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Deconstructing / Reconstructing Stereotypes in American and Palestinian Fiction

Saddik Gohar

Chair of English Literature Department (UAE University)

Abstract

For decades, the drastic ramifications of the conflict in Palestine not only trigger hostilities but also undermine the possibility of initiating mutual dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This paper aims to navigate the literary representation of the Jews and Palestinians in political Palestinian and American fiction in order to illuminate controversial issues integral to the tragic history of the two peoples. The paper argues that whereas the Palestinian writer, G. Kanafani, deconstructs hostile Jewish stereotypes in his famous novel, *Returning to Haifa*, the American novelist, Philip Roth, in *The Counterlife*, de-centralizes the Palestinians and the Oriental Jews by conflating them with a status of cultural inferiority and barbarism. By introducing counter-narratives about the history of the Palestinian / Israeli conflict, Kanafani aims to proliferate sympathetic literary images of the Jews by incorporating the Jewish history of Diaspora and genocide. Kanafani not only engages Palestinian displacement but also explores the holocaust motif disseminating issues of common interest for the two sides of the conflict. In an attempt to build bridges between the Israelis and Palestinians, Kanafani demolishes negative Jewish constructs entrenched in ideologically oriented Arabic literature foreshadowing its political agenda. Nevertheless, Roth's tendency to offer a neutral view of the Middle East conflict, in *The Counterlife*, is thwarted by a hegemonic master-narrative originating in Orientalism and Western imperialism which marginalizes the role of the Palestinians in the fictional text.

Keywords: Stereotypes; Jews; Zionism; War; Memory; holocaust; Palestinians; Israelis; Resistance; Reconciliation; Orientalism; Conflict; Master-narrative.

Introduction

The Myth of Arab Anti-Semitism

In the Arab world, the aphorism “the Jews are our cousins” used to be a recurring motif in Arabic folklore and cinema prior to the rise of the nationalist movement after the 1967 war and the emergence of political Islam in the 1980's. The above-cited aphorism is still used in Arabic discourse, although it gains punning and ironic connotations shaped by the radical developments and political complexities in the ongoing Middle East conflict. The notion of the so-called blood ties between the Arabs and the Jews is deeply integral to Arab popular culture and local religious traditions, particularly in countries where Jewish communities resided such as Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Iraq and Palestine. According to Islamic tradition and popular culture narratives, both Arabs and Jews descended from the same Semitic roots, therefore they are originally cousins and relatives. Regardless of these anthropological narratives, which may contradict their counterparts in Western theology, the Oriental Jews, like other Middle Eastern minorities such as

the Christians, the Kurds and the Druze, were able to live in a state of coexistence with the mainstream Arab-Muslim population.

The history of Arab-Jewish conflict since 1948 needs no summary here. Suffice it to say that many of the fictional works incorporating Jews and Zionists are extensions of political polemics. Most of these works aim to express the anger of the writers and incite the Arab masses against the Zionists in Israel. However, as Trevor Le Gassick argues, “few works in Arabic of recent years involve a major character who is Jewish and the portrayal is rarely sympathetic” (Le Gassick 1982: 251). In this connection it is significant to argue that for centuries Arab culture has lacked any information about the historical suffering of the Jews, particularly the Holocaust. This cultural gap, in addition to other elements, contributed to what Le Gassick calls “the rare sympathy” (Le Gassick 1982: 252) toward the Jews in Arabic literature.

The Humanization of the Jews in *Returning to Haifa: Palestine's Children*

In *Returning to Haifa: Palestine's Children*, Ghassan Kanafani's well-known novel, the authorⁱ emphasizes that the categorization of all the Israeli Jews as hard-core Zionists is completely out of touch with the exigencies of contemporary geopolitical realities. Unequivocally, the argument and events in the novel consider the principle behind Jewish hatred as corrupt and self-serving. With regard to the construction of Jewish images in Arabic literature in the post 1948 war era, *Returning to Haifa* (1969) marks a turning point and sheds light on Kanafani as an author who challenges orthodox Arab narratives about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. The establishment of the state of Israel and the huge ramifications of the Arab defeat in the 1967 war did not deter the author from deploying positive images of the Jews. Unlike Arab writers who either romanticize or demonize the Jews, Kanafani underlines human issues of common interest between the two sides of the conflict foreshadowing the political agenda of the novel. In *Returning to Haifa*, Kanafani introduces the Arab-Israeli conflict not only by incorporating Palestinian suffering and displacement, as in traditional Arabic literature, but also through an engagement with the Jewish history of Diaspora and genocide. The Jewish motif in the novel has precipitated the emergence of a new pattern of Jewish characters in Arabic literature associated with the nature of the cultural ‘other’ paving the way for novelists such as Elias Khouri who viewed the Jews in a very sympathetic manner. In the post Kanafani era, the awareness of such motif resulting from an encounter between the Palestinians and the emerged as an outburst of literary consciousness characterizing major Palestinian literature on the conflict.

Returning to Haifa is “the story of a Palestinian couple’s return to the flat from which they were forced to flee twenty years before,” (Campbell 2001:53). The main events of Kanafani’s novel cover the period that extends from the beginning of the armed clashes between fighting factions in Palestine prior to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 until the post 1967 war era. After the 1967 war and with permission from the state of Israel, Said S. and his wife, Safiyya, returned to their house in the Halisa area in the city of Haifa looking for their son, Khaldun, who was left behind during the occupation of the city in the 1948 war. When they entered the house, they were warmly received by a kind woman, Miriam Iphrat, who did not recognize them in the beginning of the encounter. She was short and rather plump and was dressed in a blue dress with white polka dots. “As Said began to translate into English, the lines of her face came together questioning. She stepped aside, allowing Said and Safiyya to enter, led them into the living room (Kanafani 2000: 162).

In the house and in a flashback, Said S., the main character in the novel remembers the bitter memories of the 1948 war when he was forced on 21 April to leave Haifa “on a British boat” and “to be cast off an hour later on the empty shore of Accra,” (Kanafani 2000: 166). In April 29, 1948, Miriam and her husband, Iphrat Koshen, accompanied by a Haganah soldier entered “what from now on became their house, rented from the Bureau of Absentee property in Haifa,” (Kanafani 2000: 166). After escaping from the Nazi Holocaust in Poland, Iphrat Koshen’s family “reached Haifa via Milan in the month of March under the auspices of the Jewish Agency” (Kanafani 2000: 166). In the beginning, Miriam’s family had to live in a small room at Hadar, the Jewish quarter in Haifa. Then the woman told her visitors that in 1948 she settled in their house, which she rented from the Israeli authorities.

During the meeting, Miriam told Said and his wife that she lost her family in the Nazi Holocaust and immigrated to Israel. Throughout the carnage perpetrated against the Jews in Europe, she escaped and hid in a neighbor’s house. After her arrival from Europe, Miriam came to Palestine and settled in the house of Said, which was given to her by the Jewish Agency. When Miriam and Iphrat entered the empty house they found the abandoned Palestinian child -Said’s baby son, Khaldun- who was in a terrible condition. The childless couple rescued him from starvation and adopted him as their own son giving him a Jewish name-Dov.

Recalling her own suffering in Nazi Germany and in Poland where she escaped from persecution, Miriam felt sympathetic toward the plight of the Palestinians. Moreover, this emigrant woman, a Holocaust survivor, told her Arab guests that she witnessed a massacre in which Palestinians, not Jews, were slaughtered by an Israeli militia. She saw two Haganah fighters throwing the dead body of a Palestinian boy in a truck. The incident reminded her of the murder of her brother at the hands of German soldiers during the Holocaust. To her, the Haganah violence against the Palestinian refugees is reminiscent of the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany and Poland.

After the initial confrontation between Said S. together with his wife Safiyya and Miriam, it seems that the Jewish woman has anticipated the visit of the Palestinian family: “I have been expecting you for a long time”, says the woman. “The truth is, ever since the war ended many people have come here, looking at the houses and going into them. Every day I said surely you would come,” (Kanafani 2000: 163). When Said and Safiyya returned to Haifa, their former house was only inhabited by Miriam and Khaldun/Dov, their son, after the death of Iphrat. During the visit of the Palestinian couple to their house and in a conversation with Miriam, she told them that Dov has become an officer in the Israeli army, and is due to come back home within few hours.

The narrative geared toward its unexpected climax after the arrival of Dov, and the final chapters witnessed the heated confrontation between Dov and his family. Castigating Said and Saffiya for abandoning him, Dov denounces his Palestinian origin, affirming his identity as a Jew and an officer in the Israeli army. He told them that he did not know that Miriam and Iphrat were not his parents until about three or four years ago. He added that since his childhood, he was aware only of his Jewish identity: “I went to Jewish school, I studied Hebrew, I go to Temple, I eat kosher food. When they told me I wasn’t their own child, it didn’t change anything. Even when they told me – later on – that my original parents were Arabs, it didn’t change anything. No, nothing changed, that’s certain. After all, in the final analysis, man is a cause,” (Kanafani, 2000:181).

The young man continues his address to Said, his biological father who was responsible for the loss of Dov. Symbolically, Said is transformed into a prototype representing all Palestinian

refugees who abandoned their homeland in 1948 resulting into the loss of Palestine: "You should not have left Haifa. Twenty years have passed, sir! Twenty years! What did you do during that time to reclaim your son?" Further, Dov accuses his father, an epitome of the Palestinian refugees, of weakness and backwardness: "You're all weak! Weak! You're bound by heavy chains of backwardness". Finally, Dov told Said and Safiyya that their tears will not regain their lost son and figuratively their lost homeland: "Tears won't work miracles! All the tears in the world won't carry a small boat holding two parents searching for their lost child. So you spent twenty years crying. That's what you tell me now? Is this your dull, worn-out weapon?" (Kanafani 2000:185).

By the end of the meeting, Dov expressed his gratitude to his Jewish foster parents, and decided to remain in Haifa as an Israeli citizen. Before the return of Dov, Said told his wife the story of Faris al-Labda, another Palestinian refugee and a friend of Said. When Faris came back to his flat in Haifa he found it occupied by another Palestinian family who did not abandon the city during the 1948 war. The family convinced Faris to join the Palestinian resistance forces. In the aftermath of the climactic meeting between Dov and his biological parents, the resistance motif is focalized again in the narrative. As Said and Safiyya drove back to Ramallah, Said thought seriously of allowing his elder son, Khalid, to join the Palestinian guerrilla fighters. In the beginning of the novel, Said prevented Khalid from joining the resistance movement in Palestine, but his meeting with Dov changes his attitude regardless of his fear of a potential confrontation between Khalid and Dov in the battlefield.

Engaging the Holocaust Analogy in Palestinian Fiction

In *Returning to Haifa*, Said and Safiyya started to see the Palestinian-Israeli question from a new perspective not only because of Dov's response, but also as a result of the encounter with Miriam. As a Holocaust survivor, Miriam expresses sympathy toward a Palestinian boy treated brutally by some Israeli soldiers in Haifa. Drawing an analogy between the Palestinian boy and her brother who was killed by the Nazis in a concentration camp in German occupied Poland, Mariam is able to change the hostile attitude of the Palestinian couple toward the Jews as a whole. The new awareness on the part of the Palestinian couple of the painful Holocaust experience opened their eyes to new realities that should be taken into consideration in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Kanafani takes his readers back to Iphrat Koshen's experience as a Holocaust survivor in Europe: "He'd read *Thieves in the Night* by Arthur Koestler while in Milan, a man who came from England to oversee the emigration operation had lent it to him. This man had lived for a while on the very hill in Galilee that Koestler used as the background for his novel (Kanafani 2000: 166). The allusion to Arthur Koestler's novel is significant because it recalls a highly romanticized account of a group of Jews who flee the Nazi Holocaust and came to Palestine to build a little settlement in the late thirties. The characters in the novel aim to challenge the surrounding hostilities in order to establish a promising community constructing "houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruits of them," (Koestler 1967: 357). The novel, like American frontier literature, depicts an image of an isolated country conquered by young pioneers who stayed in the Jewish ghetto, in Haifa, in "a building choked with people." Similarly, Kanafani, in *Returning to Haifa*, describes the life of Iphrat Koshen's family in the "Emigres' Lodge" where emigrants spend the night, eating dinner together and "waiting for eventual transfer to some other place" (Kanafani 2000: 166). Like the characters in Koestler's novel prior to their adventure, Iphrat Koshen was not fully aware of the nature of Palestine.

Attempting to counter misconceptions and stereotypes that impede the cultural dialogue between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine, Kanafani does not acquiesce to literary traditions which view the Jew simply as a militant Zionist. In the novel, he deploys a reconciliatory discourse creating positive Jewish characters such as Miriam and Iphrat, two Holocaust survivors, in an attempt to carve out a morally viable narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict. By locating Miriam, Iphrat and their adopted child, Dov at the center of his novel, Kanafani aims to dismantle local traditional conceptions about the Jews as Zionist invaders similar to other European colonialists. Further, the Holocaust motif is unequivocally and passionately introduced in an Arabic novel about the Palestinian tragedy in order to foreground parallel human calamities and suffering. Convinced that the Arabs were not able to distinguish between the white settlers in South Africa and the Jews who escaped from European anti-Semitism and the Nazi Holocaust, Kanafani reveals his commitment to build a new future, a dedication that reveals an identification with the other victim who has also experienced humiliation and displacement. The idealized portrayal of the Jewish characters in the novel and the representation of the Jew as an individual and a human being signify a sympathetic understanding that would hopefully develop into further understanding and tolerance between the two partners in the conflict over Palestine.

In a related scenario, *Returning to Haifa* is a testimony that undermines allegations about anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish hostilities in Arabic literature with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli issue. Zionist scholars like Neville Mandel and others argue that the Palestinian antagonism toward the Israelis is not the result of anti-Semitic sentiments, but due to the former considering the latter as colonizers settling Palestinian territories. Regardless of recent and frequent attempts to engage the race issue in the Palestinian question, there is no anti-Semitism in Palestinian literature and culture, in the Western sense simply because the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict are primarily due to political and geographical differences about borders. The hostile attitude toward the Israelis in Palestinian literature stems historically from the false conception that all the citizens of the Hebrew state, without exception, are militant Zionists who insist on transferring the Palestinians off their land. This claim was introduced into school curriculums and was propagated by right-wing media in the Arab world after the 1948 war and the establishment of Israel. Since the Palestinian-Israeli dispute lies in politics rather than race, the Palestinians approach the Israelis in the same way the Algerians approached the French colonizers during the era of imperialism.

As a Marxist oriented scholar, Kanafani, in *Returning to Haifa*, creates thoughtful voices openly skeptical of traditional Arab views toward the Israeli survivors of the Holocaust. In Arabic literature, it is easy to fall back on the negative stereotypes of the Jew, originally assimilated from Western culture and built on models like Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and Fagin in *Oliver Twist* and other European fictional works. In an attempt to purge Arabic literature on the Palestinian/Israeli issue from the realm of political propaganda advocated by totalitarian Arab regimes that views the Jews in Israel as sadistic Zionists and brutal invaders, Kanafani introduces a balanced vision of the conflict incorporating the Holocaust motif as a sub-plot serving his aesthetic intentions. Refusing to look at the genesis of the conflict with a myopic eye, blinded by feverish militancy and religious attachment to institutions like al-Aqsa Mosque, Kanafani engages the perspective of the cultural other, dismantling virulent stereotypes of the Jews assimilated in Arabic literature from Western sources. Unlike writers who disseminate Jewish stereotypes to achieve an ideological agenda, Kanafani weaves the Holocaust motif into the Palestinian issue, narrowing the gap between two histories of pain and exile.

Regardless of the fact that Kanafani's fiction as a whole is ultimately harnessed to the Palestinian national cause promoting native culture and identity, *Returning to Haifa* explores new horizons confronting Jewish stereotypes in Arabic literature. The novel simultaneously introduces two narratives reflecting the viewpoints of the partners in the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the first time in Arabic literature following the humiliating defeats in the wars with Israel in 1948 and 1967, the Holocaust experience is aesthetically articulated from a sympathetic perspective that honors the memory of the *Shoah*. Though it is difficult to study Kanafani's fiction in isolation from the discourse of Palestinian nationalism, Palestine is depicted in *Returning to Haifa* as the native land of both Palestinians and Jews. In this context, the novel is not only a challenge to the Arab official "grand narrative" (1991:19), to use the words of Francois Lyotard, but also a deconstructive critique of the Arab version of the conflict.

Though Kanafani's fiction is frequently dominated by what critics call "the discourse of resistance," his last novel, *Returning to Haifa* (1969) breaks new ground in Arabic literature dealing with the armed conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In the narrative, Kanafani unabashedly introduces Jewish images which undermine previous stereotypes about the Jews as antagonists to everything Arabic or Islamic. *Returning to Haifa* was written during a period in Arabic literature that prioritized a work's social function as well as literary merit. Sabri Hafez argues that the novel's socio-economic and political aspects interweave somewhat with the national cause and contribute to its development," (cited in Harlow 1996: 163). This sense of commitment, in Harlow's view, gives way to a deeper sense of alienation as the 1960's wore on and it became apparent that grand socialist experiments like Nasser's or grand political dreams like the idea of Palestinian reunification were going to fall short of their goals. In the dark days after the 1967 war, many Palestinians felt that the defeat of the Arab armies (the United Arab Forces) by the Israelis had also defeated "the very ideals of Pan-Arabism for deliverance and a victorious return to their homeland had largely been based," (Harlow 1996: 72). This defeat of ideals led to a period of self-criticism, wherein one function of the literature of commitment was to posit which changes of ideals might result in a better future. *Returning to Haifa* embodies this principle by depicting two similar versions of what ensues when Palestinians who have held onto these defeated ideals are forced to face the reality of their defeat.

Discussing the impact of the 1948 war of independence on the relationship between the Palestinians and the Jews, Edna Amir Coffin argues that the war intensified feelings of guilt on the part of the Jewish community in Israel: "the military victory put the Jewish community in the new position of perceiving itself not only as intended victims but also as potential victimizers defending itself but also expelling civilian populations from villages and homesteads" (Coffin 1982: 326). The reference to the displacement of the Palestinian refugees as a result of the 1948 war triggers an interrogative move toward a re-reading of the Arab Israeli conflict in Israel. In parallel lines with Coffin's argument, the incorporation of the Holocaust theme in Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* opens new horizons about the possibility of a revision of Arabic literature on the Palestinian-Israeli question that takes into consideration the painful histories of the two partners in conflict.

Marginalizing the Palestinian in *The Counterlife*

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said develops a link between imperialist and post-colonial narratives using a hermeneutics of interpretation called "contrapuntality" (Said 1993: 93) in order to explore texts in the postcolonial era. Incorporating Western canonical novels, Said advocates a

discursive strategy which aims to prevent hostility between East and West by integrating a counter-discourse dynamics able to uncover colonial implications hidden in western texts:

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts (Said 1993: 51).

Scrutinizing Roth's *The Counterlife*, it becomes obvious that the book could be interpreted in two different ways. On the surface, the text gives an immediate impression that the author aims to introduce the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a neutral perspective different from anti-Palestinian treatments advocated by militant Zionist writers well-known in the American literary canons.

Nevertheless, a contrapuntal reading of the novel provides evidence that writing can never be a neutral activity. Interpreting the Middle East conflict in terms that the West could easily accept, the author develops a narrative strategy through which the displaced Palestinian is either silenced or assigned a status of inferiority and decadence. In other words, the authorial attempt to create a Palestinian counter narrative about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is totally undermined by a plethora of pro-Zionist voices which dominate the fictional text deploying colonial discourses about the depravity of non-Western races and the invalidity of indigenous struggle for independence. Further, the Orientalizing process which targets the dispossessed Palestinian in addition to the absence of a moderate voice to represent a counter attitude toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict reinforces the militant and anti-Palestinian discourse of Roth's master narrative dominated by a pro-Zionist imperial voice. Due to the hegemonic structure of Roth's master narrative, the Middle East issue is unfortunately viewed from the perspective of the victorious side.

In *The Question of Palestine*, Edward Said points out: "The Zionists took it upon themselves to explain the Oriental Arab to the West, to assume responsibility for expressing what the Arabs were really like and about, never to let the Arabs appear equally with them as existing in Palestine" (Said 1980: 26). In *The Counterlife*, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is depicted from the viewpoint of the triumphant Zionists while the defeated Palestinians are totally muted and denied a reasonable voice to express their attitude toward the long-term conflict. Viewing the Palestinian subalterns as vicious assassins and vile sadists, Roth's master narrative is characterized by what Jacques Derrida calls "violence of the letter" which is some sort of violence "of difference of classification and of the systems of appellations" (Derrida 1976 : 110).

Unequivocally, most of Roth's narrative is controlled by Zionist or pro-Zionist voices which, from the perspective of a neutral reader, are fully justified in their support of Zionism as a nationalist movement saving the holocaust survivors from European anti-Semitism and establishing a homeland for the Jews on the land of Israel. However, the monolithic narrative strategy of Roth's fiction is not justified in either marginalizing the Oriental Jews as second class citizens or demeaning the Palestinians as upholders of a degraded, regressive and violent culture. Moreover, the author assigned the central roles, in his novel, to Euro-American Jews while the Oriental Jews are either silenced or deprecated. Like the Palestinians, the Oriental Jews, in Roth's narrative, are victims of a racist / imperialist ideology which aims to banish them out of an Israeli community modeled on the Western style. While the Palestinians are marginalized, in Roth's novel, the oriental Jews are given inferior roles and forced to tackle works which Western Jews are reluctant to do. By humiliating the cultural traditions of the Palestinians and Oriental Jews while glorifying Western Zionism as a Utopian ideology, the master narrative of Roth's novel creates a distinction "between democratic Israel and a homogenously non-democratic Arab world in which

the Palestinian, dispossessed and exiled by Israel, came to represent ‘terrorism’ and little beyond it” (Said 1993: 261).

Linking Orientalism to colonial conquest, Edward Said also argues that the relationship between Western colonizers and colonized Orientals is one of power and domination where the colonizer makes use of imaginative speculations to produce erroneous stereotypes of the Orient. Said also illustrates that in colonial narratives, colonized people are viewed as being “naturally subservient to a superior, advanced, developed, and morally mature [power]” (Eagleton et al 1990: 72). In Roth’s novel, which is a quasi-reproduction of Western colonial discourses, the displaced Palestinians are transformed into cultural objects, Orientalized and disparaged to conform to their image in colonial taxonomy of inferior races.

Portraying the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the perspective of the winner and taking over the typology inherent in western culture of a degraded Orient confronting the Occidental, the narrative discourse of Roth’s novel categorizes the Palestinian as inferior and fearsome. Unfortunately, the invisibility of a Palestinian voice in the novel and his frequent appearance in the speeches of Zionist narrators to play a role which conforms to his degraded image in Western culture provides an impetus to the fundamentalist colonial discourse of the text. Instead of presenting the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a balanced perspective, Roth’s master narrative is overwhelmed with an anti-Palestinian discursive strategy. On this basis, the novel becomes a reproduction of Western stereotypes about inferior races strengthening the boundaries of racial and cultural differences between the Palestinians and the Israeli people, between Western and Oriental Jews. Further, the dispersion of an imperialist version of radical Zionism in the text of Roth’s novel obscures the Palestinian Question and transforms the book into a colonial narrative neglecting the rights of the oppressed.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said underlines the importance of confronting the Palestinian-Israeli issue but raises doubts about the validity of current approaches to solve the conflict:

Ever since the Second World War, it has been impossible to evade either the Arab-Israeli conflict or the study of individual societies in academic “Middle Eastern Studies”. Thus to write about the Palestinian issue at all required one to decide whether the Palestinians were a people (or national community) which in turn implied supporting or opposing their right to self-determination (Said 1993: 260).

In *The Counterlife*, there is no doubt that the Palestinian-Israeli issue is explored from a relatively objective perspective different from biased treatments of the Middle East conflict integral to American literature. Nevertheless, the absence of key Palestinian characters in the novel, the marginalized status of the Oriental Jews and the use of a narrative strategy that advocates the viewpoint of the victor gives credibility to Said’s argument in *The Question of Palestine* that “between Zionism and the West there was and still is a community of language and of ideology, so far as the Arab was concerned, he was not part of this community” (Said 1980: 25).

The narrative of *The Counterlife* involves the journey of Nathan Zuckerman, an assimilated American Jew, to Israel where he met his brother Henry who immigrated to the Hebrew State, changed his name into Hanock and joined a militant Zionist organization “Agor” which calls for the transfer of the Palestinian people outside the borders of historical Palestine including the West Bank. Regardless of the peripheral opposition to the colonial prospect advocated by Mordecai Lippman, the leader of the messianic Zionist movement, mentioned above, it is accurate that Lippman’s radical narrative of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict occupies the center of Roth’s text. Roth’s novel is characterized by the absence of Palestinian characters except for the owners

of a Palestinian restaurant who treat Nathan with respect. Further, the Oriental Jews are given insignificant roles in Roth's novel. Likewise, moderate Zionists such as Shuki Elchanan, the Israeli journalist who called for peaceful coexistence between the Arabs and the Jews are not allowed to introduce any counter-narrative regarding the Palestinian / Israeli conflict. The limited narrative landscape allocated to the Palestinians, the Oriental Jews and moderate Zionists prioritizes Lippman's militant perspective and provides an impetus for his racist views.

By obscuring the Palestinian perspective and marginalizing moderate Jewish / Zionist viewpoints, the narrative strategy of *The Counterlife* produces a prevailing view of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that ignores the victims and advocates the opinion of the victorious side. Unfortunately, Roth's omniscient narrator seems to support the fanatic perspective of Lippman, who wants to solve the Palestinian Question, according to The Old Testament agenda by reclaiming the West Bank as Judea and banishing the Palestinians outside the land of Israel that originates in the Torah. Moreover, the narrator underlines similar militant views advocated by radical Zionists such as Nathan's kinsman whom he calls, Uncle Shimmy. In fact, Uncle Shimmy is a militant Zionist who urges the Jews to "bomb the Arab bastards till they cry uncle" (Roth 1988: 42). Unfortunately, radical attitudes like Shimmy's are granted credibility in a narrative categorizing the Palestinians as assassins who burn Israeli school buses in order to bring havoc to the Israeli cities.

The valorization of the militant views of Uncle Shimmy and Mordecai Lippman who consider the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) as Israeli land ignoring the native Palestinians transform Roth's novel into an imperialist master-narrative which depicts the Arab population of Palestine as backward people occupied by a superior race. Forced to be exiled out of Roth's narrative, the Palestinians remain in their non-place as native savages. Moreover, the authorial adoption of Lippman's version of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict where the humiliated Palestinian is introduced only through the eyes of the Western Zionist opponent intensifies the hegemonic overtones of the narrative. For example, Lippman openly declares that he is against any peace treaty with the Palestinians justifying his opinion as follows: "The Arabs will take what is given and then continue the war and instead of less trouble there will be more" (Roth 1988: 130). Aiming to present the Palestinians as deceptive and blood-thirsty people, Roth's narrative deploys colonial discourses which consider the reconciliation between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine as "remote, ridiculous dreams" (Ngugi 1986: 3).

In this context, the hostile and racist attitude of Lippman toward the Palestinian refugees becomes a testimony of Edward Said's opinion that Zionism is a reproduction of nineteenth century European imperialism. According to Said, Theodore Herzl appropriated and domesticated Zionism from European colonialism in order to serve the "needs of a developing Jewish nationalism" (Said 1980: 72). Therefore, one may argue that Roth's novel proliferates a colonial narrative which reproduces discourses in conformity with Western imperialism. In other words, the novel prioritizes a Zionist narrative which views the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine (Arabs and Oriental Jews) as inferior and irrelevant. Historically, Zionism was a counter-movement aiming to confront an age of the most vicious anti-Semitism in the West. However, it coincided with the emergence of European colonialism in Third World countries which oppressed the native inhabitants living in the colonized territories.

Since Zionism primarily aims to save Western Jews from European anti-Semitism, there is no justification that Occidental Jews who were victims of the Nazi holocaust became "oppressors of Palestinian Arabs and Oriental Jews" (Said 1980: 69). The sympathy toward two thousand years of Jewish suffering and victimization culminating in the holocaust should not lead to the

justification of Zionist brutalities against the Palestinian people and should not happen “at the expense of Palestinian Arab silence in the Western marketplace of ideas” (Said 1980: 58). Explicitly, the events of Roth's novel reinforce Said's vision about the trajectories of Western imperialist policies and its affiliated Zionist discourse. For example, Lippman's narrative about Palestinian children throwing stones at military Israeli vehicles and rolling Molotov grenades into his own house in the West Bank is underlined and perpetuated to justify his militancy against the Palestinian people.

Locating Lippman's radical narrative at the center of Roth's novel is in itself an act of justification, even support, for his racist perspective which considers the deportation of the Palestinians out of the West Bank as morally and religiously acceptable. Even Nathan, the American Jew who isolates himself from the Western Wall, the most sacred place of the Jews, glorifies Lippman as a national hero committed to defend Jewish victims against Palestinian aggression. Moreover, Lippman's radical views about the Palestinians are highlighted by an imperial narrator who points out that “Lippman is a patriot and devout believer, whose morality is plain and unambiguous, whose rhetoric is righteous and readily accessible” (Roth 1988: 185). To Henry, Nathan's brother, an assimilated Israeli citizen, Lippman- the chair of the Agor organization- is a symbol of power and authority regardless of the injuries and war scars he carries from military confrontations with the Arabs particularly in the Six Day War.

Apparently, the positive attitude of Roth's narrators toward the leader of a militant and racist movement, that aims to annihilate the Palestinians, besides the lack of sympathy toward the Palestinian victims could be considered as evidence of Said's argument about “the identification of Zionism and liberalism in the West” (Said 1980: 38) which results into the banishment of the displaced and dispossessed in Palestine. In *The Question of Palestine*, Said clarifies this point:

The fear of treading upon the highly sensitive terrain of what [Zionists] did to their victims, in an age of genocidal extermination of the Jews leads to almost total absence of any handily available historical knowledge from non-Zionist sources (Said 1980: 59).

Due to the preceding argument, the Israeli army is idealized in Roth's novel and depicted as an institution which uses violence against Palestinian refugees only in exceptional situations whereas the Palestinians and the Arabs are frequently demonized and viewed as savage barbarians who deserve to be punished. An Oriental Jew, who works as a taxi driver, told Nathan Zuckerman that his only son was killed by the Palestinians showing him a picture of a young man in army uniform: “Someone is shooting a bomb. He is no more there. No shoes, nothing, killed. I never see my son no more” (Roth 1988: 106).

Depicting the Palestinians as brutal and merciless race, Nathan recalls images of Israeli suffering and sacrifices resulting from Arab violence and aggression. For example, he recalls the horrible massacre of Shuki's brother at the hands of the Syrians during the Six-Day War, 1967. Shuki told Nathan that after the defeat of the Syrians, his brother together with other soldiers from his captured platoon were found dead and mutilated:

Their hands tied behind them to stakes in the ground; they had been castrated, decapitated, and their penises stuffed in their mouths. Strewn around the abandoned battlefield were necklaces made of their ears (Roth 1986: 70).

The disgusting scene mentioned above, which is a reproduction of American narratives about the brutality of American enemies in the wild West or in the Vietnam jungles, is an indication that Roth's narrative attempts to disseminate discourses affirming the conventional image of the Arab

as a merciless barbarian who is not different from other savages such as Negroes, Viet Cong, “Red Indians or Maoris” (cited in Said 1980: 80).

The horrible scenes provided by the narrator which portray the Arab as a barbaric assassin as well as the lack of scenes incorporating counter Israeli violence against the Palestinians and the Arabs legitimize Lippman’s militant ideology and justifies colonial racism and superiority. Because the Arabs constitute “practically the only ethnic group about whom in the West, racial slurs are tolerated, even encouraged” (Said 1980: 26), Roth’s narrative in several passages celebrates anti-Arab discourses reminiscent of those deployed by nineteenth-century colonial narratives. In other words, the subterranean Zionist agenda which constitutes the subtext of Roth’s narrative unfortunately plays a vital role in proliferating negative stereotypes about the Arabs and the Palestinians. Thereupon, Roth’s narrative links Zionism with Western imperialism and undermines its historical mission as a revolutionary movement aiming to secure a sanctuary for the holocaust survivors. In *The Question of Palestine*, Said elaborates on the link between Zionism and European imperialism:

There is unmistakable coincidence between the experience of Arab Palestinians at the hands of Zionism and the experiences of the black, yellow, and brown peoples who were described as inferior and subhuman by nineteenth-century imperialists (Said 1980: 689).

Nevertheless, the Zionist colonialist attitude toward the Arab inhabitants of Palestine is totally different from “other nineteenth-century European powers, for whom the natives of outlying territories were included in the redemptive mission *civilisatrice*” (Said 1980: 68). For example, Mordecai Lippman, the founder of the Zionist movement in Roth’s novel, wants to transfer the Palestinians outside the territories of Israel, as mentioned in the Torah, including the West Bank in order to establish a purely racist Jewish state.

Centralizing the Zionist in Roth’s Novel

There is no doubt that the master-narrative of Roth’s novel, *The Counterlife*, augmented Lippman’s fanatic vision and colonial project. Even moderate Israeli Zionists like Shuki Elchanan, a friend of Nathan, who wants Israel to give the West Bank to the Palestinians and who castigates the militant ideology of Lippman’s Zionist organization, changes his commitments toward the end of the novel. In the first part of the novel, Lippman’s militant Zionism is compared to the moderate position of Shuki who does not accept Lippman’s violent policy toward the Palestinians. In a sarcastic overtone, Shuki criticizes Lippman’s hostile attitude because it blocks the way toward any potential peaceful coexistences between the Palestinians and the Jews:

Lippman drives into Hebron with his pistol and tells the Arabs in the market how the Jews and Arabs can live happily side by side as long as the Jews are on top. He’s dying for somebody to throw a Molotov cocktail. Then his thugs can really go to town (Roth 1988: 83).

In the preceding lines, Shuki views Lippman as an aggressive Zionist who violates the peace of Hebron city and its inhabitants by creating violence and provoking the Arabs. However, Shuki’s position toward the leader of a racist movement, which calls for the slaughter of the Palestinians, undergoes some sort of metamorphosis as reflected in his letter to Nathan which reveals sympathy toward Lippman’s militancy. He even attempts to convince Nathan that Lippman is a man of principles, who, regardless of his fanaticism, is a defender of the Jewish people.

Further, Shuki begs Nathan not to denounce Lippman's extreme views simply because he has not seen Lippman's Palestinian counterpart:

You haven't met Lippman's Arab counterpart yet and been assaulted head-on by the wildness of his rhetoric. I'm sure that at Agor you will have heard Lippman talking about the Arabs and how we must rule them, but if you haven't heard the Arabs talk about ruling, if you haven't seen them ruling, then as a satirist you're in for an even bigger treat. Jewish ranting and bullshitting there is – but, however entertaining you may find Lippman's, the Arab ranting and bullshitting has a distinction all its own, and the characters spewing it are no less ugly (Roth 1988: 183).

The argument that Lippman's militant perspective is the counterpart of a fundamentalist Palestinian attitude, probably the radical Islamic movements in the occupied territories, blocks all potential horizons for mutual dialogues between the two peoples. Moreover, it endorses the radical Zionist agenda embedded in Roth's narrative. The notion that Lippman's extreme perspective is the counterpart of a similar militant project on the other side of the border seems to be reasonable; however, it gives priority to radical voices that would push the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to a fatal and catastrophic end.

The dilemma of Roth's master narrative stems from its failure to deploy positive discourses leading to mutual perception of the human suffering of both sides. Roth's narrative which incorporates an anomalous imperialist variety of Zionism that deals with the Palestinians as "an inferior native other" (Said 1980: 69) inevitably leads all Palestinians, regardless of their political positions, to recoil from Zionism. Unfortunately, Roth's narrative endorses Lippman's militant Zionism which explicitly "appeared to be an uncompromisingly exclusionary, discriminatory, colonialist praxis" (Said 1980: 69) distinguishing between privileged Western Jews and the Palestinians in addition to the Oriental Jews. In this context, the Palestinians are prevented from understanding the historical tragedy and human suffering of the Jews simply because they see Zionism only as "an ideology and a practice keeping them and the Oriental Jews imprisoned" (Said 1980: 70). Further, by delineating the Palestinian as a barbarian and savage brute who seeks Jewish blood everywhere, Roth's narrative prevents the Jews as well from understanding "the human tragedy caused the Arab Palestinians by Zionism" (Said 1980: 70).

The focus on narratives of superiority and militancy advocated by Lippman and his fellows, who are given a substantial space in the textual landscape in addition to the elimination and silencing of moderate Palestinian voices convert Roth's narrative into a colonial fiction. Integral to this colonial ethos is the radical change that comes across Shuki's attitude toward Lippman's racist project. In the beginning of the novel, Shuki considers Lippman's organization as a corrupt institution that attempts to enforce a solution of the Palestinian-Israeli issue in the light of the Old Testament's prophesies. He criticizes this option because it contradicts with the contemporary political situation in the region. As a liberal Zionist, Shuki categorically denounces any approaches toward the Middle East conflict that would involve instructions mentioned in the Torah. He argues that: "Everything going wrong with this country is in the first five books of the Old Testament. Smite the enemy, sacrifice your son, the desert is yours and nobody else's all the way to the Euphrates. A body count of dead Philistines on every other page – that's the wisdom of their wonderful Torah" (Roth 1988: 84). Shuki, in a sarcastic manner, criticizes the attitude of militant Jews toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: "If they want so much to sleep at the Biblical source because that is where Abraham tied his shoelaces, then they can sleep there under Arab rule" (84). Nevertheless, Shuki almost changed his view toward militant Zionist movements and

ideologies when he sent a message to Nathan justifying the fanatic agenda advocated by Lippman's organization.

The change that comes over Shuki's attitude, like the ideological metamorphoses which Henry Zuckerman undergoes, is integrated into the politics of colonization. In his pioneering study, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi argues that colonial existence "manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized" (Memmi 1974: 57). Explicitly, the traumatic impact of colonization, military occupation and history of blood complicates the relationship between colonizer and colonized, between oppressor and oppressed. In the beginning of the narrative, Roth introduces Shuki as a moderate Israeli Zionist who thinks that Palestinians should be given a state on the territory of Gaza and the West Bank but later he justifies the agenda of Mordecai Lippman's movement which calls for the removal of the Palestinian people out of historical Palestine. According to Memmi, the colony transforms the immigrant into a colonizer changing his personality and attitudes.

The colonizer, according to Memmi, "finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized. The more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked" (Memmi 1974: 6). In spite of his awareness of the brutality of colonization and the illegitimacy of Lippman's militant movement, Shuki is not able to openly express condemnation for Lippman because he will be ostracized by the Zionist colonial community and eventually deprived of the privileges of being a colonizer. The endorsement of colonial politics which lies at the core of Roth's master narrative could also be illuminated by involving the character of Henry Zuckerman, an American Jew who immigrated to Israel and settled in a West Bank colony. Like other fanatic Zionists in Lippman's organization, Agor, Henry becomes interested in "the gun" as well as in "Jewish beard" according to Shuki who asks Nathan: "Is your brother as thrilled by the religion as by the explosives?" (Roth 1988: 184).

Moreover, the violence and barbarism of the Palestinian natives, according to Lippman, is associated with Islam which is the religion of the colonized majority in Palestine. As a carrier of Western colonialist ethos, Lippman points out that Islam is a brutal power that is determined to annihilate the state of Israel:

Islam is not a civilization of doubt like the civilization of the Hellenized Jew. The Jew is always blaming himself for what happens in Cairo. He is blaming himself for what happens in Baghdad, believe me, they do not blame themselves for what is happening in Jerusalem. Islam is not plagued by niceys and goodies who want to be sure they don't do the wrong thing. Islam wants one thing only: to win, to triumph, to obliterate the cancer of Israel from the body of the Islamic world (Roth 1988: 131).

By giving a militant Zionist the opportunity and the narrative landscape to explain the meaning of Islam to the West while dismissing Palestinian characters from a text about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the author explicitly affirms Said's argument about the existence of "a community of language and ideology" between Zionism and the West which excludes the Palestinian subalterns: "To a very great extent this community depends heavily on a remarkable tradition in the West of enmity toward Islam in particular and the Orient in general" (Said 1980: 26). Lippman's vision of an inseparable relationship between the backwardness of Islam and the decadence of the colonized Palestinians is a reconstruction of the colonial ideology articulated by Western Orientalists like Charles Clemont-Ganneau who, in "The Arabs in Palestine" observes that "Arab civilization is mere deception, it no more exists than the horrors of Arab conquest. It is but the last gleam of Greek and Roman civilization gradually dying out in the powerless hands of Islam" (cited in Said 1980: 80).

In *Covering Islam*, Said states that there is a consensus that Islam is turned into a scapegoat for everything the West does not like about the colonized Orient: “For the right, Islam represents barbarism, for the left, medieval theocracy, for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism” (Said 1981: XV). For Lippman, Islam is apparently the barbaric religion of the Palestinian savages who must be colonized and exterminated in order to pave the way for a more civilized world to be erected on the land of Israel.

Stereotyping the Palestinians as congenitally “other” and promoting a narrative of an Islamic anti-democratic and regressive attitude to the world, Lippman gives himself the right to speak on behalf of the oppressed Palestinians who are silenced in Roth’s novel. Comparing the backwardness of the colonized Palestinians with the moral superiority of the Zionist colonizers, Lippman predicts the domination of Western civilization in a region inhabited by barbarians. There is no doubt that one of the obtrusive strategies of colonization embraces the allegation that colonization brings civilization to the land of the colonized or in Memmi’s words to bring “light to the colonized’s ignominious darkness” (Memmi 1974: 76). This process, according to Memmi, marks the brutality of colonization and justifies the annihilation of inferior races. Classifying the colonized and oppressed races as worthless, the colonizer always demonstrates his racism and superiority: “How can one deny that they are underdeveloped, that their customs are oddly changeable and their culture outdated (Memmi 1974: 22). Furthermore, the paternalistic role assumed by the colonizers in Roth’s novel inevitably leads to violent confrontations with the colonized which consequently brings about catastrophic developments prohibiting possibilities of further reconciliation and censoring mutual dialogues between the two parties.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Roth's novel is located in the intersection between Orientalism and Western colonialism. It recycles hostile stereotypes historically affiliated with African-Americans and Native Americans in order to view the Palestinians as savages and barbarians. The narrative simultaneously depicts the Zionists in a post 1948 Israel as bearers of Western civilization. Since the destruction of native images is a recurrent, almost a ritualistic practice in colonial discourses, the Palestinian subaltern, in Roth’s novel, is either denied a voice or appears in the single image of a fundamentalist, anti-Semitic demon. In this context, the Palestinian refugee is fictionally exploited to affirm anti-Palestinian discourses integral to American fiction about the Middle East. Roth's narrative associates the Palestinian community with barbarism echoing hostile stereotypes about the native American people rampant in frontier American fiction. While the Palestinians are delineated as a backward race, the Zionists are reminiscent of white settlers who immigrated from Europe to the New World to humanize the uncivilized "barbarians of the West"ⁱⁱⁱ.

Using an imperial Zionist voice to introduce the Middle East conflict to western audience and incorporating a narrative strategy which mutes the colonized Palestinian so that his voice cannot be heard, Roth’s novel produces a prevailing view of the question of Palestine that is totally accepted and endorsed by the West. In *The Counterlife*, the Palestinian perspective toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is introduced either by the faint voices of marginalized characters or filtered throughout the eyes of a dominating anti-Arab, pro-Zionist narrator. Like Orientalists who speak to the West on behalf of backward societies, the central narrators in Roth’s novel present the Palestinian subaltern to the western reader in a way that conforms to western standards, as an outlandish and savage Oriental. Unfortunately, the process of preventing the Palestinian from entering the text except as non-person or a decadent inferior Oriental aims to

perpetuate racist stereotypes and enhance what Said calls “the age-old conflict between the West and the Orient whose main surrogate was Islam” (Said 1980: 29).

On the other hand, Kanafani's narrative draws on historical resources and local cultural traditions with regard to the position of the Jews in Middle East. In the holy Quran, the Jews are honored and glorified as worshippers of God and followers of the Torahⁱⁱⁱ. Ironically, most of the narratives in the Quran engage Jewish history since ancient times and explore the destiny of the Jews in Diaspora and under the reign of the Egyptian Pharaohs. Since that time, the Jews were part and parcel of the Arab communities in the Middle East particularly in Palestine. The eruption of the Palestinian/Israeli war in 1948 and the political conflict over the land of Palestine in addition to the interference of different parties on both sides resulted into hostilities between the two nations who have lived in the same country for centuries. The emerging state of Israel which provided a sanctuary for the European Jews and the holocaust survivors confronted strong opposition from Arab governments and the Turks who occupied Palestine for more than a century. The conflict reached a climax after the 1967 war which widened the gap between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In the early 1990's, the two sides signed peace agreements in Oslo bringing about political reconciliation.

Nevertheless, the civil wars in surrounding countries and emergence of terrorist organizations in addition to violent political Islamic movements complicated the geo-political situation in the region. Apparently a permanent peace in Palestine has not been fulfilled so far. In one of his poems, the famous Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai expressed his hope for an era of peace and love between the Palestinians and the Israelis:

An Arab shepherd searches for a lamb on Mount Zion,
and on the hill across I search for my little son,
an Arab shepherd and a Jewish father
in their temporary failure .
Our voices meet above
the Sultan's pool in the middle of the valley.
We both want the son and the lamb
to never enter the process
of the terrible machine of '*Chad Gadya*'.
Later we found them in the bushes,
and our voices returned to us crying and laughing inside.
The search for a lamb and for a son
was always the beginning of a new religion
in these hills. (Cited in Coffin 1982:341).

In the preceding lines the Israeli poet dreams of a prosperous future of the Arabs and the Jews in the Holy Land. Historically the dream was frustrated probably due to dubious political policies imposed by colonial hegemonic powers in addition to the appearance of recurring obstacles. Initially, the British colonial strategy of divide and rule prior to WWII era intensified the conflict in Palestine widening the gap between the Arabs and the Jews. Due to British colonial policy, the Jews and the Palestinians were not able to come to an agreement about their attitude toward the British mandate which replaced the Turkish occupation of the land. They were not able to drive the British colonizers out of Palestine, and consequently were obliged to confront the possibility of either dividing the country or living in a multi-national state of double nationality.

Obviously, there were diversified political currents within the Middle East on the eve of the Second World War that had tremendous impacts on the history of the entire region in general

and on the situation in Palestine in particular. Just as the First World War was a dramatic historical event that stimulated competing visions about the political future of the Middle East, the Second World War had equally momentous consequences. First, the demands of the war provoked the intrusion of the European powers into the region as they sought to mobilize the political, social and economic resources required to secure their respective strategic positions. Although in the short term this policy appeared to redouble the assertion of European-control, in the longer term it signaled the end of European imperial power. In the aftermath of the war, the exhausted states of Europe, particularly England and France, lacked both the means and the will to maintain the kind of hegemony over the Middle East that had once seemed vital to the security of their interests (Tripp 1991: 88). The great Israeli novelist, Amos Oz, summarizes the ensuing situation as follows: "The encounter between the Arab residents and the Jewish settlers does not resemble an epic or a Western, but is perhaps close to a Greek tragedy. That is to say, it is a clash between justice and justice, and like ancient tragedies, there is no hope for happy reconciliation on the basis of some magic formula," (cited in Coffin 1982: 319).

Irrespective of occasional periods witnessing a growing sense of frustration and pessimism, both Israeli and Arabic literature, prior to 1948 revealed a great yearning for coexistence between the Jews and the Palestinians. Under the impact of Western Orientalism, early Israeli fiction portrayed Arab characters in an exotic fashion. Nevertheless sentimental Arab images are to be found in the socialist / realist Israeli literature of the late forties and fifties. In both Arabic and Israeli literature, mutual hostile representation of each other dominates the novels written between 1948 and 1973. But the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in the mid-seventies marks the beginning of a new era of increased understanding and tolerance between the two sides of the conflict, which is reflected in literary production particularly in works by writers such as Mahfouz, Elias Khouri, Emile Habibi and Jabra I. Jabra. These are welcome and promising developments in the field of culture in both Israel and the Palestinian territories which, it can be hoped, should help bring about more understanding and tolerance between the two nations.

Notes

ⁱ Gassan Kanafani, a leading Palestinian critic, novelist, short story writer, journalist and political activist, was born in Accra and lived in Jaffa before the establishment of the State of Israel. When the city of Jaffa was captured in 1948 by the Zionist militias, he and his family fled toward Syria where they lived in Diaspora. In 1972 he was assassinated – together with his niece – in the explosion of his booby-trapped car in Beirut. There was controversy about the identity of those who were involved in the assassination operation. The PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) sources claimed that Israeli agents were responsible for his murder. According to other sources, he was killed by rival Palestinian or Lebanese factions. Among his famous works are *Rejal fil Shams/Men In The Sun* (1963), *Matabaqqqa Lakum/All That's Left to You* (1966), *Umm Sa'ad* (1969), *Aid Ela Haifa/Returning to Haifa* (1970). As an activist and politician he participated in the foundation of the PFLP (The Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine). He was the guru of the movement and its spokesman.

ⁱⁱ In an eighteenth century poem, Daniel Bryan embodies the myth woven around the native inhabitants of the Kentucky wilderness: Where naught but beasts and bloody Indians / Dwelt throughout the mighty waste, and cruelty / And Death and superstition, triple leagued / Held there their horrid reign, and imperious sway / The guardian seraphs of benign Reform / With keen prophetic glance, the worth beheld / of the immense expanse, its future fame / its ponderous moment in the golden scales / of Freedom, Science, and Religious Truth / When by Refinement's civilizing hand / Its roughness shall all smoothed away O yes /

companions in the joys of bliss /We will refine , exalt and humanize/ The uncivilized Barbarians of the West (P. 365). For more details, see Daniel Bryan .*The Mountain Muse: Comprising the Adventures of Daniel Boone and the Power of Virtues of Refined Beauty*. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Davidson, 1813.

ⁱⁱⁱ “We aforetime grant to the children of Israel the Book (Torah). The power of command, and prophethood, We gave them for sustenance, things good and pure, and we favored them above the nations .”The Holy Quran / Section xlv-37v , p.738.

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Saddik Gohar (PhD) is a translator and critic and holds the Chair of the English Literature Department United Arab Emirates University, UAE.