

Biopower, Sovereignty, and Resistance Literature: A Foucauldian Analysis of *Rijālun fisy-Syams*

Sangidu^{1*}, Eva Farhah², Imam Wicaksono³, Sherif Saad alGayyar⁴

^{1,3}Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta Indonesia,

²Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta Indonesia,

⁴Sohar University Oman.

Corresponding Author: sangidu@ugm.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes Ghassan Kanafani's *Rijālun fisy-Syams* as a literary representation of the collective suffering of the Palestinian people and interprets the function of resistance literature as a counter-hegemonic discourse that affirms sovereignty and fosters transnational solidarity. The novelty of this research lies in addressing a critical gap in previous studies, which have largely focused on political-legal dimensions and prominent figures, while the role of literature as counter-knowledge remains underexplored. The urgency of this research is underscored by the ongoing Palestinian–Israeli conflict, which not only shapes regional discourses but also influences global awareness of human rights. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative design through library research and textual analysis, with a focus on the symbolism of death, exile, and dispossession. Data were collected through documentation and critical reading of the novel, complemented by relevant academic literature, and analyzed using thematic classification within Michel Foucault's framework of power-knowledge, particularly the concepts of biopower and counter-knowledge. The findings reveal that the novel constructs collective suffering as a counter-hegemonic narrative that not only archives historical trauma but also articulates the moral legitimacy of sovereignty while extending its resonance to universal dimensions. The primary contribution of this study is to enrich power-knowledge theory with the dimension of resistance literature, while offering practical implications for strengthening global solidarity through cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Counterhegemony, Foucault, Literature, Sovereignty, Suffering

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INTRODUCTION

The collective suffering of the Palestinian people—ranging from land dispossession and structural violence (Hanifah et al., 2024) to the loss of vital living spaces—constitutes an enduring social reality that reflects a profound history of oppression (Handel et al., 2024a; Heni & Chandra, 2022). The urgency of this study lies in its significance for uncovering human rights violations, the crisis of sovereignty, and the intergenerational reproduction of injustice, all of which demand academic attention as well as global response (Asi et al., 2024). Empirically, practices such as house demolitions and the destruction of urban areas (Wicaksono et al., 2024) illustrate how modern colonialism systematically undermines local communities (Gokaru et al., 2023; Said et al., 2024). From a practical standpoint, hunger strikes staged by Palestinian political prisoners highlight both a crisis of dignity and public health, underscoring the need for international humanitarian and legal intervention (Albadawi, 2023a). Within this context, an analysis of *Rijālun fisy-Syams* as a cultural narrative of resistance becomes highly relevant, complementing existing scholarship and deepening the understanding of Palestinian resistance.

The body of literature on Palestinian narratives has largely emphasized colonialism, displacement, and identity politics. However, it remains limited in linking representations of collective suffering to the legitimacy of sovereignty through literature (Abualrob & Yousef, 2024a). Previous research has predominantly focused on political and legal studies, leaving the role of literature as counter-knowledge underexplored (Agnew, 2024). Moreover, scholarly attention has often centered on major figures such as Mahmoud Darwish, while Ghassan Kanafani's works—particularly *Rijālun fisy-Syams*—have received less sustained examination within the context of transnational consciousness (Alkhatib, 2024). For instance, Brehony (2024) highlights the militancy of Kanafani's thought but gives insufficient attention to the symbolism of suffering as a foundation for sovereignty. Similarly, Browne (2024) discusses reconciliation within Zionist colonialism without addressing the role of literature in shaping global solidarity. This study seeks to fill these gaps by analyzing *Rijālun fisy-Syams* as counter-hegemonic discourse, offering an original contribution to the study of Palestinian resistance literature.

The aim of this research is to examine how *Rijālun fisy-Syams* (Kanafāniy, 1980) represents Palestinian collective suffering as counter-hegemonic discourse and to map the role of resistance literature in cultivating transnational solidarity. This approach addresses the shortcomings of prior studies that have not adequately engaged with the tension between representations of suffering and normative demands for sovereignty, justice, and human rights. Foucault's theory of power is employed because its concepts of biopower and power-knowledge relations provide an effective lens through which to analyze how suffering is produced, normalized, and managed by hegemonic structures (Foucault, 1995b). The notion of

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biopower/sovereign-discipline is applied to interpret the death scene within the water tank and the symbolism of land as practices of managing life and death that reveal the operations of power. Additionally, the concepts of technologies of the self and the production of counter-knowledge are utilized to explore Kanafani's narrative strategies in generating global empathy and transnational solidarity. This synthesis provides analytical strength by linking micro-textual elements with macro-political configurations, thereby transcending the limitations of normative theories.

Ultimately, Kanafani's *Rijālun fisy-Syams* demonstrates how Palestinian collective suffering can be read as counter-hegemonic discourse that affirms sovereignty and human rights. The analysis focuses on the role of resistance literature as counter-knowledge, applying Foucault's framework of power-knowledge to uncover the colonial mechanisms that perpetuate marginalization (Foucault, 1995b). The intergenerational depictions of suffering in the novel show that land dispossession, poverty, and humiliation are not merely personal experiences but existential symbols of a nation resisting the normalization of colonialism (Kanafani, 1980; Plonski, 2024). At the same time, the universal symbolism of degradation and silent death resonates with the struggles of other oppressed peoples, thereby fostering transnational solidarity (Cook, 2024; Omar, 2024). Thus, resistance literature emerges as counter-knowledge that opens critical space for exploring the relationship between colonialism, identity, and the struggle for liberation.

Previous studies demonstrate that sovereignty has never been singular in its definition but is instead contested within legal, political, and global ethical frameworks. Mahomed (2024) interprets sovereignty as the exclusive right of the state to enforce law without external intervention. However, Foucault (2003) emphasizes that sovereignty operates through mechanisms of power that discipline society, extending far beyond mere legal authority. In line with this, Lokman & Nor (2024) argue that critiques of Arab Israeli relations reveal sovereignty functioning as an ideological instrument that transcends state boundaries. This view highlights the dynamic debates surrounding the essence of sovereignty.

The understanding of sovereignty develops further when seen in its formal, legal, and symbolic dimensions, manifested through constitutions, international jurisdiction, and representations of collective identity. Soraya et al. (2024) stress that ICC jurisdiction over war crimes serves as an important indicator of sovereignty claims, while Loewenthal et al. (2023) argue that civilian attitudes can also act as a measure of legitimacy in prolonged conflicts. Watad (2024) suggests that the flag functions as a rhizome of identity in colonial space, while Seeberg (2024) highlights that control over water resources represents material sovereignty. This diversity shows that sovereignty is not only normative but also operates through concrete practices.

In the realm of resistance, earlier studies demonstrate that counter-hegemonic practices cannot be confined to direct opposition or overt

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confrontation with power, but must be understood as discursive strategies that negotiate, rearticulate, and carve out contingent spaces of freedom within dominant regimes. Aral (2021) conceptualizes Palestinian resistance as an ongoing search for alternative strategies of liberation rather than a singular or purely reactionary response to domination. This view aligns with literary and cultural analyses showing how Palestinian narratives function as sites of meaning-making that challenge hegemonic rationalities, as seen in narrative, poetic, and symbolic practices that reframe dispossession and survival (Abualrob & Yousef, 2024; Alkhatib, 2024). Resistance, in this sense, operates through language, symbolism, and representation as much as through material struggle.

From a Foucauldian perspective, such an understanding of resistance requires a clear distinction between sovereign power and biopower. Sovereign power, as articulated in Foucault's work, is grounded in the juridical right to take life or let live and manifests through law, territorial authority, and spectacular violence (Foucault, 2003). By contrast, biopower governs through the administration of life itself, regulating bodies and populations via discipline, surveillance, health, mobility, and normalization (Foucault, 1995). Resistance within biopolitical regimes therefore does not primarily confront power at the level of law or armed force, but rather disrupts the discursive and institutional mechanisms through which life is managed, categorized, and rendered governable. Counter-hegemonic practices thus emerge as interventions into the rationalities that naturalize domination and depoliticize structural violence.

Post-Foucauldian scholarship further demonstrates that in colonial and settler-colonial contexts, biopower does not replace sovereign violence but operates in conjunction with it. In Palestine, practices of population management—such as spatial fragmentation, mobility restrictions, carceral regimes, and infrastructural control—are inseparable from ongoing forms of coercive and lethal force. Studies on political imprisonment, house demolitions, and urban ruination reveal how colonial violence intersects with biopolitical governance by simultaneously regulating life and exposing it to systematic precarity and death (Albadawi, 2023; Gokaru et al., 2023; Handel et al., 2024). Resistance, therefore, must be read as contestation not only of sovereign domination but also of biopolitical technologies that discipline, exhaust, and hierarchize Palestinian existence.

At the same time, applying Foucauldian analytics to the Palestinian context necessitates a critical engagement with their Eurocentric foundations. Foucault's theorization of power was developed primarily in relation to European modernity, liberal governance, and the nation-state, assumptions that do not fully capture the realities of settler colonialism, fragmented sovereignty, and permanent states of exception. Bhungalia (2024) argues that freedom must be conceptualized beyond narrow statist frameworks, particularly in contexts where statehood itself is deferred or structurally denied. In this regard, Sarup (1993) post-structuralist critique is instructive,

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as it redefines domination and resistance as historically contingent and discursively produced rather than universal or linear. Adapting Foucauldian frameworks to Palestine thus requires situating power within colonial temporality, racialized governance, and asymmetrical global regimes rather than assuming European trajectories of political development.

Taken together, these debates position counter-hegemony as a flexible and multidimensional theoretical category. It encompasses discursive resistance to biopolitical rationalities, challenges to the entanglement of sovereign and colonial violence, and critical adaptations of Eurocentric theory to non-European contexts. Within this expanded Foucauldian horizon, Palestinian resistance emerges not as a singular act of defiance, but as an ongoing process of destabilizing hegemonic regimes of power, knowledge, and life itself through narrative, discourse, and everyday practices.

This meaning becomes clearer when expressed in literature, media, and cultural practices that reject hegemonic domination. Hussein (2021) shows how Gaza family narratives function as counter-discourse affirming identity. Warshagha et al. (2024) highlight how alternative media framing shapes public perception to challenge dominant narratives. Luz (2023) demonstrates how pilgrimage to religious sites becomes a practice of resistant memory, while Dolgopolski (2024) underlines the politics of forgetting in religious texts as a form of symbolic resistance. Khater et al. (2024) further show that discourse opposing Islamophobia has also become a counter-hegemonic arena. This diversity underscores how resistance operates across social domains.

Similarly, prior studies show that collective suffering is understood as a shared experience shaped by the legacy of historical violence and recurring trauma. Diman & Miodownik (2024) argue that communal suffering stems from violence that perpetuates minority behavioral patterns. Hussein (2021) affirms that narratives of Gaza families represent symbolic resistance to identity erasure. Komesaroff (2024) contends that collective suffering creates opportunities for reconciliation through cross-group empathy. Amin et al. (2024) demonstrate that post-October 7 escalation shows how collective trauma shapes political discourse. Thus, shared suffering is both a social construct and a tool of resistance.

This dimension of suffering becomes more tangible when viewed through narrative, psychological, and cultural manifestations that unify communal identity. Zedan (2024) finds that psychological pressure and social support influence the intensity of suffering. Nathan (2024) emphasizes that relational resilience is an important indicator of community response to conflict. Warnke et al. (2024) argue that perceptions of territorial belonging shape cross-group experiences of suffering, while Peled et al. (2024) reveal that cross-border interactions through telerobotic technology can moderate the impact of communal suffering. Most notably, Kanafāniy (1980) through *Rijālun fisy-Syams* narrates the typology of diasporic suffering as a symbol of collective trauma. Taken together, these findings affirm the complexity of

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collective suffering while underscoring the gap in connecting literary representation with sovereignty and counter-hegemonic discourse.

After reviewing previous scholarship, this study identifies a critical limitation: research on Palestine has often overlooked the representation of collective suffering in relation to the legitimacy of sovereignty through the medium of literature. This study advances a new position by highlighting the intersection of resistance literature and counter-hegemonic discourse, an area largely neglected by the dominance of political, legal, and historical analyses. The first point of distinction lies in its focus on Ghassan Kanafani's *Rijālun fisy-Syams* as a text that unveils the symbolism of suffering rather than serving merely as documentary narration. The second distinction is its interpretation of suffering within a transnational horizon, positioning it as a foundation for global solidarity rather than limiting it to a framework of national identity. The novelty of this research rests in its dual reading of the novel: as a record of historical suffering and as an opening toward normative horizons of struggle, thereby validating its originality as both a theoretical and practical contribution.

This study advances a Foucauldian reading of *Rijālun fi al-Shams* by conceptualizing literature as counter-knowledge within power-knowledge analytics, rather than as a passive reflection of social reality. In Foucauldian terms, counter-knowledge emerges when discourse exposes and destabilizes dominant regimes of truth that normalize suffering and render certain lives governable or disposable (Foucault, 1995, 2003). Kanafani's text functions as such a counter-epistemic intervention by challenging the discursive frameworks through which Palestinian collective suffering is managed, obscured, or depoliticized within colonial and international narratives.

More specifically, Kanafani's narrative disrupts hegemonic rationalities by foregrounding the intersection of biopower and sovereignty that structures Palestinian existence. The novel reveals how Palestinian bodies are simultaneously subjected to overt sovereign violence and biopolitical abandonment, where life is regulated through containment, exposure, and neglect. The deaths within the water tank operate not merely as tragic events but as a critique of a colonial biopolitical order in which survival itself becomes precarious and conditional, thereby unsettling dominant logics that naturalize such forms of governance (Seeberg, 2024).

Finally, textual techniques in *Rijālun fi al-Shams* enact discursive resistance by refusing explanatory closure and humanitarian sentimentality. Kanafani's use of silence, narrative fragmentation, and muted subjectivity disrupts conventional modes of representation and forces readers to confront the violence embedded in normalization itself. These strategies align with post-structuralist accounts of resistance as a discursive practice that destabilizes power from within language rather than through direct confrontation (Sarup, 1993), situating the novel as an active site of epistemic and political struggle within global discursive networks.

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By addressing these questions, this research not only broadens academic horizons but also carries universal significance by demonstrating the role of literature as counter-knowledge against global hegemonic narratives, with implications for advancing justice, dignity, and solidarity across the world.

METHOD

This study focuses on Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Rijālun fisy-Syams* as a cultural artifact that represents the collective suffering of the Palestinian people. The selection of this text is based on its relevance as a narrative document that exposes the intersections of power, identity, and the legitimacy of sovereignty. The scope of the research is limited to the dimension of suffering as represented in relation to counter-hegemonic discourse, rather than Kanafani's oeuvre as a whole. Specifically, the study examines the symbolism of death, land dispossession, and exile as discursive configurations of resistance. The novel is therefore relevant for investigation as it provides a form of cultural expression that connects empirical realities with global discourses on human rights and the liberation of oppressed nations.

The research design employs a qualitative approach using library-based study within the framework of textual analysis. This orientation is chosen because it enables the exploration of symbolic meanings and power relations embedded within the text. Foucault's theory of power-knowledge serves as the analytical framework, offering tools to examine discipline, biopower, and resistance as they operate through literary narratives. This theory emphasizes the diffuse, layered, and productive nature of power relations, making it suitable for analyzing the colonial mechanisms present in Kanafani's narrative. The application of theory follows a systematic process of classifying scenes, interpreting symbols, and linking them to broader configurations of power. The strength of this design lies in its ability to bridge textual analysis with critical theory, thereby producing sharp and contextually grounded interpretations.

The data sources for this research consist of secondary data, including literary texts, scholarly literature, and documents related to the Palestinian issue. *Rijālun fisy-Syams* serves as the primary source, as it contains representations of collective suffering central to the study. Academic literature supplements the analysis, such as works on colonialism, refugee experiences, and Foucault's theoretical framework, which inform the interpretation of the text. The first set of data is drawn from the narrative description of the deaths of three characters in the overheated water tank, symbolizing the collective failure to secure a viable living space. The second set is derived from the representation of displacement at the Kuwaiti border as a symbol of exclusion and marginalization. These sources are selected for their capacity to enable a deep examination of the interconnections between literary texts, political discourse, and critical theory.

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Data collection is conducted through systematic documentation and critical reading of the primary literary text alongside a focused review of relevant scholarly literature. Within this process, power–knowledge relations are analyzed by examining how narrative structures, symbols, and character positioning produce, normalize, or contest regimes of authority, discipline, and domination, following Foucauldian analytics of discourse and power (Foucault, 1995). Counter-hegemonic elements are identified based on explicit criteria: the disruption of dominant colonial rationalities, the articulation of marginalized subjectivities, and the re-signification of spaces, bodies, and suffering as sites of resistance rather than passive victimhood, as demonstrated in Palestinian narrative studies (Abualrob & Yousef, 2024; Brehony, 2024). These narrative findings are then triangulated with secondary literature on colonialism, sovereignty, and resistance to ensure analytical rigor and theoretical validity.

Data analysis is conducted using a genealogical and discursive methodology grounded in Michel Foucault’s theory of power–knowledge. In line with Foucauldian analytics, the analysis focuses on tracing the historical and discursive conditions through which representations of suffering, displacement, and resistance are produced, circulated, and legitimized within the text (Foucault, 1995, 2003). Rather than isolating thematic units, the method examines how specific discursive formations—such as discipline, enclosure, and the regulation of life and death—operate as effects of biopolitical power embedded in colonial contexts.

The analytical procedure involves close reading of narrative structures, symbols, and linguistic dispositifs to identify how biopower and disciplinary mechanisms are articulated at the micro-textual level. For instance, the depiction of silent death within the water tank is analyzed as a discursive manifestation of colonial governance over life, revealing how power functions through normalization, abandonment, and managed mortality. At the same time, the analysis traces the emergence of counter-knowledge within the text, whereby dominant colonial rationalities are disrupted through alternative discursive practices that reframe exile, dispossession, and bodily vulnerability (Aral, 2021).

By situating the literary text within broader colonial and settler-colonial discursive formations, the method enables an examination of how resistance operates as a productive force within power relations rather than as an external opposition. This genealogical–discursive approach maintains Foucauldian methodological rigor and positions the text as a site where biopower, resistance, and knowledge production intersect, thereby linking micro-level textual analysis with macro-level political and cultural configurations.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. Collective Suffering as a Counter-Narrative of Sovereignty

The novel *Rijālun fisy-Syams* depicts the collective suffering of the Palestinian people through intergenerational characters who embody experiences of loss and historical disconnection. Abul Qais appears as the older generation uprooted from his land, described through the metaphor of the earth groaning and his chest tightening as if in a grave, signifying the deep bond between human beings and the lost homeland. As'ad represents the younger generation betrayed by smugglers, illustrated through the image of a body abandoned in the desert "like a dead dog," reflecting social humiliation. Marwan represents the adolescent generation that has lost its future after being abandoned by his father and is overshadowed by hunger and disappointment. The climax of the story occurs when the three characters are trapped in the overheated water tank and die in silence, presenting the symbol of a collective prison that extinguishes hope.

Table 1:

<i>Textual Evidence and Foucauldian Discourse in Men in the Sun</i>				
No.	Character / Symbol	Arabic Quotation	Meaning & Suffering	Counter-Hegemonic Message
1.	Abul Qais	«كانت الأرض تتنّ تحت أقدامه...» "The earth groaned beneath his feet..."	The older generation uprooted from the land, suffocated in life	Legitimization of the right to land & collective memory
2.	As'ad	«تركوني في الصحراء، كما يترك الكلب الميت» "They left me in the desert, like a dead dog."	The younger generation betrayed and exploited	Critique of structural betrayal
3.	Marwan	«أبي تخلى عني، ولم يترك لي إلا الجوع والخيبة» "My father abandoned us, leaving me only hunger and disappointment."	The adolescent generation deprived of a future	Symbol of intergenerational trauma
4.	Abu al-Khazairan	«لماذا لم تدقوا جدار الخزان؟» "Why didn't you knock on the wall of the tank?"	Critique of the silence of victims and the world	Call for cultural and moral resistance
5.	Water Tank	«ماتوا صامتين في الخزان، كأن الصحراء ابتلعت صراخهم» "They died in silence inside the water tank, as if	Collective prison, silent death	Symbol of "life in death" for the Palestinian people

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*the desert swallowed their
screams.”*

The contents of the table above are elaborated in the following narrative to emphasize the interconnections between characters, symbols, suffering, and counter-hegemonic messages embedded in *Rijālun fisy-Syams*. Abul Qais is portrayed as a representation of the older Palestinian generation uprooted from their homeland and forced to live in suffocating conditions. This depiction is significant because it demonstrates that the loss of land is not merely an agrarian issue but also an existential tragedy that burdens the spirit. The quotation «كانت الأرض تننّ تحت أقدامه، وكان صدره يضيق كأنه قبر» (“The earth groaned beneath his feet, and his chest tightened as though it were a grave”) underscores the emotional bond between people and the land they have lost. The symbolism of the chest as a grave reveals that dispossession is equivalent to a living death. Through this figure, the novel conveys a counter-hegemonic message affirming the legitimacy of land rights and the centrality of collective memory for the Palestinian nation.

While Abul Qais reflects the older generation’s loss of land and dignity, As‘ad embodies another dimension of suffering through betrayal and exploitation of the younger generation. His character illustrates how suffering arises not only from external colonization but also from internal social structures that weaken the collective. The expression «تركوني في الصحراء، كما يترك الكلب الميت» (“They abandoned me in the desert, like a dead dog discarded”) conveys a sense of humiliation and worthlessness. The imagery of the body discarded like an animal carcass serves as a stark metaphor for structural betrayal of the ideal of freedom. This narrative offers a sharp critique of systems that perpetuate exploitation while rejecting the normalization of injustice endured by Palestinian youth.

Meanwhile, the suffering of adolescents is represented through Marwan, who is born into abandonment and the loss of a future. His portrayal extends the narrative arc by showing how the trauma experienced by the older and younger generations continues into a more vulnerable successor generation. His lament «أبي تخلى عنّا، ولم يترك لي إلا الجوع والخيبة» (“My father abandoned us, leaving me nothing but hunger and disappointment”) exposes the reality of youth inheriting only deprivation and emptiness. This narrative reveals the rupture of life prospects and the intergenerational transmission of social wounds. In terms of counter-hegemonic messaging, Marwan emphasizes that colonization destroys not only land but also the continuity of Palestinian family history.

The rupture between generations depicted in Marwan’s story is deepened by the voice of Abu al-Khazairan, who embodies a critique of the passivity of victims and the broader international community. His character adds a moral dimension to the narrative of suffering by questioning why tragedy must be endured in silence. His call, «لماذا لم تدقوا جدار الخزان؟» (“Why did you not knock on the tank’s wall? Why?”), challenges helplessness—not only of the

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characters within the story but also of the wider society that allows injustice to persist. The counter-hegemonic message here is a cultural and moral demand that suffering must be met with collective action rather than passivity.

The culmination of the narrative is crystallized in the symbol of the water tank, articulated through the haunting line « ماتوا صامتين في الخزان، كأنَّ الصحراء ابتلعت » «صراخهم»، which captures the silent extinction of the three protagonists. This image condenses all prior layers of suffering into a single, dense metaphor of a collective prison, where Palestinian life is enclosed, regulated, and ultimately extinguished without witness. The tank functions as a space of absolute enclosure, stripping the characters of voice, agency, and visibility, while the surrounding desert reinforces their erasure by absorbing even the possibility of protest. Their silent death signifies a condition of “life in death,” in which existence is reduced to biological survival under suffocation, abandonment, and structural immobilization. Far from being a mere narrative endpoint, the water tank operates as a biopolitical dispositif that exposes how colonial power manages life through confinement and silence, while simultaneously delivering a counter-hegemonic indictment of a world that normalizes Palestinian suffering by refusing to hear their swallowed screams.

Taken as a whole, the narratives constructed through Abul Qais, As‘ad, Marwan, Abu al-Khazairan, and the water tank symbol reveal a pattern of collective suffering that transcends personal wounds to form a discourse beyond the individual. Land dispossession, structural betrayal, intergenerational trauma, critiques of passivity, and the metaphor of a collective prison converge to construct a powerful representation of the Palestinian reality. Each character and symbol complement the others, presenting layered, continuous suffering while underscoring that this tragedy is part of a long history of colonial oppression. Thus, *Rijālun fisy-Syams* is not merely a literary story but a cultural archive that functions as a counter-narrative to global hegemony and as a moral legitimation of the Palestinian people’s sovereignty and dignity.

b. Resistance Literature and Traces of Global Solidarity

The novel *Rijālun fisy-Syams* also illustrates a dimension that expands the meaning of suffering from a local context to a universal scope, thereby generating resonance that transcends national boundaries. The figure of Abul Qais expresses his desire to migrate in order to restore his family’s dignity, a depiction that reflects survival strategies yet simultaneously underscores the profound loss of honor. As‘ad voices his frustration at being sold cheaply like a worthless commodity, linking the Palestinian experience to global patterns of human exploitation. The silent death of the three characters inside the overheated tank symbolizes a universal humanitarian tragedy whose echoes extend far beyond the borders of Palestine. Abu al-Khazairan’s anguished cry, questioning why they did not knock on the walls of the tank, serves as a

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moral call to the international community not to remain silent in the face of injustice.

Table 2:
Textual Evidence and Foucauldian Discourse in Men in the Sun

No.	Arabic Quote	Dimension of Representation	Impact on Global Awareness
1.	« سأرحل لأعود بحقائب مملوءة بالمال... » <i>I will leave to return with bags full of money...</i>	Forced migration & loss of dignity	Opens global empathy toward the suffering of refugees
2.	« باعوني كما تباع البضائع الرخيصة » <i>They sold me like cheap goods are sold</i>	Exploitation & dehumanization	Links Palestine with victims of global exploitation
3.	« ماتوا صامتين في الخزان... » <i>They died silently in the tank...</i>	Collective death in silence	A symbol of universal humanitarian tragedy
4.	« لماذا لم تدقوا جدار الخزان؟ » <i>Why did you not knock on the tank's wall?</i>	Moral and political call	An appeal to the international community to act

The details in the table above are elaborated here to demonstrate how quotations from Rijālun fisī-Syams represent the suffering of the Palestinian people while simultaneously generating global resonance. The quotation « سأرحل لأعود بحقائب مملوءة بالمال... » reflects the dimension of forced migration experienced by Palestinians as a survival strategy laden with the loss of dignity. This is significant because it underscores that displacement is not merely economic mobility but an experience of estrangement that strips away identity. The statement represents the compulsion of generations to leave their homeland merely to survive, symbolizing a shift in values from dignity to mere existence. In this way, the text creates a space for global empathy, as this suffering parallels the experiences of other displaced peoples worldwide.

If forced migration exposes the erosion of dignity, the quotation « باعوني كما تباع البضائع الرخيصة » highlights another layer of suffering through the reality of exploitation and dehumanization. It demonstrates how the human body is treated as a worthless commodity, embedding suffering within the structure of global oppression. This representation illustrates the humiliation endured by the characters and offers a sharp critique of the sociopolitical mechanisms that commodify human lives at negligible value. The expression explicitly connects the Palestinian condition with the experiences of other victims of global exploitation, opening a path for transnational solidarity against dehumanization.

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The transition from exploitation to collective death is evident in the quotation «ماتوا صامتين في الخزان...», which portrays the tragic and silent deaths of the three main characters. This reality is crucial as it presents suffering not only as an individual experience but also as a voiceless collective tragedy. The silence of their deaths illustrates structural entrapment that eliminates resistance and forecloses hope. By positioning the tank as a space of death, the text transforms the Palestinian tragedy into part of the universal language of human suffering. Thus, this representation affirms that the Palestinian experience is inseparable from global humanitarian tragedy.

The final layer of representation is deepened through the quotation «لماذا؟ لم تنقوا جدار الخزان؟», which functions as both a moral and political call. This rhetorical question is significant because it not only addresses the characters in the narrative but also challenges the silence of the international community. The voice of Abu al-Khazairan becomes a representation of moral consciousness, calling for collective action. This critique broadens the meaning of the text, transforming it from a reflection of suffering into an urgent appeal to resist injustice. In doing so, it provides an ethical impetus for global readers to engage actively with the Palestinian issue.

Taken together, these representations invite a Foucauldian interrogation of whether transnational solidarity in *Rijālun fisy-Syams* genuinely resists power or partially re-inscribes it. The novel produces solidarity through the exposure of Palestinian suffering as a biopolitical condition shaped by forced mobility, labor exploitation, and disposable life, thereby unsettling dominant rationalities that normalize such violence. At the same time, this solidarity operates within existing regimes of intelligibility, where suffering becomes legible through universal humanitarian codes that may inadvertently reproduce liberal moral hierarchies. In this sense, solidarity emerges as an ambivalent discursive practice: it functions as counter-knowledge that challenges hegemonic narratives, yet it remains entangled in power relations that condition how resistance can be recognized and circulated.

Beyond this ambivalence, a Foucauldian reading also requires attention to how the text enters and operates within global discursive networks. *Rijālun fisy-Syams* circulates beyond its immediate Palestinian context as a transnational narrative of dispossession, enabling the novel to intervene in broader regimes of truth concerning migration, colonial violence, and global inequality. Through its narrative form and thematic universality, the text participates in the production of a shared discursive space where Palestinian experience is translated into globally recognizable categories of injustice, while simultaneously challenging the epistemic limits of those categories. In this way, the novel functions not only as an archive of suffering but as a strategic discursive node that repositions Palestinian resistance within transnational circuits of meaning and power.

The findings of this study demonstrate that *Rijālun fisy-Syams* frames collective suffering as counter-hegemonic discourse that simultaneously cultivates transnational consciousness. This is evident in the intergenerational

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relationships between older, younger, and adolescent characters, where land dispossession, structural betrayal, and historical rupture emerge not as personal narratives but as political symbols resisting colonial domination. The representation of Abul Qais illustrates the intrinsic bond between people and the lost land as a basis of existential legitimacy, while the tragic deaths in the water tank underscore a condition of “life in death,” symbolizing a system of silent oppression. In this way, the study reveals that suffering in literature functions not only as an archive of experience but also as a space for articulating sovereignty and solidarity.

The close interrelation among these findings highlights the logical link between literary narratives and political realities, as symbols within the text represent forms of resistance that transcend personal boundaries toward collective dimensions. This relationship is most visible in the symbolization of the body and space, reflecting both generational trauma and counter-hegemonic strategies. Prior studies affirm the relevance of this perspective, showing how historical suffering generates behavioral patterns among oppressed communities Diman & Miodownik (2024). Similarly, narratives of exile and dispossession in the Palestinian context align with Sorby Jr. (2022) analysis of state survival in post-1967 regional struggles. Together, these findings reinforce the position of literature as a bridge between the empirical facts of suffering and the symbolic dimensions of collective resistance.

Compared to earlier research, this study is distinctive in positioning the symbolism of suffering as the foundation of both sovereignty and global solidarity. Its novelty lies in interpreting suffering not merely as trauma but as discursive construction that generates counter-knowledge. Diman & Miodownik (2024) highlight how collective trauma is transmitted across generations as a survival strategy among ethnic minorities, while Sorby Jr. (2022) examines Jordan’s post-1967 existential struggle as a small state navigating geopolitical pressures. Both studies reveal universal patterns of suffering and response that resonate with themes of displacement in *Rijālun fisy-Syams*. However, neither addresses literature as a medium of resistance that symbolically articulates suffering. This study therefore asserts the universality of resistance literature in transforming suffering into counter-hegemonic discourse across oppressed nations, not only in Palestine.

The interpretation of these findings shows that collective suffering in the novel serves as a medium for transforming empirical facts into social realities. This is clear in how the symbols of land, the abandoned body, and the water tank represent not only defeat but also discursive resistance. Comparable dynamics are reflected in historical interpretations of land ownership as contested arenas of identity (Mazeh, 2024). On the ideological level, Zreik (2024) demonstrates how the Gaza war provokes reflection on the legitimacy of sovereignty through victim-centered narratives. Consequently, the interpretation of this study confirms that the factual suffering depicted in *Rijālun fisy-Syams* is transformed into both socio-historical and ideological realities that challenge global hegemonies.

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The implications of this research are significant for global scholarship, as they highlight the role of resistance literature in shaping collective consciousness across nations. This process unfolds through representations of suffering that symbolically resonate with universal human experiences, opening pathways for transnational solidarity. The symbolism of land underscores the legitimacy of political claims, as noted by (Mazeh, 2024), while the representation of silent death evokes cross-cultural awareness, paralleling Schuz & Rubinstein (2024) analysis of interfaith dialogue as a site of solidarity. Hence, the study demonstrates that literature can transform the tragedy of Palestine into a universal humanitarian agenda.

Concrete steps are necessary to extend these findings into meaningful contributions. Such actions are essential to ensure that the research transcends theoretical reflection and connects with practical goals of liberation and solidarity. The first recommendation is to integrate Palestinian literature, particularly *Rijālun fisy-Syams*, into international educational curricula, with the involvement of academic institutions and UNESCO, to strengthen global collective memory. The second recommendation is the establishment of cross-national cultural dialogue forums, facilitated by international human rights organizations, to articulate Palestinian suffering within the framework of global solidarity. By implementing these recommendations through structured planning and evaluation, this research can yield positive outcomes in raising global awareness and reinforcing the legitimacy of Palestinian sovereignty in international discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that resistance literature has the capacity to transform experiences of collective suffering into both a foundation for legitimizing sovereignty and a catalyst for solidarity. The significance of these findings extends beyond the local context, as they bridge particular experiences with a universal language of humanity capable of inspiring political and moral responses across borders. The representation of Abul Qais, with the symbolism of land dispossession and the metaphor of a suffocated chest “as though in a grave,” underscores the moral claim to land as both a historical and ethical basis of legitimacy. Similarly, the narrative of forced migration, the betrayal endured by As’ad, and the silent deaths within the tank reframe localized suffering as a universal humanitarian tragedy. Collectively, these elements confirm the consistency between the research questions and the theoretical framework, illustrating the correspondence between literary symbols and the political realities of colonial domination.

Conceptually, the study advances an integrated reading of Foucauldian biopower and counter-knowledge, showing how literature functions simultaneously as an archive of power and a medium of resistance. Land emerges as a key indicator linking collective memory to claims of sovereignty, while death in the tank exemplifies how tragedy is converted into alternative knowledge that generates solidarity. Although limited to a single

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text and library-based analysis, the study points to future research directions, including comparative analyses of resistance literature across oppressed societies and field-based reception studies, to deepen understanding of the relationship between literature, suffering, and sovereignty politics in contemporary contexts.

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Sangidu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Validation. **Eva Farhah:** Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, and Project Administration. **Imam Wicaksono:** Writing, Editing, Data Interpretation, and Data Curation. **Sherif Sa’ad al-Gayyar:** Review, Validation, and Academic Supervision.

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