

**The Short Story as a Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan
Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Alice Walker**

Submitted by:

Ali Ahmad Allaham

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Supervised by:

Prof. Tom Cain

Dr. Neelam Srivastava

School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics
Newcastle University

March 2009

Abstract

This thesis is a comparative study of the short stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker. Although there are geographical and cultural distances which separate these authors, the fiction they wrote clearly makes their connection a tangible one.

This study presents a reading of these short stories as examples of resistance literature, minority literature, postcolonialism, Marxism and realism. In it, I examine how these authors used the short story genre to engage in the struggle of their communities. The stories are interpreted as responses to specific historical moments in the Palestinian, Kenyan and African American contexts. The stories also scrutinize the colonial relations and show a kind of resistance against the hegemony of the colonizers. The themes of the stories examined in this study are colonization and the oppression, dispossession and displacement brought on by colonialism.

The aim of this study is to show how Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker use their fiction, the short story genre in particular, as an arena of struggle in which they register their political convictions, and how their fiction displays their firm belief in the inevitability of change. In their short stories the history of the past is passed on to the new generations, and their task is to learn from the lessons of the past to better understand the present and plan for a better future.

In short, the study aims at researching the implications of colonialism and postcolonialism in the lives of the Palestinian, Kenyan and African American peoples as portrayed in the short fiction of our authors.

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Ahmad Allaham (1943-1990). He had always insisted that I should pursue higher education. I always remember this as mentioned in his will. Now I have achieved this, may his soul rest in peace, Amen!

Acknowledgements

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to my supervisors Prof. Tom Cain and Dr. Neelam Srivastava for their unlimited support, patience and encouragement throughout this research project. I have greatly profited from their knowledge, expertise and from the notes they have generously lavished in the course of doing this project. It has been an honor to be Dr. Srivastava's 1st PhD student. I appreciate all her contributions of time and effort to make my PhD experience productive and stimulating.

Special thanks to Dr. Mpalive Msiska from the Birkbeck University of London for externally examining the thesis, and for Dr. James Procter for his helpful feedback and suggestions in two APR meetings, and for internally examining this thesis.

This study would not have been possible without the scholarship granted to me by Damascus University and the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, I am deeply indebted to them. Many thanks and appreciation to the people at the Syrian Embassy in London; special thanks to Mr. Ayman Alloush, Mr. Radwan Lutfi, and Mrs. Wafaa Ibrahim.

I would like also to express my gratitude to all the staff at the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics. Special thanks to Prof. John Batchelor for his continuous help and support. Many thanks to Rowena Bryson, Melanie Birch and Rob Walton. Thanks are also due to the staff at the Robinson Library, especially the people of the Inter-library loan section.

I have been fortunate to come across many funny and good friends, without whom life would be bleak. Special thanks go to Paul Batchelor, Darren Carlaw, Mowaffak Ajaj, Naglaa Thabet, Hisham, Ahmad, Omar, Mohammad, Issam, Adel, Ghiath, Miri, Hammoud, Ayah, Samira, Majd, Haifaa, Nasser, Wafya, and many others. I thank them all for giving

me their friendship, as deep and as rich as friendship can be.

Special thanks are due to my friend Niveen Kassem for lengthy discussions on Fanon and African American literature.

Special thanks and an unending gratitude to my mother, Zeinat, whose prayers have always been with me, thanks also for coping with my absence for such a number of years. Thanks are also due to my brothers, Omar and Hamzeh, they have been my role models. Special thanks also to my sisters Khadija, Fatima, Nosaibah and Rukaya. They have given me their unequivocal support throughout, as always, for which my mere expression of thanks likewise does not suffice.

To my life and wife Suhair, all I can say is it would take another thesis to express my deep gratitude and love for you. Your patience, love and encouragement have upheld me, particularly in those many days in which I spent more time with my computer than with you.

Perhaps, I forgot someone ... so, just in case: Thank You to Whom it Concerns!

Table of Contents

The Short Story as a Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Alice Walker.....	1
Abstract	2
Dedication	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Table of Contents.....	6
Chapter One: The Short Story as a Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Alice Walker.....	8
1. Introduction	8
Ghassan Kanafani	9
Ngugi wa Thiong’o.....	10
Alice Walker.....	11
2. Theoretical Perspectives.....	12
2.1. The Short Story Genre.....	13
2.2. Resistance Literature	20
2.3. Minority Literature.....	26
2.4. Postcolonialism.....	32
2.5. Marxism.....	35
2.6. Realism	38
3. Postscript	41
4. Thesis Structure	42
5. Conclusion.....	44
Chapter Two: Ghassan Kanafani’s Resistance & Displacement: A Study of Selected Short Stories.....	45

1. Introduction	45
2. Kanafani's Short Fiction: Themes & Concerns.....	47
8. Conclusion.....	116
Chapter Three: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Modes of Resistance: A Study of <i>Secret Lives</i>	117
1. Introduction	117
2. <i>Secret Lives</i> : Themes and Concerns.....	119
9. Conclusion.....	168
Chapter Four: A Reading of Alice Walker's Feminist/Womanist Resistance: A Study of <i>In Love and Trouble</i> and <i>You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down</i>	170
1. Introduction	170
2. <i>In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women & You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down</i> : Themes and Concerns	173
3. Conclusion.....	222
Chapter Five: Face to Face: Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker ..	223
1. Introduction	223
2. The Short Story Genre: The Umbrella That Covers All	224
3. Resistance Literature Generalized	226
4. Is Resistance Literature Necessarily a Minority Literature?	239
5. Post-Displacement, Postcolonialism and Post-Slavery.....	242
6. Marxism at Work	247
7. Realism: The Reality of Lived Experiences.....	251
8. Postscript: Other Points of Divergence	255
9. Conclusion.....	259
Bibliography	261

Chapter One: The Short Story as a Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Alice Walker

1. Introduction

This thesis is a comparative study of three short story writers: Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Alice Walker. In it, I analyse how the three authors have used the short story genre to engage in the struggle of their communities. To the best of my knowledge, a study comparing these authors has never been done before.

The geographical and cultural distances that separate Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker do not hinder their closeness and connectedness in the literary field. The ground on which those three writers meet is their resistance against colonization, oppression, dispossession and displacement although each acts according to the needs of the society to which s/he belongs. This chapter focuses on the main features which make possible the study of our authors.

Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker use the short story, amongst other literary forms, as the genre through which to convey their views about the fight they, and indubitably their people, are involved in. Although the causes for which these authors stand differ, all three adopted the short story as one of the possible forms through which their ideas could be communicated to the public who are the main target of such ideas. The causes to which these authors contributed are very important to their people and communities. In the case of Kanafani it is the Palestinian cause, the loss of the land, the state of becoming refugees in the land of others and all that which accompanies such a case: oppression, poverty, mistreatment and violence. For the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, his fight is against dispossession and forcible relocation, famine and hunger, and against neo-colonialism,

imperialism and postcolonialism after Kenya's independence in 1963. For Walker, it is the fight against segregation, racism, oppression and poverty in the African American context. A brief introduction about the life and works of each author is indispensable here since their lives have important impacts on their fiction, and since they use writing as a category of resistance.

Ghassan Kanafani

Kanafani was born in Acre, Palestine in 1936. His father, a lawyer, sent him to a French missionary school where Kanafani received his first formal education. The twelve-year-old boy experienced exile from Palestine after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. His family moved first to Lebanon and then to Syria where Kanafani completed his education until he was later expelled from the School of Arabic Literature at Damascus University in 1955 as a result of his involvement in the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), a left-wing pan-Arab organization. Before 1955, he worked as a teacher in UNRWA schools in Syria. In 1955, he accepted an offer to teach in Kuwait which he left in 1960 to embark on a new career as a journalist in Beirut, being persuaded by George Habash, the founder and General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and in 1969 Kanafani became the official spokesman of the PFLP. He remained in that position until his assassination by the Mossad in July 1972 when his car exploded killing him and his niece. Kanafani's obituary in the *Daily Star* described him as the "commando who never fired a gun" and went on to say that "his weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages. And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos" (quoted in Harlow 1987: 11).

Kanafani's literary production continued over the years of his life, and in the different places he settled in. He was committed to the Palestinian cause, and his fiction

falls under the flag of resistance literature and commitment literature; known in Arabic as *Adab Al-Iltizam*.¹ He published over fifty short stories, three novels, a play, and several other literary studies. The predominant themes in Kanafani's fiction are those connected to the case of Palestine and the Palestinians: resistance, exile, poverty and oppression. The loss of the land and the new state to which the Palestinians have been relegated, refugees, and their lives are amongst the main frames of reference in Kanafani's fiction, as this study aims to reveal. It will therefore focus on studying certain short stories of Kanafani's four published collections: *Death of Bed 12* (1961), *Land of Sad Oranges* (1963), *A World Not for Us* (1965), and *Of Men and Rifles* (1968).²

Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Ngugi wa Thiong'o was born in 1938. He was educated at Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda from which he got his BA in English in 1963, and later he studied at Leeds University, England. His family was involved in the Mau Mau Rebellion and that left its clear marks on Ngugi's life and works. His childhood was marked by the expropriation of Kenyan land by the British, leaving his people *ahoi*, landless, renting their land and working on it for the British. Because of the overt political messages of his play 'I

¹ Commitment literature or *Adab Al-Iltizam* in Arabic literature is the writer's involvement with and furthering of a political or a social cause. This commitment arises from the writer's firm belief in the ability of literature to transform society. Commitment is usually directed to support the causes of the oppressed groups of society, in the Palestinian context it is linked with the struggle of the proletariat because it is commonly acknowledged they are the ones who defend the land and the cause. Moreover, commitment is not only restricted to the national cause, it is broadened to include other Arab and international causes as well, it supports all the revolutions led against injustices all over the world.

See Kilpatrick, Hilary M.D. "Commitment and Literature: The Case of Ghassan Kanafani." *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, Vol. 3, No. 1. (1976), pp. 15-19. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-6139%281976%293%3A1%3C15%3ACALTCO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R> and also

Kanafani, Ghassan. "Palestinian Resistance Literature: Dimensions and Attitudes," in *Diwan al Arab*: <http://www.diwanalarab.com/spip.php?article12489> [My translation] [Last accessed 29-12-2008].

² For biographical information about Ghassan Kanafani see:

Kanafani, Ghassan and Hilary Kilpatrick, *Men in the sun and other Palestinian stories* (Boulder, Colo.; Lynne Rienner, 1999)

Kanafani, Ghassan, *Palestine's children: returning to Haifa & other stories*. trans. Barbara Harlow & Karen E. Riley (Boulder, Colo.; London: Lynne Rienner, 2000)

Kanafani, Ghassan, *All that's left to you: a novella and short stories* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Books, 2004)

Will Marry When I Want', Ngugi was imprisoned, and after his release he was not reinstated in his job as professor at Nairobi University, and his family was harassed. He left Kenya in 1982, to live in self-imposed exile in London. Later, in 1992, he took up a post as professor of comparative literature at New York University, and later at California University.

There are certain themes which present themselves as essential in the study of Ngugi's fiction: "the land question, education, and the struggle for independence" as Williams points out (1998: 1). What remains to be mentioned about Ngugi is that he renounced his English name, Christianity as a religion, and the English language because he saw these to be symbols of colonization, and if his life and works are devoted to help the people get rid of colonization, these signs should be repudiated. Ngugi's published novels, plays, short story collection, and other literary studies tackle these themes of land and the effects of colonization, and attempt to show the effects of colonization on the lives of his people. This study will focus on Ngugi's only collection of short stories, *Secret Lives and Other Stories*, 1975, in which these themes are most clearly seen.

Alice Walker

Alice Malsenior Walker, the daughter of sharecroppers, was born in Eatonton, Georgia in 1940. Like Kanafani and Ngugi, she is both a creative writer and a political activist. Her early life was marked by a distressing event: she lost the sight of one eye when her brother, unintentionally, shot her with an air gun. She was educated at Spelman College, and at Sarah Lawrence College from which she graduated in 1965. Walker lived her childhood in poverty, and she witnessed the racism and segregation that took place in the South which was undergoing "a cataclysmic upheaval on the issue of civil rights" (White 2004: 54). Walker therefore spent several years in the 1960s working as a civil rights activist. Her

involvement with the Civil Rights Movement was “crucial to her development as a writer” as she once stated (Lauret 2000: 6). It is imperative to mention here that Walker was “inspired by the many programs and seminars that taught her about the plight of people in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East,” as Lazo points out (2000: 38). She considers the plight of all people to be her own, and this point is of paramount importance in connecting Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker together.

Walker’s literary work tackles the themes which affected her ancestors’ lives and their community. She focuses most on the oppression and violence which have been inflicted on black women. Her works document both the failures and successes of the lives of black women and their struggle to achieve their rights. Walker has published several novels, poetry collections, short story collections and other literary works. This study will focus on certain selected short stories from Walker’s collections *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973) and *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down: Stories* (1982), as the afore-mentioned themes are clearly traceable in these short stories.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

There are different perspectives on which I have decided to build my comparative analysis of Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker: the short story genre, resistance literature, minority literature, postcolonialism, Marxism, and political and social realism. I believe these categories are especially important, and I will analyse each author with reference to these theoretical perspectives. The degree to which each author fits in a certain category differs, but what are important are the general features their work has in common. Connections between these different perspectives will become clear through the analysis of the stories. The thematic similarities and differences will be discussed when analyzing the stories of each author, and will be summarized in the chapter that puts the three authors face to face

at the end of this study.

2.1. The Short Story Genre

The questions I will attempt to answer in this study are: Why the short story? What are the special features which make this genre the preferred medium through which our committed resistance writers address the issues that affect their communities? Why did they choose the short story as the form through which to take part in the struggle of their communities? What links does it have as a genre with the theoretical frameworks mentioned previously?

The short stories I am looking at intersect with some points about the genre highlighted by Edgar Allan Poe, who elevated the short story form above all other fiction because it is a “concentrated form, wrought out of an intensification of thought and feeling and demanding an equivalent stylistic intensity” (See Hanson 1985: 3). The modern tendency to marginalize the short story genre is, then, incomprehensible since its focus on a significant moment in the life of an individual in an intensified way makes it the literary medium that is best able to express the concerns of human beings in the society to which that individual belongs. I will be arguing that brevity, intensity, and unity of impression are the three features particularly characteristic of the short stories I am analyzing.³ I argue that these features are of great importance for our authors because of the political, social and economic contexts in which they wrote their stories.

As highlighted above, by its brevity the short story concentrates on one single highly significant, life changing episode in the life of a single character. Hanson proposes that “it was because of a general interest in the ‘significant moment’ that short fiction came to prominence in the modernist period” (1985: 55). Ian Reid points out that “the short story typically centres on the inward meaning of a crucial event, on sudden momentous

³ It is argued by some critics that these are the main features of the short story (see Reid 1977: 54).

intuitions, ‘epiphanies’ in James Joyce’s sense of that word; by virtue of its brevity and delicacy it can, for example, single out with special precision those occasions when an individual is most alert or most alone” (1977: 28). Cortazar also likens the short story writer to the photographer: the short story writer must “choose and define an image or event that is *significant* not only in itself, but also capable of affecting the spectator or the reader as a kind of *opening up*, a fermentation, that propels his intelligence and sensitivity toward something that extends beyond the visual or literary anecdote of the photo or story” (quoted in Peden 1982: 72). In our authors’ cases, the moments on which they focus are those of suffering, oppression or struggle where the characters involved are either victimized or are in the struggle against their oppressors, and these moments are eventually the most important in the lives of the people for whom our authors write. In our analysis of the stories, we shall see how Kanafani portrays the last minutes before leaving the land of Palestine for good, the moments of exodus, as in “Land of Sad Oranges,” Ngugi conveys the moments of breakdown or those of victory in the lives of Kenyans as in “Goodbye Africa,” and how Walker describes in detail the suffering of her African American women at certain chosen incidents as in “The Child Who Favored Daughter,” for instance.

Moreover, in the short stories I analyse, it can be argued that intensity is a common feature. It necessitates that words are used without the expansiveness possible in the novel. Language is hence used sparingly, and there is no word written just to fill up the page. Every word must justify its presence, and as Warren S. Walker argues: “because of its intensity, the short story engages the full attention of the reader” (1982: 23). In the short stories of Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker, one can see that words are really used sparingly and they do hold one’s attention, engaging the reader in what is going on and what is going to happen next. We can give here the examples of Walker’s use of the word ‘black’ in “Her Sweet Jerome,” Ngugi’s employment of the word ‘Emergency’ in “A Mercedes Funeral,” and

Kanafani's use of 'land' and 'gun' in most of the stories in his collections. All in all, as Edgar Allan Poe in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* astutely stated: "in the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design" (quoted in Gullason 1976: 20). As Poe's remark shows, the aforementioned words used by our authors direct the attention of the reader to the significance of the concepts these words refer to.

Unity of impression is also a common feature in the short stories of our authors. This feature is very important since it helps the reader to identify with the different characters in their respective positions. Poe comments on the significance of this feature. He argues that "because [the short story] could be read at one sitting it could avail itself of 'the immense benefit of *totality* ... The author is enabled to carry out his full design without interruption'" (quoted in Hanson 1985: 3). He continues to point out that "because the story can be read without interruption, the writer can involve the reader in it to an unusual degree," and the story then seems to be created by both the author and reader (quoted in Hanson 1985: 3). The reader's involvement testifies to the importance of the genre since his/her involvement allows him/her the space to discuss the issues that mostly affect his/her life, and gives the reader the chance to present his/her views on possible solutions or strategies to be taken. As will be shown later, who of us readers will not feel Mansur's victory in Kanafani's "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," or Nadia's loss in "Letter From Gaza," Mrs. Washington's rage in Walker's "Her Sweet Jerome," or Kamau's loss in Ngugi's "The Return"?

As a final point here, and after discussing these unique features of the short story genre, there remains one last point that links all three features together and works towards producing the effect and the message of the story: the theme, as Warren S. Walker points out: "The chief structural element for providing unity or focus is no longer plot— and

sometimes neither plot *nor* character—but theme” (1982: 17-18). In the aforementioned cases of the Palestinians, Kenyans and African Americans, the themes of oppression, dislocation and colonization are the unifying themes that are important not only for the authors’ own peoples but for all the people who face such conditions all over the globe.

It can also be argued that there are links between the short story and some of the theoretical frameworks used in this study. These links, I believe, are amongst the factors that led our authors to choosing the short story as one of the possible mediums through which to raise the issues about their peoples’ problems and struggles. To start with, our authors are committed to their peoples’ causes as their biographies show, their commitment to or ‘engagement’ with these issues adds value to their works since as William Sansom answers on whether the writer should be ‘engaged’ or not: “There has never been any writer of importance who is not ‘engaged’” (1972: 11).

In the second place, a linkage could be traced between the short story as a genre and resistance literature. The short story genre is seen by our authors as a tool for communicating resistance. There is also another link with the historical context essential in the study of resistance literature. Since the short story documents an existing socio-political condition, as in our authors’ cases, the story makes definite the time of the narrated action as it constructs a link with the historical reality known to the reader. This is embedded in the short story’s ability to establish links with past and future events as discussed by Hanson (1985: 56). Fanon’s notion of a literature of combat presents similarities with resistance literature. Fanon points out that when the native intellectual starts to address “his own people,” to borrow Fanon’s words, then we can claim a national literature, or what may be called a “literature of combat, in the sense that it calls on the whole people to fight for their existence as a nation. It is a literature of combat, because it moulds the national consciousness, giving it form and contours and flinging open before it

new and boundless horizons; it is a literature of combat because it assumes responsibility, and because it is the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space” (2001: 193). He also argues that in literatures of combat:

The storytellers who used to relate inert episodes now bring them alive and introduce into them modifications which are increasingly fundamental. There is a tendency to bring conflicts up to date and to modernize the kinds of struggle which the stories evoke, together with the names of heroes and the types of weapons. The method of allusion is more and more widely used. The formula ‘This all happened long ago’ is substituted by that of ‘What we are going to speak of happened somewhere else, but it might well have happened here today, and it might happen tomorrow’ (Fanon 2001: 193).

As we can see from Fanon’s passage, in the short stories of combat there is an emphasis on the historical issue. The struggle is to be kept alive by bringing the conflict to date and linking it with the conditions of one’s community. Hence, contemporary history is somehow being re-told in the stories. Moreover, there lies in the presentation of contemporary history an important role to be played by the native intellectual. Fanon argues that the “colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope” (Fanon 2001: 187). Combat and resistance literature’s objective is thus to help plan a better life for the colonized and oppressed individual.

There is also the issue of collectivity that will be discussed under resistance and

minority literatures. Hanson points out that short stories are usually “communal in intention and effect, depending on a fundamental agreement between reader and writer (or teller and listener) as to what constitutes ‘the great and the little things of life’: such a consensus must exist if events are to act as a communicative code” (1985: 6). Since a collective action is what our committed authors’ stories demand, the short story because of its ability to be re-told again and again and because of the reader’s involvement, makes it easier for the people to organize a collective response and a collective action which the story has called for in its presentation of the inevitability of change.

There is also an important link between the short story genre and realism. The short story often focuses on a present condition, an everyday reality, as “truth is often the aim” of the story (May 1976: 48). That does not however negate the presence of a fictional short story but the whole issue depends on the present condition of one’s country or community.⁴ This link between the short story and realism is further evidenced in May’s reply to the claims that the modern short story is fragmentary: “If the contemporary short story is fragmentary and inconclusive, perhaps it is because the form is best able to convey the sense that reality itself is fragmentary and inconclusive. Such a view should be especially pertinent to the modern world” (1976: 5). In May’s statement, we can construct a link with the circumstances in which our authors and the people in their communities lived. The time of colonization and oppression is logically fragmentary.

I believe that one of the most important points that led our authors to the choice of the short story concerns itself with the brevity of the short story. Since it is a time of intensity and political action, and since many of the targeted readers are peasants, workers and working class people with low levels of education, the novel because of its length appears to be impractical. Hence the short story offers itself as an alternative. Hanson

⁴ See Charles E May, *The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 2-5.

highlights that “there is a connection between social unease of disjunction and a preference of the short story form” (1985: 34). In an interview I had with Ngugi, he explained that at such times of struggles and instability there is none of the leisure time which the novel requires because of its length.⁵ Further, as Aristotle pointed out in his *Poetics* “the more compact is more pleasing than that which is spread over a greater length of time” (quoted in May 1976: 30). Gullason also argues that “The short-story writer usually gains in control, in power, and in meaningfulness by his arts of distillation, telescoping, and understatement. And, the short story can be easily reread; often it must be reread. Like the diamond, the short story throws off glints of meanings” (1976: 30). Moreover, a differentiation should be made between oral and print culture. The distinctive quality of the short story to be re-told, to become part of the oral culture of the people is also significant. There is a tradition of the short story being read to the public in Arabic literature for instance, and that helps in spreading its message widely and ensures it reaching a broad spectrum of audience. We can also here recall that both Ngugi and Walker were brought up in communities where people will gather in the evenings to listen to stories being told.

Finally, there remains to be mentioned one of the most significant factors pointed out in the testimony of one of the masters of the form, Frank O’Connor. He argues that the short story “flourishes best in an incompletely developed culture, for example in a regional settlement still lacking total social cohesion. It is demonstrably true that the short story has flourished in the last hundred years in Ireland, and in the Deep South, also in colonial societies ... The short story seems to be the mode preferred by those writers who are not writing from within a fixed and stable cultural framework” (quoted in Hanson 1985: 12), and this is the case of the authors under study because they are writing in/on societies which are suppressed. Moreover, as Hanson argues, “many prose writers began their career

⁵ I had this discussion with Ngugi during the World Development Movement’s Conference: “Activism past, present and future” in Leeds on the 30th of June, 2007.

with short fiction and continued to find the form congenial. It is indeed noticeable that several modernist novels had their origin in a short prose piece” (1985: 56). We can note that our authors have come back to the issues they discussed in short stories, and discussed them again in novels or other literary works. In a word, we can here conclude with V. S. Pritchett’s statement that the short story “is the glancing form of fiction that seems to be right for the nervousness and restlessness of contemporary life” (quoted in Hanson 1985: 124-125), and that seems genuinely applicable to our authors’ cases.

2.2. Resistance Literature

Barbara Harlow in *Resistance Literature* (1987) points out that the literature which emerges under or as a result of any kind of colonization or oppression falls under the category of ‘resistance literature.’ Resistance literature was born as a result of and as an answer to the attempts made by Western Europe and the United States to dominate economically and politically not only the lands of other nations, but their culture and beliefs as well.⁶ Peoples’ struggles against this kind of imposed hegemony have been recorded in resistance literature: “[that] particular category of literature [which] emerged significantly as part of the organized national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East ...” (Harlow 1987: xvii). Resistance literature thus addresses the issues of colonialism and oppression in all its forms: colonization of the land and/or of the mind, displacement, racial discrimination and marginalization practised against the African American minority in the United States for example. Literature in such a way becomes not only a document of a certain period of time or a special event that took place somewhere but also part of the struggle in which the people are involved. As Harlow states, resistance literature “articulated a role for literature

⁶ We can here bring the examples of Palestine and Syria in the Middle East, Algeria and Kenya in Africa, and the US intervention in Vietnam, Cuba and Chile in America.

and poets [and all writers] within the struggle alongside the gun, the pamphlet, and the diplomatic delegation” (1987: xvii).

Let us now try to define the main characteristics of resistance literature and see how the writers under discussion fall under the flag of this literature. The first point to be discussed in relation to resistance literature is that of historical context: “Essential ... to the narratives of resistance is the demand they make on the reader in their historical referencing and the burden of historical knowledge such referencing enjoins” (Harlow 1987: 80). There are certain periods of time, certain years, and certain historical episodes which become the main points of reference in the literary work. Therefore, historical knowledge is important in this literature because it provides the author with the framework, the specific historical time and background, through which s/he can construct his work. Besides, historical knowledge functions as the link which the author needs to make clear for his audience, namely the interconnectedness of the past of their ancestors and the reality of their present time. Fanon argues that amongst the objectives of colonialism is the “emptying of the native’s brain of all form and content,” and to achieve that aim, colonialism “turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it” (2001: 169). Resistance literature’s use of history is thus an attempt, an earnest one, to preserve the history of a people and their national culture as well. Kanafani refers to Palestinian literature as ‘resistance literature’ within a specific historical context, “a context which may be most immediately situated within the contemporary national liberation struggles and resistance movements against Western imperialist domination of Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle and Far East” (Harlow 1987: 4). This forms an important link between our authors too.

Kanafani’s, Ngugi’s and Walker’s literary works contain clear examples of such references to history. The year 1948 forms the frame of reference for most of Kanafani’s

stories. In “The Cake Vendor,” for example, the situation of the protagonist Hamid and that of the narrator, Hamid’s teacher, are early linked in the story with the year 1948, the year of *al-Nakbah* because the present situation in which the characters find themselves is the result of what happened in that year:

“How old are you?” I asked.

“Eleven.”

“Palestinian?” I questioned.

His answer came by way of a wordless nod, and I sensed in that gesture an element of concealed shame.

“Where do you live? I enquired.

“In the refugee camp,” he responded (Kanafani 2004: 79).

This year remains the main historical point of reference in most of Kanafani’s stories, as in: “The Land of Sad Oranges,” “Letter from Ramlah,” and “Letter from Terah.” Similarly, Ngugi’s stories also show historical references at work. In “Gone With The Drought,” “The Martyr,” “The Return,” and “Goodbye Arica” there are references to certain historical moments through which the Kenyans have lived. Likewise, Walker refers to the history of her people and how they have been brought from Africa on slave ships, and in her fiction we can find the effects of specific historical moments at work. An example could be traced in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” where the story is related to the years of the Depression, the 1930s. Other examples are in the stories “Laurel,” and “Advancing Luna—And Ida B. Wells.”

Secondly, the debate on language is essential in the study of resistance literature. Harlow points out that “the very choice of the language in which to compose is itself a political statement on the part of the writer and will need to be considered in each case, from author to author, country to country” (1987: xviii). The debate is twofold. The question of language does not limit itself only to the choice of whether it should be the indigenous language of the people or that of the colonizer or oppressor. The debate should be broadened to include the study of the linguistic registers. Put simply, whether the author chooses his/her native language or that of the colonizer/oppressor, the language skills that s/he employs should be chosen according to the objectives of the resistance narrative s/he intends to write. The question of language is also important in minority literature, but suffice it to say here that in Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept, language “is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 16). This means that the majority language will be modified and it will go through different stages in the process of producing that literature. For this reason, it could be noted that our authors usually tend to choose the language of everyday life since the message and the objectives resistance literature aim at are undoubtedly related to the author’s own people. This debate on language, furthermore, includes other “questions of writer and background as well as issues of readership and audience” (Harlow 1987: xviii).

Applying the question of language to our authors, we find that each has taken the stance that best serves his/her objectives, but all three have adhered to a certain extent to the use of everyday language, the language spoken by real people in real daily situations. Kanafani, for example, has chosen to write in Arabic. The language he has adopted is that of everyday language because of two factors. The first one is that the language of the colonizer in the Palestinian case is not a global one, Hebrew is of course not like English, and Kanafani has been living in exile in other Arab countries: Lebanon, Syria and Kuwait,

so publishing is here another important factor to be considered because he cannot publish in other languages in these countries.⁷ The second reason is that of audience. Kanafani's audience and his protagonists include, but are not restricted to, peasants, ordinary Palestinian people, and freedom fighters, so the majority of the Palestinian people are addressed here since the upper class and the bourgeoisie are not involved in the revolution and in the fight as they tend to serve their own class interests. There is a big difference in Arabic between the formal language – which is rarely used except officially and in literature, and the colloquial spoken one. In Kanafani's short stories we find that there is a mixture of these two modes, it is the people's spoken language which is at work especially in dialogues when the protagonist is a peasant or one of the common people. In the "Cake Vendor," for example, we can see spoken language in Hamid's communication with his teacher. Other examples could be found in other stories like Mansur's stories: "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad" and in "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva About Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," from which I will quote the following example. In this last mentioned story, the language which Mansur and the fighters use is informal and the expressions are Palestinian proverbs or daily common phrases. When Mansur's old gun is being addressed as a stick, he becomes furious and replies in strong language using a Palestinian proverb:

"How much did you pay for this stick?"

"Damn you, or else this stick will beat you instead" (Kanafani 2000: 63).

It can be argued here that Kanafani's choice of everyday language to address the

⁷ The authorities in Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait and many other Arab countries usually allow publications in Arabic, English and French. A publication in Hebrew is banned on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the audience in these Arab countries do not speak Hebrew.

Palestinian issue relates to the fact that the peasants were the backbone of the revolution, and they are the ones who defended the Palestinian land even before the establishment of the State of Israel. In a sense, this section of the Palestinian society was one of the most important implied readerships of Kanafani's short stories.

On the other hand, Ngugi and Walker have chosen to write in English, and each has his/her own reasons. Ngugi used English for targeting a wider audience, and targeting the "oppressor" himself.⁸ However, Ngugi has stopped writing in English and returned to write in his Gikuyu native language years after Kenya achieved its independence. From Ngugi's point of view, decolonization involves a "movement away from European values and systems, including the language which, as he sees it, carries these values" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 130). In Ngugi's point of view, as in Fanon's one as we shall shortly see, imperialism, through the cultural bomb it throws on the natives, aims "to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (Ngugi 1986: 3). Ngugi saw that there is a rift between the language he uses and the native culture he is trying to reclaim. For that reason, and in order to challenge imperialism, Ngugi has decided to return to his native tongue so that his people are the ones to be addressed and their efforts are the ones needed to abolish imperialism and its ways. In Walker's case, she was born, and lives in the land of the "oppressor", in the land of the majority culture, and her choice of English is in a sense obligatory.

The third characteristic of resistance narrative is that it is collective in nature. Since resistance literature is concerned with documenting the lives of, and calling for a better

⁸ Ngugi's short stories are written in English because the Gikuyu language and culture of which he is a product is only spoken by the Gikuyu community which represent only around 22% of the population. By writing in English Ngugi can target other Kenyan communities and the British colonizers as well. See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html#People>

future for, the people living under certain circumstances of colonization and oppression, it addresses the whole group of people whose land has been colonized or whose lives have been altered by the different kinds of domination inflicted upon them. Oppression does not choose an individual victim; it pours its curses on all the people of the society which it has targeted. Therefore, the individual lives of the protagonists of works of resistance literature are not only individuals; they stand also for the lives of most of the people who live within the milieu of the protagonists. Furthermore, people's collective relationship to the cause they are fighting for, to the land they live on, and to the national identity they share makes collectivity an essential feature of resistance literature as it calls for a collective action in order to achieve the political, social and economic changes it struggles for. Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's narratives are all of a collective nature. There are characters in these authors' fiction who are representative of the whole class of people who share those characters' miseries and destinies. Mansur in Kanafani's *Of Men and Rifles*, Kamau of "The Return" in Ngugi's *Secret Lives*, and Mrs. Washington in Walker's "Her Sweet Jerome" are just a few examples of this kind.

2.3. Minority Literature

According to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the three most significant characteristics of minority literature are: the deterritorialization of the dominant major language, its political nature, and the stand for collective values.⁹ I will attempt to use Deleuze's and Guattari's category in a reading of our three authors.

⁹ See: Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Bensmaïa, Reda, 'On the Concept of Minor Literature From Kafka to Kateb Yacine', in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas & Dorothea Olkowski (London: Routledge, 1994)
 JanMohamed, Abdul R. and David Lloyd, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Deterritorialization concerns itself with the debate on the use of language. Deleuze and Guattari's first concept illustrates that the relationship between the writer and the language s/he uses is very important in the context of minor literature: "A minor literature does not come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs in a major language" (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 16). This case could be applied to the fiction of Ngugi and Walker. They choose to write in English, the major language of their oppressors and colonizers. The use of the major language in these authors' cases is a kind of struggle against the major discourse as all "minority discourse is circumstantially a counter-hegemonic discourse" (Kubayanda 1990: 251). Besides, deterritorialization, or "the appropriation of language," is not limited to the use of the oppressor's language, the authors whose literature is called "minor" use that language in their own way and according to their literary needs. The use of the vernacular is another way of making that major language serve their specific ends. The importance laid on language is not a feature which minority literature monopolizes, it carries the same importance in postcolonial literature, as will be discussed later.

Renato Rosaldo argues that the language question in minor literature refers both "to writers' positions (outside their homeland and using a language not their own) and to their extreme modes of expression" (Rosaldo 1990: 124). This explanation by Rosaldo applies to all three writers in this study, including Kanafani, since he was writing outside of his homeland (although he was writing in his native tongue). Ngugi and Walker share that feature of appropriation too because they play their game of appropriation of the language of the master. In some of the stories we can see Ngugi's and Walker's use of the vernacular, of everyday spoken language in the dialogues between characters, as will be discussed in the analysis of the stories. Walker's "Strong Horse Tea" is an example here.

The second characteristic of minority literature is that it is overtly political. Deleuze

and Guattari point out that the difference between minor and major literatures lies in this political feature. While in major literature the concerns of the individual, whether familial, material, or other individual matters, stay in the individual realm, in minor literature the matter is different because “its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way, the family triangle connects to other triangles – commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical – that determine its values” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 17). Kanafani’s, Ngugi’s and Walker’s fictions are clearly political. The causes against which they struggle relate to the dominant politics at the time of writing. In the case of Kanafani it is the diaspora and the process of becoming a refugee after being deprived of land, home and implicitly life. Ngugi denounces the colonization of his land, and his fiction clearly reflects the effects of that colonization and sets examples for the results it has inflicted upon Kenyan people. Walker in her political activism struggles for the rights of the African Americans: the right to education, to vote, to end segregation and to be treated as human beings and as citizens. Hence, the lives of the individuals have been altered by politics, and one of the important objectives of literature is to help the people find their way out of such situations by presenting types which others could, and should, follow in order to achieve the freedom they seek.

Having a ‘collective value’ is the last characteristic of minority literature. Because minority literature’s focus is on preserving the national identity of the people and setting them face to face with the oppressor, it cannot but call for a collective action as Deleuze and Guattari point out: “The literary machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in

this milieu: *literature is the people's concern*" (2000: 17-18). The individual concerns of people undermine the aims of minority literature and hinder the achievement of the objectives of the collectivity this literature focuses on. Amongst the missions of minority literature is to raise the national consciousness of the people and to help them to emancipate and free themselves from the bonds of oppression, slavery, and colonization. Hence, the people in this case are an entity and their treatment individually or their personal actions help the oppressor and harm them. Moreover, collective value here acquires a broader meaning. All the authors involved in minority literature should therefore work for the attainment of that collective consciousness, "and because collective or national consciousness is 'often inactive in external life and always in the process of breakdown,' literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation" (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 17).

The aforementioned principle is effectively clear in our authors' works. In Kanafani's works the peasants and the intellectuals still living inside the occupied land form an entity, the refugees dispersed all over the globe form another entity, but the efforts of the two are united and directed against the colonizer, each participates in the struggle in his own way. Kanafani's short stories, and his novels and plays, call for that collective action which should be taken by all. In Ngugi's work as well, colonization, famine and hunger do not affect only one section of the people but the whole, and therefore the action should be collective. Walker, likewise, and although her works focus on the lives of oppressed women, does not exclude other black oppressed groups from the struggle. All the blacks should work for the better future that the author has envisioned, and some of the women in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* have really achieved that objective. Minority literature in this way becomes "a collective machine of expression and really ... able to treat and develop its contents" (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 18-19).

In the above discussion of resistance literature and minority literature we find that the two notions of literature intersect. In both, the question of language is an important issue, albeit the treatment and the application in each are different. Resistance literature is, obviously, political like minor literature. Harlow points out that “the emphasis in the literature of resistance is on the political as the power to change the world. The theory of resistance literature is in its politics” (1987: 30). Both literatures as well are collective in nature, and all the movements that work for the well being of the people “represent a collective and concerted struggle against hegemonic domination and oppression,” states Harlow (1987: 29). So the names differ but the objectives of both literatures are identical. Furthermore, resistance literature simply because of its revolutionary nature has been marginalized exactly as has been done with minority literature. Harlow points out that: “Palestinian literature, like the literatures of other cultures marginalized within the dominant version of world history, by virtue of its current historical situation and determination, is liable to uncritical consideration and identification, fated to either rejection or admission for the very fact of its being ‘Palestinian’” (1987: 67). Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian critic, similarly argues that because of the name ‘Palestinian literature,’ this literature has been marginalized and denied any objective criticism although this literature “is in itself a source of national pride as well as a means of resistance” (1978: 83). When the Israeli forces invaded Beirut to get rid of the PLO and its freedom fighters there, the first thing they did was burn the “PLO Research Center and its archives containing the documentary and cultural history of the Palestinian people” (Harlow 1987: 7). Besides, some of Kanafani’s books, fictional and critical, are still banned in territories under Israeli occupation: the West Bank and Gaza.

Although sometimes for different reasons, the fiction of Ngugi wa Thiong’o and other African writers faced that destiny too. One of Ngugi’s plays “Ngaahika Ndeenda” (“I

Will Marry When I Want,” 1977) was banned from being staged by the postcolonial regime of Jomo Kenyatta, and he was imprisoned because of the political views he expressed in his fiction. His self-imposed exile was also the result of the revolutionary nature of his novels, plays and short stories.

The same case of negligence is applicable to the African American literature. After a long history of being denied education, when African Americans successfully claimed the right to be educated and produced a literature of their own, that literature was not given due consideration by the major culture and sometimes even by other black critics as is the case with Alice Walker, although for a special reason in her case. In an ironic parallel to Ngugi’s persecution by the victorious postcolonial regime, Walker recalls that her literary work in the 1960s ‘was often dismissed by black reviewers ‘because of my life style,” a euphemism for my interracial marriage’ (Lauret 2000: 7). Toni Morrison comments on the widespread negligence of African American literature. She points out that “Like thousands of avid but nonacademic readers, some powerful literary critics in the United States have never read, and are proud to say so, *any* African American text” (Morrison 1992: 13). Washington argues that “without exception Afro-American women writers have been dismissed by Afro-American literary critics until they were rediscovered and reevaluated by feminist critics” (1990: 34). Moreover, “white feminists and male critics have ignored the work of black women” (Ann duCille 1997: 30). Writers such as Walker sometimes get caught in the racial cross-fire between black and white critics. Walker notes that “an editor of a leading black journal dismissed her work *without reading* it simply because it had been praised by a white critic” (Jones 1991: 187; emphasis in original). The marginalization of African American women’s work could thus be attributed to two causes: they are women first of all, and they are black, second. Clearly then, objective criticism is denied for the works of African-American authors. Barbara Christian in “The

Race for Theory” argues that the literature of Black writers is not acknowledged, it is ignored even by academics for “there is no reason, given who controls [Academic] institutions, for them to be anything other than threatened by these writers” (1996: 156). Christian sets as examples the works of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. We can also here bring the example of Alice Walker’s attempts to bring to light the work of black women, as she has done with the work of Zora Neale Hurston. (See: *Alice Walker: A Life* Evelyn C. White, 2004)

From the above comparison between resistance literature and minority literature, it could be argued that both have as their object the achievement of liberation for all the people from all kinds of oppression: political, social, material etc. It does not matter what the causes are and the focus is on the results. All the efforts are then directed towards setting the people free by guiding them and showing them the necessity of change, as change is the only way which will help them to make their own lives better than the life the oppressor is trying to impose upon them.

2.4. Postcolonialism

Postcolonial literature, as Elleke Boehmer points out, is “generally defined as that which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship. It is writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives. As well as a change in power, decolonization demanded—and still demands—symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings” (2005: 3). Postcolonial literature, that is the literature produced by indigenous writers, can be seen as a kind of resistance to the major literature of the colonizer. It could be considered as the native intellectual’s way of restoring power, of making his/her voice heard, and of making his/her people aware of the need to unite and to act in order to restore their national identity and their indigenous values by discarding those which the colonizer

has imposed upon them.

Postcolonial literature, however, remains controversial as there are no definite criteria on which literature it includes and which it does not. This problem relates to the different forms colonization takes. Colonization might be military and involves displacement as is the case with Palestine and Kenya, and it might be a mental colonization by suppressing and marginalizing a certain group within a major society as is the case of African Americans, but there remains a unified political cause behind all the masks colonization wears. Furthermore, as the term 'postcolonial' suggests, the literature is produced after the end of colonization but what can we term the literature produced in countries where colonization is still ongoing? Let us take the example of Palestine. Palestinians have not yet achieved their independence, and there are still millions of Palestinians dispersed all over the globe. Should we call that literature then anti-colonial or "pre-postcolonial" as Ella Shohat asks? (1996: 325). The issue needs further research and discussion. Moreover, in the case of Kenyans and African-Americans, how can postcolonial literature help in abolishing the effects colonization had on the beliefs of the people? It could be argued, however, that it is helpful to read Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker in the perspective of postcolonial literature.

There are certain features which make the link between resistance literature, minority literature, realism and postcolonialism possible. Postcolonial literature can often be revolutionary, and that connects it with resistance literature since producing postcolonial literature is a kind of struggle, a kind of perceiving and using "culture [as] a field of struggle" in Foucault's terms (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 167). Furthermore, both literatures concern themselves with the effects of displacement and with the importance of place as it is the result of this question that "the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an

effective identifying relationship between self and place” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 8). Literature is thus a tool to free the people from all kinds of oppression, to restore their lost rights, and to draw out for them a plan for a better future.

The second link is that between the postcolonial and the minority literatures. The colonizer marginalizes the native people, and does the same with the small groups who have been displaced into the land of the colonizer. They become minor and their relationship to the colonizer, to the centre, determines their lives. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that “marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged centre, an ‘Othering’ directed by the implied authority” (2002: 102). The relationship therefore between the centre and the margin is one of the core ideas of postcolonial literature. The struggle that both postcolonial and minority literatures take is to change and to confront the relationship to that centre, to change the way the centre deals with the margin as a dependent; a blind and obedient one. They try to change the way the centre looks at the margin as the ‘Other’ because this image has always carried negative connotations. Albert Memmi argues that “the Other is always seen as a Not, as a lack, a void ... the humanity of the Other becomes ‘opaque’ ... [and] the Others are not seen as fellow individual members of the human community, but rather as part of a chaotic, disorganized, and anonymous collectivity” (Memmi 2003: 85). The struggle of the marginalized in both literatures is then to change its image from the object of history to its subject, and in Sartre’s terms: “I must be able to apprehend the presence of this being-as-subject” (quoted in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 170).

The debate on language discussed above in relation to resistance and minority literatures, is crucial in studying postcolonial literature. Postcolonial literature demands seizing (or colonizing) the language of the colonizer; of the centre, and “replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 37).

This use of the language by the colonized could be achieved by either one of two processes: “abrogation or denial of the privilege of ‘English’ ... and the appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre ...” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 37). Hence, language should be modified to serve the objectives of the colonized, the marginalized and the oppressed, and to make voicing their experiences possible. Glossing, untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion and vernacular transcription are all possible strategies for the appropriation of language in postcolonial literature.¹⁰ In Ngugi’s and Walker’s fiction, there are examples of different sorts where language has been appropriated to serve the message the stories communicate.

2.5. Marxism

Many intellectuals, revolutionaries and regimes claim a link to Marxism as the theoretical basis for their politics. The importance of Marxism, Arif Dirlik argues, lies in the fact that it “has been seen by many in the West and the non-West as the foremost ideological candidate in the struggle against culturalist hegemony” (1990: 397). The premises within which Marxism works are concurrent with those in which resistance literature and minority literature operate. The similarities arise in some of the main themes which build up Marxist theory: the basis of social relations in economics, analysis of history, the scientific and revolutionary critique of society, dependence on the working class and peasants to build their own society, the abolition of classes and the call for a classless society which could be achieved through class struggle, and the rejection of religion as a determining factor in people’s lives.¹¹ A further link between Marxism and postcolonial literature is that the problems from which the Palestinians, the Kenyans and the African Americans suffer, and

¹⁰ For explanations and examples of these strategies, see Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002)

¹¹ See: Wesson, *Why Marxism? The continuing success of a failed theory* (New York: Basic Books, 1976)
 Heilbboner, *Marxism, for and against*. 1st edn (New York: Norton, 1980)
 Robinson, *An anthropology of Marxism, Race and representation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001)

which Marxism tackles, are related in one way or another to the 'post' periods. For instance the issue of class envy, class conflict and class struggle mostly appear in the post-displacement period in the Palestinian case, in the postcolonial period in the Kenyan situation, and in the post-slavery period in the African American case. This however does not negate the presence of these problems before colonization or under the different kinds of colonialism outlined earlier.

Marxism has continued to evolve through the years, and its evolution has made possible the expansion of Marxism to include new areas of interest: revolution, reform, anti-Westernism and national liberation. One example of Marxism's development lies in Marxism-Leninism. Lenin attached an analysis of imperialism, and in this new form anti-imperialism took the place of anti-capitalism which the original theory calls for, as Wesson indicated (1976: 7). Wesson pointed out that at

the heart of Marxism has been an abiding theme of protest against the Western-style industrialization and against one or another of its putative effects – oppression, inequality, dehumanization, destruction of human values, and the degradation of people, within the state through class oppression, externally through the subjugation of nations to colonial or semicolonial status (1976: 9).

From this last quotation, the similarities with the other schools involved in this study, and with our authors can be discerned.

On the one hand, the objectives of colonization in the cases of our authors' are to oppress the people, to distort their history, to steal the people's labour and their natural

resources, to reduce the people to an inferior position, and to dehumanize them. On the other hand, the clear objectives of resistance literature and minority literature, in addition to bringing to light the plight of the colonized and the oppressed, are to free the people from all kinds of oppression and colonization, to protect the people's national identity and history from distortion, and to open up the possibilities for a better future.

We can argue that there are Marxist elements in the writings of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker. Kanafani was a Marxist-Leninist, as is the movement for which he was the official spokesperson, the PFLP.¹² My reading of his short stories shows themes like class struggle and the rejection of religion as a determinant factor in peoples' lives. In "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva About Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad" one of the four Mansur stories in *Of Men and Rifles*, and in "The Land of Sad Oranges," for example, we see how religion is precluded and the existence of God is questioned. We see also class struggle at work: Mansur's father borrows a gun from one of the bourgeoisie with the promise to pay in olives if anything happens to the gun. Kanafani's short stories also exhibit a clear invitation to act, to revolt, to break the manacles of oppression and colonization, and to achieve the desired social change. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is also a Marxist, a Fanonist-Marxist. His life and works show Marxism in practice; in his treatment of themes like the rejection of Christianity as the religion of the colonizers, class struggle, and the expropriation of Kenyan people's – his parents' – labour by the colonizers. We can find examples in "The Martyr" and "Wedding at the Cross" in Ngugi's collection *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. Walker also uses Marxist doctrines in the struggle against the different kinds of oppression black women suffer.¹³ Rejection of

¹² See Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York; London: Methuen, 1987), and Siddiq, *Man is a cause: political consciousness and the fiction of Ghassan Kanafani* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984)

¹³ Alice Walker did not state that she is a Marxist, but my reading of her works show Marxism at work in the aforementioned themes summarized by the issues of class struggle, rejection of religion, and treating blacks as a source of cheap labour.

religion is at work in “Her Sweet Jerome,” and in other stories, especially in the first collection *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women*, the call for action to attain social change is eminent.

Marxism’s objectives, then, match those of resistance and minority literatures. All three aim to free the individual from oppression and colonization. They also share the same treatment of history – the past should be preserved and the present should be studied only for the sake of opening the gates of the future. Last but not least, all call for a change, and the way to achieve that change is a revolutionary one.

2.6. Realism

Realism in literature has been defined as the “serious treatment of everyday reality” (Auerbach 1953: 433). Critics have used the term ‘realism’ to “describe an approach to literature which seeks to represent human experience as realistically and truthfully as possible” (Barton 1997: 159). Lilian R. Furst argues that realism “was shaped ... by the impact of the political and social changes as well as the scientific and industrial advances of its day,” (Furst 1992: 1) and Furst’s idea will be our point of departure towards linking realism with the theoretical perspectives under study in relation to our authors.¹⁴

To start with, I think that realism is part and parcel of resistance literature, minority literature, postcolonialism and Marxism since all these theories have as their objective the change of man’s life for the better. It is important to note here that the realism offered by Stendhal, the founder of modern realism, was in itself a kind of resistance; an expression of his aversion from the present he lived in (See *Mimesis* 1953: 481). Realism is therefore the “structure of consciousness that accompanies” political and revolutionary action (Lukacs 1980: 21). Moreover, by the image ‘realism’ reflects of man’s life and the forces

¹⁴ The features of realist discourse are explained at length in “Philippe Hamon on the Major Features of Realist Discourse” in Lilian R. Furst (ed.) *Realism* (1992), pp. 166-184.

suppressing him/her, it provides us with a true picture of suffering and struggle so that we readers feel, believe in, and sympathize with that human being's struggle and the actions s/he takes to get rid of the oppressing forces regardless of their type. In the special cases of colonization, displacement and oppression discussed by our authors, 'realism' is not a 'make-believe' thing as Aristotelian *mimesis* might be. It is real in itself, the stories work in accordance with Lukacs' rule that "the text is a direct reflection of a social reality" (Furst 1992: 97). The historical frameworks included in the stories, the political, social and economic states described, and the people's struggles recorded, and sometimes guided, are all indicative of the reality of the situations these authors' works tell about, and this is the modern serious realism founded by Stendhal, a realism which "cannot represent man otherwise than as embedded in a total reality, political, social, and economic, which is concrete and constantly evolving – as is the case today in any novel or film" (Auerbach 1953: 463). Our authors' reliance upon their people's oral culture is another source for the realism of the narratives; and some of the stories, as we shall see, are based on the experiences of the authors themselves and/or their families and people from their own milieus. What our authors have attempted is a reading of their people and their conditions that is as accurate as possible; their political, social, and economic problems are woven into the narratives in such a way that a picture of everyday reality is conveyed to readers.

It is obvious from this that as with resistance and minority literatures, there is a strong political dimension to realism. Erich Auerbach in his discussion of Stendhal's novel *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830) argues that the political framework is an essential principle in understanding the context of this work—and other realist works: "it would almost be incomprehensible without a most accurate and detailed knowledge of the political situation, the social stratification, and the economic circumstances of a perfectly definite historical moment" ("Auerbach on Stendhal" 1992: 54). This could be extended to other

realistic literary texts. Penny Boumelha argues that “The realist text can only be read as serving, more or less unambiguously, political values that we wish to contest” (Boumelha 1992: 321). The idea of collectivity arises in the comparison between realism, resistance and minority literatures. In “Duranty on the Principles of Realism” it is argued that realism focuses on “representing the *social* side of man, which is the most visible, the most comprehensible and the most varied, and to think also of the idea of reproducing the *things affecting the lives of the greatest number*” (Furst 1992: 31; my emphasis). This principle conforms to the third feature of resistance and minority narratives.

Furthermore, in realist literature there is an emphasis on the historical principle. The representation of everyday reality cannot do without the historical situation of the people the narrative seeks to represent. Auerbach points out that in realistic literature, “The characters, attitudes, and relationships of the *dramatis personae* ... are very closely connected with contemporary historical circumstances; contemporary political and social conditions are woven into the action ...” (“Auerbach on Stendhal” 1992: 54). Roland Barthes likewise argues that there is no need for any justification of the ‘real’ because the “*having-been-there* of things is a sufficient reason for speaking of them” (Barthes 1992: 139). The historical background in realistic literature not only authenticates that literature but also makes communicating its message easier as the narrative connects itself to a specific moment in the history of the people it speaks about, and the reader can easily identify that moment and connects what s/he reads with the situations prevalent at the time of the action. Similarly, Harlow in discussing resistance literature mentions that “the controversial insistence on the “here-and now” of historical reality and its conditions of possibility underwrites much of the project of resistance literature” (1987: 16). Thus, realistic and resistance literatures share that focus on the historical background.

According to Kanafani, documenting (in resistance literature) and representing (in

realistic literature) the lives of the people cannot be “complete unless the researcher [the author] ... [takes] his testimony from the place in which it is born, lives and is propagated: the lips of the people” (1982: 12). Kanafani’s insistence on taking the truth from the lips of the people is also a feature of realistic literature because the image and the actions it depicts should be taken directly from the lives of the people. This point could also be broadened to include minority literature. In speaking about the oppressed people, those who have been marginalized, minority literature takes its material from the lives of the people. Walker constructed some of her stories from those told by her mother and grandmothers, as Mary Helen Washington has pointed out: “one vital link to [the] ‘historical and psychological thread’ of [Walker’s] ancestors’ lives is the stories passed on to her by her mother, stories which Walker absorbed through years of listening to her mother tell them. The oral stories are often the basis for her own stories, as are the lives and stories of people she grew up with in Eatonton, Georgia” (Washington 1993: 39). It can be argued therefore that all three writers build their narratives on incidents the authors have either witnessed themselves, or on events that have been told to them by a member of the community they are trying to represent.

3. Postscript

There remains one last point to be mentioned about the place of feminist literature in a study of the short story and its links to resistance, minority, postcolonialism, Marxism and realism. There are several issues which make that inclusion possible. First of all, Hanson points out that “The short story has been a particularly important form for black *women* writers in America” (1989: 5). Concerning realism, Sara Suleri argues that realism is “the genre in which African-American feminism continues to seek legitimation” (Suleri 1996: 341). Moreover, and to construct a link with the other theoretical grounds, Spivak argues

that women “in many societies have been relegated to the position of ‘Other’, marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, ‘colonized’” (quoted in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002: 172). Women, therefore, have a shared experience with the colonized and with the oppressed, and from this stems the need to stand up and tell the stories of the suffering black women have been experiencing, “to make their voices, their various voices, heard, and for whom literature is not an occasion for discourse among critics but is necessary nourishment for their people and one way by which they come to understand their lives better” (Christian 1996: 149).

In the case of Walker’s women, they have been the victims of both the ‘major,’ that is the ‘white’ in this case, and the black male who is the other source of power and authority in the life of the black female. The males, victims themselves of the oppression inflicted upon them by the white master, find their female partners, wives or even daughters, the medium through which they can assert their masculinity and their virility. The example Walker sets in “The Child Who Favored Daughter” illustrates the violence men inflict upon women to prove or restore the role their masculinity necessitates. Women in such a case become the victims of victims, the victims of both the political situation and the social one.

4. Thesis Structure

The first chapter, “Ghassan Kanafani’s Resistance & Displacement: A Study of Selected Short Stories”, investigates Kanafani’s use of the short story to tackle the issues affecting the Palestinian people both inside and outside Palestine. It also shows Kanafani’s commitment to the Palestinian cause. The themes of colonization, displacement, oppression and resistance which took place after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 are highlighted in his short stories. I aim to show the function of Kanafani’s fiction in

its call for change, its criticism of the political, social and economic conditions of the Palestinians, and its attempt to re-link the Palestinians everywhere with their land and history.

The second chapter, “Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Modes of Resistance: A Study of *Secret Lives*”, discusses Ngugi’s treatment of almost the same ideas discussed in Kanafani’s chapter but in the Kenyan context, as these are the core topics around which Ngugi’s works revolve. *Secret Lives* tackles the spuriousness of the civilizing mission of colonialism, the effects of postcolonialism on the Kenyan people, and the role played by Christianity and missionary education in facilitating colonialism. Ngugi examines the role of the Mau Mau, the meaning of ‘Home,’ detention camps, the black bourgeoisie, the importance of history and its role towards collective emancipation of the oppressed, and, most important of all the land question, the central point which underlies all other themes.

The third chapter, “A Reading of Alice Walker’s Feminist/Womanist Resistance: A Study of *In Love and Trouble & You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down*”, focuses on Alice Walker’s short stories and her attempts to voice the concerns of the oppressed black people. The central themes in Walker’s short stories are those of the oppression of African Americans, the racism and segregation from which they suffered, the Civil Rights Movement, the importance of the past and the return to one’s culture, and the double suffering of black women from black males and their white masters.

The fourth chapter, “Face to Face: Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Alice Walker”, compares the three authors directly, looking at the similarities and differences in their treatment of the issues affecting their societies, and how each has used the short story genre to express his/her views on the suffering, struggle and victory of the oppressed people in their communities. This chapter also makes clearer the points where the theoretical frameworks employed in this study intersect. I argue that minority literature

is in a way a kind of resistance literature, that the different 'post' titles used in this study fit under a bigger flag of 'postcolonialism', that the themes of Marxism have been present in the struggle of the people and in the messages of our authors' fiction as well, that realism was employed in painting a true picture of the suffering of the people in these contexts. Finally, I emphasize my main argument that the short story is a distinctively suited medium through which our authors can take their part in educating the oppressed among their people and call for change.

5. Conclusion

As the above discussion reveals, there are many points where resistance literature, minority literature, Marxism, postcolonialism and realism intersect. This, however, does not in any sense mean that there are no differences. Differences constitute an important part in the discussion of these literary modes. The short story in the three authors' works is a form of resistance literature, which is also by definition a minority literature, which operates in a postcolonial context from a Marxist perspective through techniques of realism. Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker only represent examples from these schools who have used their fiction as a means to speak to/for their people, to free them from all kinds of oppression and colonization, to form or preserve the national identity of their people, and to set for them a brighter future.

Chapter Two: Ghassan Kanafani's Resistance & Displacement: A Study of Selected Short Stories

1. Introduction

We should always remember that the Palestinians have nothing, neither passport nor territory nor nation, and if they laud and long for all those things it's because they see only the ghosts of them (Genet 1989: 85).

The Palestinians are a people who move a lot, who are always carrying bags from one place to another. This gives us a further sense of identity as a people. And we say it loudly enough, repetitiously enough, and stridently enough, strong in the knowledge that they haven't been able to get rid of us. It is a great feeling-call it positive or pessoptimistic-to wake up in the morning and say: "Well, they didn't bump me off" (Said 1994: 115).

Mahmud Darwish answers the question: What is home? "It's not a question that you can answer and continue on your way. It's your life and your cause bound up together. And before and after all of that, it's the essence of who you are" (Parmenter 1994: 96).

The 1948 Diaspora or *Nakbah* of the Palestinian people and the 1967 setback war (*Naksah*) left clear imprints on Palestinian literature and on the whole of Arabic literature. It is "perhaps the first event that may be accurately regarded as a turning point for modern

Arabic literature *on a pan-Arab scale*" (Jayyusi 1992: 16). The writings of Edward Said, Sahar Khalifah, Emile Habibi, Mahmud Darwish, Ghassan Kanafani and many others aim at conveying the catastrophe the Palestinian people suffered at that time.

These writers have always tried to highlight the Palestinian Question and the problems generated by the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 on Palestinian land. They have attempted to engage with such issues in their fiction as colonization, the meaning and importance of 'home', the relationship between 'man' and 'land', the exodus and its tragic effects on the personality, and the life of the displaced, oppression, dispossession, unemployment and poverty. These are the core themes around which Kanafani's fiction in particular revolves, and the aim of this chapter is to investigate his treatment of all these issues. In exploring these themes in Kanafani's short fiction, I will focus on the following short stories:¹⁵ "The Cake Vendor", "The Land of Sad Oranges", "Letter from Gaza", "A Present for the Holiday", "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad", and "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad." I will be studying Kanafani's employment of the short story genre in the first section, and subsequently investigating his work in terms of resistance and minority literature, then looking at post-displacement and the themes related to the new state of the Palestinian refugees as highlighted in these stories. I will trace Marxist ideas in Kanafani's work, and finally look at his fiction as a manifestation of realist literature.

Kanafani is concerned to present the most prominent dilemmas connected with the Palestinians who remained in Palestine, and with the Palestinian refugees who ended up in neighbouring Arab countries or in non-Arab countries. Cleary points out that "over 725,000 Palestinians were dispossessed" (2002: 40). Those who remained, suffered from

¹⁵ These short stories are chosen from Kanafani's four collections: *Death of Bed No. 12* (1961), *Land of Sad Oranges* (1963), *A World Not for Us* (1965), *Of Men and Rifles* (1968).

violence, abuse and unequal treatment by the Zionists¹⁶ and their military forces, they were “reduced in subsequent decades by both legal and practical discrimination to a condition of political, social and economic impotence” (Cleary 2002: 40), and those who were displaced suffered all kinds of injustices and poverty in the countries in which they settled. Kanafani’s fiction is, then, an attempt at articulating the new situation of all Palestinians, and an attempt to bring together the Palestinians inside and outside the borders of Palestine – the borders that remain indefinite to date even after sixty years of the 1948 diaspora. His fiction can also be read as an endeavour to re-connect the displaced Palestinians with their lost land. This link has not been lost, but Kanafani’s fiction presents the younger generation, those who have not witnessed displacement, with a vivid image of the suffering of their ancestors, and helps them remember the land and the meanings it had for their grandparents so that they might be able to do something to correct the wrongs done against their people. His stories can also be considered as his form of participation in his people’s struggle against the oppressive forces and the harsh conditions of life to which displacement has brought them. With this in mind, his fiction is an invitation to all the Palestinians who suffered and to all those who underwent a similar experience to try to change their situation by all possible means.

2. Kanafani’s Short Fiction: Themes & Concerns

A brief introduction to Kanafani’s collections of short stories is necessary. *Death of Bed No. 12* comprises stories which speak about general social issues as well as issues

¹⁶ It is important to agree upon a definition of Zionism at the beginning of this study. The definition I employ is the one explained in the Oxford English Dictionary. It defines Zionism as the “movement among modern Jews having for its object the assured settlement of their race upon a national basis in Palestine; after 1948, concerned chiefly with the development of the State of Israel,” and a Zionist is the supporter of Zionism. The main focus of Zionism was the creation of a national homeland for Jews in Palestine, and their strategy was first carried out by supporting the emigration of Jews to Palestine. Zionism was founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897.

See

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50291246?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=zionism&first=1&max_to_show=10

related to the Palestinian people in particular. “Mid May” and “The Cake Vendor” are the stories which tell about the 1948 *Nakbah*, and about the new state of the Palestinian refugees. Most of the stories in this collection, however, take place outside Palestine, especially in refugee camps in other Arab countries. The characters involved are often children who have had to grow up fast. They sacrifice their childhood as they become the ones who financially support their families and strive against poverty. *Land of Sad Oranges* is highly political in nature, and it could be said that all the stories in this collection tackle exclusively Palestinian issues thematically, similar to these in *Death of Bed No. 12*. *A World Not for Us* takes on social issues, and the stories have different settings as each of them takes place in a different country. The last collection, *Of Men and Rifles*, consists of eight tableaux (*lawhat*) that resemble chapters for a novel. There is indeed a sense of unity between these *lawhat*, as each one starts almost at the point where the previous one has ended. This last collection is divided into two sections. The stories in the first section differ completely from Kanafani’s other stories in a very important aspect. While most of Kanafani’s stories use 1948 and 1967 as temporal frames of reference, these stories take place pre-1948. This is not the only difference, however. These stories also involve “in some way a child, a child who, though victimized by the structures of authority that dominate the social and political world he lives in, nonetheless, by assuming new roles, participates personally in the struggle toward a new and different kind of future” as Riley and Harlow argue (Kanafani 2000: 14). While we see children in other stories struggling against bad conditions of life, the child in these stories participates in a resistance movement in addition to his struggle against the social order. The other major difference concerns the setting of the stories. While most of Kanafani’s stories happen in Palestinian camps in the Diaspora, these stories take place inside Palestine.

Kanafani’s collections of short stories can also be analyzed in relation to his

development as a writer and of his political consciousness. Siddiq (1984) has divided Kanafani's development into three main phases. The first one spans the period between 1956 and 1965, the second is between 1965 and 1968, and the third starts in 1968 and ends with Kanafani's assassination in 1972. In the first phase the ideas of loss, death and impotence pervade Kanafani's writing. The second phase of Kanafani's political development is the phase of 'continuity and change' as it is labelled by Siddiq. The third phase is characterized by the political development of the author as more logical ideas are presented in his writings since the emotional aspect of Kanafani's fiction becomes more attenuated. Fayha Abd al-Hadi has also noted that Kanafani's stories written after 1965 are much more sophisticated in terms of insight, style and content (1990: 185).¹⁷ While in earlier stories certain themes were vague, these same themes have been revisited and made clearer in later stories. We can take an example here about the difference between Jews and Zionists. While there is a conflation between the two terms in "The Land of Sad Oranges," these are clearly distinct in "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," as will be discussed later.

It should also be emphasized that Kanafani is known for his insistence on taking his stories from the lips of the people who have undergone the experiences he describes. This helps authenticate Kanafani's stories and the incidents related, so that the stories become a live record of the suffering and struggle of the Palestinian people, an important feature that allows the future generations, those who have not witnessed either the Diaspora or the horrendous state of refugees, to learn about these states and to sympathize, appreciate, and then plan and work for a better future that will accomplish the missions of the struggle their ancestors have waged. There is also a strong element of autobiography in Kanafani's fiction since he has witnessed the *Nakbah*, and all the problems related to it. His short

¹⁷ All quotes from this source are my own translation from Arabic.

stories and all of his fiction and literary work are thus part of his participation in his people's struggle, a participation that was so dangerous for the enemy that they felt it was imperative to eliminate the spread of Kanafani's ideas by assassinating him.

In what follows, I have offered detailed textual analysis of Kanafani's short stories because of the lack of criticism in English. I believe this to be the first comprehensive study of his short fiction in English.

Kanafani, like Ngugi and Walker, used the short story genre as a medium through which to speak about his people and the problems which confronted them, to record their experiences, criticize the forces that oppressed them, and call for the change such committed literature seeks to achieve, the change such oppressed displaced people need to achieve liberty. Kanafani's fiction is committed to the Palestinian cause. His commitment is not enigmatic because as Jayyusi argues all Palestinians are "committed by their very identity to a life determined by events and circumstances arising out of their own rejection of captivity and national loss ... For the writer to contemplate an orientation divorced from political life is to belie reality, to deny experience; for to engross oneself for too long in 'normal' everyday experiences is to betray one's own life and one's own people" (1992: 3). Hence, commitment in such circumstances is not a choice, it is an obligation.

Kanafani opted for the short story genre for various important reasons. First of all, in Arab writing the "short story had been developing steadily [after 1948], growing in sophistication as more and more educated writers emerged" (Jayyusi 1992: 18). Jayyusi continues to argue that Palestinian fiction in the fifties "concentrated more on the short story than on the novel – a reversal of the early fictional situation in Palestine" (1992: 24). Secondly, the short story has its ancestry in the "long tradition of fiction in Arabic (both oral and written) that has been handed down over the centuries ... the tales of love and romance ... the art of the anecdote, the many heroic folk romances ... and other folk

stories memorized by ordinary people...” (Jayyusi 1992: 11). This point introduces similarities with Ngugi and Walker, as they too lived in story-telling societies. Furthermore, the short story as a form is usually the first choice writers experiment with, as discussed elsewhere. They then shift towards the novel, and that may explain why we find that themes discussed in short stories later appear in novels by the same author. However, as Kilpatrick argues, “The combination of themes which have classical echoes with a modern consciousness of form and willingness to experiment in it hardly exists in other Arab novelists’ work, it is partly because of these qualities that Kanafani’s fiction is among the most interesting in modern Arabic literature” (1976: 64). Hence comparing Kanafani with short story writers from different cultures, but working in a similar socio-political context, and with similar authors, like Ngugi and Walker, is more revealing than comparing him with other Arab writers.

The defining features of the short story highlighted in the introductory chapter are conspicuous in Kanafani’s fiction. First of all, in relation to ‘brevity’, Kanafani focuses on representing in full an incident in the life of a chosen character. Each story written about the refugees, for example, shows through a single incident the miserable life of one of those refugees after displacement, the life of the camps and the character’s reaction to such a new life, as we shall shortly see in “Land of the Sad Oranges.” The intensity principle is also at work in Kanafani’s stories: every word serves an objective, and the climax of the story is always reached in the shortest possible way. Even if delayed sometimes by extra information as in “Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad,” that delay is necessary since the information supplied reinforces the meaning of the action that the story’s end witnesses. Unity of impression is also observable in Kanafani’s short stories, and this depends on the kind of reader addressed.

Kanafani has taken up a completely new way of telling as far as Arabic literature is

concerned. As Yusef Idris points out, he takes the first steps towards the modernity of Arabic literature (Kanafani 1973: 26). His short stories take several forms as there are relatively conventional stories, personal diary stories, and stories in a letter form which allow Kanafani to control the whole narrative. These stories are also distinguished by the simple style and everyday language in which they are narrated. A simple style in which everything is straightforward, and in which there are no confusions is a necessity for committed literature because of audience issues. If Kanafani wants his Palestinian readers to understand his messages clearly and act according to the way he envisages, he must write in a simple style because their political situation has not allowed them much access to education. The other targeted audience is the wider Arab one, for whom, because of the difference between Palestinian and other dialects, a clear style had to be employed. Kanafani has therefore used short sentences and everyday spoken language to narrate his stories. The stories are usually comprehensible without much difficulty on the part of the reader. The only responsibility Kanafani leaves for the reader is to fill the gaps left in the stories. These gaps are the ones that will ensure the reader's involvement in the story, as in "Letter from Gaza." Another defining characteristic of Kanafani's use of the short story form is the presence in most of them of two lines of narrative that meet at a certain point in the story, in "A Present for the Holiday," and "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," for example. Another remarkable Kanafanian technique is his narrative focalization through a child's perspective. The use of the child character serves two main objectives in Kanafani's fiction. First, a child character can present the misery in its truest picture, simple form. The suffering of a child is something that inevitably draws the attention of the reader. Second, a child character is a symbol of hope and optimism even if represented in a miserable state. The hope lies in the younger generation's ability to undertake the responsibility of changing the present bleak situation. Kanafani believes in

youth's aptitude for performing the desired change. Abd al-Hadi argues that these children are the seeds for the coveted revolution (1990: 204). Majedah Hamoud notes that the child characters have been uprooted from their world of innocence and happiness and thrown into the world of adults where they have to fight against an ungraceful poverty (2005: 206).

A possible criticism of Kanafani's use of the short story genre is his choice of peasant characters to express highly developed ideological and political themes, as we shall see in Mansur's case. The choice of peasant characters eliminates the character's role in the story and gives authority to Kanafani himself. Siddiq points out that

Kanafani's positive characters invariably come from the poor and downtrodden segment of the Palestinian society, especially the peasantry. Often illiterate, these characters could not be made to articulate in logical terms a sound and comprehensive political consciousness without betraying the hand of the author (1984: 9).

When Kanafani does this, he inevitably sounds heavy-handed. An example is easy to trace in "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad." Mansur is a teenager, yet he speaks in a tone and uses a language that do not reflect his real age. We see this in his reply to his uncle about the significance of the twenty bullets he has got:

"So with twenty cartridges you're going to attack the citadel at Safad."

He repeated his uncle's mocking sentence which kept coming back into his mind ... All the while he was thinking: "*If every man in Galilee took*

twenty cartridges and went to the citadel in Safad, we'd smash it to pieces in a minute" (Kanafani 2000: 53; my emphasis).

The political tone of this passage shows Kanafani in Mansur's position, speaking on his behalf. Hamoud, whom I disagree with on this point, notes that Kanafani's enthusiasm for Mansur makes him endow the latter with the language of adults (2005: 214). I believe that Kanafani, in such an incident, is obliged to speak on Mansur's behalf or the whole conception of the story will be inexpressible. The previous point shows Kanafani to be sometimes excessively heavy-handed, as mentioned above. Jayyusi argues that Kanafani had to "struggle with the heavy weight of commitment," and this explains some unevenness in his writing (1992: 30). The last point to be discussed in this regard is that although Kanafani has often left spaces and gaps in the form of ellipsis ("...") in the narrative to be filled by the reader, as in "A Present for the Holiday," in other stories, and especially at stories' endings, we can note that he has provided all the information related to the situation narrated and the character involved. A good example of this is found in his detailed description of Mansur and the actions he takes in "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad."

The above discussion shows how Kanafani has used the short story genre as a form of resistance to engage in the struggle of his people. The features of resistance literature as traced in Kanafani's short fiction, hence, need to be highlighted.

Harlow emphasizes that the term "resistance" (*muqawamah*) "was first applied in a description of Palestinian literature in 1966 by the Palestinian writer and critic Ghassan Kanafani in his study *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*" (1987: 2). The fact that Kanafani himself coined this term makes it a convincing one to apply to his own fiction. Kanafani's stories do not only record or re-tell certain incidents which the

Palestinians faced, they also, either explicitly or implicitly, call for action in order to change the state in which the Palestinians find themselves. In its call for change, the themes Kanafani's fiction discusses form part of the general agenda of the Palestinian resistance movements. Again, it becomes obvious that his fiction is also his arena of struggle, his pen thus completes in one way or another the role the gun performs in the actual battle ground. Let us now trace the main features of resistance literature in Kanafani's short stories. We will start by Kanafani's use of a historical framework, then we will look at his use of language, and will finally study the collective nature of Kanafani's characters.

The use of a historical framework performs the role of relating the past of the people to their current life. The past with both its successes and failures acts as a beacon for the people in their existing struggle, they can draw lessons from the past; lessons which might be applicable to solve some of their problems. Moreover, certain lessons might also act as an avenue into future solutions. Harlow in *After Lives* argues that "Kanafani's narrative presents a critical reinterpretation of the past at the same time as opening up interpretive possibilities affecting the historical determinations of the future" (1996: 54).

A close look at Kanafani's short stories shows that the overarching historical framework is that of the debacle of 1948 and the loss of the Palestinian land. One of the best examples of Kanafani's presentation of this aspect of history is found in "The Land of Sad Oranges."

In this story Kanafani's investigates "the haunting physical and psychological details of [the] transformation from a well-established, middle-class Palestinian family to homeless refugees" (Siddiq 1984: 6). It starts with a vivid description of the most painful moments of the exodus etched in the narrator's memory. This sorrowful feeling is linked

with the image of the lost land symbolized in the orange groves, a central image in the story:

I sat silently, with my chin between my knees and my arms wrapped round them. The groves of orange trees followed each other in succession along the side of the road. We were all eaten up with fear. The lorry panted over the damp earth, and the sound of distant shots rang out like a farewell (Kanafani 1999: 76).

The sitting posture expresses the psychological state of the narrator as fear fills his heart, and the orange groves, the symbol of the Palestinian land are the last things that he can see and remember.

The orange as a symbol of life stands at the outset of the story as orange trees cover the whole of Palestine. Later, this symbol takes on multiple meanings as it is associated with sadness and the crying of parents. Kanafani adds more significance to this symbol to emphasize its centrality to the story as the title itself suggests. Therefore, the loss of orange groves means the loss of land, the fertility of the land is embodied in the tears that everyone sheds at the moment of departure:

[The women] picked up the oranges, and the sound of their weeping reached our ears. I thought then that oranges were something dear and these big, clean fruits were beloved objects in our eyes. When the women had bought some oranges ... your father climbed down and stretched his hand to take one. He began to gaze at it in silence, and then burst into tears like a despairing child (Kanafani 1999: 76).

The land and the orange groves have thus become interconnected and being forced to leave one presumes being forced to leave the other.

The change of status from land-owners to mere strangers in the land of others implies the trauma of losing the land. Through the narrator, Kanafani manipulates this change to bring the psychological consequences of the exodus home to the reader. The trip that the narrator takes from Acre to Sidon in Lebanon is the transformation process. The movement of the lorry towards Lebanon means nothing but the added distance between these people and their land, the land of oranges, as the narrator relates to his brother:

[I] looked towards the long line of lorries entering Lebanon, rounding the bends in the roads and putting more and more distance between [us] and the land of the oranges, I too burst into a storm of weeping. Your mother was still looking silently at the orange. And all the orange trees that your father had abandoned to the Jews shone in his eyes, all the well-tended orange trees that he had bought one by one were printed on his face and reflected in the tears that he could not control in front of the officer at the police post (Kanafani 1999: 76).

The loss of the orange groves is the loss of happiness, of land and of everything that has meaning for these people.

The reason that Kanafani makes this loss of the land so traumatic lies in the nature of the relationship between the Palestinian people and their land. For Palestinians, the land is not just a place to live, it means much more than that. It is life itself as the equation is land equals life, and vice versa. This equation is amplified by Fawaz Turki (1988). In an

interview with an English journalist asking why Palestinians insist on going back to Palestine, Abu Samir, an old Palestinian man, answers:

The land is where our ancestors were born, died, and are now buried. We are from that land. The stuff of our bones and our soul comes from there. We and the soil are one. Every grain of my land carries the memories of all our ancestors within it. And every part of me carries the history of that land within it. The land of others does not know me. I am a stranger to it and it is a stranger to me. *Ardi-aardi ... My land is my nobility* (Turki 1988: 49-50).

Kanafani's story reveals the real essence of this relationship between people and land. The narrator has an extreme sense of fear the first moment he becomes a refugee. The story also shows the new state of poverty and homelessness the Palestinian refugees face.

Poverty increases the narrator's father's sense of loss and it is only the hope that the Arab armies are preparing to restore Palestine to its rightful owners that brings some light to the man's miserable life. The passage which describes the old man's hope is striking:

At exactly midnight your father poked me with his foot as I lay asleep and said in a voice vibrant with hope: "Get up and see for yourself as the Arab armies enter Palestine"... All of us ... panted as we ran like madmen. ... [Your father] had begun to race after the lorries like a small boy. He was calling out to them. He was giving hoarse shouts and gasping for breath ... Meanwhile your father, racing along despite his fifty years, pulled

cigarettes out of his pocket to throw to the soldiers and went on shouting to them ... his cheeks were wet with tears (Kanafani 1999: 78-9).

The hope of returning to the land has taken over the old man. The principal idea Kanafani emphasizes here is the way the Palestinians identify with their homeland. The land symbolizes the national identity the Palestinian refugees struggle to achieve in order to overcome the gap the 1948 exodus has created. It is then the lost meaning that the Palestinians are trying to recover, as Harlow notes: "The Palestinians have tenaciously preserved the memory of that past, which acts as a form of reinforcement in an unenviable and a strong assertion of national and personal identity" (1987: 73). The haunting image of the orange groves signifies the haunting image of the land.

However, the narrator's father's aforementioned hope is soon to vanish as the Arab armies fail to accomplish their mission. Here, it is imperative to assert an important idea Kanafani's story conveys, it is the people of the same land who should restore it. The news about the victories the Arab armies are achieving on the battlefield "makes the disillusionment only more bitter when the truth finally transpires" (Siddiq 1984: 7). The old wound of losing the land opens again and it is the fatal blow the old man receives as it transforms him again from a temporary refugee into a permanent one. The way out of this situation seems bleak. As Abd al-Hadi (1990: 200) argues, the past this father has been dreaming of has also transformed into a bond. It is the bond that has paralyzed the old man's thoughts and blocked his way. The father, nonetheless, fails to achieve the solution he thought of, killing his sons and committing suicide, and he degenerates into a state of inertia and depression. This state is the direct result of the inability to change the present situation of the refugees.

The lifelessness of the father's image at the story's end exposes the real effects of the dislocation he has suffered:

When my glance fell on your father's face, which was twitching with impotent fury, I saw at the same moment the black revolver lying on the low table, and beside it an orange. The orange was dried up and shriveled (Kanafani 1999: 80).

Thus, the image of the orange which stands a symbol of life at the beginning of the story undergoes a transformation too. It becomes a symbol of death. The orange thus carries a double meaning as Kanafani shows. It is a symbol of life only when it is rooted in its land and it dies when it is taken away: "according to a peasant who used to cultivate [the oranges], [they] would shrivel up if a change occurred [or if] they were watered by a strange hand" (Kanafani 1999: 80). Through this linkage between the image of the father and the orange, Kanafani asserts the commonly acknowledged belief that the movement away from the land brings nothing but death, loss and impotence.

"Letter from Gaza" is another story in which 1948 provides the historical frame of reference. The incident of the story occurs in Gaza Strip which was not yet under Israeli control at the time, as Israel took hold of Gaza and the West Bank after the 1967 war. The story takes the form of a letter sent from the narrator to his friend, Mustafa, who lives in Sacramento. The story is narrated in the present tense, and the epistolary narrative technique makes it possible for the author to reflect directly on the incidents of the story, by using the personal pronoun, and to shift between the present and the past, sometimes to stress or generalize certain ideas or thoughts, as Abd al-Hadi argues (1990: 206).

Although in the first part of the story the narrator waits to follow his friend to Sacramento, the change of circumstances enlightens him to stick to the right path as the end of the story suggests. The mentioning of this change at the outset of the story serves to reveal the importance of this theme as it is going to recur again throughout the story and at its end:

It'll strike you as rather odd when I proclaim this news to you – and make no doubt about it, I feel *no hesitation* at all, in fact I am *pretty well positive* that I have never seen things so clearly as I do now. *No* my friend, I have changed my mind. *I won't follow you* to “the land where there is greenery, water, and lovely faces,” as you wrote. *No, I'll stay here, and I won't ever leave* (Kanafani 1999: 111; my emphasis).

As the passage shows, the narrator's determination to remain in his land is emphasized, and this is what will make the change in the rest of the story.

The question the narrator poses at Mustafa's departure: “Why don't we abandon this Gaza and flee? Why don't we?” helps in showing the conflict in the characters' thoughts as the narrator feels his friend is not completely happy about his departure. The conflict is the result of these peoples' relation with their land. In spite of the fact that Gaza does not provide for them financially, their love for it is unquestionable; it supports its people emotionally.

Kanafani uses the above-mentioned point to state his belief about the notion of one's relation to family, and one's relation to land as well. Although the bombardment of Gaza has made the narrator determined to leave, it does not affect his whole perception of the meaning and importance of the city. It adds to the inner conflict of the narrator but it

changes nothing. The passage which shows the narrator's decision to leave for California exhibits this conflict:

I was going to leave this Gaza behind me and go to California where I would live for myself ... which had suffered so long. I hated Gaza and its inhabitants. Everything in the amputated town reminded me of failed pictures painted in a gray by a sick man. Yes, I would send my mother and my brother's widow and her children a meagre sum to help them to live, but I would liberate myself from this last tie too, there in green California, far from the reek of defeat that for seven years had filled my nostrils ... I must flee! (Kanafani 1999: 112-3).

The conflict is then the result of the 1948 defeat. Besides, this passage shows another repeated Kanafanian theme: the absence of men. Men are either killed in the 1948 war or they have joined the *Fedayeen*. The narrator's brother has been killed in that war and therefore, it has been the narrator's responsibility to take care of his brother's widow and children. This case is a typical Palestinian one.

The most important theme the above passage highlights is the point of one's relation with the land. This relationship is defined by the questions the narrator asks himself. These questions are seen as a soliloquy which shows the inner conflict the narrator feels as to what connects him, and his fellow Palestinians, to this land of theirs:

What is this ill-defined tie we had with Gaza that blunted our enthusiasm for flight? Why didn't we analyze the matter in such a way as to give it a

clear meaning? Why didn't we leave this defeat with its wounds behind us and move on to a brighter future that would give us deeper consolation!

Why? We didn't exactly know (Kanafani 1999: 113).

The search for a clear meaning here resembles the search for a new beginning. It is Kanafani's invitation to overcome that haunting sense of defeat in the 1948 war and to start a new life, on this land and in no other place.¹⁸

This passage also underscores the central importance of 1948 to Kanafani's fiction, in which "the time of the action of many stories is implicitly indicated in relation to 1948. How to come to grips with that traumatic experience, how to reunite the erstwhile and hopelessly distant past with the seemingly everlasting oppressive present" (Siddiq 1984: xiii). The link between the past and the present in order to create a better future is clearly observable in the story.

In spite of the strongly established relationship with the land, the narrator has made a voluntary departure to Kuwait. It is only voluntary in the sense that it might bring a more secure financial future. This theme of voluntary departure, nevertheless, does not eliminate the effect of estrangement. The narrator describes his life in Kuwait as dull and vacuous. He waits impatiently for the moment of return to Gaza because it is only this moment of return that gives meaning to his life. The definition of the tie with the land will be incomplete if that return does not take place.

¹⁸ This idea of relation to the land is a common one among all Palestinian writers. Turki describes the essence of this relationship:

Everything, in the end came to be seen as emerging from the womb of *el ard*: the origin of our mythology of hope, the vivid immediacies of daily life, metaphoric meditations on meaning, associative context of reference, as well as acoustic and tactile sensations. At every point of development, from childhood to old age, Palestinians lived on the land. Lived on it. Lived with it. Lived off it. From it they acquired their memories and their moods and their ego ideal and their core concept of their place in existence. The land always contained the actuality of the past and the potentiality of the present. Without it, very simple, a Palestinian could not establish his or her identity (1988: 65).

The moment of return gives rise to the next incident the story is based on. Upon his arrival, the narrator has been asked by his late brother's wife to visit her wounded daughter Nadia at the hospital. The insertion of this incident into the narrative has two dimensions that we should consider. On the one hand, it reflects Kanafani's preoccupation with presenting the world of children miserably affected by the conflict. Nadia is only thirteen years old. At this age, she resembles Hamid in "The Cake Vendor" and the narrator of "The Land of Sad Oranges". Here, Kanafani uses his narrator to explicate his love for this generation of Palestinian children: "I loved Nadia from habit, the same habit that made me love all that generation which had been so brought up on defeat and displacement that it had come to think that a happy life was a kind of social deviation" (Kanafani 1999: 113-4). On the other hand, this hospital visit is the second plot the narrative uses to intensify the message the story tries to convey.

The description the narrator gives about Nadia in her hospital room is very indicative, suggestive of a world of saintly, tortured children:

There was a profound silence in her wide eyes and a tear always shining in the depths of her black pupils. Her face was calm and still but eloquent as the face of a tortured prophet might be. Nadia was still a child, but she seemed more than a child, much more, and older than a child, much older (Kanafani 1999: 114).

The presents the narrator has brought to Nadia cannot abolish her sense of sadness. The narrator's lie about the red trousers intensifies the state of loss and grief this girl has been through and this also reminds us of the narrator's lie about his dead brother in "The Cake Vendor," as we shall see later. It is as if Kanafani cannot approach the world of his child

characters except through a lie. The moment that reveals Nadia's loss is the climax the narrative aims at:

Say something, Nadia! Don't you want the red trousers?

She lifted her gaze to me and made as if to speak, but then she stopped, gritted her teeth, and I heard her voice again, coming from far away.

Uncle!

She stretched out her hand, lifted the white coverlet with her fingers, and pointed to her leg, amputated from the top of the thigh (Kanafani 1999: 114).

It is this specific moment that causes him to change his decision, mentioned at the outset of the story.

The grief the narrator shares with Nadia has made it essential that a new beginning should be aimed at. For this, everything the narrator sees after looking at Nadia's amputated leg looks completely new:

The blazing sun filled the streets with the color of blood. And Gaza was brand new ... This Gaza in which we lived and with whose good people we had spent seven years of defeat was something new. It seemed to me just a beginning ... I imagined that the main street that I walked along on the way back home was only the beginning of a long, long road leading to Safad. Everything in this Gaza throbbed with sadness, which was not

confined to weeping. It was a challenge; more than that, it was something like reclamation of the amputated leg! (Kanafani 1999: 115)

This passage is rich in symbolism: firstly, the sun. Kanafani uses the sun as a symbol in his novels *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left to You*. It represents either death or salvation. However, in this story, the sun acquires a new colour and that directs attention to the new life the narrator describes, new sun equals new life here. Secondly, there is the long road leading to Safad. As we know, Safad belongs to the land the Israelis occupied in the 1948 war. As such, this road leads to the reclamation of the lost land as the end of this passage clearly indicates. The amputated leg, finally, is the lost land that Palestinians should restore.

The effect this incident has on the narrator leads him to change his decision, and this change becomes a comprehensive invitation for all the Palestinians. It is an invitation that all estranged Palestinians should accept. They cannot follow that invitation unless they come back to their land. For that reason, the story ends where it has actually started. The decision mentioned at the outset of the story is repeated but it carries here an added significance:

No my friend, I won't come to Sacramento, and I've no regrets ... This obscure feeling that you had as you left Gaza, this small feeling must grow into a giant deep within you. It must expand, you must seek it in order to find yourself, here among the ugly debris of defeat. I won't come to you. But you, return to us! Come back, to learn from Nadia's leg, amputated from the top of the thigh, what life is and what existence is worth. Come back, my friend! We are all waiting for you (Kanafani 1999: 115).

This passage portrays the generalization of the message and that of Mustafa. He is no longer the only person the letter is sent to; he becomes a representative of all those Palestinians who live outside the borders of Palestine.

The second historical landmark in Kanafani's fiction is associated with the years 1967-1968. The year 1968 is very important for the Palestinian people and for Palestinian literature as well. Its importance lies in the fact that it is the immediate aftermath of the 1967 June war; what Arabs used to call the year of *Al-Naksah* (setback) when compared with the 1948 *Al-Nakbah* (disaster). The June war increased the sense of defeat for the Palestinians, as Israel gained control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In addition, this war weakened the feeling of hope the establishment of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization), and the launching of its armed struggle in 1965, had created. The historical and political aspects of this critical period in the Palestinian people's lives altered their existence, as Riley and Harlow have noted (Kanafani 2000: 14).

Kanafani's stories of 1968 are an expression of the main concerns the Palestinians had at that period. We can here take the example of "A Present for the Holiday," which takes the form of a narrator's recollections after receiving a phone call. Narrated in the first person, the story shifts between the present and the past tenses. Transitions from past to present and vice-versa take place according to the point of view expressed in the story. In such a way, the narrative connects the past with the present to express the continuation of the plight the Palestinian people are going through.

By mentioning the Chinese writer, Sun Tsi, at the outset of the story, the story gives a kind of general philosophical background for its main points: "He wrote that war is subterfuge and that victory is in anticipating everything and making your enemy expect nothing. He wrote that war is surprise. He wrote that war is an attack on ideals. He wrote ..." (Kanafani 2000: 43). The 1967 war is a surprise and the defeat it brought is

unexpected. The spaces left at the end of this indirect quotation, moreover, invite the reader to think more deeply about the meaning of war, with the aim of getting the reader involved in the narrative.

This is not the only technique used in the story to ensure the reader's involvement. There is also the repetition of "But all that is beside the point ...". Despite the fact that this recurrent line distracts the flow of events, it serves as a moment for a pause for the reader to rethink what s/he has just read. It is important to note the temporal division of the narrative. "But all that is beside the point ..." is repeated after each paragraph in the first part of the story. However, when in the course of the action, the narrator recollects the year 1949 and life in the camps, the repeated line is no longer there. It only appears again at the end of the story as a point of closure for the whole narrative, and this emphasizes the continuity of the Palestinian people's calamity. Therefore, the "recurrent refrain" "But all that is beside the point ..." punctuates the narrator's recollections and "suspends the movement from past to future in the meaninglessness of the present," as Harlow and Riley note (Kanafani 2000: 16).

After recollecting an incident that happened nineteen years earlier, the narrator mentally returns to the present. Through this trip Kanafani emphasizes the continuity of the situation. Furthermore, the psychological effect of the telephone call, as will be explained later, and of this incident increases at the story's end: "the bells began to clang in a dreadful emptiness. I returned from my trip into the past which continued to throb in my head, and I ..." (Kanafani 2000: 46). In a way, Kanafani has allowed the caller's voice to invade the narrator's mind in order to express the bleakness of the situation and its continuity, emphasized by the open-endedness of the conclusion.

The third historical framework traced in Kanafani's fiction is the pre-1948 one. A good example of the use of pre-1948 history can be seen in "The Child Borrows His

Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad," written in 1965. The relationship between 1965 and the period immediately preceding 1948 is of paramount importance. On one hand, the years before 1948 witnessed the Palestinian revolution and its struggle against the British Mandate and the Zionist Movement. 1965, on the other hand, witnessed the launching of the PLO armed struggle. Kanafani associates both dates with the idea of the renewal of struggle against the oppressing forces. Although the pre-1948 struggle ends in defeat, there is a growing optimism in the 1965 struggle and this is one of the main points the story conveys. Siddiq points out that this work has a "relatively more optimistic outlook ... as a result of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964 and the launching of armed struggle the following year" (1984: 89). By making a connection between these two dates, notes Abd al-Hadi, the positive past mingles with the revolutionary present to shape the future (1990: 50).

A close reading shows that the story is rich in terms of symbolism. First of all, the title of the story puts forward two of the most significant symbols the story employs. The 'child' is the first symbol. Although 'Mansur' is a seventeen-year-old young man, the title of the story presents him as a child. However, because this 'child' is connected with the other symbol, 'the gun,' he is no longer a child. He attains the feature of manhood as he carries the gun, the icon of struggle associated with maturity. Through such a linkage, Kanafani has enabled his character to act according to the message of the story. Nevertheless, we should not forget that it is only after Mansur carries the gun that he has been elevated to a suitable rank for taking part in the pre-1948 fight. This 'child' is then symbolically a man although he is actually a teenager. The link between 'man' and 'gun' is further intensified in the title of the collection *Of Men and Rifles*.

The name Kanafani has given to his character is symbolic as well. 'Mansur' as an Arabic name literally means 'victor' or 'winner.' Hamoud argues that Kanafani has

doubled the symbol concerning Mansur. He has given him the qualities of being a 'child' as the family's youngest son, and he has given him the name 'Mansur' with its positive connotations. The positive connotations of the adjective accentuate the positive meaning of the name. They work together to produce the positive action of the child. The description of Mansur shows that he is a real man, willing to take action by himself. The difficulties through which he passes to get the gun in order to participate in the skirmish at Safad and the difficulties of the journey itself stand for his transformation into adulthood. Mansur's uncle's words of warning about the difficulty of the way serve to emphasize the righteousness and the difficulty of the route Mansur has chosen. While his uncle, Abu al-Hassan, keeps reminding him of the formidable challenge he is about to take, Mansur's determination is never thwarted: "The path between Majd al-Kurum and Safad is so rocky that even the goats find it difficult. A child like you will die in the thorns before he gets halfway there" (Kanafani 2000: 47).

It is also evident that by describing the 'fear' that Mansur feels twice during the story, Kanafani imparts an aura of realism to the situation, because one cannot imagine a youngster taking part in armed struggle without having a feeling of fear. However, this feeling is soon abolished by the presence of the gun: "Fear overcame him for just a moment, but he held the gun even tighter to his chest" and "once again was taken by a sudden fear. But the gun was there, resting on his legs like a legendary thing, quiet and unknown, awakened in the heart of man" (Kanafani 2000: 48-51). The gun then works not only as an instrument for fighting but as a source of safety as well. There is thus a link between the physical use of the gun and the psychological effect of its presence on Mansur's character.

The above description of the gun leads us to consider the importance of the gun and its meaning as the second most significant symbol in the story. Abd al-Hadi notes that the

gun has always been a positive symbol for the Palestinian resistance movement, and this symbol is always present in Kanafani's fiction (1990: 48). In addition, Harlow comments that the gun is "one of the conventional and stereotyped symbols most commonly associated with Palestinians [as] the soviet-made Kalashnikov rifles [stand as] emblems of bravado and daring" (1987: 86). The essence of this relationship explains the sense of safety that Mansur gets from the gun. Kanafani's repeated use of this symbol clearly exhibits its importance. For example, in "The Bride", a man becomes mad as he loses his gun. It is taken away by an official to be inspected. He spends the rest of his life wandering the earth looking for his gun. The efforts made by the man to get hold of the gun increase its significance: he agrees to marry his only daughter to an old, mean, rich man just to get the dowry and buy a gun. In this particular story, the gun is turned into the symbol of a bride, a woman, implying that the essence of the relationship between the Palestinian and his gun is comparable to that between a man and a woman. By such a connection of symbols, the 'gun' or the 'woman' takes the wider reference of the 'the land.'¹⁹ The inter-connection of these symbols presents 'woman,' 'gun,' and 'land' as inter-changeable notions in Kanafani's fiction.

The significance of the gun does not end there, however; the gun is also humanized in the story. The way Mansur – and other characters in different stories – treat the gun emphasizes the strong relationship between man and gun. Mansur deals with his gun as he deals with a human being: "He stroked the gun's stock and smiled weakly: 'The piastres went for the cartridges ... you know that'" (Kanafani 2000: 51).²⁰ At another point in the story Mansur addresses his gun as if speaking to a beloved woman giving it the attributes of goodness and faithfulness: "you're a *good* rifle ... and your aim almost never misses.

¹⁹ In Palestinian literature and in Arabic literature in general, it is common to refer to one's homeland as a woman. One's love for his woman as such symbolizes his love for his/her land.

²⁰ The meaning has been weakened in the translation of the story. Mansur is described as tapping the arm of the gun as if tapping someone's shoulder, and this gives a human dimension for the relationship between man and gun.

The important thing is that you're *faithful*. And your bullets come out of only one place, I hope" (Kanafani 2000: 52; my emphasis). Such addresses to the gun recur during the story. We find Mansur again talking to it/her: "If I *wanted* a gun of my own, why did I borrow you from Uncle Abu al-Hassan? You better be really good with me if you want me to borrow you again" (Kanafani 2000: 52-3).²¹ Hamoud points out that this idea of humanizing the gun is one of the most aesthetically appealing qualities of Kanafani's fiction. Through such a strong relationship between man and gun, the gun is transformed into a friend, not a killing machine or an inhuman object as it acquires certain attributes that are usually connected to the human being (2005: 234).

This idea of humanizing the gun makes us consider the type of character Kanafani has enabled to carry the gun. In most of Kanafani's stories, as in this story, we find that it is the peasants who always carry guns to defend the land. Uncle Abu al-Hassan treats his gun as he treats the olive trees of his field:

His uncle *probably* treated this gun the way he treated the trees in his little field, trimming the roots and stripping off the branches in order to graft on new ones, raising and pruning and filling in the gaps ... You see what he did with this rifle in the last quarter of a century. Maybe this had something to do with why he called it a cannon, but for whatever reason it had lost most of the distinguishing characteristic of a rifle. It sounded like thunder when you fired it (Kanafani 2000: 52; my emphasis).²²

²¹ The meaning of this sentence is altered by the translator. The Arabic meaning is: If I had my own gun, I would not have to borrow you from Uncle Abu al-Hassan.

²² The word 'probably' is not meant in the Arabic text. The use of this word gives the possibility of the action while in fact the action is described as definite.

Choosing a peasant character intensifies the relationship between man and gun as the land is added to that equation. It is the peasants who know the value of the land more than others. Turki explicates this relationship on behalf of an old Palestinian noting that man and soul are one and that one gets his/her soul from that land and that one's land is one's nobility. A man working on his land is seen as if making love to his wife, as Turki notes in *Soul in Exile*.²³

It is really the peasants who defended the land and for that reason they are always present in the political and fictional backgrounds of that period. The intellectuals were mostly absent from that scene. This point is made clear in the story through Dr. Qassim's character. The difference between Mansur and Dr. Qassim corresponds to the discrepancy between the peasant's role and that of the intellectual. While Mansur is described as deeply connected to the fields, to the land,

This little one loves the fields ... The fields of olive trees appeared before him bathed in a holy light: "The child loves the fields. As soon as he comes home from school, he plunges straight into the canal up to his knees. He has real farmer's hands ... He's always sneaking out of the house at night to go and sleep under the olive trees ... (Kanafani 2000: 56)

his elder brother prefers city life. In spite of all the sacrifices his father has made for him, he insists on opening his practice in Haifa where he might satisfy his sexual and materialistic needs. When we know that Abu Qassim has sold some of his olive groves, we appreciate

²³ "To see Palestinian peasants on the land, or those remnants of them left on the West Bank of the River Jordan, or in Gaza, is not to see men and women working or tilling the land, but men and women making love to it, possessed of it, possessed by it, in a sensual absorption at once erotic and spiritual-and to have a glimpse of the outrage they would carry within them at its loss" (Turki 1988: 66).

the hope that he has invested in his son: “Just so that people would one day call him “Doctor,” his father had sold a section of olive trees ... in order to defray the cost of books and microscopes for Doctor Qassim” (Kanafani 2000: 54). Qassim has thus become disengaged from his class and this is due to his materialistic viewpoint about his future.

This stark contrast between the peasant’s and the intellectual’s mentality justifies Kanafani’s focus on the peasant’s character. Abd al-Hadi notes that the story reveals Mansur as the true son of the land, he has not been affected by any values that are not authentic: loving the land and fighting for it are his ideals. While, on the other hand, Qassim, the peasant who becomes a doctor, has been contaminated with other materialistic values (1990: 196).

This story, moreover, could be seen as Kanafani’s call to arms, as Mansur is presented to us bearing a gun, underlining Kanafani’s belief in the inescapable need to resort to arms in order to regain the land (Siddiq 1984:60).

“Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad” is another story in which pre-1948 is the historical landmark. It narrates the success of the adventure Mansur has taken in “The Child Borrows His Uncle’s Gun.” Moreover, this story is one of the main stories in which Kanafani introduces the ‘enemy’. Siddiq points out that the

most significant manifestation of political consciousness in [*Of Men and Rifles*] is to be found in the recurrent attempt to define the enemy. In the stories of the first phase (1956-1965), the enemy remained an abstraction, albeit a menacing one. It was Jews collectively as they encroached on the territory of the indigenous population and sought to disclose the Arab peasant from his land ... Here the presence of the Jew encroaches on the consciousness of the Palestinian Arab characters in various ways and

leaves different impressions (1984: 43).

While in earlier stories, in “The Land of Sad Oranges” for example, there is an obscure image of the ‘enemy’ with no difference between Jews and Zionists being indicated, this image becomes explicit in this story. In contrast to his earlier work, Kanafani highlights a distinction between Jews and Zionists.

The story tries to establish a long-lasting relationship between Arabs and Jews through two different mediums. The first one is the marriage project between Dr. Qassim and Eva. This project faces certain obstacles which stood in the way of fulfilling it. Although we can think of this marriage symbolically as Kanafani’s attempt to draw Arabs and Jews closer, we cannot ignore the importance of the idea behind this symbolic plan. Even though the story does not tell about the success or failure of this project, Kanafani’s presentation of the new relationship between Arabs and Jews makes it impossible to achieve it. Hamoud explains that the presence of the gun in Eva’s house has destroyed the marriage proposal (2005: 157). It is for this reason that Kanafani introduces the gun in the first paragraph of the story, thus emphasizing its negative impact on the future of this relationship. However, it is imperative to note that the gun here is completely different from the beloved gun which we have seen in “The Child Borrows His Uncle’s Gun and Goes East to Safad” and from the gun that Mansur uses at the story’s end. While that gun stands as an emblem of courage and a medium to restore a lost land, the gun here is a medium for killing Arabs:

All of it was exposed to the barrel of the gun set up on the roof of the house. He didn’t quite recall the details of the story which he had read that morning about the two Arabs who had been killed by bullets from some

far-off gun, or whether the incident had occurred near this very region (Kanafani 2000: 59).

Although in the story Dr. Qassim is presented as detached from the struggle, the presence of the gun has linked him back to his people. The story shows these links to be uncertain as he himself is uncertain about the consequences of his relationship with Eva.

The second strategy employed by Kanafani to re-establish the relationship between Arabs and Jews is the attempt to restore the relationship between them which existed before the arrival of the Ashkenazi Jews. According to Kanafani, it was a relationship of peace and coexistence. Because this project is more complicated than the first one, it is Ustaz Ma'aruf, the intellectual fighter, who articulates this previous relationship. Had Kanafani used any other character to do this – like Mansur or other fighters – it would be unconvincing because such an important theme needs to be expressed by an intellectual character. Moreover, a peasant character would not be able to convey such a significant issue in a clear and effective way.

The description of this old relationship shows the 'other' not as an enemy but as part of the society. The 'Arab Jews,' as Palestinians used to call them, had been an integral part of the Palestinian community:

In Safad, even though there were four thousand Jews who had never, for one day, been farmers, no one minded. They'd lived in their shops for a long time, selling their wares to the people, *exchanging greetings with them and long conversations*. They'd been *invited to lunch and dinner*. Because they'd been there for a long time, they knew how to speak Arabic. They were called by Arabic names and they read Arabic books

and newspapers. It seemed *logical* for the inhabitants of Safad to call them *Arab Jews*. There would have been no problem if the large shops hadn't started to spring up in the country, surreptitiously, like plants, in the night. They said: The *Ashkenazi* came and took a closed-off, isolated corner of the side of the Jewish quarter. This happened in such a way that in the beginning no one noticed (Kanafani 2000: 68; my emphasis).

The integration of the 'Arab Jews' into society seems natural as they have been in Palestine for so long. They have become part and parcel of Palestinian society.

What one gets from the above passage is but an assertion of the applicability of a solution the author may have in mind. If Palestinians and Israelis have been living happily and peacefully at a certain time, why do they not restore that relationship? Although this solution is never explicitly spelt out in Kanafani's fiction, it can be understood from the context and the attempted marriage project between an Arab and a Jew, Dr. Qassim and Eva. Moreover, through the historical information provided, Kanafani both dates the Palestinian-Israeli struggle and exonerates the 'Arab Jews' from the misdoings of the Zionist movement. Zionists, as the narrative shows, came to Palestine as ordinary Jews and then started to open their large markets. Although these markets functioned as such, they were used as a cover for other activities. The story gives examples of those owners, their businesses and the hidden mission they were performing. Examples include Iskander, Braunfeld, Banderely, Mr. Bar, and the legendary Edel Mayberg, the owner of the Central Hotel. The facts the story mentions about Edel Mayberg make it clear that these Jews were implementing the Zionist plans in the area:

Edel ... Who suspects that he's a member of the Haganah? And that his

hotels and restaurants and houses are filled with arms? Or the foreigner Mr. Bar ... who would bet that he's a military officer who procures weapons and draws up plans? Banderley ... Braunfeld ... They dispatch especially for the future. Everything is perfectly inventoried (Kanafani 2000: 68-9).

Kanafani has emphasized that 'Arab Jews' are not to be blamed as they have been left in the dark concerning the Zionist plans: "Probably this was a surprise not only for the Arabs of Safad but for the old Jews as well. They said so and said so and said so, then they were silent" (Kanafani 2000: 69). The 'Arab Jews' were as ignorant of the Zionists' plans as their Arab counterparts.²⁴

The fight between Arabs and Zionists is based on inequality, as the story conveys. While the Palestinian fighters try every possible way to get hold of guns as we have seen in Mansur's attempt, Zionists have access to all sorts of arms. There is another reason that makes the fight unequal. This is the biased attitude of the British, whose attitude is clearly criticized by the narrator's examples of the unevenness of the fight:

It was an *ignoble fight*. Two days ago, Edel Mayberg and his son opened fire on Safad for an hour ... The *English were in their beds sound asleep* in the Mount Canaan Centre and in the home of Hajj Fu'ad al-Kholy ...

²⁴ Adam Hanieh points out that in 1920 Palestinian Jews signed anti-Zionist petitions denouncing Ashkenazi rule. See http://www.jews-for-allah.org/Jews-not-for-Judaism/Arab_Jews.htm
See also, Rashid Khalidi (2006) "Unwritten history": The challenges of writing Palestinian history reflect the larger challenges facing the Palestinians' quest for statehood:
http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/10/01/unwritten_history/

and in the central police station in the al-Wata quarter. For a whole hour of shooting *not one of them woke up*. But then when our young men began to climb the road to the citadel, *they all got up and went racing off without even putting their pants on. An ignoble fight, like trying to stop an armored car with your bare hands* (Kanafani 2000: 69; my emphasis).

Anyone involved in this fight is, then, fighting bare-handed, “Ustaz Ma’ruf’s hands were also bare” (Kanafani 2000: 69). In such a way, as Hamoud points out, a Palestinian has to fight two enemies: the British and the Zionists. While they have the most advanced weaponry, the Palestinian has only old-fashioned guns. It is as if Palestinians are fighting the impossible (2005: 157). Kanafani emphasizes the inequality of the fight by referring to the fighters as being surrounded by madness: “Here we are like one man sitting on the roof of a minaret fighting an entire city. The bullets come at him from every side. But actually this example isn’t quite right. Let’s change it to an upside-down minaret, or the devil’s own well surrounded by a thousand springs ...” (Kanafani 2000: 70).

Although no one can fight an armoured car with his bare hands, the attempts of the fighters convey the optimistic outlook of Kanafani’s fiction. As discussed earlier, the establishment of the PLO in 1964 and the launching of its armed struggle in 1965 made it possible for Kanafani to foresee a better future for his people’s fight. Though there are seventeen years separating the time of the action of the story, pre-1948, and the writing of the story in 1965, the struggle is described as continuous.

Kanafani comments on the issue of leadership in this story as well. In general, the peasants are the ones who feel the need to fight the enemy while the intellectuals are kept aside, although the intellectual Ustaz Ma’aruf is an exception. Even so, notes Najmah Habib, Ustaz Ma’aruf shares the limited thinking of other fighters as the question he

addresses to Mansur shows (1999: 75): “What brought you here from Majd al-Kurum anyway? Are there so few men in Safad?” (Kanafani 2000: 70) Ustaz Ma’aruf’s question shows the “general lack of articulate political consciousness so typical of Kanafani’s 1948 characters,” argues Siddiq (1984: 41).

Mansur’s heroic act at the end of the story, when he shoots the marksman, seems theoretically exceptional but it is practically the only applicable solution to stop the killing of Arabs. That Mansur is the one who can achieve this is important since his obsession with the idea of joining the fighters surrounding the citadel is rewarded by doing something remarkable at the story’s end. In addition, it is interesting here to note Kanafani’s powerful description of the dangerous moments of the action. The action intensifies the feelings of the character involved and we can see this in both Mansur’s and Ustaz Ma’aruf’s roles.

Mansur accomplishes his role in his people’s fight. It is only when he shoots the marksman that he fulfils the value of the journey he has made. The deliberate way he performs the action shows him to be an expert but we should remember that it is only in following his uncle’s advice that he could fulfil his heroic act:

He made sure of the bullet in the firing chamber, then slowly and cautiously lifted the mouth of the gun to the corner of the wall, taking careful aim. His uncle had told him: ‘Don’t worry about the sights on the guns, just worry about your own nerves.’ The empty square in the wall of sandbags appeared framed in the mouth of his gun when still more shots were fired. The holes in the barrel became one fiendishly large hole from which water flooded out. This, however, did not rattle Mansur’s nerves and the next instant the hammer hit and an unbelievably wild thunder exploded. Then silence fell (Kanafani 2000: 72-3).

This passage refers to two significant ideas that we should consider. The first one concerns Kanafani's military knowledge. The second point concerns the effectiveness of Mansur's uncle's advice, which should be understood in a broader sense. Kanafani does not call for the abolition of the old people's role in the fight: their experience is to be implemented and their ideas are to be used as long as they fit the current Palestinian situation.

It is after Mansur's heroic act that the other fighters acknowledge his significance for the fight. Those who made fun of him and of his gun earlier calling it a 'stick', shout now with joy: "You're a lion, you with the stick" (Kanafani 2000: 73). It is at that moment too that Mansur gets rid of his fear and of the 'death trills' which had been ringing in his head. Mansur's action has two meanings. The first one is that Mansur himself performs the action, thus emphasizing the role of peasants in the Palestinian resistance movement. The second, which has a wider reference, is that Kanafani sets Mansur's character as a model for the young generation to follow. As we have seen in previous stories, Kanafani's hope lies in the young generation and they have to take their part in the struggle in order to restore the lost Palestinian land. Nevertheless, it seems that Kanafani has missed an important aspect of the roles of the fight. Mansur is the only one who takes action at the story's end. Hence, the end of his story glorifies an individual act done by a member of a certain class, while what the Palestinians really need is a collective act in which all the Palestinian people and all the classes of the Palestinian society participate to achieve the desired objective.

Kanafani has revisited the relationship between man and land in this story with an emphasis on stones. The story provides the readers with a detailed description of the scene where the story takes place:

The Acre road goes eastward and then climbs to the north and goes from

there into Safad. It makes a half circle around the green hills of *stone* and wild thyme²⁵ ... To the west of the citadel is the Kurdish section. From there to the east extends the Jewish quarter on two sides. To the south is al-Wata section ... The heavy *stone* houses there are scattered about like panting attempts to climb the hill, which faces the citadel itself with its heavy arched *stones* (Kanafani 2000: 67; my emphasis).

This description suggests that Kanafani wants to draw a map of the Palestinian landscape to preserve in memory what the land looks like and to etch for good the memories of that place into his readers' minds. Parmenter argues that "the use of place imagery in literature helps Palestinians, as individuals and as a group, to maintain a sense of belonging to a particular place and milieu" (1994: 77). Moreover, the repetition of the word 'stones' in the above passage shows its importance. The peculiarity of stones in the Palestinian landscape is emphasized as the story reveals:

The vaulted houses with domes were built from stones taken from the al-Jarmaq quarry. The people of Safad call these superior stones, since they are able to preserve their mountain soul, desolate, coarse and firm, year after year, as if they were still a part of the mountain itself, and not yet dug out of it. You can always get stones from the mountains to build the walls of a house, high or low, rich or poor, but the stones from al-Jarmaq are the only stones whose soul you can't steal, nor can you deprive them of their

²⁵ This takes us back to Mansur's food on his way to Safad. It was thyme and the thyme is again mentioned here; it is as if Kanafani wants to re-assert that Mansur's relationship with the land is so strong that he gets his food from it only as in another situation he eats a tomato which one of the fighters offers him when he joined them in the car.

connections with the mountains. If you build one of them into the neat, upright wall, you can't pass by it without feeling that you're in the mountain air, helpless, dispersed, doomed (Kanafani 2000: 67-8).

The stones are shown as if they are real or alive as they keep that soul of the place from which they are taken. This is really symbolical of the Palestinian refugees' case; similarly pulled out of their land and thrown away as Kanafani himself was, they yet cannot erase the memory of their land or ignore the link that draws them there. These stones, in addition, have the peculiarity of the Palestinian identity, notes Hamoud (2005: 44). It is as if Kanafani wants to define his people by defining the Palestinian land, emphasizing the intimate link between the Palestinian and his/her land.²⁶ Kanafani explicates the essence of that relationship, emphasizes its continuity and refers to the generality of this link, that includes all the Palestinian people from all classes.

The presentation of the aforementioned historical frameworks necessitates the use of a language that allows the messages of the narratives to be conveyed effectively. According to Kanafani, language is very important in describing the struggle and its objectives. For him, resistance "springs from [the] linguistic initiatives [which work together] with the rigidity of the situation" (quoted in Harlow 1987: 3). Writing in Arabic, Kanafani paid special attention to the issue of language. The language Kanafani uses is either classic formal Arabic or, more often, the informal everyday spoken language of common people, usually peasants and freedom fighters; it alters according to the message of the piece of fiction he is writing.

²⁶ This is a commonly discussed idea among Palestinian poets and novelists. Mahmud Darwish, for example, reveals what stones mean for him: "stones encompass the very substance of Palestinian life, the roof and walls which form an unspoken, existential bond between people and place" (quoted in Parmenter 1994: 1-2).

In “The Child Borrows His Uncle’s Gun and Goes East to Safad,” for example, we see that it is the common every day language that is used. It is the only language that suits the audience of the story and its characters as well. Hamoud argues that Kanafani has put an emphasis on the use of simple language in order to be able to incarnate the peasant’s character (2005: 130). Although the language seems formal, there are fragments which are informal so it is a mix of the two. We see an example in Mansur’s reply to his uncle’s question:

Where did you buy the cartridges?

In Majd al-Kurum.

How much did you pay?

A pound and a half.

Where did you get it?

Legally, you know, every single piastre²⁷ (Kanafani 2000: 50).

Kanafani has in this way made use of common informal Palestinian dialect to express his character’s attitudes. This adds realism to Mansur’s situation. Moreover, there is the important word “*marteneh*” which means “gun,” a word only used in Palestinian society, which is repeated many times in the story. This repetition of the word and its presence in the title of the story emphasizes its importance and reflects the significance it carries.

The use of certain proverbs and informal songs makes the language closer to Palestinian society as well. We see Mansur’s father, for instance, saying to his mother upon

²⁷ I have here to clarify the meaning of this proverb as it is not clear in the translation, in Arabic culture this proverb literally means: “it is my decent money; I have made it penny by penny.”

Mansur's absence: "While your heart worries about your son, your son worries about the rock" (Kanafani 2000: 54).²⁸ In another incident, we find Abu Qassim addressing his returning son: "A donkey is a donkey, even when he's been brought up with horses" (Kanafani 2000: 55). There are also the trills and ululations of joy that Dr. Qassim's mother receives him with: "O my support, my child, my heart. O son of Majd al-Kurum her glory. O return of the knight. Protect him O Guardian, with a hundred hands from the evil eye. O Protector, O adored one!" (Kanafani 2000: 56) This kind of language, notes Hamoud, expresses the soul of the Palestinian land that is connected with the mental and emotional picture in the story, and that helps in building the Palestinian character, and defines his/her attachment to Arabic culture in general (2005: 131).

Each character uses the language that suits his/her role. We see that the father's, the mother's, and the uncle's simple language is that of kindness and care, exhibiting the simple-heartedness of the peasants. Mansur's language although it has some of the peasants' characteristics, is also one of determination and patriotism, and sometimes takes a strongly political form. Dr. Qassim's language is that of arrogance, as he cuts his last ties with his village and his people.

As noted above, Kanafani's insistence on using popular language has sometimes obliged him to interfere in the narrative. In "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad," for instance, we can easily conceive that it is Kanafani speaking rather than Mansur when the latter is questioned by Ustaz Ma'aruf. Here the language used does not show Mansur's character, it shows an intellectual's political tone even as it describes the non-intellectual's inarticulacy:

The question came as a surprise. Mansur decided not to answer, since in

²⁸ In Arabic, this proverb literally means that while parents are always worried about their son's/daughters' wellbeing, sons/daughters care about nothing but their joy and happiness.

fact he didn't know the answer. Once more he took refuge in the world he had quietly regulated in his own mind. He decided again that a question of this sort didn't require an answer. After all, *you can hardly ask a fighter why he's fighting*, can you? It would be like asking *a man why he is a man* (Kanafani 2000: 70; my emphasis).

Hamoud argues that the language used here exceeds the teenager's linguistic abilities and reflects the author's own. The ideas expressed are not those of a teenager. Mansur cannot perceive that such ideas as the rejection of the enemy and the need to fight him are instinctive (2005: 217). Here as elsewhere, Kanafani changes the language when he feels that the character involved will not be able to express the idea clearly.

After presenting the historical framework in a suitable language, the third feature of resistance literature the narratives focus on is that of collective nature. Resistance is not an individual activity when one is speaking about a whole colonized people and when the efforts of all the colonized and the displaced are needed in order to achieve the desired change. Resistance movements and national liberation movements, as Harlow argues, "represent a collective and concerted struggle against hegemonic domination and oppression" (1987: 29). Hence, the literature that discusses the people's struggle should itself be collective, presenting credible and engaging characters and strategies of opposition.

There are several characters in Kanafani's fiction who act as role models for others to follow. In "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad" Kanafani sets Mansur as an example for his Palestinian fellows, an example of the type of character needed for taking action in liberating the Palestinian land. His search for the gun, and all

the obstacles he encounters, do not prevent him from completing the mission he has set for himself.

In "Letter from Gaza," Mustafa represents a whole Palestinian group that has left Gaza, and the whole Palestinian land, in search of wealth and personal happiness or personal salvation. Abd al-Hadi notes that when writing this story Kanafani had in mind the image of this kind of Palestinian who searches for wealth; such a search for wealth and personal, as opposed to collective, salvation, results in death in Kanafani's view (1990: 175). By taking this route, such Palestinians have cut the tie with their homeland. Whether consciously and willingly or not, this route leads them in the wrong direction. Kanafani calls for the abolition of the aim of personal salvation and the establishment of collective salvation. In this story, this is exemplified by Nadia. Her heroic sacrifice to protect her brothers and sisters is the clear way drawn for others to follow. We get all these messages without knowing the reason behind Nadia's amputated leg. However, the story's end uncovers the reason:

They told me that Nadia had lost her leg when she threw herself on top of her little brothers and sisters to protect them from the bombs and flames that had fastened their claws into the house. Nadia could have saved herself, she could have run away, rescued her leg. But she didn't (Kanafani 1999: 115).

The amputated leg intensifies the meaning of the loss the Palestinians have endured, and works upon employing this sense to plan a different future, a future in which all Palestinians stay in or come back to their lost land.

In “A Present for the Holiday” we note the move Kanafani has made from using the singular pronouns “I” and “my” to the use of the collective pronouns “we” and “us”. In such a way, collective salvation is alluded to as a possible solution. Collective salvation, in this case from hunger, works in this story as the whole family eat for a week from the lentil box the narrator receives from the Red Cross, whereas in *Men in the Sun* personal salvation has ended in a tragic, disastrous way. The four men die in *Men in the Sun* in the empty water tank because they have sought personal salvation, their journey is only to attain wealth and escape personal problems.

Abdel-Malek and Jacobson point out that: “Among Palestinians an individual may suffer and die alone, but his general plight is always linked to the plight of the community and the nation. When Palestinians think of themselves they always think of ‘us’” (1999: 168). Kanafani bears this out in the way he sets up such models to be followed by his people. However, there are other models which he offers in order to explicate the catastrophe of the Palestinians; Hamid of the “The Cake Vendor” is a good example here, and his story will be discussed later. His suffering and the suffering of his classmates, which implicitly tell of the suffering of all the displaced Palestinians, are not examples to be followed, but to stimulate resistance.

Due to the nature of the highly political nature of Kanafani’s short fiction, and to the resistance his fiction calls for, his works, as mentioned elsewhere, were marginalized and banned by the colonial authorities. A study of Kanafani’s short fiction as a kind of minority literature is then necessary.

Joe Cleary argues that

Palestinians have always had to wrestle with the fact that they are the victims of victims. As such, they have always found it difficult to get a

considered hearing in the West – all too often their resistance to Israeli oppression is represented not as a struggle for self-determination, but simply as the latest malign episode in the age-old persecution of the Jews (2002: 189).

Palestinian literature has therefore been marginalized and denied serious critical appraisal. Written in exile, the fiction or critical works of Palestinian authors have had to face difficulties of publication as well as of criticism, a point similar to the marginalization of the works of Ngugi and Walker. This, however, does not in any sense reduce the importance of that literature, and in the special case of Kanafani's fiction the mere fact that the Israelis banned his books inside the occupied land and burned the PLO Research Centre which contains his works and the works of other Palestinian intellectuals affirms the importance of such works, revealing the danger they felt lay in the spread of the ideas and messages these authors tackle.

The issues that need be discussed under a study of Kanafani's fiction as minority literature relate to the re-territorialization of the major language, its stand for collective values, and its political import.

First of all, while Ngugi and Walker deterritorialize the English language to give it a specifically Kenyan and African American context, deterritorialization is not applicable in the case of Kanafani's fiction since he uses the Arabic language. However, Kanafani's particular use of Arabic, mixing formal and informal language together with different linguistic registers, is particularly distinctive and effective. This usage, and the powerful imagery and symbolism clearly traceable in his works, fall under what Deleuze and Guattari call the "ordinary use of language [which] can be called extensive or representative – the reterritorializing function of language" (2000: 20), as every word and

every image have a special Palestinian context. We have seen this in Kanafani's use of Palestinian proverbs and his employment of words that only Palestinians use.

Kanafani's use of the symbols of the gun, the orange and the amputated leg in the stories discussed here anchors the fiction to a Palestinian context. Kanafani links the gun to the struggle of the Palestinians, he highlights its importance and the different roles it plays in Palestinian society. As noted above, it is not only a tool used in the battlefield, it plays a significant role in the Palestinian familial system of authority. Likewise, the orange as a symbol is immediately linked with the Palestinian land. The absence of the orange trees in the "The Land of Sad Oranges" reflects the Palestinians' feeling of loss, while the amputated leg stands for the lost land itself. Kanafani's use of language makes every item take on a Palestinian meaning, which is thus enriched or kept alive in the minds and hearts of the displaced.

Secondly, in minority literature the incidents narrated and the protagonists or victims involved go beyond the personal level. Kanafani's stories mostly tell of general episodes that affected all Palestinians, whether he is writing about the 1948 *Nakbah* or the 1967 *Naksah*. As Cleary points out "in Palestine [these dates and catastrophes have] drastic consequences for all Palestinians. Whether they live within Israel proper, in the West Bank and Gaza, or in the Diaspora, all Palestinians have been adversely affected in one way or another by the dismemberment of their original homeland" (2002: 46). Harlow argues that "The Palestinian people require the solidarity of all dispossessed peoples against the hegemonic institutions and regimes which have confiscated not only their right to livelihood but also their claim to a historical existence" (1996: 60). The colonized and the displaced state of the Palestinians resembles those in other parts of the world who have undergone the same processes, like the Kenyans and the African Americans. A connection can thus be drawn between all the "wretched of the earth," to borrow Fanon's words. It is

thus that we find in some of Kanafani's stories certain characters who are not Palestinians, but who face similar conditions of oppression. One such is the protagonist of "Death of Bed No. 12," who encounters poverty, dislocation and several other hardships, and then dies alone in a place where no one knows his name, where he is from, or his story.

Minority literature, therefore, calls for collective action that will free all the marginalized and the colonized, and will give them back their stolen rights. The actions taken by Kanafani's characters are not meant to be personal, they teach others in order to achieve the change required. Mansur of "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," Nadia of "Letter from Gaza," and Hamid of "The Cake Vendor" are examples of the calamities faced and of the actions taken even those which lead to the offer of one's life for the rescue of others.

Thirdly, literature that tackles suffering and struggles which arise from political reasons tends to have a strongly political stance, as one would expect. Kilpatrick points out that "politics play a major role in most of [Kanafani's] writing" (1976: 64). Political writing becomes here part of the author's commitment to his people's cause. As Siddiq argues "the clearer Kanafani's political outlook and ideological commitment became, the stronger grew his tendency to use fiction as a handmaiden for politics" (1984: 90).

Kanafani's fiction is of great political significance as it not only presents the major political issues, but also their destructive effects on all the Palestinian people. The themes the stories tackle are always the consequences of politics. From describing the moment of departing for good the land of Palestine in "The Land of Sad Oranges" and the miserable situation of the displaced Palestinians, through "The Cake Vendor" and "A Present for the Holiday" which present other examples of the dismal state of the dispossessed, to "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad" and "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," where political and resistance activities are

related, the ideas put forward are patently political, and the social issues discussed in the stories are related to the political situation that has produced them.

Thus the Palestinians have been transformed into refugees; they have been displaced, and they have become a minority group in the land of others. Their new situation is the direct result of displacement, and it has to be studied under the postcolonial 'post-displacement' rubric.

As the term 'postcolonial' itself suggests, this kind of literature emerges after the official end of colonization. In the Palestinian case this term seems inapplicable since an end has still not been achieved. What I propose here is to study Kanafani's fiction under the flag of postcolonial literature but to give it a name that best describes the condition under which this literature emerged: 'post-displacement' literature. Post-displacement literature in its revolutionary nature, like resistance and minority literature, endeavours to help the displaced both overcome the hardships they are facing by showing examples of the most desperate situations of their fellow Palestinians, and to preserve the Palestinian national identity by keeping in their minds a live image of Palestine. What I will do is to present the main points Kanafani's fiction tackles as related to post-displacement: extreme poverty, children in men's clothes, and the roles of UNRWA and the Red Cross, as these points register the everyday realities of the displaced Palestinians.

In "The Cake Vendor" Kanafani presents an example of a Palestinian refugee who has to strive against the harshest conditions in order to earn his and his family's living. Hamid, an eleven-year-old boy, is taken from Kanafani's own milieu. Abd al-Hadi points out that Kanafani's first short stories show his love for the world of dispossessed and displaced children which he knew well. Here, he has utilised this environment to explicate the predicament of Palestinian refugees in their Diaspora, in this case in Damascus.

Hamid is a representative of a whole class of young Palestinian refugees. Although he is a child, he has to work very hard as a cake vendor or as a shoe-shine boy, in addition to being a student, in order to support his family. The figure of the young boy elucidates the terrible situation of those people who were forced to flee away from their land. They left everything behind and those who were very lucky took some blankets and important documents. As a result, the refugees got to the neighbouring Arab countries, mostly Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, with nothing to live on. Once there, they were obliged to do any kind of work to support their families.²⁹

However, as mentioned earlier, there was a large number of families who had no man to depend on. Those families' choice was that women should work, and because women did not earn enough, their children had to work as well. This entire miserable situation was the result of the exodus. There were other refugees who could do nothing, who just roamed the streets looking for what they had lost: a land and a life.

The story opens with the narrator passing by a shoe-shine boy, Hamid. Kanafani's description of him is expressive of the state of hopelessness this boy has reached. His sitting posture reveals the depth of the character's feelings. Kanafani makes the boy's plight typical of the Palestinian predicament by linking it to the narrator's own history. He recognizes that he too has been in just such a position a decade earlier:

He was squatting there as if he'd never once shifted his position, with his rough black hair, his eyes lit up with a dull gleam of *hopelessness*, hunched over his wooden box, and staring at the shine of an expensive pair of shoes. For an entire year his image had remained constant with me,

²⁹ Fawaz Turki (1988: 19) recalls how he and his Palestinian peers wandered the streets of Beirut doing the same job Kanafani's hero does: "We wandered the streets of Beirut together, peddling, shining shoes, hustling, stealing. And talking. We were all Palestinians and we all came from the camps. We spoke the same language, lived the same tensions. The geography of our souls intersected."

indelibly engraved on my mind, ever since I'd first seen him in that particular *corner*. And for no apparent reason, other than that *I myself had occupied this same spot ten years earlier*, when I was passing a most difficult period of my life. My way of polishing shoes had been similar to his; *my vision of the whole universe was a shoe – its toe and heel represented two cold poles between which my entire world was contained* (Kanafani 2004: 78; my emphasis).

The insight into the disgrace that Hamid feels is also an indicator of the continuity of his predicament. The microcosm of the whole universe in the toe and heels of a shoe is expressive of the suffering and is a representation of the whole Palestinian situation. The refugees have been obliged to do any kind of job even if it is an antipathetic one, it represents their newly acquired space and world simply because it provides them with their little daily needs.³⁰ Hamid not only feels shame because of his work but even a sense of “concealed shame” is felt in his “wordless nod” admitting that he is a Palestinian living in camps or tents with his family.

The similarity between Hamid and the narrator is intensified when the narrator asks him to shine his shoes. This incident causes the narrator's anguish whether to give Hamid his “normal rate” or to tip him and that takes him back in his memories:

³⁰ Turki relates how one of his Palestinian friends is asked by a Lebanese *Zaim* (huckster) to shine his shoes for half a lira. However, the boy will not get the money until he kisses the *Zaim's* foot. When the child agrees to do this just because he is very hungry, the *Zaim* makes fun of him and withdraws his foot each time the boy tries to kiss it:

Well in the 1950s we were, as children, hungry. And hunger has a meaning, a logic, all its own. Just as our metaphysical need to be free declares its own form of meaning, so does our physical need to eat. A human being, triggered uncontrollably to gratify either need, will do anything – and a child will more readily than an adult (1988: 22-3).

Although this incident is not a general case, other things like it happen everywhere. It is the result of being displaced and dispossessed that some Palestinians should suffer and endure in order to live.

Should I give him his normal rate, or should I offer more? When I received my minimum fee, I'd feel pride at the *dignity* of my work, and when I was tipped, a sense of *humiliation* would overshadow my happiness at the extra money I earned (Kanafani 2004: 79; my emphasis).

The connection between *dignity* and *humiliation* in this passage reveals the complexity and the irony of the situation. How does one feel pride in such job? Or how is humiliation mixed with dignity? What effect does this mixture give? It is the humiliating nature of the work and the obligation to do such work which is intensified here as Hamid is obliged to do it, while the dignity is only connected with the sense of earning one's living in an honest way. This incident is the starting point of the narrative, in which the narrator and Hamid are going to meet again.

The second meeting takes place in a classroom. The significance of this meeting is that it introduces a completely new life that Hamid is leading. The narrator teaches at an UNRWA School, and it is there that he meets Hamid. He finds him sitting in the front row of the class with his rough black hair and his "threadbare shirt [which] was inadequate to cover his nakedness, and his eyes still bore traces of an inerasable sadness" (Kanafani 2004: 79). Kanafani, through the narrator, uses his experience as a teacher to convey to the reader another kind of microcosm that he has encountered. The whole class consists of children like Hamid:

Children waiting impatiently for the final bell to sound, when they'd take off through the alleys of Damascus, racing against dusk to earn their supper. They awaited the hour of their liberty with impatience, fanning out under the cold, grey sky, each of them pursuing their own course of

life, and as night fell, they would return to their tents or mud huts where a family remained crammed together, silent the whole night through, except for the sound of suppressed coughing” (Kanafani 2004: 79-80).

“Liberty” has a nice irony here: from school to another kind of confinement. It is in any case a temporary liberty since the children are to work the rest of the day and then be imprisoned again within their tents with their whole families. Hamid’s case is generalized to include more than himself and to stand for the second generation of the refugees. Kanafani left Palestine when he was twelve years old and now Hamid and his classmates are eleven. The first generation of the *Nakbah* (exodus) is Ghassan’s one, and the second one is Hamid’s who left when they were only three years old. What the first generation has done, the second is now doing. Nothing has changed. The fight against poverty and the loss of the homeland continues through Hamid and his mates. The children are no longer children but small adults in the path they are stuck in without a choice:

I used to feel that I was teaching children who were old for their years. The spark in each of them seemed to have been ignited by the harsh friction of contact with a rough edged life ... The class was a miniature world, a microcosm full of misery of a heroic kind (Kanafani 2004: 80).

The students are all Hamids in one way or another. Each of them has some kind of a misery which s/he should hide on the one hand, and struggle against on the other.

The embarrassment which strikes the narrator upon finding Hamid in the class is created by the fear that Hamid might recognize him as his customer of a few weeks earlier. He does not, but the events of the story work on deepening the narrator’s sense of

sympathy with Hamid. Hamid's reply to the teacher's question about the reason for his not studying well takes the teacher by surprise as it reveals another kind of work that Hamid does:

“Why don't you study?” I continued.

“Because I work,” was his reply.

“Till what hour?” I asked.

“Until midnight ... sir ... The people leaving the cinema always buy my cakes if I wait outside for them” (Kanafani 2004: 80).

The image of a little boy wandering the cold rainy streets of Damascus “trembling like a leaf in the storm, his shoulders hunched, his hands pressed into the rents in his clothes” haunts the narrator's imagination, creating a sense of restlessness and deep commiseration for the boy (Kanafani 2004: 81). This incident, moreover, leads the narrator to search for a way through which he can help the boy without causing any sense of humiliation.

The significance of this incident and another one that follows upon finding Hamid drowsy in class reveal what Kanafani has noted about the miserable situation of children living in camps. In an interview with a Swiss author, Kanafani expressed his anger at the images he had seen in Palestinian camps:

I used to get angry when I saw a child sleeping during class. Simply enough, I discovered the reason: those children work at night, they sell sweets, chewing gum or other things in cinemas and streets. Of course, they come to class very tired. Such a case leads the human being to the

roots of the problem (quoted in abd al-Hadi 1990: 21).

This is a typical Palestinian condition. What the narrator sees in class is what Kanafani has seen in real life. Moreover, it is not only the cold weather that has affected the drowsy Hamid, it is also the very little he has sold the night before and this means that he will not be able to support his family enough that night. Through such observations, Kanafani time and again asserts the significance of the picture his story shows, searching for a way to enter into Hamid's personality.

The chance for this comes when the teacher asks Hamid to bring the food the teacher's brother has brought. In the discussion that follows this, the narrator learns that Hamid's brother is dead. To console the little boy, he invents the lie that he himself has lost a brother a while ago. Incidents continue to reveal that Hamid is an orphan as he pretends upon complaining of another teacher beating him. Even if this is to be proved a lie as the story progresses, yet it serves here to remind the readers of the absent fathers and of the very bad conditions families are left at:

“Then it's left to you to support your family? ...

“Yes,” he replied, “it's up to me. My mother earns a little cleaning the stores of the relief agency, but I earn more” (Kanafani 2004: 84-5).

The more the teacher learns about Hamid's situation, the more he resolves to be supportive to him, even if by giving him good marks he does not deserve.

It is the discovery of this lie that has brought the teacher back to the reality he has admitted the first time he entered the class:

I told myself that these confounded boys were in reality much older than their years, and that my mistake lay in treating them as if they were simply children. I'd ignored the fact of their being so much in advance of their years, and capable of attaining their goal by any means that occurred to them ...” (Kanafani 2004: 86).

What the lie serves here is to open to the reader a new dimension through which s/he can see the real truth behind it. There is also the other lie about Hamid's dead mother that a student has related to the teacher. Hamid's mother died while giving birth to a dead baby girl. Although these lies have irritated the teacher, they have changed nothing of the whole situation presented. As abd al-Hadi notes, it is this web of lies that Hamid has resorted to which gives him the ability not to admit the real situation that he does not accept (1990: 191). It is then Hamid's own way of escaping the troubles he faces, and it is the way Kanafani chooses to show the seeds of change and rebellion within the present situation of refugees.

The end of the story explains Hamid's lies. As the story starts with the picture of a shoe-shine boy, so it ends with the same image. Kanafani again emphasises this image as the plot of the story revolves around this symbol. On his way home from school, the teacher meets Hamid at the same corner with his wooden box. He takes hold of him, accusing him of being a liar. The shocked boy uncovers the truth to defend himself:

“Listen, Sir.”

“You liar,” I cut him short. “You live with your mother, isn't that so?”

“No, sir, no! My mother's dead, but it's difficult to explain ... When she

died, my father asked us to keep her death a secret.”

“Why?”

“Because he didn’t have the money to pay for the funeral, and he was afraid of the government.”

“And your father? You told me he was dead ... isn’t that so?”

“My father’s not dead, he’s mad. He wanders the streets of the city half-naked. He went mad after he saw my brother’s head chopped off by the lift. Yes, my brother put his head out of the lift to greet my father, and my father saw the whole thing with his own eyes” (Kanafani 2004: 87-8).

This passage clarifies an important point. It is as if Kanafani here uses this image of the chopped head and the mad father to express, symbolically, the essence of loss Palestinians feel. The father has become mad due to the traumatic experience of dispossession and apart from its intrinsic horror, the chopped head refers to that loss, as does Nadia’s amputated leg in “Letter from Gaza.” The chopped head resembles the dispossessed Palestinians who are cut off their land. Besides, the arbitrariness of the brother’s death is suggestive of the pointless death of Palestinians through the massacres the enemy committed.

The last doubt that remains to be dispelled is why Hamid has told the teacher that he sells cakes while he is in fact a shoe-shine boy. Hamid’s answer is that:

“I used to sell cakes, but the day before yesterday came back to this job.”

“But you used to earn more?” I questioned.

“Yes,” he said, “but ...”

He hung his head, as was his practice whenever he felt unduly vulnerable, and with his brush proceeded to beat the top of his box. Without raising his eyes, he whispered: “When I got hungry at the end of the night, I’d eat two or three of my cakes” (Kanafani 2004: 88).

This is the fact that concludes the story. The little boy’s hunger is not allowed to be erased as his eating of his cakes reduces the amount of money he has to support his family with. The reality of Hamid’s situation makes the readers understand the causes for his lies. It is the reality of the Palestinian refugees’ state and their everyday life that his story reveals.

“The Land of Sad Oranges” shows another image of the extreme poverty the refugees face. The fact that the narrator and his brothers and sisters are asked by the father to go to the hills in order not to ask for breakfast reveals the depth of suffering these people are brought into: “[we] discovered, without any difficulty at all, that the idea behind climbing the hills in the early morning, as your father ordered, was to distract us from demanding breakfast” (Kanafani 1999: 79). The inability to do anything dominates the father’s new life and destroys it both psychologically and physically. He becomes helpless and hopeless. His disillusionment and the mere thought of the permanence of uprootedness suggest no other solution but killing his children and committing suicide. Abd al-Hadi (1990: 201) argues that it is the solution of an incapable shattered character who runs away from any future visions while he cannot get away from the memories of the past:

A diabolical thought had implanted itself in his brain, and he jumped up like a man who has found a satisfactory conclusion. Overwhelmed by his

awareness that he was able to put an end to his difficulties ... he began to mutter to himself as he turned round and round, looking for something we could not see ... Your mother had understood everything in an instant and, caught up in the agitation that mothers feel when their children are exposed to danger, she set about pushing us out of the room ... [We] heard your father's voice: "I want to kill them. I want to kill myself. I want to be done with ... I want ..." (Kanafani, 1999: 79).

The importance this passage carries lies in its generality. It becomes frequent among refugees to think of suicide as the only applicable solution.

At such times of catastrophes and extreme poverty, UNRWA and the Red Cross try to help the colonized and the displaced. The use of the Red Cross as a reference is employed by Kanafani to reveal another side of the miserable life the Palestinians lead. Most Palestinians have to wait long to get material help from the Red Cross or from the UNRWA. This help usually comes in the form of the distribution of flour, sugar, cooking oil, sardines, blankets, shirts and trousers, and this strikes a similarity with one of Walker's stories, as will be discussed later. Humiliatingly, people receiving this help must wait in queues for hours long to receive their portions. For that reason, the narrator of "A Present for the Holiday," for example, sees the 'Boxes' far away while waiting for his turn in that cold weather: "The Boxes seemed very far away and we were trembling like a field of sugar cane and hopping about in order to keep the blood flowing in our veins. After a million years, my turn came" (Kanafani 2000: 45).

In showing the contents of the box the narrator receives, I believe Kanafani has moved back to show the irony the caller's idea implies. Everything that does not help

overcome the poverty or the hunger is discarded immediately from the narrator's mind.

The only thing he remembers is the can of lentil soup:

I ran "*home*" without opening it. Now, nineteen years later, I have completely forgotten what was in that dream box. Except for just one thing: *a can of lentil soup*.

I *clutched* the soup can with my two hands red from the cold *and pressed it to my chest in front of ten other children*, my brothers and relatives, who *looked* at it with *their twenty wide eyes*.

Probably the box held splendid children's toys too, but these weren't to eat and so I didn't pay any attention to them and they got lost. I kept the can of soup for a week, and every day I gave my mother some of it in a water glass so she could cook it for us (Kanafani 2000: 45; my emphasis).

The lentil soup is so precious for both the narrator and his family as it is the only thing important this box contains. What is the use of toys for hungry children? Hamoud argues that the behaviour of this child is entirely logical, while the toy is an essential need for an ordinary child, it is not for a displaced hungry one because he sees in it a welfare he does not need as it cannot annul the sense of hunger (2005: 206). Moreover, we can see how Kanafani has separated the word "home" by quotation marks. This separation underlies that this is not the permanent home, it is the temporary one for however long displacement continues.

The situation of displacement has also involved other levels of resistance. It is a resistance against both the colonial and the post-displacement situations. Resistance is not

only waged against the colonial power, but also against the oppressing forces of society whether these are related to the familial patriarchal system, religion, class struggle, or any other force. This kind of struggle can be linked to and studied under Marxism since these issues are in one way or another part of the struggle implied in the dogmas of Marxism.

Most of the Palestinian revolutionary and national liberation movements claim a link to Marxism, they take Marxist ideas to be the ones that best fit the objectives of the struggle they are involved in. Kanafani started his acquaintance with Marxist ideas while he was in Kuwait, and then he became a Marxist-Leninist when he joined the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) after the 1967 war. The influence of Marxism is most evident in Kanafani's fiction in his questioning of the concept of God, and in his treatment of class-struggle.

The narrator of "The Land of Sad Oranges," seeing the terrible state of his people, wonders about the existence of God he was told about at the religious school where he was educated. The cause for this questioning lies in the discrepancy between the image of the benevolent God the pictures at school reveal and his absence at such a crucial time:

I ... doubted whether this God really wanted to make men happy. I also doubted whether this God could hear and see everything. The colored pictures ... showing the Lord having compassion on children and smiling in their faces seemed like another of the lies made up ... I was sure that the God we had known in Palestine had left it too, and was a refugee in some place that I did not know, unable to find a solution to his own problems (Kanafani 1999: 77).

According to Siddiq, Kanafani uses his narrator to allude to his disbelief in the existence of a God. This idea becomes clearer in Kanafani's later works and it "becomes a crucial thematic feature of [his] oeuvre" (Siddiq 1984: 6).

The story also presents another very important idea connected with the difference between 'Jews' and 'Zionists'. We learn that the narrator's angry uncle, full of despair "made [his way] for a house occupied by a Jewish family, opened the door, threw his belongings inside and jerked his round face at them, saying very distinctly: "Go to Palestine!" (Kanafani 1999: 77) Although the narrator criticizes this act "unequivocally on ethical grounds," the necessity of the situation justifies the act (Siddiq 1984: 6). This idea refers to the distinction Kanafani needs to make between the two different terms. It is not the Jews but rather the Zionists who have chosen Palestine as a homeland.

In "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," religion is also one of the forces that are blamed for the distress that befell the Palestinians. Although this accusation is not mentioned clearly, the context in which the rabbis are mentioned gives a hint about their responsibility as Ustaz Ma'ruf tells: "Year after year ... Safad saw dozens of rabbis approach the synagogues ... These old men with their long white beards and round black head coverings, did they know? Did they? You can't say anything now" (Kanafani 2000: 69). Ustaz Ma'ruf's question broadens the subject to be discussed. It "raises and tries to assess a much more profound question: the relationship between Zionism and Judaism. He broaches this subject not in abstract philosophical terms but rather from the practical ways in which it affected the indigenous Jewish community in Safad and Jewish-Arab relations in the city" (Siddiq 1984: 44). However, continues Siddiq, Ustaz Ma'ruf's refusal to answer this question works here as evidence of the 'Arab-Jews' innocence, as discussed earlier.

The relationship between Judaism and Zionism takes us back to one of Kanafani's central themes: the rejection of religion as a determinant factor in people's lives. Although the story under discussion belongs to an advanced stage of Kanafani's development, this idea is still vague as comparison with "The Land of Sad Oranges" shows. The enigmatic nature of this idea could be attributed to two factors. The first one is Kanafani's Marxist-Leninist view point. The second and most important factor concerns a group of the people Kanafani is writing his fiction for. The vast majority of the Palestinian people, whether Muslims or Christians, are believers. So, in my opinion, Kanafani has not elaborated much on this question in order not to take the risk of offending his audience. Moreover, it should be noted that Kanafani has confined himself to discussing the difference between Judaism and Zionism in broad general terms. It is only

the 'old' or 'Arab' Jews as opposed to the 'new' or 'Ashkenazi' Jews in service of the Hagana. Kanafani is remarkably consistent in both his view and treatment of this issue ... In both cases religion is rejected as a criterion for gauging the soundness of political consciousness or as a proper framework for political action and solidarity (Siddiq 1984: 45).

Neither 'Zionism' as a political movement nor 'Judaism' as a religion is mentioned by name.

Class difference and class conflict are among the most important themes Kanafani's fiction discusses. These ideas are very important both before the Palestinian *Nakbah* and after displacement. Palestinian society as presented in Kanafani's stories has class conflict in the nature of the relationship between peasants and merchants pre-1948,

and class struggle continues to shape the relationships between Palestinians in the Diaspora as well.

In “A Present for the Holiday” Kanafani reflects upon the idea of class difference. While the caller is given all the positive features of leading a happy life disengaged from the problems of his people, the narrator is completely involved to the degree that he sleeps late dreaming about the plight of his Palestinian fellows. The disengagement of the caller intensifies this class difference. While one rests all night, other men have duties to perform: “Do you see what men do in times like this, the men who are marching in the early darkness to build for us an honour unstained by the mud?” (Kanafani 2000: 43)

The mud the author speaks about is the loss the war has brought and the camps the Palestinians live in as the narrator explicitly mentions: “The camps. Those stains on the forehead of our weary morning, lacerations brandished like flags of defeat, billowing by chance above the plains of mud and dust and compassion” (Kanafani 2000: 44). This theme of representing the life in the camp as a stain is a common Kanafanian and Palestinian one. The symbolic mud here stands for the lost honour, the lost land and the lost life. The transformation the Palestinians went through from land owners to strangers carries in itself the meaning of falling from one class into another. The author himself belongs to a middle-class family but after the 1948 Diaspora, he becomes *déclassé*. Other stories show how men in the camps have to remove the real mud from the streets of the camps. Here, it seems Kanafani has made use of the actual mud to build the image of the symbolic one to show how this loss has been intensified.

The caller’s idea to “collect toys for the children and send them to the refugees in Jordan, to the camps” increases and awakens the narrator’s sense of loss. It has distracted him, though in a positive way, as well. Speaking about the meaning of the camps, he moves to show an example of a child’s life in the camp. Darwish, the young student, is one

of Kanafani's child characters. The first thing mentioned about him that "he sold cakes after school" reminds us of Hamid in "The Cake Vendor." Although Darwish is to be chased by the narrator between the tents of the camp in order to be brought to the evening class, he is a genius only if "he had found something for himself to eat that day" (Kanafani 2000: 44). Through this description of the life of a child, Kanafani shows the effects of the camp life on the Palestinian refugees. Kanafani himself experienced this, and for that reason it is common to see his child characters bearing the responsibility of supporting themselves and their families by undertaking different kinds of jobs they can handle as Hamoud comments (2005: 205). This description, furthermore, reveals how the uprooted character is accommodated into this new life that has been imposed upon him/her even if temporarily. The exposition of this kind of life also shows the wide gap between the caller's background and the narrator's one.

Through the class difference shown between the caller and the narrator, the story reveals the difference in their interests as well. Even if the caller's idea looks like an attempt to help, there is a hidden meaning that the narrative explicates. The upper classes, in most cases, do not show sympathy with or offer help for the lower ones except to attain certain advantages. The caller's intentions are clear: "It's an excellent idea, don't you think? You'll help us. *We want a news campaign in the papers, you know*" (Kanafani 2000: 44; my emphasis). The advantage the caller seeks then is a political one. The news campaign shows him as a caring loving person and that will help in different fields like elections, for example. The story here reveals how the merchants of politics have changed the people's catastrophe into something profitable for them. Hamoud has highlighted this, commenting that those merchants have turned the displaced dispossessed Palestinian people into a commodity, both to show off their humanity and to gain these peoples' respect and support (2005: 160).

We can therefore trace a sense of irony and criticism in the narrator's journalistic phrase and in the incident he remembers: "Mr. So-and-So spent his New Year Holiday collecting toys for the refugees. High society women will distribute them in the camps" (Kanafani 2000: 44). Mr. So-and-So and those high society women are criticized through the immediate description of the muddy camp that follows this supposed news headline. The essence of the difference is also shown in mentioning the night club, the short dresses and the white boots those upper class people wear.

What is interesting in the narration of this story is that each extract from the caller's speech takes the narrator far away in time and place to relate other incidents or just to give his own reflections. The caller's meaning of 'surprise' stands at the opposite extreme from the narrator's one. While the caller has in mind the cardboard boxes as a surprise, the narrator has in mind the Chinese writer's description of war as a surprise, a detail that emphasizes the difference between the caller and the narrator. This emphasis widens the gap between them, so that the message of the story can be clearly expressed. To do so, the story shows us the idea that haunts the narrator's mind: the June war and the consequences it brought. In such a way, the reader can see the depth of the persistent psychological problem the narrator faces, and can grasp its effects and its real meaning. We notice this in the comments about the June war: "I look at people and ask: are these really our faces? All this *mud* that *June* has *vomited* on to them, how could we have *cleaned it off so quickly*? Can we really be *smiling*? Is it *true*? ..." (Kanafani 2000: 44; my emphasis). It is interesting to note the irony and symbolism included in this passage. June is a summer month, so, where does this mud come from? Here it is the symbolic mud of the defeat the June war has caused, as if June has vomited on the faces of the Palestinians. However, not all the Palestinians are included. The author excludes himself and the men marching at night trying to build a brighter future. He only includes those upper class men and women

who just care about fame and position, who have forgotten the defeat and think only about their own interests. According to this note, we can see that Kanafani's positive characters, as discussed earlier, belong to the middle or low classes, mostly peasants, while his negative characters, in most cases, belong to the upper classes.

This difference in class implies a difference in interests. While the caller wants "every child [to] get a sealed package with a surprise toy inside it," the narrator travels back in time nineteen years to 1949 symbolically expressed: "The pillow carried me back nineteen years" (Kanafani 2000: 45). The presents the caller intends to distribute have reminded the narrator of the present he had then received, as discussed earlier. This also reveals Kanafani's way of expressing the continuity of the plight or its renewal as if time has never stopped. The description Kanafani gives for that specific day, for the child and for the weather work all together to produce the repeated image the narrator can foresee when the caller distributes his presents:

They told us that day: the Red Cross will bring all you children presents for the holiday. I was wearing short pants and a gray cotton shirt and open shoes without socks. The winter was the worst the region had ever seen and when I set out that morning my fingers froze and were covered with something like fine glass. I sat down on the pavement and began to cry. Then a man came by and carried me to a nearby shop where they were lighting a wood fire in some kind of tin container. They brought me close and I stretched my feet towards the flame. Then I went racing to the Red Cross Centre, and stood with the hundreds of children, all of us waiting for our turn (Kanafani 2000: 45).

This passage is very telling. It contains a powerful image of the state of the displaced Palestinians. Poverty is described through the kind of clothes this child wears in the very cold weather described, and this is again a recurrent Kanafanian image, as we have seen in the description of Hamid in “The Cake Vendor”. Besides, the cold weather has a reference here. Kanafani links the winter of 1949 a year after he, and his narrator supposedly, became a refugee, with the June 1967 time. The June mud we have been wondering about earlier has now been explained. Since the 1949 winter was “the worst the region had ever seen”, the mud has continued until 1967 when there is no need for another winter as the Palestinians have already had enough ‘mud’: land loss and defeat.

Tracing the class conflict issue in the stories which are set pre-1948, we can note its importance and see earlier examples. Ali kahlili argues that “the Zionist movement, which was allied with other settler-colonial movements, was not concerned merely with establishing economic domination for the sake of general power and acquiring Palestinian raw materials, but aimed to create a Jewish political and national entity in Palestine. It is this fact which gives class relations in Palestine their special historical character” (quoted in Harlow 1987: 91).

Although written with a different setting and historical background, “The Child Borrows His Uncle’s Gun and Goes East to Safad” tackles the issue of leadership which is connected with class struggle. The élite upper class leaders took part in the struggle either to be elevated in rank or merely for commercial reasons. Hence, we always find Kanafani preceding the names he gives for such people with appellations like *haji* [the title given to one who has made the greater pilgrimage (on the 8th to 10th day of the 12th month of the Muslim year) to Mecca] or *shaykh* [the head of a Muslim religious community or the head of a tribe]. Siddiq points out that these epithets show “Kanafani’s political hostility toward the ruling feudal-clerical class within Palestinian society” (Siddiq 1984: 73). In such a way,

the absence of effective leadership gives the chance for Kanafani to give another dimension to the story as it develops into an attack against the ruling class. Mansur's participation in the struggle takes a wider significance as such. The war is waged at both the occupiers and the authority symbols within the community. Kanafani's presentation of Mansur's role becomes double-targeted as Harlow notes: "Kanafani ... presents Mansur's participation in the resistance not only as a national liberation struggle but as a class struggle as well" (Harlow 1987: 91).

Through such a transformation of struggle, power is transformed as well. The old stereotyped members of the Palestinian élite are replaced by the young generation of Mansur and his peers. Khalidi notes that the élite class "disappeared utterly from the political scene, discredited by its failures, and crippled by the loss of much of its lands, business, and properties" (Khalidi 1997: 180).

The gun, in addition to its roles previously discussed, plays a significant role in highlighting the issue of challenging the authority of older generations, an issue that could be grouped under the struggle waged to change that authority or to hand it from the old to the young. As Riley and Harlow note, "Guns ... are the possessions of adults, his father, his uncle, the older men of the villages, and Mansur is subject to their authority" (Kanafani 2000: 18). The gun therefore is not only a weapon with which to fight the colonizers, but also a means to challenge and to change the patriarchal authoritative social system within Palestinian society.

The search for the gun and "the efforts made to acquire [it] enhance [its] value" notes Kilpatrick (1976: 61). The gun as a medium is controlled by the old men of the country and the young generation has to be under their authority. The old men, however, have done their part in the fight, and that ended in defeat because of the old mentality of doing things. Kanafani's hope lies in the younger generation. Therefore, he endows the gun

with a “transcendent value [as it] participates in a complicated system of exchange and circulation” as Harlow notes (1987: 89). Nevertheless, Kanafani does not call for the abolition of the old generation’s role but for the onset of a kind of shared understanding and shared commitment that will lead to the emergence of “a collective solidarity [and] the beginnings of an organized resistance movement, based on bonds of affiliation rather than on the ties of filiation and authority” (Harlow 1987: 89). Mansur’s possession of the gun is, then, the model the story seeks to present for others to follow and the “‘boy-meets-rifle’ relationship in Fuentes’ words works as the structuring model of the stories” (Harlow 1987: 89). The transfer of authority from the old to the young in this case first means handing the younger generation the responsibility for their share in the struggle, and second it means merging all classes of Palestinian society into one – one that can attempt to attain some of the revolution’s objectives their antecedents could not.

The presentation of the above issues of resistance, minority, post-displacement and Marxism needs a literary technique that allows an effective investigation and tackling of such themes. Hence, realism offers itself as a suitable category.

Cleary argues that “In the Palestinian context there are powerful pressures that compel the writer towards realist narrative” (2002: 196). Kanafani’s fiction was in the service of the national struggle, and as a left-wing activist, he “gravitated more towards a social realist” (Cleary 2002: 197) The effects of colonialism and displacement on the lives of ordinary people, and the struggle of these people as well as the successes and failures of their attempts at restoring their land or preserving their identity, and their individual and collective life details are treated seriously in Kanafani’s short stories, with the attention of recording such people’s experiences by taking the truth from their lips.

The political, social and economic situations of the Palestinian people are mirrored in Kanafani’s fiction. These situations are intertwined with the national cause of the

Palestinians. It can therefore be argued that Kanafani's fiction has a strong sense of autobiography, since it expresses the situation of the people he himself belongs to and the situations he has experienced. In addition, the characters are also taken from Kanafani's environment. In "The Cake Vendor," for instance, the experiences Hamid goes through and the terrible situation of his family and his classmates stand for the case of all the displaced Palestinians, his case and that of the narrator in "The Land of Sad Oranges," reflect the complexity of the situation and the unbearable suffering of the refugees Kanafani speaks about. The personal experiences narrated are the reality for all Palestinians. Moreover, the historical references these and other stories include confer on them the characteristic of 'having-been-there,' a quality essential in realist literature.

Delving into the other main features of realist discourse,³¹ one can note that most of them are traceable in Kanafani's fiction. Most obviously realist literature should have the ability to describe extensively the image it wants to convey, and in Kanafani's fiction we see that clear descriptions are given of the characters, incidents and setting of the story; even the stones are described in great detail in "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad," as noted earlier. The stories sometimes make a continuous reference to childhood memories and trauma resultant from a certain incident. "The Land of Sad Oranges" is an example here. The narrator recollects the experience of dislocation and lives the trauma that incident has created. Other stories also describe the physical and psychological traits of their protagonists. Kanafani probes into the minds of the characters to show how they think and feel at a certain given moment, in the way we have seen in Mansur's character in "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad" and "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad." Kanafani, furthermore, guarantees the source of the information narrated. In "Doctor Qassim Talks to

³¹ See (Hamon 1992: 166-184).

Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad,” for instance, the realistic, historically reliable description of the old relationship between Arabs and Jews comes from Ustaz Ma’aruf, the intellectual who is well-informed about the history he is explaining. In other stories, such authenticating derives from the fact that the narrators are the same persons who have undergone the experiences they describe, as in “The Land of Sad Oranges.” Moreover, Kanafani’s fiction does not have instances of words such as ‘probably’ or ‘perhaps,’ words which might raise questions about the truth of the situations. The statements in most cases are affirmative, for example at the end of “The Child Borrows His Uncle’s Gun and Goes East to Safad,” where after the father discovers Doctor Qassim’s new attitude, he assertively puts his hope into Mansur: “There’s still the child” (Kanafani 2000: 57). In addition, Kanafani’s characters remain within the realm of the real, they do not possess any unusual powers. Even when the incidents of the story necessitate the presence of such powers, as in the case of Mansur, Kanafani allows fear to invade his heart and mind keeping him a real peasant character so that it becomes easier for others to identify with him. Presentation of characters is also usually straightforward; they are described as soon as they appear in Kanafani’s stories, a technique which helps keep the smooth flow of the narrative going. In “The Cake Vendor,” for example, Hamid is described right at the beginning of the story.

The presence of these features allows us to argue with the validity of Cleary’s hypothesis set at the beginning of this section. The need to represent the political, social and economic circumstances of the Palestinians and the special context of the Palestinian catastrophe impel the writer towards realist discourse.

8. Conclusion

Ghassan Kanafani's fiction, like Ngugi's and Walker's, is the tool he has chosen to participate in his people's struggle. His participation is an effective one as his fiction is the voice through which we hear the history of the Palestinian people, the plight of the loss of the land, their suffering and displacement, and the struggle they waged against the oppressive forces that attempted not only to colonize their land, but also to annihilate their identity. Kanafani's stories reveal the trauma the Palestinians suffered and the horrors this trauma has caused. The social, political and economic effects of that situation portray its importance and its dangerous consequences for the whole population involved.

To sum up, Kanafani's commitment to the Palestinian cause is indisputable, and as Siddiq phrases it: "[Kanafani's] overall contribution to Palestinian fiction and political consciousness lies safely beyond doubt" (1984: 91). There is nothing more precious than one's life to be paid to participate in his people's struggle and to convey to us readers the plight of a people that continue to suffer to the present day, and that is what Kanafani did. Hence, Kanafani's messages have become the objectives for all the Palestinians inside and outside the borders of Palestine, and his fiction is still a lighthouse which guides others, and a well from which one can always educe mottos to be followed.

The objectives of Kanafani's fiction, as the objectives of other resistance, minority, postcolonial, Marxist and realist literatures, are to achieve the freedom of his people and their survival, as well as the survival of all the oppressed all over the world. The injustices Kanafani's fiction speaks about are not only related to the Palestinian people: there are many who underwent similar experiences in different parts of the world, like the Kenyans and the African Americans, as we will see in the following chapters. This similarity presents a necessary link with all the uprooted, dispossessed and the colonized, and this gives an added significance to Kanafani's fiction as his messages become universal.

Chapter Three: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Modes of Resistance: A Study of *Secret Lives*

1. Introduction

We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal and we have been degraded a great deal. It is our weakness that has led to our being oppressed, exploited, disregarded. Now we want a revolution – a revolution which brings to an end our weakness so that we are never again exploited, oppressed and humiliated (Nyerere 1968: 235).

I have chosen to start this chapter on Ngugi's short stories with this quotation because it takes us to the crux of the ideas presented in his works. Much like the Palestinians in Kanafani's fiction, the oppression which the Kenyans suffered at the hands of colonial and postcolonial regimes is the core topic around which Ngugi's works revolve. This study addresses itself to the analysis of themes highlighted in Ngugi's collection of short stories, *Secret Lives* (1975). It will look into some of these themes which include colonialism and its 'civilizing mission,' postcolonialism and the effects it had on the people of Kenya, the role played by Christianity and missionary education in facilitating colonialism, the Mau Mau, the time of the Emergency, and the land question, the latter a focal point of Ngugi's fiction. I will examine these themes from a number of theoretical perspectives outlined in the introduction. The study will also look at Ngugi's use of the short story as a genre to communicate his vision about Kenyan society. Ngugi started his writing career with short stories, a point I shall later discuss. Most importantly, the study will compare Ngugi's short fiction with that of Kanafani and Walker.

Ngugi's *Secret Lives* is divided into three main sections: 'Of Mothers and Children,' 'Fighters and Martyrs,' and 'Secret Lives.' These sections refer to the development of Ngugi's themes that move from personal difficulties to national difficulties such as colonization, resistance, and the problems brought on by independence. His characters often correspond to specific social types or are made to be representatives for the class to which they belong. The references Ngugi makes in the first section to the main points of the later sections form a prelude to his subsequent treatment of famine, hunger and the role of the missionaries and lead into the major political themes of the later sections. This study will focus on the following stories to analyse this process: "Gone with the Drought," "The Martyr," "The Return," "A Meeting in the Dark," "Goodbye Africa," "Wedding at the Cross," "A Mercedes Funeral," and "The Mubenzi Tribesman."

Ngugi wrote some of these stories while he was at Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda in the period between 1960 and 1964. The stories written in this period are mainly the stories in the first and the second parts of Ngugi's collection. The stories which comprise the third part were written after Ngugi's return to Kenya in 1971 after teaching African literature at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, for a year. The stories, as Ngugi states in the Preface of *Secret Lives*, stand as a kind of "creative autobiography [during the period of their writing] and touch on ideas and moods affecting [me] over the same period. My writing is really an attempt to understand myself and my situation in society and in history" (1975: xii). As Killam argues, the stories deal with the "nature and moral worth of various aspects of original Gikuyu culture, of the effect of Christian teaching both in schools and the churches on the quality of African life; of the development of capitalism, class-consciousness and human alienation as a new Kenya develops out of the independence struggle" (1980: 73-74). The stories, furthermore, examine the causes behind the hard conditions from which the peasants and urban workers

of Kenyan society have suffered. The importance of the role of women in Gikuyu society is given special attention, especially in the first three stories of the collection where their suffering is foregrounded in the narrative. The stories on the whole show the deep connection between the personal and the political in Kenyan society at the time of their writing.

2. *Secret Lives*: Themes and Concerns

As mentioned earlier, some of the stories were written in 1961 before Kenya achieved its independence in 1963. The later stories were written while Kenya was still in the difficult process of abolishing the destructive effects of colonialism on the collective consciousness, and attempting as well to put an end to the neo-colonialism of the new black élite, the few educated groups who maintained control of the people, thus continuing the oppressive practices of the erstwhile white rulers. Ngugi's fiction resembles Kanafani's and Walker's in being a form of 'resistance literature,' to use Harlow's definition. Harlow argues that the literature produced in the areas of the world where the colonizing forces have sought "socio-economic control and cultural control" (1987: xvi) is a form of 'resistance literature,' as it analyses the political and social issues affecting the colonized societies and registers the movements of the oppressed people to free themselves from the shackles in which they have been restrained.

The Mau Mau resistance movement in Kenya as well as the struggle towards achieving total liberation from both old and neo-colonialism are major themes in Ngugi's stories. Here we find points in common with Kanafani, where the Palestinian peasants' movement and struggle are the essence of his stories, as discussed earlier. Cook and Okenimkpe argue that Ngugi "wrote to urge the African to lift himself above colonialism and its continuing constraints on his mind and thought, and above all such other limitations

and circumstances which could hamper his aspirations” (1997: 16). Ngugi’s fiction bears witness to his participation in the struggle his people are waging and the role he sets for himself is to expose the destructive activities of colonial and postcolonial regimes and to show his people the way to freedom and change.

Ngugi’s use of the short story genre presents itself as well suited for offering a political critique of Kenyan society, and as a mode of intervention. It is important to recall that Ngugi’s first attempts at creative writing were short stories. This could be attributed to several factors: firstly he belongs to a culture of story-telling, secondly the features of the short story form offer certain advantages to a writer in his situation as highlighted in the introductory chapter. Furthermore, it could be argued that Ngugi has opted for the short story as a way to gain the requisite skills for embarking on the novel as it gives a larger space for the writer’s ideas, and therefore we find that many of the themes discussed in his short stories recur in his novels.

Focusing on the features of the short story genre in Ngugi’s fiction – brevity, intensity, and unity of impression – one notes that they best serve the purpose of exposing the violence of the colonizers, which stands in contrast to their ‘civilizing mission’, and highlighting the determination of the Mau Mau fighters and their struggle, in addition to revealing the counter-revolutionary deeds of the collaborators and the new black leaders.

The brevity principle is essential in Ngugi’s fiction, I believe, because his short stories offer a glimpse into the lives of the protagonists at the moment when they face certain events or obstacles or when there is a need for a decision to be made. According to Poe: “The short story ... tends to concentrate on some significant moment, some instant of perception” (quoted in Ian Reid 1977: 28). Since the whole lives of the characters cannot be narrated within the space of a single short story, the author therefore selects only certain important moments to be narrated, and through memories or flashback other incidents are

connected with the one which is of the utmost importance for the development of the action. There seems then to be a collection of secondary or sub-events conjoining with the main one to produce the one on which the story revolves. For example, in “A Mercedes Funeral,” several incidents related to Wahinya’s life are narrated, but all contribute to the most significant one which is the issue of his death and burial, since the message of the story is expressed by the hypocrisies presented at that moment.

The principle of intensity is linked with the brevity principle. Because of its brevity, the short story should reveal the tension of the action in the briefest way possible. Hence, every word, utterance, or act is charged with a meaning. Everything inserted in the short story has a function, and for that reason the reader has to read every line carefully to get to the real essence of the action: “The intensity that manifests itself in the short story does not derive solely from the chosen incident or the manifested theme; rather, it comes from a tight dramatic tension patterning of the incident in such a way that its dramatic tension is exposed and felt” (May 2002: 119). Hence the reader feels what the protagonist feels at the moment of the action and engages his/her full attention in grasping what is to happen. The best example from *Secret Lives* is in “A Meeting in the Dark” when John has an internal conflict which ends in his strangling of Wamuhu.

Unity of impression, according to Poe, is the chief formal property of the short story (quoted in Reid 1977: 54). There should be a single character and a single incident around which the story revolves, and there should be a single impression which the story should produce on the reader. It might be possible to argue that every reader sympathises or identifies with the character or event which best expresses his/her situation. A freedom fighter might therefore identify with Kamau of “The Return,” for example.

Ngugi’s *Secret Lives* reveals Ngugi’s knowledge of the prerequisites of the fictional form he wants to use. Cook and Okenimpke point out that “in a majority of the stories the

protagonist is introduced to us in the opening sentence, and only in one case later than the second paragraph ... [this] indicates Ngugi's grasp of the pithiest of all fictional forms" (1997: 155). Ngugi's earlier stories, I believe, are attempts at the classical form of the short story, starting from the final climax and then narrating the events that lead to it. The setting of the stories is described vividly, and natural environment is also depicted: rain in "Gone with the Drought," the stars in "The Return," the cries of the bird in "The Martyr." The list of examples could go on. As Cook and Okenimpke argue, the "participation of the environment is a constant feature in the earlier stories (1977: 157). Moreover, Ngugi tends to use a simple style. Since for a part of his audience English is a second language, he has used an accessible language, and has "made of his quest something very different from any of his contemporaries. It is given to only a few outstanding writers to reach a simplicity which is neither elementary nor a reduction of language to bald outlines, but which is a distilling of all the main possibilities of a tongue so as to arrive at a clarity which has both subtlety and richness" (Cook and Okenimpke 1997: 238). Ngugi's style is marked by the use of short direct sentences, and by the use of everyday spoken language and proverbs, possibly influenced by the oral tradition of listening to stories around the fireside, and these make easier the communication of the story's message.

On the other hand, Ngugi has said that 'I don't think I'm particularly good' at short stories. Killam argues that there is shrewdness in this judgement as "there is some unevenness in the treatment, the ironic endings do not always succeed and some of the stories lack tension, thus interest" (1980: 84). On the contrary, Cook and Okenimpke argue that "it is the success of his endings that finally stamps Ngugi as a true short story writer" (1997: 163). I tend to agree more with Killam. Some endings are more successful than others. The problems with the endings might be attributed to a larger issue. I believe that Ngugi has a preference for 'telling' over 'showing', neglecting Chekhov's principle: "in

short stories it is better to say not enough than to say too much” (quoted in May 2002: 63). This preference for ‘telling’ affects the text in two very important ways. First, it suggests a lack of faith in the reader, leaving little space to the reader’s imagination. Second, as in Kanafani and in Walker, by using such a method the narrative voice sounds didactic, one of the temptations of the short story. In “A Meeting in the Dark” Ngugi could have ended the story with John strangling Miriamu, but the sentence he inserts at the end, “Soon everyone will know that he has created and then killed” (Ngugi 1975: 70) sounds like unnecessary or excessive information. Likewise, in “A Mercedes Funeral” the story could have ended with Wahinya being buried in a simple coffin by his close relatives, but the extra details Ngugi provides about the results of the election and the destiny of the other characters seem superfluous.

Whatever flaws his short stories have, it is clear that he uses them to describe the oppression and the struggle of the Kenyans. The treatment of these ideas in Ngugi’s fiction leads us therefore to consider them as resistance literature.

Ngugi’s fiction can be likened to Harlow’s concept of resistance literature where literature becomes the writer’s “arena of struggle” (1987: 2), again a point shared by Kanafani and Walker. Ngugi has offered his pen alongside the gun used by the freedom fighters of the Mau Mau, and that is the role which resistance literature demands from its writers, as Harlow argues (1987: Xvii). When the resistance takes place in the forests and mountains of Kenya, the gun is the supreme master and the active supporter of the people’s claims to their land and stolen rights; when the resistance is against the new black leaders, a word might be enough if it plays the role of the gun, as we shall see in “Wedding at the Cross.” Let us now examine the ways in which the main features of resistance literature can be seen to be at work in Ngugi’s short stories.

As Harlow argues, there is a demand which resistance literature places on its readers, namely an assumption of historical knowledge in relation to the context of the narrative (1987: 80). There is another important aspect of the issue as well. Frantz Fanon argues that “by a kind of perverted logic, [colonialism] turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it” (2001: 169). Since colonialism aims at destroying the past of the colonized, there must be a kind of revival of that past in resistance literature. However, as we have seen in Kanafani’s treatment of the past, the past for Ngugi is not seen as a determinant of the present; it is only a way to understand the present better and to look to a different future. Ngugi’s theory of history is very important in this regard:

I want to talk about the past as a way of talking about the present ... I want to argue that what has been – the evolution of human culture throughout the ages, society in motion through time and space – is of grave import to the [writer]. For what has been, especially for the vast majority of submerged, exploited masses in Africa, Asia and Black America, is intimately bound up with what might be our vision of the future, of diverse possibilities of life and human potential, has roots in our experience of the past (Ngugi 1972: 39).

The above passage also highlights Ngugi’s sympathy with all the oppressed irrespective of their location or political situation. It is here that we see the point of contact with Kanafani and Walker, as their fiction too highlights the need to free the oppressed and the colonized across the world. The relationship with the past hence has very important effects on

Ngugi's fiction, on the destinies of certain characters and on the thematic concerns of his works, as Cook and Okenimpke argue (1997: 196).

To trace Ngugi's treatment of, and reference to, history in the stories, let us first look at 'Gone with the Drought.' The most important historical reference in this story is that of the drought and hunger of the 40s in Kenya, a theme on which the story builds and which it uses as an introduction to the treatment of other recent themes such as colonialism, the Emergency and the Mau Mau of the 50s and 60s. The woman protagonist in the story "had lost [her husband] during the Emergency, killed not by the Mau Mau or the Colonial forces, but poisoned at a beer-drinking party" (Ngugi 1975: 17-18); she has also lost two of her sons in the 40s because of drought and hunger, and her last son in the 60s. The long-drawn out plight of this woman thus sketches out historical Kenya from the 40s to the 60s. Ngugi's portrayal of history in such a way functions here as a historical narrative which draws attention not only to the struggle Kenyans have taken against nature, but also to the hardships they have suffered and the struggles they have commenced against colonialism. Ngugi, the narrator and the old woman of the story date all their sufferings to the "advent of the whitemen," "Ruraya Famine (the Famine of England) was the most serious famine to have ever faced the Gikuyu people" (Ngugi 1975: 18), and the mother does not forget to mention that she herself would not have been born had not her "mother ... been saved from such another famine by missionaries" (Ngugi 1975: 18). The curse the old woman speaks of and the past she is highlighting show "her disintegrating spirit [as] representative of the spirit of the people" argues Chimalum Nwankwo (1992: 164), because it is not only her problems she is lamenting but the problems of her people as a whole. One of the most impressive speeches of this story is the way Ngugi, ironically but truthfully, links the problems of Kenyans with the Famine in

another remote place – England. It is the fact that the “white men arrive so soon after the terrible ‘Famine of England’” which justifies this link, as Robson points out (1979: 75).

There is another important historical reference at work in the story. It is the Famine Relief Scheme. The colonial forces in Kenya, after achieving their aims and devouring the life of the native by stealing his land, wealth and labour, offered their help, and showed their mercy, through distributing food in quantities not always enough to keep the oppressed alive: “The headman told her that the D.O. these days rationed out food – part of the Famine Relief Scheme” (Ngugi 1975: 18). The sad fact that the old woman finds her son dead by the time she gets home with the food has a double effect. Although the boy is dead and the woman’s curse is to continue, since she loses her last son as well, his death, I think, represents a refusal to accept such meagre material help from the colonial power. The help offered by the colonial oppressors in the story can be directly linked with the other authors of this study: Kanafani, in his presentation of the material help offered by the UNRWA, and with Walker as well, as will be seen later. Famine Relief Schemes and UNRWA act in the same way in the case of African Americans and Palestinians, by providing the colonized and suppressed with the bare minimum for survival.³² Moreover, Nwankwo argues that the fluctuating movement between the present and the past in the narrative “supports Ngugi’s familiar argument about the relationship between the past and the present” (1992: 19).

History is the framework for almost all of Ngugi’s stories, whether it is pre-colonial, colonial, or postcolonial, or narratives and myths about the past which are part of Kenyan culture. In “The Martyr” for example we find clear references to the arrival of settlers, to the land question, to the *Ihii* Freedom Boys and the Mau Mau. Ngugi stresses how Kenyans believed that their land had been promised to them by God: “Had God not

³² See: Walker’s “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” and Kanafani’s “A Present for the Holiday”.

promised Gekoyo all this land, he and his children, forever and ever?" (Ngugi 1975: 43)

Another important historical fact is the Nairobi Massacre as Njoroge, the story's protagonist, remembers his father who "died in the struggle – the struggle to rebuild the destroyed shrines. That was at the famous 1923 Nairobi Massacre when police fired on a people peacefully demonstrating for their rights" (Ngugi 1975: 43). In "The Return," the reference is made to the colonial forces, to detention camps, and to the Mau Mau. Moreover, it is the land consolidation act that has caused the poverty of Kamau's family, his wife has run away with one of his rivals since his family does not have enough money to provide for her. In "A Meeting in the Dark" there is only one reference to the Mau Mau and the Emergency, and another one to the cultural changes that have taken place in Kenyan society, like the issue of circumcision, for instance. "Goodbye Africa" also features the Mau Mau, the Emergency, and the settlers' last days on the land of Kenya and the 'civilizing' mission of the colonizers, in addition to certain African magic rituals. "Wedding at the Cross" is "one of those backward glancing situations in Ngugi in which the past is romanticised as the storehouse of solutions for problems of the present" (Nwankwo 1992: 175). Glimpses of the past are at work in the story, in such a way as to invite the reader to learn from it in resolving matters of the present. There are many historical references in the story: the new religion and its effects on the lives and the culture of the people, the exploitation of Africans by the whites who later wash their hands of them and leave them in the worst possible situation, the Mau Mau, the land consolidation act, Jomo Kenyatta, collaboration with the enemy for material gains and to avoid "concentration camps and the forest" (Ngugi 1975: 104), and 'The Religion of Sorrows' as a way of restoring an African mode of Christianity. In "A Mercedes Funeral" the Mau Mau is a central historical reference as recovering the land remains the main goal to be attained. The story also outlines the mass murders and the mass burials during the

Emergency and the way these events have changed the moral codes of the people and their respect for death and the dead:

Then came the Emergency. Guns on every side. Fathers, mothers, children, cattle, donkeys – all killed, and bodies left in the open for vultures and hyenas. Or mass burial. People became cynical about death: they were really indifferent to life. You today: me tomorrow. Why cry my Lord? Why mourn the dead? There was only one cry: for the victory of the struggle (Ngugi 1975: 118).

When the victory of the struggle has been achieved, the reference is then made to independence, *Uhuru*. The main character's, Wahinya's, version of history, full of powerful images of the struggles against the British, is contrasted with the narrator's version since his education is a colonial one. The narrator's history tells of the "Celts, the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes and Vikings, William the Conqueror, Drake, Hawkins, Wilberforce, Nelson, Napoleon, and all these real heroes of history" (Ngugi 1975: 123).

As we have seen, history is very important in Ngugi's fiction as it is essential for the achievement of the people's hopes and dreams, just as it is for Kanafani's and Walker's fictions. In an interview, Ngugi argues that:

History is very important in any people, how we look at our past is very important in determining how we look at and how we evaluate the present. A distorted view of the people's past can very easily distort our views and evaluations of the present as well as the evaluation of our present

potentials and the future possibilities as a people (quoted in Killam 1980: 10).³³

To undo the fake image of the history written by colonialism and imperialism, the history of the people has to be brought back to life through the work of the intellectual, to use Fanon's expression. The Africa 'without a history,' as the colonizers have claimed, should be restored, the people should be told about their past and about the struggles their ancestors have fought. The past should be reclaimed but in a version that fits the present, and as Ngugi argues: 'the past becomes the source of inspiration; the present, the arena of perspiration; and the future, our collective aspiration' (Ngugi 1997: 139). It needs be stressed again that Ngugi makes use here of Fanon's principle, as discussed in "On National Culture":

The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must take part in action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle (Fanon 2001: 187).

The equation then becomes clear: colonialism distorts and destroys the past, the African writer resuscitates it for the exploited and the oppressed, for the people whose history has been erased, so that they might go on and build the future that befits their aspirations.

³³ See Ngugi, 'An Interview with Ngugi', *The Weekly Review* (Nairobi: 9 January 1978, p. 10).

The most important historical facts in Ngugi's short stories are the land question, the Mau Mau, and the new black ruling class that takes over after independence in 1963. In the following section, I will focus on the land issue, and then discuss the issue of neo-colonialism from the perspective of postcolonial theory.

The land question stands supreme amongst the issues that thwart peoples' lives on all levels: material, physical and psychological. It is a central issue in the fiction of all three authors in this study, and for other committed resistance writers – the Palestinian question and the landless dispossessed refugees for Ghassan Kanafani, the displacement of Africans as slaves for Alice Walker, and the expropriation of the land by white settlers in Ngugi. Ngugi and his family, for example, lived as tenants on the land of others.³⁴ For him, the land question is essential to “an understanding of Kenya's history and contemporary politics, as indeed it is of twentieth century history wherever people have had their land taken away by conquest, unequal treaties or by the genocide of part of the population” (Ngugi 1986: 44).

The importance of the land for the Kenyan people, the Gikuyu community, stems from their belief that it has been given to their father Gikuyu and their mother Mumbi by God, as Ngugi reminds his readers both in his fiction and non-fiction.³⁵ This mythical belief implies that there is a special relationship that connects a Gikuyu with his land, characterized by two significant links. The first link is a material one, as the land is a source of food and it secures economic gains for the peasant community to cover their basic needs. Nwankwo points out that “the Gikuyu are an agricultural people; like all agricultural people, land and its ownership must be of supreme importance to their existence” (1992: 12). The second link is a spiritual and a mental one. The special spiritual

³⁴ See Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1972) p. 48

³⁵ See Carol Sichermann, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Making of A Rebel* (London: Hans Zell Publishers, 1990), p. 41 and Patrick Williams, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 2

relationship between the Gikuyu people and their land is the fact that through the land the Gikuyu communicate with their ancestors, and it is the land that holds the family and tribe together. Jomo Kenyatta describes the Gikuyu belief in this way:

Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried. The Gikuyu consider the earth as the 'mother' of the tribe ... it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirit of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it. Among the Gikuyu the soil is especially honoured, and an everlasting oath is to swear by the earth (1979: 21).

Given the importance of such a relationship between man and land, the land becomes one of the most important themes in Ngugi's short and long fiction and non-fiction. Killam argues that Ngugi's fiction is "an examination of the consequences of the alienation of the people from their land, thus effectively from life" (1980: 20).

This last point about the alienation of the people from their land leads us to look at the way in which the Kenyan land has been expropriated by the colonial forces and how that has affected the Gikuyu people. The history of the British intervention in the Kenyan land has been discussed in full in Ime Ikiddeh's essay on Ngugi:

From the attempt by Joseph Chamberlain in 1902 to found, 'a national

home for the Jewish race'³⁶ on thousands of square miles of land in Kenya and the official appropriation for British ex-soldiers after the World War, to the open seizure and illegal speculation by white settler-farmers that went on all the time, the record of British usurpation of land in Kenya must be one of the most sordid scandals in colonial history (Ikiddeh 1984: 73).

Taking the land and displacing its owners were then the main processes of colonization. The British Imperial Land Act of 1915 left people without land, or even without rights over what had been for centuries their land as it transferred the ownership of the land to the British Crown (Cook and Okenimkpe 1997: 3). The people became *ahoi*, landless people. However, it was not any land that the colonial settlers wanted, it was the rich productive land, what was known in Kenya as the 'Highlands'. In *Homecoming* Ngugi argues that the white settlers appropriated the best part of the land for themselves (1972: 26). It was in what later became to be known the 'White Highlands' that Ngugi and his family lived. This experience had a direct effect on Ngugi, and that might explain the reason for the recurrence of the land theme in his fiction. In "The Return" for example, the difference between the Gikuyu lands and the green settlers' fields is described: "the over-tilled Gikuyu holdings wore haggard looks in contrast to the sprawling green fields in the settled area" (Ngugi 1975: 49).

The stolen land and implicitly the stolen lives, the dispossession and relocation, led the people to the conviction that they had to fight to get their land back; that was the aim of the Mau Mau, the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, the most important anti-colonial

³⁶ There is an ironic link between the catastrophe of the Palestinians and the Kenyans here, and between Kanafani and Ngugi as well. Though the proposition to make Kenya a national home for the Jews did not succeed, it did in the Palestinian case as has been previously discussed.

force in the lives of Kenyans. Williams points out that “the phase of armed resistance from 1952-56 associated with Mau Mau” has an important influence on Ngugi’s fiction (1998: 4). The significance of the Mau Mau lies in its being the expression of the national consciousness of the Kenyan people. The aim of colonization, any colonization, is to destroy the image the colonized people have of themselves. The aim of resistance movements, and indubitably resistance literature and culture, is to arouse the people’s consciousness and to draw their attention to the destructive procedures the colonizers employ.³⁷ In writing about the Mau Mau, Ngugi may be aiming to restore the lost identity of the people and to re-write the history that has been distorted by colonialism. Therefore, “among the aspects of Mau Mau which Ngugi stresses is its national character,” argues Williams (1998: 89). The Mau Mau, as Ngugi points out, exceeded the limiting “narrow confines of the tribe” (1972: 12), and the fighters involved in it, mainly peasants and workers, sought organization towards achieving the real aim: total liberation.

Ngugi became an advocate of the Mau Mau because the objectives it set for itself are the same he defends and calls for: “the basic objectives of Mau Mau revolutionaries were to drive out the Europeans, seize the government, and give back to the Kenya peasants their stolen land and property” as he explains (1972: 28). Fighting for the land is the drive behind many resistance movements across the globe, including the Palestinian one; we have seen in the previous chapter the emphasis Kanafani places on this issue. A very powerful explanation about the importance and meaning of fighting for the land is found in Meja Mwangi’s novel *Taste of Death*:

But we are right ... We are fighting for our land, and because we want our
land, we must bear the consequences. The land is for our ancestors, our

³⁷ See Fanon, “On National Culture” in *The Wretched of the Earth* 2001, pp. 166-199.

children, our livestock and our hearts. Must a man whose grandfather owned acres of land die without a place to be buried in? Wouldn't he want to lie next to his ancestors when he died? Must his children be put into bondage after his death in order to get food? Must they be crushed under the heel of a foreigner while their fathers saw the possibility of it and did nothing? No, it couldn't be. We have to first die fighting for the liberation of our land. Then our children must also die, then their children and the children of their children until they achieved liberty (1975: 124).

The Mau Mau becomes therefore the manifestation of the people's hopes and aspirations for getting their land back, and the role of resistance writing in such a context is to expound its objectives, defend its acts, and defy the false claims of its opponents.

The images drawn of the Mau Mau in Ngugi's stories are positive ones that counter the bad images printed by colonial forces and postcolonial collaborators who saw the Mau Mau as a violent bloody group destroying the peace and stability of the country.³⁸ In "The Martyr" we can see how the character Njoroge initially makes up his mind to help the Freedom Boys because he believes in their cause. However, the human way in which he thinks about Mrs. Hill as a mother makes him change his mind although with the conviction that he will join the fighters in the forest as a 'propitiation' after rescuing Mrs Hill:

He began to walk, walk back to Mrs Hill's house. He had decided to save

³⁸ Ngugi gives the example of Fred Majdalany, in his book *A State of Emergency: The Full Story of the Mau Mau* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), who is horrified by the savage acts of the Mau Mau which fall into two categories: taking the oath and actual violence. Majdalany sees the Mau Mau as simply evil and atavistic. See Ngugi wa Thinog'o, *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1972) p. 28.

her. Then probably he would go to the forest. There, he would forever fight with a freer conscience. That seemed excellent. It would also serve as a propitiation for his betrayal of the other 'Boys' (Ngugi 1975: 46).

However, the end of the story affirms that his human way and personal approach to the settlers is ineffective in relationship to the struggle of his people. It is also interesting at the same time that Mrs Hill thinks about Njoroge in a human way:

She thought of Njoroge. A queer boy. Had he many wives? Had he a large family? It was surprising even to her to find that she had lived with him so long, yet had never thought of these things. This reflection shocked her a little. It was the first time she had ever thought of him as a man with a family. She had always seen him as a servant. Even now it seemed ridiculous to think of her houseboy as a father with a family (Ngugi 1975: 47).

But while he runs to save her because he has always seen her as a human being, it is the first time she thinks of him as a man and not as a servant. She, and implicitly her people – have taken it for granted that the natives are nothing but servants to them. Ngugi takes us inside Njoroge's mind to see the internal conflict: go on as planned with the Boys or save the woman; the decision he makes is human on one hand, but a kind of betrayal on the other, and Njoroge dies because he has failed to look at the white settlers in the same way they look at natives, and because he has betrayed the oath the fighters have made. There is ambiguity, however, over whether Njoroge's death is a redemption or a punishment, and it

is only in the title of the story that we might find the answer: “The Martyr” remains a positive title in the context of resistance movements and the struggle for independence.

The Mau Mau also plays a central role in “Goodbye Africa.” The shamba boy, the main character in this story, is seen as a representative of the task that all Kenyans, all Africans, should take up if they want to set themselves free. The story marks the last days of two white settlers in Africa who are haunted by the image of the Mau Mau shamba boy that symbolizes the crimes committed by the settlers against the natives. The title becomes ironic: Africa will never leave them after the pain they have inflicted on its people, and they will never be able to say ‘Goodbye Africa’ as a result. Moreover, the untold confession of the white settler functions here as a direct statement on how the colonial forces treat the freedom fighters:

I met that man – our shamba boy. Do you remember him? The one who spurned my gift and disappeared, maybe to the forest? He stood in the office with that sneer in his face – like – like the devil. The servile submissive face when he worked for you had gone. He had that strange effect on me – when I remembered the grief he caused you – well – made me boil inside – I felt a violent rage within such as I had never felt before – I could not bear that grin. I stood and spat into his face. And that arrogant stare never left his face even as he cleared off the spit with the back of his left hand. Isn’t it strange that I forgot his name now, that I never really knew his name? Did you? ... and there in the office I saw the violence in his eyes. I was afraid of him. Can you believe it? I, afraid of a black man? Afraid of my former shamba boy? What happened later, I cannot remember, I cannot explain, I was not myself, I only saw the face

of the man. At night, in the morning, I saw the grin, the sneer, the arrogant indifference. And he would not confess to anything. I gave command. He was taken to the forest. I never saw him again ... (Ngugi 1975: 75-76).

I have quoted this passage at length because it encapsulates the whole message of the story. First of all, the way in which the shamba boy revolts against his oppression, by rejecting the gift he receives from the white master and joining the fighters in the forest, is the way that all the colonized and all the oppressed should follow. The change is only achieved through a revolution and that is one of the main themes which Ngugi's fiction conveys. Second, the white settlers treat the natives as less than human beings and expect them to be submissive and content with what the white masters tell them to do. We have a similar theme in Walker's fiction, although the natives are the whites. Third, the passage shows how the colonial forces have treated the Mau Mau as 'terrorists,' by claiming that they are destroying the 'peace' and the 'civilization' the Europeans brought them. The white settler of this story shares the views of Mrs. Hardy and Mrs. Smiles of "The Martyr": "All of them should be whipped" (Ngugi 1975: 48), and the collaborators of the black people share that view too as Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr. does in "Wedding at the Cross": "his own people. Why should they upset the peace? Why should they upset the stability ..." (Ngugi 1975: 104).

The choice of the apposite language for the committed narrative is one of the main issues for the resistance writer. Ngugi chooses English to be the language of his fiction but only for a limited period, and I believe that could be attributed to his attempt to address a wider audience and target the colonizer himself. He later denounces English and returns to write in his native Gikuyu language since he has reached the conviction that if he wants to address the people whose issues he needs to voice, he should use their language. From

Ngugi's point of view, language is the most important vehicle through which colonization "fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (1986: 9).

Ngugi's English style reveals the attempt to use common everyday language with an emphasis on the use of a simple idiom in a way which is similar to both Kanafani and Walker, as will be discussed in the conclusion. Cook and Okenimkpe argue that: Ngugi's style "is simple in that he writes prose which is easy to read, but not in the sense of avoiding the full range and variety of the English language. If ever an author has worked hard and successfully to have the best of both worlds, Ngugi has done so" (1997: 240). Everyday speech is evident in the dialogues between the characters of almost all of the stories in the collection (Cook and Okenimkpe 1997: 240), and an example could be traced in "The Return": 'Is it well with you?' 'What's wrong, man? What's the matter with you?' (Ngugi 1975: 50-51), and the list of examples could go on in other stories as well.

Resistance writers usually resist the colonizers' attempts at annihilating their communities' languages and cultures. Ngugi cannot write in his native language at that early period due to certain obstacles like publication and audience issues, therefore he appropriates the English language of the colonizers to best suit the needs of his fiction as well as the aspirations and hopes of his people. Some of the ways in which that appropriation can be achieved, are listed by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin: "glossing, untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion, code-switching and vernacular transcription" (2002: 58). Studying Ngugi's short stories, one notes that he has played the game of appropriation of the English language to comply with the needs of his fiction and the needs of the struggle he is advocating. Cook and Okenimkpe argue that "Every original writer does new things with each language he employs, and in some small degree changes

it permanently in adapting it to his own needs and individuality. Ngugi has already made a distinct mark on English” (1997: 238).

In almost all of the stories we find instances where Ngugi uses different strategies to modify the English language. It is especially the words that are related to the people’s everyday life and cultural practices which are left untranslated in Ngugi’s stories. In “Gone with the Drought,” for example, *njahi*, which means black beans grown in a special season between April and May, is left untranslated. Other untranslated words in the stories are also related to people’s daily lives, their mode of communication and their myths and beliefs: “*Ndio*=yes, *Bwana*=sir, mister, master, employer used to refer to the male head of a European household, *wazungu*=European-white, *Rika*=age group, *Akama*=people occupying the land east of Nairobi, *irimu*=ogres, common in Gikuyu folklore, *wobenzi*=nationality or tribe of people who drove Mercedes Benz cars, *Uhuru*=freedom.”³⁹ We find other instances of the use of Gikuyu proverbs as in “Wedding at the Cross”: “Truly God never ate *ugali*” (Ngugi 1975: 106).

Ngugi’s appropriation of the English language is a twofold issue related to issues of reception and audience.⁴⁰ First, if the target reader is a non-African one, the use of untranslated words and unfamiliar syntactical structures will impel him/her to learn more about the language and the culture s/he is reading about. Second, if the target audience is an African one, the local Kenyan people, these words and the simplicity of the style might

³⁹ For a full list of the words left untranslated in Ngugi’s fiction see:

Carol Sichermann, *Ngugi wa Thiong’o: The Making of a Rebel* (London: Hans Zell Publishers, 1990)

⁴⁰ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) point out that in postcolonial writing the language of the centre is replaced in a discourse adapted to fit the colonized. This adaptation is done by two processes: ‘abrogation’ and ‘appropriation.’ ‘Abrogation’ involves the denial of the privilege of ‘English,’ and ‘appropriation’ is done through seizing and remoulding the use of the language so that it comes to carry and express one’s own culture. English in this way changes into ‘english’ in which the vernacular is incorporated. For the full discussion on this issue, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 37-76

Fanon also comments on the audience issue. He argues that “while at the beginning the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, whether with the intention of charming him or of denouncing him through ethnical or subjectivist means, now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people” (2001: 192-193)

make him/her understand the author's message clearly since not all Africans speak or read sophisticated English. Moreover, as Meyer points out, Ngugi's tendency to use the local African Gikuyu language increased "with time and in accordance with [his] ideological development as a writer" (1991: 137). This is certainly true because while we can find one instance of using Gikuyu or Swahili words without translation in "Gone with the Draught," the number increases to more than fifteen in "A Mercedes Funeral." Meyer also explains that since Ngugi's aim is a revolutionary one, English should be "localized so that it loses its foreign aura" (1991: 144). English should therefore serve that revolutionary aim and that necessitates the use of Gikuyu or Swahili in Ngugi's fiction. However, since that aim seemed to be unachievable because the target audience did not get the author's message due to the language, Ngugi decided to address them in their native tongue, Gikuyu.

Finally, resistance literature usually targets the broad masses, the colonized, the marginalized and the oppressed, and therefore this literature itself tends to be collective and calls for collective action. The revolutionary collective action demanded by such a literature is expressed in several forms in the fiction of Ngugi. First of all, like their counterparts in Kanafani's and in Walker's fiction, some of the protagonists in the story are presented as models, and the actions they take are presented as exemplary for all the people. Their characters represent the collective rather than the individual spirit.

Ngugi's view in this regard stems from the obvious fact that colonization, famine, hunger and ill-treatment do not affect only one section of society but the whole, hence the action should be a collective one. The action of the shamba boy in "Goodbye Africa" is an example: "one Christmas, the boy suddenly threw back at [his white master] the gift of a long coat and ten shillings. The boy had laughed and walked out of his service. For a long time, he could never forget the laughter ... Later when the Mau Mau War broke out, he, as a screening office, was to meet the boy" (Ngugi 1975: 73). The action taken by the shamba

boy thus functions as an invitation for all who are in a similar situation. The significance of refusing the present suggests that the colonizers give nothing out of good will, their giving is on the condition of a complete submissiveness on the part of the oppressed. Secondly, the characters who function as models remain unnamed in the stories, and this is also similar to Kanafani and Walker. This technique, I believe, is the author's attempt to generalize the case of that individual; in so doing, he ensures the desired collective action leading to the collective freedom of the whole oppressed group. Another example is found in "Gone with the Drought," in the case of the unnamed old woman. Her case is applicable to plenty of people like her: how many have lost their sons and daughters because of famine and hunger? How many have been killed during the Emergency? The answer is unknown although the conditions described in the story make it clear that the number is distressingly high.

Some of Ngugi's works were banned, and he was also imprisoned because of the political views expressed in his fiction and non-fiction. His work was marginalized by the postcolonial regime of Kenya. In the following pages I will examine the features of minority discourse as presented in Ngugi's fiction.

Ngugi's texts explain how the Gikuyu language has been made 'minor' by the colonial and postcolonial élites in the Kenyan context. In *Decolonizing the Mind* Ngugi clearly shows how colonization has sought to achieve its aims by imposing its tongue and its literature on the colonized. English became the language of education and the language of government, it was elevated to that position by degrading the language of the natives: "English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all the others had to bow before it in defence" (1986: 11). It was through colonial education that the imposition of the colonizer's language began, if one was caught speaking Gikuyu s/he would be humiliated and punished while any achievement in English would be rewarded. Colonizing

the language benefits the élites in the postcolonial period as well, because the loyalty of most of those taught in English will not be to their people, not to the oppressed masses, but to the colonial master. English thus becomes a credit card for positions in the government, for better jobs, for money and for more financial gains.⁴¹

The issue of language is also connected with the political nature of the texts produced in such circumstances of colonialism and postcolonialism. Ngugi argues that “Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics?” (1997: xvi). It is not then whether the writer chooses to write about politics or not, the real issue is whose side the writer is going to adopt: the side of the oppressed or that of the oppressor? Ngugi takes the side of the people, their problems are his and their emancipation is the aim he has adhered to. The stances he has taken, the imprisonment he has faced, and the self-imposed exile are but the result of his faithfulness to his people’s cause. The themes he tackles in his short stories are the results of the politics of colonialism and postcolonialism and the struggle of his people against these forces. From “Gone with the Drought” to “The Mubenzi Tribesman” the themes are blatantly political, and even when they sound social they remain the result of the politics dominant at the time of their writing. This could be explained by the relationship between literature, the writer and the society which that literature takes as its focus. The writer is not an alien, and the problems of society affect him as well. The writer remains a member of the social group to which s/he belongs. By addressing the issues which affect his/her society, s/he works for the wellbeing of his community and of his people as a result. Moreover, in Ngugi’s case the author’s participation in the struggle of his/her community continues in the postcolonial period, as will be discussed in the following section.

⁴¹ See Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind* (London : James Currey, 1986), p. 12

The first step that we should make is to differentiate between postcolonialism as a theory which marks the end of colonization, and postcolonialism as a social struggle and a social issue which determines the lives of the people after the end of colonization. The ‘post’ in the postcolonial, some critics argue, is a signifier not only of the change in power structure after the end of colonization but also the continuing effects of colonialism.⁴² Therefore, any study of postcolonialism should start by looking at the colonial period and the anti-colonial struggle.

The term ‘postcolonial’ can be specifically attached to Ngugi’s short fiction since most of the issues discussed relate to postcolonial Kenya; issues like the impact of colonial education on postcolonial leaders and those of class struggle as well. In his short stories, there seems to be a map drawn for both the colonial and postcolonial periods since the ‘post’ independence period carried nothing new for the Kenyans. Therefore, we should proceed from studying the ways in which colonialism attempted to impose its culture and beliefs on the colonized Kenyans, as presented in Ngugi’s fiction, and move towards analyzing how the natives struggled against that hegemony through the anti-colonial period, and how the new ruling group tried to maintain a quasi-colonial rule after independence since “postcolonial hegemony persists in other forms other than overt political rule,” as Ella Shohat notes (1996: 326).

One of the forms through which colonialism attempts to impose its discourse on the colonized is through religion. Christianity in the African context is therefore seen by our author, and by other African critics and writers, as an agent of colonialism. Williams argues that “the hegemonic struggle for the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Gikuyu is conducted principally through schools and, more importantly, Christian missions” (1998: 24). The role of the Church, furthermore, is not restricted to the period of colonization but continues

⁴² See Padmini Mongia (ed.), “Introduction” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1996), p. 2

in the postcolonial period, as Ngugi argued in a talk in 1970 when he denounced his Christian name and Christianity as a religion because of the discrepancies between his beliefs and the acts he witnessed.⁴³ The conflict between Christianity and the Gikuyu beliefs arises out of the missionaries' attacks on the native religion: circumcision and African dances are regarded as pagan rituals which need to be eradicated. The people therefore attempted to preserve their own beliefs and customs because of the special significance imbedded in such acts as circumcision, polygamy, and other African customs.

In almost all of Ngugi's fiction, Christianity brought by the missionaries is the destructive factor of Gikuyu society. Christianity is never "exonerated from the problems of modern Kenya and indeed Africa" (Nwankwo 1992: 192). The major discrepancy is between the assumed doctrine and mission of Christianity and its role in assisting colonialism in Africa:

Christianity, whose basic doctrine was love and equality between men, was an integral part of the social force - colonialism - which in Kenya was built on the inequality and hatred between men and the consequent subjugation of the black race by the white race.

The coming of Christianity also set in motion a process of social change, involving rapid disintegration of the tribal set-up and the frame-work of social norms and values by which people had formerly ordered their lives and their relationship to others (Ngugi 1972: 31).

⁴³ See Patrick Williams, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 9 and Chimalum Nwankwo, *The Works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Towards the Kingdom of Woman and Man* (Ikeja: Longman Nigeria, 1992), p. 8

The doctrine of love is never practiced in the colony, and the assumed civilizing mission is in fact an enslaving one. What Christianity has shown in Africa is an inequality and degradation of the native people through the rejection of their values and rites. Christianity is thus seen as an obfuscatory force, for while the colonial powers robbed the land, the missionaries participated in both robbing the land and the souls of the colonized. Missionaries even became landowners and as such became part and parcel of the colonial mission. The whole issue could be summed up in the following quotation from *Homecoming*:

Often missionaries became landowners and kept cattle on the stolen lands, and these flourished very well – under African labour. This on top of similar alienation of land by settlers made people see religion as something to blind the black races with while the white race stole people’s national property (Ngugi 1972: 33).

Christianity brought by missionaries sought other ways in which to enforce the doctrines that best help the imperial mission of the settlers: missionary colonial education was the way to achieve that aim. The education Gikuyu youth got at missionary schools was not beneficial to the people, but to the colonizers, and the Gikuyu child was further alienated by it from his people, their problems, and their hopes, as we shall shortly see in the stories.

Secret Lives is replete with instances where the missionaries’ flawed Christianity, together with colonial missionary education stand as an inhibiting force and a separator between Africans according to the norms set by the Church, as can be seen in “A Meeting in the Dark.” The story opens with John, who finishes his education at home and wants to

pursue his education at Makerere, watching his father coming home with the bag swinging on his side: “John knew what it contained: a Bible, a hymn-book and probably a notebook and a pen. His father was a preacher. He knew it was he who had stopped his mother from telling him stories when he became a man of God ... So John feared his father” (Ngugi 1975: 55). John’s fear of his father is built on a religious basis since he is afraid that his father will discover the relationship between him and Wamuhu, the female victim in this story. The cause of the fear, or the irony of the story, starts from the point when John’s father becomes “a man of God”:

She had married him a long time ago. She could not tell the number of years. They had been happy. Then the man became a convert. And everything in the home put on a religious tone. He even made her stop telling stories to the child. “Tell him of Jesus. Jesus died for you. Jesus died for the child. He must know the Lord” (Ngugi 1975: 56-57).

Since he and John’s mother have sinned before marriage, according to Christian rules, he is afraid that John might commit that sin: “Could it be a resentment because, well, the two had ‘sinned’ before marriage? John had been the result of that sin” (Ngugi 1975: 57). For that reason John’s father keeps him under strict surveillance: “He always looked at him as though John was a sinner, one who had to be watched all the time” (Ngugi 1975: 55). Loving Jesus, and the love preached by his father, and by the new religion implicitly, however, turns to its opposite at the story’s end. The fact that he cannot marry the girl whom he loves, and whom he has made pregnant, simply because she is circumcised, proves the hypocrisy of the teachings of Christianity.

The conflict is thus one between the old traditional ways of the tribe and those new ways of the missionaries:

Then the white men had come, preaching a strange religion, strange ways, which all men followed. The tribe's code of behaviour was broken. The new faith could not keep the tribe together, how could it? The men who followed the new faith would not let the girls be circumcised. And they would not let their sons marry circumcised girls (Ngugi 1975: 62).

This passage shows the causes of the rift in the Gikuyu society and the way in which colonialism has changed the people's beliefs and their culture. Whatever one may think of female circumcision – and there is a huge debate about it in the critical literature – circumcision has a very important meaning for the Gikuyu people:

Circumcision was an important ritual to the tribe. It kept the people together, bound the tribe. It was at the core of the social structure, and something that gave meaning to man's life. End the custom and the spiritual basis of the tribe's cohesion and integration would be no more (Ngugi 1965: 79).

Circumcision is the mark of passage from childhood to adulthood in the Gikuyu beliefs, and that passage will not be completed until both male and female youth undergo circumcision at a certain age. Furthermore, bloodshed on the land which circumcision

involves is of great social and psychological significance. Nwankwo argues: “it is in Gikuyuland that the ancestors are located, both literally and symbolically; hence it is through the earth that the present generation contacts past generations” (1992: 15). Therefore, the drops of blood on the land function as a link that connects the past and present. It can also be argued that these drops of blood are the oath of the youth to protect their land even if they have to pay in blood for that act.

John, however, who has received the white man’s education, and who has been ‘bred in the footsteps of the Lord,’ cannot adhere to his people’s beliefs because of the authority of his father and of Reverend Carstone, standing for the authority of the church. Besides, it is not only his religious beliefs, but also his selfish aspirations for further education and a better future, which shape his internal conflict as whether to marry Wamuhu or not:

John was shaky. Why! Why could he not defy all expectations, all prospects of a future, and marry the girl? No. No. It was impossible. She was circumcised and he knew that his father and the church would never consent to such a marriage. She had no learning – or rather she had not gone beyond standard four. Marrying her would probably ruin his chances of ever going to a university (Ngugi 1975: 65).

He does his best to make Wamuhu accept money to say that someone else has made her pregnant. Nevertheless, ironically enough, Wamuhu, though circumcised, and un-educated, chooses to remain faithful to the moral and cultural codes of her people. She refuses his bribe, and in an act of fury, seeing in her the image of his father and the religious authority

he stands for, John strangles her. Wamuhu's death could therefore be attributed to the influence of the internal conflict created by the clash of the old and new religious and cultural beliefs on the converts, and to the change of traditions and rites that the new faith has brought into the lives of its followers.

The other story in which Christianity as a new faith is given great attention is "Wedding at the Cross." Wariuki the milk-clerk marries Miriamu, against the will of her family; she is the descendant of a Christian family who has benefited from the missionaries and from the new religion in its first days in Africa. The issue that stands as a barrier between the two lovers is the Christian wedding which her father insists upon, but which Wariuki cannot afford. The father's objections suggest other important issues:

[Douglas Jones] did not want her to marry one of those useless half-educated upstarts, who disturbed the ordered life, peace and prosperity on European farms. Such men, as the Bwana District Officer often told him, would only end in jails: they were motivated by greed and wanted to cheat the simple-hearted and illiterate workers about the evils of white settlers and missionaries (Ngugi 1975: 99).

The passage shows Wariuki as a revolutionary young man, and he satirizes the white bosses and mimics their speech. However, his meeting with Miriamu's father changes his life, as after this meeting it has been directed towards getting wealth in any possible way, to avenge himself of the insult he receives. The insignificant demands of Christianity are therefore the factors behind Wariuki's change: he takes several jobs, fights for the British in several places around the world, and he finally collaborates with his enemy, the colonial

power, the enemy he used to satirize, and he gets a piece of land and a loan as a reward for his collaboration. The old Wariuki is dead, and the enemy of yesterday becomes today's best friend. It is ironical also that Miriamu's father's views about him earlier in the story have now become Wariuki's views of the Mau Mau fighters. He sees them as destroying the peace of the country:

He was angry. Not with the whites, not with the Indians, all of whom he saw as permanent features of the land like the mountains and the valleys, but with his own people. Why should they upset the peace? Why should they upset the stability just when he had started gathering a few cents from his trade? (Ngugi 1975: 104)

By collaborating with the British Wariuki escapes the forest and detention camps, and when the chaos of all that is over, he joins the Church in gratitude for not being killed by the Mau Mau fighters as a collaborator. The pagan life he and his wife have lived in the past changes into a Christian one. Ironically, he drags his wife with him into the old religion of her family, and he casts away his African name to replace it by a Christian one: Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr.

Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr.'s change is however contrasted with the behaviour of his wife, who takes his old role. She treats the workers kindly, she hates going to the Church, and she prays to get her man back. She wants the old Wariuki back because the new Dodge she has is a false copy created by the colonials, by the new faith; the old Wariuki is lost to that new belief which, in spite of the fact that it brings him money and social status, kills the human in him. His constant haunting dream to avenge himself comes

true at last and the preparations for a religious wedding at the cross are complete. To his shock and to reader's shock as well, and in an act of self-affirmation, Miriamu says "No" to the clergy man's connubial question:

She looked at Livingstone, she looked at her father, and she could not see any difference between them. Her voice came in a loud whisper: 'No.' ... 'No, I cannot ... I cannot marry Livingstone ... because ... because ... I have been married before. I am married to ... to ... Wariuki ... and he is dead' (Ngugi 1975: 112).

Wariuki's death in Miriamu's eyes is the proof that he has used Christianity only for the material gain. His change of beliefs is furthermore an attestation that colonialism and its agents, Christianity and Christian missionaries, have succeeded in altering some people's lives and their views to embrace basic values which they formerly rejected, and it has blinded them to the oppression and the hardships of the majority of their people. It has blatantly then accomplished the mission colonialism has set for it: to work as a dividing force in Gikuyu society.

Education conducted through missionary schools is another strategy which colonialism employs to impose its beliefs on the colonized, and which the afore-mentioned and other stories in *Secret Lives* tackle. Ngugi sees the missionary schools as the forerunners of colonialism, preparing the ground for its arrival by changing the natives' minds about their own beliefs and culture, as Killam points out (1980: 1-2). Ime Ikiddeh in his preface to Ngugi's book *Homecoming* also argues that colonialism and capitalism, the twin brothers who united against the Africans, "in order to gain acceptability and perpetuation, enlist the services of their more sly but attractive first cousins, Christianity

and Christian-oriented education, whose duty is to capture the soul and the mind as well” (Ngugi 1972: xii). Ngugi’s aversion to colonial education stems from the racial discrimination and the system of teaching the African child about Europe, its history and geography before knowing about the history and geography of his own country. He sees colonial education as really harmful in the Kenyan situation because of its covert objectives:

In the past [the educational] system was designed to fit people into a colonial regime. It produced a whole group of people with a colonial mentality whose two facets were an inferiority complex that was ready to be apologetic of a people’s past when not outright ashamed of it, and an extreme dependency – a feeling that only the white man can do things for us (quoted in Cook & Okenimkpe 1983: 17).

Ngugi sees colonial education then as an alienating force as its aim is to estrange the African child from his people, his culture, his people’s values and their dreams and aspirations:

The colonial system produced the kind of education which nurtured subservience, self-hatred, and mutual suspicion. It produced a people uprooted from the masses. Often there was racial discrimination in the allocation of schools, of teachers, of teaching facilities. ... The educational system reflected this inequality. It encouraged a slave mentality, with a reverent awe for the achievements of Europe. Europe was the centre of the

universe. Africa was discovered by Europe: it was an extension of Europe. So in history people learnt about the rise of the Anglo-Saxons as if they were the true ancestors of the human race. Even in geography, the rocks of Europe had to be studied first before coming to Africa (Ngugi 1972: 14).

The alienation process of the African has also involved alienating him from his mother language because the colonial education was one conducted in English. By learning the foreign language, the educated African comes to think and act in accordance with the values of that new language, and s/he comes to see him/herself as superior to his/her own people. In “Wedding at the Cross,” for example, Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr.’s sons only speak English because the new social status of their father makes it possible for them to have the white man’s education and feel superior to their society’s members.

In “A Meeting in the Dark” we encounter the first example of those educated at missionary schools and who have absorbed all the white man’s learning and wisdom. Although John, the polite educated young man who never wants to betray the tribe, is unlike the other educated people who speak English, his education in reality, severs him from his tribe, from the values and beliefs of his people:

John was by nature polite. Everyone knew this. He was quite unlike the other proud, educated sons of the tribe – sons who came back from the other side of the waters with white or Negro wives who spoke English. And they behaved just like Europeans! John was a favourite, a model of humility and moral perfection. Everyone knew that though a clergyman’s son, John would never betray the tribe (Ngugi 1975: 58-9).

John's education and the strict religious morality of the new faith have confused him. His internal psychological conflict at the story's end is the direct result of the contradiction between the beliefs of his tribe and those of the new faith. His education however succeeds and the bond with his tribe is broken through the act of killing Wamuhu. Wamuhu's death therefore signifies the victory of colonialism and its allies, and it announces the death of the old values of the Gikuyu people.

"A Mercedes Funeral" probably stands as Ngugi's most focused attempt to show the difference between colonial missionary education and the education received at the African-run schools which were built as part of the struggle against colonial hegemony. The narrator of the story typifies those educated at missionary schools, in this case Siriana boarding school, while Wahinya is educated only for a short period at an African-run school. The difference in the effects of their education is shown through the dialogue between the two, and Wahinya's dream of attaining higher education is contrasted with the narrator's views about the meaning and importance of education; his views are also embodied in the character of the university student contestant for election. The views of each differ to reflect the wide disparity between the two kinds of education since those educated at schools which came under the Colonial District Education Board could go on with education and pursue their dreams, while "All African-run schools were suspected of aiding in the freedom struggle" (Ngugi 1975: 122) and were therefore closed and then burnt down by the British.

It is again the issue of the history taught at these different schools which clearly reveals the true mission of colonial schools in altering people's history and their views to themselves and to the world:

and in history ... you remember that African king we learnt about? What

was his name ... Chaka, and Moshoeshoe ... and how they fought the British with stones, spears and bare hands ... and Waiyaki, the Laibon, Mwanga, and Nandi struggle against the British army ... He would become excited. He would reel off name after name of the early African heroes. I pitied him really. I wanted to tell him about the *true and correct history*: the Celts, the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes and Vikings, William the Conqueror, Drake, Hawkins, Wilberforce, Nelson, Napoleon, and all the *real* heroes of history (Ngugi 1975: 123; my emphasis).

These different versions of history are the direct result of the difference in education taught and the teachers' attitudes between missionary schools and African-run ones. While at missionary colonial schools, the teachers are Europeans who see that their part in educating the natives entails teaching them about Europe and its history, the teachers at African-run schools are natives who wish to teach the children the true history of their people and to show them the path ahead. The message of Wahinya's teacher sums up the whole issue of colonialism and the whole idea of what the struggle needs: "Boys don't gaze in wonder at the things the whiteman has made: pins, guns, bombs, aeroplanes ... what one man can do, another one can ... what one race can do, another one can, and more ..." (Ngugi 1975: 124). In fact this quotation could be taken to function as the message behind *Secret Lives*. It tells of hope and it conveys determination to change the present condition of Africa, and that change necessarily implies fighting the oppressor and resisting his plans to make Africa merely an extension of Europe or a playground for colonialism's hopes and plans. The African is capable of doing what the white man can do, and this should be the motto s/he should adopt to pursue African dreams of freedom. The story highlights the importance of this message by telling how the teacher is killed by the British because of his

political revolutionary views. So while African-run schools produced Africans who know the history of their people, missionary schools created those who are removed from the aspirations of their people, and who only seek material and financial gains beneficial to themselves, creating the conflict between the individual and the collective. It breaks the ties between a person and his own community as his/her main aim becomes the pursuit of personal gains, an objective similar to that of Dr. Qassim in Kanafani's *Of Men and Rifles*.

Colonial education thus leads to the creation of a new class, the black bourgeoisie, the few educated and bred at the hands of colonialism who will pursue its objectives after its official end, when Kenya gets its long-awaited and long struggled-for independence. Speaking about this class takes us to the core of our discussion of neo-colonialism and postcolonialism. The *Uhuru* (independence) of Kenya does not satisfy the needs of the majority section of the Kenyan people because the postcolonial leaders have continued to use the force and the power handed down to them by the colonials. The poor and the oppressed continued to live in poverty while the new black ruling class, the new élite, dwell in peace and prosperity. As Ngugi argues, they betrayed the real people, the peasants and the workers, who had been the backbone of the revolution and who had achieved that change, and their betrayal was the acknowledgement that they would remain faithful to the white master. So instead of working for the wellbeing of the masses, their blurred vision made them work for foreign powers:

The African bourgeoisie that inherited the flag from the departing colonial powers was created within the cultural womb of imperialism ... So their mental outlook, their attitudes toward their own societies, toward their own history, toward their own languages, toward everything national, tended to be foreign; they saw things through eyeglasses given them by

their European bourgeoisie mentors (Ngugi 1993: 84-85).

It can be argued here that Ngugi echoes Fanon's ideas about the role played by the new élite. Fanon argues that the new leaders usually tend to act as an intermediary between their people and the colonial power. They will step into the shoes of the former settlers, and they will also be helped by the Western bourgeoisies.⁴⁴ Fanon concludes that

In under-developed countries, the bourgeoisie should not be allowed to find the conditions necessary for its existence and its growth. In other words, the combined effort of the masses led by a party and of intellectuals who are highly conscious and armed with revolutionary principles ought to bar the way to this useless and harmful middle class (Fanon 2001: 140).

In the Kenyan context, this new bourgeoisie remains colonized by the same master the people has defeated, but their enduring state of colonization badly affects the people who have put faith in them to right the wrongs experienced under the rule of the 'whiteman.' The new state is as bad as the old one, and the hopes of the peoples are dashed as the new emergent class employs the same methods employed by the colonials. Independence is deprived of its real meaning by this new class, as Ngugi points out:

It was independence with a question mark. The age of independence had

⁴⁴ Fanon argues that efforts should be made by the peasants and intellectuals against the emergence of the bourgeoisie, and against their opportunistic behaviour. See Franz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), pp. 119-165.

produced a new class and a new leadership that often was not very different from the old one. Black skins, white masks? White skins, black masks? Black skins concealing colonial settlers' hearts? ... But really, this was a new company, a company of African profiteers firmly deriving their character, power and inspiration from their guardianship of imperialist interests (Ngugi 1993: 65).

Kenya as a result became a new colony, and the struggle of the oppressed people is to continue until they achieve their complete liberation. Literature's role, according to Ngugi, is to stand by the people in their struggle and to expose the deeds and the selfish objectives of the new class.

Ngugi's *Secret Lives* could then be considered his contribution to the ongoing struggle of his people, exposing characters who embody this new class. Their appearance in the stories starts in "Wedding at the Cross." Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr. is the first example. The wealth he collects is the result of his collaboration with the colonial regime, and when he has that wealth, his treatment of the native people, of the peasants and workers changes. He even rebukes his wife for her kind treatment of them:

Every morning, she would wake early, take her Kiondo, and go to the farm where she would work in the tea estate alongside the workers. ... Sometimes she made lunch and tea for the workers. This infuriated her husband: why, oh why did she choose to humiliate him before these people? Why would she not conduct herself like a Christian lady? After all, had she not come from a Christian home? (Ngugi 1975: 106).

Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr. thus begins to see the poor workers as his enemies, and the hatred he feels they have for him is something normal: the envy of the poor for the rich.⁴⁵

In “A Mercedes Funeral,” the image of the emergent new class becomes clearer, and the narrator himself belongs to that class and the evidences lie in the loan he gets and the Mercedes Benz he drives. The official Hon. John Joe James who used to be known as John Karanja and who drops his African name after being elected also belongs to the black leader class, the *élite*. Among the contestants for the election is also a third figure, the university student who “dress[es] in American shirts and jeans ... they dress only in foreign clothes ... foreign fashions ... foreign ideas ...” (Ngugi 1975: 115). The contestants’ accusations against the existing MP also reveal the spirit of neo-colonial governments at that time; although they are no better than him, and their aspirations are the same as his, they seek to win votes by asking:

What had he done for the area? He had only enriched himself and his relatives. They pointed to his business interests, his numerous buildings in the area, and his many shares in even the smallest Petrol Station in the Constituency. From what forgotten corner had he suddenly acquired all that wealth, including a thousand acre farm ... (Ngugi 1975: 116).

This passage summarizes neatly how members of the new black bourgeoisie use power for their own personal interests, how they have forgotten the people whom they represent, and who have elected them to that position. Corruption is everywhere in the new state, even at churches - Ngugi’s attacks on the superficiality and hypocrisy of the Church continues -

⁴⁵ This reminds us of Kanafani’s ‘caller’ character in “A Present for the Holiday.” The new class care only about their wealth and fame. All they want is to have financial and political gains irrespective of their peoples’ needs.

which will not welcome a poor corpse: “It was a disgrace to die poor: even the Church will not receive the poor in state, though the priest would rush to the death-bed to despatch the wretch quickly on a heaven bound journey, and claim another victim for Christ” (Ngugi 1975: 119). Wahinya’s death only gets the prominence it does because it is an election year, so each contestant wants to show the people that he cares for the poor by offering a burial plan and a coffin for the dead Wahinya. The starkest irony lies in the coffin John Joe James offers: “It was not a coffin at all, but really an immaculate model of a black Mercedes Benz 660S complete with doors and glasses and maroon curtains and blinds” (Ngugi 1975: 135). So the dead Wahinya who always dreams of riding in a Mercedes Benz is to be buried in one! The people’s reaction to such a coffin is the one expected as they leave the scene “as if they didn’t want to be identified with the indecency” (Ngugi 1975: 136), and Wahinya is buried in a simple coffin. The end of the story and the results of the election offer no hope, although Ngugi has always expressed hope in changing the present situation. John Joe James is elected again and the student graduates, gets a loan and becomes a landowner; he is following in the footsteps of John Joe James while the other contestants are ruined, and most importantly, the lives of the people remain unchanged.

In the last story in the collection “The Mubenzi Tribesman,” the educated ‘tribesman’ who wants to bring the wisdom of the ‘whiteman’ through his education and who makes a vow never to betray the tribe, falls down.⁴⁶ His marriage to Ruth, the city black girl who introduced wigs and straightened hair at college, is the starting point of his downfall. Appearances and the need to satisfy the needs of his wife and her Christian background, as she came from a rich family who exploited the commercial possibilities of the new world, lead to his ruin:

⁴⁶ The educated Mubenzi tribesman in this story resembles Kanafani’s ‘Dr. Qassim’ character in the two stories of *Of Men and Rifles*. It is education in both cases that has separated the educated from the cause of his people, and it is again financial and ultimately individual wellbeing that is sought by these two characters.

He gave up teaching ... An oil company was the answer ... To economize, he gradually discontinued support for his countless relatives. ... He joined a new tribe and certain standards were expected of him and other members. He bought a Mercedes S220. He also bought a Mini Morris – a shopping basket for his wife ... he began to ‘borrow’ the company’s money that came his way (Ngugi 1975: 141-2).

The prison sentence he receives is hence the result of his breaking the oath never to betray his people. His wife’s denial of him after getting out of prison is also a punishment for cutting the link with his people, and for joining a new tribe, the tribe of those who ride Mercedes Benzes, the tribe of the new black leaders. The hysterical situation of laughter and crying which he gets to at the story’s end is Ngugi’s statement that any break with one’s own people will only lead to self-hatred and bitterness, because it is only from his/her people that one gets the strength and stamina to go forward.

Class struggle hence played a very significant role in the Kenyan situation as highlighted in Ngugi’s fiction. This and other problems studied under the postcolonial situation in Kenya can also be studied under Marxism, as shall be discussed in the following section.

As with Kanafani, Ngugi was influenced by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Fanon and other revolutionary and radical writers. Williams argues that the works of such thinkers and theoreticians were very important in the development of Ngugi’s thoughts and in his development as a creative writer. For example, he considers Lenin’s *Imperialism – the Highest Stage of Capitalism* as an eye-opener (quoted in Williams 1998: 7). Ngugi “endorses Marxism as the panacea for all problems in Africa,” Nwankwo points out (1992: 190). In Ngugi’s own account, it was Marx who articulated “a political and economic

philosophy which ... suits the needs for development in post-independent Kenya. It is Fanon who places the thinking of Marx in the Kenyan and African context" (quoted in Killam 1980: 12). Marxist thinking is employed in Ngugi's fiction in his treatment of history, of material power and who controls the wealth produced by the natives, capitalism, of the struggle between social classes, and of the rejection of religion as an inhibitive force in the lives of people.

Ngugi's version of history is in accord with Marxist guidelines,⁴⁷ the history of the oppressed and the history of their struggle should be re-written to enlighten the colonized and the exploited, as discussed elsewhere. The past, the victory of previous struggles and the hope of achieving victory in the present are directed to the empowerment of the people who will then learn from the lessons of the past and deal with the present accordingly. The alienation of the people from the land of their ancestors is the colonizers' attempt to break their ties with the past generations, and the role of the writer, in such a context, is to resume the broken dialogue with the gods of his people and with the real heroes in the history of the people, as Fanon prescribes, and by doing so, the African writer, and Ngugi is a perfect example, rewrites history in a version that best fits the needs of the present generations, their causes, and their just struggles.

The alienation of the people from their land causes a major problem. The alienated people become workers on their own land but they now work for the material benefits of the new masters, the colonial and the neo-colonial élite. This new state leads to one of the core problems of colonialism and neo/postcolonialism: economic exploitation of the masses, capitalism. One of the main objectives of Marxism is to fight capitalism and the economic exploitation of the peasants and workers. While the peasants and workers are the real producers of the wealth of a country, they do not get any of it for their wellbeing.

⁴⁷ See G. D. Killam, *An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi* (London: Heinemann, 1980).

Ngugi once mentioned that his family used to have only one meal a day, once in the evening, and a tea sometimes in the afternoons is a kind of luxury (Ngugi 1972: 48). What Marxism, and Ngugi, call for is then an urgent necessity: the people who produce should be the main beneficiaries of what they produce, and capitalism is to be abolished in all its forms.⁴⁸ Examples of those economically exploited are there in *Secret Lives*, among whom Njoroge of “The Martyr” and Wahinya of “A Mercedes Funeral” are perfect examples.

Political domination and economic exploitation led to the creation of classes in Kenya, usually two classes: the ‘Haves’ and the ‘Have Nots,’ as Ngugi puts it (1972: xvii). The ‘Haves’ want to have more because of their greed, and the ‘Have Nots’ want to have a little just to continue their lives, and that leads to the class struggle the stories tell about especially in postcolonial Kenya. The ‘Have Nots’ function in the stories as agents of Marxist beliefs which call for the abolition of classes and the equal distribution of wealth in the country. Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr. in “Wedding at the Cross,” and the narrator, the existing MP and the graduate student in “A Mercedes Funeral,” and the Wabenzi tribesman in “The Mubenzi Tribesman” are all representatives of the ‘Have’ class. Njoroge in “The Martyr,” the shamba boy in “Goodbye Africa,” Wamuhu and her family in “A Meeting in the Dark,” the workers and peasants in “Wedding at the Cross,” Wahinya in “A Mercedes Funeral,” and the tribe people in “The Mubenzi Tribesman” are representatives of the ‘Have Nots’ class. The class struggle of these characters is expressed in different forms, and in spite of the overt sympathy Ngugi shows for the ‘Have Nots’ yet *Secret Lives* never tells of the victory of any. All of them suffer and the sad endings of some stories leave the issue ambiguous whether this class is going to win or not. It is only in the last story “The Mubenzi Tribesman” in which one feels a glimpse of hope as the self-hatred and the

⁴⁸ See (Ngugi 1972).

bitterness which the Wabenzi tribesman feels might indicate the blooming of the seeds of change.

The last point of Marxist thinking evident in Ngugi's fiction is the rejection of religion as a determinant factor in people's lives.⁴⁹ Ngugi's abhorrence for religion is the direct result of the role Christianity played in helping colonialism and dividing the people, distorting their history and changing their values and beliefs about the rites which have been their distinct marks for ages. The Church in the Kenyan context became, as Ngugi's works show, the greatest enemy of the people and their struggles, and it is the contradictions in the church's views about colonialism and the struggle against it that led to Ngugi's denunciation of Christianity. So while colonialism is sanctioned in Christianity's views, the Mau Mau is seen as a terrorist band, and that is only one example amongst plenty in which religion played a destructive role in the African context. As Ngugi explains:

The Church opposed Mau Mau, but never the colonial Caesar. It saw the Mau Mau liberation movement as being savage and anti-Christian: it did not see the policies of the colonial powers, in depriving people of their land, in making them work for a pittance, in depriving them of legal rights, in having them beaten and mistreated ... as the exact opposite of all the Church was supposed to stand for. The Church appeared to say: the white Caesar can do no wrong; white is good, while black is bad and wrong. The Church, instead of fighting against the real colonial anti-Christ, vigorously fought against those who were prepared to lose their lives that many might live (1972: 33-34).

⁴⁹ This point is similar to Kanafani, as has been discussed in Kanafani's chapter.

The hypocritical views of Christianity and the church are exposed in the stories, and the double-faced treatment of the natives is made explicit so that the people are aware of the dividing power of the new religion, since it has succeeded in cutting the links between certain characters and their people – the best examples here are John of “A Meeting in the Dark” and Dodge W. Livingstone, Jr. in “Wedding at the Cross.”

These then are the problems from which the Kenyan people suffered, as highlighted in Ngugi’s fiction, and hence there stems the need for a literary technique to present these problems. Realism offers itself a possible technique in this regard, as will be discussed in the following section.

Realist literature focuses on everyday reality, and chooses only certain important actions and certain moments of the lives of the people (Auerbach 1953: 433). Usually the chosen actions and the chosen moments are the ones which affect the lives of the majority, that is the actions which are mostly connected with the political, social or economic lives of the people. Here, fiction becomes the direct reflection of social reality, as Lukacs argues (See Furst 1992: 97).

The political framework and the political, economic, and social situations at a certain historical moment which often characterise realist literature are evident in Ngugi’s stories.⁵⁰ From “Gone with the Drought” to “The Martyr” and “Goodbye Africa” through to the final stories in Ngugi’s collection, nothing else is depicted but the lives of the Kenyan people and the forces which affect these lives. The historical references to the Drought, the Emergency, the Mau Mau, and to the period of postcolonialism are the ones that give these stories and the actions narrated in them the quality of ‘having-been-there,’ which is a sufficient reason for narrating of the real since these events did take place, as discussed elsewhere (See Barthes 1992: 139). The lives of the characters are connected

⁵⁰ These political and social situations woven in the narrative reflect the everyday reality the fiction highlights (See Auerbach 1953: 228).

with their historical, social and political circumstances, and their struggles against these circumstances are dated in the stories. Such defining of the time of the action is an important feature of realist literature, as Ian Watt argues: “specificity of time [is] one of the distinguishing hallmarks of the realist mode,” as well as “specificity of place and characterisation” (quoted in Furst 1992: 51). As has been previously discussed in the historical background of the stories in resistance and minority literatures, the stories take certain historical moments as a general framework for their actions, and the historical knowledge demanded of the reader works also as a necessary component in realist discourse. However, it should be affirmed that Ngugi is not only a recorder of history, he is actually “recreating and re-interpreting history, building his experience, his imaginative presentation of reality, into a vision which seeks to probe ‘what any political and economic arrangement does to the spirit governing human relationships’. For him that is what literature is about” (Killam 1984: 76).

Secondly, it is important in realist literature to take the truth from the lips of the people, and here lies the significance of the oral culture.⁵¹ Ngugi himself is influenced by that culture as he remarks: “I can vividly recall those evenings of story-telling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields ...” (1986: 10). The stories told around the fireside might then be incorporated in Ngugi’s stories, and their mode of narration is the one that he came to learn from as he remembers both the bad and the good story-tellers, the latter of whom would often re-tell a known story but in a fresh new way. Some of Ngugi’s stories, as he points out in the preface to *Secret Lives* and elsewhere, might be considered as a kind of autobiography because he has witnessed certain of the actions told in these stories, and he

⁵¹ This is a point where Ngugi and Walker meet as they are both brought up and influenced by the oral culture, and the stories told to them become the essence of their short fiction.

was informed about other incidents by the stories told in the oral culture as mentioned previously. For example, he recollects how his brother joined the Mau Mau in 1954, how his uncles have been taken out of their homes and killed by the British. He also recalls how his family and himself worked on their land, the Gikuyu land, but for the benefit of others – for white settlers or sometimes for a rich African landlord. These memories resurface in “The Martyr,” “Goodbye Africa” and “Wedding at the Cross.” Cook and Okenimpke point out that “Ngugi’s childhood and adolescent experiences are woven into his fiction ... He draws on his background judiciously in a number of works” (1997: 4).

Thirdly, taking the features of realist discourse into consideration,⁵² we find that Ngugi’s short stories refer to childhood memories, traumatism, obsessions and mention of the family or tradition. Moreover, Ngugi takes us into the minds of his characters to show us their psychological state and the way they think at certain crucial times of their lives. The best example that comes to mind here is John in “A Meeting in the Dark.” Ngugi makes us clearly evaluate the action through showing John’s internal conflict and the many scenarios that he imagines if he fails to convince Wamuhu to accuse someone else of making her pregnant. Ngugi’s *Secret Lives* also refers to a sacred or a historical text through the references to the Bible as a holy book and to Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya* as a profane text, and this technique of referencing to known texts is one of the features of realist discourse. Ngugi’s short stories also put an emphasis on the use of names, another feature of realist discourse. Characters with English names or those who drop their African names to take English ones for their social status are underscored. For instance in “The Martyr” the names of three female European settlers are preceded by ‘Mrs’ so as to give them the status of being mistresses for the houseboy. In the same story, Njoroge addresses the lady he works for as *Memsahib*, a form of address only used for European ladies. In “A

⁵² See (Hamon 1992).

Meeting in the Dark,” the son of the preacher is named John, a name with religious connotations. Ngugi also guarantees the source of his information, a point known under realist literature. For example, religious knowledge is communicated through the character of a preacher, and that is what we encounter in “A Meeting in the Dark.” Moreover, Ngugi’s stories are narrated from a participant’s point of view. The narrator of “A Mercedes Funeral” is involved in the story he is narrating as he claims he knows the protagonist, Wahinya, and this gives credibility to the information narrated. Furthermore, in Ngugi’s fiction, as in Kanafani’s, there is no use of adverbial qualifiers indicating uncertainty, such as ‘perhaps’ or ‘probably,’ because such words might question the truthfulness of the narrated incidents. Also, as in realist discourse, the hero/victim of the stories is not given superhuman qualities and s/he acts according to the situation in which s/he finds him/herself. Ngugi’s characters could be regarded as anti-hero characters because the situations in which they are involved mostly involve oppression in one way or another, and their struggle for emancipation is presented realistically and convincingly, as in the case of the shamba boy in “Goodbye Africa.” Ngugi’s realism extends to the plain, unambiguous language of his stories: one cannot find instances of playing on words and the meanings are clear for the readers. Instead, his stories are characterised by a wealth of description and scene-setting, without informational gaps. Indeed, Ngugi describes his characters and their actions in such detail that at times it seems excessive.

9. Conclusion

Ngugi’s contribution to Kenyan nationalism is a significant one. The chief goal of his fiction is to expose and attack the forces which affect the majority of his people, and *Secret Lives* suggests that the civilizing mission of colonialism is a pretext for economic plunder and political domination. The horrors of the postcolonial period and the corruption of the

ruling class are also uncovered in the stories. Kenya between the 1940s and the 1970s is made accessible to the reader who wishes to see the struggles of its people against political, economic and social oppression. The realities of the period are ingeniously woven into the fiction and conveyed through the different characters taken from nearly all social classes of Kenyan society.

The literatures of resistance, minority, postcolonialism, Marxism and realism all aim to free the individual from injustices and oppression, and thus *Secret Lives* becomes a kind of a reference book not only for Kenyans but for all 'the wretched of the earth.' *Secret Lives* can be considered then as itself a mode of resistance, a capital 'NO' to all the colonizers and oppressors of the people.

To conclude, this study of Ngugi's *Secret Lives* and the main themes and concerns tackled in the short stories show him as fine example of the committed author. His commitment, Cook and Okenimpke argue, is to African emancipation and the evidence is "the recurrence [in his fiction] of certain motifs which included: a relentless siege on colonialism and capitalism; a commitment to the wellbeing of the African masses; [and] a distrust of the ruling and materially affluent African élite" (1997: 16). Ngugi's role is thus like those of Kanafani's and Walker's, as will be discussed in the following chapter. He is an educator, a teacher of the masses, and his aim is to educate them through fiction in order to achieve the kind of revolutionary change necessary for the better future the oppressed masses dream about. In a word, while some of the characters in his short stories fail to keep the oath never to betray their people and the tribe, Ngugi never does.

**Chapter Four: A Reading of Alice Walker's Feminist/Womanist Resistance: A Study
of *In Love and Trouble* and *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down***

1. Introduction

We are black like the Africans themselves. And ... we and the Africans will be working for a common goal: *the uplift of black people everywhere* (Walker 1983: 122; my emphasis).

Similarly to Kanafani and Ngugi, Walker's short fiction focuses on African Americans' resistance to oppression and injustice. The passage quoted above from her Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Color Purple* (1982), links its themes to those of her short fiction. More specifically, her short stories voice the oppression faced by black *women* in the racist, segregated, and patriarchal societies in which they live. Her fiction revolves around the following core themes: the physical and psychological violence practised upon black women, religion, slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, the importance of folklore, the past, and most importantly, an attempt to show black women a way forward to empowerment.

In this chapter, I will focus on two of Walker's short story collections *In Love and Trouble* (1973) and *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1981). My theoretical framework will draw on the themes outlined in the introduction and examined with relation to Kanafani and Ngugi. In this case, however, I aim to read Walker's short stories as a form of feminist resistance literature. This point sets Walker's short fiction apart from that of Ngugi and Kanafani. The chapter will also look at Walker's use of the short story genre as a form that is particularly well suited to the articulation of oppressed voices.

In a conversation with Sharon Wilson, Walker pointed out: “I’m always trying to give voice to specific people in the hope that if I do that, then that specific kind of person will be better understood, really brought into the common fund of people that we have knowledge of and therefore we share with, and are in community with” (1993: 320). In her accounts of the oppression and discrimination faced by black women in American society, there is a strong autobiographical element, which also draws on stories narrated to her by her mother and grandmother (see White 2004: 28).

A brief textual history to the short story collections of Alice Walker will be helpful here. Some of Walker’s short stories were published in *Ms. Magazine*; Walker joined *Ms.* in the mid-seventies as contributing editor, a post she then held for years (Thom 1997: 59). This magazine targeted an upscale audience, but above all, the readers of *Ms.* were women willing to support something that they valued (Thom 1997: 216). According to Thom, *Ms.* “took up its mission as a monthly advocate for the women’s movement” (1997: 44), and Walker herself is concerned with voicing the lives and struggles of women. Hence, it can be argued that a magazine with such objectives was a good venue for Walker’s stories.

In Love and Trouble was first published in 1973. It was written during the late sixties and early seventies, when Walker was in Mississippi after she received a travel grant from the philanthropist Charles Merrill in 1966 (see Walker 2009 and Lazo 2000: 51). Mississippi, the heart of the racist South (Lazo 2000: 51), is, then, the backdrop to her stories. Historically, this period was of fundamental importance to African Americans, because of the Civil Rights Movement. Between 1965 and 1968, Walker was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement: she “canvasses for voter-registration in her native Georgia, and is employed by Headstart in Mississippi to teach black history to SNCC, the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee” (Lauret 2000: 7). One of the most important events of the period was the murder of Martin Luther King in Memphis,

Tennessee, on the 4th of April, 1968. Martin Luther King's death left its clear imprints on Walker's life and works: "When he was assassinated ... it was as if the last light in my world had gone out. We had a tough, young, fearless friend and brother who stood with us and for us. Suddenly, he was gone" (Lazo 2000: 55). This profoundly traumatic event may have had an effect on her decision to engage in explicitly politicized fiction, with a focus on the conditions of African Americans in the South.

In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women tends to "emphasize characters' often fruitless battles for physical security and psychological health" as Winchell puts it (quoted in Cutter 1994: 666). In essence, this collection investigates the "dynamics of being a black woman" as McDowell points out (1993: 168). The title of the collection emphasizes the fact that these women are in a situation of extreme pressure on all sides: "The women in this volume truly are 'in love and trouble' due in large measures to the roles, relationships, and self-images imposed upon them by a society which knows little and cares less about them as individuals" (Petry 1993: 194). The short stories attempt to address this representational imbalance, and to restore a voice to these women.

You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down is Walker's second collection of short stories, and the women protagonists presented are those who speak for the women of the first collection. The women here become "much more in control of their own actions and conscious of their right to oppose all attacks on their selfhood" (Christian 1982: 195). Most of the stories in this collection, therefore, tell of black women who have successfully carved out a path of personal autonomy and self-fulfilment. The stories in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* also offer more philosophical insights into some of the issues which have thwarted the lives of the women of *In Love and Trouble*. Some of the themes covered here include rape, miscegenation, pornography and abortion. The explicit discussion of such issues has, however, made some critics label the collection as "propaganda" (White

2004: 330).⁵³ However, as we will see later, this is a highly debatable observation when we look at the texts in greater detail. The study aims to show that this charge of propaganda is untrue.

For the purposes of my analysis, I will focus on the following short stories: “Her Sweet Jerome”, “The Child Who Favored Daughter,” “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff,” “Strong Horse Tea” from *In Love and Trouble* and “How Did I Get Away With Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy,” “Coming Apart,” and “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells” from *You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down*. Most importantly, this chapter will introduce some of the similarities and differences between Walker and the other two authors of this thesis: Kanafani and Ngugi. The first distinction that should be emphasized here is that in Kanafani’s and Ngugi’s short stories, women play a more marginal role, while in Walker’s short fiction, it is the men who are less prominent.

2. In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women & You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down: Themes and Concerns

Like Kanafani and Ngugi, Walker used the short story form as a vehicle for social and political critique, but with especial reference to the situation of African American women. And, as with Kanafani and Ngugi, at the time in which Walker wrote her short stories, she was also engaged in political activism. Walker points out that “as an activist I was happy to realize I could dream up and write [a short story] even during a period of political activity, while registering voters in Mississippi, for instance” (Walker 1995: vii-viii). This point confirms that, as argued earlier, the short story offers itself as a medium in times of struggle. Secondly, her writing is influenced by oral culture, which played an important

⁵³ These issues were unapproachable for other authors. The reason for leaving incest, lesbianism and other subjects undisturbed could be understood by answering the following question made by Trudier Harris in “Tiptoeing Through Taboo: Incest in “The Child Who Favored Daughter””: “How could black writers talk of nationbuilding if they had presented evidence of the nation being destroyed from within its own ranks, and especially from within its own families?” (1982-83: 496)

role in Walker's upbringing (see Washington 1993: 39). Her short stories gave literary form to the oral tales she had listened to as a child (see Lauret 2000: 4-5). Thirdly, there is a collective dimension to Walker's narratives that squarely places them in the category of resistance literature. Fourthly, the stories could be seen as Walker's form of political participation in the Civil Rights Movement. Moreover, many writers begin their career by experimenting with the short story form because of its features – brevity, intensity and unity of impression (as highlighted in the introductory chapter). For this reason, we see that many of the ideas discussed in Walker's short stories are revisited again in her novels.

The element of brevity discernible in Kanafani's and Ngugi's short stories is again traceable in Walker's short fiction. May argues that the short story "by its very brevity, cannot deal with the dense detail and duration in the way that a novel can, but instead must focus on a revelatory breakup of the rhythm of everyday reality" (2002: 52). A good example of brevity is "The Child Who Favored Daughter," which immediately focuses on the punishment 'daughter' is to receive from her father for taking a white lover, and the story of 'Daughter' is told in a flashback or is presented as a parallel story set in the past. The story also covers a relatively short time-span; except for the flashbacks, the incidents take place in less than two days.

The intensity principle is also discernible in Walker's short stories; every word plays a role in the economy of the story's meaning. The descriptions she gives of her characters are related to the actions they are later to take. Moreover, the intensity principle keeps up the momentum of the story and thus the attention of the reader. The best example here is again from "The Child Who Favored Daughter," which right from the beginning builds up a suspense in relation to the punishment the 'father' is going to inflict on his 'daughter.'

In Walker's short stories, the "unity of impression" principle may ensure that an oppressed illiterate black woman will identify with Mrs. Washington, a daughter who has been a victim of incest will feel the ruthlessness of the punishment of 'daughter,' an African American will feel more keenly the tragedy of the lynchings in "Coming Apart," and a reader who cannot identify with any of the protagonists or the incidents narrated will feel empathy for the characters being portrayed.

Walker's short stories reveal both her familiarity with the classic form of the short story and her own experimentation with the genre. Some of her stories, like "The Child Who Favored Daughter," and "Strong Horse Tea" for example, start with the climax and then narrate the accidents that led to this climax, a technique which is a feature of the classical short story. Walker's stories, like Kanafani's and Ngugi's, are also distinctive for their simple style. A simple style is arguably the most effective in communicating ideas of social and political change to its intended audience. McDowell points out that Walker's fiction had, in fact, two different audiences, but African American readers were her privileged audience:

Walker could choose to ignore the fact that her audience was predominantly white, a choice strongly influenced ... by the social realities and literary circumstances of her place and time. We might pinpoint specifically the emergence of black nationalism in the 1960s and 70s and the rise of the women's movement that followed closely on its heels. During this period, the writers and critics who formed the cultural arm of the larger political movement became convinced ... that "their real audience, like the nation to come, was black." Accordingly, they directed "their energies to the creation of a new nation and their voices to an

audience radically different from any [they] had ever conceived of,” a black audience which would include, as never before, ordinary blacks from ghetto communities (1990: 109-10)

Walker’s simplicity of style could thus be seen as a quality to which any committed literature aiming at effecting change tended to adhere. Walker also “excels at narrative technique” in several stories (Petry 1993: 201). The example that could be taken here is “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy.” The reader wonders at the beginning of the story how a schoolgirl is able to write her own story in such a clear way and in excellent English; later we learn that after killing the lawyer, she stole his money and financed her education so that she is able now to tell her own story. Furthermore, the political ideas in her stories are conveyed by suitably politicized characters. A view on the Civil Rights Movement is conveyed through a character who is both an activist and a participant, as in “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells”. At times, when the themes are too complex for an “ordinary” character to portray them, she resorts to introducing excerpts from critical essays in her stories, as in “Coming Apart,” a technique for which Walker has been criticized, because it “distorts” the short story form. Walker’s style, like Kanafani’s and Ngugi’s, also features the use of short sentences which are direct and to the point, and uses everyday spoken language. In this, the short stories may be influenced by oral culture, while also conveying the story’s message more directly.

A possible criticism of Walker’s short stories comes from Petry who argues that Walker’s short fiction shows an “unevenness in technique and thereby illuminates the texts’ failure of political/cultural/spiritual vision” (Lauret 2000: 197). Bradley also comments on some of the short stories as “flawed by ‘unassimilated rhetoric, simplistic

politics and a total lack of plot and characterization” (quoted in Lauret 2000: 197). Although this criticism might be true to a certain degree, I believe that some of Walker’s stories successfully elucidate her political, cultural and spiritual vision. Her stories, especially those of *In Love and Trouble* clearly show the political and racial conditions which result in the suffering of black women, and the women’s oppression and subsequent struggles are presented in a similarly clear way. Secondly, critics point to Walker’s preference for telling over showing, which “suggests a mistrust of her readers, or her texts, or both” (Petry 1993: 203). The reader is thus “patronised or – worse – denied any room to move and make [his/]her own meanings” (Lauret 2000: 197). Petry argues that Walker has a habit of “telling the reader what the story is about, of making sure that he does not overlook a single theme” (1993: 204). In most of the stories we feel that Walker is guiding us towards a specific interpretation of the narrative. For example, in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff,” we might prefer to be left to imagine what will happen to the ‘old moppet’ after Hannah’s death, but Walker denies the reader that right, as she tells of the white woman’s death several months later. The endings of her stories are of variable success, in some cases veering towards sentimentality. In other stories, like “Strong Horse Tea”, Walker avoids dénouement altogether to escape sentimentality; here, “the pain is underscored by the lack – indeed, the impossibility – of resolution in the character’s situations” (Petry 1993: 207). In one story, “Advancing Luna – and Ida B. Wells,” there are four different endings, and these multiple endings effectively “prod the reader, insisting on the complexity of the issue and the characters,” argues Christian (1982: 198). There is also an unintended humour in several of the short stories in *You Can’t Keep A Good Woman Down*, and as Petry explains: “There is absolutely nothing in Alice Walker’s interviews, nothing in her many personal essays, nothing in her friends’ and colleagues’ reviews of her books, nothing anywhere to suggest that she is being anything but dead

serious in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*" (1993: 201). According to Petry, this unintended humour discredits the serious themes of rape, pornography and miscegenation Walker discusses in these short stories. So while the stories of *In Love and Trouble* have a serious effect and "move the reader to tears, to shock, to thought" those of *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* "too often move him to guffaws. Too bad they weren't meant to be humorous" (Petry 1993: 197-8). Hence, it becomes possible to accept Petry's criticism of *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*: "the characters, subject matter, and writing style of most of the stories in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* leave the reader with a she's-gotta-be-kidding attitude that effectively undercuts its very serious intentions" (1993: 198). The final point to be discussed here is Walker's tendency to present editorials and critical essays as short stories (see Petry 1993: 205). Katha Pollitt sums it up thus: "As a storyteller she is impassioned, sprawling, emotional, lushly evocative, steeped in place, in memory, in the compelling power of narrative itself. A lavishly gifted writer, in other words—but not of this sort of book" (quoted in Petry 208). It is hard to agree with this statement in its entirety. Walker's short fiction is certainly equal in its literary qualities to her longer productions in prose, as I shall hope to demonstrate.

In the following section I read a selection of Walker's short stories as examples of a "womanist/feminist resistance narrative", building on Barbara Harlow's theory of resistance literature.

As we have seen, Harlow argues that resistance literature emerges under or as an outcome of colonization, whether figurative or literal. The 'colonization' of the African Americans is a colonization of the mind; generations of African Americans were colonized by slavery, racism and segregation, and African American women were victims of a 'double colonization' due to their gender. In such a context, a literature that addresses these peoples' problems and the oppression from which they continued to suffer is

ineluctably a kind of resistance literature, which in itself becomes part of the struggle of the oppressed to achieve their freedom. Walker's fiction is in line with Harlow's concept of resistance literature. Walker states her mission of resistance clearly in "Choice: A Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.": "At the moment I saw his resistance I knew I would never be able to live in this country without resisting everything that sought to disinherit me, and I would never be forced away from the land of my birth without a fight" (quoted in White 2004: 60). Moreover, since a major part of Walker's fiction concerns itself particularly with narrating the lives of women and the problems they face, it could be argued that Walker's mode of resistance is a feminist one.

As discussed elsewhere, the colonizer attempts to erase or distort the past of the colonized subject in order to deprive her of her own history and to impose his own hegemonic narrative. Resistance narratives employ history to renew and restore the past of the oppressed, their culture, beliefs and values in an attempt to make them better able to assess their present condition and build on that for the future.

Walker, in her fiction, has verbalized the history of black people in general and black women in particular. bell hooks remarks of *The Color Purple* that Walker uses "the basic historical fact as a frame to enhance the social realism of her text while superimposing a decidedly contemporary perspective. Historical accuracy is altered to serve didactic purposes—to teach the reader history not as it was but as it should have been" (1993: 292). It could be argued that the same is applicable to Walker's short stories. Walker acknowledges the exigency of African American women forging a link with previous generations, and as Washington argues, she is "especially concerned with the need for black people to acknowledge and respect their roots, Walker is sensitive to these women who are divorced from their heritage" (Washington 1993: 45). The history of slavery and oppression on all levels, both physical and psychological, is a well from which

African American women should draw the strength to reconstruct their identity and move forward. Davis remarks that in *In Love and Trouble* Walker is “exploring the immediate past and the unimagined future: Africa, love, civil rights, [and] suicide,” (1993: 277); all these themes are constantly related back to the present.

The history of the oppression of black uneducated women is a theme which “Her Sweet Jerome” tackles in detail. Even in the titles of the books Mrs. Washington finds under her husband’s bed, there is clearly great import in the history the titles allude to and in the images drawn on these books:

Fists and guns appeared everywhere. “Black” was the one word that appeared consistently on each cover. *Black Rage, Black Fire, Black Anger, Black Revenge, Black Vengeance, Black Hatred, Black Beauty, Black Revolution*. Then the word “revolution” took over. *Revolution in the Streets, Revolution from the Rooftops, Revolution in the Hills, Revolution and Rebellion, Revolution and Black People in the United States, Revolution and Death* (Walker 1995: 33).

The sequence of the words mentioned in the titles appears to map the trajectory of African American history; they start by defining the feelings of anger of African Americans, and then allude to their decision to achieve their freedom through the revolution.

“The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” is another story in which Walker uses a historical framework. Speaking about her short story, Walker points out that:

I gathered up the historical and psychological threads of the life some of

my ancestors lived, and in the writing of it I felt joy and strength and my own continuity. I had that wonderful feeling writers get sometimes, not very often, of being *with* a great many people, ancient spirits, all very happy to see me consulting and acknowledging them, and eager to let me know, through the joy of their presence that indeed I am not alone (Walker in Washington 1993: 38).

There are certain historical references at work in this story: the Depression of the 1930s and the resulting hunger and starvation, the Relief Scheme and the food stamps sent by the government, and the racism even in the distribution of food. Walker defines one of her literary ancestors as a model, Zora Neale Hurston, through the research she has done on voodoo, black folklore, their magic and 'rootwork'. This story is in fact a detailed description of an experience which Walker's mother had gone through during the Depression and the New Deal programs introduced by President Franklin Roosevelt. While preparing to go and collect the food stamps, Walker's mother received a parcel of clothes from her sister who lived in the North. She wore one of the dresses, which looked new, and went to get her share of the food being distributed. Seeing her in such a fine dress, the woman responsible for distributing food refused to grant her what she was entitled to have (see White 2004: 27). Walker builds on this piece of family biography to write one of her most powerful short stories. For her mother, this experience is one of her most enduring memories:

Whenever her mother told the story about the flour, Alice would later write, "She automatically raised her head higher than ever—it was always

high—and there was a look of righteousness, a kind of holy *heat* coming from her eyes. She said she had lived to see this same white woman grow old and senile and so badly crippled she had to get about on *two* sticks” (White 2004: 28).

The significance of this incident and of the plotted revenge are emphasised in the title of the story.

Walker’s discovery of Zora Neale Hurston as a literary ancestor is a very important historical event that has its effects on both her life and works, because in forging that link a feeling of continuity and a glimpse of hope are achieved: “Walker explains the effect of her “collaboration” with her esteemed literary ancestor in terms of an indescribable joy that comes from the auspicious knowledge of partaking in the ebullient community of historical personages and ancient spirits (Walker in Smith 1999: 13). The importance of this event stems from Walker’s perception of the social role of the creative writer in the life of her people, which, as Dieke argues, “is a cultivated awareness of the reciprocal saving potential of art, based on [Walker’s] sense of art as a means of keeping alive the connection between ancestral spirits and their living descendants. This multiple preservation of artist, subject, and communal spirit describes, I believe, the very core of Walker’s artistic strategy” (Dieke 1999: 110). The writer in this way becomes involved not only in her people’s present struggle but also in providing a historical and ancestral base on which that struggle should lean and draw strength from.

One of the most significant historical backgrounds in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” is the revival of folkloric conjuration and voodoo. Harris points out that in employing the theme of conjuration, Walker goes back to the days of slavery and again finds another link with her ancestral literary figures; “Tante Rosie (“Ro’zee”), Walker’s

conjure woman in “Revenge,” is reminiscent of Chestnutt’s Aun’ Peggy of *The Conjure Woman*, originally published in 1899 (1977: 3). In the story, Hannah seeks revenge on the white woman who refused to give her food by asking for the help of a conjurer woman, who with a curse (quoted from Zora Neale Hurston’s *Mules and Men*) assists Hannah to correct the wrong that has been practised against her. Walker’s recuperation of African American folklore is part of her attempt to reconstruct a “black” history which is distinct from the religio-cultural forms of the whites. In relation to the period of slavery, Harris explains that since the black slave “could not see, understand, or commune with the plantation owner’s god, [s/he] could identify with practices resembling those with which [s/he] was familiar in [his/her] native Africa” (1977: 3). Voodoo and black folk culture, according to Harris, are used here by Walker as a weapon against the cultural colonialism inflicted on black people and as a way to express her views on the social conditions affecting their lives in the United States (1977: 8).

“Strong Horse Tea” is another story in which voodoo, superstition and black folk magic are the main historical references at work. Rannie Toomer, the woman protagonist in the story, has no other option but to resort to folk magic to cure her little baby boy Snooks after her reluctance to do so at the beginning of the story. Her belief in the new world, the white world, has offered her nothing as no white doctor will come to take care of her dying baby, and the time she wasted waiting for that doctor who never came has resulted in the death of her son. The white mailman, whom Rannie has asked to send her a doctor, never does so and instead sends Aunt Sarah, the black woman of magic. The mailman’s action emphasizes the racial discrimination present at the time of the story, since in that segregated society he cannot conceive of sending a real doctor to take care of a black baby in the poor black area where Rannie lives. Furthermore, “he half believed with everybody else in the country that the old-eyed black woman possessed magic. *Magic*

that if it didn't work on whites probably would on blacks" (Walker 83-4; my emphasis). Harris argues that "because of [Rannie's] physical condition and the distinction the postman makes between blacks and whites, he denies Rannie the basic human rights which he feels privileged to enjoy" (1977: 6). The end of the story and the death of the boy, as well as the different folkloric treatments suggested by Aunt Sarah, "arrowsroot or sassyfrass and cloves, or a sugar tit soaked in cat's blood" (Walker 1995: 81), raise several questions about the meanings of this narrative. Harris points out that the different repugnant remedies recommended are not documented in black folklore (1977: 6), and therefore they might be considered as an attempt to punish Rannie Toomer for her disbelief in black magic and black culture. The mother's search for these remedies might also be considered an attempt to spare her witnessing her son's death. Rannie's erroneous trust in white medicine disregards her own cultural past and she has paid with her son's life in return. As Harris remarks, "the story portrays the consequences of moving on to the better things – the technology of the white world, here, or the white world in general – at the expense of something more valuable – one's heritage and roots" (1977: 6-7). It can be argued then that the story emphasizes the importance of the belief in one's culture and heritage.

Rape as a form of oppression against black women is a common theme in the fiction of African American women writers like Toni Morrison and Gayl Jones. It works in Walker's stories as a historical framework as well, since it is associated with the politics of slavery:

I am speaking for my great-great-great-great-grandmother who came here with all this pain in her body. In addition to having been captured, put in the hull of a ship, packed like sardines, put on the auction block, in

addition to her children being sold, she being raped, in addition to all this, she might have been genitally mutilated (Walker in White 2004: 459).

In addition to raising the issue of rape, in this passage Walker refers to the practices of genital mutilation in Africa before the women were sold into slavery. It seems here that she wants to start right from one of the most horrible acts practised against women in African culture. Representations of rape occur in the stories “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy,” “Coming Apart,” and “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells.” Rape here is understood as a consequence of slavery and as both physically colonizing and mentally corrupting. But Walker also portrays the rape of white women, as for example the rape of Luna, the Civil Rights activist, in “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells.” Rape offers Walker the occasion to reflect on the ways in which sexual violence acquires a political meaning in inter-racial relations, as a form of “racial revenge”. In “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells,” there is a strong critique of the way in which rape is seen by some black writers. For Eldridge Cleaver, rape is considered a revolutionary act: “Eldridge Cleaver wrote of being a rapist/revolutionary; of “practicing” on black women before moving on to white” (Walker 1995: 216). The black body should not in any way function as a lab mouse neither for the black male nor for the white one. Walker also quotes LeRoi Jones (Imamu Baraka) whose advice to young black men was:

“Rape the white girls. Rape their fathers.” It was clear that he meant this literally and also as: to rape a white girl *is* to rape her father. It was the misogynous cruelty of this latter meaning that was habitually lost on black

men ... but nearly always perceived and rejected by women of whatever color (Walker 1995: 216).

Baraka's advice, regardless of its supposedly revolutionary import, which views rape as a way to "pay back" the white world for the violence it has visited upon African Americans, is here abhorred and rejected by Walker.

The black woman remains the most frequent victim of rape in Walker's stories. The results of rape, however, are destructive whether it is carried out against a black woman or against a white one. The rape of a black woman means her inner self-destruction, and the rape of a white woman by a black male means the certain death of her rapist through lynching. In one of the salient passages in the story Walker wrote:

Who knows what the black woman thinks of rape? Who has asked her? Who *cares*? Who has even properly acknowledged that *she* and not the white woman ... is the most likely victim of rape? Whenever interracial rape is mentioned, a black woman's first thought is to protect the lives of her brothers, her father, her sons, her lover. A history of lynching has bred this reflex in her (Walker 1995: 217-218).

In this story, Walker also rediscovers the importance of one of her literary ancestors' views about rape and lynching, Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) who was well known for her defence of black men accused of raping white women.

In "How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy" a black schoolgirl is repeatedly raped by the white lawyer her mother works

for. Their sexual relationship starts off as a rape and then eventually turns into paid sex. However, in spite of this shift, the whole process is a violation of the girl's rights because her first sexual encounter as a 16 year old teenager is a rape, and the rape here is not only a physical one but also a psychological one. It has changed the girl's mentality and feelings towards many things, to the point that she later consents to sending her mother into an insane asylum because she objects to her daughter's sexual relationship with the man whose father is a racist. The narrative emphasizes the destructive effects of rape on the mentality of black women, and the daughter's killing of the lawyer at the end of the story could be considered as the girl's redemption since she has avenged herself and her mother of the wrongs that have been inflicted upon them.

In "Coming Apart" and "Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells" the theme of rape is broadened to include a black man raping a white woman. Walker's treatment becomes more philosophical and takes on wider historical dimensions, as after the Civil War the charge of rape was used as a way of maintaining authority over African Americans and effectively, terrorizing them. In "Coming Apart" we learn that "over 2,000 Black men were lynched in a 10 year period from 1889-99. There were also a number of Black women lynched. ... Over 50% of the lynched Black males were charged with rape or attempted rape" (Walker 1995: 177). Through the excerpts of the essays included in the story, Walker historically records the injustice practised against black men as well as against black women. If a black man has sex with a "consenting white woman," it was considered rape. If he "insulted a white woman by looking at her, it was attempted rape" (Walker 1995: 177-8). But of course none of this applied to black women who were raped by white men, for which there were very few, if any, prosecutions. Unlike the interracial rape discussed in "Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells," the black male there is not punished or lynched, his act remains and is limited to a special personal case, and this

limiting of the case might be considered as Walker's attempt, through the character who disbelieves that the rape has actually taken place, to redeem the black man's act and consider it an individual act that should not be generalized.

The charge of rape so often levelled at black males is related both to racism and to sexual competition:

By their lynchings, the white man was showing that he hated the Black man carnally, biologically; he hated his color, his features, his genitals. Thus he attacked the Black man's body, and like a lover gone mad, maimed his flesh, violated him in the most intimate, pornographic fashion (Walker 1995: 178).

The white man feels that the black man both endangers his authority over the white woman and also threatens his sexual image. Lynching is thus the white male's attempt at restoring or preserving his self-image at the expense of destroying the life of another human being. Likewise, the black man's raping of black women and humiliating and oppressing them is an attempt at restoring a lost masculinity. Because the black man is oppressed by the white master in the work field, he in his turn inflicts his violence on the black female in his circle, as Walker shows in "The Child Who Favored Daughter."

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s is also one of the most significant historical frameworks Walker employs. The ideologies of the Civil Rights Movement are at times explicitly foregrounded in the stories, and at other times are the subject of indirect allusion. In "Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells", the main incident is directly linked to the movement, and there are also historical references to the assassination of Malcolm X and

John Kennedy. More indirect representations can be found in several short stories: “Her Sweet Jerome,” “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff,” “Strong Horse Tea,” “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy,” and “Coming Apart.” However, in both cases the Civil Rights Movement is given a central role in African American history as it is portrayed in the stories.

“Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells” starts in the summer of 1965. The narrator, who might be Walker herself, given its clearly autobiographical voice, tells of the actions performed by the civil rights workers at the time:

I met Luna the summer of 1965 in Atlanta where we both attended a political conference and rally. It was designed to give us the courage, as temporary civil rights workers, to penetrate the small hamlets farther south. I had taken a bus from Sarah Lawrence in New York and gone back to Georgia, my home state, to try my hand at registering voters. It had become obvious from the high spirits and sense of almost divine purpose exhibited by black people that a revolution was going on, and I did not intend to miss it. Especially not this summery, student-studded version of it (Walker 1995: 210).

Walker was doing the job of voter-registration and teaching black people about the importance of voting, portraying the hope and the firm belief in the movement’s ability to change the United States for the better: “We believed we could change America because we were young and bright and held ourselves *responsible* for changing it. We did not believe we would fail” (Walker 1995: 211). The physical and psychological violence

whites inflicted against the civil rights workers is highlighted in the story: “After all, 1965 was only a year after 1964 when three civil rights workers had been taken deep into a Mississippi forest by local officials and sadistically tortured and murdered” (Walker 1995: 214). The use of images and stories from the Civil Rights Movement’s history of struggle, and its successes and failures work as points of historical reference for the reader, who is invited to learn more about the history of the movement, its objectives and its significance for African Americans.

Moving to discuss Walker’s use of language in presenting these important issues, one notes that like Kanafani and Ngugi, she uses everyday spoken language in narrating the struggles of ordinary African Americans. Only when the matters she discusses are more complex does she resort to the use of a critical language which is sometimes difficult for the ordinary reader to grasp. She does this in “Coming Apart,” for example, where she borrows excerpts from essays about pornography.⁵⁴ In other stories, Walker’s language is a mixture of prose and poetry, as she herself remarks: “I like those of my short stories that show the plastic, shaping, almost painting quality of words. In “Roselily” and “The Child Who Favors Daughter” the prose is poetry, or, prose and poetry run together to add a new dimension to the language” (Walker in O’Brien 1993: 340).

“Her Sweet Jerome” is a good example of Walker’s use of “simple” language. In her short fiction, she “insists on recapturing the authentic African American voice – whether in dialect, as they do, or in standard English” (Cowart 1999: 26). This method of reinventing the vernacular as a literary language is part of a process through which black identity can be restored. Walker tends to use short sentences, a technique which aims to convey its message effectively and rapidly. As Christian points out: “[Walker is] like a quilter, she is economical; her stories are thrifty; there are no bulges or long stretches of

⁵⁴ The story was originally intended as an introduction to *Take Back the Night*, a book about Third World women (see Walker 1995: 168).

the same material, no waste” (1993: 52). Walker also makes use of simple opposites as a stylistic technique. The following passage shows Walker’s use of simple language, short sentences and the use of opposites:

She searched *high* and she searched *low*. She looked in *taverns* and she looked in *churches*. She looked in the school where he worked.

She went to *whorehouses* and to *prayer meetings*, through parks and outside the city limits, all the while buying *axes* and *pistols* and *knives* of all descriptions. Of course she said nothing to her sweet Jerome, who watched her maneuverings from behind the covers of his vast supply of paperback books (Walker 1995: 29; my emphasis).

Walker’s fiction presents distinctively “African American” patterns of speech that serve to reflect more closely the African American experience and convey the realities of their oppressive conditions, as for example in “Strong Horse Tea”: “We going to have a us a doctor” (Walker 1995: 80), “They gotta come see ’bout this baby” (Walker 1995: 81), and “*O my lawd*” (Walker 1995: 85).

Walker’s use of simple everyday spoken language communicates the experiences and the stories of her black women characters in their own voices. McDowell argues that even “Walker’s “black black” heroines, those not sheltered by light skin or class privilege, speak aloud in their own voices about the events that impact their lives” (quoted in Reid 2000: 317). Gayl Jones points out that “early African American writers wrote to white audiences, in language and forms that were *approved*” (1991: 180). Walker’s re-creation of black vernacular does away with these “approved forms”, and uses it as a way to restore

one's culture and tradition, that is "the black language of black texts that expresses the distinctive quality of our literary tradition" (Gates 1987: xxi).

As a final point under resistance literature, we need to look at the collective nature of Walker's characters. Washington points out that "one theme that has become central to the works of Louise Meirwether, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker is the collective and historical violation of black women" (1977: 21). Black women share a history of oppression, discrimination and humiliation. Consequently, it is the survival mission of African Americans that Walker has set out to accomplish through her fiction. Walker's stories are "written as a matter of communal survival. Walker is very aware of the history of oppression of African Americans, and she recognizes the importance of building a heritage to help African American thrive" (McMillan 2004: 5). In *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* we can see a "conscious effort by Walker to explore the imaginings, dreams, and rituals of the subconscious of black women which contains their accumulated collective reality" (Washington 1993: 38).

There is a shift in the representation of collective action between the first and the second collection of short stories. The actions taken by the women protagonists in her first collection, *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women*, do not take any collective action; whereas in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* the actions of the protagonists are presented as a model for the collective. An example from the first collection can be found in "Her Sweet Jerome." Although the suffering of Mrs. Washington III can be read as representative of the collective sufferings of many black women, she ends up going insane and burning herself, clearly not an example to follow. More exemplary reactions to oppression can be seen in the actions taken by Hannah in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff" who has avenged herself of the injustice which has been practised upon her; and in those of the school girl in "How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest

Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy”. Likewise, the wife in “Coming Apart” raises the consciousness of her husband about the abhorrent treatment of black women in pornography in an act which affirms her identity at the story’s end. The actions taken by those women thus function as a model to follow for all those who are in a similar situation.

The issues that Walker’s characters tackle are ones that have affected both themselves and their forbears, and the stories work to collectively raise the consciousness of the present generation of black women. The topic of the collective survival of the whole is “central to Walker’s oeuvre”, as Winchell argues (quoted in Jackson 2001: 65). In the preface to her work *Alice Walker*, she explicates that:

The four novels, two collections of short stories, two collections of essays, and four collections of poems following those first poems represent [Walker’s] celebration of black women who have had the wherewithal to discover inside themselves from which to draw strength, and have thus survived whole, as Walker herself has done (quoted in Jackson 2001: 65).

In this way, it becomes evident that Walker has taken Richard Wright’s advice into account. Wright urged Negro writers “to develop a collective voice of social consciousness, both nationalist and Marxist”⁵⁵ (quoted in Johnson 1990: 145). Walker’s explicit mission is the physical, psychological and spiritual survival of oppressed black people: ‘it is what Walker wants: “You ask about ‘preoccupation.’ I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival, the survival *whole* of my people,” says Walker’ (Walker in Jones 1991: 157). Moreover, it is not only the collective survival of African American women

⁵⁵ See Richard Wright’s essay “Blueprint for Negro Writing” in *New Challenge* (Fall, 1937).

that Walker advocates. On this point her writer's mission resembles that of Kanafani and Ngugi: it is the survival of all the oppressed, of all the wretched of the earth because suffering and oppression are world-wide. As Ann duCille argues, "the griefs of African American women indeed seem to grieve on universal bones" (1997: 49).

Walker's concern with the survival whole and her presentation of controversial issues has led to the marginalization of her fiction. Reda Bensmaia points out that "there are minor literatures because peoples, races, and entire cultures were in the past reduced to silence" (1994: 220). Berlant argues that the African American suffers from a "kind of "hybrid" affiliation to both sides of the hyphen, the Afro-American citizen learns not of the inalienable rights but of the *a priori* inferiority and cultural marginality of Afro-Americans – as if the "Afro" in the complex term were a syntactical negation of "American" (1993: 220). Minority literature, therefore, emerges as a kind of counter-hegemonic discourse, and in the case of African Americans it aspires first to refute the negative images of blacks in the dominant white literature and culture; and second, to revive the oppressed and marginalized culture and values of the African Americans which the white "colonizer" has sought to destroy in its attempts to erase the past of the oppressed. The voice of African Americans has been silenced, and their literature opposes the silent state to which they have been relegated, becoming the voice that speaks about their oppression and marginalization, but at the same time articulating history, culture and values.

Deleuze and Guattari briefly discuss "what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language," arguing that in "minor literature everything is political" and that "everything takes on a collective value" (2000: 17). I would argue that there is an evident relationship between the concept of minority literature and political writing in the context of African American literature.

Cowart argues that “black writers, their very tongues colonized, find themselves torn between the language they grew up speaking and some more authentic language or cultural orientation” (1999: 27). Though Walker does not present any evidence of African language in her writing, she has “de-territorialized” the English language by re-inventing the black vernacular. Walker’s attempts stem from her commitment to “Southern ‘folk’ culture and more especially the black vernacular” (Lauret 2000: 16) in order to further the emancipation of black women. As has been previously discussed, imbuing the English language with a distinctively African American cadence can be seen as part of the author’s attempts to re-appropriate the mainstream language for black culture.

Moreover, the predicaments from which the protagonists in minority literature suffer do not remain at the personal level but stand for the plight of all the oppressed and the marginalized, and therefore the action that minority literature calls for is a collective one which aims at achieving change for all those who suffer, irrespective of who they are or who their oppressor is. Walker, as Lazo points out, was enthused “by the many programs and seminars that taught her about the plight of people in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East” (2000: 38), and this, together with her travels to Cuba and China, made her feel that oppression was a universal condition, as was the human struggle against it (White 2004: 369). Thus one might argue that the protagonist of Walker’s fiction is always the collective; the black women in her short stories stand for all women. In her tendency to universalize the condition of oppression in her writing, and in her emphasis on a universal solidarity with the oppressed, Walker can be compared to both Kanafani and Ngugi. Collective struggle and action, it can be argued, starts on the local or national level, and then moves towards a universal one.

Evidently, literature which speaks about people’s suffering, their oppression, and their struggle against it can be said to be inherently political. Fredric Jameson astutely

explains that no freedom and no liberation could be achieved without at first identifying that “there is nothing that is not social and historical –indeed, that everything is “in the last analysis” political” (1981: 20). As already mentioned, the 1960s was the time of political action that witnessed the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and its struggle against racism, segregation and discrimination. Christian argues that “Political movements affect personal lives and [Walker’s fiction shows] how personal lives are the marrow of political movements” (1993: 76).

Walker’s fiction in such a context is of great political significance. The themes that the short stories tackle are the direct results of the discrimination practiced against the African American people. In “Her Sweet Jerome” and the reference to the ‘Black Revolution’; in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” and the discussion of segregation even at times of hunger and starvation; in “Strong Horse Tea” where a white doctor will not trouble himself to treat a sick black boy; in “Advancing Luna–and Ida B. Wells” where political activism and black voter registration take place, the ideas discussed are palpably political.

The discussion of these ideas in Walker’s short fiction, and Walker’s political activism relate to the period of the 1960s. This time is of great importance for the African Americans, as discussed elsewhere. It is the time at which their struggle has to continue to erase the wrong and lasting practices of the ‘post-slavery’ period.

Elleke Boehmer defines postcoloniality as “that condition in which colonized peoples seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise” (2005: 3). The period of postcolonialism, or what I intend to call post-slavery, in the case of African Americans, meant the end of slavery in its overt form, though other forms of oppression persisted: racial, sexual, political and economical. Post-slavery literature thus could help in abolishing the lasting effects of slavery which has taken these new forms, and it also

participates in restoring the national identity, culture and values of the people by making explicit the marginalization and discrimination practiced by the oppressor, while at the same time stressing the need for rejecting his values.

The most important features of post-slavery literature, which connects it with the other theoretical frameworks of this study, are its revolutionary nature, its focus on displacing the traditional relationship between the centre and the margin, its encoding of everyday realities as they are experienced by the oppressed, and finally its emphasis on appropriating the language of the master to suit the needs of the oppressed. What I intend to do in what follows is to highlight the above points through an analysis of Walker's short stories, thus offering a definition of post-slavery literature and its role in the struggle for black emancipation. I will discuss the destructive effects of illiteracy, love vs. incest, and centre vs. margin, in the African American context.

One of the worst forms of oppression is the illiteracy that African Americans suffered from as slaves when first brought to America. The evidence for this could be found in a quotation by Frederick Douglass:

It was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read ... "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master– to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now ... if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave" (quoted in Lester 1997: 302).

Later, when African Americans, after a long and arduous struggle, won the right to be educated, they faced the obstacle of racial segregation in the educational system. Walker's short fictions highlight the enormous importance of literacy and the destructive effects of illiteracy on the lives of African American women.

A good example here is the character of Mrs. Washington in "Her Sweet Jerome." Mrs. Washington's inability to immediately understand the cause her husband is working for, namely the black revolution, and the pain this has caused her oblige her to take action. I would argue that her actions are meant to convey two important messages to the reader. Firstly, that her ignorance should be punished and her illiteracy should not be an example to follow, and secondly, that her repressed anger needs to find an outlet. Her action, therefore, represents her enlightenment and relieves her inner conflicts. The weapons that she has been collecting from early on in the story are finally put to use, although her anger is time and again released on the wrong person or thing:

With quiet care she stacked the books neatly on his pillow. With the largest of her knives she ripped and stabbed them through. When the brazen and difficult words did not disappear with the books, she hastened with kerosene to set the marriage bed afire ... 'Trash!' she cried over and over, reaching through the flames to strike out the words, now raised from the dead in glorious colors. 'I kill you! I kill you!' she screamed against the roaring fire, backing enraged and trembling into a darkened corner of the room, not near the open door. But the fire and the words rumbled against her together, overwhelming her with pain and enlightenment. And she hid her big wet face in her singed then sizzling arms and screamed and screamed (Walker 1995: 33-4).

The words which she could not understand in her life have killed her at the story's end. Her continuous screams gesture towards the continuity of black female suffering and struggle.

Something, however, remains unclear in this story. Walker never explains why Mrs. Washington and people like her are left in the dark concerning the revolution. If the revolution is intended to bring about their emancipation, why are they kept uninformed? Does Walker want to show that illiterate black women cannot participate in the revolution? Unlike Kanafani's short stories, in which both peasants and intellectuals were included in the revolution, there are only intellectuals in the circles of Mrs. Washington's husband, Jerome, and the women who participate in the meetings are his fellow schoolteachers.

The exclusion of illiterate black women from the revolution, in any case, is emphasized here. When Mrs. Washington enters the place where her husband's group meetings are held, the only woman who notes Mrs. Washington's presence "*laughingly* asked if she had come to 'join the revolution'" (Walker 1995: 32; my emphasis). Intellectual whites are, on the other hand, welcomed in the group:

Among Jerome's group of friends, or "comrades," as he sometimes called them jokingly (or not jokingly, for all she knew), were two or three whites from the community's white college and university. Jerome didn't ordinarily like white people, and she could not understand where they fit into the group. The principal's house was the meeting place, and the whites arrived looking backward over their shoulders after nightfall (Walker 1995: 31).

This could be read as a bold narrative move on Walker's part, an attempt to highlight, in an albeit limited way, the participation of whites in black emancipation movements.

Mrs. Washington's discovery of her husband's secret meetings, however, has enlightened her. In spite of her exclusion, "[e]very once in a while a phrase she could understand touched her ear. She heard 'slave trade' and 'violent overthrow' and 'off de pig,' an expression she'd never heard before" (Walker 1995: 32). Jerome's negligence of his wife even when she finally manages to enter the group makes it imperative on Walker's protagonist to act:

Jerome rose from among the group of men, who sat in a circle on the other side of the room, and, *without paying any attention to her*, began reciting some of the nastiest-sounding poetry she'd ever heard (Walker 1995: 32; my emphasis).

She experiences the pain of discovering that it is not a woman she should be worried about, the pain of her fruitless searches, and the pain of her exclusion compounded by the fact that the revolution her husband is planning is funded by her own money. Her madness is thus justified in the silliness of the illusion she has drowned herself into: "'It ain't no woman.' Just like that. It had never occurred to her there could be anything more serious" (Walker 1995: 33). The pain she feels is but the result of her certainty that she is the true supporter of her husband's revolution; she has always encouraged his reading habit, she has always taken care of him, and by contrast, he has covertly mocked her searches for other women. Washington argues that Jerome "has hidden [the revolution matter] from her

no doubt because she is ignorant, but it is a revolution financed by her money and her devotion to him” (Washington 1993: 42).

Furthermore, the ultimate cause of pain is her ignorance about the meaning of the ‘revolution’: “With a sob she realized she didn’t even know what the word ‘revolution’ meant” (Walker 1995: 33). Walker has astutely narrated the final moments of her protagonist’s enlightenment and downfall (it is a downfall in one sense and a rise in another). The passage in which Mrs. Washington finds her husband’s books needs to be quoted again at length because of its importance:

Coated with grit, with dust sticking to the pages, she held in her crude, indelicate hands, trembling now, a sizable pile of paperback books. Books that had fallen from his hands behind the bed over the months of their marriage. She dusted them carefully one by one and looked with frowning concentration at their covers. Fists and guns appeared everywhere. “Black” was the one word that appeared consistently on each cover. *Black rage, Black Fire, Black Anger, Black Revenge, Black Vengeance, Black Hatred, Black Beauty, Black Revolution*. Then the word “revolution” took over. *Revolution in the Streets, Revolution from the Rooftops, Revolution in the Hills, Revolution and Rebellion, Revolution and Black People in the United States, Revolution and Death*. She looked with wonder at the books that were her husband’s preoccupation, enraged that the obvious was what she had never guessed before (Walker 1995: 33).

Such a passage emphasizes the political importance of literacy in emancipating black women, so that they attain autonomy and become part of the revolution.

Walker's emphasis on the importance of literacy continues in "The Child Who Favored Daughter." The fact that 'daughter' can write results in her death at the story's end. Lester points out that "the most threatening source of power to the father here is his daughter's literacy" (1997: 300). The literacy of 'daughter' has threatened 'Father's' authority; by refusing to deny the content of the letter she has written to her white lover, she takes control of her own self by choosing punishment and death to assert the liberation of her mind. In so doing, she has thus appropriated the authority of her father. Albert Camus in his definition of the rebel argues that if one chooses to do something at the risk of death, then it means that s/he considers that something to be of more significance than his/her own life: "If he prefers the risk of death to the negation of the rights that he defends, it is because he considers these rights more important than himself" (quoted in Jackson 2001: 78). The revolutionary action of 'daughter' is thus the avowal that literacy and her ability to write and create are more important than her own life since they are the true indications of her self-sufficiency.

The revolutionary character of post-slavery literature is further affirmed by another issue present in this story: incest. "The Child Who Favored Daughter" explores the way history repeats itself in the lives of its two main female characters. They face a similar tragic destiny – though time has elapsed between the two generations of women, there has not been any change in the social conditions in which they live. The story revolves around a father who has an incestuous attraction both to his daughter and to his sister. The history of his attraction to his sister who has run away from the oppression of her family and committed suicide has visited him again and shaped his relationship first with his wife and later with his daughter. Discovering a letter his daughter has written to her white lover, the

father punishes her after she refuses to deny the contents of the letter. He beats her, lops off her breasts and throws them to the yelping dogs to avenge the disloyalty of his daughter and the infidelity of his sister.

The epigraph which opens the story encapsulates the driving force of the story: “That my daughter should/ fancy herself in love/ with *any* man! How can this be?” (Walker 1995: 35) The poem focuses on the “exclusiveness of a daughter’s love” (Wyatt 1993: 128). In the collection *In Love and Trouble* love is presented as a destructive influence on black women’s lives, as in “Her Sweet Jerome.” Although there is a significant difference between the representations of love in these two stories, in both cases it is love that brings about a tragic end for the females involved. In addition, the story’s opening epigraph is considered as Walker’s attempt to establish “connections [to slave narrative] early on in language and imagery”, and thus as the model that will define the relationships between males and females in the course of the story (Lester 1997: 291). It is the same master/slave relationship that defines the relationships between the two sexes in the story. Love here, as in “Her Sweet Jerome” acquires a new meaning and a new dimension: it simply means “possession” when it relates to African American women, as Walker shows in *In Love and Trouble*.

There are two kinds of love that should be analyzed with regards to this story. The first kind is “normal” heterosexual love between two adults. Whether the love between ‘Daughter’ and her master, white lover, or that between ‘daughter’ and her white lover belong to this kind of love or not, is not shown clearly in the story. However, this love remains within the realm of socially accepted love. The second kind is that of a forbidden love; the love between a father and a sister or between a father and daughter, a brother and a sister or a son and a mother. It is incest which Walker attacks although her Black American colleagues have left this subject unapproached due to specific reasons – like

nationbuilding – which might have affected all African Americans at that time, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. The love between daughter's father and his sister and then between him and his own daughter is a forbidden love that has resulted in a tragic death for both 'Daughter' and 'daughter.'

Inter-racial love takes place twice in the story, and in both cases it leads to a tragic end for the woman. It results in suicide in the case of 'Daughter', the aunt, and it results in brutal bodily mutilation and death in the case of 'daughter.' The story explores the reasons why black women have been denied the freedom to choose the kind of love they want. The father/brother in the story cannot accept the fact that a black woman offers her love and body to the white master who humiliates him at work. The black man regards the white man's love towards a black woman as an attempt to oust him even in his home, thus annihilating his identity at the deepest level. The fact that the two main black female characters in "The Child Who Favored Daughter" have taken on white lovers imperils the authority of black males in the familial context. In traditional social relations between blacks and whites, the white male plays the role of the master, and the relationship between the master and the slave has always had negative and unhealthy connotations. In the case of Daughter, "that she had given herself to the lord of his own bondage was what galled him!" (Walker 1995: 39) The same applies to the case of 'daughter' even if it is not known whether the white lover is his boss or overseer. The white man retains the position of master at all times, in his relationship with African Americans. Not only does he dominate the black man in the work environment, he also marginalizes him in the private sphere by wresting his women away from him. This marginalization of the black male is seen as unforgivable, a point I will return to later. In order to combat his feeling of oppression, he should restore his confidence and show some kind of authority and control within his family. The domination black men practise over black women is thus a way of

restoring their identity, preserving their masculinity and defending their existence; these are the attitudes that Walker's short fiction attacks.

Patriarchal authority is, therefore, seen by Walker as a very important factor in the representation of African American society. Walker emphasizes the role of the father figure early in the story: "*Father, judge, giver of life*" (Walker 1995: 35). This passage suggests the widespread traditional notion of the male role in the African American context. Moreover, the attributes of the father are parallel to those of God in Christianity. Lester argues that Walker has "complicate[d] traditional western Judeo-Christian mythology by connecting it with a patriarchal authority that tries to silence women" (Lester 1997: 293). Lester's point could be valid if the connection is meant to serve that special purpose, but what if that connection is only Walker's way of asserting and aggrandizing the role of the father? Whether it carries a religious connotation or not, the father figure is bent on destroying the lives of the women in this story, as is evident in the cases of 'daughter's' father and 'Daughter's' father. By playing that destructive role, the father is presented as analogous to the white master and the violence inflicted upon him by the white man is practiced in turn on the females who fall under his authority.

Incest is also linked with racism, one of the core themes of "The Child Who Favored Daughter." The story does not make clear how daughter's father gets hold of the letter she has written to her lover. It suggests several possibilities, the most important of which is the one related to the lover's mother:

[S]he wonders how he knows about the letter. Her lover has a mother who dotes on the girl he married. It could have been her, *preserving the race*. Or the young bride herself, brittle to ice to find a letter from her among keepsakes her husband makes no move to destroy. Or—? But that notion

does not develop in her mind. She loves him (Walker 1995: 36; my emphasis).

'Preserving the race' is then not only one of the father's concerns but the white lover's mother shares that concern too. The mother's concerns are clear enough since she would not accept a black woman as her son's wife or partner, whereas the father's concerns carry a more ambiguous meaning. His daughter taking on a white lover endangers the father's authority as a black male, since it also signifies physical and mental independence from him. Wyatt argues that "for the woman, going outside the "race" becomes a way of asserting a sexual independence that she will not renounce. For the man, staying within the race becomes a way of containing a sexual desire he cannot acknowledge" (Wyatt 1993: 128). Freud's argument that the need for the individual to gain independence from parental authority explains and justifies the stance taken by daughter in the story: "The freeing of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development" (Freud 1950: 74). Walker's short story stresses and celebrates the importance of daughter's independence, as black female emancipation is a key theme of the collection.

Maintaining control is one of the black male's priorities, according to Walker. From the outset, the story makes clear that the father will make every effort possible to have that control. The representation of the father figure at the opening of each section of the story emphasizes the omnipotent role of the father. Moreover, the presence of the gun stresses the destructive role of the father who will not hesitate to use that gun if necessary. As has been the case with Kanafani, the gun remains an important masculine symbol that

ensures the authority of the male figure, and an emblem of bravado in the struggle Kanafani's male characters undertake.

The opening of the second section of the story presents a new use for the gun. It becomes the weapon to be used to frighten daughter and bring her back into chastity: "He is sitting on the porch with his shotgun leaning against the banister within reach. If he cannot frighten her into chastity with his voice he will threaten her with the gun" (Walker 1995: 37). Although the gun is never used in the story, its presence does away with any sense of a "normal" father-daughter relationship. Harris uses the gun's image here as evidence for the father's incestuous attraction towards his daughter: "*How* the father has waited for his daughter is further testament to the personal, non-Platonic involvement" (Harris 1982: 50). Thus the gun becomes a phallic symbol that ensures the father's hidden desires for his daughter. This symbol is repeated throughout the story and at its end, although it is never told whether the father's desire has been fulfilled or not.

The father's sexual involvement with his daughter is emphasized as his memories of Daughter indicate that involvement too. To understand the present situation one needs to analyse the relationship between father and Daughter. It is the trauma of his memories that has led the father to act violently against his daughter, and earlier against his wife. Walker gives a clear explanation for the father's violence through the use of effective poetic quotes: "Memories of years/ Unknowable women— sisters/ spouses/ illusions of souls" (Walker 1995: 37). Harris argues convincingly that "certainly the brother's sister should have been an unknowable woman to him sexually, but to put her in the same category with spouses shows a further perversion. The brother allows what his sister has done to shape his relationship with all women" (Harris 1982: 499). It is the nature of love presented in *In Love and Trouble* which is perverted. Putting sisters on the same level with wives is a distortion of the meaning of both. If sisters should be unknowable—which is the natural

thing, why should spouses be unknowable? In this particular case of incest, it seems certain that the father has breached that rule in the past and his previous actions make it possible to violate the rule again in the relationship between him and his daughter.

The father's actions could be understood if analysed according to Freud's concepts articulated in his essay 'Family Romance.' Freud argues that "the young phantasy-builder can get rid of his forbidden degree of kinship with one of his sisters if he finds himself sexually attracted by her" (1950: 77). It is exactly what the father has done in his relationship with his sister. The story makes it clear that his love for his sister was not a natural one and the description Walker gives of 'Daughter' makes that change of love from a brotherly one into an incestuous one obligatory because of the adulterous nature of her love. The following passage illustrates Daughter's notion of love and her relationship not only with her brother but with all the men that came into her life:

She was like honey, tawny, wild, and sweet. She was a generous girl and pretty, and he could not remember a time when he did not love her intensely, with his whole heart. She would give him anything she had, give anybody anything she had. She could not keep money, clothes, health. Nor did she seem to care for the love that came to her too easily. When he begged her not to go out, to stay with him, she laughed at him and went her way, sleeping here, sleeping there. Wherever she was needed, she would say, and laugh. But this could not go on forever (Walker 1995: 38; my emphasis).

Because 'Daughter' has adulterous relationships with other men, the father and brother see

her act as treason towards the male members in her family.

In brief, the tragic ends which both 'Daughter' and 'daughter' meet could be taken as an assertion of their self-dependency. They both choose death over imprisonment within their fathers' incestuous desires and their patriarchal systems. The stances these two females are represented as a narrative example in the ability of black women to oppose, to say 'No', and secondly, in their ability to choose their own destiny.

We have already pointed out the minor and marginalized status to which African American literature has been relegated, in parallel with the marginalized status of black men in the public sphere, and that of black women in both the private and the public sphere. While the white man is the undisputed master of the public sphere, in turn, the black male becomes the master to whom the black female should pay her tribute. What remains to be discussed is Walker's treatment and retribution for the marginalization of black women. This will be researched through looking at Walker's presentation of her male and female characters.

To start with the male characters, one can note that despite the fact that they are the oppressing force in most of the stories, Walker's male characters are left on the margins and no thorough or extended exhibition is shown of their actual roles. Kelly points out that "most of the stories in Walker's first collection, *In Love and Trouble*, leave men on the periphery ... [In 'Her Sweet Jerome', for example,] although a man is the motivating force, he is on the periphery" (1999: 173). The story does not bring Jerome into action, and we are told about his actions either through the narrator or through the comments his wife makes about him. There is no clear dialogue between him and his wife or between him and his fellow revolutionary comrades, and all the speeches are recorded and summarised. In one important event, Jerome's reciting poetry is only described and no actual lines of that poetry are put forward for the reader to share. It can be argued that Walker's treatment of

her male characters is an attempt to reject the centrality of the male in the lives of African American women. Since men are central in real life, they should be exteriorised in fiction.

Walker's treatment of her female characters is completely different, however. They are the oppressed ones, they are the ones who suffer, and they should be the ones who effect the change for a better life. Their suffering thus will be rewarded although some of these women might suffer greatly or even lose their lives for the cause they stand for. They are really pushed out in the light in Walker's fiction. Moreover, Walker's female characters fall into one of three categories. They belong either to the 'Suspended Woman' category, the 'Assimilated Woman' one or the 'Emergent Woman' category (see Washington 1977: 23).

Mrs. Washington in 'Her Sweet Jerome' belongs to the first category; she is a 'suspended woman.' 'Suspended women' in Walker's fiction form the first part of the cycle through which her women characters grow. Describing them, Walker told Washington,

They either kill themselves or they are used up by the man, or by the children, or by ... whatever pressures against them. And they cannot go anywhere. I mean, you can't just move, until there is a room for you to move into. And that's the way I see many of the women I have created [thus far] (Walker in White 2004: 333).

The cause for this grouping of women is attributed to Walker's notion about the circumstances these women are subjected to:

Walker refers to them as ‘suspended’ women because the pressures against them are so great they can’t move anywhere. Suspended in time and place, they are women whose life choices are so severely limited that they either kill themselves, retreat into insanity, or are simply defeated one way or another by the external circumstances of their lives” (Washington 1977: 22).

A close look at Mrs. Washington’s character and her role in the story clearly reveals how “suspended” she is. She is literally destroyed by her husband’s negligence and oppression, by society’s rumours, and by her failure to stand firm against these forces. Suspended women hence suffer from both physical and psychological abuse, and these women belong to the end of the 19th century and early 20th century.

The second kind of Walker’s female characters is the ‘Assimilated Women.’ Women in this category are also victims but not of physical violence but rather of “psychic violence that alienates them from their roots and cuts them off from real contact with their own people and also from a part of themselves” (Washington 1977: 22). These women belong to the generation of the 1940s and 50s, and are more cognizant of their oppression than the women of the first cycle. They have the aptitude to change their current situation despite the forces oppressing them, “they are still thwarted because they feel themselves coming to life before the necessary changes have been made in the political environment, before there is space for them to move into” (Washington 1977: 22). The psychic violence from which they suffer estranges them from their roots and consequently they lose connection with their people. Walker explains the state of these women as:

I have this theory that Black women in the Fifties, in the Forties—the late Forties and early Fifties—got away from their roots much more than they will probably ever do again, because that was the time of greatest striving to get into White Society and to erase all the back-grounds of poverty. It was a time when you could be the exception, could be the One. But I think she's not unique—so many, many black families have a daughter or a sister who was the one who escaped because, you see, that was what was set up for her; she was going to be the one who escaped ... (Walker in Washington 1977: 22).

Hence, what these women have succeeded in accomplishing is to become acceptable to the white world, but the price they have to pay is a dear one: the negation of their racial identity.

An example of the 'Assimilated Woman' could be found in the short story "How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy." The schoolgirl's mother is in control of her own life, she works and earns her own living as her daughter describes her: "Mama worked in private homes. That's how she described her job, to make it sound nicer. 'I work in private homes,' she would say, and that sounded nicer, she thought, than saying 'I am a maid'" (Walker 1995: 149). However, the woman's independence, her work particularly, has resulted in her daughter being repeatedly raped by the white master for whom the mother worked. It has also, as discussed earlier, caused the mother to be put into an insane asylum after she has beaten her daughter to draw her attention to the racist attitudes of that man's father:

That night she told me something I hadn't paid much attention to before. She said: 'On top of everything else, that man's daddy goes on the TV every night and says folks like us ain't even human.' It was his daddy who had stood in the schoolhouse door saying it would be over his dead body before any black children would come into a white school (Walker 1995: 151).

Nevertheless, the schoolgirl comes back to her senses again at the end of the story, but it is too late as the mother has really become insane:

Mama *was* insane. She had no mind left at all. They had given her shock treatments or something ... God knows what else they gave her. But she was as vacant as an empty eye socket (Walker 1995: 152).

The mother's death at the end of the story verifies the fact that she has claimed her rights or attempted revenge before the right time has come. It was the schoolgirl who has really waited for the right time, and she took her and her mother's revenge by killing the lawyer.

The third kind of Walker's female characters is the 'Emergent Women.' These women belong to the late 1960s. They are the women who have lived through the time of the revolution, the Civil Rights Movement. They are those who come in the right time and they are affected by the political changes which have made achieving freedom attainable. Walker describes the 'Emergent Women':

My women, in the future, will not burn themselves up—that’s what I mean by coming to the end of a cycle, and understanding something to the end ... Now I am ready to look at women who have made the room larger for other to move in ... I think one reason I never stay away from the Southern Movement is because I realize how deeply political changes affect the choices and lifestyles of people. The movement of the Sixties, Black Power, the Muslims, the Panthers ... have changed the options of Black people generally and of Black women in particular. So that my women characters won’t all end the way they have been, because Black women now offer varied, live models of how it is possible to live. We have made a new place to move (Walker in Washington 1977: 22).

Walker herself is an exemplar of these women as she has been called to life by the Civil Rights Movement. There are several women in her short stories who belong to this category like the protagonist of “Advancing Luna—And Ida B. Wells,” the wife in “Coming Apart,” the schoolgirl in “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy”, and the women in the revolutionary group in “Her Sweet Jerome” could also be included in this category.

One of the most important theoretical backgrounds that allows a presentation of the suffering of the oppressed can be said to be Marxism. As discussed elsewhere, most revolutionary movements all over the world claim a link to Marxism as Marxist ideologies form a suitable background dogma for the people’s struggle. White mentions that Walker read Castro’s defence of the revolution *History Will Absolve Me* and that helped “to frame her understanding of the political roots of the Uprising in Cuba and provided an overview of Marxist ideology” (2004: 72). Later she visited Russia and Lenin’s tomb, and enrolled

in a class to know more about the Russian revolution. It can then be claimed that these readings and visits has helped in Walker's understanding of the Marxist theory, and this in a way paves the way for Marxist features to be implemented and discerned in her literary work.

There are several themes that can be studied in order to make these traces clearer. These themes, moreover, also help in comparing Walker with the other authors of the study, Kanafani and Ngugi. Walker's treatment of history, her presentation of black and especially female characters as a source of cheap labour, the issue of who should control and benefit from the wealth produced by blacks, the rejection of religion as an inhibiting factor in the lives of African Americans, the use of religion as an imperialist tool, and questioning the concept of God, can all be seen under a Marxist perspective.

The history presented in Walker's short stories is in line with the Marxist version of history. It is the history of the oppressions of the past and its struggle that should be narrated so that the present generation learns from that history and analyses his present accordingly to formulate a better and brighter future. The retold history of oppression and struggle helps in empowering the present generation because it does not only re-tell the injustices, but also the successes and failures one's own people have undertaken and their methods of survival.

As has been discussed under resistance literature, Walker's historical frameworks embody these lessons, and again it is not history as it was which was employed but history as it should have been. *In Love and Trouble* narrates the history and the past of oppression while *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* brings more examples of the successes which black people have achieved, from the political rights achieved by political activism and the Civil Rights Movement to their effects on the personal lives of black women. It can be argued that the women protagonists of *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* have learned

from the history of previous victimized and oppressed women. They have rebelled against the history and norms of oppression, and they have carved out their own way in life. However, as under Marxist treatment of history, it should be emphasized that Walker's 'emergent' women would not have achieved their newly acquired space without leaning on and learning from the history of their ancestors.

The oppressions from which African Americans suffered also include economic oppression. Walker's parents worked as sharecroppers and so Walker herself lived that experience. This economic exploitation and undervaluing the labour of the proletariat is at the core of Marxist ideology which urges the exploited to revolt and struggle for their own rights. Jameson points out that economic exploitation helps in creating a kind of solidarity among the oppressed so that they can identify their common persecutor: "those who must work and produce surplus value for others will necessarily grasp their own solidarity – initially, in the unarticulated form of rage, helplessness, victimization, oppression by a common enemy" (1981: 290). After identifying that oppressor and building that solidarity, the oppressed begin to fight back, and search for the way to emancipate and benefit from their own labour. Washington points out that "it is Walker's contention that, for two centuries, black women have been denied and thwarted in a society in which they have been valued only as a source of cheap labor" (1977: 20). There is another important side to the issue, the creation of social classes and consequently the resulting struggle between them. We can note that some of Walker's characters are financially self-dependent like Mrs. Washington in "Her Sweet Jerome," while other women are forced to become prostitutes to feed themselves like Hannah in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff."

The final feature of Marxism in Walker's fiction is her treatment of religion and the concept of God. The following quotation sums up her view about the whole issue:

Although I am constantly involved, internally, with religious questions—and I seem to have spent all of my life rebelling against the church and other people’s interpretations of what religion is—the truth is probably that I don’t believe there is a God, although I would like to believe it. Certainly I don’t believe there is a God beyond nature. The world is God. Man is God. So is a leaf or a snake (Walker in O’Brien 1993: 341).

The above passage clearly reveals Walker’s view. First, Christianity is believed to have advocated slavery for the benefit of the white man. Second, in its attempts to justify its decision, Christianity and its missionaries described the black man’s culture and his traditions and habits as ‘heathen nigger paganism’ (Walker 1995: 69) as in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff.” Third, because the injustices from which black women suffered have not been corrected by God, for whom the black woman has waited for so long to take action, black women resort to other agents, like folk magic, who might help in correcting the wrong, and again the example here is Hannah in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff.” After being denied the food, a gambler shares what he has got with her but only after the death of her two children, and although Hannah admits it was the Lord who sent him to do so, she is angry at the Lord’s being late:

The Lord called him to have pity on us and since he knew us and knew my husband had deserted me he said he were right glad to help out. But it was mighty late in the day when he thought about helping out and the children were far gone. Nothing could save them except the Lord and he seemed to have other things on His mind, like the wedding that spring of the mean little moppet (Walker 1995: 61).

Hannah addresses Tante Rosie:

God cannot be let to make her happy all these years and me miserable.
What kind of justice would that be? It would be monstrous! (Walker 1995:
62)

This theme of God's indifference to the suffering of black women is a common one in Walker's fiction, and it also exemplifies the overlap between Walker's short stories and her novels. Celie in *The Color Purple* stops sending letters to God explaining her miseries after she receives no replies.

Moreover, most people who participate in left political activism tend to disbelieve in the existence of God. As we have seen in the short stories of Kanafani and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the presence of God is questioned due to the difficulties these people find themselves involved in. In Walker's description of the women in Jerome's revolutionary group in "Her Sweet Jerome," this idea is crystallized:

The women in Jerome's group wore short kinky hair and large hoop earrings. They stuck together, *calling themselves by what they termed their "African" names*, and *never went to church*. Along with the men, the women sometimes held "workshops" for the young toughs of the town (Walker 1995: 31).

It could be argued then that Marxism, as a school upon which those activists build the principles for their struggle, necessitates the preclusion of religion. It might also be possible to argue that Walker's attack on God is also widened to include the image of the patriarchal male in the familial context, as we have seen in "The Child Who Favored Daughter." Hence, the male who oppresses the female and the God who does not answer her calls and does not do justice to her become one and the same.

Realism also provides a useful theoretical framework for the study of Walker's short stories. Everyday experiences depicted in realist literature are usually those that are the direct result of the political, social and economic situation of the characters. The political episodes that affect the life of a certain class of people, usually the oppressed and the marginalized and mostly the working class, are the rich field from which much realist literature garners its narrative sources. In addition, as Gates Jr. points out, many black writers ... have conceived their task to be the creation of an art that reports and directly reflects brute, irreducible, and ineffable "black reality" (Gates 1987: 45).

The political realities faced by Walker's characters are evident in her short stories. The historical references to the Depression Year, the Black Revolution and Revenge, and the Civil Rights Movement give these stories the 'having-been-there' of things which gives a compelling reason for narrating the real. Furthermore, these historical moments act as a general framework for the characters' actions, and the reader's burden of the historical knowledge demanded of him/her works as a necessary factor in realist literature. However, it should be highlighted again that Walker is not only a transcriber of history, she is re-creating and re-telling history not as it was but as it could have been.

Secondly, the importance of oral culture as another important characteristic of realist literature should be considered. Walker's stories bear the trace of oral history culled from her mother and other black women: she has "found a deep well of stories ... from the

black women who had been so subservient to whites and frequently abused by black men all their lives. She listened to their stories and recorded them” (Lazo 2000: 54). It could be argued that Walker takes the essential material for her stories from the stories of these women, from the actual ‘real’ people who suffered. Furthermore, we should not neglect the autobiographical factor. Some of Walker’s stories originate from an autobiographical background, such as “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff” and “Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Well.” The mere fact that Walker was deeply involved in that struggle which is a central theme of her fiction makes it a form of committed writing. Discussing Walker’s *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, McMillan argues that Walker uses “the story narrative to combine her highly particularized experience with literary allusion and symbolism, helping her to bring “real life” onto the page while paradoxically highlighting the fictionalized presentation of that “life”” (2004: 4).

Thus we have identified some aspects of realist discourse in Walker’s short stories.⁵⁶ The autobiographical factor, the oral history component, and the aspect of psychological verisimilitude are all at work in her stories. Third, the short stories often present the use of a parallel story through intertextual reference. These references might be biblical as in “The Child Who Favored Daughter”, or references to literary texts such as Zora Neale Hurston’s *Mules and Men* in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff”. Fourth, there is a correlation between the names of characters and their roles in the stories as well as their broader roles in society as a whole. For instance, in the passage previously quoted about the women in Jerome’s group in “Her Sweet Jerome,” we note how these women wanted an African name which is indicative of the identity they wish to reclaim and discarded their American names which are imposed on them by white culture. At times Walker does not name her characters, as in the cases of ‘daughter’ and ‘Daughter’ in “The

⁵⁶ See (Hamon 1992: 166-184).

Child Who Favored Daughter.’ The use of such a technique might be a way to make the characters representative of the social group they stand for, namely oppressed black women. Fifth, Walker offers a realistic spokesperson for the source of the information, facts and knowledge given in the stories. For example, information given about how magic or a curse works comes from a conjurer in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff,” and information about the pornographic treatment of black women comes through excerpts from critical essays about the subject in “Coming Apart.” The stories are usually narrated by a character who is well informed about the story and who knows all the details, which is the sixth feature of realistic discourse, according to Hamon. “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy,” for instance, is told by the daughter who narrates her own story. Seventh, one can note Walker’s avoidance of using words which might raise doubts about the authenticity of the story. Eighth, Walker’s protagonists, like Ngugi’s, are anti-heroes and permit an easy identification between the implied reader and the character, since they are often portrayed as suffering from oppression. The emancipation they struggle for and achieve is brought about in a realistic, not mythical way; the revenge the narrator achieves in “How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy” is represented in a persuasively convincing way. Ninth, Walker is economic in her use of words as has been discussed earlier, and this helps in sharpening the precision of the realist representation. Tenth, realist discourse is characterized by the absence of the supernatural, and there is no such thing in Walker’s stories. The eleventh feature of the realist text is the absence of techniques which slow down the narrative; a character is immediately described the moment they appear on the scene, as is the case in Walker’s stories (see for example “Coming Apart”). Finally, in Walker’s stories, characters and their actions are described fully to the extent one feels that

Walker wants to tell everything so that the reader misses nothing. Hence, as argued by Petry, Walker is a “woman who prides herself on being a hard-hitting realist” (1993: 206).

3. Conclusion

Walker’s participation in the African American struggle for emancipation is a noteworthy one. Her short stories explore the lives of the oppressed black women, recording the suffering and the struggle they have undertaken to become free, independent and treated as equals in the racist society in which they live. The successes and the failures of these women’s struggles are highlighted in the stories, and the political, social and economic forces which attempted to seize the lives and souls of African Americans are brought out clearly on the page. Moreover, the history of African Americans is revisited and their culture, beliefs and values are portrayed to the present generation of African Americans as a source of hope for the future and as a call to action.

To conclude, this study of Walker’s *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* and *You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down* show her as the example of the committed author. Her commitment is to the emancipation and the wellbeing of her people, and especially the happiness, safety and welfare of African American women, as well as the wellbeing of all the oppressed. Her belief in change has been transmitted to the readers, and the revolutionary action her fiction calls for: fighting back against all the forces that oppress is Walker’s permanent and memorable message that is to continue to be the motto for generations to come.

Chapter Five: Face to Face: Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker

1. Introduction

This examination of Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's short stories confirms that Fanon's phrase 'the wretched of the earth' is *bona fide*; their work does connect different people in very far different places together. The wretchedness of the Palestinian can be compared to that of the Kenyan and the African American. The stories written by these authors reveal the oppression, humiliation, displacement, poverty and the effects of colonialism and postcolonialism on the lives and minds of those oppressed. The three authors' commitment to the causes of their people has enabled them to probe the depths of their characters and suggest ways forward for social and political change. The committed literature produced by our authors, in addition to several other functions, has engendered political action amongst the target recipients who are usually the oppressed masses.

The similarities between these authors' messages do not however negate the fact that there are differences. The aim of this chapter is to bring to light these similarities and differences, both on the theoretical and the thematic level. Moreover, the themes of resistance, minority, postcolonialism, realism, Marxism and the short story genre will also be revisited to highlight the connection between these theories in the afore-mentioned authors' works, and to bring to light the importance and function of these literatures in the different societies these authors have written in/for.

2. The Short Story Genre: The Umbrella That Covers All

The previous chapters have shown how Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker have all used the short story as the genre through which to first express their critiques of the forces affecting the lives of their people. The study has also attempted to show how the short story is a 'distinctive genre' because of its three correlated features: brevity, intensity, and unity of impression.⁵⁷ These features are of great importance for our authors because of the general political, social and economic context. They have also shown the links the short story, as a genre, has with the other theoretical frameworks discussed.

What remain to be discussed here are the similarities and differences between the techniques employed by our authors' in their use of the short story form. On the one hand, the study shows that all three have used most of the classical short story telling methods, although each has his/her unique style of telling. Besides, all have used a simple style, simple language and short sentences that are direct to the point they need to express, and this, as has been previously argued, relates to audience issues. As such, it can be considered a prerequisite of committed fiction. There are also other thematic similarities between our authors. They have all shown a firm belief in the younger generation and in their ability to change the present conditions of oppression. Kanafani's 'Mansur', Ngugi's the 'shamba boy' and Walker's 'daughter' have all challenged the oppressing authorities regardless of the danger involved in such a challenge.

The study also shows that all three writers sound didactic at one time or another. Ngugi and Walker for example have a clear preference for telling over showing throughout most of the stories, they over tell everything, fearing the reader might lose some important point; they mistrust their readers and leave no gaps to be filled, unlike Kanafani who has a preference for showing over telling except at stories' ends, where his fear of readers'

⁵⁷ See (Reid 1977: 54).

misunderstanding prevents him from leaving the conclusion to be the reader's responsibility. Only in "A Present for the Holiday" does he leave a little space. There are other technical differences: while we have seen that Ngugi and Walker express their own views through the most suitable character, Kanafani has sometimes failed to do this, as we have seen in his presentation of Mansur. As discussed earlier, when Kanafani feels the character cannot articulate the author's message, he steps in and talks on behalf of that character, and that is why he has been accused by some critics, with whom I agree, of being occasionally heavy-handed. Another difference is that Kanafani's and Ngugi's short stories are considered as short stories, they belong to the form, while one of Walker's failures is her presentation of editorials and critical essays as short stories, and this kind of fiction poses difficult issues for the reader. This, however, could be attributed to the nature of the difficult topics she discusses in her stories, topics like incest and black males' bad treatment of female relatives, issues which are mostly ignored by other black writers.

In brief, the fact that these authors have all employed the short story genre to participate in their peoples' struggles and that some of those people have achieved a change, as in Ngugi's and Walker's cases, testify to the ability of the short story to perform the task of reaching the masses, enlightening and empowering them to perform the necessary change. The failure in Kanafani's people's case is however not to be blamed on the author but on the extreme complexity of the cause he was defending. Above all, the fact that all three authors have faced imprisonment, harassment and even assassination in Kanafani's case attests that their short stories have succeeded in conveying the messages they intended.

3. Resistance Literature Generalized

I would have liked to tell you
the story of a nightingale who died

I would have liked to tell you
the story ...

Had they not slit my lips

(Samih al-Qassim – “Slit Lips” quoted in Harlow 1987: 1-2).

I believe that the above lines, quoted from one of the foremost Palestinian poets, summarize the whole mission and function of resistance literature: to tell of the suffering of the colonized people and their struggle to change their present situations, irrespective of where it is written and who writes it. As Harlow argues, resistance literature is part of the “struggle for liberation on many levels and in many arenas” (1987: xviii). Kanafani avers the important relationship between resistance literature and the actual resistance taking place on all levels.⁵⁸ For him, the “extreme importance of the cultural form of resistance is no less valuable than armed resistance itself” (1982: 13). Ngugi also argues that “in literature there have been two opposing aesthetics: the aesthetic of oppression and exploitation and of acquiescence with imperialism; and that of human struggle for total liberation” (1997: 8). Hence, texts of resistance literature need to be revolutionary, to provide a national literature that can awaken the people. In Fanon’s words, some resistance writers feel the need “to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the

⁵⁸ See (Harlow 1987: 10-11).

heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action” (2001: 178-179).⁵⁹ The awakening process, as defined by Fanon, starts with the author’s “cry of protest. The lament first makes the indictment; then it makes an appeal. In the period that follows, the words of command are heard” (2001: 193).

Starting with the theoretical similarities between our authors’ works, one can infer that the short stories of all three display the same aspects of resistance literature, as defined by Harlow: the burden of historical knowledge put on the reader, the debate on language and the collective nature of the central protagonists of the stories, as well as the collective destiny and action to be taken by the colonized. Despite the differences in place, time and the issues tackled, these common factors are easily traceable in the short stories of Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker. Palestinian resistance literature, as outlined in Kanafani’s fiction, is written in a context that is similar to the ones experienced by Kenyans and African Americans. In this way, it becomes possible to argue that resistance literature is generalized, it is made transnational as the specific cases of each society do not change the actual structure of resistance literature. To prove this fact, we need first to remind ourselves of the subjects and concerns raised by the writings of our authors.

First of all, and concerning the historical burden issue, Harlow argues that “Th[e] controversial insistence on the “here-and-now” of historical reality and its conditions of possibility underwrites much of the project of resistance literature and the internal debate which surrounds that literature” (1987: 16). The texts of resistance literature, Harlow continues, are therefore “immediate interventions into the historical record, attempting to produce and impart new historical facts and analyses, what Edward Said has referred to as

⁵⁹ In Fanon’s argument, the native intellectuals’ passion to defend the existence of their national culture is a source of amazement, their efforts are channelled in the course of countering the colonialist theory of pre-colonial barbarism as they fear their culture is at the risk of being swamped by the Western culture of the colonizers. The solution the native intellectuals envision is carried out through renewing the contact with the history of the people, the pre-colonial one. See (Fanon 2001: 165-199).

‘new objects for a new kind of knowledge.’ This requires that the historical record and the present agenda be rewritten” (Harlow 1987: 16).

Kanafani’s stories therefore do not only serve to remind the Palestinian reader about the Palestinian Revolution of 1936-1939, the 1948 *Nakbah*, the 1967 *Naksah* and the miserable state of refugees scattered all over the globe, they also urge both Arab and non-Arab readers to learn about the history of Palestine and about the catastrophes that befell the Palestinians after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The stories map Palestinian history from the days of British rule and draw a picture of all the wars fought between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We have seen how Kanafani’s writings in the first phase of his development as a writer mainly take 1948 as their principal frame of reference. Later, following the 1967 *Naksah*, the stories combine these two dates as this new loss of more Palestinian land led to an increased loss of identity and the attempt by the colonizer to invade not only the Palestinian land but also to change or abolish Palestinian history. The stories show how the suffering of the Palestinian inside the occupied land continues, and the sense of loss for those who have become refugees is augmented.

Kanafani has brought the historical past into clear focus in his short stories. The loss of the land in 1948 and its drastic effects on the Palestinians are the central themes around which the stories revolve. In “The Land of Sad Oranges” we have seen how the loss of his land and his transformation into a refugee have haunted the memory of the narrator’s father – as they have haunted the memory of every Palestinian – causing his attempt at suicide and his symbolic death at the story’s end. Kanafani’s stories also explicate the nature of the relationship between the Palestinian and his/her land. The land has always meant the life and the identity of the Palestinian. Away from his land, he is crippled and paralyzed, and his life seems to seek an end as life on a different land cannot provide the Palestinian with the sense of identity and life his own land used to offer him.

Moreover, the history Kanafani's stories show emphasizes the belief that it is the Palestinian who should restore his land. The failure of the Arab armies' attempts at restoring Palestine accentuates this fact. In another story, "Letter from Gaza," Kanafani returns to this previous idea. He calls for all the Palestinians in the Diaspora to go back to Palestine by stressing the importance of the relationship between people and land. The 'ill-defined tie' with Gaza is a broader ill-defined tie with the Palestinian land, and it is an actual tie between man and land, a tie that certainly includes identity as the most important knot which holds all parts together. The equation is thus: man equals land, and land is first and foremost an identity. Kanafani also stresses the fact that a future cannot be established unless the traumatic experiences of the past are discarded. A new future and a new beginning are aimed at. The 1948 defeat should be wiped away from the mind of the Palestinians, and that cannot be achieved until they reclaim their lost land in every possible way. Nadia's generation, the generation of defeat and displacement should have a better future, and that can only be attained after all the Palestinians come back, unite in their struggle and take lessons from the history of their ancestors who fought the pre-1948 revolution, as Kanafani retells that history in other stories. Moreover, the 1967 defeat has intensified that of 1948. The hope that was created by the establishment of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) in 1964 and the launching of its armed struggle in 1965 has been weakened by this new loss. The plight of the Palestinians continues, and their struggle has yet to go on. The present seems but an extension of the past and Kanafani connects both to show that the present holds nothing new for the Palestinians. The 1967 defeat is the most important landmark in "A Present for the Holiday," and the life in the camps is to continue as a result of this new setback.

The pre-1948 period is also important in Kanafani's attempt to tell the history of Palestine. In his stories "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun and Goes East to Safad" and

“Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad,” pre-1948 history is narrated. These stories carry some very significant information about historical Palestine. In them, Kanafani historicizes in fiction the Palestinian revolution and the struggle against the British Mandate and the Zionist movement. In this way the stories mingle the present with the past, as the present struggle is but a continuation of the past one. These stories could also be seen as Kanafani’s invitation to arms; the highlighting of the positive features of Mansur’s character, and the success he achieves at the end of “Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad”, reveal Kanafani’s belief in the inevitable need to resort to arms to defend the Palestinian land. In these two stories Kanafani also provides the readers with important historical information about the peaceful presence of the Jews in Palestine pre-1948, the “Arab Jews” who were an integral part of Palestinian society, and who are exonerated from the wrongs done by the new arrivals, namely ‘the Ashkenazi Jews,’ the ones who were implementing the Zionist plan in Palestine.

Ngugi’s short stories, likewise, draw a map of historical Kenya and reveal the oppression, exploitation, colonization, dislocation and degradation the Kenyans suffered from both the colonial and the postcolonial regimes. Ngugi’s stories document the different masks worn by colonialism and postcolonialism. The Mau-Mau and the successes and failures of their struggle are narrated, the importance of history and the past are emphasized, and the magnitude of the ‘land’ is underlined in Ngugi, time and again, reminding his readers about the mythical belief of how the ‘Gikuyu’ land has been given to their father Gikuyu and their mother Mumbi by God by showing both the material and spiritual significance of the land. Moreover, Ngugi’s version of history, as revealed in his fiction, analyses the past in order to better evaluate the present and the appropriate plan of the future, the better future that all the Kenyans look forward to; this as Harlow explains, is

the kind of struggle needed, the one “which engages the traditional past as well as the present circumstances of western hegemony in order to determine future coordinates of social and political formations and strategic alliances” (1987: 20).

Ngugi’s short stories therefore start from the 1940s drought, famine and hunger, as in ‘Gone with the Drought.’ They also historicize the arrival of settlers, the land question, the Emergency and the Mau Mau resistance movement of the 50s and 60s and the detention camps as in “The Martyr” and “The Return,” and then, after *Uhuru*, independence, they start to register and criticize the acts of the postcolonial regime as in “Wedding at the Cross” and “A Mercedes Funeral.” In some of these stories there is an attempt at showing the stark contrast between the different versions of history the Kenyans have; the people who have a national sense of belonging, and the freedom fighters, speak only of the history of their great African ancestors and their struggles and achievements. This recuperation of national history could be considered Ngugi’s attempt at reviving the true history of his people, while the intellectuals, the black elite, who have received a colonial missionary education know only about the history of the West, of the colonials; “A Mercedes Funeral” is the best example in this regard.⁶⁰

Similarly, Alice Walker’s short stories offer her reading of the history of her people and map their passage through it. Her fiction articulates the history of black people in general and black women in particular. There are very important historical references at work in her short stories: the oppression of black people and how they have been enslaved and brought to America on slave ships, the racism, segregation and physical abuse and rape practiced against the blacks, the struggle of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and

⁶⁰ Again there is a link here with Fanon’s argument of the role of the native intellectual whose duty here is to revive the sense of dignity and pride in the past of his/her people, since colonialism has always sought to convince the native that they came for his benefit, to lighten his/her darkness, bring him/her their civilization and rid the natives of their barbarism. The native intellectual’s role is then a necessity, and s/he has to bring the splendour of the past and of the culture of his/her people (See Fanon 2001: 165-199).

the importance of African American culture and heritage. To help free the oppressed black women, the main target audience of Walker's narratives, her short fiction points to the indispensable need that these women revive the link with their roots, their ancestors and their heritage, and this conforms to the explanation given by Fanon. He argues that: "The Negroes who live in the United States and in Central or Latin America in fact experience the need to attach themselves to a cultural matrix. Their problem is not fundamentally different from that of the Africans. The whites of America did not mete out to them any different treatment from that of the whites that ruled over the Africans. We have seen that the whites were used to putting all Negroes in the same bag" (2001: 173).

Walker's short stories start by telling of the history of the oppression of black women and then move towards discussing the broader issues of the slave trade, the 'Black Revolution' and the Civil Rights Movement, which latter remains one of the most prominent historical contexts employed by Walker, as in "Her Sweet Jerome" and several other stories. Other stories tackle the issues of the Depression of the 1930s and the resulting hunger and starvation, the Relief Scheme, voodoo and black people's magic and folklore as in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff" and "Strong Horse Tea." Certain stories discuss the issue of rape, which works as a historical framework in Walker's fiction, as we have seen in "How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy," "Coming Apart," and "Advancing Luna—and Ida B. Wells." The stories reveal the suffering of raped black women as well as the severe punishments of castration and lynching suffered by black males accused of raping white women. They also show Walker's stance against rape as a form of revenge or as an attempt at restoring authority by black men, as in "The Child Who Favored Daughter"; a woman's body should never be a battlefield either for the white male or for the black one.

Our second theme of convergence, the debate on language, is very important in the discussion of resistance literature. According to Harlow, the writer of resistance should choose the language that best serves the objectives of the narrative s/he is writing, as discussed in the introductory chapter. Elias Khouri, a Lebanese critic and novelist, argues that: “Language is the very framework of steadfastness (*sumud*) ... Language is the repository of the collective memory. It is the basic national value which must be preserved” (1982: 245). In the short stories of Ghassan Kanafani, we have seen that it is usually the simple everyday spoken language that is used, although there are certain occasions where he employs formal classic Arabic. The Palestinian dialect is used repeatedly by the characters who are involved in the people’s fight or who are victims of the Palestinian plight. For instance, Mansur’s language in the collection *Of Men and Rifles* is a faithful representation of Palestinian Arabic. The use of special Palestinian words and proverbs make that language easily understandable by a significant part of Kanafani’s target audience, the Palestinian common people. Moreover, I would argue that the use of Palestinian proverbs, songs and ululations helps in reviving the Palestinian Arab dialect especially for those refugees whose dialect has been affected by the dialects of the new Arab countries in which they have been forced to seek asylum. This kind of linguistic revival works as a kind of emotional bond with their original dialect, and this in a way helps in keeping the memory of the Palestinians everywhere alive as these attachments to the land and the language remain alive. Nevertheless, the language Kanafani’s characters use differs from character to character and from situation to situation: he utilises the language of peasants, the language of the intellectual, and the political language of the fighters, and when a certain character’s language abilities do not serve the situation or the message, the authorial voice steps in and talks on behalf of this/that character, as we have seen in the way Kanafani “borrows” Mansur’s tongue in certain situations.

Ngugi, as noted earlier, started his fictional career using the English language. In his view, however, the use of English by the African writer is itself a kind of colonialism, and subsequently, he returned to the use of the Gikuyu language in order to better articulate the problems of the Kenyan individuals, and better communicate his messages about the exigency of *change*. He felt that the culture he was trying to preserve and retrieve is African, and the language that should be used to achieve such an end, should be the language of the people whose questions he was voicing.⁶¹ Even when writing in English, the language he uses has been localized to reach the Kenyan and African audience; English has been stamped by the Gikuyu language. The use of the vernacular is another tool employed by Ngugi to alter the English language, with Gikuyu proverbs and everyday speeches used, as we have seen in “Wedding at the Cross” and “The Return.”

Likewise, the language Walker uses is a vernacularized version of English, and everyday African American spoken language and the African American dialect are traceable in her short stories. In order to illustrate more convincingly the suffering of African Americans, she mostly writes in a simple language that conveys the voice of her characters. In “Her Sweet Jerome” and “Strong Horse Tea” we can find examples of Walker’s language, and of the appropriation she has made of English in order to be able to voice the particular problems of the African Americans. Her use of this language can also be read as an attempt at restoring the dignity of black language; the vernacular here serves as a tool for restoring or revitalizing African American culture and tradition.

The collective nature of resistance literature is another thematic similarity that these authors share. Harlow points out that “resistance organizations and national liberation movements represent a collective and concerted struggle against hegemonic domination

⁶¹ Ngugi argues that in order for Kenyan writers to be able to speak to their Kenyan audience and to bring to light the grandeur of their history, they have to return to the roots, life and language of the Kenyan masses (See Ngugi 1986: 73).

and oppression” (1987: 29). Resistance literature should therefore, represent the people’s collective struggle. Its collective nature is a necessity here; where large groups of people are beleaguered, such collective action is the only way to change these peoples’ circumstances. The same principle is highlighted by Fanon, who argues that the oppressed, most of the time the peasants and common people, “hold one doctrine only: to act in such a way that the nation may exist. There is no programme; there are no speeches or resolutions, and no political trends. The problem is clear: the foreigners must go: so let us form a common front against the oppressor and let us strengthen our hands by armed combat” (2001: 104-105). Although Fanon’s call for armed combat is not applicable in Walker’s case, though it clearly is in Kanafani and Ngugi, all three stress the need for collective efforts if their peoples want to find a way out of their similar predicaments.

In Kanafani’s fiction, one notes that certain positive characters are presented as models for all Palestinians, and indeed for all oppressed people, such as Mansur of *Men and Rifles* and Nadia in “A Present for the Holiday,” and certain other negative characters, who are negative from Kanafani’s point of view because they seek personal salvation without caring about the salvation of their people, are criticized as wrong models, like Mustafa in “Letter From Gaza”. Collective salvation remains the chief objective.

In a similar way, Ngugi’s short stories offer characters as models, like the shamba boy in “Goodbye Africa,” while other characters’ actions are to be discarded as in “The Mubenzi Tribesman.” Besides, one of Ngugi’s remarkable strategies is to keep certain characters unnamed in the stories so that their actions, and sometimes their sufferings, are generalized, as in the above case of the shamba boy, and the unnamed female protagonist in “Gone with the Drought.”

Walker also offer the reader certain African American women as exemplars for their people, their actions being such as to work towards achieving the total liberation of

black people in general, and black women in particular. Hannah's action in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff," the girl's action in "How Did I Get Away with Killing One of the Biggest Lawyers in the State? It Was Easy," and the wife's role in "Coming Apart" are the kinds of actions needed for the survival of oppressed black people. Walker also generalizes the suffering of black people in her stories in order to inform readers about the suffering of African Americans, as in the example of Mrs. Washington of "Her Sweet Jerome."

The scrutiny of such similarities helps locate further similarities and differences between these authors. First of all, Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker all use fiction as an arena of struggle where fiction functions as a handmaiden for politics; their fiction hence registers their political convictions. It narrates modes of struggle that help empower and free their people from the shackles of all kinds of colonization and oppression. Secondly, all three have been displaced, although this takes on a slightly different meaning for Walker, as she was born in the United States, but she, in a way, belongs to an African culture, and her people have been forcibly transported to the white world on slave ships. In the cases of Kanafani and Ngugi, the land question stands as the most important issue in their fictions. Palestinians' and Kenyans' struggles to reclaim their land are in fact struggles for identity, the collective identity of the people, and these struggles are indubitably struggles for freedom. In this struggle for identity the African Americans take their part as what they are really struggling for is also recognition of their identity and equality of treatment with white Americans. Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker's short fictions also share a firm belief in social and political change. The authors have all used the 'gun' as a symbol in their short stories, albeit its significance is different in Walker's writing. Kanafani and Ngugi both represented the gun as a tool for achieving liberation for their people and for the occupied land. The gun in such a context is of great import to the resistance movements. The difference in Walker's short stories is that the gun is used as a

symbol of masculine authority, a phallic symbol, as has been previously discussed. Nonetheless, a similarity could be suggested, since Kanafani and Ngugi have both linked the gun with male freedom fighters. Furthermore, the three authors under study have all used the everyday spoken language of their people, though this is the only linguistic similarity they share. There are a number of important differences between Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's language due to the specific context and culture each wants to illustrate. Kanafani cannot write in English for example, because of audience and publication issues, Ngugi's English is of a Kenyan stamp, and Walker's English includes African American words and phrases. Finally, their short fiction shows hope in the younger generation's ability to change the present miserable conditions of their people. The authors' fictions pass on the history, culture, struggles and norms of the past, and the new generation's task is to learn from these and work on achieving the change required. All three authors, therefore, show young characters who take up arms or who fight for their rights.

There are further differences that can be suggested in Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's presentation of the resistance of their people. First of all, the conditions and causes each author advocates are different due to the different masks of colonization. The cases of the Palestinians can be compared to, but cannot be applied on, the Kenyans or African Americans, for example. Also, while Kanafani's and Ngugi's fictions address the issues affecting the majority of their people, Walker's fiction puts an emphasis on targeting African American women first, and in a narrower frame targeting the issues influencing the lives of all African Americans. For instance, Kanafani and Ngugi present the importance of the land for their people, while in some of Walker's stories the discussion focuses on sexual oppression; though an injustice only a section of women suffered from in the African American context. Finally, while in the cases of Kanafani's and Ngugi's fictions

the struggle is dated back to its earliest dates, in the short fiction of Alice Walker it seems that she has concentrated more on the new forms of oppression and only made an indirect implied reference to the first stages of slavery in the African American situation.

In a word, the above discussion confirms my argument about these examples of resistance literature: the cultural and political context of oppression is less significant than the actual condition of oppression, which is comparable in psychological and social terms in different countries and communities around the globe. I would also argue that the author who writes for the colonized and oppressed, who voices their struggle and who urges them to resist and look for a change concentrates on the past of the oppressed, reconstructs the history of their ancestors so that they can learn from their lessons and then start to take action. Moreover, s/he will always choose to write in the language of the people whom s/he wants to set free. This, however, does not mean the exclusion of other readers who might sympathize and sometimes act together with those who are oppressed. Finally, s/he sets certain models for the people to follow in their footsteps. The glorification of the models' actions helps the oppressed to identify with them and encourages their ability to take the same action. Resistance literature is hence a transnational phenomenon; the differences in place and time do not substantially affect the structure and the discourse of the fiction that falls under such a flag. And the importance of resistance literature still continues, as Harlow points out: "Resistance literature ... has in the past played a vital role in the historical struggle of the resistance movements in the context of which it was written. That same literature continues to enlist readers and critics in the First as in the Third Worlds in the active reconstruction of interrupted histories" (1987: 200). Resistance literature then raises the oppressed peoples' consciousness, alerts them to the dangers around, and highlights for them the tasks that they should undertake.

4. Is Resistance Literature Necessarily a Minority Literature?

I believe that the answer to the above question is yes. As a result of its call for struggles to be waged on all levels of society, resistance literature is not the kind of literature welcomed by the authorities or the establishment; whether they are the colonial leaders, the postcolonial ones or any oppressive force in a society. For example “many of Ghassan Kanafani’s works ... are forbidden in the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza,” as Harlow explains (1987: 80). Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd point out that:

The dominant culture occludes minority discourse by making minority texts unavailable – either literally through publishers and libraries or, more subtly, through an implicit theoretical perspective that is structurally blind to minority concerns – one of the first tasks of a reemergent minority culture is to break out from such ideological encirclement (1990: 6-7).

Moreover, resistance literature is like minority literature in that they are both counter-hegemonic: “minority cultural forms become palatable: a form of practical struggle,” argue JanMohamed and Lloyd (1990: 5). Additionally, the oppressed are usually a minority; even if the whole population is colonized and suppressed, both the colonial and postcolonial regimes take the role of the majority leaving the political, social and economic concerns of the minority group on the margins. What the rulers really care for are their own material advantages regardless of what the people require.⁶² Furthermore, the major features of

⁶² What I need to emphasize here is that ‘minority’ is not necessarily a numerical issue. In the case of Kenyans and Palestinians, for example, all the population are made a ‘minority,’ while in the case of African Americans the ‘minority’ is a numerical one. However, irrespective of who is made ‘minor,’ the rights and concerns of the oppressed and the marginalized are to be discussed under minority literature.

resistance literature and of minority literature, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, overlap: the issue of language in resistance literature is almost the same as in minority literature, the canon of resistance literature like minority literature is of a political nature. Finally, both literatures stand for collective values and call for a collective action. Collectivity is thus the issue, and as Kubayanda points out: “the desire and the quest for a genuinely plural reality are at the heart of minority discourse” (1990: 253).

From the previous analysis of the short stories one can argue that Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's works can be considered as part of minority literature, as for example in the issue of language. Of course, while we can find similarities between Ngugi's and Walker's use of English, Kanafani's fiction differs since he is writing in Arabic. Besides, while in Ngugi's and Walker's fiction there is a noticeable deterritorialization of the English language, in Kanafani's case it is the opposite; he effects the reterritorialization of the Arabic language to keep alive the Palestinian dialect which was at risk of extinction due to the Palestinians' displacement and their being affected by the local dialects or languages of the countries they settled in. Nevertheless, as noted elsewhere, all three authors use the everyday spoken language of their community in their short fictions.

The other intersecting feature between resistance and minority literatures is their shared focus on politics, tackling common themes such as the colonization of the land and the mind, the oppression of the people and the attempts to rewrite the history of the people. Therefore, any fiction that falls under the flag of such literatures is necessarily political even if it tackles social issues, because everything in the end is related to the dominant politics of oppression and colonization, as Bensmaia highlights: “The “individual concern” finds itself linked directly to the political” (2000: Xvii). Literature thus, as Fanon points

out, works as a political educator of the masses, it teaches them “that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people” (2001: 159). As we have seen, in the short stories of Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker there is an obvious link between the cases presented and the political nature of the Palestinian, Kenyan and African American societies.

The last feature of minority literature I wish to highlight, namely its stand for collective values, is identical with resistance literature’s stand and call for collective action. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd’s advice is: “Those who, despite their marginalization, in fact constitute the majority should be able collectively to examine the nature and content of their common marginalization and to develop strategies for their reempowerment” (1990: 2). In its treatment of the issues affecting the marginalized groups, minority literature discusses themes and sets characters who act as representatives for the situations of the whole oppressed people. As we have seen Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker reveal the state of colonized, displaced and humiliated people, and the characters they present are real people drawn out from these groups. The benefit of offering such characters and collective situations is to raise the consciousness of the people through identification with the characters offered and the situations narrated, making the oppressed aware that they are not alone in their suffering. This awareness in turn leads the people to the conviction that since the plight is collective the action that should be taken against it should itself be collective to achieve the total liberation of the colonized, the oppressed, and the marginalized.

It can thus be said that resistance and minority literatures inter-connect in the broad issues of colonization and oppression. However, in spite of the clear interaction, there remains room for differences. The cases Kanafani discusses, for instance, differ from those of Kenyan society or to the African American one. The major differences lie in the peculiar circumstances of the society in which such literatures are written.

5. Post-Displacement, Postcolonialism and Post-Slavery

My discussion in the introductory chapter has attempted to reveal the links between resistance literature, minority literature and postcolonial literature: all function as part of the people's struggle against different sorts of colonization and hegemony; the issue of language is an important feature in the study of all three literatures; they also challenge the relationship between the centre and the margin; and the objective of all three is to achieve a change in the oppressed people's conditions. Depending on the previous analysis of Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's short stories, my argument here is going to focus on the relevance of grouping the fiction of the authors studied under the 'postcolonial' rubric. As I have argued, the only fiction that would fit the category precisely is Ngugi's; I have grouped Kanafani's fiction under the 'post-displacement' title, and Walker's under the title of 'post-slavery.' The critical question that still needs to be answered here is whether the emphasis in such a title is on the 'post' or on the word that follows it.

One of the most significant objectives of postcolonial literature, and of all the 'post' literatures mentioned above, is to address the issue of national culture and the national identity of the people.⁶³ To achieve this they all try to expose the oppressors' attempts to

⁶³ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out that the crisis of identity arrives in postcolonial discourse from the latter's involvement with the issues of place and displacement. What postcolonial literature is concerned with, then, is the 'development' or 'recovery' of the identifying relationship between self and place, and subsequently 'identity.' They conclude that "beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are a feature common to all post-colonial literatures in English" (2002: 8-9).

annihilate the culture and identity of the oppressed by imposing their own languages, beliefs and values. Ella Shohat points out that “for communities which have undergone brutal ruptures, now in the process of forging a collective identity, no matter how hybrid that identity has been before, during, and after colonialism, the retrieval and reinscription of a fragmented past becomes a crucial contemporary site for forging a resistant collective identity” (1996: 330). By displaying the oppressors’ attempts and the people’s suffering and struggle, these literatures function both as a register of the people’s struggle, and as an enlightening guide which offers examples and possible future solutions through the model acts and characters they offer. To adumbrate this point, I will look at the main issues discussed under the ‘post’ titles in my analysis of the short stories of each author, exploring the similarities and differences they exhibit.

Kanafani’s post-displacement fiction, or what Shohat calls ‘pre-post-colonial’ literature, relates the experiences of dislocation from which the Palestinian suffered. By keeping a live image of Palestine and the Palestinian land, he maintains the connection between the displaced and his/her land, culture and beliefs. The sense of being ‘Palestinian’ is never lost in spite of all the difficulties of dispossession. Even the shoe-shine boy in “The Cake Vendor” admits that he is a Palestinian, and I believe that the shame felt in his reply is only an expression of the dejection the Palestinian feels towards his new situation. This new situation of becoming refugees, and the concomitant extreme poverty, made the Palestinians accept any kind of work just to earn something that might satisfy their mundane needs: shoe-shining, selling cakes, cleaning houses and stores, and so on. It is even more distressing to see the image of children being asked by their father to go to the hills in the morning in order not to ask for breakfast, as we have seen in “The Land of Sad Oranges.” However, the logic of hunger, the struggle against poverty and the loss of the land continue, and the Palestinian identity is kept alive by attaching greater

importance to the principal issue, the Palestinian land; this importance is emphasised by Kanafani in Mansur's stories in the collection *Of Men and Rifles*. It becomes then safe to argue that Kanafani's short stories serve as an awakener of the Palestinians. Their displacement is a major event that altered their lives but they need not forget the land from which they have been displaced. The freedom fighters' struggle pre-1948 helps to raise the national consciousness of the people and gives them the hope they urgently need in their hopeless new situation. Kanafani's post-displacement fiction is thus linked with the pre-displacement one, and this link is a vital one since he believes the struggle should never stop until the aims are achieved, the land is restored and Palestinian identity rejuvenated.

Ngugi's postcolonial fiction, likewise, focuses on the land question and the identity issue. In the Kenyan case, colonialism with its agents Christianity and colonial missionary education have attempted to obliterate Kenyan culture, beliefs, language and customs. These attempts are seen to continue in the postcolonial era in the hands of the postcolonial ruling group, since their education has been a foreign colonial one and their loyalty is not to their people but to the values of the previous colonial masters. Ngugi's fiction therefore attempts at discrediting the colonial and postcolonial acts carried out to blind the people and cut the strong ties they have with their land, identity, beliefs and rituals. There are numerous examples in Ngugi's *Secret Lives* which tell of the missionaries' attacks on the people's old beliefs, where the Kenyan dances are regarded as pagan rituals, and circumcision and polygamy are also attacked by both the colonial and postcolonial groups, who employ the same methods used by the colonial regime. In Ngugi's text, therefore, the land is the central term of reference around which all his other terms revolve. The land issue is connected with identity, since a Kenyan takes his identity from his/her land, and the rituals these people carried out relate in one way or another to the land. In the example of circumcision, the blood drops on the land symbolize the willingness to defend the land

even if one has to pay in blood. In postcolonial Kenya the self-serving corruption of the new leaders leads to the creation of class struggle in Kenyan society, examples of which can be seen in “A Meeting in the Dark,” “Wedding at the Cross” and “A Mercedes Funeral.” The postcolonial regime even treats the fighters who have achieved independence as threatening figures who are destroying the peace and stability of the country. Therefore, it becomes possible to contend that Ngugi’s postcolonial fiction is an earnest attempt at keeping the people’s ties with their land, identity and culture alive by exposing and refuting the false claims of the civilizing mission of the colonizers and their successors. There is no denial that the colonising powers have brought some form of civilization to the societies they colonized, but their goal also includes stealing the wealth and history of the countries in which they settled.

Walker’s post-slavery fiction is similar to Kanafani’s and Ngugi’s fiction in its focus on restoring the identity, culture and values of the black people by its attempts at encouraging the return to their culture. Walker’s post-slavery fiction could be divided into two groups: the first one concerns itself with studying the oppressions practised against all the blacks by the white master; racism, segregation, sexual, political and economical oppressions and marginalization. The second group studies the oppressions practised on black women by black men: incest, negligence and bad treatment. So while the white master tries to destroy the identity of the black people in general, the black male tries to destroy the black female. As has been seen, black women were the ones who suffered most: Mrs. Washington of “Her Sweet Jerome,” and ‘daughter’ and ‘Daughter’ in “The Child Who Favored Daughter” are two obvious examples. Due to the patriarchal nature of black society, women suffered dual oppression, both at the hands of the white masters and at the hands of their black male relatives. Their bodies and their lives were the battlefields for confirming the supremacy of the white/black male over the black female, and the

master/slave relationship between whites and blacks is essentially the same as that which determines the relationship between black men and women. Walker's fiction thus performs a double role: it first attempts to show the black people's struggle in the post-slavery period, their struggle to keep their identity and to achieve their revenge, a theme highlighted in "Her Sweet Jerome" and "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff"; and second, it endeavours to empower black women and enable them to control their lives and their own destinies; several of the women in Walker's short stories belong to the 'emergent' kind of women who are independent and self-sufficient.

Because of the different 'post' categories of the three authors, it is necessary to decide whether the stress should be laid on the 'post' or on the noun or adjective that follows it. I would argue that although the 'post' remains an important part of the description, greater importance should be attached to the word that follows it. The significance of 'post' lies in the fact that it is not just a time-marker signifying there has been a prelude. Since 'postcolonial' covers the cultures affected by colonialism "from the moment of colonization to the present day" as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out (2002-2), the 'post-' also functions as an 'anti-' colonial-displacement-slavery. In this way, the stress falls on both the 'post-' and the word that follows it.

It is, then, plausible to group the works of these three authors under the flag of postcolonial literature. The different titles – 'post-displacement', 'post-slavery' – which I have attached to Kanafani's and Walker's fictions are not essentially distinct from the postcolonial category in which Ngugi's fiction clearly belongs. What is different is the situation each of the authors has attempted to reveal, but the main objectives are to awaken the people, and to restore identity, culture and beliefs which in the 'post' periods have been suppressed so that the 'post' state continues to the benefit of the 'post' leaders.

6. Marxism at Work

The foregoing analysis of the works of the authors under study shows that they have grasped the essence of Marxism but each has adapted Marxism to best fit the objectives of the struggle of his/her people. For example, the original revolutionary nature of the Proletariat in Marxist theory changes to become the revolutionary nature of the colonized and the displaced in the Palestinian case, of the colonized and the postcolonial subject in the Kenyan case, and of the degraded and suppressed blacks in the African American context.⁶⁴ My argument here focuses on showing that Marxism, as traced in Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's fictions, is presented as a possible solution to some of the problems of the colonized and the oppressed peoples. I also aim at showing the similarities and differences between the different versions of Marxism outlined in our authors' works.

First of all, Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker have all been influenced by Marxist thinking and its different manifestations, a point evident in their different autobiographies: Kanafani was a Marxist-Leninist, Ngugi is a Marxist-Leninist-Fanonist and Walker a 'Marxist'. Second, the links discussed earlier between Marxism, resistance and minority literatures can be broadened to include a further link with postcolonialism, post-displacement and post-slavery literatures. The problems from which the Palestinians, the Kenyans and the African-Americans suffer, and which Marxism tackles, are related in one way or another to the 'post' periods. For instance the creation of classes, class conflict and class struggle mostly appear in the post-displacement period in the Palestinian case, in the postcolonial period in the Kenyan situation, and in the post-slavery period in the African

⁶⁴ There has been an ongoing debate about the relationship between Marxism and postcolonialism. Recent criticism, however, emphasizes that "'Marxism' and 'postcolonial studies' have something to say to each other" as the issues Marxists tackle are the same which postcolonial critics study; issues of imperialism, nationalism, racism and subalternity. These similarities however do not mean the absence of some points of difference. For a full discussion of the issue, see Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (eds.), *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

American case. This however does not negate the presence of these problems under the different kinds of colonialism outlined earlier.

Kanafani's fiction offers examples of class problems both pre-1948 and post-1948. The merchants who used to lend money and guns to the peasants fighting in the Palestinian Revolution have developed into the exploitative businessmen of the Diaspora, those who only care about political and financial gains and about fame and the positions they want to achieve, as seen in *Of Men and Rifles* and in "A Present For the Holiday." Kanafani's fiction functions as an attack on their mentality and their practices against their own people. Their disentanglement from the people's fight has allowed them to seek their well-being at the expense of the people's hardships. Furthermore, class struggle is also widened in Kanafani's fiction; as has been shown, Mansur participates in the struggle as both a national one and as a class struggle. The efforts he makes to challenge the authority of the old people in his milieu in order to get hold of the gun imply a wider challenge to their authority. Another important factor in Kanafani's fiction traceable to Marxist influence is his treatment of history. History, particularly the successes and failures of the struggles of the past, should act only as eye-openers for the struggles of the present and for the fighters involved in it – this point about Kanafani's treatment of history has been analyzed in detail under resistance literature. Moreover, Kanafani's stories follow Marxist thinking in their treatment of religion; the concept of God is questioned, and religion is to be put aside when discussing the national problems of the Palestinians. "The Land of Sad Oranges" offers one of the clearest examples of this ideological approach.

Ngugi's Marxism, however, is more comprehensive than Kanafani's, a difference attributable to the nature of the problems each society suffers from. In his fiction, as well, original and modified Marxist thinking is easily detectable. The themes which reflect Marxist philosophy include the treatment of history, where the history of oppression and

struggle is the one that needs be highlighted; the emphasis on the destructive role of capitalism, as the wealth produced by the native Kenyans is used solely for the advantages of the colonial and postcolonial leaders; the emphasis laid on class struggle; and finally, the rejection of religion. Ngugi's presentation of these issues is intended to empower the people and to teach them that a solution is achievable if efficient effort is exerted. In his short stories, and with his own interpretation of history that surely follows Marxist doctrines, Ngugi describes the loss of the land and the struggle of the Mau Mau to claim back their land. He also stresses and criticizes the detrimental consequences of society's division into two classes, the 'Haves' and the 'Have Nots,' as has been seen in "A Mercedes Funeral," "Wedding at the Cross" and several other stories. He also condemns the role Christianity as a religion has played; it has been a hindering force, seen by Ngugi as an agent of colonialism.

Walker's version of Marxism has certain similarities with those of Kanafani and Ngugi. In her short stories, Marxism is traceable in her treatment of history, in her attacks on considering black people as a source of cheap labour who get very little of what they produce, and in questioning the concept of God and seeing religion as an imperialist tool. To start with Walker's treatment of history, one can see that the history of the oppression of black people, the racism and segregation practised against them, are narrated in an attempt to make the present generation come to know of the suffering of their ancestors so that they can learn from their experiences and work for change, as for example in "Strong Horse Tea." There are also several instances in Walker's short stories which exemplify economic oppression. Black people, black women in particular, are seen as cheap labourers (one of the core topics of Marxism) working for the whites for very little in return; this leads to the creation of classes and the onset of class struggle, a process seen in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff." Moreover, Walker's concept of the Christian God is in

accord with Marxism. God, for Walker, is too busy to listen to the sufferings and calls for help of black women; he does not correct the injustices practised against them, and for that reason he is to be replaced by resorting to black magic. Again this is clearly articulated in “The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff.” Walker’s attack on the role of God is widened into an attack on the patriarchal black male who assumes the role of the controller of black women’s lives, as we have seen in “The Child Who Favored Daughter.” Finally, Walker sees in Christianity a biased religion as it first promoted slavery for the white man’s benefit, where according to Marx “the social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of Antiquity, glorified the serfdom of the Middle Ages” (1964: 83), and this is always linked with considering black culture and beliefs as a kind of ‘heathen nigger paganism,’ as Walker reveals.

In these ways the essence of Marxism has been grasped and localized by the authors under study. Each has adapted it to serve the issues his/her society is struggling against. The differences in the versions of Marxism presented by the three authors can be attributed to the peculiarity of the situations of the Palestinian, Kenyan and African American societies. Some of the elements of Kanafani’s Marxism, for example, are limited to the Palestinian context; others can be generalized and compared to the Kenyan and African-American situations. Also, Ngugi’s Marxism is more comprehensive than both Kanafani’s and Walker’s ones; his treatment of the issues affecting Kenyans are broader and tackles themes that are of interest to other communities and struggles. Like Kanafani’s, but unlike Ngugi’s, Walker’s version of Marxism is a narrow one as it mainly focuses on the economic oppression of black women. These different versions, however, unite in their treatment of history as in Marxist ideology “Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their

manifold effects upon the outer world that constitutes history” (Marx 1964: 255). Each agrees in their rejection of the blinding effects of religion on the people’s minds and lives, as religion is but “the opium of the people” (Marx 1964: 42), and in the issue of class struggle since “all political struggles are class struggles, and all class struggles for emancipation, despite their necessarily political form – for every class struggle is a political struggle- turn ultimately on the question of *economic* emancipation” (Marx 1964: 259). Marxism’s ability to adapt according to the needs of every society, its ability to voice Palestinian, Kenyan and African American concerns, and the revolutionary nature embedded in its doctrines, together with the links early established with resistance, minority and the ‘post’ literatures, make it a possible answer to different problems in different parts of the world as “Marx’s message of salvation is universal” (Marx 1969: 1).

7. Realism: The Reality of Lived Experiences

Literature is able to portray the contradictions, struggles and conflicts of social life in the same way as these appear in the mind and life of actual human beings, and portray the connections between these collisions in the same way as they focus themselves within the human being (Lukacs 1980: 143).

I have tried in the introductory chapter and in the chapters analysing the short stories of our authors to show the connections between realism and the other theoretical grounds studied in this thesis. Moreover, I have argued that in the works of our authors, the features of realist discourse, as set out in Lilian R. Furst’s *Realism* (1992), are easily identifiable. However, it should be emphasized here that ‘realism’ remains a relative concept. Although

the writer aims at representing man's life, yet as is clear from the above quotation, the author usually portrays the image that appears to him/her or that which engraves itself in his/her head, and as Henry James writes "the measure of reality is very difficult to fix" (1992: 43). My aim here is to discuss the importance of realism and its relevance to the issues tackled by our authors, in addition to pointing out the major similarities and differences in the 'realisms' traced in Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's short stories.

From my reading of Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's short stories, it is clear that there are some key points which make grouping and comparing them under 'realism' possible. In addition to the crucial 'historical background,' 'oral culture' and 'autobiography' issues discussed elsewhere, there are some other common factors. First of all, in the short stories studied, we have seen that in all three writers there is the employment of childhood memories and details of lived experiences: the narrator of "The Land of Sad Oranges" in Kanafani's case, Wahinya of "A Mercedes Funeral" in Ngugi's case, and the 'daughter's father' of "The Child Who Favored Daughter" in Walker's short stories. There is also a similarity in the authors' handling of the characters involved in the stories; for example, the characters presented are true representatives of the common people whose issues these literatures aim to discuss, and whose voice is the one that needs to be heard. In their treatments of characters, Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker convey a description of both their physical and psychological traits; we see them in front of us, we live with them in their situations, we enter into their minds and see how they think, feel, plan and act, as in Kanafani's 'Mansur,' Ngugi's 'John' in "A Meeting in the Dark," and Walker's Hannah in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff." Their characters' names are mostly connected with their, and their people's, states; when victory is the aim, in Kanafani's fiction for example, 'Mansur' or 'victor' is given, when martyrdom for the land is the issue in Ngugi's stories, the 'Martyr' is the name used, and when the people's

relationship with their ancestors and roots are to be revived in Walker's case, African names are employed. In addition, we have seen that all three authors have for the most part managed to guarantee their source of information. Kanafani's Ustaz Ma'ruf, the intellectual teacher as his name indicates, tells about the history of the arrival of the Jews and the implementation of the Zionist plan; Ngugi's 'John' and his father 'the preacher' relate religious information; and Walker's 'Tante Rosie' in "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff" tells about conjuration and the spell to be used. All the victims/heroes portrayed by the three authors make probable a reader's identification with these characters. Who, for instance, will forget the suffering inflicted upon Kanafani's child characters 'Hamid,' and 'Nadia,' who will not approve the acts of Ngugi's the 'shamba' boy in "Goodbye Africa" or 'Miriamu' in "Wedding at the Cross," and who will not admire 'daughter's' firm stance in Walker's "The Child Who Favored Daughter"? The final point of similarity is that in all the short stories there is a parallel story at work, and there is usually a reference to a text the reader knows: the Quran in Kanafani's case, the Bible in Ngugi's fiction, and the Bible and Zora Neale's Hurston's books in Walker's.

There are, however, two differences that need to be highlighted in these authors' use of 'realism.' First, realist discourse is a serious one. However, while we see that both Kanafani's and Ngugi's fictions remain within the realm of the serious, there is an unintended comic element in Walker's short stories, as described in chapter (4). Second, in realist literature the time and place of the action are usually defined. These authors, however, differ in that time and place are only given in certain incidents, although the general historical framework acts as a time/place marker. For example, Kanafani's stories are related in relation to the years 1948 and 1967, but these years are rarely mentioned in the narrative. The refugee camps, the places of action for some stories, are similarly never named, a strategy which works both to Kanafani's advantage and disadvantage; when it is

meant to make all refugee camps look the same it is a telling generalization, but this same generalization makes the distinctive features of the states of each camp and of the refugees living in it blurred.⁶⁵ The same could be true in Ngugi's case, as for example in the case of independence. The year 1963 is never mentioned although most of the Kenyans' struggles relate to this year, but the place of the action is amply clear in Ngugi's stories. In Walker's case, however, both the time and place are clearly marked usually at the outset of the stories.

To sum up, realism as highlighted in Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's works is one of the central features that make their fictions perform the tasks they want fiction to do. It reflects a true picture of their peoples' sufferings and oppressions, as well as of their struggles, triumphs and setbacks. Their fiction enacts the mission realist discourse entails: "the central task of literature ... i.e. the portrayal of real human beings, is the need to know what is true, what is false, what is objective, what is subjective, what is important, what is unimportant, what is great, what is petty, what is human, what is inhuman, what is tragic, and what is ridiculous" (Lukacs 1980: 156). The realities of the experiences conveyed strengthen our authors' stories since

only if the writer knows and experiences accurately and surely what is essential and what is secondary, will he manage to understand, even as a writer, how to give expressions to the essential, how to portray the typical fate of a class, a generation, or an entire epoch, in terms of the private destiny of a single individual (Lukacs 1980: 156).

⁶⁵ There is a marked difference between the camps in Lebanon and those in Syria for example, but this does not obliterate the fact that all refugee camps share some similarities, the most important of which is the miserable condition of life in all camps. Hence, Kanafani's technique emphasizes the idea that any camp stands for all, and relates the distinctive features of each camp less clearly in the short stories.

These realities in turn make the messages conveyed easily fathomable by the targeted readers, and make their victims/heroes into models that such readers can identify with and follow.

8. Postscript: Other Points of Divergence

In addition to the similarities and differences presented so far between Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker, there remain a number of important differences that should be highlighted. Some of these differences are thematic, and others relate to the techniques of short story telling. The main issues that are to be studied here include the length of the stories, the presentation and number of characters, the presentation of nature, the use of proverbs, the choice of words, and other differences that are linked with the specific societies and communities the three authors wrote in/for.

A close look at Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's short stories shows that they are different in length. While some of Kanafani's and Ngugi's stories run to more than twenty pages, Walker's stories tend to be shorter. Although the three authors have maintained the brevity principle essential in the short story, this difference can be explained by looking at one of the main issues tackled in the longer stories of Kanafani and Ngugi. They both seem to increase the span of their narratives when they present the history of their people. Kanafani's "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad" which maps the history of colonialism in Palestine, and Ngugi's "A Mercedes Funeral" which introduces the different versions of history taught to Kenyans, are the best examples in this regard. Conversely, the history of Walker's people is presented in relatively shorter versions.

Our second point of divergence concerns itself with the three authors' presentation of characters. I believe that the characters of the three authors are completely different, the

number of characters involved in the stories is different, and the roles they assign to their characters differ. The traits of Kanafani's Palestinian characters cannot work in the Kenyan context or in the African American one. Each character acts according to the ends s/he needs to accomplish. In addition, while Kanafani's and Walker's stories present a limited number of characters, Ngugi's stories have the largest number of characters. It seems that both Kanafani and Walker have confined themselves to emphasize the life and destiny of a single character, a feature essential to the short story form. On the contrary, Ngugi's short stories, sometimes, put forward more than one character, and hence the reader loses his/her focus on the misery or struggle of the main character. In "A Mercedes Funeral", for instance, there are different emphases on Wahinya, on the narrator, and on the contestants for the election. Although all those characters' roles help in showing the life and death of Wahinya, these characters' lives and their actions sometimes distract the attention of the reader. They also, at certain points, obstruct the smooth flow of the narrative. There is also another point of difference between the three authors that falls under the tag of 'characterization'. One can note that Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker differ in their assignment of roles for their characters. Unlike Kanafani's and Walker's minor characters who play secondary roles, some of Ngugi's minor characters are made to carry major roles. The roles of the fighters in Kanafani's *Of Men and Rifles*, and those of the poor people waiting in queues in Walker's "*The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff*" are minor, while the roles of the minor tribespeople in "The Mubenzi Tribesman" are exaggerated and given more significance. The last point that needs to be emphasized here is that unlike Kanafani's and Ngugi's stories which marginalize the role of women characters, Walker's narratives emphasize the role of women and marginalizes that of men, a point discussed in detail in Walker's chapter.

Thirdly, the three authors differ widely in their presentation of nature and the

environment in their short stories. While Kanafani's and Ngugi's works do provide a useful perspective on the Palestinian and the Kenyan nature, Walker's works fail to do the same. We have seen that Kanafani's short stories offer the reader a detailed description of the Palestinian landscape and of the weather in Palestine and in the camps; even stones are described and given a Palestinian context; examples can be found in "The Land of Sad Oranges" and "Doctor Qassim Talks to Eva about Mansur Who Has Arrived in Safad". Ngugi's stories do the same in depicting rivers, mountains and forests, descriptions easily traceable in "The Return", for example. These elements become part of the narratives and help linking the protagonist, and the Palestinian reader, more with his/her land and people. I can find no instances of such elements in Walker's short stories.

The fourth point of difference highlights the three authors' use of proverbs in their fiction. Proverbs have often proven useful to writers of literature. Given the fact that people continue to understand and use proverbs, most of Kanafani's and Ngugi's short stories employ proverbs which make the language and the narrative closer to a significant part of their target readers. The use of proverbs helps in keeping the Palestinians and the Kenyans connected to their culture and language as these two were facing fierce attacks by the colonials and the postcolonial groups. In the Palestinian case, the Palestinian dialect was being affected by the different Arab dialects in the countries in which the refugees settled. Likewise, English, and the foreign culture, prevailed on the expense of the Gikuyu language and culture, in Kenya. In contrast, there is no use of proverbs in Walker's short fiction. Walker, however, has used another medium to preserve the culture of her people. In her stories, black women, and black people in general, are encouraged to revive the links with their roots and ancestors, and to attach themselves to a cultural matrix. This can be clearly seen in Walker's attempts at bringing to life the works of Zora Neale Hurston, for example.

Fifthly, there is a major difference in the three authors' choice of words. In spite of the fact that this can be explained and attributed to the difference in language between Kanafani's Arabic, on the one hand, and Ngugi's and Walker's English, on the other, there remain certain points that should be underlined. It can be argued that, for Arab readers, the special Palestinian words Kanafani used are smoother than the vernacular words used by Ngugi and Walker, for an English audience. What I want to say here is that it is possible for other Arab readers to understand the meaning of the word *marteneh* (gun) for example because it remains an Arabic word, while it is difficult for an English reader to understand Ngugi's *uhuru* (independence) or Walker's vernacularized words unless s/he studies their language and culture. Moreover, as discussed elsewhere, Walker's words and the language she uses are sometimes difficult to be perceived by a group of her target readers; a difficulty attributed to Walker's use of excerpts from articles or books in her fiction. However, all three authors have attempted at relating the words to the specific social contexts of their audience.

The last difference I wish to highlight is related to the specific societies and communities the three authors wrote in/for. While there are themes that all three authors can discuss, there are different issues that can be tackled in relation to the Kenyan or African American contexts but cannot be discussed in the Palestinian situation, for example. These different points give each author a peculiarity that none of the other compared writers can compete him/her at. The themes of magic and voodoo, for instance, are exclusively African American issues. They are given a prominent place in the stories, and only Walker can present them. Likewise, only Kanafani can present the Palestinian diaspora and the different problems from which the Palestinian suffered. Ngugi as well is the only one who can present the ideas of Mau Mau, and the difficulties the Kenyans faced in postcolonial Kenya.

In conclusion, it seems evident that Kanafani's, Ngugi's and Walker's works, when examined together, reveal more similarities than differences. The three authors have the enviable faculty of telling good stories. Their short stories had drawn, and continue to draw, the attention of readers all over the globe.

9. Conclusion

I have attempted to show how it is possible to connect different authors in different parts of the world together, how Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker have all used the short story genre to preserve and revive the national identity of their peoples, to voice the oppressions from which their peoples suffer, to highlight the colonizing strategies of the oppressors, and to guide their people through a renewal of the past, a scrutinizing look at the present, and an optimistic glance at the future, the future in which each author hopes their people will become free from all kinds of colonization, whether military, political, social or economic, whether it is a colonization of the land or of the mind. I have also discussed how, by nature of their empowering message and by the emphasis they lay on the inevitability of change, these collections of short stories fit into several theoretical categories at the same time: they can all be grouped under resistance literature, minority literature, postcolonial literature, Marxist literature, and realist discourse.

Due to the limitations imposed by the length of the thesis, I have only explored these ideas in the short fictions of Kanafani, Ngugi and Walker. A further broader study investigating the same theories, and the similarities and differences between our authors' novels and other literary genres will be highly valuable, and so would be a wider study of the afore-mentioned themes and theories in the works of other authors chosen from other parts of the world; since oppression is global and struggle is also universal, an oppressed

person will always look to art, and in particular to fiction, for a brighter future irrespective of the nature of the oppressing force.

Bibliography

- Abd al-Hadi, Fayha, *Ghassan Kanafani: al-riwayah wa-al-qisah al-qasirah* (al-Quds: Passia, al-Jamiyah al-Filastiniyah al-Akadimiyah lil-Shuun al-Dawliyah, 1990)
- Abdel-Malek, Kamal and David C. Jacobson, *Israeli and Palestinian identities in history and literature* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999)
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The empire writes back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002)
- Ashrawi, Hanan Mikhail, 'The Contemporary Palestinian Poetry of Occupation', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7 No.3 (1978)
- Auerbach, Eric, 'Eric Auerbach on Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992)
- Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953)
- Barthes, Roland, 'Roland Barthes on the Reality Effect in Descriptions', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992)
- Bartolovich, Crystal and Neil Lazarus, *Marxism, modernity and postcolonial studies, Cultural margins 11* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Barton, Edwin J. and Glenda A. Hudson, *A contemporary guide to literary terms: with strategies for writing essays about literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997)
- Bensmaia, Reda, 'On the Concept of Minor Literature From Kafka to Kateb Yacine', in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas & Dorothea Olkowski (London: Routledge, 1994)

- Bensmaia, Reda, 'Foreword: The Kafka Effect', in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, ed. by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)
- Berlant, Lauren, 'Race, Gender, and Nation in *The Color Purple*', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Boehmer, Elleke, *Colonial and post colonial literature : migrant metaphors*. 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- Boumelha, Penny, 'Penny Boumelha on Realism and Feminism', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992)
- Christian, Barbara, 'Review: The Short Story in Process', *Callaloo* (1982)
- Christian, Barbara, 'Novels for Everyday Use', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Christian, Barbara, 'The Race for Theory', in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996)
- CIA, 'Kenya', CIA, (2008) <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html#People>> [Date accessed 18/12/2008]
- Cleary, Joe, *Literature, partition and the nation state: culture and conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Cook, David and Michael Okenimkpe, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: an exploration of his writings*. 2nd edn (Oxford: J. Currey, 1997)
- Cowart, David, 'Heritage and Deracination in walker's "Everyday Use"', in *Critical Essays on Alice Walker*, ed. by Ikenna Dieke (London: Greenwood Press, 1999)

- Cutter, Martha J., 'Fragmentation and Unification, Myth and Metaphor', *African American Review*, 28 No. 4 (1994)
- Davis, Thadious, 'Poetry as Preface to Fiction', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)
- Dirlik, Arif, 'Culturalism as Hegemonic Ideology and Liberating Practice', in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, ed. by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- duCille, Ann, 'Crossdressing, Crossreading, or Complementary Theorizing? The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies', in *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, ed. by Barbara Christian Elizabeth Abel, Helene Moglen (London: The Regents of the University of California, 1997)
- Fanon, Frantz, *The wretched of the earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001)
- Freud, Sigmund and James Strachey, *An autobiographical study* (London: Hogarth press and the Institute of psycho-analysis, 1950)
- Furst, Lilian R., *Realism, Modern literatures in perspective* (London; New York: Longman, 1992)
- Gates, Henry Louis, *Figures in Black: words, signs, and the "racial" self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Genet, Jean, *Prisoner of love* (Picador, 1989)
- Gullason, Thomas A., 'The Short Story: An Underrated Art ', in *Short Story Theory*, ed. by Charles E. May (Ohio University Press, 1969)

- Habib, Najmah Khalil, *Al-Namuzaj Al-Insani fi Adab Ghassan Kanafani* (Beirut: Dar Beesan, 1999)
- Hamoud, Majedah, *Jamaliat al-Shakhsiya al-Filastiniyah lada Ghassan Kanafani* (Damascus: Dar al-Numayr, 2005)
- Hamon, Philippe, 'Philippe Hamon on the Major Features of Realist Discourse', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London and New York: Longman, 1992)
- Hanieh, Adam, 'Arab Jews', (2008) <http://www.jews-for-allah.org/Jews-not-for-Judaism/Arab_Jews.htm> [Date accessed 18/12/2008]
- Hanson, Clare, *Short stories and short fictions, 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985)
- Hanson, Clare, *Re-reading the short story* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- Harlow, Barbara, *Resistance literature* (New York; London: Methuen, 1987)
- Harlow, Barbara, *After lives: legacies of revolutionary writing* (London: Verso, 1996)
- Harris, Trudier, 'Folklore in the Fiction of Alice Walker: A Perpetuation of Historical and Literary Traditions', *Black American Literature Forum*, 11 (1977)
- Harris, Trudier, 'Tiptoeing Through Taboo: Incest in "The Child Who Favored Daughter"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 28 (1982-83)
- Heilbroner, Robert L., *Marxism, for and against*. 1st edn (New York: Norton, 1980)
- Hooks, Bell, 'Reading and Resistance: The Color Purple', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Ikiddeh, Ime, 'Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Novelist as Historian', in *Critical Perspectives on Ngugi wa Thiong'o*, ed. by G. D. Killam (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1984)
- Jackson, Tommie Lee, *An invincible summer: female diasporan authors* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001)

- James, Henry, 'On the Art of Fiction', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992)
- Jameson, Fredric, *The political unconscious: narrative as a socially symbolic act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981)
- JanMohamed, Abdul R. and David Lloyd, 'Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse: What Is To Be Done?', in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, ed. by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- JanMohamed, Abdul R. and David Lloyd, *The Nature and context of minority discourse* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Anthology of modern Palestinian literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992)
- Johnson, Barbara E., 'The Re(a)d and the Black', in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Meridian: New American Library, 1990)
- Jones, Gayl, *Liberating voices: oral tradition in African American literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Kanafani, Anni, *Ghassan Kanafani* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1973)
- Kanafani, Ghassan, *Alathar AlKamilah, The Complete Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani. Vol. II* (Beirut: Dar Altaliah, 1973)
- Kanafani, Ghassan, *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948-1966* (Beirut: Institute for Arab Research, 1982)
- Kanafani, Ghassan, *Palestine's children: returning to Haifa & other stories*. trans. Barbara Harlow & Karen E. Riley (Boulder, Colo.; London: Lynne Rienner, 2000)
- Kanafani, Ghassan, *All that's left to you: a novella and short stories* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Books, 2004)

- Kanafani, Ghassan, 'Resistance Palestinian Literature: Dimensions and Attitudes', (2008)
<<http://www.diwanalarab.com/spip.php?article12489>> [Date accessed 29-12-2008]
- Kanafani, Ghassan and Hilary Kilpatrick, *Men in the sun and other Palestinian stories* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1999)
- Kelly, Erna, 'A Matter of Focus: Men in the Margins of Alice Walker's Fiction', in *Critical Essays on Alice Walker*, ed. by Ikenna Dieke (London: Greenwood Press, 1999)
- Kenyatta, Jomo, *Facing Mount Kenya: the traditional life of the Kikuyu* (London: Heinemann, 1979)
- Khalidi, Rashid, *Palestinian identity: the construction of modern national consciousness* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997)
- Khalidi, Rashid, 'Unwritten history: The challenges of writing Palestinian history reflect the larger challenges facing the Palestinians' quest for statehood', (2006)
<http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/10/01/unwritten_history/>
[Date accessed 18/12/2008]
- Khoury, Elias, 'The World of Meanings in Palestinian Poetry', in *The Lost Memory* (Beirut: Institut for Arab Research, 1982)
- Killam, G. D., *An introduction to the writings of Ngugi* (London: Heinemann, 1980)
- Killam, G. D., *Critical perspectives on Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. 1st edn (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1984)
- Kilpatrick, Hilary, 'Tradition and Innovation in the Fiction of Ghassan Kanafani', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 7 (1976a)
- Kilpatrick, Hilary M.D., 'Commitment and Literature: The Case of Ghassan Kanafani ', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, Vol. 3 (1976b)
- Kubayanda, Josaphat Bekunuru, 'Minority Discourse and the African Collective: Some Examples from Latin American and Caribbean Literature', in *The Nature and*

- Context of Minority Discourse*, ed. by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Lauret, Maria, *Alice Walker* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000)
- Lazo, Caroline Evensen, *Alice Walker: freedom writer* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner, 2000)
- Lester, Neal A., 'Not my mother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing...': Alice Walker's "The Child Who Favored Daughter" as Neo-Slave Narrative', *Studies in Short Fiction* 34 (1997)
- Lukács, George, *Essays on realism*. trans. David Fernbach. ed. by Rodge Livingstone (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980)
- Majdalany, F., *State of emergency: the full story of Mau Mau* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963)
- Marx, Karl and Shlomo Avineri, *Karl Marx on colonialism and modernization: his despatches [sic] and other writings on China, India, Mexico, the Middle East and North Africa*. 1st edn (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969)
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *On religion* (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press: American Academy of Religion, 1964)
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The communist manifesto*. New edn (London: Penguin, 2004)
- May, Charles E, 'A Survey of Short Story Criticism in America', in *Short Story Theories*, ed. by Charles E May (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976)
- May, Charles E., *The short story: the reality of artifice* (London: Routledge, 2002)
- McDowell, Deborah E., "'The Changing Same": Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists', in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Meridian: New American Library, 1990)

- McDowell, Deborah E., 'The Self in Bloom: Walker's Meridian', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- McMillan, Laurie, 'Telling a Critical Story: Alice Walker's In Search of Our Mother's Gardens', *Journal of Modern Literature* 28: 1 (2004)
- Memmi, Albert, *The colonizer and the colonized* (London: Earthscan, 2003)
- Meyer, Herta, "*Justice for the oppressed--*": *the political dimension in the language use of Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Essen: Verlag Die Blaue Eule, 1991)
- Mongia, Padmini, *Contemporary postcolonial theory: a reader* (New York: Arnold, 1996)
- Morrison, Toni, *Playing in the dark: whiteness and the literary imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992)
- Mwangi, Meja, *Taste of death* (Nairobi: East African, 1975)
- Ngugi, James Thiong'o, *Secret lives, and other stories* (London: Heinemann 1975)
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, *The River between* (London: Heinemann, 1965)
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, *Homecoming: essays on African and Caribbean literature, culture and politics* (London: Heinemann, 1972)
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, 'An Interview with Ngugi', *The Weekly Review*, 9 January 1978
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature* (London: Currey, 1986)
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, *Moving the centre: the struggle for cultural freedoms* (Oxford: Portsmouth, N.H. : J. Currey; Heinemann, 1993)
- Ngugi wa, Thiong'o, *Writers in politics: a re-engagement with issues of literature & society*. Rev. & enl. edn (Oxford: James Currey, 1997)
- Nwankwo, Chimalum, *The works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o: towards the kingdom of woman and man* (Ikeja: Longman Nigeria, 1992)

- Nyerere, Julius K., *Freedom and socialism. Uhuru na ujamaa; a selection from writings and speeches, 1965-1967* (Dar Es Salaam, New York,: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- O'Brien, John, 'Alice Walker: An Interview', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Parmenter, Barbara McKean, *Giving voice to stones: place and identity in Palestinian literature* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1994)
- Peden, Margaret Sayers, 'The Arduous Journey', in *The Teller and the Tale: Aspects of the Short Story*, ed. by Wendell M. Aycock (Texas: Texas Tech University, 1982)
- Petry, Alice Hall, 'Walker: The Achievement of the Short Fiction', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Reid, E. Shelley, 'Beyond Morrison and Walker: Looking Good and Looking Forward in Contemporary Black Women's Stories', *African American Review*, 34 (2000)
- Reid, Ian, *The short story* (London; New York: Methuen; Barnes & Noble Books, 1977)
- Robinson, Cedric J., *An anthropology of Marxism, Race and representation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001)
- Robson, Clifford B., *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979)
- Rosaldo, Renato, 'Politics, Patriarchs, and Laughter', in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, ed. by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Said, Edward W., *The politics of dispossession: the struggle for Palestinian self-determination, 1969-1994* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994)
- Sansom, William, *The birth of a story* (London,: Chatto and Windus; Hogarth Press, 1972)

- Shohat, Ella, 'Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'', in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996)
- Sicherman, Carol, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: the making of a rebel, a source book in Kenyan literature and resistance* (London: Zell, 1990)
- Siddiq, Muhammad, *Man is a cause: political consciousness and the fiction of Ghassan Kanafani* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984)
- Smith, Felipe, 'Alice Walker's Redemptive Art', in *Critical Essays on Alice Walker*, ed. by Ikenna Dieke (London: Greenwood Press, 1999)
- Suleri, Sara, 'Women Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition', in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996)
- Thom, Mary, *Inside Ms: 25 years of the magazine and the feminist movement* (New York: H. Holt, 1997)
- Turki, Fawaz, *Soul in exile: lives of a Palestinian revolutionary* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1988)
- Walker, Alice, *The complete stories* (London: Women's Press, 1995)
- Walker, Alice, *The color purple* (London: Phoenix, 2004)
- Walker, Warren S., 'From Raconteur To Writer: Oral Roots and Printed Leaves of Short Fiction ', in *The Teller and the Tale: Aspects of the Short Story*, ed. by Wendell M. Aycock (Texas: Texas Tech University, 1982)
- Walker, Alice, 'Alice Walker's Biography', (2009)
<http://www.alicewalkersgarden.com/alice_walker_bio.html> [Accessed 03-02-2009]
- Washington, Mary Helen, 'Teaching Black-Eyed Susans: An Approach to the Study of Black Women Writers', *Black American Literature Forum*, 11 (1977)

- Washington, Mary Helen, "The Darkened Eye Restored": Notes Toward a Literary History of Black Women', in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Meridian: New American Library, 1990)
- Washington, Mary Helen, 'An Essay on Alice Walker', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Watt, Ian, 'Ian Watt on Realism and the Novel Form', in *Realism*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst (London and New York: Longman, 1992)
- Wesson, Robert G., *Why Marxism? The continuing success of a failed theory* (New York: Basic Books, 1976)
- White, Evelyn C., *Alice Walker: a life*. 1st edn (New York ; London: Norton, 2004)
- Williams, Patrick, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)
- Wilson, Sharon, 'A Conversation with Alice Walker', in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993)
- Wright, Richard, 'Blueprint for Negro Writing', *New Challenge* (1937)
- Wyatt, David, *Out of the sixties: storytelling and the Vietnam generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)