

The Palestinian Issue: From Narrative Fiction to Cinematic Presentation-A Critical Study of the Film 'The Deceived' Based on the Novel “Men in the Sun” by Ghassan Kanafani as a Model.

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Abstract:

Arab cinema has shown great interest in the Palestinian cause. This is reflected in the abundance of films addressing the issue and their connection to important events witnessed. This article focuses on the novel "Men in the Sun" by Ghassan Kanafani as a case study. Interpretation and understanding, as the ultimate goals for both the novelist and the director, differ.

In this research, we study and analyze the narrative components: narrator, time, characters, setting, and events trying to reveal the relationship that unites these two artistic genres.

The novel relies on linear verbal expression, whereas cinematic narrative requires external elements to converge and organize its production within the film, including the following: the screenplay, the director, cinematography, and editing.

Keywords: Palestinian cause, narrative components, narrator, characters, events.

1.Introduction:

Since its early beginnings, the Palestinian issue has been a pivotal and essential focus in Arab dramatic works, being considered a central concern for every Arab. With the evolution of events and realities surrounding the issue, the intensification of the Arab-Israeli conflict,

and the expansion of the problems and issues posed by the matter in various dimensions the importance of increasing the focus of dramatic arts on this issue became evident. Thus, the reliance on dramatic arts is emphasized due to its profound impact on hearts and minds, serving as a powerful tool for marketing and garnering support for the cause. Additionally, there is a specific need for Arabs and Palestinians, in particular, to have a medium that conveys the reality and history of the daily tragedy they endure under the weight of Israeli occupation. As the Arab conscience has been closely tied to the Palestinian cause, many creators across various fields of dramatic arts have taken up the task of conveying and depicting this issue through their dramatic works, including theater, cinema, and television drama. This ongoing narrative serves to follow, discuss, and address the multifaceted dimensions of the issue, recognizing it as an active conflict shaping the face of the Arab nation. It is our attempt to explore the trajectory of interest in the Palestinian cause through Arab dramatic arts.

2. *Palestinian Novel*

Palestinian novel has imposed the necessity of serious attention to it as a literary genre with its own specificity and ideology. The sophisticated cultural status resulting from the events and realities experienced by the Palestinian people has produced a number of distinct narrative texts. Observers of contemporary Palestinian fiction note that it has made significant progress in aligning with modern narrative writing techniques, employing various narrative techniques and styles in this field.

1.2 . The Palestinian Novel from Its Inception to the Nakba:

As for its beginnings, the Palestinian novel hardly stood out with any particularity compared to others in the Arab world, in terms of style or direction. It was subject to the influences that shaped modern Arab novels in general. However, the Palestinian novel was relatively delayed compared to some Arab countries like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. This delay can be attributed to several reasons. Cultural unity was more prominent in Egypt, the Levant, and Iraq, where the art of the novel emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The emergence of a cultural movement in a specific region did not necessarily imply that this movement had distinctive tastes or directions compared to others in the Arab world (Al-Sa'afin 1985, 6). Moreover, administrative divisions were not as prevalent.

To truly grasp the unique nature of the Palestinian novel from its inception until it gained its own distinctiveness, one must observe the development of the Arab novel in general and the Palestinian novel in particular. Although it did not have its own distinctiveness before Khalil Beidas in those early days, the novel in neighboring Arab countries served as precursors and initial stages for the emergence of the Palestinian novel. Many scholars mark the beginning of the last century as the starting point for studying literary and cultural life in Palestine. Some argue that Palestinian fiction was delayed compared to other literary arts, attributing this to the events and upheavals that occurred in Palestine since it came under British mandate. They also point out the lack of attention from critics towards emerging

literary efforts. Furthermore, the mandate authorities restricted education to the children of families supportive of their policies (Qustandi 1995, 17).

Some contemporary scholars suggest that Palestinian novel shares similarities with the novel in neighboring Arab countries due to the close connections between these regions, which have fostered a cultural exchange and interaction in many aspects. It's worth noting that Palestine was historically part of the Levant, and the current recognized borders were not established before, since this literary genre (Al-Sa'afin 1985, 6) appeared. Ibrahim Al-Saafin (Al-Assad 1963, 11) argued this perspective, highlighting that the political, cultural, social, and intellectual circumstances in Arab regions during that era did not allow for the emergence of a distinct Palestinian novel. However, novels influenced by popular taste prevailed during the early stages of the Arab novel. Nonetheless, discussions about a novel of this nature are often considered arbitrary and contrived.

Dr. Nasser al-Assad identified three significant sources that played a major role in the emergence of this narrative style in literary arts:

- 1- Direct contact with foreign cultures, such as Russian, English, and French, through education, particularly in missionary schools, played a crucial role. Khalil Beidas was greatly influenced by Russian schools in particular.
- 2- Access to newspapers and cultural magazines published in Lebanon and Egypt, such as Al-Muqtataf, Al-Hilal, Al-Sharq, Al-Ahram, and others.
- 3- Contact with foreign culture through the Turkish language, which saw the infiltration of numerous foreign translations. There were intellectuals and educated individuals in Palestine proficient in Turkish, both in reading and writing (Al-Assad 1963, 11).

The cultural scene in Palestine saw the emergence of several relatively advanced literary works, all of which were carefully crafted and focused on specific themes. This suggests that the translation phase paved the way for the inception of distinctly Palestinian novels. There are references to several novels from the 1940s, including:

- 1- "Memoirs of a Hen," first published in 1943 by Dr. Ishaq Marzi Al-Husseini, which went through multiple editions for its importance (Al-Husseini 1981).
- 2- In 1946, "In the Bed" by Mohammed Al-Adnani was published, narrating the protagonist's journey through illness and the strange encounters and incidents he faced during his treatment.
- 3- "Marqus Al-Amiyan" (Blind Discoteque) by Aref Al-Arif, released in 1947, follows a linear narrative through the amusing character of a blind friend, chronicling their journey from school days to adulthood as he challenges societal norms.
- 4- "Fi Samim" (In the Core) by Iskandar Khouri (Al-Husseine 1945), also published in 1947 (Abu Matar 1982, 32-33), tells a linear narrative without chronological constraints, revolving around a romantic relationship between a young man from an aristocratic family and a poor girl whom he marries.
- 5- There are indications that Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's novel "A Cry in the longNight" appeared in 1947, but its first edition was published in Baghdad in 1955.

2.2. The Political Tone in Kanafani's Writings:

The continuous events in Palestine had a profound impact during periods of social, cultural, and political transition. This era was marked by intense conflict between the self and the other - the self deeply rooted in both collective and individual consciousness, and the other depicted as invasive and oppressive. This was a central theme that shaped Palestinian literature, giving it a political essence. In Ghassan Kanafani's novel "Men in the Sun," the portrayal of the desert symbolized an escape from self to death. Meanwhile, in "Men in the Sun," the desert served as a battleground against the enemy, a pathway to self-discovery, leading to the deaths of the three Palestinians in the tank without realizing their own count. As for "What Remains for You," the Palestinian identifies both internal and external adversaries and eliminates them simultaneously (Kanafani 1986, 7).

As a result of Palestine's violation, Palestinian literature had to inevitably shift towards the political realm in order to depict reality, aiming to showcase the Palestinian viewpoint to the increasingly widespread public opinion.

The uniqueness of Palestinian literature lies in the narrative models that do not derive their essence solely from the descriptions the narrator bestows upon specific locations. Rather, there is another source of this uniqueness: the human archetype, the dispossessed Palestinian crushed from all sides, whose land was seized and who was expelled from it. Consequently, Palestinians lived in a state of psychological and social dislocation.

Ghassan Kanafani began his novel "The Lover" in 1966, at the outset of the resistance and armed struggle movement, serving as a continuation of previous literary endeavors that supported the element of struggle for the Palestinian people.

When discussing Palestine as a place, it embodies a symbiotic duality for Palestinians: Palestine as a place, land, and homeland reflects the distinctiveness of this location as the land of diaspora and martyrs, as well as the land of religions and sanctities. Kanafani speaks of Palestine as "representing the whole world in my stories" (Kanafani 1974).

Ghassan Kanafani's writings were distinguished by his focus not only on the Palestinian individual but also on a broader human condition. This human condition suffers from problems surrounding it from all sides. This condition was most evident in the Palestinian individual, as when he wrote "about Palestine as an issue in itself. And about Palestinian children and the Palestinian human being, and about Palestinian hopes as separate things from our own independent world and standing on their own as purely Palestinian events" (Kanafani 1974).

Ghassan Kanafani doesn't just depict the reality and his interpretation of the Palestinian issue, but also delves into the meaning of departure, exile, and the encompassing dimensions of poverty, which include land, home, homeland, memories, and childhood.

His novels, more than mere narratives, reflect the Palestinian reality, including occupation, displacement, and the struggle for survival. They also serve as a reminder of the past, urging readers to confront the present. Through his increasing political awareness, Kanafani endowed Palestinian literature with its unique character. His literary works, particularly the four novels published before his martyrdom, vividly illustrate the specificities of Palestinian literature and the journey of Palestinians from fleeing to resistance.

In "Men in the Sun," for instance, Kanafani portrays the infernal journey of escape from exile to the scorching deserts along the road from Basra to Kuwait. The novel serves as a summary of social and political relations born and entangled with the complexities of relationships and implications, linked to the specificity of time, place, language, and ultimately the human dimension, whether explicit, symbolic, or indicative.

3. A Critical Study of the Film "The Deceived"

1.3 Film Details:

- Screenplay and Direction: Tawfiq Saleh
- Production: General Cinema Foundation/Syria
- Production Manager: Mohammed Salem
- Screenplay and Direction: Tawfiq Saleh
- Editing: Sahib Haddad
- Music: Salehi Al-Wadi
- Sound: Zuhair Fahmi
- Director of Photography: Bahjat Haddad
- Main roles: Abdul Rahman Al-Rashi (Abu Al-Khezran), Mohammed Khair Halawani (Abu Qais), Bassam Latifi (Asaad), Saleh Khalifi (Marwan).

2.3 Analysis of the Film "The Deceived"

Ghassan Kanafani's novel "Men in the Sun" is comprised of seven short chapters that initially resemble independent vignettes. However, as the narrative progresses, the first three chapters seamlessly merge into each other, introducing new events to the plot by the fourth chapter.

The narrative strategy in the text relies on three main narrative voices. The first of these voices is the voice of the absent conscience (third-person narration) in the narrator's language. For example, the novel begins its narration by introducing us to Abu Qais lying on the banks of the Tigris River through the narrator's voice: "Abu Qais rested his chest on the damp ground, and the earth began to tremble beneath him...".

The second narrative voice is the flashback evoked by the character in the context of the narrative present, performed by the narrator. For example, Abu Qais' nostalgic lying on the banks of the Tigris River triggers a memory of an incident associated with the mention of the river, interwoven into the fabric of the narrative: "...We are in August! So why this dampness in the ground? It's the river! Don't you see it stretching as far as the eye can see beside you? / And when the two great rivers meet: the Tigris and the Euphrates, they form one river called the Shatt al-arab extending from just before Basra to..."/ Professor Salim, the thin, gray-bearded old man, said that ten times in his thin voice to a small child standing beside the blackboard...".

Thirdly, within this narrative transition, the voice of the narrator intertwines with the voice of the character in a manner that allows the reader to recognize fragments of events and situations in the character's history. The author does not deliberately distinguish between the voice of the character and the voice of the narrator; therefore, when Abu Qais, whom the

narrator has informed us about, lies on the riverbank, he recalls Professor Salim's discussion about the river for his students at school. This recollection merges the two timelines (the memory time and the present time) through the release of the character's consciousness via the lengthy internal monologue, in which the narrator himself does not exclude his voice: "So here is the river that Professor Salim spoke of ten years ago! Here it is, lying thousands of miles and days away from his village and Professor Salim's school. Oh God's mercy upon you! Surely, you are fortunate in the sight of God to die just one night before the poor village falls into the hands of the Jews... Just one night... Oh God! Is there a greater divine blessing than this?"

What I am trying to convey here is that there are no quotation marks in the printed version of the novel to distinguish between the character's speech and the narrator's speech, and this does not make things easy. Throughout the novel, the four Palestinian characters share the revelation of their past and its reflection on their present through these voices.

As for Tawfiq Saleh's cinematic adaptation of the novel, he employed the same strategy, although the nature of cinematic language made the voice of the flashback stand solely on the character; for example, we hear Professor Salim's monologue in the film, which was previously mentioned in relation to the novel, through Abu Qais' voice coming from off-screen (off-screen voice).

However, regardless of what has been said about "Al-Makhdu'un" film in terms of its literary source, it differs from "Men in the Sun" in aspects that I find in my interpretation, embodied in five elements. The first element is condensation by omission and reduction. The second element is addition. The third element is modification. The fourth element is interpretation. As for the fifth element, it is audiovisual embodiment.

In regards to the first aspect, which involves condensing by omission and reduction, it's commonly understood that this is a practice often employed in cinematic adaptations of literary works for both practical and aesthetic reasons. This includes ensuring that the film's duration remains within appropriate limits and strategically omitting details that may distract viewers from the central themes and motifs of the work. In the film "The Deceived," certain details and dialogues from "Men in the Sun" were omitted to align with the cinematic language and expression. For instance, the film does not depict Abu Qais and his wife anticipating the birth of their child, nor the subsequent death of their daughter Hasna two months after her birth, as described in the novel.

Regarding the second aspect, which involves addition, one of the most notable examples is the inclusion of photographic inserts using a photomontage style, showcasing scenes of Palestinian refugees enduring displacement and diaspora. Additionally, excerpts from archives depicting Arab betrayals and collaborations intersecting with the early days of the establishment of the Israeli state are incorporated. Within this framework, we encounter poignant memories portrayed through a black-and-white photograph capturing a meeting of Arab leaders in a hall adorned with the Quranic verse "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." However, historical records attest that these leaders were (and still are, in reality) far from embodying the spirit of this divine injunction.

This cinematic addition contextualizes the suffering of the characters within a documentary and historical framework, thereby revealing its textual complexities. It innovatively bridges the gap between the documentary and narrative genres, lending greater credibility to the narrative. The auditory counterpart to this photomontage is Abu Qais's voice in his monologue, recounting his experience of losing his homeland and subsequent displacement.

Furthermore, an important example of addition in the film is the prologue, which includes a passage by Mahmoud Darwish read before the opening credits appear: "My father once told

me: / He who has no homeland / Has no grave in the soil / And was advised against traveling." The composition of this passage, depicted in the establishing shots of the vast desert under the scorching sun, transcends being just a poetic prelude to serve as an interpretive key for the entire film. The poetic passage is prominently displayed in writing at the beginning of the scene.

In the middle of the frame, we see the skeletal remains of one of those who sacrificed their lives for the illusion of a better life away from their homeland. It is the body of a Palestinian who perished in the desert before reaching the promised land of Kuwait with its alluring paradise. In the background of the frame, Abu Qais stumbles forward, gradually approaching the corpse and the poetic inscription. This serves as a prophecy and summary of the entire film; in reality, Abu Qais is advancing towards the same fate as the decomposed skeletal structure, as long as neither of them heeds the warning against traveling.

This prologue, with its message of resistance, stands in stark contrast to the message of submission and resignation engraved on the wall of the hall where the esteemed Arab leaders convened, or as a counterpoint to the inability of the latent text to achieve effective resistance in the present and lived reality. Additionally, given its placement in the prologue, this poetic text foreshadows the emergence of the character of Professor Salim, who epitomizes the spirit of resistance in both the novel and the film, as well as the conflict with the latent and theological discourse, where Professor Salim openly admits in the village council that he does not know how to pray but knows how to shoot.

Another significant addition occurs at the end of the film, set within Kuwaiti territory, where we see footage of towering flames replacing the sun from earlier in the film (I will elaborate more on this later). While these flames may, on a literal level, be associated with the garbage heap onto which Abu Al-Khayzaran threw the bodies of Asaad, Marwan, and Abu Qais, symbolically, they extend beyond that; the flames symbolize the oil and its riches that led the three (or four) Palestinians to seek opportunities in Kuwait, only for us to realize that the Arabs have squandered the most important economic asset available to them in their contemporary history.

Regarding the third aspect of how the cinematic adaptation differs from the literary source, it involves transformation. An example of this is the reference to the "noble man" who donated a house to Abu Qais in the novel becoming more generalized in the film. In Abu Qais's monologue, we hear: "They brought you and told you to live here, so you did." Transforming the reference from the singular individual (as in the original literary work) to the plural form encompasses not only individuals like the "noble man" but also charitable organizations, refugee relief agencies, and all the solutions and compromises born out of pity and its cheap compassion, none of which alter the fact that the house Abu Qais lives in—its diminishing space—is not his own, nor his possession.

When it comes to interpretation, one aspect is that the novel portrays a character named Saad enticing Abu Qais to go to Kuwait by recounting his own experience of returning with wealth - all within Abu Qais's place of residence.

In the film, although part of the scene indeed takes place in Abu Qais's residence, we also see Saad seated on a chair amidst a crowd of listeners, including Abu Qais and his wife, who sit on the ground, listening intently. Symbolically, Saad's seated position and the listeners on the ground signify his detachment from the roots after being estranged from them. Thus, he delivers his speech with a sense of superiority, both literally and metaphorically, while his audience remains grounded, clinging to the land they inhabit. By having Saad address a group of Palestinians rather than just Abu Qais and his wife (as in Kanafani's work), the film

suggests that the choice to go to Kuwait - to leave the homeland or continue further away from it - is being marketed to a sector or segment of Palestinian society as a whole, indicating Palestinian national consciousness. Abu Qais, as a member of that segment, represents them, albeit involuntarily. This cinematic interpretation roots the fact that the problem is collective rather than individual.

Another example of transformation in the film compared to the novel involves the auditory and visual embodiment. In the novel, the presence of Zakaria, Marwan's brother, is a vague occurrence, conveyed through fleeting and scattered references in Marwan's monologue and his brief mention in conversation with Abu Al-Khayzaran.

In the film, Zakaria's absence is emphasized, yet his presence is heightened by the narrative reference to his message to Marwan, which gains new significance when heard through an off-screen voice. While we do not "see" Zakaria in the film, we hear his voice, thus embodying his existence and essence.

Furthermore, in terms of character portrayal, the addition of Asaad's friend, who is absent in the novel, serves to develop and articulate the concerns expressed in Asaad's monologue in the flashback scene following his borrowing of fifty Jordanian dinars from his uncle. In this way, what was once a monologue becomes a dialogue, as Asaad's friend attempts to dissuade him from his decision to travel. Another similar example is the addition of a character whom Abu Al-Khayzaran converses with, expressing his thoughts to himself in the flashback monologue in the novel.

These embodiments personalize the internal anxieties and fears of the narrative discourse, evolving the monologues into broader dialogues. The examples mentioned above contribute to the aesthetics and politics of the films.

However, most critics who have studied "The Deceived" as a cinematic adaptation affirm that the film follows the novel faithfully, faithfully representing it in its narrative. The only significant difference between the novel and the film, which they saw as important and extensively discussed, is that in the film, the three Palestinians (Asaad, Marwan, and Abu Qais) do not bang on the walls of the tanker truck, as they do in the novel, during the truck's forced stop at the Kuwaiti border checkpoint (the reconnaissance center). Thus, they die in silence and submission, reflecting the prevailing Palestinian condition in the historical period in which the events of the novel take place. Bilal Al-Hasan, for example, views it as "the death issue in the shadow of the defeatist world" and argues that "if the tank is a symbol of the large prison in which the Palestinian lives in a world of displacement, then escaping from this prison can only be achieved by banging its walls in an attempt to break free. If these walls had been knocked down, it would have been possible to surpass death and reach salvation. When silence persists, death is the inevitable result." Ahmed Khalifa, on the other hand, associates Abu Al-Khayzaran's question "Why didn't you bang the tank?" with the act of defiance and resistance.

"Between what he refers to as the 'author's call,' encapsulated in the phrase 'do not die before you become a call,' Khalifa, who believes that Kanafani, by not having his characters bang on the tanker walls, 'truthfully and faithfully reflected the reality of the Palestinian people as it existed before 1965,' here meaning the reality of the Palestinian people before the emergence of the effective armed Palestinian resistance movement through the establishment of Fatah, and his artistic integrity did not allow him to contrive a 'miracle' that would pave a fictitious path forward for his story's heroes that did not yet exist in the real world.

Kanafani intentionally (though perhaps unintentionally) created this rich ambiguity that allows for multiple interpretations of his narrative text within the actual and potential scenarios of the Palestinian resistance movement's development and its impact on narrative action. While there is no evidence that the three Palestinians (Asaad, Marwan, and Abu Qais)

did indeed bang on the tanker walls, the plausibility suggested by Captain Fadel (that the three must have banged on the tanker walls) is not unreasonable; Abu Al-Khayzaran, from my perspective, was merely attempting to absolve himself and place blame on innocent victims and unfortunate circumstances through this literal and rhetorical, albeit confused, question. It goes without saying that he did not hear their banging on the tanker walls while he was in the Kuwaiti border office (the reconnaissance center), where the air conditioning hummed loudly behind the closed door he was confined to in a nightmarish manner (I will elaborate further on this later).

However, this 'ambiguity' is the main point of divergence between Tawfiq Saleh's film adaptation and Ghassan Kanafani's novel, a point that sparked significant debate for very valid reasons; the three hostages do indeed bang on the tanker wall in the film, clearly and unequivocally. We hear their banging escalating gradually as the camera performs a slow zoom-in on the ominous water tanker truck. After this shot, we see a static long shot showing the external parts of several air conditioning units installed in the border checkpoint offices, emitting loud noises. Then we return to the truck in a quick shot, hearing the bangs crescendo before fading away.

Understanding this primary change in Tawfiq Saleh's cinematic adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novel must be considered within the chronological, historical, political, and military context of intertwined events: the novel's timeline, the film's timeline, and the timeline of the Palestinian resistance movement. The aftermath of that battle had a significant moral and ethical impact on Palestinian fighters who realized that defeating the enemy militarily despite its superior armament and readiness was possible. However, what followed were the Black September massacres in 1970, where hundreds of Palestinians were massacred in Jordan for various reasons, followed by the departure of Palestinian resistance factions from Jordan in July 1971. The following year, in 1972, Tawfiq Saleh completed "The Deceived" after those challenging events.

Thus, the filmmaking process in this case transcends mere mechanical adaptation and parroting of the original literary text; it becomes an active creator intertwining with the national and political narrative that the people enact with blood and flesh on the stage of direct action in the historical context. Therefore, what Tawfiq Saleh did in his film adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novel is a critical reading act unfolding according to the dialectical practice of text and life together, making the director a faithful interpreter of the text.

It is undoubtedly commendable for Tawfiq Saleh in this context to challenge the culture of sanctifying the text in our societies as an a priori given above all else. Thus, I see Tawfiq Saleh's adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novel as a significant Arab equivalent to Orson Welles's adaptation of Franz Kafka's "The Trial" (completed in 1962).

The historical logic itself is what prevents the Palestinian from dying 'like a dog' in silence and submission after the massacres of 1948 in Palestine, the 1970 massacres in Jordan, after the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its commencement of significant military operations against the Israeli state entrenched in the heart of the Arab homeland, and after the victory achieved with great courage in the symbolic and highly moral Battle of Karamah. Therefore, it is imperative to bang on the walls of the tanker truck, as the era of cheap and gratuitous death has passed forever, and there is no retreat from resistance.

Hence, the banging comes explicitly and unambiguously in Tawfiq Saleh's film, unlike what happened in Ghassan Kanafani's novel due to variations in historical, political, and military circumstances. In Tawfiq Saleh's cinematic adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novel,

we see an important protest statement in the final scene, namely, a close-up shot of Abu Qais's fist with the camera zooming in, making the fist the sole subject in the last frame of the film."

"The truth is, Abu Qais's hand grip in that scene syncs with the grip of Professor Salim, who held onto the rifle even after being martyred in battle, as seen in the second flashback scene at the beginning of the film. In that scene, the martyr's companion struggled to pry the rifle from his tight grasp, so it's not a coincidence at all that Abu Qais is the one recalling Professor Salim, and not any other character. Additionally, the two hand grip scenes visually correspond with the scene where Abu Qais extends his arm to knead the earth with his hand in the first flashback scene, where he reminisces about his conversation with his friend about the 'smell of the earth.' Thus, the symbolic weight of these consistencies lies in the act of the hand affirming the bond with the homeland, the grip clinging to the weapon in defense of it, and the grip reaching out in protest against displacement and death elsewhere.

However, the critics' assertion that aside from the question of banging on the walls of the water tanker (which I'll revisit later in this discussion), the film fully adheres to the novel is a statement that cannot be accepted without reservation from my perspective. There are significant and nuanced differences concerning dialogue, description, and psychological atmosphere, differences that make the film an independent vision in some aspects compared to the novel.

In the flashback scene in the film, Marwan engages in a bout of crying upon hearing the ululations of his father's wedding from the woman known as Shafiqah, his mother's rival. This boyish crying and panic have no origin in the novel. Furthermore, after being slapped by the Iraqi smuggler in retaliation for his threat to inform the police, a threat suggesting impulsiveness and lack of wisdom, Marwan walks into the marketplace, leans against a wall, and cries. This second bout of crying also has no origin in the novel.

Marwan's two crying reactions reveal his fragility and weakness, mixed with naivety resulting from ignorance, lack of experience, and wisdom, traits witnessed in many instances in the text. For example, he asks Abu Al-Khayzaran upon seeing the water tanker he learned would be used for smuggling whether there is water in the tanker, to which Abu Al-Khayzaran sarcastically replies that he is a smuggler, not a swimming instructor. Marwan later asks if he, Asaad, and Abu Qais will reach Kuwait on the same day the smuggling operation begins, revealing his ignorance of the distance between Basra and Kuwait, an ignorance unsuitable for someone originally intending to traverse the distance between Tinak and the checkpoint for smuggling.

However, Marwan must undergo the transition from adolescence to manhood, from naivety to wisdom, with an awareness of the journey and its consequences, so that he meets his end having attained a high degree of maturity. This degree of maturity would qualify him to be one of those banging on the walls of the water tanker in protest rather than dying 'like a dog,' merely echoing Kafka's protagonist. Thus, it is noteworthy that Tawfiq Saleh's film adaptation omits what Abu Al-Khayzaran says to Marwan in the original novel: 'What's wrong with you thinking this way? Thinking is not suitable for you, Marwan, you're still young... and life is long...' No, not at all, because thinking has become very appropriate in this circumstance, as the journey would rapidly mature Marwan, where there is no time to be wasted in frivolity and nonsense before death, in protest and rejection. Life may be long for youths of various nationalities and backgrounds, but it is certainly not so for the Palestinian boy seeking salvation."

In discussing Marwan's character, it's crucial not to overlook the profound significance that the entire film contains only one quick-moving horizontal "swish pan" shot, and it's exclusively dedicated to Marwan narratively, not any other character. This technique was employed at a crucial moment, transitioning from the initial agreement scene on the

smuggling deal to the scene of completing that fatal deal. In that scene, we see, and you see along with us, the three characters (Abu Qais, Marwan, and Asaad), each represented by their coffin, symbolized by the black water truck. I must mention here that black is universally associated with mourning and death, and it's uncommon to see a water truck with such a boxy shape, as these tanks are typically oval-shaped. Thus, symbolically, the color and shape of the smuggling water truck represent a coffin.

The use of this technique - the swish pan - only once throughout the film suggests a reading within the objective framework of the unusual acceleration that Marwan undergoes in his journey towards tragic maturity and self-completion, intertwined with the national and general human condition. Therefore, Marwan provides us - in the film - with evidence of his maturity and evolving consciousness during the journey. For instance, when the water truck stops after crossing the Iraqi border checkpoint (Safwan Center), and the three (Abu Qais, Marwan, and Asaad) emerge from the burning tank, semi-unconscious due to the intense heat and lack of air, Marwan rushes to lie in the shade of the truck, resting against Abu Qais's thigh. In response to Asaad's inquiry, Abu Qais reassures him that he's not sick, just trying to catch his breath, to which Marwan scolds him, almost tauntingly, in the language of a seasoned sage: 'You left your share of air back there!... You wasted it!' Then, as he gazes at the sky, framed as a solitary object in the shot through a 'zoom in' technique, almost naked except for his underwear, symbolically ready for the ritual washing: 'You all wasted your share!' (meaning their share of air). Surprised by Marwan's insight and wisdom, Abu Qais asks, 'What did you say, Marwan?!' to which Marwan responds eloquently - a eloquence that compensates for the reckless foolishness and rashness in his threat to the Iraqi smuggler in Basra by not shocking him with the discovery of his tragic foresight: 'I didn't say anything... I was just talking to myself.'

This dialogue has no origin in the novel, nor does it imply that after Marwan had rested his head on Abu Qais's thigh, the latter, being the oldest in the group, then rested his head on Marwan's thigh, signifying that with age comes a search for comfort in the younger, in a gesture of refuge and protection. Also, Marwan's later remark, 'I don't think we needed to come here... I feel like I'm walking towards my uncle,' constitutes a mature critical evaluation of the journey (both literal and metaphorical) that has no origin in the novel; this final sentence represents the director's political vision and that of the film.

Furthermore, Marwan procrastinates returning to hide in the black water truck after the first stage of the smuggling operation succeeds (crossing the Iraqi border checkpoint). When Asaad urges him to return and says they will rest once they reach Kuwait, Marwan sarcastically retorts, 'If we make it!' He then adds, prophetically foretelling the imminent death that will soon befall them: 'And if we don't make it, we'll rest forever!' That was the last thing he said, and it's the most impactful line in the film.

The sun appears in the first shot of the film before the title appears in the credits, and thereafter, it appears twenty-three times in the film's narrative time. This generous number is difficult to overlook; however, the appearance of the sun in the cinematic text varies depending on the narrative context and circumstances. Thus, the suggestive implications of these appearances differ from one another. For example, the sun appears within the first flashback of Abu Qais, which is his personal recollection of his relationship with the land, symbolized by the scene where he stretches his arm to knead the clay between his fingers in a symbolic act of creation, with the sun shining through the trees in that medium shot.

However, the sun here is a natural element of the national landscape, and its natural energy is positive when coupled with the appearance of the land and trees. Its potentially aggressive

nature is absorbed, as it appears in the background behind the trees through the use of shallow focus technique, making the leaves of the trees unified with the sun. This visual unity bestows a special aesthetic touch on the scene, providing a poetic vision of the creative harmony of natural elements in the national landscape.

This scene captures the same transparency, revealing streams of sunlight filtering through the trees after Professor Salim's death. The camera explores the Palestinian landscape and topography using the soft focus technique, portraying the tree trunks and branches as if in mourning. The sunlight sharply contrasts with the earth, casting a harsh light as Professor Salim lies lifeless on the ground, having sacrificed himself in its defense. However, the scene ends with a gradual zoom-in towards the sun through the black tree trunks and branches. As the sun moves closer to the center of the frame, its brilliance intensifies, saturating the shot with light until the sun's disc fills the entire frame in radiant whiteness. This shot smoothly dissolves into the next scene, a wide daylight shot of a displaced Palestinian family seen through deep focus, navigating their challenging journey in the barren desert under the scorching sun.

The significance of the contrast between these two scenes is clear enough to the author, where the sun of exile takes the place of the homeland's sun. The sun of exile will never be like the sun of the homeland, and it leaves its mark on what remains of the film with its intrusive and overwhelming presence.

Due to its audio and visual dimensions, the film is more explicit in portraying the "Palestinian hell" through the artistic symbols of *mise-en-scene*. In the final scene of the film, fire literally appears as a clear symbol, as this ultimate visual symbol crowns the oral and visual cues that have been laid out throughout the narrative.

However, the sun, considered as the "principal familiar image" (returning to Stefan Sharff's theorization), surpasses its role as merely presenting an "artistic symbol". Instead, it becomes an artistic tool not only representing the narrative and its characters but also embodying the narrator himself. The strongest example of this realization occurs in the transition to the flashback scene of Abu Al-Khezarani following As'ad's sudden question about his marital status. This flashback introduces the viewer to Abu Al-Khezarani's ordeal, reminding them of it vividly and bitterly. After As'ad poses his question, Abu Al-Khezarani's demeanor abruptly changes, as he closes his eyes bitterly and then opens them, pretending, attempting to lessen the intensity of the sunlight facing him through the front windshield of the water truck he is driving.

Thus, we see the sun and its rays in quick successive close-up shots, the last of which is a close-up shot of the sun's disc occupying the entire frame. The transition to Abu Al-Khezarani's flashback scene is accomplished through a skillful use of associative montage, where the shot of the sun's disc intelligently dissolves into a shot of the operating room lamp in the hospital where Abu Al-Khezarani is lying, with surgeons operating on his intimate body part in an attempt to save his life from the effects of the mine that exploded under him during a battle in the 1948 war.

Therefore, the "primary familiar image" (returning to Sharff's theory) functions here as a "transitional device," turning the sun into a narrator. Its visual connection with the lamp links to Abu Al-Khezarani's "hellish" memory, providing a sign to the astute viewer about the ongoing "hellishness" of the past (sexual) in the present (political and livelihood). This skillful use of associative montage indeed evokes one of the most potent examples in the history of classical cinema: I'm referring to the associative montage utilized by Alfred Hitchcock in his timeless film "Psycho" (completed in 1960), where he juxtaposes the water swirling down the drain in the bathtub as the last droplets drain away in a close-up shot with

the terror-stricken eye of the victim who had just been stabbed to death moments earlier during one of the most intimate and private moments for a person: bathing.

The mention of the lamp in the operating room at the hospital is found in Kanafani's narrative, but it appears after the flashback as one of the elements that enriches the scene, not due to any transition or transformation carried out by Tawfiq Saleh.

The image of the left front wheel of the water truck in close-up shots is seen in the truck's moving position (never while it's stationary). This image is repeated seven times in the film's narrative, with two occurrences seen before the three Palestinian characters (Marwan, As'ad, and Abu Qais) enter the truck's tank, and the other five shots occurring later in the storyline.

The circular motion of the water truck's left front wheel serves to establish a subconscious connection between it and the rotation of the sun disk, considering it as the "primary familiar image" in the film. In this formal resemblance and the repeated appearances of both images (primary and secondary), there is an indication of a functional and structural similarity between the two images as artistic symbols. The scorching sun rising to the peak of the noonday sky finds its visual echo in the left front wheel of the black-water truck, which prowls alone in the deserts of exile between Iraq and Kuwait, carrying the three Palestinians seeking safety and prosperity to a death that can only be described as vile and gruesome.

The entrance of Abu Al-Khezran into the adapted administrative office at the Kuwaiti border post (the lookout point), and the unexpected obstruction that resulted in the death of the three Palestinians inside the water truck's tank, marks the dramatic climax in Kanafani's "Men in the Sun" novel and in Saleh's "The Duped" film. The cinematic treatment of this scene constitutes the most significant point of controversy about the film. The explicit portrayal of the three Palestinians banging on the walls of the water truck, pleading and desperate, contrasts with the novel's ambiguous and perplexing depiction or leaves it as a cryptic and confusing point open to contradictory interpretations at best (this point was discussed earlier in this article). However, in my humble opinion, this scene has not been adequately studied by those who have written about Kanafani's novel or Saleh's film, or both. I do not claim here that I will dissect this scene to give a definitive answer, but my purpose is to reflect on it and raise questions arising from the need to examine some of its aspects.

I would like to address three points here:

The first point revolves around the fact that Abu Al-Khezran is addressed in the feminine form (approximately) for the first time in Kanafani's novel and Saleh's film. Throughout the scene, Abu Baqer, the Kuwaiti border official, consistently refers to him as "Abu Khezrana," while the narrator continues to use the masculine form "Abu Al-Khezran." Similarly, in the film, the Kuwaiti border official Ali addresses him as "Abu Al-Khezran" once during his escort to the office, and then Abu Baqer calls him "Abu Khezrana" three times during their conversation.

This choice of addressing Abu Al-Khezran in the feminine form raises interesting questions about gender identity and power dynamics within the narrative. It may suggest a shift in Abu Al-Khezran's perceived masculinity or vulnerability in the eyes of the border officials, highlighting the complex interplay between gender, authority, and identity in the context of the story.

I will discuss the second point, regarding the implausibility of the alleged romantic relationship between Abu Al-Khezran and the dancer Kawkab, after thoroughly addressing the first one.

I will return to discuss this point after addressing the second point related to it. So, the second point is about the story of the dancer Kawkab, which, according to Kanafani's

narrative, was ended by Hajj Reda over the phone to Abu Baqer. Hajj Reda does not appear vocally or visually in Saleh's film, although he engages in dialogue with Abu Al-Khezran in Kanafani's novel after the wheels of the water truck get stuck in the mud during the fishing trip.

Thus, Hajj Reda can only be one of three possibilities: either he is aware of Abu Al-Khezran's sexual dysfunction, making it highly unlikely for him to fabricate such a story due to its objectivity; yet, he fabricates it anyway. Alternatively, due to the power dynamics between him and Abu Al-Khezran (as the former is the latter's employer), he is aware of his sexual dysfunction but still, for reasons unknown, fabricates the story and ends it with Abu Baqer. Or, Hajj Reda may be unaware of Abu Al-Khezran's sexual dysfunction and, for his own purposes, fabricates the story of the alleged relationship between Abu Al-Khezran and the dancer Kawkab.

What happened is that when the border official, Baqer, informed Abu Al-Khezran that Hajj Reda had told him and others "the story" from beginning to end, Abu Al-Khezran's facial expression, as captured by the camera, showed clear signs of fear and a sense of betrayal. This indicates that there is indeed some "story" or shared secret between Hajj Reda and Abu Al-Khezran, something that Hajj Reda should not have disclosed to anyone. Nevertheless, he did, leading to Abu Al-Khezran's fearful and betrayed reaction, clearly evident in his facial expression, due to the significance of this "secret story" reaching the border officials at the Kuwaiti surveillance center. However, the question remains: what exactly is this "story"?

Here, I will endeavor to argue that the "story" that crossed Abu Al-Khezran's mind is likely the tale of smuggling across the Iraqi/Kuwaiti border, in which he is involved. As'ad had discovered discrepancies in Abu Al-Khezran's statements during the completion of the smuggling deal in the film and informed his fellow travelers about it. While in Kanafani's novel, this discrepancy is not in Abu Al-Khezran's statements but between his statements and the narrator's account.

What As'ad concluded is that Abu Al-Khezran is involved in smuggling items for the wealthy Kuwaiti merchant, Hajj Reda, and that he smuggles people on the return journey from Iraq to Kuwait for his own benefit, behind the back of his employer, Hajj Reda. However, if this is indeed the case, then why did Hajj Reda sacrifice his smuggler by fabricating the fantastical story about a sexual relationship between Abu Al-Khezran and the dancer Kokab?

In reality, the narrator, in the narrative, is our only reliable source of knowing whether this call actually took place. However, in "Men in the Sun," we cannot fully trust the narrator because he has misled us before. For instance, this narrator had told us that the truck, which was supposed to supply water for Hajj Reda's guests on the desert hunting trip, had a minor malfunction a week before the day of smuggling the three Palestinians. This contradicts Abu Al-Khezran's statement that "the tank hasn't seen water for six months." Therefore, our certainty that Hajj Reda called Baqer and informed him about the alleged relationship between Abu Al-Khezran and the dancer Kokab remains uncertain at best, even if we lack clear evidence that he did not make the call.

This leads to the third point I mentioned earlier, which is the nightmarish nature of the cinematic scene taking place in the office of the employees at the Kuwaiti surveillance center after Abu Al-Khezran enters to complete routine crossing procedures.

The execution of this scene relied heavily on simplicity, whether in terms of camera movement (which, for example, did not resort to complex shooting angles), or in terms of "decor" (where the scene's decor was natural and realistic, not symbolic), or in terms of lighting (where there were no visual effects such as resorting to dim lighting, for example). However, despite all this, or perhaps because of it, this scene involves a high-level nightmare

sensation that begins with Abu Al-Khezran entering the office. In Abu Al-Khezran's nickname, there is a gendered relationship that a discerning ear cannot miss between "Abu Al-Khezran" and "Al-Khazzan," and this linguistic relationship implies a functional symmetry in the objective roles shared by the two. In addition to this, the nickname implies a load of power and punishment, as it recalls the stick of "Al-Khezran" and its known uses in hitting, disciplining, and punishing in Arab culture. It also implies a clear phallic symbol.

However, Abu Al-Khezran enters the border office at the surveillance center as "Abu Al-Khezran," as the employee, Ali, greets him, but suddenly becomes "Abu Khazzanah" in Abu Baqer's mouth. In this feminine sexual inclusion, it implies "lack of masculinity" in Abu Al-Khezran from a masculine point of view. Undoubtedly, Abu Al-Khezran, aware of his sexual impotence, understood the signal. However, the irony here is that "Abu Khazzanah" is accused at the same time of spending red-hot nights with a dancer named Kokab, and this accusation may "save" his masculinity (externally, at least), as the paradox here is that the feminine (almost) plays a masculine role. However, "the masculinity of Abu Khazzanah," as believed by Abu Baqer (at least, as he says), is precisely what causes the death of the three Palestinians inside the water tanker, waiting for Abu Al-Khezran to complete the border crossing procedures into Kuwait through the surveillance center.

But the irony here is that when Abu Al-Khezran insists to the border officials that there is no truth to the story of his alleged relationship with the dancer Kokab, he was actually telling the truth because of his personal internal knowledge that he is physically incapable of having such a relationship. However, Abu Baqer shouts at him in a destructive frenzy: "Do not lie!" Thus, telling the truth here did not help Abu Al-Khezran escape the terrible predicament. Not only that, but the "lie" committed by Abu Al-Khezran (from Abu Baqer's point of view, of course) was not against the border officials at the Kuwaiti surveillance center, who did not believe him when he told the truth, but it was against his three compatriots whom he promised to bring to Kuwait, and they believed him not for free, but paid in advance for it. Yet here he is leaving them to die suffocated inside the water tanker, far away from Palestine, and also far away from Kuwait, which is within a stone's throw from the place of death.

In addition to the bitter ironies emerging from Abu Al-Khezran's nickname, there is a glaring numerical equivalence between the number of Palestinians detained in the water tanker (three) and the number of employees in the border surveillance center office (also three), thus there is numerical parity between the two parties. This is a matter that should be pondered upon as it unites the border office and the water tanker in an "unreasonable" and nightmarish manner. However, it is precisely this nightmarish quality that characterizes this scene in the first place. The three border employees who appear in close-up shots are subjecting Abu Al-Khezran to an unfair trial akin to Kafkaesque trials, all the while Abu Al-Khezran knows that every moment of delay in the office/trial brings the hidden individuals inside the water tanker closer to certain death. However, at the moment when Abu Baqer strikes his desk with his hand like a judge's gavel, after Ali reminds him that the alleged dancer's name is indeed Kokab, the montage cuts to a close-up shot of the water tanker where we hear the three detainees (Marwan, Asaad, and Abu Qais) launching their judgment from inside the tanker, providing testimony not only against their "leader" Abu Al-Khezran (in this leadership role as Asaad described him) who put them in this predicament, but also against the three border employees.

There is also a numerical equivalence between the total number of victims who perished in the water tanker disaster (three) and the number of border employees (also three), totaling six. Additionally, there were six times that Hajj Reda inquired about Abu Al-Khezran according

to Abu Baqer. The symbolic inclusion of a single individual encompassing six persons suggests his strength, power, and dominance over them. However, as previously mentioned, the film does not embody the character of Hajj Reda in any way, leaving this mysterious character present only through reference, akin to a ghost haunting the narrative.

Kanafani expressed his artistic endeavor by stating that it involves writing a "one hundred percent realistic story, while also giving a feeling that is nonexistent." Executing such a nightmarish scene in its realism, or realistic in its nightmarishness, puts us in the same spirit as the one envisioned by the writer, imposing challenges on us to interpret the work not only as an artistic expression of Palestinian suffering, as depicted in the attempt of three Palestinians to smuggle into Kuwait, who could also be three Mexicans trying to enter the United States, or three Turks into Germany, but also as a commentary on the tragedy of human displacement away from their homeland, where the scene represents a microcosm of existence. Despite the "direct" political context (as it appears) in which the events of Ghassan Kanafani's novel "Men in the Sun" and Tawfiq Saleh's film "The Dupes" unfold, it is subject to whimsical and nightmarish climates expressed by writers like Samuel Beckett and Franz Kafka. I believe it is beyond my capacity to say anything further after this statement.

4 Conclusion:

Although many Palestinian and Arab writers and critics doubted whether Ghassan had watched the film "The Deceived" before his assassination on July 8, 1972, by the Mossad, who blew up his car in the Hazmieh area near Beirut, Abdullah Habib mentions that the American critic Barbara Harlow pointed out in her book "After Lives: Legacy of Revolutionary Writing" (published in English in 1996) that, according to Farouk Ghandoor, Ghassan Kanafani's cousin and later editor of his literary works, Kanafani himself had watched the film three times in public screenings, and did not object to the changes made by Tawfiq Saleh regarding the subject of breaking the wall of the water truck tank. Instead, Kanafani asked Ghandoor, on one of those occasions, not to raise this issue in open discussion with the public. Despite all the successes achieved by "The Deceived" in Arab and international film festivals, and the honors and accolades it received, as well as its wide fame both in the Arab world and internationally, it was only shown in public cinemas in Syria for only two weeks, then its screening was stopped at the height of its popularity!! The film was also not shown publicly in other Arab countries except in Tunisia, Algeria, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (formerly). The rest of the Arab countries banned its screening.

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