The "Motherland": An Archetypal and Postcolonial Reading of Ghassan Kanafani’s *Umm Saad*

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Abstract

Working at the intersection of postcolonial and archetypal criticism, this article investigates the role of women in resistance literature by looking at a piece of postcolonial Arabic fiction, Ghassan Kanafani’s *Umm Saad* (1969). Rooted in Arab politics concerning land rights and anti-Zionist struggle, the text offers a related archetypal approach to the depiction of women in politicized literature. *Umm Saad* allegorizes the struggles of Palestinians to reclaim their land. A poor peasant woman, the titular heroine embodies the intimate connection between Palestinians and their land, acting as a helper to combative men and a primal symbol for attachment to the enduring land. Umm Saad is a personal mother and a trope for a feminized colonized territory, metaphorically representing the Palestinian nation and assuming mythological features enabling her to identify with the Earth Mother to send a message against dispossession. Since she embodies positive mother archetype symbolism (the personal mother and the Earth Mother), she acts as a source of fertility and protection. Expressing a political statement via the mother archetype, Kanafani appeals to a basic human need, i.e. the need to settle down in one’s land, which makes woman an indispensable part of the collective unconscious of any nation.

Keywords: Archetypal Criticism; Kanafani; Mother(land); Postcolonial Arabic Fiction; *Umm Saad*.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Theme of Land in Kanafani’s Fiction

Against the occupiers’ misleading narrative and Zionist propaganda claims that Palestine did not exist and its land was unpopulated before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Ghassan Kanafani’s fiction makes rich references to the Palestinian land, history, and scenery. One Zionist myth Kanafani seems to have reacted to is that Palestine was “a land without people for a people without a land” (Alwadhaf 2011, 110). The identity of Kanafani’s characters, as a consequence, is richly tied to their country, and uprooting is a real concern. His writings avidly invoke Palestinian life and politics, especially land-related conflicts. In *Umm Saad* (1969), this recurring connection with the lost land gains more prominence and is established through mother archetype symbolism.

His “Men in the Sun” in Kanafani’s novella of that title are agonized by the oppressive heat of the desert borderline area between Iraq and Kuwait and ultimately die away from Palestine. Abu Qais, for
example, was forced to leave his field and the land he owned in a village ten years ago. He is now in the Shatt area in Basra, Iraq, resting on "the damp ground," breathing "the scent of the earth," and listening to the earth throbbing under him "with tired heartbeats, which trembled through the grains of sand and penetrated the cells of his body" (1962, 21). The personified land becomes a living, animate being associated with women, and the scent of the damp ground reminds him of the smell of his wife, of "the smell of a woman who had washed with cold water and covered his face with her hair while it was still damp" (21). This farmer has dreams of returning to "the olive trees" he once owned in his village and buying more "olive shoots" (27). His unexpected death in exile, in a sweltering water tank, makes such dreams of returning to the land of his roots simply ironic.

In Kanafani’s *Returning to Haifa* (1969), a Palestinian couple return to their former home in Haifa, after twenty years, to find it occupied by a Jewish family. Forced to evacuate it in the midst of the violence, panic, and chaos of the 1948 catastrophe, they leave behind an infant who is then raised by Zionist parents, gets named “Dov,” and joins the Israeli army. Kanafani makes a close association between the lost child and the lost (home)land. The Palestinians who moved out of their homes during the exodus left behind precious land and a disintegrating nation, which is symbolized by the lost son. In a story entitled “The Man Who Did Not Die” in the collection *Death of Bed No. 12*, Kanafani addresses the problem of selling Palestinian land to Jews as a major cause of the catastrophe of 1948. He writes a cogent account about poor Palestinian peasants living off the land they rent and how they lose their livelihood when the owners of the land sell it to greedy Jewish businessmen enticing them with money. Shame and disgrace are the fate of those who sell their land, a fate harder than death. Upon selling his land, the owner Mr. Ali is confronted with the woman who rents his land and is surprised that the land “has that value which makes a man’s face writhe in pain and grief if forced to leave it” (1958, 130).

Hence, British colonization and then Zionist occupation are essential for understanding themes of land and exile in Kanafani’s works. The land of Palestine was lost to colonial forces represented by the British mandate and Israeli occupation. Kanafani witnessed first-hand the repercussions of settler colonialism and the acquisition of territories in Palestine. Settler colonies were instituted by colonial powers “to absorb populations from the home country” and satisfy settlers’ greed for “land” and “advancement” (Castle 2007, 140). Thus, the 1948 war which resulted in the creation of Israel made Kanafani leave, at the age of twelve, to seek refuge in Lebanon first and Syria and Kuwait after that. However, a life of exile never made him forget the Palestinian land.

Kanafani’s lifelong commitment to the Palestinian issue is clear in an assertion like the following: “My political position springs from my being a novelist. In so far as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite” (in Brehony 2017). Even when he “seems” to deviate from the specific political cause of Palestine, as his critical study *On Zionist Literature* indicates, he actually aims to expose the role of Zionist literature in facilitating the colonization of Palestine, whether this literature was written by Jews or those who sympathize with them and whether it was written in Hebrew or other languages (1967, 8). As Kanafani framed it in this critical study, his goal was to expose the enemies (14). He, therefore, viewed resistance literature as a political tool of opposition in a cultural battle against
Israel occupation and Zionist schemes. In his study entitled *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968*, he explicated his belief in “the sanctity of the word and has an unwavering faith in its role and value and responsibilities as a political weapon in the resistance movement which is broader in meaning than the armed resistance” (1968, 109). Thus, he used his writings as an ideological tool tantamount to weapons.

For Kanafani, it is the Palestinian cause that gives worth and impetus to his fiction, and we can understand his concern with the Palestinian countryside accordingly. In the words of Tina Malhi-Sherwell, "Landscapes came to dominate Palestinian art, as they were conceived as the locus of Palestinian identity.... In the case of Palestinians, it was the Palestinian village, its surrounding landscape, and the peasantry that achieved the status of national signifier" (2000, 164). The analogy can be extended to include not only visual arts but fiction as well. In this case, the titular heroine Umm Saad in Kanafani’s novella stands for the problematic Palestinian identity and the lost nation whose land has been confiscated, yet she carries hope for return to one’s roots.

1.2. The Theme of Land and Postcolonial Theory

A proper context for understanding Kanafani’s preoccupation with the Palestinian land comes from postcolonial theory and cultural studies as he worked within such parameters on the relation between colonialism and imperialism often invoked by critics like Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Albert Memmi in their exposition of different forms of human oppression. In his introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, evoking Homi Bhabha on the relation between “nation” and “narration,” argues that “[t]he main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future—these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative” (1993, xii-xiii; emphasis added). Said focuses on contest over geography as one form of imperialism that can also take the discursive form of a struggle “about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings” (7). He defines imperialism in terms of colonial expansion, overseas rule, struggle over land, and a competition “to acquire and accumulate territory” (8). As an act of losing a people’s land to the imperialist usurper, imperialism for Said is an action of “geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control” (271). Said argues that at a basic level, “imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others” (7). Hence, colonialism is but one of the consequences of imperialism, which itself is an act of maintaining authority over distant territories. Given the importance of land for the native people and the colonizers, it is normal that attempts at countering colonialism at the cultural front highlight the theme of land as well as its rich metaphors. As indicated by Said, narrative and discourse form an essential part of imperialism in its expanded sense.

Nasser Abufarha (2008), in a study on dominant national symbols in Palestinian literature and culture, asserts that “[l]and lies at the center of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict both in its materiality and in ideas” (343). This land is a “dominant feature of Palestinian identity and construction” (344). Similarly,
Frantz Fanon (1963), in his famous study on decolonization and nation building *The Wretched of the Earth*, claims that "[f]or a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and naturally, dignity" (9). Like Said and Abufarha, Fanon also stresses the importance of the land for the colonized because it signifies livelihood, identity, and worth. Fanon argues that the "colonist is not content with physically limiting the space of the colonized" but tries to make the colonized equal to "absolute evil" by way of making the colonized justifiably different (6). This limiting of space can be understood in terms of acquisition of land and restricting the movement of its inhabitants. Significantly, and following a dialectical, materialist approach reminiscent of Marx, Fanon contends that "in colonial countries only the peasantry is revolutionary" because it has "nothing to lose and everything to gain" in decolonization (23). This can be interpreted in the sense that they are left out by the nationalist parties inside and exploited by the foreign colonizer. If they lose their land under colonialism, i.e. their source of livelihood, then regaining it is a big win for them. Kanafani himself showed an interest in the revolutionary potential of the peasant class directly attached to the land. Umm Saad is a peasant woman who now lives in a refugee camp. Reflecting Kanafani’s socialist leanings, she embodies his belief in the common people as the source of revolution.

In *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968*, Kanafani shows how Palestinian literature of resistance under occupation has “a social dimension, offering its loyalty to the working class that undertook the burden of carrying guns and determining the outcome of resistance” (2016, 108). Umm Saad embodies that sociopolitical function. The grape vine she plants for the narrator, as we will see in the discussion to come, blooms at the end, which makes this same oppressed, hard-working class the site of hope and resistance as well.

In his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, the postcolonial critic Albert Memmi has argued that the colonialist “accepting the reality of being a colonizer means agreeing to be a nonlegitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper” (1974, 96). As a “usurper,” the colonialist disowns the colonized yet takes their land even if the process entails brute force. Critics and theorists of postcolonialism often agree that colonialism as a form of subjecting the colonized “is most clearly seen in physical conquest, but in its more subtle forms, it involves political, economic, and cultural domination” (Dobie 2012, 205). This article highlights the first and more basic level of colonialism, i.e. physical conquest of territories. Kanafani’s novella *Umm Saad* is merely part of his overall project of condemning the usurpations of imperialism, in general, and Jewish settler colonialism, in particular. In his fictional and non-fictional oeuvre, Kanafani culturally reacted to the lived reality of colonialism as conquering and subjugating territories.

Kanafani’s critical study *Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966* introduces the concept of “resistance literature” (1966) which we can use to understand his political project in *Umm Saad*. He establishes his ideological project as a writer of resistance literature writing within a specific political/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 1978, 4). In this book, Kanafani asserts that “more than three fourths of the 200 thousand Arabs who remained there in Palestine after the
Zionist occupation were from the village dwellers. As for city dwellers, the overriding majority of them left Palestine during the 1948 war or just after that” (1966, 11). Those who remained in the villages were peasants, not the intellectual elite like the highly educated writers or artists who often lived in or moved to the cities before 1948 or went into exile after the catastrophe. By contrast, Kanafani asserts that the peasants (fallaheen) “not only had the honor of participating in the continued revolutions in Palestine before the occupation, but also received the heavy burden from the 1948 war” (63). Accordingly, Kanafani’s preface to the novella makes Umm Saad represent a class of refugees (peasants) for whom revolution is like daily bread and strife (1966, 7-8).

While writing resistance literature, Kanafani also systematically produced a discursive account of the national story in his stories, novels, and political essays. In his introduction to Nation and Narration, Homi Bhabha famously claims that "Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (1990, 1). This image of the nation as narration, as a cultural construction often in the form of the novel, Bhabha contends, stems from the fact that “it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west” (1). A nation can be produced in narrative and has a symbolic, ambivalent nature for Bhabha. Contra Said and Fanon, a nation for Bhabha is more than lost or gained land but also a state of mind and a mental concept. In Kanafani’s works, we have both arguments: the value of the land usurped by the colonizer and a mental obsession with this lost land that gets manifested in the conception of his allegorical fictions.

For most Arabs, land means stature, belonging, and identity. It is the basis for a spiritual bond with nature and a foundation for culture. Figuratively speaking, land is their caring "mother" that gives back in return for attention and cultivation. In Kanafani's Umm Saad, this connectedness to the land as a mother figure finds a supreme fictional illustration. And this theme acquires particular significance once examined against the exodus of Palestinians in the 1948 Nakbah when tens of thousands were expelled from their lands and villages to live in refugee camps in neighboring countries with the creation of the State of Israel in the same year. Kanafani's own family fled his birthplace in Acre in 1948 to settle in Damascus as refugees when he was about twelve years old (Kilpatrick 1999, 9-10). The hope of return to the land they lost got more distant yet more intense with the passage of years. Hence, this article contends that Kanafani's fictions tell the story of his nation, a story of the loss of land and collective mourning. Kanafani wrote in a tradition of established writers who used woman as a symbol for the nation (whether usurped or resisting) like W. B. Yeats in his one-act play “Cathleen Ni Houlihan” (1903) in which a poor old woman allegorically corresponds to the Irish nation in need of sacrifice and regeneration against British invaders. His engaging nationalistic literature conflates archetypes and politics to depict a memorable Umm Saad refusing to have her land stolen from her by Zionist settlers.

The current study is legitimate because Kanafani’s Umm Saad has not received adequate critical attention in English. Moreover, scholarly commentaries on this novella in Arabic are mostly old, scant, and unavailable to most readers. However, the political/historical context necessary for understanding Kanafani and often alluded to by critics is still illuminating in this case. For example, Ahmad Sa'di argues
that "Al-Nakbah is a Palestinian event and a site of Palestinian collective memory" (2002, 177) because in that year a country and a nation were being erased from maps and history books with the help of imperialist powers. For Sa'di, this tragic event resulted in "the confiscation of Palestinian-owned land by the Israeli State. The land, which had for centuries been considered by Palestinians to be a major source of wealth, influence, status, and dignity, was transferred to Jewish ownership and use" (184). This historical context, together with the defeat of the 1967 whereby more Palestinian land was lost to Israel, forms a necessary background for understanding the political message of Kanafani’s novella. The text reveals an intimate connection to the motherland as manifested in motherly attributes of Umm Saad. Her presence testifies to Kanafani’s repeated, even obsession, dwelling on the dislocated Palestinians whose distance exacerbated their longing for their land.

As one piece of the post-48 Arabic novel, Umm Saad can be considered in light of Hosam Aboul-Ela's contention that the structure of such post-48 Arabic novels entails difference from European models and rootedness, instead, "in Arab geohistorical location, in the series of military defeats, in the disappointments of unequal development and failed decolonization programs, and in the cynicism regarding history and the future that the Arab politics of space instilled in the Arab artist" (2003, 11). Aboul-Ela contends that Kanafani, in All That's Left to You, "takes the effects of defeat and displacement on ordinary Palestinians as his subject matter, and again he mixes up chronology in an expression of opposition to the monolithic historiography of the triumphalist" (14). As a consequence of defeat, displacement meant tragically forcing Palestinians out of their land, which is what Kanafani allegorically revisits in Umm Saad. In structure and subject matter, Kanafani’s works write back to colonialist discourses, thus writing history from the perspective of the oppressed.

2. Literature Review

The political relevance of Kanafani’s fiction is not a quite new idea. Many critics have highlighted the political value of his fiction of resistance. For Haidar Eid, as an instance, "to understand Kanafani's ideological orientation and commitment is to understand both the past of the Palestinians and their present more deeply: an understanding that contributes to their liberation, and to human liberation in general" (2013, 1). Another recent study has claimed that Kanafani’s commitment to the Palestinian issue “is evident in his various works which handle the predicament of an exiled nation” and explore "the exodus and its influence upon Palestinians" (Waleed & Muhaidat 2017, 26) as manifested in novellas like All That’s Left to You (1966) and Returning to Haifa (1969). And studying parallels between Kanafani’s All That’s Left to You and William Faulkner’s modernist American fiction, Aida Azouqa has argued that Kanafani utilized artistic innovations like multiple narrators and stream of consciousness without sacrificing his commitment, thus striking a balance between both ends and challenging dominant literary discourses (2000, 155).

However, full-text, scholarly commentaries on Umm Saad in English are limited and inaccessible to most readers. Significantly, the positive range of mother-archetype symbolism used in Umm Saad has not been explored, nor did critics approach the intersection between postcolonialism and archetypal criticism in Kanafani’s Umm Saad. In one of the existing commentaries on the novella in English, Hilary
Kilpatrick characterizes Umm Saad as "a middle-aged refugee peasant woman" (1999, 12). According to Anni Kanafani, Umm Saad was for Kanafani "a symbol of the Palestinian women in the camp and of the worker class" (in Kilpatrick 1999, 12). For Kilpatrick, "The nature of Zionist colonization, with its stress on acquiring land, struck at the existence of the peasants, the largest section of the Palestinian society" (13). It is no wonder, then, that Umm Saad is a peasant woman whose whole existence got transformed through colonialist acquisition of the land of Palestinian villagers. The choice of a female character rather than a male freedom fighter is significant, offering a variation on the postcolonial novels which center on the male hero. As this female character is a farmer and a mother, an archetypal approach seems warranted, and Kanafani brings notions of class and gender into his conception of colonial oppression.

3. The Earth Mother Archetype: A Jungian Perspective

Archetypes have essential meanings and images in our lives. According to archetypal theorists, archetypes are part of our internal lives that we should look for, reclaim, and fathom: “Our task is not, therefore, to deny the archetype, but to dissolve the projections, in order to restore their contents to the individual who has involuntarily lost them by projecting them outside himself” (Jung 1970, 18). Mainly, Kanafani’s novels employ male protagonists to comment on political realities of resistance, militancy, and oppression. When women are depicted, they are typically minor, absent characters existing in the shadow of militant men. For example, one short story in Kanafani’s collection A World Not Ours has the title “The Bride” whereby a man buys a new gun by paying for its price from the dowry of his only daughter, marrying her off to an old man to get the price. Under a fake official pretext, a corrupt officer takes it from the man who originally earned it in fighting the enemy and sells it to the bride’s father for money, not fulfilling a promise of returning it to its first owner. As a result, the first owner could not fight the Jews attacking his village. The sympathetic narrator says that he could not know “the name of the bride who was sold as a price for the gun” (1965, 187). In such a story, woman is objectified and distanced to the background, even made nameless in a patriarchal culture whereby men carry guns and engage in armed resistance against the occupier.

_Umm Saad_, however, is one of very few cases in which female protagonists come to the forefront in Kanafani’s politicized fiction. Psychoanalytic criticism on the feminine—Jungian psychology in particular—might be an apt theoretical frame to juxtapose against the legitimate postcolonial approach. In “Anima and Animus,” Jung argues that women can receive the projection of our souls. Looking at unconscious femininity (anima) and unconscious masculinity (animus), Jung claims that Woman, with her different psychology, is “a source of information about things for which a man has no eyes. She can be his inspiration: her intuitive capacity, often superior to man’s, can give him timely warning, and her feeling, always directed toward the personal, can show him ways which his own less personally accented feeling would never have discovered” (2000, 158). In this inspirational, intuitive capacity, woman can function as the unconscious of a nation. It is the inherited collective image of woman as mother and motherland that exists in our unconscious and that this article explores.
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Umm Saad—both as a personal mother and a family relation to the narrator and equally in her figurative relation to the Palestinian (home)land—is used by Kanafani as a political metaphor for resistance and attachment to the land. She is a tradition and an educator for the narrator, standing for a class of militant yet impoverished people in refugee camps. In the preface to the novel (1969), Kanafani tells us that he is affiliated with this class to which Umm Saad belongs, that "brave, crushed, and poor class thrown into the camps of misery" (7). This revolutionary class sees struggle as an essential part of their life. Since Umm Saad inspired Kanafani, she is deemed as his mentor, as a woman whose lips and tough hands "remained Palestinian despite everything," and awaiting arms for twenty years (7). Although this woman faced loss and defeat, she never gave up being the enduring source of resistance against the colonizer; thus, we find in her the mother of a militant man, a "fida'i." According to Kanafani's wife Anni Kanafani, the uneducated Umm Saad has much to impart to the literate narrator: "it is the illiterate woman who speaks and the intellectual who listens and puts the questions" (in Brehony 2017). Moreover, she is not only a real Palestinian woman Kanafani knew but also a type and a symbol for the defiant Palestinian nation. Early in the novella, the narrator's wife comments that Umm Saad never gives up. She returns after the defeat of 1967: "They have fought for her and when they lost she lost twice" (10). This twofold loss entails the loss of war in 1948 (national loss) as well as another loss contingent on the Arab fighters’ loss in the second war of 1967.

It is argued that Umm Saad is depicted in terms evocative of the mother archetype in different manifestations. Kanafani uses this analogy to heighten her image as a symbol of resistance to the colonizer and endurance in one's homeland. In the words of a feminist postcolonial critic, "Black and female identities are not simply figurative or superficial sites of play and metaphor, but occupy very real political spaces of diaspora, dispossession and resistance" (Kanneh 1995, 348). The intersection of archetypal and postcolonial criticism gives more political relevance to the argument. Despite the metaphorical meanings of Umm Saad, Kanafani gives her immediacy, richness, and elemental simplicity. She is not simply an abstract symbol but a woman close to us in our human fears and hopes in that we can visualize her and think of her real-life counterparts.

Archetypes are universal symbols forming the collective unconscious. They are inherited, pre-existing forms transcending the personal unconscious. Following Carl Jung, critics usually refer to them as primordial images or "collective archaic contents" (Braga 2016, 223). Significantly, Umm Saad embodies the positive aspects of the mother archetype. According to Jung, the mother archetype is an ideal corresponding to Plato's notion of the "Idea." In this sense, Jung claims in *Four Archetypes:*

"Somewhere, in ‘a place beyond the skies,’ there is a prototype or primordial image of the mother that is pre-existent and supraordinate to all phenomena in which the ‘maternal,’ in the broadest sense of the term, is manifest” (1970, 9). The presiding mother archetype entails protection and production, yet it can have negative symbols. In the words of Jung, "The archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness: the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden. It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well, or to various vessels such as the baptismal font, or to vessel-shaped flowers like the rose or the lotus" (15). Confirming this positive role of the mother archetype, Jung continues: "The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of
the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility” (16). Such a description fits the depiction of Umm Saad who embodies the positive projections of the mother archetype in order to communicate a political message of rootedness in and eventual return to the land.

In *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung argues the versatile nature of the mother archetype and its richly symbolic nature: "Many things arousing devotion or feelings of awe, as for instance the Church, university, city or country, heaven, earth, the woods, the sea or any still waters, matter even, the underworld and the moon, can be mother-symbols" (1959, 81). Jung asserts the association between woman and earth and the direct identification between woman and the Earth Mother: "Experience reveals the striking fact that the Urania type of mother-image predominates in masculine psychology, whereas in a woman the chthonic type, or Earth Mother, is the most frequent" (106). The Earth Mother image, hence, is more suitable for feminine psychology within a range of heaven and earth mythical symbolism Jung alludes to. In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung similarly asserts that "The city is a maternal symbol, a woman who harbours the inhabitants in herself like children" (1967, 307). By extension, this also implies that one's nurturing country can be viewed in terms of maternal symbolism.

In *Man and His Symbols*, Jung discusses major dream symbols as revealing the unconscious in a certain “symbolic image” (1964, 5). He still sees archetypes as archaic, primordial, and instinctive trends with meanings existing in dreams, mythologies, and literature. In this work, Jung explains that archetypes are basic patterns “without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world” (58). He asserts the multiple manifestations of archetypes, their “variable representations” (57), despite their basic inherited form. According to Jung, “The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif—representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern” (58). Via the mother figure, Kanafani chose to appeal to a primordial image and a significant figure we encounter in stories, novels, poems, fairy tales, and myths. This universal image of the good, caring mother he instills in Umm Saad makes his message about the intimate relation between peasants and their land more universal, with wider political appeal.

An archetypal critic like Northrop Frye has defined an archetype as a “communicable symbol” and viewed archetypal criticism as “primarily concerned with literature as a social fact and as a mode of communication” (1957, 99). On another occasion, Frye contends that some archetypes are “deeply rooted in conventional association that they can hardly avoid suggesting that association, as the geometrical figure of the cross inevitably suggests the death of Christ” (102). In this article, it is demonstrated that archetypes can equally communicate political ends despite the conventional associations we might hold between archetypal themes/characters and their related meanings. Kanafani, hence, used a mother figure to communicate an unavoidable yet fitting message about the intimate association between the personal mother (Umm Saad) and the figurative mother (the motherland Palestine).
4. The Mother Archetype in *Umm Saad*

The narrator links Umm Saad, a personal mother and an archetypal symbol, to the earth mother archetype as an embodiment of continuance, care, and connectedness. In this novella, the mother and the earth mother archetypes are obviously related as mother symbols. Both are providers of plenty and have the ability to sustain us, and both are responsible for the positive formation of our identity. The earth is a symbol for the great mother archetype just as Umm Saad is a mother and a woman who is attached to her land. And so, Umm Saad means different things for the narrator and appears in different guises. However, Jung asserts that the archetype “as an image of instinct is a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives” (1960, 145), which makes the archetype a source of inspiration, authority, and the ultimate destination of our strivings. One clear function for Umm Saad, therefore, is manifesting the basic values and natural needs of belonging to and returning to our roots, in this case the land from which Palestinian peasants were expelled as a result of the 1948 and 1967 wars.

When we first encounter Umm Saad, she emerges from the void and silence in a path surrounded by olive trees. Her description is constantly juxtaposed against references to the countryside, nature, and the return to the womb motif. Significantly, the narrator compares her punctual daily appearance to "something arising from the womb of the earth" (9). She lives in a refugee camp, but when she visits the narrator and enters the room carrying a vine twig, "the smell of country seeps through the room" (10). In Jungian psychology, trees are manifest mother symbols because they stand for “fertility and fruitfulness” (1970, 15). The grape vine Umm Saad carries and the olive trees she walks among, as the novella opens, point to the correspondence between two generative mother symbols viewed as a source of life and re-birth: the personal mother and trees as emblematic mothers.

In *Four Archetypes*, Jung makes the distinction between “the personal mother and grandmother, stepmother and mother-in-law; then any woman with whom a relation exists,” on the one hand, and, on the other hand, “mothers in a figurative sense” like the Church, the Virgin, Paradise, cities, woods, earth, among others (1970, 15). In *Umm Saad* (1969), Kanafani bridges the gap between the personal mother, Umm Saad, and the figurative function she holds, the Palestinian land/nation, to explicate his political message and give it the needed immediacy and vigor. Umm Saad’s forehead, according to the narrator, "has the color of the earth" (12), and so are her brown arms (13). Her strong brunette arm, which she reveals to the narrator to show him how a bullet scraped the arm of her son from the wrist to the elbow, is described as having a color similar to that of earth (34). On another occasion, and when she stands up to leave, "the smell of the country which Saad hid in—protected by that unbelievable natural shield—seeped through the room" (40). As a trope, this countryside woman represents the multitude of villages peasants lost in the Nakbah war of 1948 and thus the land which they were forced to leave.

Towards the end of the novella, the smell of the country exudes through the room as Umm Saad takes her little things and moves toward the door to leave (75). Due to the cracks in her palms emblematic of her harsh life of toil, the narrator describes her palms as similar to "the surface of a land tortured by thirst" (41). Her palms are as dry as two wooden logs, with cracks like those of an old trunk (22). Her entering the room with a twig of a grape plant that she wants to plant for the narrator is equally significant. She tells the narrator that she has cut it from a vine she encountered on the road to plant it for
him near the door, "and in few years you eat grapes" (11). By the time the novella ends, and as she is leaving the narrator's house, her promise of life/re-birth is beginning to be fulfilled; she tells him that "the vine has sprouted" (75). The bedazzled narrator reacts: "And I stepped towards the door where Umm Saad was bending over the soil where she has planted—since a long time it seemed to me then—that dry brown twig which she brought me one morning, looking at a green head gravely ripping the earth's surface" (75), which indicates Umm Saad’s persisting belief in the land as a source of life and abundance.

While some critics have discussed dominant symbols like cactus, orange and olive trees as “national Palestinian symbols” signifying community, lost land, and rootedness respectively (Abufarha 2008, 345-346), the symbolism of the vine plant has not been examined. However, it still falls within such orbits of signification, indicating attachment to one’s roots. Such common national symbols often indicate the rooted Palestinian identity, but the vine tree in particular adds overtones of resilience, patience, and perseverance because abundant water spoils it and because its roots go deep into the earth. Umm Saad is made a goddess of fertility and belonging to the earth as this brown, dry twig she plants ultimately blooms into something green and generous without needing much water, which fosters the mother archetype she embodies.

Remarkably, Umm Saad tells the narrator that her injured son will "return" to the fida’i fighters (guerilla comrades) after his wound heals. While her son repeatedly goes back to the militant youth (i.e. to where he belongs and finds his identity), she repeatedly makes us return to the land of our roots. The narrator reflects that Umm Saad has adequately embodied resistance in her language and actions, and has thus taught him "how the exiled extract their vocabularies and implant them in their lives just as the blade of the plow cuts into the earth" (34). In her actions and in the precise language she uses, she is a living example of a close bond with the land.

Her recurrent, ritualistic visitations to the narrator's house every Tuesday make her a symbol of recurrence and a reminder of loss. The narrator has known her for years following the same indispensable habits: "And when she knocks the door of the house and lays her poor things in the entrance, the smell of miserable yet steadfast, hopeful camps pervades my mind, and to my tongue returns the bitter misery I have masticated to dizziness year after year" (21-22). She is a living emblem of defeat yet resistance, a life instinct refusing to yield to the death drive. In allegorical terms, Umm Saad is a figure for Palestinian women who have lived through misery and strife only to beget resistance. Those hands of hers nurtured her son before he went to the fida’i fighters just as "the earth nurtures the stem of a soft plant" (22). But now that "bird" she nurtured for twenty years has flown and is carrying a gun. Umm Saad is described in terms of what sustains and procreates, which casts her in the positive side of the mother archetype.

Nature and earth-related imagery are richly used to characterize Umm Saad. Not only is she associated with the generative earth but also with the rain that makes this earth fertile. On one rainy Tuesday, Umm Saad visits the narrator who describes her appearance in the following manner that captures the earth mother archetype: "It was a rainy Tuesday morning. Umm Saad entered dripping water. Her hair was wet and dripping on her face, which seemed as if it were watered earth. She picked her coat and put the faded umbrella in the corner as you would put a tired sword" (27). The wet hair is likened to a
watered earth, and the old umbrella is compared to a tired sword, which enhances the arduous resistance Umm Saad stands for. In fact, her dress has the stains of red, wet soil. When the narrator asks her about the cause of such stains, she tells him that the camp overflowed the night before because of rain. His question triggers her tears, tears shed because of poverty and misfortune. The narrator describes the shedding of her tears in equally legendary, earth-bound, and violent terms: "Her tears sprouted like the earth exploding with an eternally awaited for spring, like a sword drawn out from its silent sheath" (28). For the narrator, the stains on her dress are like a wreath of thorns (29), which suggests suffering and sacrifice caused by the loss of the Palestinian land and gives this suffering a sacred aura reminiscent of Jesus, martyrs, and saints.

The narrator makes Umm Saad a mythical figure. Or else, his description casts her in such mythically paranormal roles. Describing her crying, the narrator says that she cried not exactly through the cells of her whole skin, that her dry palms wept in a way he could hear, and that her hair was dripping tears (28). On another occasion, her voice—while calling for the narrator when he goes to the camp—is described as "louder than the explosive thunder in the top of the sky" and the echo is described as falling from everywhere "like a waterfall" (32). In such extramundane descriptions, Umm Saad signifies more than the personal mother archetype and comes to represent the great mother archetype as Mother Nature. It is no surprise that Saad deems other Palestinian women he encounters as his mother. Like those women, Umm Saad is no exception in being a prototype rather than simply a mother. She stands for generations of women who endured misfortune in camp life yet embody hope of liberation from the occupier.

The fact that she fulfills the mother archetype function is further manifested when Saad and four other comrades are besieged and hide among plants. When they get hungry, an old woman—resembling Umm Saad in age and looks—comes to feed them for five days without delay. This woman, too, becomes his surrogate mother and embodies positive features of the mother archetype. When she appears, she is dressed in a country dress, carrying a parcel on her head, and a bundle of green shoots in her hands (36). When she leaves the food parcel for them, she says, "May Allah protect you my sons” (39). And he even calls her “mother”, and she addresses the comrades as “my children.” Such a transmutation of identities (i.e. Saad’s biological mother vs. this old woman who nurtures him) enhances the symbolic value and function of motherhood as an archetypal motif rather than anything contingent on an individual person. For Saad, all mothers transpose his own mother and become his in exile. And those mothers see such young men fighting for their land as their sons. The narrator, too, even calls Umm Saad at one point "my mom” (40), which corresponds to Jung’s views on the spirituality and transcendence associated with the mother archetype. Jung, we should emphasize, argues that the personal mother function of the mother archetype can be fulfilled by different sorts of mothers like the personal mother, the stepmother, the grandmother, the mother-in-law, and even “any woman with whom a relationship exists—for example, a nurse or governess or perhaps a remote ancestress” (1970, 15). An older relation to the narrator, Umm Saad can be viewed as an “ancestress” for him.

As a universal symbol, the archetypal woman can take, among others, the form of the good mother, the terrible mother, and the spiritual mother. With regard to the good mother, the archetype carries the
"positive aspects of the Earth Mother" like those related to "the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, fertility, growth, abundance" (Guerin et al. 1979, 160). Umm Saad carries such efficacious symbolism and seems to live in harmony with natural impulses. After the rain, the sun appears again and cuts its way through the dark clouds "just like a plow penetrating the ground to make a furrow;" and the room is struck "with a bundle of warmth" (31). The narrator observes Umm Saad’s agreeable reaction to the sunlight. He asks: “Was it by accident that the sun’s rays fell on her face while sitting there? She smiled, and looked strong and young as she always did” (31). On other occasions, the narrator describes her as an "old yet strong lady who spent her life in hard strife” (22). So, the narrator's account of her is not fixed since she keeps transforming and mutating—surprisingly being old and young, weak and firm. Broadly, the narrator views Umm Saad in terms of the broad spectrum of the mother archetype, with fluid identities, attributes, and manifestations. Having established the intimate connection between woman and the mother archetype, and Umm Saad and the Palestinian land, it is necessary now to link postcolonialism to archetypal criticism by way of projecting Kanafani’s political scheme in the possibly conscious use of this archetype.

5. The Mother Archetype and Postcolonialism

An analysis of postcoloniality in a text often involves an exploration of the complex connection between its content and historical/political context. It also involves a discussion of the text’s depiction of the relationship between colonial powers and the colonized as well as the consequences of exploitation and hegemony. In this regard, postcolonial criticism often brings “an awareness of power relations between Western and ‘Third World’ cultures” and equally a rejection of dominant Western ideologies functioning as a “repressive ethnocentrism” (Selden et al. 2005, 218). In Kanafani’s novella, Umm Saad is made a symbol for attachment to the land against uprooting as well as political resistance against the colonizer. She is not the passive type or the domestic one limiting her life to her household. In one sense, she is the land refusing to accommodate the exploitative colonizer and yet producing resistance. This woman assumes a public role, collecting metal pieces after Israeli raids to prevent such pieces from deflating the tires of cars in the camp (43-44). She acts as a leader for other camp women and children, organizing them, inspiring them, and steering their efforts to a productive end. Kanafani uses Umm Saad to culturally undermine imperialism, which is at the heart of postcolonial criticism. The alliance between archetypal symbolism and postcolonial themes the text manifests enhances its political nature. In the words of one renowned critic, literary theory is necessarily “political," and its history “is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch” (Eagleton 2008, 169). In this regard, and taking politics for granted, a major task of literary theory becomes offering different forms of politics and alternative readings of history as evidenced by cultural productions like the novel.

As a militant woman, Umm Saad wears on her chest a chain with a machine-gun bullet as a reminder of the insurgent mode of life her son Saad chose for himself (64). The narrator observes how after one incident she stretched her palms in front of him. Wounds on such rough palms “extended like red, dry rivers with a unique smell: the smell of brave resistance being part of man's body and blood” (46). For the
narrator, this mother figure is the quintessence of simple, dedicated resistance against a colonizer greedy for the native land. Umm Saad represents a reaction to settler colonialism and the sociocultural consequences of occupation manifested in cramped, cramped camp life, unemployment, and forced relocation. The misery of camp life (cleaning people's houses and carrying out family household chores) makes such an observation a significant one, for this woman knows nothing but strenuous effort to make a living for her children. Within the historical context of the text, Umm Saad is an emblem for the post-1948 (Nakbah) generation which got exiled and suffered a lot due to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the loss of their land. She is one of generations of women who witnessed the armed struggle against the English before the coming of the Jews to her land and before the 1948 war. She lived in Palestine before the occupation and still remembers those days. However, she now lives in a state of exile and poverty (66), and the talisman she once wore on her chest is not preventing that poverty and misery accruing as a result of new political realities. In reaction to poverty and misery in camp life, men and women find in political resistance a way out of wretchedness in the camp. This is the case of Saad's father who had a better temperament after his son joined the fida’i comrades (74). Like his wife Umm Saad, Abu Saad finds meaning in a life of resistance. His militant children offer an existential justification for his miserable life in the refugee camp.

When her young son Saeed demonstrates his military skills before camp inhabitants, Umm Saad releases a ululation that gets echoed by other women in the camp (70). She is so happy that he is learning to use guns and avoid harm. Confirming the positive mother archetype function of fecundity and abundance correlated with Umm Saad as well as the association between woman and the nation, a proud Abu Saad tells an old man in the camp (while watching his younger son, Saeed, practice some military training with other camp children): "This woman delivers children only to become fida’i fighters; she delivers and Palestine claims" (73). Abu Saad is proud that Saad joined the fida’i fighters in al Ghor valley (72). Both father and mother find a meaning for this life in armed resistance. Umm Saad tells the narrator that holding a gun is like a contagion that spreads among the youth in the camp (73). In this regard, Coffin has argued that in *Umm Saad* Kanafani is depicting “the heroism of an entire class of Palestinians” (1996, 112). Hence, Umm Saad’s archetypal relevance cannot be isolated from her political significance in a battle to stay in the land or simply return to it one day. In the words of one critic, “[t]he intimate relationship between the Palestinians—especially peasants—and the land makes their separation tragic. Land is much more than just property. It is a mirror, an identity and a belonging” (Eid 2013, 7). For this reason, Kanafani used Umm Saad to comment on the relevance of women to the cause of liberation and nationalism. Rather than being an obstacle or an impediment for liberation, Umm Saad is a necessary psychic vehicle for reclaiming the land and thus achieving this liberation.

Apparently, Kanafani deemed literature as a form of cultural resistance. He used it as a political tool, a fact verified in his assassination by the Israeli Mossad in Beirut in 1972 due to the threat his writings seemed to pose for the colonizers. Resistance literature, written from exile or under occupation, meant for Kanafani a strong alliance between literature and politics. His fictions remain committed to the national situation, and can thus be read allegorically in terms of the figurative relation between his characters and the Palestinian nation.
6. Coda: *Umm Saad* and the National Allegory

Kanafani’s works form what Fredric Jameson (1968) famously labeled as “the national allegory” when he asserts that “a certain nationalism is fundamental in the third world” (65). This third world, for Jameson, includes a range of countries that “have suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism” (67) as opposed to the capitalist first world. Kanafani consciously wrote a national allegory in which Umm Saad becomes the Palestinian nation and the land Palestinians need to survive. It is no wonder that he dedicates this book to her: “To Umm Saad, the nation and the school.” Political oppression makes this genre that Kanafani opted for a legitimate choice. The fact that Umm Saad fulfills the role of the archetypal/prototypical mother aligns her with the public (political) sphere rather than the limited (private) one. Jameson offers a totalizing claim that “All third-world texts are necessarily… allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories” (69; emphasis original). He explains his position arguing that third-world texts, “even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic—necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society” (69; emphasis original). Jameson’s claims boil down to the conclusion that the third-world writer working within a postcolonial context, like Kanafani, cannot escape viewing literature as a political tool and a means of praxis.

Nevertheless, and considering the somewhat hostile reception of Jameson’s argument, there is nothing inherently wrong with the association between the personal and the political coming together in a western form of narrative like the novel but within the genre of resistance literature Kanafani adopted, unless allegoricalness entails inferior aesthetic merits. Moreover, allegoricalness exists in levels and degrees in Arabic literature. Responding to Jameson’s approach, Aijaz Ahmad (1987) —objecting to Jameson’s absolutist logic—has legitimately claimed that nationalism itself “is not some unitary thing with some pre-determined essence and value” (2007, 1832). Kanafani forged his own variety of the national allegory through mythical, archetypal dimensions. To prove his hypothesis about the association between “libidinal investment” and socio-political components, Jameson cites instances from Chinese and African literature. *Umm Saad*, as an instance of non-canonical forms of literature and a national allegory, could have served him well. The nationalist ideology Kanafani embraces is, in fact, complicated by Marxist underpinnings about the poverty of Palestinian peasants and yet their potential for revolution. In addition, Kanafani subverts the “postmodern” model Jameson sees as characteristic of the un-national literatures of the west through metafictional layers in which Umm Saad becomes a recurring presence in excerpts featured in many of his short story collections. In a sense, Kanafani employs yet subverts the traditionally realistic national allegory as *Umm Saad* consists of nine episodic sections all unified through the primal, even mythical, presence of the titular heroine. Kanafani’s national allegory, however, remains essentially political.

Kanafani’s *Umm Saad* has been examined in terms of its protest message against displacement and its assertion of the primacy of land for the colonized through the apt mother figure. In general, the use of
woman as a symbol of the Palestinian land/nation in Palestinian literature may not be exactly new, but the gendered and politically significant trope of woman as the homeland has been examined in this article in terms of the universally rich symbolism of the mother archetype to show how the theme of land is deeply ingrained in the psyche of Palestinian writers. In addition, it has been implicitly argued that the role of women in Kanafani’s literature of resistance is not marginal as evidenced by the elemental presence of Umm Saad.

According to Tahrir Hamdi, resistance writers and artists like Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, and Najj al Ali “have taken it upon themselves to bear witness to an unspeakable past, something which dominant History has been bent on silencing” (2011, 23). In this type of literature Hamdi labels as "bearing witness," the writer witnessing the past is recording "her or his people’s suffering, documenting it and producing an archive that would prove necessary for a mass witnessing” (23) of what has been lost in terms of land or identity. Hamdi continues that the work of the Palestinian writer “is necessarily informed by the threat of complete identity erasure, a complete loss of land or history” (2011, 24). In a section on Kanafani’s *Returning to Haifa*, Hamdi argues that one essential reason why Kanafani was assassinated was that he wrote “the ultimate Palestinian narrative, a narrative that is not only aware of the past but urges its readers to contemplate the present and future of the Palestinian situation” (37).

Hence, Hamdi sees Kanafani’s bearing witness as a form of resistance giving life to the cause of liberation rather than allowing it to die in sentimental abstractions and nostalgic memories. This argument, like Ahmad’s argument, goes against the allegorical abstractions of Jameson and gives more political significance to Kanafani’s fiction, making his narrative about the confiscation of Palestinian land and the depopulation of villages more politically nuanced and assertive. In this light, Umm Saad’s blooming grape vine is an instance of productive labor, a step in the arduous struggle for liberation. And the act of “bearing witness” to a history of dispossession is, in itself, indicative of a literature carrying the collective unconscious of the Palestinian nation, which validates the archetypal approach employed in this article. In brief, “bearing witness” to a history of land deprivation meant for Kanafani writing a national allegory in which the value of the land is symbolized through the maternal metaphor.

In Kanafani’s politically engaged fiction, we encounter the land which was lost, the land which Umm Saad represents. If there is hope in regaining it, this hope lies in the poor class of peasant men and women for whom the land means life. Unlike capitalists and profiteers, this class of hard-working men and honest women knows the value of the land and aspires to regain it. The cyclical structure of the novella confirms this attachment when that grape vine Umm Saad has planted for the narrator towards the beginning of the story blooms at the end. The novella begins with Umm Saad carrying the vine twig (11) and ends with that same twig sprouting (75), which corresponds to the endurance of the abiding earth and enacts the rebirth archetype. Unlike the pessimistic end of *Men in the Sun* (death in a desert dump), this novella ends with a hopeful note in line with its engagement with the mother archetype. Both Umm Saad and the blooming vine embody rebirth and regeneration, and thus transformation from defeat/death to triumph/life. In this regard, Annis Pratt’s comment that archetypes are “fluid and dynamic, empowering women’s personalities to grow and develop” (1981, 135) acquires more prominence against different layers of oppression, colonial, patriarchal, ethnic, and otherwise.
Kanafani’s achievement has been bridging the gap between two sides of the mother archetype, the personal mother and the figurative earth mother, to serve a political end. He used the mother archetype to argue against occupation because this archetypal treatment gave his fiction a universal value and yet more legitimacy and immediacy. He depicted the land as the essence of man’s psyche, which makes his denunciation of Israeli politics and Zionist occupation more radical. Using such a primal archetype, Kanafani ensured a wider appeal to his audience and more readership, giving the Palestinian issue a global dimension and thus selling a political message about the indivisible nature of connection between (wo)man and the land. The story of this connection can be summed up in the given name “Palestine” many Palestinians and Arabs assign to their daughters in reminiscence of the land of Palestine. If Kanafani (consciously or unconsciously) employed one of the projections of archetypes in the mother archetype, he actualized this archetype, making it down-to-earth and giving it overt political weight.

الأرض الأم: قراءة نمطية ما بعد كولونيالية لرواية أم كنفاني (أم سعد)

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الملخص

يستقصي هذا البحث، باستخدام التداخل بين النقد النمطي وما بعد الكولونيالي، دور المرأة في أدب المقاومة من خلال تحليل أحد النصوص من الأدب العربي، وتحديدا رواية أم كنفاني (أم سعد) (1971)، وتجسد هذه الرواية السياسة المتعلقة بملكية الأرض والصراع العربي الصهيوني عليها، ومن ثم الصورة النمطية للمرأة في الأدب السياسي. وتمثل الرواية الكفاح الفلسطيني لاستعادة هذه الأرض ومقاومة المغتصب. وتمثل أم سعد المرأة الفلاحية الفقيرة التي عانت التشرد بفعل خسارة الأرض، والتي تجسد قيم المقاومة والتعلق بالأرض. وتعكس أم سعد الصورة النمطية للأرض الأم والأم الأرض وتتقمص صفات أسطورية تمكنها من تجسيد هذه المقاربة ورسالة ضد الاستيلاء على هذه الأرض. كما تتمثل أم سعد الصورة الإيجابية لملكي أمومة المرتبطة بالأرض ورعاية الأم، ولذلك، تجد أن أم سعد تجسد معنى الخشب والرعاية، وهو ما يمكن كنفاني من ترسخ رسالة سياسية ضد سياسات الاستعمار والاحتلال من خلال صورة المرأة الأم الموارية للأرض الأم، وهكذا يمتاز كنفاني فتى حس اللاوعي الجمعي المرتبطة بالاستقرار والطمأنينة، أي يوجد أساسي للمرأة والأرض في حياتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النقد النمطي، كنفاني، الأرض الأم، الأدب العربي، المابع الكولونيالي، أم سعد.
Endnotes

1 This is the author’s translation from the original Arabic edition of this study. Although the study came out in 1968, the edition used here is that of 2016.

2 Kanafani dedicates this book to Umm Saad who, he asserts in the introduction to this novella, is a real woman he knew and learned from, and even a relation to him (7). He concedes that she is still a type, a representative of a whole class of militant and hard-working poor class (8).

3 The critical attention this novel has received in English is scanty. As for Jungian interpretations of Kanafani’s works, a single study by Ahmad Harb (2004) was conducted on another novel, a Jungian analysis of Kanafani’s All That’s Left To You in terms of themes like death, rebirth, and search journey for the lost “mother.” See References for a full entry.

4 This and all subsequent quotes from the novella are the author’s translation from the original Arabic text.

References


The "Motherland": An Archetypal and Postcolonial Reading of Ghassan Kanafani's *Umm Saad*


