluation process that Abu Qais is performing on his life. Being able to view his life through such a lens allows Abu Qais to see how little he actually knows about history and geography. His son asks him, "'What is the Shatt al-Arab?'" (Kanafani 24) to only later accusingly claim, "'I saw you looking through the classroom window today. . . . You learned it today while you were peeping through the window'" (Kanafani 24). This allows readers to see how little a life under occupation allowed for him to actually understand about his position within the world. Speaking on another of Kanafani's texts, *The Land of the Sad Oranges*, Hilary Kilpatrick explains how Kanafani exposes the occupation's ability to break down the innocence of childhood and the safety of family: "In this story Kanafani has woven together the historical thread of the flight from Palestine with the themes of the reduction of the family to destitution, and above all the children's loss of innocence" (16). I feel that Kanafani also exposes this within here as Abu Qais is battled by his son's accusations of peeping through the window of his class. Rather than pacifying his father's interest in his education, Abu Qais's son has been trained by the occupation to notice the actions of his people, replacing the innocence of childhood with an inquisitive nature that attacks the innocence of even his closest relationships.

As the teachings of the occupation enter his home, Abu Qais becomes so disconnected from his family he is unable to find unconditional joy in the fact that his wife will soon be giving

birth again. As his wife attempts to speak for both of them, claiming that "'We want a girl this time'" (Kanafani 24) Abu Qais immediately corrects her by firmly stating, "'No, we want a boy. A boy'" (Kanafani 24). Seeing this through the newly awakened Palestinian view it is safe to assume that Kanafani is using this debate to suggest how occupation has come to teach Abu Qais that everything in life should be able to be controlled. In order to free him from this controlling mindset Kanafani does not write the birth of a son, but in fact grants him a daughter: "But she gave birth to a girl he named Hosna, who died two months later" (25). Not only does Kanafani write the opposite of Abu Qais's demanding desires, but he allows the girl to only live for two months.

With the death of his daughter Hosna, so comes the death of his satisfaction with life. Kanafani explains "The doctor said distastefully: 'She was extremely emaciated'" (25), suggesting that it was Abu Qais's inability to provide for his family in an occupied world that allowed for the death of his daughter. Kanafani works to make this feeling become even clearer as he again connects Abu Qais's life with Palestine in an attempt to suggest that with Hosna's death so came the death of another piece of Palestine:

> He hurried outside. But as he shut the door behind him he heard the cry of the newborn child, so he turned back and put his ear to the wood of the door. . . . The roar of the Shatt, the sailors shouting to each other, the sky blazing, and the black bird still circling aimlessly. He got up, brushed the earth from his clothes, and stood looking at the river. More than at any time in the past he felt alien and insignificant. (25)

As Hosna was born behind that door that he pressed his ear to, so was a new world. This image of birth awakening the sense that there is something greater than his self in the world is quite similar and apparently alluding to the same feelings that Kanafani spoke of about the birth of his son. Although these feelings were being awakened within Abu Qais, Kanafani works to show him how a world so beautiful, a world that shadows your significance with its own grace can be lost to the selfishness of occupation. Abu Qais's demanding of a son dooms Hosna before she is born, making her something that he can only think of in the past tense, much like Palestine. By equating Hosna's birth with the spiritual and visceral feelings that overcame Abu Qais with the land, Kanafani places Hosna into a kind of divine role—one which works to hauntingly remind Abu Qais of the beauty that once existed, but now is lost.

Kanafani's impeccable ability to weave the past with the present in ways that make each moment feel brand new allows readers the chance to view this birth and death as though they and Abu Qais were experiencing it for the first time. Sadly though, I would argue that this is not the first time that Abu Qais has relived the pain of losing something much more significant than himself. By introducing the birth and death of Hosna, Kanafani appears to be explaining that one cannot continue to live within a world that would deny something so great. It is with this that Hosna, as a representation of the lost Palestine, becomes a kind of phantasmal being, haunting the occupied world so strongly that Abu Qais is unable to simply reassimilate with it. If Hosna was the future of Palestine, then her death serves as a phantom pain, or sensational reminder of what greatness once existed in front of Abu Qais. Unsatisfied with a life without his daughter and without Palestine, Kanafani suggests that the only way for him to continue within the occupied world is to create as strong of a bond with what he lost as possible: "He went back, and threw himself down with his chest on the damp earth, which began to beat beneath him again,

while the scent of the earth rose to his nostrils and poured into his veins like a flood" (28). As he breathes in the hope of what was and what could have been, Abu Qais is no doubt fueling his soul and his being with the courage to abandon occupied life in order to better advance his family and care for the future generations of his people. "Bearing on his shoulders all the humiliation and hope that an old man can carry" (Kanafani 27), Abu Qais finds purpose in preserving and bettering the world that he knew exists beneath the rubble of occupation. No longer living for his selfishness, Abu Qais fills his essence with the heritage of his people as he enters what he hopes will be a spiritual salvation for him, one that will allow him the chance to leave the harshness of occupation behind him as he looks for a place where he can let his cultural heritage thrive.

Assad and the Nomadic Nightmare

"The road! Were there still roads in this world? . . .They all say that: 'You'll find yourself in the road'"—Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in the Sun*

As the text progresses and readers are introduced to the character of Assad we can see how an individual's vision can be completely tainted by the lens of experience, removing false hope from desire. Upon introducing Assad to his readers, Kanafani does so in a way that highlights his age and experience, while also exposing his constant nomadic position within life: "Assad stood in front of the fat man, the proprietor of the office that undertook to smuggle people from Basra to Kuwait" (28). The very first image that Kanafani gives readers of Assad proves to be one that works to remove any sense of satisfaction that he may have for his current place in life. This position echoes Abu Qais's inability to find comfort in life after coming to understand what he lost in life. Assad's desperation to pass from where he is currently stationed becomes greater as Kanafani writes, "[he] burst out: 'Fifteen dinars I'll pay you. Fine! But after I

arrive, not before'" (28). It is with this that readers can truly see Assad's desperation and experience working together to define the next path that he forges in life. Although it is important for him to leave, he knows well enough that he should not pay for something that cannot be fully promised—like his arrival to Kuwait. This understanding is echoed as Assad argues, "'Why? Ha! Because the guide you send with us will run away before we get halfway there. Fifteen dinars, fine, but not before we arrive'" (Kanafani 29). This inability to trust is not something that has always existed within Assad, but is in fact something that was learned through the many experiences that he faced throughout his life—the guide will abandon him. This assertion is not something that could be born simply from fear. Fear would tell Assad that there is a chance that he could possibly fail on his journey, fear would tell Assad that he is putting a lot into the hands of strangers, but the fear that he expresses is a fear that only experience could dictate.

Asserting that the guide *will* abandon him suggests a kind of foresight that the average person would not have. Of course there is the possibility that something *could* happen, but Assad knows that something *will* happen. Amy Zalman suggests this to be true as she proclaims, "The men are guided by two maps, not one" (21), suggesting that although Assad is in search of a guide, he already carries the guide of experience with him. Continuing, Zalman urges that "their failure to reach their predicted endpoint occurs when the directions of these two maps diverge" (21), asserting that if Assad or his fellow journeymen were to abandon their past experiences, relying solely on one path—rather than both—then they will find failure. Experience for Assad is nothing more than a phantom, haunting him whenever things become too stagnant or too routine. As the phantom of experience urges Assad to speak up to the fat man, readers can see how experience not only can taint how Assad sees the future, but also how it can potentially

harm Assad's future. Kanafani shows this as he has the fat man attest, "'I'm not forcing you'" (29), suggesting that it is not the fat man who is telling Assad to feel a sense of unease about where he is in life. By claiming no responsibility for Assad's desire to leave, the fat man seems to catch Assad off guard as he timidly asks "'What do you mean?'" (Kanafani 29). It is with this timid reply that experience can finally make itself fully known as Kanafani reveals what the fat man's ultimatum to Assad actually is: "'I mean that if you don't like our conditions, you can turn around, take three steps, and find yourself in the road'" (29). With the introduction of the road, Assad's phantom of experience finally beings to take shape:

> The road! Were there still roads in this world? Hadn't he wiped them with his forehead and washed them with his sweat for days and days? They all say that: "You'll find yourself in the road." Abul Abd, who smuggled him from Jordan to Iraq, had told him: "You've only got to go round H4, it doesn't matter if you stray a little into the interior. You're still a boy and you can take a bit of heat. Then come back, and you will find me waiting for you in the road." (Kanafani 29)

This image further exposes how through his experience with the greed that has filled the souls of the people like the fat man and Abul-Abd, who claim to be working to help Palestinians like himself rebuild their lives, Assad finds himself amputated from these people, cut-off from this occupied, or Westernized vision of Palestine. Furthermore, this image exposes how Assad's experience has resulted in his inability to look at things simply for what they are; instead they have become mirages or phantoms. To Assad roads are no longer roads or methods of transportation, but instead are representative of a way for the West to be granted entry into the sacred land of Palestine and a way for others to trick and harm Palestinians like Assad.

Kanafani exposes the greater depths of the harshness that Assad's phantom of experience has on an individual as the smuggler, the fat man, asks Assad where he is staying in town, equating it with vermin: "'What's the name of the hotel where you are staying?' 'The Shatt Hotel.' 'Ah, the rats' hotel'" (33). Not only does this image work to insult Assad, but it also insinuates that keeping in association with someone like Assad would be bad for the fat man and for Basra. In the fat man's opinion, Assad is subhuman and nothing more than a nuisance. It is in this that Kanafani appears to be exposing readers to how the Palestinians have come to be known due to occupation. Although Palestine once belonged to the Palestinians, as far as the East is concerned they all died under occupation. Understanding that experience is what keeps Assad aware of whom he is, this insult immediately causes his mind to flash back to a time of harshness: "The wild rat ran across the road, its little eyes shining in the car's headlamps." (Kanafani 33). It is important to note that Assad's immediate reaction is not to defend his choice of hotel or himself for that matter, but is instead to flashback in his mind to the time of his journey to Basra, more specifically to a time where two travelers who picked him up in a car couldn't see things for what they were—exposing the tainted views of the West. Kanafani explains:

> They had picked him up a little after sunset, after he had waved to them in their small car. . . . "Where are you from?" "Palestine. Ramleh." "Oh. Ramleh is a very long way away. A couple of weeks ago I was in Zeita. Do you know Zeita? I stood in front of the barbed wire. A little child came up to me and said in English that his house was a few feet ahead of the barbed wire." (34)

thus suggesting that these people only knew the East through the influences placed upon it by the West. Although Palestine is what Assad knows as home Ramleh is all that the occupation will

allow it to be known as. Palestine is nonexistent to anyone who never got to experience it—whether they experienced living there, being born there, or in Assad's case facing a journey of exile from there. As Kanafani wrote this image, it appears that he did so with one very important thing in mind. . . that being a chance to illuminate how the West and its influence has come to view the East and its struggles. The East in these travelers' eyes is not something to talk of, but instead something to forget, allowing it and its people to become confused images of rats being foxes, as the wife often suspects: "'It's a fox. Did you see it?' The husband, a foreigner, laughed. 'You women! You make a rat into a fox'" (Kanafani 33). Even as the wife explains her encounters with the boy from Zeita, she reveals that she is only certain of one fact and that is the boy's ability to speak English.

Through the use of images like these Kanafani appears to be using Assad and the phantom of his experience to call the attention of others toward the fact that first of all Palestine is a real place, and most importantly that even though it has come to have been known as a place with a different name, its people are still very much alive. Experience, as much as it may hurt or shock Assad, is crucial for true vitality. According to Kanafani, without experience people would never be able to fully feel what it is like to be born. Experience is the essence of self-realization. And it is this same experience that is responsible for uniting a people, a culture, and a heritage. Similar to Abu Qais, experience allows Palestine to enter Assad and become his eyes, viewing the world with new fears driven by the sense of certainty that comes with Palestine's own experiences.

Marwan and the Duty of the Son

"He loved his father with a great and unshakeable love. But that changed nothing of the terrible truth, the truth that proclaimed that his father had fled . . . fled . . . fled."

—Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in the Sun*

Marwan, the youngest of the men on the journey within Kanafani's novella, may very well be the most important of all of these characters. Where Abu Qais relies on nature to guide his experiences in life, and Assad's experiences of losing both his identity and his home to occupation work to illuminate the importance of being and retaining a connection with what is seen as being gone, Marwan's character blends both of these traits with that of being a son and virtually a child within a world of occupation. These characteristics prove to be of high importance as Marwan must work to answer the cryptic questions that his family has buried beneath the rubble of occupation, while also attempting to form himself into a respectable Palestinian man.

Where Abu Qais and Assad quickly come to have most certain claims to their Palestinian identities, Marwan's lack of experience with the world leaves him at times simply a prosthetic extension shared between his mother, father, and even his step-mother Shafiqa. Although Marwan remains close to his parents, he cannot help but to notice the turmoil that his father's absence has placed upon his family: "It seemed he would not be able to penetrate the thick veil of disappointment that separated him from that distinct feeling which existed, unexpressed, somewhere in his mind" (Kanafani 37). Despite Kanafani's having Marwan suffer from this deep sense of disappointment, Marwan is able to use it as a driving force to better understand not only his position within his family, but to also understand his position within the world. In a similar, yet highly magnified way as Abu Qais, it is not until Kanafani allows Marwan the chance to

become one with nature that he is able to find any true sense of being within the text. With the introduction of nature within Marwan's life not only does Marwan find beauty in the natural world, but he is also finally able to find the strength to be both happy and confident in his thoughts as he finds the inspiration to write a letter to his mother. Kanafani writes:

> He'd got up early that morning. The servant had taken the bed up to the roof of the hotel, because sleeping in the room when it was as hot and damp as that was impossible. When the sun rose he opened his eyes. The weather was beautiful and calm, and the sky was still blue, with black pigeons hovering low in it. He could hear their wings fluttering when they flew over the hotel in a wide circle. A thick blanket of silence covered everything, and the air had a clean, moist scent of early morning. He stretched out his hand to the small case under the bed, took out a notebook and pen, and proceeded to write to his mother. . . . (39).

Here Kanafani implies a kind of oneness that Marwan's comfort with nature forged between him and the natural world. Similar to Abu Qais, Marwan too is beneath soaring black birds, yet where Abu Qais feels a sense of fear and exile due to this, Marwan finds a kind of familiarity with it. This works to expose that it was not until Marwan was taken over by the essence of nature that he was able to find the inspiration to write to his mother.

It is in this image that readers are able to see how satisfaction within this text is something driven not solely by man's desire, but also nature's desire; continuing further Kanafani states "It was the best thing he'd done for months" (39). Kanafani also suggests that nature allows for an individual to find moments of solace within a world of harshness; writing, "He was in an excellent mood, and the letter reflected the tranquility of the sky above him. . . . He didn't want to cross out anything in the whole letter—not only because his mother would see

the crossed-out words as a bad omen, but also, quite simply, because he didn't want to" (39). It is in this moment of spiritual connection, or oneness with the natural world, that according to Kanafani man is able to not only find peace, but also find the strength to identify his own vision of truth. Through this image we can also see how even voice can act as a prosthesis within Palestinian literature, noting that Marwan must first be at one with the land in order to be rewarded with a voice. Nature and the natural world allow Marwan the opportunity to identify with his feelings and feel pride in them. It is this pride that he finds within this particular moment of solace that allows him to lift the veil that had been draped over what he felt was so unspeakable for so long. This letter served as an exploratory device as Kanafani reveals how Marwan "didn't know how he had allowed himself to describe his father as nothing but a depraved beast" (39). In his words to his mother Marwan explains his disgust over his father's leaving his mother: "'To leave four children, to divorce you for no reason, then to marry that deformed woman. It is something for which he won't forgive himself, when he wakes up one day and realizes what he's done'" (Kanafani 39). Here not only is Marwan claiming that his father will be unable to forgive himself, but he is also explaining that he will not be able to forgive his father for abandoning him. This image also plays on Abu Qais's unwillingness to truly care for Hosna until after she died. Understanding that Marwan shares a prosthetic bond to both his mother and his father, it seems only natural that he will find himself also asking himself the same question he feels his father will have to come to terms with—what happens when I wake up and realize what I have done?

As Marwan's father begins to take possession of him again, readers can see how he begins to place a dark veil over all of the freedom that he previously uncovered on the roof of the hotel: "In fact it surprised him that the letter he had written to his mother could give him that

marvelous feeling which made his disappointment appear less important than it really was" (Kanafani 43). As his father takes possession of Marwan, he is no longer something to be proud of. He is the son of a man who abandoned his family to marry a deformed woman, the son of a man who he couldn't come to hate even if every single fiber of his being demanded it: "In any case, he didn't hate his father so much" (Kanafani 39). Perhaps the most disappointing thing about Marwan is in fact the most admirable quality of his character: "He loved his father with a great and unshakeable love" (Kanafani 43). It is his ability to see this that disappoints him so much, but it is this same quality that provides him some kind of identity. When he is living his life in relation to his mother's feelings, he is free of disappointment, because he cannot be a disappointment to someone who already disappoints him so much, but when he is living his life in relation to his father's feelings, he cannot get passed the closeness he feels to his father despite the less than admirable decisions he made in his life: "But that changed nothing of the terrible truth, the truth that proclaimed that his father had fled. . . fled. . . fled" (Kanafani 43). Although he knows what his father did to his family, it is his father's bonding them with Shafiqa that allows Marwan the opportunity to truly identify with his self—his Palestinian roots.

The closer Marwan allowed himself to get to his father, the closer he got to Shafiqa, who in herself is a representative image of Palestine's struggle to stay alive within an occupied world. Although his father doesn't bind himself to Shafiqa for loving reasons, "My father thought . . . if he let two rooms and lived with his lame wife in the third, he would live out the rest of his life in security, untroubled by anything" (Kanafani 40), Marwan is still able to take notice of his Palestinian roots through his stepmother Shafiqa "who had lost her right leg during the bombardment of Jaffa" (Kanafani 40). Amireh comments that "Marwan's father marries the crippled Shafiqa because she owns a house with a concrete roof. In other words, the helpless,

undesired woman becomes the provider of shelter for the humiliated man, who loses the respect of his wife and son" (752), suggesting a kind of comfort that Marwan's father is able to find in the fact that Shafiqa is unable to leave from their home. Only in death will Shafiqa be nonexistent to him. Despite her being tainted by Marwan's father's infidelities, Shafiqa offers as much comfort to her stepson Marwan as she possibly can, going so far as to attempt to relieve him of his feelings of shame and disappointment. Kanafani allows her to explain this as he writes, "'We suggested to your mother that she should come and live here, but she didn't agree. What more do you want us to do?'" (44). No longer simply a love that was forged from adulterous sin, Marwan is able to begin accepting his bond with his father's new family. With this acceptance so comes Marwan's ability to move forward on his journey, guided by what Kanafani notes as Marwan's still being able to "hear Shafiqa's stick tapping the tiles monotonously" (44), allowing her to fully take on the phantom role of Palestine in Marwan's mind. Shafiqa's ability to take on this role of phantom memory strengthens Amireh's claim, suggesting that it isn't just a crippled Shafiqa who is sheltering Marwan's father from the occupation, but is in essence the memory of Palestine that is acting as the figure of shelter to its people, who have become broken, at times humiliated sub-humans under the rule of occupation.

Abul Khaizuran and the Androgyny of Prosthesis

Marwan being a kind of amalgamation of several of Kanafani's characters, it comes as no real shock that he is the key to the introduction of Kanafani's last main male character. Understanding the importance of Marwan's bond with Shafiqa, Kanafani is quick to use her character in a way that transcends her seemingly short role within the text, allowing her to move forward through another highly prosthetic character, Abul Khaizuran. When naming his Palestinian guide, Abul Khaizuran, Kanafani obviously took much consideration as he reveals

his name itself to mean a prosthetic—a cane. Kanafani writes, "'They call me Abul Khaizuran.' For the first time since Marwan had set eyes on the man, he noticed that he really did remind one of a cane" (38). Interestingly enough this moment comes almost immediately after Marwan reveals a familiar feeling that he has for Abul, claiming "The tall man had begun to walk beside him familiarly, and when Marwan looked at him he thought he'd seen him somewhere before" (Kanafani 38). As Abul reveals that he knows of Marwan's wishes of going to Kuwait, "'Do you want to go to Kuwait?'" (Kanafani 38), Marwan is able to make the connection between Abul—the cane, and Shafiqa—the one legged phantasmal, spiritual mother. It is this feeling of familiarity that I feel unites Abul Khaizuran with Shafiqa, understanding that this moment comes some time after Marwan leaves Shafiqa and his father's home; an image within the text that seems to dominate the motives of Marwan's character, "When he stood up, Shafiqa raised her arms in the air, *praying for his success*. . . . Shafiqa picked up her stick and stood up with a quick movement. She had stopped crying. Marwan shut the door behind him and walked away. He could still hear Shafiqa's stick tapping the tiles, monotonously, but as he turned the corner the sound died away" (Kanafani, *Emphasis Mine* 44). The sounds of Shafiqa's tapping cane seem to move Marwan into taking his journey, and it is the introduction of man who's name not only means cane, but also who's body looks like a cane that can transport him on his journey. Not only does this place a huge spiritual emphasis on Shafiqa for Marwan, but it also works to do the same for Abul as she becomes an unknown uniting force between the two. Although Abul doesn't know Shafiqa, their shared identities allow her to work as a kind of phantom for him also.

Although Shafiqa works as a guiding light of sorts for Marwan, her femininity seems to attack Marwan as his being becomes less paternal and more maternal, creating a kind of darkness

that taints his connection to the Palestinian world. Understanding Abul as an extension of Shafiqa the scarred and prosthetic Palestinian, his position as guide and barer of these men in itself is prosthetic as he reveals his inability to bring children into the world. Kanafani explains that Abul lost his genitals in resistance to the occupation, being maimed and scarred by an explosion—similar to that of Shafiqa's loss of her leg. Kanafani writes:

> He closed his eyes for a moment, and then opened them as wide as he could. . . . Suddenly a black thought occurred to him and he began to scream like a madman. He couldn't remember what he said then, but he felt a hand covered with a slippery glove placed over his mouth with a violent movement. The voice reached him as though it were coming through cotton: "Be sensible. Be sensible. At least it's better than dying.". . . . Ten years had passed since they took his manhood from him, and he had lived that humiliation day after day and hour after hour. . . . He had lost his manhood and his country, and damn everything in this bloody world (53).

It is in this that Kanafani implies that Abul's loss of manhood came not only with the price of his ability to have relations with others, but also the loss of his country, and with both of these the loss of his legacy. Amireh claims that "There is no ambiguity here; for both Abul Khaizuran and Kanafani national defeat is experience as castration" (753). The removal of Abul Khaizuran's genitalia marks the end of a race of people and the end of a national identity, leaving any who carry Palestinian blood, like Kanafani himself, groping for their missing identity. Damning Abul's Palestinian legacy in this way, Kanafani leaves readers alluding back to Abu Qais' inability to nourish and care for his daughter, as well as Shafiqa's being an undesirable burden to the world. These prosthetic beings, scarred by the perils of the Israeli occupation, attempts at

continuing to function within society as they normally would if they were untouched suggests what Kate Elswit explains is "the supplemented body emphasiz[ing] the way in which prosthesis augment[s] the individuals themselves, reconnecting their bearers to will, independence, industry, and ultimately spirit" (396), while also allowing Kanafani to expose how due to the augmentation of these individuals, they are unable to fully act as natural beings could. Although these characters desire to function for good, the scars placed upon them by the occupation has left them unable to produce a surviving legacy within a world that is no longer their own. It is for this reason that Abul Khaizuran, despite wanting to guide these three other men into salvation, can only do so by bringing them death.

Perhaps falling completely to the role of victim placed upon him by Kanafani's words, "Be sensible. Be sensible. At least it's better than dying" (53), Abul is so scarred himself that the pain that he lives with due to his androgynous nature taints the severity of death with the promise of salvation. It is also important to note that for Abul Khaizuran Palestine only exists as the ultimate reminder of what he no longer is—a functioning man. Zalman explains this further, stating, "Without appearing to intend it, the novel proposes that gender identity must be constructed in relation to national identity. Moreover, it suggests that the relationship between gender and national identity must be constructed anew on the post-1948 landscape" (21). Forging a pure national identity under the occupation is near impossible according to Zalman who suggests that "Abul Khaizuran has few compunctions about profiting from the desperation of his fellow Palestinians. He is a cynical and disillusioned man, traumatized by his surgical castration following his injury fighting in the 1948 war" (20). As the memory of his war experiences haunt Abul Khaizuran the difficulty for Palestinians to reestablish their cultural identity under occupation takes the forefront. How can a people find peace within a world that refuses to accept

them? Kanafani brings this feeling to light as he depicts an image of grave robbing. As Abul dumps the bodies of Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan—all of which he was to be protecting, he becomes unable to see them as anything more than the bearers of treasure. Kanafani clarifies this feeling, writing, "But a thought occurred to him when he had covered some distance, and he switched off the engine again, walked back to where he had left the bodies, and took the money from their pockets. He also removed Marwan's watch" (73-74), implying that for these men, their journey had come to an end. As he removes the money from each pocket, Abul is claiming that he delivered them to their destination, death, uniting these men with the dead world of Palestine. By removing the watch from Marwan he is also removing the ticking sound, similar to Shafiqa's tapping that had guided him that far. Kanafani's choice to have Abul become a grave robber of sorts not only implies the reality of these men's death but also implies the destructive greed that occupation has placed where Abul's manhood once was. No longer able to create a legacy, it is only fit that he bears the inherited remains of the world that will die a little more with him.

Maternity and the Prosthetic Uterus

Women within the world of *Men in the Sun* are granted very little room for expression. Although there are very few women who appear within the text and even less that are able to speak, I feel that Kanafani is not doing this to be chauvinistic, but is instead attempting to gain the attention specifically of a male audience. In fact what may be most haunting about this text is the "feminization" (Amireh 753) of the men within this text. Amireh points out that "The three characters' national defeat is experienced as economic disadvantage and a loss of their traditional role as providers for themselves and their families, including their women" (753), suggesting that in doing this Kanafani is able to expose on a universally male level, how the occupation of

Palestine hurts manhood and masculinity in the East—if the males of Palestine could be feminized, then why not the rest of the males of the East? Illuminating the humiliation of feminizing the males of the text is not being done to attack the validity of women within Palestinian society, but in itself is representative of the treatment of gender roles within the East. Due to the desire for male heirs, Kanafani plays on this typical characteristic as he introduces Hosna only long enough for her to pass away. Although she appears for only a page within the text, her presence feels everlasting as Abu Qais draws his connection to Palestine through her loss. This places a great wealth upon her character as she is not simply a daughter, but is instead a direct representation of Palestine itself.

Assad himself even has a kind of female phantasmal guide as his experienced memories are consumed particularly by a time when he encountered a foreigner and his wife. Rather than being able to graciously rescue Assad from what would be his certain death, the foreign couple begins degrading his heritage. When he speaks of his home being Palestine they correct him, referring to it as Ramleh. When he speaks directly with her all she can speak of are times when an Arab may have spoken to her in English, and of course about the foxes that she keeps seeing throughout the East. Although she speaks of seeing foxes, her husband explains that they are rats, placing their reference directly onto the Arabs who the fat man informed Assad were nothing more than rats themselves. This places the role of the female within Kanafani's novella in an even more problematic position—can only Palestinian women see Palestine and its people?

Through the introduction of Marwan's stepmother, Shafiqa, Kanafani is able to challenge this theory, as he uses her to expose the harshness that occupation has had on Palestine and its people, exposing that their existing without assimilating with the occupation makes them very similar to the trouble or burden Said mentions in *The Question of Palestine*. Kanafani writes,

"Shafiqa's father had one desire: to transfer to a husband's shoulders the burden of his daughter, who had lost her right leg during the bombardment of Jaffa" (40), exposing that Shafiqa's survival and resistance to dying from an occupied attack left her as a burden, rather than a trophy of resistance. The amputation of her leg by the attacks in Jaffa not only left Shafiqa undesirable to most men, but also made her take on the role of a false mother, or stepmother, rather than being allowed the opportunity to lovingly birth a child of her own. Although Marwan exposes Shafiqa as being beautiful, "Her face was beautiful" (Kanafani 44), this doesn't come until after he admits thinking, "'I wonder where her thigh ends?'" (Kanafani 44). This exposes how the scars of occupation worked to strip Palestinians of their identities—you can live through occupation, but if you do not assimilate then you will be branded a burden to society, or some kind of cross between man and vermin as the foreigner claimed. Although Shafiqa is a burden in the sense of her resistance to occupation, her role as survivor allows her to take on an almost divinely maternal or spiritual role within the text, placing her in the phantasmal role similar to that of Hosna to Abu Qais and experience to Assad. Her being a stepmother allows her to be the mother of all Palestinians, rather than just the mother of those she may have birthed.

Understanding her maternal position it is also important to note again Abul Khaizuran's androgyny and his being a prosthetic extension of her. As Shafiqa's role as divine maternal Palestinian transcends into the character of Abul it comes with no surprise that he will be transporting Marwan and his two fellow Palestinians in a prosthetic vessel, or prosthetic womb. Relying on the use of a water truck as transportation within the text, Kanafani clearly seems to be toying with the notion of prosthetics. The truck becoming a womb or vessel of protected transportation and delivery, not only does not hold water anymore, but keeps imposing intense heat on the three passengers as they are carried inside of it: "'Is there any water in the tank?' 'Of

course not. What are you thinking of? Am I a smuggler or a swimming teacher? . . . . I advise you to take your shirts off. The heat's stifling, terrifying, and you'll sweat as though you were in an oven. But it's only for five or seven minutes. . .'" (Kanafani 49; 57). Despite the fact that Kanafani is allowing these men to enter a journey of hope, he illuminates that hope comes with the price of peril. Although a womb would bring its fetus nourishment, the water truck as a prosthetic womb is unable to nourish the men, thrusting it into an anti-creational role. Keeping in mind Abul's inability to have children of his own, his sacred protection for these men will fail to deliver them to the life that they desire.

As masculine as it may be, Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* uses strong female imagery to convey a journey of deliverance as he attempts to grant four Palestinian men entrance back into the world that occupation stole from them—that world being Palestine. Relying on feminine characters and images allows Kanafani to use these women in ways that transcend any physical boundaries, thrusting them into seemingly divine roles as they become phantasmal guides, leading Abu Qais, Assad, Marwan, and Abul Khaizuran on their journey home. Due to their divine nature within the text, the women that Kanafani writes of within the novella are only able to act through a prosthetic extension. Taking on a spiritual essence to their being, they are unable to travel with the men as they look to better their position with the East. Although the men are sneaking around in exile, it is the women within the text that are able to ultimately deliver them to Palestine thanks to their divine intervention. Unfortunately Kanafani seems to ultimately suggest that the only way that these men can be delivered to Palestine is to keep it within their heart, while they assimilate to the occupation and its greed, or else meet Palestine in death as it becomes their final resting place.

-Chapter Two-

Wild Thorns and Eroding Impressions

"keep your mouth shut and leave some tracks wherever you go"

—Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*

As readers are introduced to Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* they are entered into a world that has fallen victim to extreme intolerance and prejudice. Quickly displacement begins to run rampant as the text demonstrates the harsh inequalities that Palestinians face in an abrasively evolving world, exposing how Arab men are nothing more than dogs wandering lost in search of their home. Albeit much of the novel is directly about this search for home and familiarity within a crumbling world, Khalifeh demonstrates through her extremely quit witted prose that the novel is less about finding the familiar and more so about leaving one's mark in order to reclaim what was once theirs. Although this seems to be a relatively simple concept—doing something that will make you and your affiliation remembered—it is important to note that doing so would require the individual to firstly acknowledge that something was missing, while also acknowledging who or what it is that is responsible for the eradication of this missing link. As Khalifeh writes, "'keep your mouth shut and leave some tracks wherever you go'" (24) it becomes clear that she is writing not for the survival of a particular person, but in fact for the survival of a people, a land, and an essence of being that is eroding before their eyes. Unfortunately, as Khalifeh explains within her text, it may be possible for some to leave tracks and marks, but it is another thing entirely to be able to truly preserve this original state of being when society demands assimilation.

Although marks are a way to leave a print, both personal and historical, onto one's society and land, marks too, I feel, take on an entirely new meaning within this text

metamorphosing from historical and personal points of reflection into something much stronger—phantasmal beings that infuse the sensations of both loss and memory into those who are most closely related to them. Douwe Tiemersma speaks of phantom limb pain as being a sensational ghost of what used to exist prior to amputation, claiming, "The phantom limb spontaneously moves in accordance with the rest of the body and sometimes voluntary control is possible. It is experienced as real in almost the same sense as the material body" (26). Due to the catastrophes that marked the beginning of the Israeli occupation of Palestine—loss of cultural heritage and identity—the Palestinian people within this text are marked as if they were post-amputees. Ahmad H. Sa'di explains that "The 1948 War resulted in Al-Nakbah—the immense catastrophe—for the Palestinian people and changed their life beyond recognition" (175), echoing this post-amputee position as something mangled and left as a reminder of the loss of Palestine. If the Palestinians are in fact post-amputees, then the marks within this text become both physical sites of loss or change—e.g. the stump, or site of amputation—as well as reflective sites that resurrect memory.

As Khalifeh pens images of marks within this text not only is she attempting to provide physical examples of change, but she is also consuming the essence of her characters with the memories of what used to be, creating a phantom sensation or phantom pain. The mark is not simply something that exists, but it is something that can cease to exist so long as nothing resurrects it in the present. Upon reviving these memories the Palestinians, as Khalifeh describes them, are able to reconstruct a cultural identity—remembering their lost Palestine. Sa'di further clarifies this, noting, "It has been possible to partly reconstruct the past and regain some of its representations because enough material and fertile memories managed to elude the shattering experience of the society's disintegration and the stifling international silence" (175-176).

Khalifeh takes notice of this particular argument and infuses it within her text, suggesting that through interaction with people of the same historical circumstance memory is able to surface and drive both action and the rebirth of their culture. Tiemersma's theories of the phantom limb echo this resurfacing as he argues, "By new stimulation of the stump there is a chance, however, of the original phantom limb being restored" (26). Unfortunately until these people come in contact with each other, they are left unable to be fully aware of what used to exist, filling them with a void that longs for cultural enlightenment.

In order to better understand this longing for the lost Palestine as a kind of phantom pain that requires prosthetic action from those who once directly belonged to this land, it is important to reflect again on Elizabeth Grosz's understanding of the phantom limb: "In traditional psychological and physiological terms, the phantom limb is treated as a memory, a past experience reactivated in the present" (86). It is Sahar Khalifeh's use of a man, Usama, returning to the land that once felt as though it were home, that allows for this reintroduction or reactivation of memory to become a phantom feeling. Allowing the once insider to act as though he were an outsider looking in not only exposes the flaws that the occupation has brought to Palestine and the Palestinians, but also allows for the reintroduction of Palestinian heritage to emerge. Usama's entry within this now walled, or cordoned off society works as a hypodermic shot of sorts, injecting Palestine into the veins of what appears to be a kind of stagnant and lifeless society. By allowing for this awakening or heightening of Palestinian identity to reemerge within her text, Khalifeh also allows for the entry of Edward Said's belief that Palestine is "'Ours,' but not fully 'ours'" (*After The Last Sky* 40). It is this feeling of belonging to something that is not actually there that allows Palestine to become an even stronger phantom within Khalifeh's text, forcing each of her characters to truly reevaluate his or her role within the

occupied society. Although it seems simple enough to believe as readers that the text is forged to simply reestablish the bonds between Palestine and the Palestinians, *Wild Thorns* flips this theory on its head as Khalifeh begins to explore whether or not it is truly possible for these people to reclaim their land, at what cost this reclaiming will come, if the cost is worth it, and if westernization has truly hindered the lives of these people so much that they should truly desire to revert back to the times before occupation. As the title of the text suggests, each choice has a consequence, and as beautiful as the rose may be, is it possible to truly hold it without feeling the prick of its thorns?

Although the theme of marks is not formally introduced as soon as the novel opens, Khalifeh creates a devastating image of brutality that acts as a seed or a root for a series of prints that she uses to drive her main character Usama al-Karmi. Upon Usama entering the checkpoint at the beginning of the novel Khalifeh wastes very little time painting an image of the violence that has consumed the Palestinian people. Khalifeh writes, "The Arab girl was sobbing while an Israeli soldier yelled, 'Open your legs! Open your legs! I've got to see up there! Open your legs!' There came the sound of slaps: 'You swine! You swine! Oh! Oh'" (14), exposing how the Israeli government treated those who opposed, or did not work to assimilate with their visions of society. I would argue that this image marks Usama, scarring him with the pain of his people, while removing any sense of comfort the thought of returning home could offer. The journey home is now complicated with fear and marked with this image of violence, transforming it into an act that is haunted by memory. Although this violence was not forced upon Usama it does not mean that this girl's experience did not leave a mark on him as both a human being and a Palestinian, as he later speaks of hearing her screams echoing through his mind: "Usama too tried to calm his thoughts, but failed. That girl's screams still rang in his ears and in every cell of

his body . . . 'You swine! You swine!'" (Khalifeh 23). It is in this that readers can see how one's experience can influence those of another, creating a mark or a scar that serves as a guide throughout life. Although the image is brutal it is divine in its effect on Usama, allowing for the world to be illuminated in a way that almost scars his vision, making him able to see things for what they have become. It is for this reason that home cannot simply be home, family can become oppositions, and casualties can become a reactionary lesson for society.

As the screams of the Arab girl echo within Usama's mind they seem to severely damage his views of home when he finally makes it into town. Khalifeh writes, "Nothing in the town seemed to have changed" (26) suggesting lack of progression throughout the years, only to later write, "The people no longer seemed so poverty-stricken. . . . Something had changed" (26-27) conveying that the Palestinians seem to no longer move in opposition to the Israeli government. Assimilation here provides safety in the eyes of the Palestinians, whereas resistance proves problematic for daily life. Although the land, or the town, was still the same, the people metamorphosed in a way that made them less Palestinian in Usama's eyes as he questioned his Cousin Adil: "'What are young people like you doing to oppose what goes on inside'" (Khalifeh 28). This begins a thread of questions between the cousins centering answers on being "inside" (Khalifeh 28) and "outside" (Khalifeh 28). Khalifeh's use of this questioning dialogue works to expose a great divide between Palestinians, suggesting that they are no longer a single people, but instead are those who have experienced the view from the outside—the violence, the girl's screams, and those who have only experienced the freshness of cultural melding that came to those who lived on the inside. Sa'di too reflects on this divide between Palestinians, remarking, "Al-Nakbah is the violent moment which also created an unbridgeable break between the past and the present. It represents an end to normality; i.e., this split disturbed the 'normal' evolution

of history" (186). It is in this same light that Khalifeh presents readers with the images of Usama and Adil—a man who is caught in the past, what he remembers, and a man who lived history firsthand, recounting experience as memory. Each man has his own historical view of Palestine and the occupation, and each man views the marks left by the occupation in different contexts.

Although the inside seems free from the effects of the outside Khalifeh expresses to readers that this is simply a delusion. Rather than continue to struggle on the inside, Khalifeh exposes how the characters within her text choose to settle their fighting with hope that God may step in and defend their souls for them. When Usama questions his mother about resistance she simply claims, "'The country's just fine, son. God will provide. The occupation will end'" (Khalifeh 32). This image works to represent the same passive nature that welcomes Usama as he enters the town, suggesting that as long as things appear to be moving fine, it does not matter if individuals have to give up their own beliefs. Rather than concern themselves with the greater good for their people, Palestinians on the inside seem to believe it is better to think of all people and what good each has to offer. Although the occupation has brought foreign luxuries to the Palestinian people, they have done so in a way that hinders any hope for them to advance without help from the occupation. Usama explains that "Mother doesn't read or write. Just her thumb print must suffice" (Khalifeh 38), suggesting that despite all of the luxuries that the occupation may have brought to the inside, they ignored the need for the intellectual advancement of the Palestinians. Again this idea of marks becomes quite prevalent within the text as these people have nothing more than fingerprints to leave behind, rather than having the ability to leave a mark that can truly withstand the tests of time.

Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* works to thrust readers into a world that not only promotes the eradication of a people, but does so in a way that forces these people to almost do this by

themselves through their growing desire to have more materialistic needs met by society. As materialistic desires begin to be injected into the occupied people, a kind of dependent relationship is formed. As the Palestinians are given new tastes and luxuries they become more and more submissive to the occupation. As long as they are given what they desire, then they no longer fear the entire concept of occupation, allowing their selves to become a controlled and manipulated people. It is this control and manipulation that jades their perception so much that they are unable to truly see the price that they are paying as a whole, because they are satisfied so much on an individual level. As the individual becomes more and more satisfied, the person's desire to incorporate himself or herself with others becomes less desirable, leaving a gap where solidarity and cultural heritage once made its mark within society.

Lacing the text with instances of marks as site and memory, Khalifeh is also allowing the theme of eradication to surface as a threat within the novel. Although the Israeli occupation seems to confine the Palestinians, they are no longer willing to work against it as long as they are being spoon fed some kind of materialistic advancement. According to Khalifeh it is not until an outsider enters back into this walled society that these people can have the opportunity to truly see what they are giving up in order to feed these materialistic desires. It is this reintroduction of the outsider that allows for a cultural awareness to become present within the text, bringing forward a phantom sensation that stems from the culture that occupation has been manipulating the Palestinians of this text to abandon. For Khalifeh it is not enough for Palestinians to have things given to them, they must be able to provide for themselves, and work in a way that leaves their own mark on their society—creating a cast form of their cultural prints that their future generations can identify with. Focusing on two of the main characters within Khalifeh's novel,

Usama and Adil, it becomes apparent as to just how important the theory of the mark is within the text.

Understanding that the mark serves as a kind of stimulus in the resurrection process of Palestine, it is important to explore how marks drive both of these characters within the text. By breaking this chapter down into two other parts, I will explore which images within the text work to revive Palestinian heritage within Usama, his familial counterpart Adil, and further identify what kind of action these phantom sensations have on each of them. Understanding that the value of the individual is quite the apparent theme within this text, I will work to identify what is unique about both of these men's individual notions of cultural identity and how these notions are influenced by the occupation. To better understand what effect individuality has on cultural identity, I will also expose how each of these men work to enlighten their society and how they work to protect and preserve the phantom world of Palestine. Through their prosthetic bonds with Palestine and the memorable marks of Palestinian culture that remain trapped under the rubble of occupation, I will make apparent what kind of damage has been placed upon Palestinian society by the Israeli occupation's oppressive control, and furthermore, what kind of damaging effects this oppression has had on both of these characters.

Usama and the Guerrilla Homecoming

"Usama's eyes filled with tears. 'Oh, what's happened to us?' he cried. 'What's happened? I don't understand. I don't understand anything."

—Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*

Upon entering Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* readers are placed within a world where the journey home becomes more of a journey toward the finding of a new, stronger, prosthetic identity. Relying on the image of the return of the outsider, Usama, Khalifeh is able to address

the westernized, imperial notion that "we must save these people from themselves" (Metres 83) as Usama himself begins to believe that it is his duty to take back Palestine for the Palestinians. Amal Amireh elaborates on this same urgency in relation to telling the history or story of Palestine, reflecting that "In the Palestinian context, the national demand for recognition and self-determination has been cast as the right to tell the Palestinian story. The Palestinians have been denied not only a homeland, but also 'the permission to narrate'" (Amireh 749). It is Usama's position as outsider that allows him the permission to narrate, or control the history of his people—granting him the position of first narrator within Khalifeh's text. This feeling begins to consume Usama as he gets stuck within a viciously violent checkpoint while on his way home. Writing of times of war, scholars Ryan Bishop and John Phillips ask, "Who are you going to believe, me or your own two eyes?" (157). It is this same question that seems to sum up the Palestinian experience as Khalifeh views it within her novel. Although Usama enters the checkpoint it is not his experiences that frighten and anger him so much as it is the experiences of a Palestinian woman being searched. Khalifeh writes, "The Arab girl was sobbing while an Israeli soldier yelled, 'Open your legs! Open your legs! I've got to see up there! Open your legs!' There came the sound of slaps: 'You swine! You swine! Oh! Oh!' (14), all the while having Usama battle over the name of his mother's new home, "'I left to work abroad five years ago, three months after the occupation started. We were living in Tulkarm; then my father died and my mother moved to Nablus.' Why did your mother move to Shekem?' 'She likes Nablus.' 'Why does she like Shekem. . .'" (13). It is through images like these within the text that we can see how the Israeli government treats those who oppose, or refuse to work towards assimilating with their occupied vision of society. Not only are these individuals placed into situations where they must defend their bodies from the officers of the occupation, but they must also defend their

cultural identities at the same time. While one suffers physically, the other suffers mentally, sharing their pain as they yell and argue aloud.

By lacing and interweaving this sense of violence with Usama's experience with identity Khalifeh begins to work toward creating a new Usama for her readers, breaking him of his past and instead consuming his mind with the thoughts of reclaiming Palestine through leaving his mark on society. Khalifeh writes, "'keep your mouth shut and leave some tracks wherever you go'" (24), suggesting that his words are not what will fix the occupation, but instead it is his interactions with the occupation, his resistive actions that will allow him to reclaim Palestine for the Palestinians. Although this violence was not forced upon Usama that does not mean that Palestinian girl's experience did not leave a mark on him as a Palestinian, as he later speaks of hearing her screams echoing through his mind: "Usama too tried to calm his thoughts, but failed. That girl's screams still rang in his ears and in every cell of his body . . .'you swine! You swine!'" (Khalifeh 23). It is in this that readers can see how one's experience can influence those of another, creating a mark or a scar, a prosthesis that serves as a guide throughout life. As the echo of the girl's screams ring through his mind, he begins to view the world, looking for what once stood in the place of vague and vacant spaces. Befriending a woman on the bus into town he begins to have his history retold to him in a way that breaks his typical memories and instead replaces them with shadows that lay where his culture once stood. Khalifeh writes, "'There used to be lemon groves here, all the way to the mountains. They burned them'" (24), exposing how memory serves as a reminder of both what once lived and the brutality of the occupation. Khalifeh has the woman on the bus say, "They were trying to erase the prints" (24), revealing how important it is for the occupation to destroy the physical prints that Palestine left behind.

This suggests that as long as there is something physical remaining that declares itself as Palestinian there is a force in opposition of the occupation.

Although the decay that lay in front of Usama would suggest otherwise, Khalifeh explains through the woman that "The trees don't walk any more, but the prints are still there. Believe it or not, the earth is not really barren and dead" (24). Despite the fact that what once existed does not stand before them anymore, Khalifeh is suggesting that the memory of Palestine through a Palestinian's eyes keeps it alive. Where someone who is not Palestinian would just see an old dilapidated grove, Palestinians like Usama and his fellow traveler are able to see the beauty that is buried beneath the rubble of occupation. It is in this that Khalifeh appears to be giving hope back to the Palestinians, allowing them to begin making claims on the world that still remains so vital within their souls. Through these memories Palestine is able to resurrect itself within the text, becoming a kind of spectral force that attaches itself to Usama's memories. When he remembers the pain of the woman being searched, he is not simply remembering her pain and shame, but he is also remembering the pain and the shame that robbed Palestine of its global and cultural identity.

As Usama finally returns home he must confront occupied Palestine for the first time, finally realizing that occupation, as Philip Metres claims, "is different than he imagined, but not the simple defeat and humiliation that he views it" (86). Immediately as Usama enters the town he feels no real sense of change, until he is driven to look at how the people were truly interacting with the world around them:

> Nothing in the town seemed to have changed. The square looked the same as always. . . . Everybody was out on the pavement, doing things but not talking.

> Yes, nothing had changed. . . . And yet. The people no longer seemed so poverty-stricken. They dressed fashionably now. And their pace was quicker. They bought things without haggling. (Khalifeh 26)

It is this view of the Palestinians' complacency with the Westernized society that occupation thrust upon them that seems to awaken Usama's sense, calling him to take action and stand up for the Palestine that he remembers. Metres comments on this noting that "We see this new reality through Usama's eyes, heightened by his (and, arguably, 'our') relative innocence regarding the mechanisms of occupation" (88), suggesting that due to his reliance on memory of Palestine, his experiences are tainted by the prosthetics of memory causing phantom pains of the Palestine of his past to awaken within his soul. In other words, as his memory rebuilds and critiques the world around him, it does so with the pain that he experienced at the checkpoint. As he notices each and every complacency with occupation, each and every change that seems to be erasing Palestine from its people, he hears the cries and screams of the girl—he hears Palestine in pain.

This is only the beginning of Usama's cruel awakening, as he later is introduced to his mother's complacent place within the occupied world, as well as the destruction of his uncle's farm, which she wishes for Usama to work on. Exposing another trivial layer to the occupation, Khalifeh writes of the place of religion within the occupation, explaining, "'I told you, everything's fine. And soon God will settle everything. Maybe the foreign journalists who visit your uncle will have some influence on America, and American will tell Israel to withdraw and she will. You see, things are not as hard as you think. Didn't I say God will settle everything soon?'" (32). Although religion works to give Usama's mother hope for the future of her family and her people, religion is not simply divine within this text, but rather is something that is

attributed to the Western world. Speaking of God saving Palestine and the Palestinians, reuniting them in strength and perseverance, Usama's mother immediately credits God with having a connection with America, as though she were using God as nothing more than a middle man joining the two worlds. It is important to note that this connection is made only after she accuses Usama of blasphemy: "'You expect God to solve it all, Mother? Isn't there any other way?' 'Don't blaspheme, Usama, God bless you. Don't you believe in the power of Almighty God?'" (Khalifeh 32). Although his mother appears to be speaking of God, her use of God in such a close relation with the West seems to suggest that for her Heaven is in the western world, and that it is not simply God, but America—a quasi God of sorts, that will deliver them from the occupation.

In hope of making her son more complacent with the current conditions of occupation, she explains her will for him to work on his uncle's farm. It is through this desire for his complacency with the occupation that Usama is driven to accept his role, not as a passive citizen of occupation, but instead rebellious resistance soldier. Khalifeh writes, "She got onto the subject of work, and then came out with an unexpected suggestion. Why not work on his uncle's farm? The farm needed help, and Adil was like his own brother. And work on a farm wasn't that hard" (37), imposing a forced familial bond between Usama and his cousin Adil, while also imposing the burden of resurrecting his family's farm from the depths of occupation. Although his mother claims that things are in God's hands, her ability to rearrange Usama's life and desires at will places her in a divine role, birthing what Khalifeh writes is a possible savior for Usama's family—and in essence the Palestinian people. Even though God is supposed to save the Palestinians from occupation, Usama's mother places so much trust and responsibility on her son that it comes with very little surprise that he begins to believe that he is capable of reclaiming

Palestine for the Palestinians. Khalifeh makes this intention clear as she writes, “The fact was that he’d accepted his role as a committed fighter, and his destiny was no longer a matter of personal choice or whim” (38), implying that Usama is not simply visiting his mother, but is in fact returning home to impose a kind of attack on the occupation. If his mother is a figure of complacency with the occupation, then it is with his resistance to her wishes that the figure of Usama the freedom fighter is born.

Solidifying his role as guerilla radical, or Palestinian extremist, Khalifeh tells of Usama’s return to his uncle’s farm: “The road to the farm looked as though it hadn’t been used recently. Grass grew wild over the paths. The little building once used as a reception room was locked up. He found his eyes misting over with tears as he called out, ‘Is there anybody here?’” (39). It is in this image that readers can see the effects that occupation had on the world that once fostered Palestinian culture. No longer were people coming to purchase things from the farm, no longer was the farm actively growing producing essentials, and no longer was this cultural heritage desired. Where many used to work on this farm in the past, Khalifeh reveals “They all go off to work in Israel” (41), further insisting that it’s due to Israel offering “Lots of money” (41) and “Plenty of easy work” (41). Unable to make sense of his people’s willingness to give up on their culture in order for personal gain, Usama breaks down: “Usama’s eyes filled with tears. ‘Oh, what’s happened to us?’ he cried. ‘What’s happened? I don’t understand. I don’t understand anything’” (Khalifeh 43), allowing readers the chance to feel the turmoil that is brewing within Usama’s soul. It is in this that readers can truly see him letting go of his people, as he is no longer able to understand them or their decision, and he is no longer able to find solace with them. Not only do they make him question them, but it is quite clear that they make him question himself—forcing the most vicious of questions to bubble up to the surface, what is it that I can

do to save my people? It is in this that Khalifeh offers readers an intimate look at what can drive a person to the role of resistance fighter, and furthermore, what is able to turn this figure of resistance into an extremist.

Echoing Usama's descent into radicalism Khalifeh introduces a massive cloud of darkness within the text, allowing it to hover over and consume the seemingly good things that assimilation with occupation has brought to former Palestine. She writes, "Israel should beware of what it's created—a time bomb about to explode" (Khalifeh 146), lacing the theme of occupation with a kind of viral darkness, capable of bringing mass destruction. Although occupation through Usama's eyes has brought a kind of destruction to the Palestinian people, Khalifeh's use of this image of the time bomb allows readers to realize that there will be more casualties in the face of occupation. It is an image like this that works to act as a warning to any and all who act to suppress or eliminate the cultural identities of others, implying that once something is erased it can no longer shield your people or your world from what is certain backlash and destruction. Speaking of the prisons where radicals and extremists like Usama are placed, Khalifeh tells: "Its prisons have become breeding grounds for ideas, not disposal sites for land-mines" (146). It is in this that images of prosthetic relationships begin to reemerge within the text. Where the screams of the girl stuck with Usama after the checkpoint, the radical views and theories that he meets in places like prisons enter within him, binding him tighter to the cause of a more precisely identified people—the Palestinian extremists.

It is after his experiences with these people in prison that Usama's full descent into raging extremist begins to completely take form. Forming an innate hatred for the occupation and its supporters, Usama's mind is plagued with the teachings of his fellow extremists in prison. Where he simply heard the screams of the shamed girl in the beginning of his journey, he now

hears the words of Palestinian poets, resisting the occupation of their land. Khalifeh writes, “No, we’ll not die, but we’ll / Uproot death from out land. / There, over there, far, far way “(120), allowing these words to take over the extremists images of this text as a kind of anthem for action, pledging allegiance to their cause. It is through this prosthetic bond that these kinds of anthems form with Usama and the other resistance fighters that drive him to act out, rather than keeping his thoughts to himself.

As these words and feelings echo through his mind, he is filled with desperation to act out for his cause. Nejd Yaziji defines this drastic shift toward radicalism as Usama’s rejection of the passivity of his people and his own self: “This unmediated idea of national struggle necessitates not only that he reject offhand what he recognizes as the people’s weaknesses and passive acceptance of the status quo of the occupation, but that he denounce, equally vehemently, the signs of his own weakness and vulnerability” (91). If Usama is to truly find a connection with his people, he cannot simply place himself above them, but must act alongside them. Usama’s desperate need to break free from the Occupation’s control is best seen as he stabs the Israeli officer in front of the man’s wife and child. Khalifeh writes, “Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a young man, his face shrouded in a white kufiyya, sprang at the officer. His raised hand came down with lightning speed, and a dagger sank to the hilt in the nape of the officer’s neck” (158), depicting this putrid sense of hatred that Usama must have held toward Israeli’s in general as he acted almost with no time to think of who, what kind of person, this officer was. His thoughts consumed by his hatred for the occupation, bodies remained faceless in Usama’s mind. For Usama the officer was simply Israeli and the source of the Occupation. This is echoed in the sentence “The young man took to his heels and no one stopped him” (Khalifeh 158), expressing both shock over the incident from the community of onlookers

and the lack of feeling from the assailant, Usama. It is this lack of feeling or numbness toward humanity that Khalifeh uses to show just how deeply affected the Palestinian people are by the Israeli Occupation.

This kind of disregard for humanity, by the extremists, is exposed again in the text as Usama helps lead an attack on busses carrying workers to Israeli jobs. Usama exclaims "Fire. . . Fire on the second bus!" (181), showing no regard for the people, once his family and friends, who are on the buses. To Usama these people too are faceless, dying as martyrs for his cause. Yaziji reflects on this feeling, revealing that Usama "gains the singularity of his response by ignoring the realities of his people" (92). It is through the deaths of others that Usama feels he will be able to present the history of his people to the rest of the world in a way that will both make the world listen and force the world to view him as a martyr for his cause. It is not until the identity of one innocent caught in the line of fire is allowed to surface that Usama is finally driven, if but for one second, back down to his communal position within humanity: "The voice confirmed Zuhdi's suspicions. 'Usama! It is you, Usama! You bastard! What about your own cousin? And Abu Sabir? And me?' He stood on a rock and yelled, 'Usama! I knew it was you, Usama!' Usama turned, amazed and shocked. It was Zuhdi!" (Khalifeh 181). It is in this confusing reality of battle that Usama is finally brought into a position where he is too human, too consumed with vitality to no longer be impervious to the brutality of his cause. Khalifeh makes this clear as she writes:

> Shrapnel flew through the air. Usama fell, his stomach split open, his entrails spilling out. He reached out his hand to touch the earth, mixed now with blood and tears. The land! Blood. Poetry. Dreams of love. In the village below the flute reminded you of weddings yet to come. A tendency to waywardness and madness

> in the heart. Brightly coloured scarves. Hands clasped, feet tapping the ground and sending the spirit high as seventh heaven. Mother! Adil! Nuwar! Tears veiling the vision. The organizations are afflicted with short-sightedness. Not true, you fool! (183)

As Usama's blood mixes with his land, he is reminded of the truth of his culture. No longer is Palestine really as dead as he once believed it to be. As he spills his vitality on the ground, the land comes to life. As beautiful as this image appears to be, it also serves as a lesson on the extremist way of life as Khalifeh reminds Usama of the world that he is leaving behind. This also calls attention to the falseness of his beliefs of the Palestinian world being dead—it has simply evolved to survive the harsh reality of occupation.

Adil and Merciful Assimilation

"So now the battle's beginning, thought Adil. I've been expecting it. It's not a new battle. The tragedy's repeated every day."—Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*

When readers enter Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* they are not simply embarking on the journey of one man, but rather they are embarking on the journeys of two men as they find themselves trapped within a world of Occupation. Through Usama's reintroduction with now occupied Palestine Khalifeh introduces us to Usama's counter image, his cousin Adil. Adil's perspective of the occupation, being a person who has lived within it without resistance, offers readers an image of how assimilation can taint an individual's bonds with others, while allowing them the experience necessary to truly come to their own conclusion about what has been taken from them. Yaziji echoes this claiming, "Adil's character instantiates a possible alternative to the opposition between Usama's grand narrative of struggle and the status quo of total deliverance. Adil's struggles are real and meaningful within the realm of available choices" (100). Through

her use of Adil, Khalifeh is able to provide us with an understanding of both the extremist or resistive Palestinians, while also allowing us to view the occupation from a civil standing—exploring the events of the average day, rather than simply the memories of days passed. Shifting the narrative toward Adil and away from Usama, Khalifeh is able to "expose Usama and his mission" (Metres 89) for what they truly are, "vexed, naïve, and deeply dangerous romantic" (Metres 89) rather than the rogue hero he dreams of being. This allows for a sense of realness to enter the novel, breaking it from its romantic stance and placing it into a realm of common feeling. As Usama meets with Adil, so does resistance meet passivity. Usama perhaps exposing how deeply affected he was by his encounter at the checkpoint uses Adil as a way to fire back on the occupation with the same force that they did to him. Grilling Adil with questions Usama asks, "Is this an occupation or a disintegration? . . . . What are young people like you doing to oppose what goes on inside" (Khalifeh 28). Supposedly being on common grounds as Palestinians, Usama uses this as an opportunity to finally vent his anger toward both Palestine and Israel (Metres 91), while expecting no real backlash. Khalifeh does not allow this as she teaches Usama that within an occupied world, Palestinians have no voice without consequence as she allows Adil to fire back, "'The same as what you've done to oppose what's outside'" (28). It is in this that readers are allowed a new view of occupation, not simply as a confining force capturing a culture, but something much greater, something that gains its power from outside influences. By asking this question Adil is able to expose that like anything else, outside influences can have power over the inside, implying that battles shouldn't simply be fought on the inside, but should also be fought on the outside.

As Usama takes in the new position of his old home, the assimilated lifestyles that have become so dominant, it appears as though he is not the only one thinking of this fact. Adil's

questioning of Usama and what he did on the outside suggests that like his cousin, he is quite aware of the current position of Palestinians within their society. He is aware of their greed and their blatant complacency with the occupation, due to the materialistic advancements it brought to his people. Occupation being something that makes Usama feel a sickening feeling of distance from his people, Adil looks at the current conditions as a new, less fair, way of life. As Usama looks and notices all of the changes that have happened since the occupation, it is actually Adil who feels them. Due to his position as insider, Adil has not only witnessed all of the changes that have happened, but he has felt how it has changed his people. Khalifeh explains this as she writes, "'He bears everyone's burdens, Adil does. Yes, he carries the troubles of all. He's got nine people hanging around his neck, not to mention the kidney machine. Poor Adil. He's on the go from sun-up to sundown'" (31), placing Adil in the role of protector and provider. Where Usama declares himself as the protector of his people, Adil acts as elected protector—taking on the role of father, as his father's "kidney's just gave out from worry" (Khalifeh 31). Not only does Adil have to care for his family as his father would, but he must also care for their new needs. Due to the West's influence on the occupation, the medical advancement of the prosthetic kidney device extends life and suffering, where pity would have allowed his father to die. It is with this that Khalifeh begins to question—what is the price for life?

Life for Adil is something he must sacrifice in order to allow others to flourish. His father is able to still live, but Adil is the one who must work to pay for the machine keeping his father alive. Rather than rebel against his position Khalifeh explains that he simply does what is expected of him: "'Adil's as silent as the sphinx, son, working away day and night. He's got nine people to support, apart from the machine'" (31). Where Usama would resist taking on this role, claiming that accepting it would bring the certain death of his people, Adil realizes the actuality

of the situation. For Adil, if he were to stop supporting his family they would no longer be able to live their lives the way they wish—his father not being able to live at all. Considering Adil as a prosthetic extension of Palestine, abandoning his family would be just as devastating as Palestine no longer existing to its people. If Adil refused to comply with the changes forced on him, then it would be the same as Palestine refusing to exist as a memory to its people. It is the mark of these western influences that are placed upon Adil and his people that serve as a kind of phantom sensation, making him more aware of his current position as a Palestinian man, as well as the position of his culture and heritage within an occupied world.

Although his current position within society does not bring him complete happiness, he still desires a chance for normalcy during these times of occupation. Countering Usama's disgust for Adil's complacent nature, Adil explains that what he is doing as an insider is in fact working against the occupation: "convince me that what I'm doing isn't part of the struggle, that the fight has fixed ground rules. . . . You can have my life, Usama, if you can only convince me that freedom means that people who can't defend themselves go hungry. And that there's happiness in hunger" (Khalifeh 63). This image works to counter and challenge Usama's belief that people must be willing to die for the cause in order to overcome the occupation. Adil being the passive survivor sees through this and understands as an insider that overcoming the occupation means simply to live, because it is in life that the beliefs and heritage of Palestine can continue to flourish within its people. Although Adil is able to adapt as life changes, he is viewed by critics as being "anti-heroic, because Adil . . . is incapable of heroic deeds. . . . He simply takes life as it comes" (Faqir 1407). This may be true at times for Adil, but I would argue that as the text progresses, Adil is granted the chance to take on heroic attributes through his passive resistance. Although occupation forces these people to hide their heritage, enticing them to cover

themselves with the exports of other worlds, Adil knows that there is much more to being Palestinian than just being able to see. For Adil being Palestinian means being able to feel Palestine, to know that in action his people are allowing their culture to come to life. It is for this reason that he is able to look at his cousin Usama and in the same breath that accused Usama of finding power in death, explain that he does not want death, but rather desires life and the hope of continuity: "'I want a woman. I need a woman, a woman somewhere who'll open the door for me and let me express my passion and my bitterness'" (Khalifeh 63). For Adil the hope for love, family, and community drives his passion to live. Adil understands that even in times of occupation it is humanity that thrives over the memories of materialistic desires.

This is further exposed as Adil's paternal role begins to flourish more within the text, solidifying his role as the man that people turn to in the face of tragedy. This is first seen when Abu Sabir injures himself at work: "The workers were shouting 'Adil! Adil!' in a loud chorus as they stared at the man stretch out on the ground" (Khalifeh 48). Rather than simply scream for help, the workers can only think of one thing to call out, that being Adil's name. This seems to suggest that not only Adil's family views him as the paternal protector or the savior, but so do the rest of his people. This is echoed again as Khalifeh further writes, "'Abu Sabir's cut his fingers off! He's laying out there on the ground! The blood won't stop! We don't know what to do!'" (48). Even in times of mass chaos and hysteria the people know that Adil is someone who they can turn to for help. This removes him from his place as simply being a man and strengthens his role as prosthetic extension of Palestine. In times of struggle people turn to their country for help similarly to how these people turn to Adil for help. Adil's divine sense of being becomes even more evident as he takes action to help save Abu Sabir from what otherwise would be certain death:

> Adil turned and ran back to the crowd of men. He cleared a path and bent down to raise the injured man's shoulders from the ground: "Lift him up, Zuhdi," he said. They carried Abu Sabir towards the garage. Someone opened the rear door of a van. Adil climbed inside and pulled Abu Sabir onto the rubber floor beside him. He took off his own shirt and began tearing it into strips, shouting, "Come on, let's get moving!" (Khalifeh 49)

Although what Adil is doing here seems as though it is simply a natural response, it appears to be something much greater as he is able to shake off the hysterics surrounding the shock of the incident and think clearly enough to formulate a plan of action. Where others simply froze, Adil is able to command the situation and deliver Abu Sabir from death. It is here that Khalifeh begins to truly toy with the binary differences between Adil and his cousin Usama. Where Usama would look at this situation as a man getting what he deserved for turning his back on his home, marking him as a martyr or symbol of the necessity to reclaim Palestine for the Palestinians, Adil looks at the situation with a sense of communal instinct. Adil understands that the lives of the Palestinians are what keep Palestine alive. As he looks into the suffering eyes of Abu Sabir, he does not see solely the suffering of Abu Sabir, but instead sees the suffering of Palestine itself. If he were to let Abu Sabir die, then he would be allowing a piece of Palestine to die along with him, surrendering his people more and more to the occupation.

Through images like these Adil is able to transcend the passive image of the victim and turn himself into something of a figure of resistance in his own right. This further exposes the prosthetic nature of being, or the prosthetic of the self, as Adil and Usama are able to both take on the role of resistance, but do so in ways that are quite different. Although they resist the occupation in different ways, they do share the bond of a phantom sensation that drives them to

action. Where Usama is driven to action by his haunting memories of the girl at the checkpoint and the teachings of fellow extremists, Adil finds his inspiration to act coming from his need to protect and father his people, especially when he is faced with direct instances of their suffering. Adil's character becomes perhaps one of the most prosthetic of all within the text as he uses his position within the occupation in ways that attempt to stand in resistance while also trying to call for unity. This can especially be seen as Adil attempts to counter Usama's violent act of murdering an Israeli officer, by delivering the officer's family away from the scene and toward a feeling of solace. Khalifeh states that:

> Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a young man, his face shrouded in a white kufiyya, sprang at the officer. His raised hand came down with lightning speed, and a dagger sank to the hilt in the nape of the officer's neck. . . . Adil spoke to the Israeli woman. She rested her head on Adil's shoulder, moaning to herself. . . . Adil tore the stars off and tossed them to the ground. Then he picked up the little girl, hoisted her onto his shoulders, and walked off down the empty street. Her mother followed behind, silently weeping (158 & 160).

Khalifeh uses this image to depict not only the hatred that Usama held within himself toward all Israelis, regardless of who they were or what they did, but also the roots of kindness that exist within Palestinian culture as Adil is nonresponsive to the fact that the officer is Israeli, but rather responsive due to the bond that they share as human beings. Usama sees this man as nothing more than a direct representation of the enemy, a subhuman kind of view that bonds Usama with many other Palestinians within the text, while Adil sees this man as an individual caught within circumstances that are similar to his own. It is this lack of tenderness shown by the Usama and the Palestinian onlookers that seems to disturb Khalifeh, as she is sure to expose the cries of

hatred that they yell out at Adil as he attempts to tend to the fallen man: "'Leave the pig alone!'" (160). Although the community is urging Adil to not tend to the officer, he realizes that assimilation not only bound Palestine to the occupation, but also bound the people of Israel to the occupation. Although it is simple to blame all Israelis for the occupation, the truth of the matter is that it is their government and its leaders that are responsible for the occupation. Although the officer is a political figure of sorts, he is simply an officer—a man who is supposed to protect and keep order within this occupied world. Adil's ability to notice this allows readers the chance to see Palestine finding understanding of this, despite the fact that many of its people are unwilling to look away from the cloud of occupation hanging overhead.

As upsetting as this scene appears to be, it also acts as one of the most moving throughout the text as Adil stares directly into the face of his people's hatred and finds community. When writing of Adil ripping the stars off of the officer's jacket, she seems to do so in order to justify Adil's seemingly natural response to see if the officer can be saved. With the ripping of the stars from the officer's jacket no longer does the officer exist, but instead Khalifeh paints us an image of a man who, like the Palestinians, was a victim of the occupation. With his stars the officer is the occupation's prosthetic arm acting as a symbol of enforcement, violence, and suppression towards Palestine, but without them he is simply a soul trapped within a struggle. Where Usama takes on the prosthetic role of violent attacker, in his eyes defender, Adil seems to take on the prosthetic role of Palestine's divinity within this scene. Rather than allowing the officer's family to suffer while they watch him lying dead, Adil carries the officer's child and leads the officer's wife away from the chaotic image of violence, delivering them to a sense of salvation. With this Khalifeh seems to acknowledge what Metres claims as "The ultimate brutality of the occupation is that no one is spared from ethical taint" (91). Understanding both nations' role within the

occupation, the divine Adil is able to forgive and allow repentance for both the Palestinians who committed the murder, as well as the Israelis whose occupational violence and oppression acted as the catalyst for extremist resistive attacks like these.

Although Adil takes on this almost divine prosthetic role within the text, Khalifeh refuses to depict the occupation as anything that would "leave hands unbloodied" (Metres 92). This is seen as we watch Adil's relationship with his father; Abu Adil progress throughout the novel. Abu Adil, perhaps the greatest embodiment of prosthesis within the entire text, relies on a prosthetic, a kidney machine, in order to live. Khalifeh exposes this as she writes, "Your uncle goes from bad to worse, but he doesn't complain. It's true, he shouts more these days and gets angry. God help Um Adil. The poor man's kidneys just gave out from worry" (31). She introducing this kind of prosthetic of all types, calls attention to Abu Adil's inability to simply filter things on his own. This reliance on outside forces to purify the effects of the world on his body suggests that he relies on the views of others to shape his views toward the occupation. Khalifeh exposes this relationship as she writes of his meeting with journalists, claiming, "After the occupation, Abu Adil couldn't hold his head up the way he used to. But he's still fighting he meets foreign journalists, he talks to them. He attacks the occupation all right" (31). It is through this image that we can see how Abu Adil uses his position, a man who could afford an expensive prosthesis, and his circumstance as a way to meet with people who can spread his views and enlighten his mind on the occupation.

Although Abu Adil is working to spread the memory of Palestine, Adil is unable to find respect for these actions, as he is forced to work to support his father and this expensive filter. This leaves a bitter taste in Adil's mouth as Khalifeh writes:

> Abu Sabir shook his head. “No, Adil,” he said, “you’ve never really known the bitterness of fate. When its curse falls on you remorselessly you see death as something you can reach only in your wildest dreams.” Adil shook his head but said nothing. I know all this too, he thought, both through my father and through my own experience but mainly through my own experience. My father has such a grip on life, as the past always has on the present, an unshakeable grip, impossible to cast off, like a prison record or the grip of a virus clinging to a healthy cell. The very sap of my body, he thought, is threatened by my father’s illness. (51)

This suggests that Abu Adil’s grip on the past, his position with the world, keeps him from being able to see the world as it is today. In this Adil is able to criticize his father for his use of the media as a source for information on the Occupation, claiming that it fails in relation to experience. This also allows for him to expose a kind of bitterness towards his father for having to experience what other people, as expressed in the quote above, should not or would not have to face if it were not for this prosthetic bond that his father formed with the materials given to him by the occupation. Although his father is alive, he is unable to simply live. He remains locked away waging a war of words against the same thing that continues to give him life, while he demands Adil to give up his life in order to take care of his family as if he were now the paternal figure of the household.

This works to place Adil and his father in opposing prosthetic roles. Adil is placed in the light of being the prosthetic representation of Palestine in the present, where his father—gripping to life through a machine—is placed in the light of being the prosthetic of Palestine of the past. This also suggests that Palestinians of the past would be unwilling to see the value of the future, whereas those of the present are able to take notice of these advancements—noting the good and

the bad that they can bring, based off of what they have grown to see happen to their past. Looking at the past as the shadows that Usama clings to, the past takes on a dead role that is consumed with the anger of loss and the hunger for retribution. Understanding that the past is what fuels the resistance actions of Usama, Adil allows himself to remove Palestine of the past from the current and future, as he refuses to save his father's kidney machine from destruction. Khalifeh further elaborates on this as she writes:

> "Ten more minutes," a soldier shouted. The kidney machine. He pushed the thought away, and began to walk up and down the stairs to keep his mind occupied . . . I won't take that damned machine. Yes, I will. No, I won't. Yes, I will. "Hey, Adil, give him a hand or that big wardrobe'll topple over!" . . . "Time's up," the soldier shouted. "Come on now, time's up! No, I'm sorry, you can't go back upstairs, sir. Down you go! Come on now!" But what about the machine? His father's kidney machine! Should I tell the officer? He'd probably put off the demolition for a few minutes so we could get it out. But if I wanted to take it so much why didn't I move it out in the beginning? (203-204)

Adil's indecisive nature in this image works to portray Khalifeh's own personal issues with Palestine and the occupation. It is not simply a struggle about whether or not Adil should allow his father to live, but is instead whether or not he should allow his father's bond with the past to live in the present or the future. It is as though Khalifeh is asking: does the past truly have a relevant role within the future—especially during times of occupation? This decision, as harsh as it may seem, conveys that "the old order of Palestinian society that Abu Adil represents cannot survive" (Metres 92), also further suggesting that the resistance from relying on violence dictated by the past will promote a victorious path for a new Palestine to form. Khalifeh acknowledges

this herself as she has Adil admit the certain misfortune that would follow if he were to allow his father to live: “Emotions won’t help you. Would you kill a man then? Kill your own father? But men are always being killed. And if my father goes on living, we’ll all die . . . Me, Nuwar, the children. Haven’t we lost enough already?” (204). This image proves that through the prosthetic nature of nationalism and the self, nations, as well as “bodies [are] no longer set apart by their intrinsically whole nature but [are] entirely alterable by human means” (Elswit 390), allowing them to be forged from the past, while also granting them the ability to re-present the past in a way that makes it less abrasive and more able to flourish within present times.

Sahar Khalifeh’s *Wild Thorns* works to expose readers to the idea that war not only dissolves all, but has no true alliance with a particular people. As she builds a world in turmoil, Khalifeh is quick to depict the struggle for cultures to survive within an ever changing, ever eroding world. Early in the novel Khalifeh writes, “keep your mouth shut and leave some tracks wherever you go” (24), exposing how it is important for a culture’s actions to speak for them during times of oppression and resistance. Through her use of the opposing Palestinians, the cousins Usama and Adil, she is able to reveal to readers that Israelis are not solely responsible for the dissolving of Palestinian culture. Despite using Usama to show the extremists’ desire for death in opposition to the Occupation, Khalifeh’s use of Adil in response to the oppressive forces of the Occupation depicts how it is not in fact those who die for a cause that are truly remembered as martyrs, but it is instead those who work peacefully to bridge the gaps between oppression and resistance that are able to truly become martyrs as they carry the reality of history with them every day.

Ultimately Khalifeh’s work asserts that as long as there are opposing forces acting both between and within cultures “History will find it hard to judge whether the occupation was a

blessing or a disaster" (Khalifeh 147), making it a question that can only be answered through experience. Although these men are doing what they feel is right, Khalifeh conveys that being or feeling right is not something that comes for free, but instead comes at the cost of others. For one person, culture, or people to survive during times of occupation—many others will have to be lost. These casualties can and should act as reminders, both for what was there, and also as a lesson on the brutality that cultural dominance can have on the innocent.

-Conclusion-

Lifting the Veil

The existence of the country of Palestine is something that has been in question since the mid twentieth century. Ahmad H. Sa'di reveals that "The 1948 War resulted in Al-Nakbah—the immense catastrophe—for the Palestinian people and changed their life beyond recognition. . . Between 77 and 83 percent of the Palestinians who lived in the part of Palestine that later became Israel—i.e., 78 percent of Mandatory Palestine—were turned into refugees" (175), depicting how the Palestinian people came to feel a total loss of cultural identity post the Arab-Israeli war. As the Israelis fought for their claim to independence, they did so leaving the blood and culture of the Palestinian people lying in the wreckage. Once Israel made their forceful claim to Palestine the Palestinian people either became refugees or else they were forced to adhere to the new rules and expectations of the occupation. Due to the forceful nature of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Palestinians became so far removed from their cultural identities that they lost their essence and began to take on a victimized role within a land that once was their own.

In an attempt to establish and recognize his cultural identity Edward Said spent much of his scholarly career working to publically reestablish the roots of his people—the Palestinians—in a world that refused to acknowledge their existence. It was through his scholarly efforts that it became more apparent as to how little claim he was actually allowed to make on a land, a culture, and a people that struggled to exist post mid twentieth century. In *The Question of Palestine* he admits the despair that overshadows Palestine's effort to be noticed, suggesting that throughout much of Palestine's occupied history the land and its people have been met with disrespect by world leaders, primarily those who are responsible for the Israeli occupation: "In

Israel today it is the custom officially to refer to the Palestinians as 'so-called Palestinians,' which is a somewhat gentler phrase than Golda Meir's flat assertion in 1969 that the Palestinians did not exist" (*Question of Palestine* 4-5). Not only were these people supposedly extinct, but anyone who refused to feel this way or looked to claim Palestinian roots were looked at as being a part of a subhuman race. It is because of this image and many others that Said depicts that I was first able to take notice of the post-amputated position that these people seem to have been placed in.

Looking at the Palestinians as victims of a vicious attack on their national body and pride, their prosthetic attributes became more apparent than ever. Reading various instances of Palestinians struggling to hold onto the memory of the land and culture that once belonged to them, it became evident to me that these people felt similar reactions as those who were victims of physical amputation. Memory no longer served in the superficial sense, but instead served as a sensationalized phantom reminder of the world that these people were forgetting as they assimilated deeper with the demands of the Israeli occupation. Douwe Tiemersma clarifies this notion, claiming that these memories act as new sources of stimulation or reminders of what the Palestinians are missing: "By new stimulation of the stump there is a chance, however, of the original phantom limb being restored" (26). As these memories awaken the previously forgotten nationalistic feelings of the Palestinians, they become aware of not only what is missing from their lives, but also what their connection actually is with their heritage. While these senses become more heightened Palestine becomes less of a memory to the Palestinians and more of an ever present entity within their lives.

This rousing sensation seems to mirror a highly similar response to that of post-amputees. Annie Woodhouse explains this response as being either phantom limb pain or phantom limb

sensation, suggesting that it is the memory of the lost appendage that causes these feelings to occur within post-amputees: “Phantom limb pain is any painful sensations that are referred to the absent limb” (132) and “Phantom limb sensation is any sensation in the absent limb, except pain” (132). As a conscious understanding that something is missing is instilled, or perhaps re-instilled, within the patient their body begins to look for the absent accessory. Although the patient has learned to live without the appendage, the body’s assertion that the appendage is not fully gone suggests what Elizabeth Grosz claims is “the refusal of an experience to enter into the past [and] the tenacity of a present that remains immutable” (89). Although the patient can move forward, the body imposing the memory of the missing appendage keeps the patient in a constant state of limbo, unable to let go of what is believed to be no longer present. Looking as Palestine as a lost appendage and the Palestinians as the patients, the pains exist as a phantasmal claim to the culture that they lost to occupation. As a Palestinian begins to remember Palestine their senses become heightened and they are sure to drift into a conscious state of mind that both adheres to the fact that it is no longer present globally, but never the less remains active within them, providing the Palestinian people with a renewed sense of self.

Recognizing this reestablished sense of being it became easy for me to see this first hand through the literary efforts of two passionate Palestinian texts—Ghassan Kanafani’s *Men in the Sun* and Sahar Khalifeh’s *Wild Thorns*. Each text works to expose the feeling of vacancy that has come to consume the lives of the Palestinians as they find themselves becoming assimilated with the occupational forces of Israel. Although there is a dominantly physical sense of occupation that overcomes the Palestinians within these texts, both authors work to show how the effects of the occupation pierce much deeper than simply skin alone. Kanafani makes this apparent within the introduction of his text, as his Palestinian pride is awakened in a letter to his son: “I heard

you crying. I could not move. There was something bigger than my awareness being born in the other room through your bewildered sobbing. It was as if a blessed scalpel was cutting up your chest and putting there the heart that belongs to you" (10). This passionate sense of identity works to fill the void that occupation left within him, creating a kind of promise to his self that his son will never have to feel the same emptiness that he had to as long as his heart beats for Palestine.

The thumping of his son's Palestinian heart serves as a metronome keeping the pace of his novella natural in the midst of the imposed harshness of occupation. In the same letter to his son, Kanafani offers a philosophical outlook that I find to be the key to reading Palestinian literature. He declares, "Do not believe that man grows. No; he is born suddenly—a word, in a moment, penetrates his heart to a new throb" (Kanafani 10). This spiritual awakening threads itself through his text as he offers readers a view into a world where four men find themselves struggling to survive within the chaos of exile that has consumed them due to the Israeli occupation. Kanafani provides each man with an awakening moment, as powerful as his—the birth of his son—but not necessarily as cheerful in nature. Although occupation is credited with harming Palestine as a whole, Kanafani exposes the scars that it placed on each individual. As each of these four men is awakened by their relationship with Palestine they are haunted by the scars that represent the loss of the land that they once loved. Each phantasmal memory begins to act as if they are phantom limbs, reminding these men of what they are now without. No longer able to simply be Palestinian within this world of occupation, these men are driven by their scars on a journey to find salvation for themselves and their homeland. By truly taking notice of these sensations each of the characters within *Men in the Sun* is able to see how much of his own

Palestinian identity has actually been lost to the occupation and whether or not their culture is truly lost or simply in a state of transitional awareness begging to strive once again.

Sahar Khalifeh's novel *Wild Thorns* follows a similar pattern as Kanafani's novella, but does so in a way that questions the effectiveness of this cultural awakening. Basing her novel around the constant struggle between what was once present, Palestine, and what is now present, Israel, Khalifeh also uses memory to fuel action within the text and bring forth a claim to a cultural identity. As she introduces her readers to two cousins, Usama and Adil, she exposes how each individual's call to action can be—and more often than not—is answered in ways that can hinder their cause. Struggling to make sense of the loss of the home that he once remembered, Usama is depicted as being haunted by the screams of those he feels are merely innocent victims: the Palestinians. While the screams echo through his mind, Usama is left questioning how he himself can overcome the presence of the occupation and inspire the rebirth of both Palestine and the Palestinian race. Understanding that humanity is capable of all actions, Khalifeh notes the injustices of Usama's martyr mentality, suggesting his inability to view crime as a destructive force, but rather instead seeing it as a combative resistance effort. Struggling to make sense of a world where people no longer fear the impositions of the occupation, Usama abandons his family and friends in order to take a stand for an old world view of Palestine, leaving bloodshed and destruction in his path to national redemption.

Khalifeh's introduction of Usama's counterpart Adil allows for combat and guerilla warfare to not be the only way for Palestinians to resist occupation in order to retain a sense of national pride and identity. Adil offers readers a look at passivity, challenging the bloodlust of Usama, with the hypothetical question of—what if we were to not stand in the way of change? Although this gains Adil some looks of disgust from Usama, Khalifeh is sure to expose the

divinity of this way of being. Where innocent people fear Usama within the novel, they find solace and comfort with Adil. This thrusts Adil into the light of protector, making him someone that virtually all Palestinians within the text turn to for support. Due to this divine nature, Adil is able to break free from the "dirty Arab" stereotype that was placed on his people by the Israeli occupation and instead become a heroic figure for the future of humanity as a whole. Even though Adil is pure in his figure, his mind is consumed in a similar sense as Usama's—both men are haunted by what used to be real for them. Rather than hearing the screams of torture that fill this occupied territory, Adil is haunted by what has become the fact that he is no longer the son, but is instead the prosthetic father to his family—forced to care for them and the machinery that keeps his father alive. Although Adil is capable of seeing humanity on a common enough level that he is willing to at times comfort Israelis within the text, he is ultimately unable to find the strength to comfort those he sees as being responsible for the conditions of his people—choosing a prosthetic relationship over that of his own blood.

By examining these two texts through the lens of prosthesis in relation to Said's various writings on the treatment, or mistreatment, of the Palestinians, I have found the beauty that lies beneath the rubble of occupation. No longer veiled by the stereotypical mysticism of the East, I am able to see humanity as a whole and truly realize the pain that the nation of Palestine and its people have had to suffer through. Although these texts provide readers with journeys and instances of possible redemption for these people, both leave very little feeling of hope for the future. As Kanafani writes of the journey to Palestine's resurrection, he does so in a way that suggests that only in death can Palestinians know the truth that is Palestine. Khalifeh struggles with this same feeling as she presents readers with the destruction of Usama. Headstrong on the notion that martyrdom is the only hope for the world recognizing Palestine's existence beneath

the occupation, Usama's death is destined and costly. Alternatively, Adil offers readers a chance to view passive resistance as an option, providing proof that only in life can something truly be remembered. Although life allows for the resurrection of Palestine through memory, Adil's ability to abandon the past for the better of the future suggests that even in life Palestine as a whole—capable of both beauty and destruction—is not able to fully flourish, as people only remember what they feel is necessary or important to them. What Sahar Khalifeh demands may very well be true: "keep your mouth shut and leave some tracks wherever you go" (24). Perhaps the truth solely lies within the tracks and marks left behind by Palestine itself. The answers echoing within the tracks of Palestinian ancestors, calling attention to the world that was presumed lost after bloodied struggles. The world of scars that lay distant within the shadows of occupation, calling out to the memories of their people. Waiting for a time where Palestine can truly be felt and reclaimed as their own once again.

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