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From Page to Screen: Storytelling and the Transformation of Palestinian Narratives of Exile in Tewfik Saleh's *The Dupes* and Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*

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Dedication

To the soul of my father, may Allah grant you Jannah and eternal peace.

Aya Hibat EL Khalek

Dedication

To my father Abd Elaziz .

To my mother Meriem.

To my brothers karim& Yamen.

To my sisters Sara,Hiba&Lamisse.

To my best friend Ismaha

Rayan

Abstract

This dissertation examines the narrative transformation and political implications of *The Dupes* (1972),directed by Tewfik Saleh, a cinematic adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's pivotal novella *Men in the Sun* (1963). The study examines the interplay between literature and cinema, investigating how adaptation transforms the original text's themes of exile, displacement, and resistance into a visual format. The dissertation does soby conducting a comparative analysis of narrative structure, character development, and formal techniques such as montage, symbolism, and mise-en-scène.It highlights how inner psychological states in the novella are externalized in the film. The dissertation situates both the novella and the film within the historical and political context of the Nakba and the broader Palestinian struggle, drawing on adaptation theory, narratology, and cultural memory studies. The dissertation also demonstrates that *TheDupes* serves as a manifestation of cinematic resistance, preserving collective memory and amplifying the Palestinian narrative within both Arab and global cinema. The analysis shows that film adaptation functions as an artistic reinterpretation and also as a medium of considerable political significance for the preservation of culture and the practice of ethical witnessing.

Keywords: Adaptation; Narrative structure; Visual storytelling; Palestinian cinema; Resistance; Displacement; Cultural memory; Nakba; Ghassan Kanafani; Tewfik Saleh

Résumé

Cette dissertation examine l'évolution narrative et les implications politiques du film *Les Dupes* (1972)réalisé par Tewfik Saleh, une adaptation cinématographique de la novella majeure de Ghassan Kanafani, *Des hommes dans le soleil* (1963). L'étude examine l'interaction entre la littérature et le cinéma, en explorant comment l'adaptation transforme les thèmes d'exil, de déplacement et de résistance du texte original en une forme visuelle. La recherche effectue une analyse comparative de la structure narrative, du développement des personnages, ainsi que des techniques formelles telles que le montage, le symbolisme et la mise en scène.Elle met en lumière la manière dont les états psychologiques internes de la novelle sont extériorisés dans le film.La thèse place la novelle et le film dans le contexte historique et politique de la Nakba et de la lutte palestinienne, en utilisant des concepts de la théorie de l'adaptation, de la narratologie et des études sur la mémoire culturelle. La thèse démontre également que *Les Dupes* est un exemple de résistance au cinéma. Il garde vivante la mémoire collective et montre l'histoire palestinienne dans le cinéma arabe et dans le monde entier.L'analyse montre que l'adaptation cinématographique est à la fois une réinterprétation artistique et un moyen important sur le plan politique pour préserver la culture et témoigner de manière éthique.

Mots clés : Adaptation, Structure narrative, Narration visuelle, Cinéma palestinien, Résistance, Déplacement, Mémoire culturelle, Nakba, Ghassan Kanafani, Tewfik Saleh

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث التطور السردي والبعد السياسي في فيلم المخدوعون(1972)، وهو اقتباس سينمائي للرواية المحورية رجال في الشمس (1963)للكاتب الفلسطيني غسان كنفاني. تركز الدراسة على العلاقة التبادلية بين الأدب والسينما، موضحةً كيف يعمل الاقتباس السينمائي على تحويل موضوعات النص الأصلي المتعلقة بالمنفى، والتهجير، والمقاومة، إلى

لغة بصريةيعتمد البحث على تحليل مقارن للبنية السردية، وتطور الشخصيات، والتقنيات الشكلية مثل المونتاج، والرمزية، وتنظيم المشهد (الميزانسين). كما يضع كلًا من الرواية والفيلم في سياقهما التاريخي والسياسي، خلال فترة النكبة والنضال الفلسطيني الأوسع، مستعينًا بنظرية الاقتباس، وعلم السرد، ودراسات الذاكرة الثقافيةيسلط البحث الضوء على كيفية تحويل الحالات النفسية الداخلية في الرواية إلى تعبيرات خارجية في الفيلم. يبين هذا البحث أن فيلم المخدوعون يمثل تجسيدًا

للمقاومة السينمائية، إذ يسهم في الحفاظ على الذاكرة الجماعية، ويعزز السرد الفلسطيني داخل السينما العربية والعالمية

على حد سواء.يظهر التحليل أن الاقتباس السينمائي لا يعمل فقط كإعادة تفسير فنية، بل يعد أيضًا وسيلة ذات أهمية سياسية

كبيرة، للحفاظ على الثقافة وممارسة الشهادة الأخلاقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الاقتباس ، البنية السردية، السرد البصري، السينما الفلسطينية، المقاومة، التهجير، الذاكرة الثقافية، النكبة، غسان كنفاني، توفيق صالح

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Introduction

In the vast landscape of world literature and political cinema, the Palestinian narrative remains one of the most marginalized and misrepresented, particularly in the context of the Nakba and the mass displacement of Palestinians in 1948. The Palestinian story was born from colonization, occupation, and dispossession. The literary and cinematic works emerging from this context serve as narratives of survival and mourning, and as active forms of political resistance. Central to this study is *Men in the Sun* (1963), Ghassan Kanafani's seminal novella that recounts the devastating journey of three Palestinian refugees, and its 1972 film adaptation, *The Dupes*, directed by Tawfiq Saleh. Both texts are foundational in articulating the trauma of exile and the silenced suffering of the Palestinian people.

The present dissertation explores how the transformation of *Men in the Sun* into *The Dupes* visually reconstructs and expands the novella's core themes of displacement, betrayal, and failed resistance. It argues that the film adaptation preserves the political allegory of the original text and reinterprets it through visual techniques. This preservation activates collective memory and mobilizes a cinematic language of resistance. The central research objective is to examine the aesthetic, symbolic, and ideological strategies employed in this adaptation,how they contribute to the representation of Palestinian trauma in visual culture. Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* (1963) is set in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba. The novella follows the journey of three Palestinian refugees: Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan, who attempt to escape their conditions of exile by traveling to Kuwait in search of work. They enlist the help of a smuggler, Abul Khaizuran, who hides them in the tank of a water truck to bypass border controls. Despite reaching the border, bureaucratic delays cause the smuggler to take too long, and the men silently die in the heat. Kanafani himself was not only a writer but also a journalist, political thinker, and member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. His works highlight themes of exile, betrayal, resistance, and the fragmentation of

Palestinian identity. Using both prose and symbolic storytelling, Kanafani delivers a powerful meditation on the price of survival under colonial and regional abandonment.

In 1972, Egyptian director Tawfiq Saleh adapted Kanafani's novella into the film *The Dupes* (*Al-Makhdu'un*), which has since become a landmark of Arab political cinema. Shot in black and white, the film retains the core storyline but visually amplifies the characters' suffering through stark desert imagery, oppressive mise-en-scène, and minimal dialogue. As we shall discover in detail in this dissertation, Saleh transforms internal psychological monologues into external cinematic symbols, focusing on facial expressions, silence, and spatial confinement to represent despair and dehumanization.

In a 1976 interview conducted by Guy Hennebelle and Khemaïs Khayati, published in their book *Palestine and Cinema* (original French title: *La Palestine et le cinéma*), Egyptian filmmaker Tewfiq Saleh reflects on the making and meaning of his 1972 film *The Dupes*. The interview offers rare insight into Saleh's cinematic philosophy, his political perspective, and his interpretation of Palestinian suffering under Arab regimes. It explores his decision to emphasize realism, allegory, and emotional impact over heroic narratives. In this conversation Saleh describes *The Dupes* not as a mobilizing film in the traditional revolutionary sense but as a "revealing" film intended to provoke awareness and political consciousness through the honest portrayal of oppression.

From the start, Saleh positions himself as a politically committed filmmaker within a censorial environment. His work is framed by the urgent realities of the post-Nakba Arab world, including the failures of Arab regimes to support the Palestinian cause, the fragmentation of pan-Arab identity. He emphasized that *The Dupes* was never intended to be a heroic or mobilizing film in the traditional revolutionary sense:

> As I [Saleh] mentioned earlier, there was a positive hero in 'Les Dupes': Selim. But he is killed very quickly, just as the Palestinian resistance was suppressed for a long time

before being reborn in 1965. I am not radically against having a positive hero in a film. But it is true that I don't particularly like this type of character. (140)

What distinguishes this study from existing scholarship is its dual focus on intermedial adaptation and construction of cultural memory. Kanafani's novella has been widely studied in postcolonial and resistance literature. The tragic death of the three Palestinian protagonists inside a sealed water tanker has been interpreted by critics as a powerful metaphor for political and existential suffocation. In her study, Jeyasiba Ponmani Sami asserts that Kanafani's narrative represents "the collective representation of various sad realities with the refugees across the world and their migration experiences" (127). This chilling outcome, as the study notes, critiques not only the material risks of migration but also "the risk and uncertainty that accompanies the infrastructure where the oil resources occupy the center" (130).

Saleh's film is recognized within Arab political cinema, but few studies offer a sustained comparative analysis of the two works as interlinked narratives within the Palestinian cultural archive. This dissertation fills that gap by analyzing the film not as a derivative of the novella, but as a creative re-visioning that recontextualizes narrative and symbolic elements through visual storytelling.

To conduct this analysis, this dissertation draws on an interdisciplinary methodological framework, combining adaptation theory, narratology, and cultural memory studies, alongside postcolonial perspectives that contextualize the Nakba within larger structures of violence, imperialism, and displacement. Scholarly discourse on Ghassan Kanafani and Tawfiq Saleh has increasingly highlighted the intersection of literature and film as a vital space for articulating Palestinian trauma and resistance. Mourad Marrah emphasizes that "Kanafani's narratives are more than mere stories,they are political testimonies that reflect the existential struggle of the Palestinian people" (Marrah 695). His novel *Men in the*

Sun becomes a foundational text in Palestinian literary realism, where the desert symbolizes exile and death, and silence represents collective submission. Tawfiq Saleh's film adaptation, *The Dupes*, extends these themes visually, transforming internal monologue into powerful cinematic metaphors such as the sun and fire while altering narrative ambiguity for political assertion. Joseph Massad, in *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*, situates these cultural productions within a broader critique of colonial modernity, arguing that Palestinian narratives "must be read through their dialectical relation to Zionism, Arab nationalism, and European colonialism" (Massad 2). This dissertation builds on and complements these studies by examining not just how Kanafani's narrative is transformed by Saleh, but how the medium shift from novel to film allows Palestinian cinema to become an oppositional archive. In doing so, it attempts contribute to closing the gap in adaptation theory that often neglects the geopolitical stakes of Arab and Palestinian film adaptations.

The adaptation of a literary text into film requires a different approach from mere reading of text. This is not a transfer but a transformation process that balances the original with the peculiar demands of the cinematic medium. According to Leitch, adaptation needs to be theorized as transformation, not reproduction, wherein both the medium of film and the source material interact in such a way as to create something new. Adaptations fill in the gap between literature and film and introduce literature to an audience that may not have otherwise been reached. Leitch discusses various theories in film adaptation, basing his arguments on various theorists such as Wagner, Andrew, and Genette who categorize the various ways in which works of literature are adapted into film. Leitch takes these ideas and uses them to examine how the film versions of a story can be either faithful or unfaithful to the original text. Adaptation of literature, especially when it comes to sensitive political and social issues, acts like a sort of reinterpretation both from the vision of the filmmaker himself and also from the cultural ambiance in which it was produced. According to Hutcheon,

adaptation might be considered a form of cultural memory that allows for the evolution or gaining of new audiences. *Men in the Sun* was not just an adaptation of the story provided by Kanafani but rather one that reinvented it with a re-exploration of the Palestinian refugee condition within a cinematic context. The film *The Dupes* maintains much of the original narrative's spirit, but also introduces changes to the plot and characterization to suit the cinematic medium. In most cases, the translation from text to screen results in the removal or change of certain narrative aspects. Filmic depictions of space, time, and social setting are largely dissimilar to those that occur in literature. *Men in the Sun* and its filmic adaptation is an example, as the desolate landscape in the film, for instance, is a metaphor for the despair inside the characters. Although powerful visually, the film lacks the introspective narrative given by Kanafani in the novel.

This study adopts a comparative and interdisciplinary methodology to examine the transformation of *Men in the Sun* into *The Dupes*, focusing on how the adaptation mediates trauma, memory, and resistance through distinct narrative and aesthetic strategies. The core objective is not to assess the film's fidelity to the original text, but rather to investigate how the novella's themes are reimagined in cinematic terms, and how those reimagining reflect and reshape collective memory. Close textual analysis of selected passages from the novella to identify key themes and symbolic motifs will be attempted. Formal film analysis of corresponding scenes in *The Dupes*, focusing on camera angles, mise-en-scène, sound design, lighting, and editing will be also attempted, offering a comparative reading of narrative structure, character representation, and symbolic transformation between the two mediums. By combining these methods, the dissertation seeks to uncover how cinema not only translates but also transforms literary resistance into a visceral and multisensory experience that speaks to broader Arab and global audiences.

This study is significant on multiple levels: academic, cultural, and political. It

contributes to the growing field of adaptation studies, but it does so from a uniquely Palestinian and postcolonial perspective, foregrounding the transformative power of cinema in contexts of displacement, occupation, and historical erasure. While adaptation is often studied through questions of fidelity and artistic merit, this dissertation reorients the discussion toward cinema as a site of memory-making and political resistance. This dissertation also expands on existing scholarship by positioning adaptation as a political and aesthetic intervention, particularly in postcolonial and Arab intellectual contexts. It shows how visual storytelling engages the senses not just the intellect, and thereby evokes emotional responses that literature alone may not. In highlighting the cinematic strategies that "show rather than tell" (through silence, framing, mise-en-scène, and montage), this study emphasizes the embodied nature of memory in film. Furthermore, the research explores how intellectual resistance operates within artistic production. Both Ghassan Kanafani and Tawfiq Saleh represent a generation of Arab intellectuals who refused to separate politics from aesthetics. Their works exemplify how storytelling, whether textual or visual, can challenge dominant narratives and offer counter-histories. Therefore, this study aligns with a tradition of engaged literature and political cinema that insists on telling the truth of marginalized peoples.

This dissertation is structured into three chapters. Chapter One establishes the theoretical and historical framework, drawing on adaptation theory, narratology, and cultural memory studies to contextualize both the novella and the film. It also introduces Ghassan Kanafani's literary contribution and Tawfiq Saleh's cinematic vision, incorporating reflections from Saleh's 1976 interview to highlight his political and artistic strategies. Chapter Two presents a comparative analysis of *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes*, focusing on how narrative structure, character development, and symbolic imagery are transformed in the adaptation process. Special attention is given to the shift from textual introspection to visual expression, and how the film externalizes psychological suffering. Chapter Three explores the

political and ethical implications of visual storytelling in The Dupes, analyzing its role in preserving collective memory, provoking emotional response, and offering a cinematic form of resistance. The dissertation concludes by positioning both works within the broader discourse of resistance literature and political cinema.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. Chapter One provides the theoretical and contextual framework, focusing on adaptation theory, narrative structures, and the challenges of visualizing inner narratives. It also situates *Men in the Sun* within Nakba literature, highlighting Ghassan Kanafani's contributions and the broader political and cultural landscape of Palestinian and Arab cinema. Chapter Two offers a comparative analysis of *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes*, examining how narrative and character are transformed through cinematic techniques such as flashbacks, montage, and visual symbolism. Particular emphasis is placed on thematic shifts and the emotional resonance of key scenes like the soil burial and the infamous question, "Why didn't you knock? " Chapter Three explores how *The Dupes* functions as a vehicle of cultural preservation and political resistance. It assesses the film's reception in Arab and international contexts, the role of film festivals in amplifying Palestinian voices, and the emotional impact on diaspora audiences. Through this structure, the dissertation endeavors to analyze how adaptation becomes a space for narrative transformation, ethical witnessing, and collective memory.

In sum, this dissertation investigates how *Men in the Sun* and its cinematic adaptation *The Dupes* function not only as narrative texts but as cultural acts of resistance and remembrance. By analyzing the transformation of Kanafani's literary symbols into Saleh's visual language, the study highlights how adaptation can preserve historical trauma while reactivating it for new audiences and mediums. Through an interdisciplinary framework that combines adaptation theory, narratology, and cultural memory studies, this research positions both works within the larger context of Palestinian intellectual resistance and world literature.

As Palestinian narratives continue to be marginalized, retelling and reinterpreting stories like *Men in the Sun* becomes not just a literary or cinematic task, but a political and ethical imperative. The chapters that follow will explore how literature and film, each in their own way, bear witness to the Palestinian condition and contribute to the ongoing struggle against historical erasure.

While existing scholarship has given considerable attention to the political implications of Kanafani's work, there remains a gap in comparative studies that examine the narrative, symbolic, and sensory strategies employed in *Men in the Sun* in relation to *The Dupe*s. This dissertation seeks to address this gap by analyzing the layered narrative structures, character trajectories, and aesthetic choices across both works. In doing so, it situates these narratives within the framework of resistance literature and also within global discourses of adaptation, trauma, and memory central in postcolonial world literature and cinema.

Chapter One:

Theoretical and Contextual Framework

This chapter attempts to establish the foundational concepts and contextual background essential for understanding the connection between literature and cinema, particularly in relation to the representation of historical and cultural experiences. It begins by exploring key theoretical perspectives on adaptation, examining how literary works are transformed into cinematic narratives, and the inherent challenges in visualizing internal and complex storytelling. The chapter then shifts focus to the broader historical and cultural contexts, addressing the Nakba and its literary representation. It also highlights the emergence of Nakba literature and the significant contributions of Ghassan Kanafani alongside the political and historical relevance of *Men in the Sun* within the Palestinian context. Finally, the chapter considers the development of Palestinian cinema and its platforms for cultural expression and memory, setting the stage for a deeper analysis throughout the study

1 Literature and Cinema

Cinema and literature are two intertwined mediums; as forms of narrative expression, their relationship is dynamic and reciprocal. Starting with their shared purpose of artistic expression and reflection of tangible and psychological aspects of human life, this relationship can be traced along a broad trajectory of intersections, influences, and interactions. Literature, on the one hand, provides a fertile ground for narrative material presented through the cinematic medium. However, this relationship is bidirectional; each can influence the other. Cinema's technical capacities for projecting narratives through audio-visual techniques have influenced literary practice, creating a "cinematic" effect on modern writing, which can aid in streamlining editing and facilitate the adaptation process. Crucially, the adaptation of literature into film involves interpretation and transformation of narratives rather than simple transcription. This engages filmmakers in a conflict of loyalty to the source material and the

needs of the cinematic medium, raising questions of fidelity.

1.1. Adaptation Theory: Transformation vs. Reproduction

The adaptation of literature to film is not simply a matter of transposing a story from one medium to another. It demands a profound understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the cinematic form, necessitating a process of reimagining and reshaping the narrative to effectively communicate within the constraints and expressive possibilities of film. This focus represents a narrow scope within the broader field of adaptation studies. Scholars are exploring a wide variety of adaptations across different types of media, such as television, video games, graphic novels, and transmedia storytelling. These adaptations show how stories are being reshaped and reimagined as they move from one medium to another.

It is necessary to go beyond only looking at books turned into movies and consider the border landscape of adaptation. As Linda Hutcheon argues in *A Theory of Adaptation*, "we often take adaptations for granted, assuming they are simple and straightforward transfers of a story from one format to another. But this is a misconception" (xiv). The adaptation of a literary text into film requires a different approach from mere reading of text. This is not a transfer but a transformation process that balances the original with the peculiar demands of the cinematic medium. Adaptation is a complex process involving interpretation, transformation, and creative choices. It is more than just a mechanical replica of the original. Whether shifting a narrative from literature to film, theater, or another medium, adaptation requires reimagining elements to align with different artistic, cultural, and technological contexts. In *Concepts in Film Theory*, Dudley Andrew points out that adaptation is a key part of filmmaking, stating that "all representational film adapts a prior conception" and that even documentaries "situate some prior whole" rather than presenting reality as it is (96). He identifies three types of adaptation: borrowing, where filmmakers use a source's cultural

value; intersecting, which keeps the original distinct by resisting full cinematic transformation; and transforming, where the source is reshaped into a fully cinematic work (98).Andrew sees adaptation as both a way of telling stories and a form of interpretation, shaped by cultural and historical contexts. He explains that "the choices of how adaptation is done and what sources it draws from reveal much about cinema's sense of its role and goals over time" (104). In this way, adaptation reflects cinema's evolving styles, beliefs, and technological progress.

Thomas Leitch argues that adapting a book into a film is not just about copying content but about reshaping the story to fit the film medium. He challenges the idea that adaptations must stay true to the original, stating that most adaptations are not fully faithful. Instead, he sees adaptation as a process that filmmakers approach in different ways, rather than something that must always strive for fidelity, "a problem variously conceived and defined by the filmmakers at hand, not as an unquestioned desideratum of all adaptations" (Leitch 127).Leitch builds upon theories from scholars such as Geoffrey Wagner, Dudley Andrew and Gerard Genette, who classify adaptations into categories such as borrowing, intersecting, and transforming (Leitch 93). He emphasizes that adaptation exists within a broader framework of intertextuality, arguing that "there is no normative model for adaptation" and that films based on literary works are best understood as new creative works rather than as mere reproductions (Leitch 151). Furthermore, Leitch highlights how adaptations serve an important role in bridging the gap between literature and film by introducing literary works to audiences who may not have otherwise engaged with them. He challenges the rigid categorization of adaptation, stating that "students of adaptation abandon their fondness for huddling on the near end of the slippery slope between adaptation and allusion, where categorical distinctions still seem seductively plausible" (Leitch 207). Overall, Leitch's perspective redefines adaptation as a dynamic process that involves negotiation

between the literary source and cinematic expression, encouraging scholars to move beyond fidelity discourse and instead focus on the creative transformations that make adaptations unique.

1.2. Narrative Structures in Literature and Film

Narrative structure is fundamental to storytelling in both literature and film, dictating how a story unfolds and how audiences experience it, and organizing events and character developments to create a cohesive and engaging experience for the audience. While structures like the three-act model are classic, non-linear, circular, and parallel narratives break away from traditional storytelling by breaking free from chronological order. A non-linear narrative jumps around in time; a circular narrative ends where it began, creating a loop; and a parallel narrative follows multiple storylines that may intersect or mirror each other, offering different perspectives or themes.

Narrative structure serves as the fundamental framework through which stories are constructed and conveyed in both literature and film. Despite their shared goal of storytelling, literature and film employ distinct narrative mechanisms shaped by their respective mediums. In literary theory, narratology has been essential in narrative structures, especially in terms of differentiating between story and discourse. The first is the chronological sequence of events, and the second is the way these events are presented. This highlights the flexibility authors have in manipulating narrative time, such as through flashbacks or non-linear arrangements. Gérard Genette further refines this by introducing concepts like “localization,” which is about whose perspective the story is told from and narrative levels, distinguishing between the act of telling and the narrated content: "Story and narrating thus exist for me only by means of the intermediary of the narrative. But reciprocally the narrative (the narrated discourse) can only be such to the extent that it tells a story... and to the extent that it is uttered by someone, without which... it would not in itself be a discourse." (Genette 29).

Structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss analyzes narratives as systems of functions and oppositions, revealing the underlying mythic patterns and binaries that shape story development “If there is a meaning to be found in mythology, this cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined” (Lévi-Strauss 131). Lévi-Strauss shifts focus to the deep structure of narrative content. His contribution lies in revealing that narratives, especially myths, are built around recurring binary oppositions and relational patterns, not just linear plot progression. These theoretical tools allow for deep exploration of narrative complexity, especially regarding internal character psychology, unreliable narration, and intricate temporal structures.

1.3. Challenges in Visualizing Inner Narratives

Inner narratives in films are the ultimate challenge for filmmakers. Their visualization through the camera is a problem that needs adaptive solutions since transcribing the characters' thoughts, feelings, and memories from the written medium of literary sources to the cinema's visual one is a long-term process. Visualizing inner narratives is more about creating new ways of representing thoughts, feelings, memories and experiences, instead of those used in the literary form. Many challenges are faced, and subjectivity is one of them. Filmmakers rely on the external representation of the internal states of the characters through the use, for instance, of stream of consciousness. The challenge is faced while transposing the inner narratives into the cinematic world. "Showing not telling" is a cinematic property that engages filmmakers with this problem more and more. The internal state in the written medium should be represented through the visual and auditory aspects of cinema, to shorten the gap between the written and visual version of a work. The original material will be shared by the filmmaker's perspective and ways of reception. Several cinematic techniques help convey a character's inner world: Voice-over narration and direct interaction to the inner voice of

characters (monologues);facial expressions and body language summary along blocks of written material intrusions and facial expressions; *mise-en-scène* presenting the character's inner state through a combination of cinematic elements; subconscious representations through dream sequences and memories recalled; and symbolic imagery and music creating a new realm for characters, ameliorating the audience's experience through the five senses.

1.4. Film Adaptation and Cultural Memory

Film adaptation and cultural memory are two related notions, since film adaptation plays a role in the preserving of the cultural memory of a given nation or a historical event. In this respect, adaptation is not a mere translation of the original material but it engages with the construction, preservation and transformation of cultural memory. By influencing the way cultural stories and historical events are told and transmitted to the contemporary audience, film adaptation is actively or passively affecting cultural memory: first of all, adaptations are considered one of the strongest tools used to shape and reinforce cultural memory; the visualization and new interpretations of the cultural sources influence and direct the way audience will remember these literary works and historical events, ensuring these events serve a tool of communication with the collective consciousness of a whole social and political context. Adaptations represent values, ideas and expectations of that time's cultural and social context. Film adaptation of a classical literary work can hold different perspectives of the story depending on the cultural and social context of its producers and audience. As a result, the original text or event's understanding and remembering by a given cultural context can be different based on the cultural political and social background. Another aspect that film adaptation can also impact cultural memory is the use of a fictional visualized world to approach the public consciousness of a given social and cultural context. The cinematic presentations of characters and scenes often shape how audiences interpret and remember the original text or event. Since adaptations are not mere reproductions of the original text, they

might involve omissions, additions and change in order of events to adapt to cinema's needs and norms; these changes can affect how the work would be interpreted and remembered. For instance, the addition of a secondary romantic storyline to the basic historical text adaptation will shift the focus from the political and historical events interpreted by the mind of the audience to the emotional interpretation of a love story, which makes adaptation an active tool in the preservation of cultural memory. Adaptation serves to plays a monumental role for lost, marginalized and forgotten cultural memories and artifacts; it can contribute to the restoration of the collective cultural memory of a given nation by challenging dominant narratives such as the colonial and the racist discourses through its visual cinematic techniques. Film adaptations can preserve cultural memory and influence the way in which this memory will be interpreted, becoming a vital tool in the formation and transmission of the cultural memory.

2 Historical and Cultural Context

2.1 The Nakba and Its Representation in Literature

The Nakba is not just a historical event; it is an ongoing reality for Palestinians. Millions of refugees and their descendants still live in exile, in many refugee camps across Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza . As Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod explain, *"the Nakba is not over yet; after almost sixty years neither the Palestinians nor Israelis have yet achieved a state of normality; the violence and uprooting of Palestinians continues"* (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod11). Israeli occupation, settlement expansion, and military control continue to displace Palestinians, making the Nakba an enduring trauma. The Nakba is the experience that has perhaps most defined Palestinian history. For the Palestinian, it is not merely a political event; the Nakba is of existential significance to Palestinians, representing both the shattering of the Palestinian community in Palestine and the consolidation of a shared national consciousness" (Masalha 13).

The Nakba refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians in 1948,

following the establishment of the Zionist entity. More than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or forced to flee from their homes, and hundreds of Palestinian villages were destroyed. The Nakba was not just a moment of political upheaval but a profound rupture in Palestinian history, leading to the fragmentation of Palestinian society and the loss of a homeland. The Nakba is a defining event in Palestinian identity, history, and collective memory.

The Nakba resulted from a combination of British colonial policies, Zionist settler-colonialism, and violent displacement. The 1947 UN Partition Plan proposed dividing Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, but Zionist militias launched military operations to expand beyond the proposed borders, leading to the destruction of Palestinian villages and mass expulsions. When the Zionist entity declared what it called“independence” in May 1948, Palestinian society was already in ruins, with thousands displaced or killed. Nakba Day (May 15th) is a day of mourning and remembrance for Palestinians, marking the anniversary of their mass displacement in 1948. Land Day (March 30th) commemorates protests against Israeli land confiscations in 1976. Over the decades, both Nakba Day and Land Day have become central to Palestinian collective memory, symbolizing resistance against dispossession and erasure. Nur Masalha remarks that “the Nakba day on 15 May and the Land Day on 30 March are key dates on the calendar of anniversaries not just for the Palestinians inside Israel but for those throughout historic Palestine” (242). He also points out that Nakba Day has been commemorated more widely in recent decades compared to the previous four decades, despite Israeli suppression (242). These acts of remembrance challenge the hegemonic Zionist narrative, which seeks to erase Palestinian history, and instead reclaim Palestinian identity, struggle, and resilience.

One of the most fundamental demands of Palestinian resistance is the right of return for the millions of refugees who were expelled in 1948 and 1967 .“Israel” firmly rejects this

demand, fearing that a return of Palestinian refugees would change the country's demographics and challenge its identity as a Jewish state . Masalha argues that the denial of the right of return is a form of continued Nakba, as it maintains Palestinians in a state of statelessness, exile, and dispossession. He further states: "The implementation of the 'right of return' would both undermine the Zionist project and transform Israel into a 'bi-national state'... Zionist Israelis do not want the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees, who would question the colonial nature of Israeli society" (250).

Resistance literature plays a crucial role in preserving Palestinian history and asserting national identity. It is essential in times of occupation, displacement, and erasure. In this respect, writers like Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish have captured the Palestinian experience. Their works tell stories of exile, loss, and resistance. Through novels, short stories, and poetry, they challenge efforts to erase Palestinian history. Resistance literature actively challenges political oppression and colonial narratives. It goes beyond documenting history and identity. Palestinian literature defies the silencing of Palestinian voices by offering alternative perspectives, exposing injustice, and fostering solidarity. It often blends personal stories with political critique, portraying the lived experiences of occupation, siege, and, and exile. Authors like Susan Abulhawa and Elias Khoury continue this tradition in contemporary literature, keeping the Palestinian struggle alive in global consciousness

The Emergence of Nakba Literature (Resistance Literature)

The term "resistance literature" (*Adab al-Muqawamah*) was first used by Ghassan Kanafani while speaking of Palestinian literature. He identified themes of resistance in various Palestinian works, linking their narratives to the broader Palestinian fight against oppression Palestinian. In *Palestinian Resistance: Literature under Occupation 1948-1968*(1972) (*al-Adab al-Filastini al-MuqawimTahta al-Ihtilal: 1948-1968*), Kanafani established the foundational principles of resistance literature by outlining its significance as a

cultural and political tool against occupation. Palestinian literature emerges from a long history of political and cultural struggle against foreign imperialist forces. It remains deeply rooted in nationalism, striving to reclaim and reaffirm the Palestinian identity.

In his book *Reflections on Exile*, Edward said notes that after 1967, there was an emergence in Palestinian literature, including works by Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, and Fadwa Touqan. In a curious way, therefore, the rise in prominence of Palestinian writers "after 1967 (Mahmoud Darwish, Samih el-Kassem, Kanafani, Fadwa Touqan, and others) [is] a tendency which accompanied the enormous dissemination of political interest in specifically Palestinian activity" (Said 77). This period marked an increased focus on Palestinian identity in literary expression. Resistance literature is tied up to national identity and the liberation struggle. The 1948 establishment of "Israel" caused a profound transformation in Palestinian writing driven by the dramatic demographic and social shifts. Kanafani states that "The fall of Palestine to the Zionists in 1948 led to a disastrous change both in the number and the social structure of the Arab population in occupied Palestine". (3). While exile literature expresses sorrow and nostalgia, resistance literature actively opposes oppression. Kanafani argues that literature under occupation is not passive but a form of defiance. He states: "Resistance was not an easy choice; it was rather a daily battle with a ferocious enemy who considered it a question of life and death."Kanafani argues that literature under occupation is not passive but a form of defiance. And as the measures of persecution became fiercer, resistance consolidated" (Kanafani *Resistance*7). This perspective shows that resistance literature is a response to oppression and a way to strengthen the struggle. Moreover, resistance literature developed beyond traditional forms, capturing the fragmented and traumatic realities of Palestinian life. Kanafani notes in this respect: "Resistance poetry did not only witness a change in purport and poetic effect but also in form and technique. It rejected the traditional poetic forms and adopted modern techniques without losing force." (*Resistance* 7). This

flexibility shows that resistance literature is not fixed but evolves alongside the Palestinian struggle for liberation

Kanafani's Contributions to Nakba Literature.

Ghassan Kanafani (1936–1972) was a Palestinian writer, journalist, and political activist. He was born in Acre, Palestine, but his family was forced to flee during the Nakba in 1948. They lived in Lebanon and later in Syria. His experience of exile influenced his writing. His most famous book, *Men in the Sun* (1963), tells the story of Palestinian refugees who die in a tanker while trying to find work. Other well-known works include *Return to Haifa* (1970) and *All That's Left to You* (1966). He was also a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Kanafani used his writing to speak about Palestinian struggles. On July 8, 1972, he was killed by a car bomb in Beirut. The attack was carried out by Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. Even after his death, his books remain important. His work continues to inspire people around the world. Ghassan Kanafani saw the writer as a committed intellectual whose role was inseparable from the liberation struggle. Roger Allen in *The Arabic Novel* states: "No modern Arab novelist has been able to project the tragedy of the Palestinian people in fiction with greater impact than Ghassan Kanafani" (147). Ghassan Kanafani played a crucial role in shaping and defining Nakba literature through his exploration of themes of displacement, resistance, and political consciousness. Ghassan Kanafani did not just write stories. He wrote *the* Palestinian story. And that story is still being told today:"Kanafani's unconditional commitment to the survival of the Palestinian people and his tremendous journalistic and literary output made it possible for him not just to write stories, but to write the Palestinian story, made it possible for that story to continue to be written, and lived, today" (Roger 10–11).Kanafani's commitment to the Palestinian cause was not limited to fiction—his work as a journalist, political thinker, and activist made his literary contributions part of a larger movement of resistance and remembrance. He was more than a

novelist. He was a journalist, a revolutionary: a voice that could not be ignored. His words were dangerous, and so was he. Through *Al-Hadaf*[12], he exposed truths that many sought to suppress, refusing to let silence bury the Palestinian struggle. But in 1972, they came for him. A car bomb ended his life, a brutal attempt to erase not just the man, but the power of his voice. Yet his words remain. They endure, carrying the weight of history, resistance, and an unbroken will. As Riley observed, Kanafani did not just write about Palestine—he ensured that Palestine would continue to write itself. Kanafani defined resistance literature as fighting on two fronts: raising awareness and countering Zionist narratives. He argued that Palestinian poetry "a deep awareness of the dimension of the battle in whose depth it has found itself, and for this reason, it has avoided the relapses into romanticism that most Arab poetry has witnessed in these times" (161). His studies, and especially *Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine* (1966), emphasized how literature serves as a tool for national and cultural resistance.

Ghassan Kanafani played a crucial role in breaking the "cultural embargo" (*Ḥassan Kana*) that Palestinians in "Israel" faced. Due to Israeli censorship and political restrictions, Palestinian writers within "Israel" were cut off from broader Arab literary developments, and their works were often inaccessible to Arab audiences. Kanafani, both as a writer and as an editor of *al-Adab* and *al-Hadaf*, actively worked to bridge this gap, as his"literature has remained unknown to us during these long years of Diaspora, even though it is the most brilliant aspect of the [Palestinian] struggle" (142).He introduced and championed the poetry of figures such as Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, and Tawfiq Zayyad, whose works resonated deeply with themes of resistance, exile, and national identity. These poets, who were living under Israeli rule, wrote poetry as a form of political defiance, articulating the

[2]*Al-Hadaf* was a Palestinian political and cultural magazine founded in 1969 as the official publication of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Under the editorship of Ghassan Kanafani, it became a key platform for revolutionary thought, resistance literature, and the intersection of politics and culture in the Palestinian struggle.

pain of displacement and the longing for liberation. Kanafani's efforts ensured that their voices were heard beyond Israel's imposed barriers, situating them within the larger Arab literary and political discourse on resistance and decolonization. His advocacy not only elevated these poets but also reinforced the idea that literature was an essential weapon in the Palestinian struggle, a means of preserving identity and history in the face of systematic erasure. Through his work, Kanafani helped redefine Palestinian literature as a crucial element of the broader Arab cultural and revolutionary movements.

Kanafani's formal innovations were seen as a response to the Palestinian condition. The lack of a stable homeland translates into a lack of stable narrative structures. Unlike traditional European novels, which offer closure and resolution, Kanafani's works remain open-ended, unresolved, and unsettling, just like the Palestinian struggle itself. In this regard, Edward Said writes:

> Kanafani's story of Palestinian loss and death is undermined as a narrative by the novel's peculiarly disintegrating prose, in which within a group of two or three sentences time and place are in such an unrelenting state of flux that the reader is never absolutely certain where and when the story is taking place. In his most complex long narrative *Ma Tabaqqa Lakum* (*What Is Left for You*, 1966), this technique is taken to such an extreme that even in one short paragraph multiple narrators speak without, so far as the reader is concerned, adequate markers, distinctions, delimitations(310).

Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* is a powerful novella about three Palestinian refugees trying to reach Kuwait from Basra. Their journey, marked by loss and desperation after the 1948 Nakba, ends in tragedy when they die of asphyxiation in a water truck at the border. While the story reflects the Palestinian exile experience, it also resonates beyond national allegory, connecting with global immigrant literature and broader literary traditions (Said

362).

2.2 The Political and Historical Significance of *Men in the Sun* within the Palestinian Context

Men in the Sun (1963) represents a strong articulation of loss, displacement, and exile. It vividly describes the difficulties of Palestinian refugees after the 1948 Nakba. The story follows three men (Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan) each burdened by a dream, a struggle, and a desperate longing for a better life.Their goal is to escape the harsh realities of refugee camps and reach Kuwait which is a land that promises work, financial stability, and hope for the future. Through their journey from Iraq to Kuwait, Kanafani crafts a powerful metaphor for the broader Palestinian experience.It focuses on themes of exile and statelessness. The novella holds deep political and historical significance, encapsulating the enduring struggles of the Palestinian people in the wake of displacement.As one of the most influential writers of the Palestinian resistance movement, Kanafani blends political allegory with realism to critique the socio-political conditions that force Palestinians into cycles of suffering and exploitation.The novella does not merely depict individual struggles; it functions as a broader commentary on the plight of a displaced nation, addressing themes of identity, agency, and betrayal. The characters' silent deaths represent more than personal tragedies; they symbolize the collective fate of Palestinians that despite their resilience, are trapped within oppressive structures that deny them a voice and a future.

Men in the Sun is a deeply psychological and existential work, beyond its political significance. It explores masculinity, failure, and the weight of inherited trauma. Each character embodies a different generational response to exile. Abu Qais, the elderly refugee, clings to memories of his lost homeland; Assad, the middle-generation figure, is restless and desperate for change; and Marwan, the youngest, represents the continuing cycle of struggle and disillusionment. Their ultimate fate reflects not only their personal vulnerabilities but also

the crushing forces of history that dictate their lives.

Men in the Sun is novella that Kanafani also wrote to criticize the failure of the Palestinian leadership and the broader Arab world in addressing the suffering of refugees. Abul Khaizuran, for instance, the smuggler represents how Arab leaders are seen as failing to protect their people the same way the character fails to protect the refugees he transports. Abul Khaizuran's physical injury symbolizes the loss of masculinity that reflects the broader narrative of Palestinian leadership; it is a metaphor for the broader emasculation and ineffectiveness of Palestinian leadership, which leaves its people abandoned and vulnerable. As Haidar Eid states, the novel is "an attack on the corruption of the Arab regimes" that allow Palestinian refugees to "suffocate in an airless, marginal world of refugee camps" (1).

Furthermore, one of the approaches that *Men in the Sun* deals with and criticizes is the individualistic approach to survival that the protagonists take to seek personal economic security rather than collective political struggle. Their decision (Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan) to run toward Kuwait rather than return to Palestine reflects the Palestinian exile. It highlights the futility of seeking dignity outside their homeland. Their deaths in the water tank silently and unnoticed parallel the way Palestinian suffering has often been ignored on the global stage (Eid 4).The novel's famous final line "Why didn't they knock on the sides of the tank?" is not just a literal question but it has a profound political metaphor. It implies that the refugees (the Palestinian people) must resist rather than remain passive in the face of oppression (Kilpatrick 3).The historical context of *Men in the Sun* is rooted in the Palestinian diaspora highlighting the experiences of refugees who were looking for economic opportunities in Gulf states. The novel illustrates the harsh realities of this migration that Palestinians face where they get exploited, marginalized, and left without political agency.Haidar Eid describes *Men in the Sun* as "a classical Palestinian journey" that differs from traditional heroic journeys, as it is not about the search for knowledge but about the

desperate struggle for survival (2) .The journey of the protagonists from Palestine to Iraq and then to Kuwait represents different generations of Palestinian refugees and mirrors the actual migration patterns of Palestinian refugees in the 1950s and 1960s.The desert setting in the novel plays a crucial role in symbolizing both exile and a test of endurance. It reflects the suffering and alienation of Palestinians who are forced to cross it in search of a better life without knowing what it holds, only to meet a tragic fate. The suffocating heat inside the tanker ultimately kills the protagonists. It represents the oppressive conditions of exile and the political stagnation that has suffocated Palestinian aspirations (Kilpatrick 12). In addition, *Men in the Sun* challenges the Arab world's response to the Palestinian crisis. The Arab regimes in the novel are portrayed as complicit in Palestinian suffering. They failed to provide real solutions and treating refugees as a burden rather than a shared responsibility (Eid 3)

2.3 Palestinian Cinema and Film Festivals

If Palestinian literature has played a crucial role in the Palestinian struggle for liberation and cultural memory, so has Palestinian cinema. Palestinian cinema's history and development over time are rooted in the social and political evolution of Palestine. Cinema represents a form of resistance, with the characteristics of the cinematic medium showcasing the social and political lives of the Palestinians, the crimes and violations of the occupation, and the existence of national resistance. Palestinian cinema's emergence and development are mainly related to many historical factors, starting with the 1960s-1970s period, which saw the rise of nationalism. During this period, Palestinian filmmakers floated onto the scene. Then came the 1980s-1990s, when Palestinian cinema witnessed international recognition. The cinematic medium of these periods was intertwined with the Palestinian-Israel conflict, which made it politically engaged.

The origins of Palestinian cinema date back to the 1930s, with filmmaker Ibrahim Hassan Sirhan producing a short documentary in 1935 to commemorate the visit of King Ibn

Saud to Palestine. However, this early momentum was tragically disrupted by the 1948 Nakba, which led to the destruction of the cultural infrastructure, including studios and archives. This event ushered in what scholars refer to as the "Epoch of Silence," a period in which Palestinian voices were largely absent from cinema, not by choice but by geopolitical circumstance.

Most of the filmmakers, on the other hand, were exiled to different countries, challenging the geographical distance while maintaining a national commitment to the Palestinian cause while living in a divided land. Elia Suleiman is one of these filmmakers and directors, with works like *Divine Intervention* (2002) and *The Time That Remains* (2009), which describe the Palestinian fight and the Israeli occupation. His films contributed to the wave of intellectual resistance and liberalism. Another key filmmaker is Hany Abu-Assad, with his works *Paradise Now* (2005) and *Omar* (2013), which report on the long resistance journey of the Palestinians, along with the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Another important filmmaker is Mai Masri, a female contributor to Palestinian cinema. Her works represent Palestinian women and the violated minorities within Palestinian society. Palestinian cinema is mostly political in nature, dealing with themes directly related to the Palestinian struggle with the conflict. It explores not only Palestinian life but also universally shared themes, such as resistance, exile, and alienation, which are commonly depicted in the films as consequences of the occupation. It is important to note that the minimalist style with everyday figures characterizes Palestinian cinema. Michel Khleifi's contributions cannot be ignored; his works, such as *Fertile Memory* (1980), dive into the psychological and emotional experiences of the Palestinian people under occupation. Challenges faced by the filmmakers are crucially the lack of resources and the restrictions of occupation. Nevertheless, Palestinian cinema has made its place among world cinema, thanks also to the rise of digital cinema, which has made it accessible to the young generation of

Palestinian talents.

As Palestinian cinema evolved, it was shaped by collective struggle and a sense of political urgency. One of the most influential figures in this development was Tawfiq Saleh (1929–2001), a pioneering Egyptian filmmaker whose work connected Palestinian experiences with broader Arab social realities. Saleh's films are powerful early examples of how cinema can confront themes of displacement, resistance, and social injustice.

In films like *Struggle of the Heroes* (1962), *The Rebels* (1966), and especially *The Dupes (1973)*, which explores the tragedy of Palestinian displacement, Saleh used narrative as a form of political engagement. He believed cinema is not for entertainment but for provocation, reflection, and resistance. His refusal to compromise with state power or censorship makes Saleh unique. As a result, many of his projects were delayed, banned, or limited in release.

2.4 Film Festivals as Spaces of Mediation and Meaning-making

Films like Tawfik Saleh's are important because they were displayed in international film festivals, bringing wide recognition and visibility to the Palestinian experience. Film festivals are spaces of mediation where films are shaped and interpreted in real time by curators, critics, and audiences. These festivals place films within a chosen context that influence how people understand them. The way a festival plans its lineup, the themes it highlights, and the panels it hosts – all contribute to a broader ideological framework that guides the audience's interpretation of the films presented (Johnson). This kind of framing is more important when it comes to political films, where festivals end up playing the role of middleman between what the filmmaker wants to say and how audiences take it in.

As Johnson notes, festivals mediate meaning through programming choices, thematic framing, and paratextual elements such as panels or marketing materials. Yet this mediation becomes fraught in the case of Palestinian cinema, where the line between art and activism is

not only blurred but actively contested. Palestinian films, often created as acts of resistance and cultural preservation, risk being depoliticized when consumed through the humanitarian lens favored by Western festivals. This idea goes along with reception theory, where it depends on where, when, and how it's watched. So when it comes to films that deal with topics like displacement or identity, film festivals can really shape what the audience takes away from it through the way a festival frames the movie through its themes, promotional materials, or even Q&A sessions, which can really shape what the audience takes away from it. For example, *Fire at Sea* (2016) won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. It offers a poignant portrayal of the refugee crisis. Johnson (2023) examines how the festival's context influenced the narrative of the film, positioning it within a humanitarian discourse that frames the crisis as a global issue of human rights.

In conclusion, this chapter has laid a detailed theoretical foundation to better frame the discussions and analyses in the subsequent chapters. By delving into core principles of adaptation theory, narrative structure, and the challenges of translating literature to film, alongside the historical and cultural context surrounding the Nakba and its representations, we have attempted to establish a solid contextual and conceptual map. This framework is intended to enhance the understanding and incorporation of these reflections within the context of *Men in the Sun* and its cinematic adaptation.

Chapter TWO:

Comparative Analysis of Narrative Structure and Formal Techniques in *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes*

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of *Men in the Sun* and its film adaptation, *The Dupes*, focusing on how narrative structure and thematic content are handled in each medium. The chapter examines character introduction in the novella and film, focusing on Kanafani's minimalist narration and the gradual development of characters through fragmented memory and internal reflection, contrasting this with how the film uses visual storytelling, such as symbolic imagery and expressive montage, to externalize the characters' inner states. The chapter then goes on to explore how themes of exile, trauma, and loss are conveyed through cinematic techniques like flashbacks, non-linear sequencing, and repeated symbols. Special attention is given to key moments, including the soil scene and the haunting refrain "Why didn't you knock?", to show how the film reinterprets and intensifies the novella's emotional and political impact.

1. Narrative Structure and Character Development

In literature, novelists introduce well-developed characters through extensive background information, detailed exposition, and access to their internal thoughts. This allows a deeper understanding of their past inner workings and motivations taking up entire paragraphs and pages. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, Darcy is introduced through Elizabeth Bennett's perspective, narrative commentary, and societal context. In contrast, film adaptations have to introduce characters more immediately and visually. The lack of internal monologue or direct narrative commentary forces filmmakers to rely on visual elements like facial expressions, body language, and action. Filmmakers must be strategic in how they introduce character backstories relying on subtleties and symbolism to express what would take pages of

description in a novel without detailed exposition.

In *Men in the Sun*, the internal lives of the three main characters—Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan—are introduced through psychological introspection, memory, and interior monologue. Kanafani structures the story to allow readers to enter the minds of these men. Each one is presented by desperation and shaped by personal and historical trauma. Their motivations and fears are introduced gradually through flashbacks, stream-of-consciousness narration, and narrative silence, creating a sense of displacement and loss.

The 1972 film adaptation, *The Dupes*, translates this interiority into a visual and symbolic language. With no access to the character's inner thoughts, director Tewfik Saleh introduces the characters through visual context: their body language, setting, and interactions. For instance, instead of telling Marwan's family struggles through narration, the film visually captures his life in the refugee camp and his emotionally charged interactions with his family. His situation becomes real to us through what we see and feel, not what we are told. The film uses long silences, close-ups, and stark desert landscapes to emphasize isolation and hopelessness, and characters are introduced not just as individuals but as representatives of a collective Palestinian experience.

The evolution of narrative form in the adaptation is reflected in the shift of characters' portrayal from psychological realism to symbolic archetypes. In *Men in the Sun*, symbolic archetypes highlight the suffering of Palestinian refugees. For example, the water tank symbolizes false hope and hidden suffering. Through this adaptation, we see how character introduction and development transform from internal (in the novella) to external and symbolic (in film), highlighting how the medium of cinema reframes narrative perspective while preserving emotional resonance.

2. Introducing Characters: A Comparative Examination

2.1 Abu Qais

An older Palestinian refugee burdened by the memory of his lost land, Abu Qais is cautious, thoughtful, and driven by a deep desire to provide a better future for his family. His body is tired, but his soul still burns with hope and sorrow. Abu Qais is the first character introduced in the novel. He is an old, tired man who lost his home and the olive tree he once owned. Now, he lives in the refugee camps with his pregnant wife and young son. He dreams of being like those men who traveled to Kuwait and returned with money that helped them fulfill their dreams.Abu Qais's believes that *death is a mercy* compared to the suffering and humiliation of living in exile and poverty after losing Palestine. Ghassan Kanafani captures the deep despair of displacement through the narrator's reflection on Ustaz Selim's death:

> Ustaz Selim, the mercy of God be upon you. God was certainly good to you when he made you die one night before the wretched village fell into the hands of the Jews. One night only. O God, is there any divine favor greater than that? It is true that the men were too busy to bury you and honor you in your death. But all the same you stayed there. You stayed there. You saved yourself humiliation and wretchedness, and you preserved your old age from shame. (*Men* 23)

The visual adaptation replaces words with symbolic imagery. Abu Qais is introduced through a visual narrative that captures his inner uncertainty without needing dialogue. In the opening scene of the film, he appears alone, crossing a deadly desert under the harsh light of midday sun. The remains of human bones reflect at first glance the harshness of the desert nature and harsh realities of Palestinian people. The camera lingers on a low-angle shot, emphasizing the immensity of the barren landscape and the small, fragile figure making his way through it. He suddenly stops, crouching in a corner of the frame, and gently places his hand on the cracked, sun-scorched earth. A close-up leads to a flashback when he was talking about how he heard

the earth the heartbeat and soil smell that reminded him of his wife. Suddenly, the harsh sunlight brought him back to reality. This silent moment speaks volumes, symbolizing his deep-rooted attachment to his homeland and the internal conflict that comes with abandoning it. The absence of speech highlights the weight of memory and longing, allowing the audience to feel his emotional hesitation.

This image mirrors the novella's metaphor of the earth throbbing suggesting that the land itself pulses with meaning; for Abu Qais it is source of identity, history, and pain.
In the novel, Abu Qais's attachment to the land is expressed through introspection and poetic internal monologue. The narrative gives us direct access to his thoughts, particularly his memory of lying on the ground and feeling the earth "throb," a metaphor for the living, breathing presence of his homeland. His conflict is articulated verbally: we hear his fears, regrets, and emotional connection to Palestine.

2.2 Asad

A young and ambitious man in his twenties. Impulsive and restless, Asad is desperate to escape the hopelessness of the refugee camps and build a life in Kuwait. He is a political activist pursued by the authorities for his political involvement. He represents a type of Palestinian who wants to migrate for personal reasons. After building the excuse for himself that he is a revolutionary wanted by the authorities, he ultimately escapes for purely self-serving motives. In this way, he is the opposite of Abu Qais, as he actively seeks to change his situation, choosing migration to Kuwait as an alternative. He feels humiliated both in prison and in the smugglers' dent; Asad's desperate determination to escape his current condition and reach Kuwait: "Die! Who says that isn't preferable to your life at the moment? For ten years you have been hoping to return to the ten olive trees that you once owned in your village. Your village! Ha!" (27).

As’ad is introduced through a narrative and visual shift that follows Abu Qais’s moment with the smuggler. After a close-up of Abu Qais speaking with quiet hesitation to the smuggler in the office, the scene cuts abruptly to As’ad, marking a shift not in physical space but in narrative focus. The camera becomes unstable. It reflects As’ad’s unsettled mental state as he stands inside the smuggler’s dimly lit office. The lighting is high-contrast, casting sharp shadows across his face. It highlights the tension and distrust in his expression. As the smuggler mentions the word "road", a flashback is triggered, As’ad is suddenly thrown into a vivid memory of his past, when he was abandoned and deceived by another smuggler during a previous attempt to migrate. The memory is depicted through disjointed, shaky camera work, immersing the viewer in his emotional and physical vulnerability. Unlike the novel, which reveals this past through reflective narration and internal monologue, the visual storytelling externalizes his trauma, using cinematic tools to create an immediate, felt experience.
Through this visual flashback, the audience gains insight into his guarded demeanor and the weight of memory he carries into every new deal.

2.3 Marwan

The youngest of the group, Marwan represents a blend of hope and tragedy. After his father abandons the family, Marwan takes on the responsibility of supporting his mother and siblings. Despite his youth, he shows maturity and quiet strength. He was forced to leave school because he felt responsible for supporting his family. This was due to the fact that Marwan’s older brother worked in Kuwait and used to send enough money to support the family. However, after getting married in Kuwait, he stopped sending money.
Marwan is introduced in the same smuggler’s office setting, but his scene unfolds with a sharp emotional contrast. As Marwan attempts to negotiate the price with the smuggler, he shows a youthful confidence, perhaps defiance. His tone is hopeful, bordering on naive, which the smuggler finds laughable. The camera captures this power through high-contrast lighting,

throwing the smuggler's face into harsh shadow while isolating Marwan in stark light, making him appear exposed and vulnerable. The smuggler laughs cruelly, mocking his idealism. In a sudden burst of violence, the smuggler slaps Marwan. It shatters any illusion of agency, intensifying the humiliation and powerlessness Marwan experiences. This moment introduces him as the youngest and most inexperienced of the three men. The slap becomes symbolic of the world's harsh indifference to his hope. The use of the same techniques as in As'ad's scene—erratic camera, dramatic lighting, and abrupt transitions—links their stories through tone and trauma, yet distinguishes Marwan by focusing on his innocence and the loss of dignity he faces at the very start. Marwan's character gradually reveals his familial struggles and sacrifices through internal narration; the visual narrative captures this through.

2.4 Abu Khaizaran

A former Palestinian fighter turned smuggler, Abu Khaizaran lost his manhood in war. It was haunting him deeply. Though he appears confident and in control, he is also a tragic figure caught between the memory of a proud past and the moral compromises of his present life. He represents the point of hope after the despair that had overwhelmed Abu Qais and Marwan, the hope of reaching Kuwait. The character of Abu Al-Khaizuran lacks all virtuous qualities. He stands as a human model of spiritual and intellectual loss, as he became disillusioned with all values — especially after losing his masculinity due to the accident he suffered. He said:

> Shall I tell you the truth? I want more money, more money, much more. And I find it difficult to accumulate money honestly. Do you see this miserable being which is me? I have some money. In two years I'll leave everything and settle down. I want to relax, to stretch out, to rest in the shade, thinking or not thinking. I don't want to make a single movement. I've had more than enough exhaustion in my life. Yes indeed, more than enough (65).

Abu Khaizaran is introduced with a sense of commanding presence, entering the story just after Marwan exits the smuggler's office. His entrance is bold and confident, contrasting with the vulnerability and uncertainty shown in the other characters. He interacts directly with Marwan, taking control of the conversation and offering reassurances that feel practiced, almost too smooth. The camera uses medium shots to frame him as capable and in control. While the novel explores Abu Khaizaran's internal conflict and emasculation through extended monologue and reflection, the visual narrative uses physicality, pacing, and subtle facial expression to suggest the same inner rupture. His introduction thus foreshadows the tragic complexity of his character, a man who appears in control but is quietly haunted by what he's lost.

3. Minimalist Narration in *Men in the Sun*

The depiction of the psychological and emotional landscape of Palestinian exile in *Men in the Sun* was portrayed by Ghassan Kanafani 's minimalist yet powerful narrative structure. He relies on internal monologues, sparse dialogue, and carefully chosen details. His narration is marked by economy and restraint. For example, the way Kanafani relies on understatement. A 16-year-old sacrificing his education to save his family is a tragedy, but he does not call it a tragedy. Instead, he places the burden on readers to feel the weight of Marwan's choice: "I was at school two months ago. But now I want to work to support my family"(42). Another example is when Abu Qais mentions the memory of his daughter, with no crying, no funeral scene, no emotional outpouring, just a simple depiction: "But she gave birth to a girl he named Hosna, who died two months later"(25).

Kanafani constructs a fragmented but deeply personal portrayal of displacement. Each of the three central characters, Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan, are introduced through a self-contained chapter. Each chapter is shaped by personal memory, internal conflict, and

reflective solitude of the character. This narrative structure not only individualizes their experiences but also mirrors the fractured identity of a people navigating the trauma of dispossession.

The fragmented structure of *Men in the Sun* is not just a stylistic choice; it is deeply connected to the Palestinian experience of exile, displacement, and loss as understood the concept on "exilic narrativity." Ihab Saloul develops “exilic narrativity” as a theoretical framework to describe how exiled or displaced individuals tell their stories:“a narrative-building through fragmentation in terms of place, self and other. This exilic narrativity … represents a specific instance of migratory aesthetics…” (Saloul 113).The novel’s disjointed structure marked by shifting timelines, fragmented voices, and memory-driven monologues reflect the physical and psychological wandering endured by its protagonists and, by extension, the Palestinian people in diaspora. This narrative technique exemplifies what Saloul refers to as “migratory aesthetics,” a storytelling mode shaped by movement, dislocation, and uncertainty. The novel becomes a tragic allegory, representing not just individual suffering but the collective trauma: “The novel is a tragic allegory enclosed within a humanistic project” (Aldous 12).

Kanafani, furthermore, uses short flashbacks or small actions to reveal deep emotions and past experiences, avoiding detailed psychological analysis of his characters. A good example of this is the opening of the first chapter, Abu Qais, when he touches the ground. This simple gesture reflects wordlessly the pain of being force fully displaced and his deep desire to stay connected to his homeland and the sorrow he feels at being forced to leave it.

Conversely in *The Dupes* Tewfik Saleh conveys emotional weight through cinematic techniques rather than psychological expositions. The director uses visual cues to show Abu Qais’ attachment to the land and the pain of departure instead of focusing on an internal monologue or verbalizing his emotional struggle. When Abu Qais stands before the earth, his

body language, his lingering touch, a deep, silent breath, and sweat mirror the same longing for rootedness that Kanafani evokes in the novel.

The omission of internal psychology is a crucial narrative technique used by Ghassan Kanafani to highlight the emotional and psychological landscape of the characters indirectly. By focusing on action and context rather than introspective reflection, Kanafani creates a sense of detachment and alienation that mirrors the characters' own feelings of being trapped and powerless. The famous water tank scene is a perfect illustration of the omission and minimalist narrative structure of the novella. Kanafani has not provided detailed, step-by-step explanation of what the characters have faced from fear and inner thoughts inside the water tank. Instead, we experience the suffocating heat and silence as external elements that amplify the sense of doom. The suffocating heat and oppressive silence in the tank do not just symbolize the men's fear; they were the fear and the despair. We do not get direct insight into their thoughts, but the physical environment speaks for them. Edward Said describes how historical forces like colonialism and forced migration shape not only individuals' physical realities but also their internal landscapes and expressions of identity: “The experience of exile is terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: it’s essential sadness can never be surmounted”(173).

Symbolism is a key feature that Kanafani used to convey complex political realities without direct dedications, which reflects the minimalist narrative structure of *Men in the Sun*. In other words, less is more. Metaphors, silence, and paradox are used to evoke the despair, betrayal, and paralysis of the Palestinian condition in the post-Nakba era. Rather than offering direct political commentary, Kanafani leaves readers with a disturbing silence and unanswered questions. Exile has affected the writer’s use of language, making it charged with anxiety, elaborateness, and sometimes overstatement: "Out of such travail there comes an urgency, not

to say a precariousness of vision and a tentativeness of statement, that renders the use of language something much more interesting and provisional than it would otherwise be"(Said 10).The desert, for instance ,plays a crucial role as a dominant symbol of harsh realities and an endless journey of exile, it was not just a physical barrier but a psychological and existential wasteland, reflecting the torment of the Palestinian experience:"The desert was like a giant in hiding, flogging their heads with whips of fire and boiling pitch" (Kanafani *Men*48).Kanafani's vivid imagery employs striking descriptions that portray the desert as a silent aggressor. This literary technique suggests that even the natural environment contributes to the hardship experienced by the refugees. The desert holds a dual symbolic meaning: it can signify both immediate danger and a feeling of suspense about existence. Yet, in the larger world of literature, it frequently takes on a different meaning, representing ideas of transcendence and significant personal or spiritual growth. According to Fadaee the desert is frequently associated with a sense of inner liberation and a stripping away of pretense ("Freedom of Soul and Being Naked").Kanafani presents the desert as more than just a landscape of suffering and suspense; it is also a symbolic ground where these difficult experiences can unexpectedly give rise to deep, even spiritual, transformation. In As'ad's first encounter with the desert, the narrator writes: "The sun was pouring flame down on his head, and as he climbed the yellow slopes, he felt he was alone in the whole world" (31).The language evokes not only the overwhelming physical torment but a deeper existential dread, encapsulated in As'ad's reflection: "If they had taken me to the desert prison, Al-Jafr, at H4, I wonder if life would have been kinder than it is now. Pointless, pointless. The desert was everywhere" (31).

4. Visual Storytelling Techniques in *The Dupes*

Saleh translates the existential suffering of exile into a visible, tangible force. He used a barren desert landscape not just as setting, but as a dynamic symbol of desolation and hopelessness. Both *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes* portray the tragic harsh realities of the refugee experience by capturing the psychological and systemic violence of exile. The film is saturated with oppressive contrasts. The sun-scorched desert is considered a character in itself, how its blinding brightness doesn't illuminate but it obliterates. It burns away individuality, hope, and even temporality. In Said's terms, the exile is "discontinuous," and this desert mirrors that fragmentation. The camera cuts between hard landscapes and dark, airless interiors, and inside the tank is now transformed into a visual grave or tomb. These shifts between open, endless space and claustrophobia reflect the brutal containment of refugee life.

In *The Dupes,* Tewfik Saleh employs a visual minimalist perspective that echoes the literary minimalist structure of *Men in The Sun*. In the same way Kanafani avoids psychological overt expositions, Saleh refrains from using voice-over narration or direct access to the characters' thoughts, offering ambiguous cues to convey the characters' emotional thoughts.He constructs visual metaphors and cinematic silence to evoke the same emotional terrain. The film emerges through visual metaphors such as the starkness of the desert, the oppressive heat, and the confining structure of the tanker and through extended silences that heighten the viewer's sense of entrapment and anticipation. These choices preserve the source material's aesthetic tone and portray its political and existential themes. Both the novel and the film force the audience to actively interpret the characters' inner lives to emphasize the alienation and despair that define the Palestinian condition. In this perspective, silence functions as both a narrative device and a thematic statement that reflects on the characters' voicelessness within larger structures of displacement and systemic failure. Each of the three main characters Abu

Qais, As'ad, and Marwan are introduced through isolated sequences that mix their present experiences with disrupted, memory-driven flashbacks. The sequences are fragmented, emotionally loaded, and often triggered by sensory details, reinforcing the fractured sense of identity that defines life in exile without straightforward depictions of the past. The characters' psychological landscapes are shaped by personal traumaand political loss. Saleh also leans into symbolic representation. Long silences, slow tracking shots, and close-ups of weary eyes replace the introspective commentary of the novella; Abu Qais as the rooted elder longing for the land, Assad as the disillusioned middle man, and Marwan as the youth torn between loyalty and survival.This transformation reflects a broader shift in the adaptation: from psychological realism in prose to visual allegory in film. The minimalist dialogue and barren desert landscapes in *The Dupes* reflect the internal silence and loss articulated in *Men in the Sun*. This transformation explains how cinema reframes character perspective from the internal to the external while still preserving the human core of the narrative.

4.1 The Soil Scene: From Internal Gesture to Cinematic Symbol

One of the most emotional yet understated scenes is when Abu Qais touches the soil in the opening chapter. In the novella, this small act carries profound emotional and symbolic weight. Kanafani portrays Abu Qais's attachment to the land that he is being forced to leave through internal monologue and subtle description:

> Abu Qais rested on the damp ground, and the earth began to throb under him with tired heartbeats, which trembled through the grains of sand and penetrated the cells of his body. Every time he threw himself down with his chest to the ground he sensed that throbbing, as though the heart of the earth had been pushing its difficult way towards the light from the utmost depths of hell, ever since the first time he had lain there. (Kanafan*Men* 23).

At this point, the soil is no longer just ground; it powerfully represents Abu Qais's home, his

past, and who he is. Abu Qais's physical act is silent; it emphasizes his rootedness and the trauma of separation. Instead of burdening the moment with overt explanation, Kanfani carried the moment with minimalist gestures filled with unspoken sorrow. In *The Dupes*, this scene is powerfully shown without a single word of dialogue or narration. Abu Qais is shown kneeling slowly, placing his palm gently on the ground, and then pressing his fingers into the soil. The camera lingers on this act, capturing his hand in close-up as it sinks into the dirt. Saleh conveys Abu Qais's longing and grief through visual language, without internal monologue. Close-ups isolate the hand in contact with the soil, emphasizing intimacy. The natural light in the scene stretches out shadows immediately establishing a mood of sadness and introspection. The sounds like the wind and faint background noises add to the sense of isolation and the weight of what's happening. The actor's body language is equally telling. His posture is heavy and deliberate—he moves like someone bearing the weight of history. The slowness of his movement reflects both reluctance and reverence. The moment he stands, his backward glance at the soil becomes potent, echoing the words Kanafani never needed to write.

4.2 Symbolism and Emotional Impact: "Why didn't you knock?"

Death inside the tank symbolizes the oppression and suffocation experienced by Palestinians as a result of the occupation and Arab neglect. Abu Al-Khaizuran's question represents the blame directed at those who accepted defeat without resistance as if he was blaming them for their death and how they chose death over words. When Abu Al-Khaizuran asks "Why didn't you knock?" he appears to shift the blame onto the dead passengers to ease his own guilt. However, the shift in pronouns from "they" to "you" implicates the reader directly. This final question reflects a deep meaning for justice, dignity, and return to one's homeland due to the profound bond between Palestinians and their land. For characters like Abu Qais, land is not merely property; it is identity, memory, and soul. Kanafani uses as a powerful symbol of

irony and tragedy. Although water is typically a source of life, the tank is empty and becomes a vessel of death. The tank acts as a metaphor for siege and suffocation, reflecting the larger Palestinian condition. When the men enter the tank a second time despite knowing the risk, it reflects their complete surrender and loss of control over their fate. Their deaths are not shocking but expected. The three men, representing different voices of the Palestinian narrative, become symbols of a tragedy born from choice without real power.“Why didn’t you knock?” is not just a literal question; it is an existential one. They did not know they were allowed to knock as if they were forced not to resist. They were silenced by fear, by oppression, and by years of being powerless.

This question is the key point of difference between the novella and film. In the film the question is removed despite its importance even though it represents the way Abu Khizarne felt: is he blaming himself or is he blaming the dead bodies? Does he feel guilty or do they just choose to die in silence .Kanafani has described what Abu Khizarne felt with just one line:“why didn't they knock?”He also mentioned how he left and went back and took money from their pockets as if they owed him that money. While going through the last chapter when Abu Khizarne was at the checking point of Kuwait he kept thinking about the people in the tank, and he knew that he was taking a little more time than he expected. In contrast, Tawfik Saleh kept the minimalist narrative structure and took it to another level, deleting the line and replacing it with silence and cinematic techniques. If we take a close-up look on the scene a 1:41:00, we are in the aftermath of that tragedy: Abu Kheizaran opens the tank to find the three dead bodies. He is struck by shock but also concerned about covering up the incident. The desert is silent: no music no dialogue, just the weight of death.
He desperately disposes of the bodies, dragging them into the barren desert, leaving them anonymously among the sand dunes. The blinding desert sun enhances the brutality of their deaths. The tanker is filmed like a coffin metal and sealed. The camera does not rush. It

lingers on the bodies, on the tanker, on Abu Kheizaran face. These techniques create a feeling of prolonged agony, emphasizing the irreversibility of what just happened.

Abu Kheizaran is a symbol of how Arab regimes or elites have treated the Palestinian cause with opportunism and detachment. He did not want to kill them, but he cared more about money and not getting caught. Their bodies are discarded —no names, no mourning, no justice. This reflects the erasure of the Palestinian identity in exile. The film, like the novella, critiques the internal rot of Arab society, not just colonialism, but class, corruption, cowardice, and the failure of revolution.

4.3 Marwan's Goodbye to His Father and Shafiqa

This scene centers on Marwan's final visit to his father and his stepmother, Shafiqa, before he sets out for Kuwait. It follows a period of deep emotions where Marwan wrestles with feelings of abandonment, familial duty, and resentment. Despite his father's past desertion, Marwan still seeks connection, suggesting a deeper emotional and cultural connection that cannot be severed by absence. Marwan's feelings are contradictory. He is caught between betrayal and longing. His inability to hate his father entirely suggests that love, even when betrayed, stays. This is not forgiveness, it is emotional dependency and the deep human desire to be loved by one's parents, no matter the harm they have caused.
When he was with his father, he told him while smoking: "Freedom is something that has been decreed for us since the beginning of creation." His father sees himself not as a free agent but as someone trapped by destiny. It also reflects a collective trauma referencing Palestinian exile, where characters see their suffering as inherited, not chosen. The moment Mawan was leaving, he stepped back, and the camera focused on his father, showing how emotional he was. His father said to him: 'May God send you success, Marwan, you brave boy.' And he tried to laugh. He couldn't, so he began rubbing the boy's back with his large, hard hand…"This is masculine tenderness expressed through touch, not words. The father is

emotionally repressed, and his affection appears awkward and clumsy—he fails to laugh, and instead rubs Marwan's back. This gesture, though brief, reveals years of unspoken love, buried beneath layers of absence and guilt.

4.4 Flashbacks and Non-linear Storytelling

The Dupes translates the internal monologues into cinematic flashbacks that go along with more explicit visual language. As Viola Shafik notes in *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* (1998), Arab filmmakers often use flashbacks and visual fragmentation to critique the socio-political forces underlying exile, oppression, and trauma not just for narrative exposition. The film opens with documentary-style footage of refugee camps, grounding the narrative in the lived reality of exile and displacement. This technique establishes historical credibility and sets a tone of urgency and authenticity. Saleh shifts toward rhetorical allegory, using symbolic characters and situations to morally mobilize the viewers rather than pursue a straightforwardly analytical or realist narrative. As Viola Shafik notes," *The Duped* uses a similarly allegorical and moralist narration"(158),where the tragedy is depicted as a consequence of internalized defeat, cowardice, and moral failure within the Arab world more than just outcome of political structures. Saleh uses cinematic tools such as fades, voice-overs, and mise-en-scène to distinguish past from present, in order to translate literary interiority into a cinematic idiom. For example, in the flashback sequences that depict Marwan's home life, the domestic *mise-en-scène* is sparse and dimly lit, mirroring his emotional state and economic situation. The visual impact of the suffocating water tank scene with fragmented flashbacks, creates a visceral sense of claustrophobia and doom. This mirrors Shafik's broader argument that Arab political cinema often sought to create "shock effects" that would awaken the viewer's consciousness through visual intensity and historical allegory .Both works use non-linear storytelling to similar thematic ends. They disrupt chronological time to mirror the rupture in Palestinian history following the Nakba, highlighting how the

characters are unable to live in the present. The past is not left behind; it is here and always will. In this way, flashbacks become more than narrative devices—they serve as formal embodiments of historical trauma, collective disorientation, and a political commentary on the failure of the Arab world to address the Palestinian issue.

In both *Men in the Sun* and its film adaptation, *The Dupes*, flashbacks are central to the narrative structure, offering fragmented glimpses into each character's past. Kanafani devotes individual chapters to the backstories of Marwan, Assad, and Abu Qais, not in chronological accounts, but as sensory recollections. These memories are often triggered by bodily sensations or fleeting emotions: the heat of the desert, the scent of a place, or the weight of fear. This non-linear form mirrors the psychological fragmentation caused by exile and displacement. Similarly, *The Dupes* adopts a non-linear structure that visually dramatizes these internal disruptions. One striking example is Marwan's flashback to the moment his brother abandoned their family. The film does not transition into this memory through conventional dialogue or exposition. Instead, a close-up shot of a letter in Marwan's pocket becomes the visual cue. The camera slowly dissolves into the memory, shifting the palette with muted tones and dim lighting to differentiate past from present. This cinematic technique underscores how memory invades the present, often uninvited and unresolved. A parallel moment occurs when Abu Khaizuran is asked if he is married. His facial expression tightens subtly, signaling the emotional depth behind the question. Without a word, the scene transitions into a flashback of his life before the trauma that left him physically and emotionally scarred. The disruption in linear time becomes a formal representation of his inner dislocation. His past does not sit behind him but continues to press against his present identity.

4.5 Montage as a Narrative Device

Montage functions as a critical tool of political expression. It uses the visual strategies of revolutionary cinema while reflecting the fragmentary reality of Palestinian exile. Tewfik Saleh employs montage as an editing technique and form of resistance aesthetics. His use of abrupt cuts, temporal disjunctions, and visual juxtapositions aligns with what Barbara Harlow identifies as the goals of resistance literature: to challenge dominant forms of narrative and to give voice to the silenced through a "new aesthetic" forged in struggle (Harlow 98).Saleh's montage sequences—particularly the intercutting between the characters' present suffocation and their fragmented memories—construct a cinematic dialectic between past and present, oppression and aspiration. This technique mirrors the "call and response" structure found in resistance poetry, where juxtaposition is used to create tension and political clarity. In the climactic sequence of *The Dupes*, the montage becomes increasingly rapid and chaotic: images of blistering desert heat, sweat-drenched faces, childhood memories, political meetings, and economic desperation collide within seconds. The montage of death and memory ends in silence. Through montage, Saleh does not only tell stories, he disrupts them, fractures them, and rebuilds them in the image of a people still struggling to reclaim both land and voice.

This chapter has tried to show how *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes* use different narrative forms to express shared themes of exile and loss. While the novella relies on minimalist narration and internal reflection, the film uses visual techniques like flashbacks and symbolism to deepen emotional impact. Both works reflect the fragmented reality of displacement through their structure and style.

Chapter Three:

Adaptation as Resistance in Palestinian Cinema: Tracing Socio-Political Narratives in *The Dupes*

This chapter offers a focused analysis of Palestinian cinema and *The Dupes* in particular as a form of cultural preservation, political resistance, and collective memory. It explores how visual storytelling humanizes the Palestinian experience by foregrounding personal and shared narratives, particularly within contexts of displacement and conflict. The chapter also traces the recognition of Palestinian films at regional and international festivals from Carthage to Cannes, highlighting their role in amplifying marginalized voices. A special focus on the renewed interest in *The Dupes* during the 2020s illustrates a broader reappraisal of Palestinian cinematic heritage. Finally, drawing on Reception Studies, the chapter examines how different audiences – local, diasporic, and international engage – with these films, emphasizing the role of film festivals as critical spaces for interpretation, resonance, and cultural mediation.

1. Visual Storytelling as Cultural Preservation, Political Resistance, and Collective Memory

1.1. Visual Storytelling as Cultural Preservation and Resistance

In order to understand the reception and significance of *The Dupes* as an international film, it is necessary to provide an overview of Palestinian cinema as a visual type of cultural and political intervention in international cinema and politics. Palestinian cinema has emerged as a cultural medium and as an essential site of memory, identity, and political resistance, despite the fact that it sufferers from the absence of sovereign state structures and formal archival institutions. Palestinian filmmakers use the cinematic space to challenge dominant narratives, preserve collective memory, and reconstruct a fragmented national identity. Cinema does not

function just as entertainment but as a political artifact, a living archive that witnesses the trauma of displacement and the resilience of a people denied their homeland. Traditional archival systems are inaccessible or nonexistent because of the ongoing occupation, exile, and geopolitical fragmentation; due to that, cinema emerges as a vital alternative to conventional historical record-keeping. Palestinian cinema functions as a dynamic site of political resistance, cultural preservation, and disruption of global narratives. It offers an alternative archive that challenges dominant representations and connects local trauma to broader histories of displacement and survival.

Collective memory is complex. The lasting rupture of historical continuity was caused by the trauma of the 1948 Nakba, the large-scale displacement and dispossession of more than 700,000 Palestinians. The loss was not only territorial, but cultural, economic, and psychological. What makes it particularly complex is how this trauma has been actively silenced or denied in dominant narratives, especially in Western media and political discourse. Scholar Asad Taffal emphasizes that collective memory serves as "the backbone for a society's culture, traditions, customs, and values"(204). He underscores that collective memory is central to shaping a society's culture, traditions, and values by preserving shared experiences and narrative, especially when that society faces political erasure. This memory is preserved and transmitted through oral narration, artifacts, folklore, and increasingly films; it is socially constructed, not just individually experienced. He highlights how Palestinians have resisted cultural erasure through oral history, traditional dress, and symbolic objects:"Some of the older Palestinians still keep the keys of their original houses tens of years after the NAKBA in the hope that they would one day return to their land, or at least pass these keys down to the coming generations" (Taffal 216).

Taffal explains that collective memory is often shaped by the current needs of a society and by power structures. Drawing on theorists from Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre

Nora, he stresses that memory is selective and frequently constructed by those in authority. While Halbwachs views collective memory as structured by social frameworks, Nora introduces the idea of 'lieux de mémoire', "sites that attempt to hold memory in place when the living continuity of tradition is broken." Halbwachs and Nora suggest that the "collective memory" of any group is actually a manipulated construction of those who maintain the power and status to define those memories" (Taffal 210).

This understanding of memory as both constructed and politicized is vital when analyzing Palestinian cinema .If memory is a contested terrain, then film becomes a battlefield. In this context, Palestinian cinema is more than storytelling; it is a form of cultural resistance. Palestinian filmmakers must counter two powerful forces which are physical displacement and symbolic misrepresentation. Physical displacement is the Nakba and its consequences, while symbolic misrepresentation is about how Palestinians are often portrayed in mainstream or colonial narratives as terrorists, victims, or non-existent altogether.

Films are tools in which Palestinian directors reclaim their narrative and assert their existence on the world stage. Palestinian filmmakers actively rewrite their own visibility by using cinema to assert political subjectivity rather than passively reacting to dominant depictions. This is especially evident in works like Elia Suleiman's *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1998), where narrative fragmentation mirrors the dislocation of identity under occupation .Cinema is a political act. It is not just entertainment; it's a way for Palestinians to assert their identity, challenge stereotypes, and preserve memory. Every frame becomes a tool of resistance.

Elia Suleiman is a key Palestinian filmmaker. He is best known for the 2002 film *Divine Intervention,* a modern tragicomedy on living under occupation in Palestine which won the Jury Prize at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival. He is known for his minimal dialogue, deadpan humor, and surreal scenes where everyday life is shaped by checkpoints, loss, and

irony. In his film *Chronicle of a Disappearance*, the narrative feels disjointed, reflecting the disorientation of being Palestinian in Israel.

Palestinian cinema, as Hend Alawadhi notes, "is intricately tied to the memory of a pre-1948 Palestine and the desire of return; one that must be understood in the context of sixty years of exile and dispersion" (Alawadhi 17). Items such as house keys, family photographs, and deeds are considered cinematic elements of displacement. Films like *1948: Creation and Catastrophe* (2017) document continuity, belonging, and historical rootedness, not just the loss of territory. These symbolic objects serve as fragile bridges to a world violently severed. They embody unresolved historical claims and function as cinematic stand-ins for a return that remains politically denied but emotionally personal.

Palestinian films about displacement also reflect global histories of loss and forced migration. They basically connect with the experiences of indigenous peoples in the Americas, who were forced off their lands and lost sacred traditions. Refugee stories from Africa, Asia, and Europe that were caused by colonialism, war, or economic hardship share the same deep sense of rupture, emotional loss, and displacement .Palestinian cinema turns a national tragedy into a reflection of worldwide struggles with forced migration and broken identities.

For example, *Salt of this Sea* (2008) by Annemarie Jacir shows Soraya trying to reclaim her family's land in Jaffa . She symbolizes the Palestinian experience and a universal fight for justice. Similarly, Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains* (2009) captures the quiet sadness of life under occupation, connecting with the struggles of other oppressed peoples around the world. Palestinian filmmakers place personal and national memories into a global history of exile. Their films highlight the political and emotional importance of remembering. Palestinian cinema shows the Nakba as both a unique tragedy and a part of the broader human story of displacement, survival, and hope.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Tewfik Saleh's *The Dupes* offers an allegorical portrayal of exile and betrayal. Centering on three Palestinian refugees who were presented not as faceless masses, but as individuals, each with their own backstory, hopes, and quiet desperation. Their silent deaths symbolize the failure of both Arab solidarity and international institutions, while also bringing modern images of border violence, migrant death, and political abandonment. *The Dupes* speaks powerfully to contemporary global audiences familiar with themes of forced migration and systemic neglect.

1.2. Humanizing the Palestinian Experience through Personal and Shared Narratives

Palestinian cinema plays a critical role in challenging dehumanizing stereotypes by focusing on personal and communal narratives. Cinema becomes a battleground for identity politics, where Palestinian filmmakers must represent themselves and undo decades of colonial caricature. Filmmakers show Palestinians as real people, they use intimate storytelling to reveal the full humanity of individuals living under occupation, exile, and displacement, not anonymous victims or political symbols. They restore voice, agency, and complexity to Palestinian identity through personal stories and shared memories, these films invite global audiences to move beyond political headlines.

The aftermath of the 1948 Nakba led to a massive visual archive of Palestinian refugees that was created by humanitarian agencies such as UNRWA[3], the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).Nadia Yaqub notes that the early post-Nakba era saw Palestinians depicted through a "humanitarian gaze" (Yaqub 17). She describes the humanitarian gaze as a visual and rhetorical framework that portrays Palestinians as helpless refugees who need charity rather than as political agents or historical subjects. Films like *Sands of Sorrow* (1950) were produced by Western

[3] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

organizations that portrayed Palestinians as helpless refugees, passive and mute, seeking international sympathy. As Yaqub explains in her analysis of early post-Nakba visual culture, "*Sands of Sorrow* and its rhetorical structure reflect political realities on the ground for Palestinians. In the immediate aftermath of the 1948 war, they were viewed… primarily as refugees in need of humanitarian assistance"(Yaqub 17).

Visual strategies reinforced the dehumanization of Palestinian refugees. They were depicted as a mass, emphasizing uniformity and anonymity using Aerial and high-angle shots. Images of suffering, like ragged children and stoic elders, aligned with Western stereotypes of what suffering should look like. According to Yaqub, "early UNRWA photographs showcased Palestinian poverty and dependence, portraying them as abject and reliant on aid"(21).

The Palestine Film Unit (PFU) was created by Palestinian filmmakers associated with Fatah and other resistance groups. It challenged the humanitarian gaze that portrayed Palestinians as passive victims. Instead, these films highlighted resistance, agency, and the struggle for national liberation. As Yaqub notes, Palestinians reclaimed control over their political narrative, aiming to make visible their project for independent liberation.

However, this shift was more than producing new images but about redefining what it meant to be seen. The PFU and other cultural groups used pictures and stories to share their message emphasizing collective struggle, revolutionary identity, and global solidarity. Instead of being seen as helpless, Palestinians were shown as strong and active in their own history. Yaqub's analysis reminds us that the politics of visibility are never neutral. Early post-Nakba films and photographs by humanitarian agencies shaped international understanding of the Palestinian issue, but they also constrained Palestinian self-representation.

It is in this context that Tewfik Saleh's *The Dupes* stands as a foundational work in Palestinian and Arab political cinema for its allegorical critique of Arab regimes and its

deeply human portrayal of displacement. While the film functions on a symbolic level, invoking betrayal, silence, and abandonment, the characters' emotional and psychological depth allows the film to humanize the Palestinian condition. *The Dupes* invites viewers to live the inner worlds of its protagonists. The three central characters Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan represent different generations and emotional registers of the post-Nakba Palestinian experience.

Abu Qais embodies the sorrow of losing both land and pride; Assad reflects the youthful desire for mobility and reinvention; and Marwan, on the other hand, bears the burden of poverty and a fractured family. These personal narratives to broader themes of collective trauma shape the film's emotional core. In one powerful sequence, we see Abu Qais lying on the ground, ear to the soil. The scene doesn't use words to explain his feelings; instead, it relies on visuals: his aged face, shaking hands, and the dry, cracked earth. His focus on memory and loss ties into what Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory," a strong emotional link to a past that wasn't personally experienced but still feels very real .Similarly, Assad's flashback to a conversation with his mother is filled with tension and tenderness, even though the scene only lasts a few seconds, and we only hear what Assad says without seeing his face. It reveals the internal pressures Palestinians face: the need to survive, to migrate, to make something of themselves while feeling the weight of familial obligation and collective despair.

2. Recognition and Reception in Arab and International Cinema

The recognition and interpretation of Palestinian films differ between Arab and international contexts. The difference is rooted in historical connections, aesthetic expectations, and political frameworks. To reveal the global significance and the obstacles in asserting a cinematic identity, we have to understand how Palestinian cinema is received. Palestinian cinema is viewed and considered as an extension of the broader Arab resistance narrative

within the Arab world. Arab audiences often feel deeply connected with cultural and emotional resonance to the themes of exile, occupation, and national identity portrayed in these films. Directors like Michel Khleifi and Rashid Masharawi's works contributed to the articulation of a shared Arab-Palestinian cultural memory. Arab filmmakers include cultural elements like weddings, funerals, roadblocks, and local landscapes into their movies. These elements create a familiar framework for Arab viewers who feel connected and embedded within them.

Nevertheless, Palestinian cinema, while connected culturally within the Arab world, is influenced by the political climates of individual countries. It faced significant challenges due to the inconsistent institutional support, which created an unstable and challenging environment for Palestinian filmmakers. This can affect funding, production, distribution, and artistic freedom .Some Arab regimes may hesitate to fully support films that portray resistance. In addition, films that explore themes of gender roles or internal divisions within Palestinian society are considered socially or culturally sensitive and may face criticism or censorship in Arab states. Despite these tensions, Palestinian films continue to be embraced by many Arab audiences as vital expressions of cultural resilience and political steadfastness.

From the start, Tewfiq Saleh positions himself as a politically committed filmmaker within a censorial environment. His work is framed by the urgent realities of the post-Nakba Arab world, including the failures of Arab regimes to support the Palestinian cause, the fragmentation of pan-Arab identity. He said on censorship: "I left an ambiguity regarding the responsibility of other heads of government, both past and present in the region, in order to create an escape route for myself and remove a too-convenient argument from the censors" (Hennebelle and Khayati 138), revealing a tactical consciousness. Salah deliberately included ambiguity in his film *The Dupes* to protect it from censorship, by avoiding direct political critique. Saleh is not naïve; he knows how to deliver political critique. He uses allegory,

omission, and indirection to encode resistance into the structure of his film. He critiques Arab governments by portraying them as indirectly responsible for the suffering of Palestinians. This is effectively conveyed through the symbolic scene of the Kuwaiti customs officers, whose meaningless conversation ultimately leads to the deaths of three men in the tank.

Internationally, Palestinian cinema has made significant inroads within European film festivals and art-house circuits. Films such as Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention(2002)* and Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now (2005)* have garnered prestigious awards and widespread attention. Their reception has been shaped by political controversy and institutional limitations. According to an article published by MIFTAH[4], *Divine Intervention*was initially denied Oscar consideration due to the Academy's denial at the time to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state.

When Palestinian films are accepted into international competitions, the controversy is still there, as to how to label them Palestinian or Israeli.Western critics and viewers focus primarily on the conflict narrative and interpret the theme through a lens of geopolitical tension, overlooking the emotional, humorous, and poetic aspects. As Sarah Frances Hudsonnotes in *Modern Palestinian Filmmaking in a Global World*,"Palestinian cinema is frequently approached through the prism of occupation, with artistic merit viewed as secondary to political messaging" (14). Palestinian cinema is often seen mainly as a political tool to highlight the occupation, with less focus on its artistic value. However, this view can be criticized. While Palestinian films do explore political issues, they also have artistic elements like unique storytelling, visual style, and emotional depth.

The recognition of Palestinian cinema in both Arab and international contexts represents a significant cultural achievement despite challenges. As Sarah Hudson explains, "The Boston Palestinian Film Festival, a considerably larger and longer running Palestinian

[4]The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy

film festival, is able to be somewhat more flexible in its criteria ‘of cinematic quality by Palestinian filmmakers, regardless of where they reside or the subject matter of the film… which speak to some aspect of the Palestinian narrative, regardless of country of origin’” (Hudson 4). Indeed, the Boston Palestine Film Festival’s (BPFF) programming criteria prioritize high-quality films by Palestinian filmmakers, regardless of their location. It accepts films that reflect aspects of the Palestinian narrative, allowing for a wide range of subject matter, not limited to political themes. Hamid Dabashi, for instance, underscores that Palestinian cinema is born of statelessness and it has shaped how it is received: “Palestinian cinema… emerges from the bowels of a national tragedy that has found no political resolution” (Dabashi x).Thus, when such films gain recognition in international festivals or receive awards, it is not just artistic acclaim, but they are challenging the political logic that continues to deny Palestinian issue .

In terms of Arab reception, Dabashi noted that early Palestinian cinema was embraced as part of a wider Arab anti-colonial discourse. He also points out the fear of Arab regimes that supporting Palestinian resistance too overtly would provoke their internal instability. However, for Arab viewers who mostly had experienced occupation, colonialism, or exile themselves, Palestinian films offer affective identification. They become, as Dabashi writes, “an extended commentary on Arab silence, complicity, or fatigue” (xi). In the light of what he said,Palestinian cinema critiques Arab indifference or complicity toward the Palestinian struggle, using film as a tool to address the silence and fatigue within the Arab world regarding the issue.

2.1 From Carthage to Cannes: Regional and Global Recognition of Palestinian Cinema

In the decades following the Nakba of 1948, Palestinian filmmakers faced challenges to tell their stories in the absence of a state, a national cinema infrastructure, or access to mainstream

global platforms .With limited means of production and dissemination, Palestinian cinema emerged as an artistic practice and as a political act. Within this context, film festivals became crucial instruments for resistance and gaining visibility. Regional and international festivals served as critical venues for Palestinian voices to be heard. It is in this strategic landscape that *The Dupes*(1972) is considered a seminal work in the history of Palestinian and Arab political cinema. The film transformed a harsh story of exile and betrayal into a powerful cinematic visual representation of both colonial oppression and Arab political failure. More than just a film, *The Dupes* became a key moment in the evolution of Palestinian and Arab political cinema and an achievement that made it through its reception at international and regional film festivals. *The Dupes* was not just a product of pan-Arab collaboration and revolutionary aesthetics, it is an early case study to give voice to Palestinian experiences in international and regional cultural spaces. The film's commercial distribution was limited due to political censorship, but it has achieved critical acclaim through festival circuits that helped its position as a landmark of decolonial cinema.

One of the most internationally significant milestones for *The Dupes* was its selection for Critics' Week at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival. According to MUBI, an internationally recognized platform of art-films, *The Dupes* was officially selected for the Directors' Fortnight (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs) at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival. This section of the festival is known for showcasing innovative and independent films; it is non-competitive, meaning it does not award an official prize like the Palme d'Or, but films shown often gain critical acclaim and go on to win awards elsewhere. Yaqub noted that the film was a turning point for how Palestinian stories were presented to European audience, because it is a Palestinian story presented with both political urgency and aesthetic precision. This highlights the film's artistic and political significance. Critics have lauded *The Dupes* for its stark portrayal of the Palestinian experience. MUBI describes it as "a stark and stately black-and-

white film" that traces the destinies of three different men brought together by their dispossession, their despair, and their hope for a better future. Cine-Scope, an online platform dedicated to thoughtful film criticism and analysis, states:"*The Dupes* is the greatest scream of Arab cinema, a suffocatingly sun-drenched scream of political, economic and existential injustice."On Letterboxd, the film is recognized as a masterful adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Men in the Sun*, and is noted as one of the first Arab films to address the Palestinian predicament. While *The Dupes* may not have been part of the main competition at Cannes, its selection for the Directors' Fortnight and the critical acclaim it received underscore its importance in cinematic history

Although the film did not ultimately open in Paris as planned, its screening at Cannes remains symbolically significant. *The Dupes* emerged during a time when Palestinian stories were politically marginalized. Although *The Dupes* lacked mainstream recognition like Oscars or commercial success yet its selection at Cannes functioned as a powerful act of international legitimate on that elevated Palestinian cinema globally.

Beyond Cannes, at the 8th Moscow International Film Festival in 1973, *The Dupes* was officially selected for the main competition and nominated for the Golden Prize. This recognition emphasizes the film's international acclaim and its impactful portrayal of the Palestinian refugee experience. The Festival was during the Cold War and played a key role in promoting anti-imperialist and revolutionary filmmaking. The cultural infrastructure of the Soviet bloc emerged as a crucial platform for the distribution of films from the Global South, including Palestine. While *The Dupes* did not win the Golden Prize, which was awarded to Vytautas Žalakevičius's*That Sweet Word: Liberty!* and Ludmil Staikov's *Affection*, its selection for the main competition highlights its significance in global cinema . It linked *The Dupes* to leftist solidarity movements; it reinforced its status as a cinematic work in global resistance discourse.

According to the official site of Locarno International Film Festival,the movie was screened on the same year as Cannes. The Academy Awards and major Western festivals like Venice did not acknowledge the film. This absence highlights how Palestinian stories were pushed to the margins in the West. Although *The Dupes* received praise at Locarno, it faced distribution challenges in the West. As Josef Gugler recounts:“Censorship of the film was not limited to the Arab world. It was screened at Cannes but did not open in Paris as planned” (Hennebelle and Khayati 1977, 126).

Despite its international recognition, *The Dupes* struggled to gain access to wide audiences in the Arab world due to state censorship that it faced from Arab regimes. Its critique of Arab regimes led to a muted release. The film was produced by Syria’s National Film Organization and featured a cross-Arab collaboration: an Egyptian director, a Palestinian story, and production in Syria and Iraq. According to Yaqub, “The film was shown in Damascus for only two weeks, and was not screened at all in Egypt or Iraq” (118).This limited exposure within the Arab world underscores the broader discomfort regional governments felt toward cinematic works that challenged dominant political narratives. Regionally, *The Dupes* achieved significant recognition at Arab film festivals, which functioned as key platforms for promoting cultural expression and political unity. It won the Tanit d’Or the highest honor at the 1972 Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia. As Yaqub notes,“Both *The Dupes* and Kafr Kassem won the Golden Tanit Award at the JCC in the years in which they were released. *The Dupes* also represented Syria at Cannes in 1972" (104). The film’s success at Carthage came despite being banned in several Arab states, including Egypt and Iraq, due to its unflinching critique of Arab complicity in the Palestinian tragedy.

2.2 The Strategic Role of Festivals in Amplifying Palestinian Voices Globally

The role of festivals is crucial in shaping meaning for many films .It is significant for Palestinian filmmakers whose work grapples with complex themes of occupation, resistance,

and cultural identity. Festivals become more than just venues for them; they become key platforms for sharing their stories and perspectives with the world. Film festivals such as the Palestinian Film Festival in New York, the Dubai International Film Festival, and the Berlin International Film Festival have strategically supported Palestinian cinema by offering these filmmakers visibility and a space to communicate their political and cultural experiences. These festivals allow Palestinian filmmakers to engage with broader political and cultural questions that shape how their work is received. As Costa Villaverde points out,"the significance that film festivals, and cinema events in general, can have for the development of local communities, particularly through their partial contribution to conflict resolution" (2).In the context of Palestinian cinema, this mediation is particularly important.

By screening Palestinian films at prominent festivals, Palestinian voices are heard and understood within the broader global discourses. Festivals also give Palestinian filmmakers a way to disrupt the usual narratives that tend to dominate conversations about Palestine. Monia Acciari describes festivals as "cosmopolitan assemblages," spaces where many different voices come together and where diverse identities and narratives are negotiated and shared. For Palestinian filmmakers, this presents an opportunity to reshape how their narratives are received and often reduced to either political rhetoric or portrayals of victimhood.

In this regard, the strategic role of film festivals in amplifying Palestinian voices goes beyond the exhibition of films. They offer a way to challenge stereotypes, change the narrative, and take part in global conversations about justice, identity, and resistance. It's not just about getting a film seen; it's about making sure that Palestinian voices are heard, and heard on their own terms.

2.3 Recognition of *The Dupes* in the 2020s: A Reappraisal of Palestinian Cinema

Though the film was released nearly five decades ago, the 2020s have noticed a resurface in its recognition within various international events and public discourse. This renewed

attention highlights the relevance of *The Dupes* and its relation within contemporary conversations about displacement, resistance, and Palestinian identity. One of the key moments for the film in the 21st century is its restoration. According to Batalha Centro de Cinema official website, the film was restored by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and Cineteca di Bologna in 2023.This restoration has allowed the film to be reintroduced to modern audiences. The restoration became possible through the collaboration of the Syrian National Film Organization and the family of Tewfik Saleh.*The Dupes* remains accessible for future generations, continuing its role in shaping discourse about Palestinian history and identity.

The Dupes has featured in other international retrospectives and screenings. Notably, the Arab Film Festival Berlin (ALFILM) featured the film in a Palestinian-focused retrospective in April 2024. It was featured as part of the ALFILM Spotlight titled *Here is Elsewhere: Palestine in Arab Cinema and Beyond*. This segment delved into the enduring impact of the Palestinian cause, exploring themes of displacement, solidarity, and identity through various cinematic narratives. It was highlighted as a forgotten masterpiece of Arab cinema and recognized for its courageous testimony to the suffering of Palestinian refugees after the Nakba. It was recognized as one of the seminal works that shaped the cinematic portrayal of Palestinian struggles. The screening also showcased the film's newly restored version, according to the office website of the festival. In Berlin, *The Dupes* was showcased as a "forgotten masterpiece of Arab cinema," with emphasis on its adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novella and its critique of Arab regimes' complicity in the Palestinian tragedy In addition to Berlin, the restored film has been featured at other major international festivals, including the New York Film Festival and the BFI London Film Festival, where it was presented as a significant revival and a seminal work in the global history of political cinema .According to Film Forum, The Film Forum's screening of *The Dupes* was part of the

"Decolonizing Cinema" series on May 2024, pairing it with Mustafa Abu Ali's short film *They Do Not Exist*. This highlighted the film's role in challenging dominant narratives and its contribution to a cinema of resistance. The screening invited international audiences to engage with the film as a critical examination of colonial and post-colonial dynamics and situating The Dupes within this context. Furthermore, the BFI's inclusion of *The Dupes* underscores its significance in Arab cinema and its enduring impact on audiences. The film's restoration and screening at such a prestigious festival provide an opportunity for contemporary viewers to engage with its powerful narrative and historical context.

These screenings have brought renewed attention to the film's historical significance and its role in shaping the cinematic narrative of Palestinian exile and dispossession
On December 6, 2024, the Asian Film Archive hosted a screening of *The Dupes* at the Oldham Theatre in Singapore .This screening was part of the Asian Film Archive's commitment to showcasing significant works of Asian cinema that address pressing social and political issues. The festival's description highlighted the film's "unapologetic indictment of political elites' complicity in the Palestinian struggle" and noted its ban in several Arab countries due to its critical stance

Another recent screening of *The Dupes* took place at the Palestine Museum US, through collaborations with groups like the Palestine Solidarity Network, VUB Crosstalks, and Cinema RITCS. It reflects a broader cultural movement in the 2020s that highlights Palestinian stories in global cinema. These events place the film within important discussions about colonialism, migration, and resistance, connecting its themes to today's ongoing refugee crises. On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) hosted a screening of *The Dupes* as part of its Crosstalks program. It explores the intersections of cinema, politics, and society. This academic setting provided a space for critical reflection on the film's themes of exile, resistance, and collective memory.

The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) featured Tewfik Saleh's film as part of its 48th edition in 2024. It was showcased in the "Restored Classics" section, highlighting its significance in global cinema. The HKIFF's inclusion of *The Dupes* underscores its enduring relevance and the festival's commitment to presenting films that address critical social and political issues. Also, at the 8th edition of the Festival Ciné-Palestine in 2024, held at Videodrome 2 in Marseille, *The Dupes* was featured as part of the festival's tribute to Palestinian cinema. The screening was followed by a discussion led by Samia Chabani, the director of the association Ancrages. This event highlighted the film's significance in portraying the struggles and resilience of Palestinian refugees in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba (Videodrome 2)

At the El Gouna Film Festival in Egypt, the film was featured in the "Special Presentations" section under the "Window on Palestine" program. This platform stressed its powerful depiction of the Palestinian refugee experience and its connection to broader themes of displacement, resilience, and identity ("El Gouna Film Festival"). In Algeria, the Festival International du Film Arabe d'Oran (FIOFA) included *The Dupes* in its "Classics" section during its 12th edition. The screening was introduced by Tunisian filmmaker and film historian Mohamed Challouf, who emphasized the film's continuing relevance and emotional impact. Despite being over five decades old, the film's themes remain disturbingly current, especially in light of ongoing displacement crises around the world("El Watan"). At the 21st edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival, held from November 29 to December 7, 2024, *The Dupes* was featured in the "11th Continent" section. This program is dedicated to showcasing bold and boundary-pushing works from around the world.The Marrakech International Film Festival's decision to feature *The Dupes* in its lineup reflects the festival's commitment to presenting films that address critical social and political issues, fostering dialogue and understanding through the medium of cinema. (Montages Magazine; Ion

Cinema).

3. Audience Reception and the Role of Interpretation *(Reception Studies)*

3.1 Reception Theory and Audience Engagement

The way we think about how audiences engage with media has shifted significantly. Itis no longer seen as a simple, passive act of consumption; it used to be thought that people just passively took in whatever was shown to them. Instead, it is an active, interpretive process, audiences actively interpret what they see or hear. A key turning point in this shift was Stuart Hall's influential 1980 essay "Encoding/Decoding." In it,he argued that media producers "encode" messages with certain meanings, but that doesn't guarantee people will receive them the same way. He points out that "[t]he 'message form' is the necessary 'form of appearance' of the event in its passage from source to receiver"(Hall 118), emphasizing that people do not just absorb media messages, they interpret them, meaning the way something is presented does not determine how it will be understood. Hall proposes three ways people might interpret media: by fully accepting it (hegemonic), partly agreeing with it (negotiated), or rejecting it completely (oppositional).

Robert Holub, building on Hans Robert Jauss's literary theories, adds another layer to this by focusing on how audiences' expectations change over time. He talks about "horizons of expectations," the cultural and historical baggage audiences bring with them when they encounter a text. According to Holub, "The aesthetic implication lies in the fact that the first receptionof a work by the reader includes a test of its aestheticvalue in comparison with works already read"(59).This idea helps explain why a film or book might be received very differently by different generations or cultural groups.

Both Hall and Holub underscore the active role of the audience. They emphasize that media texts do not convey a singular, fixed meaning. On the other hand, reception becomes an interaction shaped by ideology, culture, and historical moment, to understand how diasporic

and global audiences interpret media differently. Together, Hall and Holub offer a way to think about media reception as a deeply personal, context-driven process. Meaning isn't just in the text; it's made in the interaction between text and audience.

3.2 Diaspora and Intergenerational Reception

Reception theory offers a compelling framework for analyzing how diasporic audiences engage with media texts that reflect on communities in exile or in diaspora. For many diasporic viewers, films and documentaries about their homeland are more than just stories; they are tools for connecting to cultural memory, history, and identity. This is especially true for how second or third-generation viewer so often relate to mediated representations of the homeland through a lens shaped by inherited memory, viewers who may not have direct memories of their homeland but feel a strong inherited connection to it.

Films and documentaries serve as mediators of "postmemory," a concept developed by Marianne Hirsch to describe the transgenerational transmission of trauma and memory in the absence of direct experience.It refers to memories that are passed down, not experienced firsthand, and often carried through stories, photos, or films. A documentary like *Born in Gaza 2014*, for example, becomes a powerful medium through which younger members of the diaspora engage with their family's past . For these viewers, the reception process involves both decoding the film's message and filling in the emotional and historical gaps with inherited memory. In Hall's terms, these viewers might occupy a negotiated position where they understand the encoded message but interpret it through their own lived diasporic experience. Holub's "horizon of expectations" also helps explain how younger diasporic audiences bring a different interpretive framework than their parents. They might view the same film less as a call to political resistance and more as a way to piece together a fragmented sense of self or family history.

Tewfik Saleh's *The Dupes* is a powerful example of how a film about a specific

political struggle (Palestinian displacement) can connect with very different kinds of audiences from different generations. It is about more than just tragedy. It is about betrayal, helplessness, and the silence that follows. For Palestinians, especially second- and third-generation viewers, the film can become a way to connect with a painful history they didn't live through but still carry. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory, the film invites viewers to emotionally inhabit a historical trauma they did not personally witness but nevertheless inherit as part of their collective identity.

3.3 Local and Arab Audience Reception: Cultural Familiarity and Political Resonance

The Dupes serves as both a history lesson and a mirror for younger diasporic viewers. They might not have been there, but the emotions and questions about identity, belonging, and justice still feel personal. The film can evoke both affective resonance and critical distance. While the older generation engages with the narrative through the immediacy of lived experience and political urgency, the younger watch with some distance, they try to make sense of what it means to them now. This fits with what Stuart Hall calls a "negotiated reading," where viewers do not just accept a message at face value, they interpret it through their own lives and perspectives. The painful silence at the film's conclusion mirrors the novella's famous final question, "Why didn't you knock on the tank?"It becomes a symbol of historical betrayal and also of the interpretive burden passed on to future generations.

Global audiences, people with no personal connection to Palestine, see the film very differently. They respond more to the human side of the story instead of focusing on the politics. People risking everything for a better life and being let down by systems that should have protected them. That kind of emotional framing helps make the film more accessible to wider audiences. Holub's idea of the "horizon of expectations" helps explain this. Each viewer brings their own background, values, and assumptions to a film, so the same story can

end up meaning very different things depending on who's watching. Thus, *The Dupes* illustrate the complex dynamics and show how one film can do a lot; it can help preserve memory, spark identity conversations in the diaspora, and open up human rights discussions internationally.

When it comes to Arab cinema, local and regional audiences often connect with the films in ways that go beyond simple entertainment. These connections are shaped by cultural familiarity and the political resonance of the narratives depicted on screen that resonate with everyday life in the Arab world. While international film festivals often frame Arab films through a lens of exoticism or geopolitical critique, Arab viewers engage with these works through shared histories, linguistic intimacy, and lived political experiences like the language, setting, and the emotions tied to regional struggles.

Cultural familiarity plays a foundational role in how Arab audiences connect with their cinema. Arab audiences tend to appreciate films that reflect their own environments whether through dialects, recognizable social behaviors, or even just the look and feel of a city like Cairo or Beirut. For example, Lebanese viewers might see themselves in the teenage characters of West Beirut and resonate with the Beiruti slang and war-time imagery of Ziad Doueiri's *West Beirut* in ways that a non-Arab audience cannot fully grasp. These films feel like they are telling "our" stories, rather than looking at Arab life from the outside.

New audiences , Palestinian, Arab, and international encounter *The Dupes* through different affective and ideological lenses, each shaped by their own political and cultural contexts. The film's final sequence, where the three men suffocate inside the sealed water tank under the desert sun, presents an allegory of abandonment and erasure for Palestinian viewers who are in the diaspora. The close-ups of sweat, breathlessness, and silence reflect a history of being spoken about but rarely listened to. For many, the image of the tank becomes a metaphor for political suffocation of being trapped not only by colonial violence but also by

Arab betrayal. For younger Palestinians, especially those born in exile, the film may evoke postmemory (Hirsch), making visible a trauma inherited but not experienced, and felt through the bodies of others on screen. Arab viewers in the 1970s may have read this scene as a direct critique of Arab regimes' complicity and cowardice, particularly the character of Abu Kheizara. Contemporary Arab youth, however, might read the same character with ambivalence, less as a traitor, more as a symbol of disillusionment representing a generation that has lost faith in political rhetoric. International audiences, especially post-2020, are likely to interpret the tank sequence through a humanitarian and universalist lens. The stark, silent suffering of the refugees recalls modern tragedies, from migrants dying in shipping containers. However, this global reception may risk flattening the film's political edge, reducing it to a story of victimhood rather than resistance. As such, audience interpretation depends on textual elements and viewing contexts, as reception theory reminds us.

Saleh's story about Palestinians crying during a screening in Damascus shows his belief that audiences. He asserts in this regard:"We are too often surrounded by empty or manipulative images. I saw Palestinians cry in Damascus during a screening of *The Dupes*, and I am convinced they knew the film was telling the truth" (Hennebelle and Khayati 139). Especially those who are politically oppressed are capable of recognizing truth and meaning in film. He respects the viewer's emotional and moral intelligence:"A young Palestinian in the audience who attended the screening of the film in Damascus told me he recognized his father in this character"(Hennebelle and Khayati 137). This is very different from most Arab cinema at the time, which often avoided real political issues or treated them in simplistic, exaggerated ways. *The Dupes*, by contrast, presents suffering honestly and without compromise. It's not entertainment, but testimony a witness to real injustice. Because of this honesty, the film was seen as subversive and even dangerous which is why it was sometimes banned or censored.

Politics is another major reason Arab audiences connect deeply with their films. A lot of Arab cinema explores themes like oppression, resistance, and displacement issues. Films like Hany Abu-Assad's *Omar* or Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* reflect political realities that many Arab audiences find familiar. They represent ongoing struggles. Watching these films can feel like watching a version of your own life or your community's past. It transforms film viewing into a politically charged act, often laden with personal and collective memory. What's also interesting is how differently Arab audiences interpret these films compared to international viewers. Western critics might see a movie like *Paradise Now* as controversial or focused on terrorism, local audiences are more likely to view them as articulations of resistance and dignity .In fact, watching these kinds of films can even become a form of political engagement.

Arab audiences often use film screenings as spaces for discussion, protest, and communal reflection .One example from the book talks about how screenings of *The Square in Cairo* became more than just movie nights ,they turned into emotional gatherings that brought people together after the revolution. Arab cinema means something different to local and regional audiences than it does to international ones. Because of shared language, history, and ongoing political challenges, Arab viewers often experience these films as reflections of their own lives.

In conclusion, this chapter has tried to examine Palestinian cinema and its local and international reception as a form of cultural resistance and collective memory. Through the lens of visual storytelling, recognition, and audience reception, we attempted to show how *The Dupes* continue to resonate across generations and contexts.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to conduct a close examination of Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* and its cinematic adaptation *The Dupes*, to see how both texts convey the trauma of the Nakba and the ongoing state of Palestinian exile. It attempted to investigate how internal narratives of loss, silence, and displacement are portrayed on screen through symbolic images, little dialogue, and visual storytelling by navigating between literature and cinema. Both works, though distinct in form, offer a unified elegy to a people trapped between memory and marginalization, silence and suffocation.

Kanafani's novella captures the political and existential tragedy of Palestinians through a deceptively simple narrative, one where the quiet deaths of Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan speak louder than any battle cry. In turn, Saleh's adaptation turns this silence into a clear visual language. *The Dupes* becomes more than just a reproduction; it becomes a cinematic re-embodiment of collective memory and resistance, through deliberate pacing, barren landscapes, and the final unanswered question" Why didn't they knock?"

This dissertation has also looked at how adaptation becomes an important site of cultural negotiation rather than being a derivative act. *Men in the Sun*'s cinematic reimagining allows the Nakba to be both remembered and relived. Saleh's camera transforms the screen into a place of testimony by bringing back the silenced voices and forgotten bodies of the past. *The Dupe s*plays an active role in preserving and transmitting cultural memory and shaping how history is recalled, and how it is emotionally and politically experienced by new generations.

Moreover, this study has traced how Palestinian cinema emerged from silenced margins into global recognition. Films such as *The Dupes* establish a foundation for a politically engaged and aesthetically audacious cinematic tradition. Both literature and film,

therefore, become forms of resistance, showing what isn't said and protecting the right to remember and narrate.

In conclusion, this dissertation has aimed to illuminate how *Men in the Sun* and *The Dupes* together construct a deeply layered narrative of loss and defiance. Kanafani's literary voice and Saleh's cinematic vision converge to narrate the personal despair of exile and the collective struggle of a nation denied return. These works do not recount a historical tragedy but they inhabit it, resist it, and guarantee it remains neither forgotten nor normalized.The close reading (Chapter Two)and the focus on reception (Chapter Three) aim to enhance understanding of how adaptation functions as a significant act of cultural remembrance, and how Palestinian narratives, whether textual or visual, continues to speak across time, trauma, and borders.

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