

**CONTRADICTIONAL DUALS IN GHASSAN KANAFANI'S STORIES**  
**(A COLLECTION ABOUT MEN AND GUNS) AS A SAMPLE**

Dr. Nizar Frak Ali Al-Hassany <sup>1</sup>  
 Oday Kamil Hammadi <sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>General Directorate of Education in al\_Muthanna  
<sup>2</sup>Directorate of Education, Al Qadisiyah Governorate, Iraq  
 Email: ar3357930@gmail.com

ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>This study seeks, in its critical effort, to uncover the contradictory duals in Ghassan Kanafani's stories as a cognitive system that includes the depth of their presence in these stories and reflects a narrative awareness issued by the storyteller.</p> <p>Since these dualities expand with the expansion of Kanafani's narrative production, which makes this study inflated unjustifiably, the researchers decided to rely on the collection (On Men and Guns) as one of the most important collections of stories whose narrative system contains these dualities.</p> <p>These dualities – with what they include of aesthetic and intellectual dimensions – contributed significantly to the production of its artistic and semantic structure.</p>	

**Introduction**

This study aims to investigate the concept of contradictory duals in the collection (On Men and Guns) by the short story writer Ghassan Kanafani, as it strives to clarify the representations of antithetical binaries of presence and absence, homeland and exile, life and death within the stories of the collection and the linguistic methods adopted by the short story writer in crystallizing the idea of contradictory duals and the connotations that he seeks to convey to the reader through narrative storytelling.

contradictory duals in Ghassan Kanafani's stories

Reshaping the language in any narrative work must be based on grammatical signs and special methods that establish a dynamic narrative voice for the narrating self.

This emerging voice is a necessary mediator between the two moments of formation and reshaping (reading); because it belongs to the world of the artistic work and is thrown into an external world that the recipient hears and understands its subjectivity (1).

It is the narrative aid to which the realistic author entrusts the narration of the story primarily and is guided by the answer to the question ((Who is speaking?)) and its image can be drawn through the fingerprints it necessarily leaves in the narrative discourse (2 ). Among these fingerprints is its special formation of the language which is considered a focus from which the other dimensions emanate and

are based ( 3). It seems that this special formation of language is closely related to the type of narrator ((and among the examples of the connection between the type of narrator or his formula and the style, is what we see in the neutral narrator and the descriptive analytical style, and between the refined narrator and the standard style used for evaluative language. If the narrator is neutral, his language is neutral, working to convey the meaning or reveal the action without revealing any emotion from the speaker, a cold language like the language of sciences. As for the refined narrator, his language is an epic poetic evaluative language that conveys the event and the feeling accompanying it at the same time. Therefore, we find the first descriptive and standard, relying on the first level of language, while the second is metaphorical, relying on psychological depiction and on conveying feelings and sensations and on exaggeration or belittling of the action))(4).

This narrative adopted by the revised narrator makes the short story - in many cases - a narrative structure that opens linguistically and artistically to a group of special techniques that work effectively to transfer it from the traditional monotonous narrative style to a different narrative style full of modernity, novelty and distinction.

By contemplating these techniques, we see the antithetical dualities as one of the most important creative characteristics in narrative texts due to the creative aesthetic energies they possess that are capable of attracting the recipient into the orbit of these texts and arousing his emotions. The use of contradictory duals arouses astonishment and paradox generated by the meeting of opposites, and the opposite provides us with the possibility of balancing between it and its opposite, and this is what generates a cognitive perception of things that helps the recipient generate a duality from a duality; The duality of (light/darkness) can refer to the duality of (dream/reality), which leads to the birth of a distinct space for the text, in which a set of actual temporal and spatial relationships come together, at different times, and this relationship meets on more than one axis, meets, collides, intersects and parallels, enriching the text and diversifying its semantic possibilities (5). The observer notices that dualities exist with the existence of man, and are formed with him. It is a philosophical idea that seeks to say ((the duality of the principles that explain the universe, such as the duality of opposites and their succession, and the duality of the one and matter - from the aspect of what is the principle of indeterminacy - or the duality of the infinite one)) (6). However, the antithetical dualities in this concept were known recently, but the critical code defined it in colors close to it, such as antithesis, contrast, and contradiction. From afar, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi pointed to the profound effect that dualities leave, as al-Tawhidi goes on to say that literary and philosophical thought is also a result of the diversity of dualities; man is a contradictory composition (7). Close to this meaning is what Al-Jurjani stated that combining opposites and distant sides makes the recipient in a state of being carried away by the meaning. (8) Perhaps the opposition or antithesis is the closest to the term of antithetical pairs in the poetic system. In this regard, Abu Hilal Al-Askari says: ((The correspondence in speech is the combina

tion of a thing and its opposite in a part of the parts of the message or sermon or a line of the lines of the poem, such as the combination of black and white)) (9).

Recently, we can consider the first incubator of antithetical binaries to be modern linguistic studies, which were established by (De Saussure) and his proposals in modern linguistics, and then the structuralist school adopted the idea of binaries while dismantling the language system and exploring the contents of the text, and calling for the death of the author.

If we wanted to monitor these binaries in Ghassan Kanafani's stories, the narrator in these stories seemed to us inclined to give birth to them, until they came to control a wide area in the space of his narrative experience; therefore, it became necessary for us to stand on them and reveal their fertile aesthetic values that allowed this narrative space to be so rich, and this dominance over the recipient's self.

Here, it must be noted that any focus on these binaries must be in harmony with the narrator's moral references and the struggle data that primarily embrace the land of Palestine and the struggle of its people against the occupation, so he seeks to create a broad horizon in the reader's mind, trying to involve him within the text. The antithetical dualities had a great impact in revealing the narrator's position on the place, through constructing the architecture of the place according to aesthetic connotations that highlight its high value at one stage, and degrade it at another.

The duality (homeland/camp): Through this duality, the homeland becomes a place of warmth, security and containment ((often sneaking in at night and sleeping under the olive trees))(10). It also becomes a sacred place for us ((and his chest opened up and relief returned to him suddenly, and the olive fields appeared before him shining with a sacred light))(11). In addition, it is a source of unity and revolution ((and in that void filled with the neighing of olives there were two men from the same family))(12). While the camp appears to us through this duality as a negative place carrying the ugliest connotations of humiliation, defeat and brokenness ((and the camps are those stains on the brow of our tired morning. And the tattered rags that flutter like the banners of defeat thrown by chance over the steppes of mud, dust and pity))(13)

As it is clear that this spatial opposition put the reader in front of the narrator's clear bias towards the original place (homeland) at the expense of the intrusive, emergency place (the camp), which is a bias that if we tried to follow it we would find it a fixed bias in the writer's self before the narrator adopted it and disclosed it within the narrative text. It is noticeable that when the imagination shows its interest in something, it deepens the values of this thing such that it adds imagination to the values of reality, and then the place that is attracted towards the imagination such that it does not remain a neutral, indifferent place with geometric dimensions only, but rather enters into a state of communication with the writer that pushes him to create it psychologically (14).

This is what we saw in the story (The Little One Discovers That the Key Is Like an Axe) in which the narrator deals with the key of the Al Jaber family according to the duality of (definiteness and indefiniteness). The key/axe that symbolizes the homeland in this story is present with the specificity of the land of Palestine for the Al Jaber family ((For us, the key was a set of virtues that entered our lives slowly, but steadily. It was the only key that time could not lose. Every man, every child, every woman in the village knew that this key was the key to Jaber's house. There were even people in the neighboring villages who knew that as well. If it was lost or fell, it would return to the house as if by itself)) (15). It is noteworthy that this particularity with which the key was present has shaped the identity of the family, to the point that its existence has become linked to the existence of (the key/axe), and its pronunciation with ( Al of definite article) by family members is a reflection of a mental covenant that acknowledges the key as an objective equivalent to the homeland, so that (Al) here is transformed from an abstract grammatical tool into a strong spiritual link, any projection of which will result in a violent attack to destroy the identity. Then this meaning is confirmed by the deep brokenness that befell the soul of one of the sons of the (Al Jaber) family when he was informed by the owner of the room he was renting that a person named (Yahya) came regarding a key without the (definite article)

((He said that he came regarding a key / key? / And suddenly the whole world recoiled and stood before me at once, and perhaps that was the first time in my life that I heard the word (key) without the (al). It was always (the(Al) key), so what made it just a key?)) (16). As it is clear that the(Al) (definite article) - here - became a distinguishing mark between (possession, warmth and containment) and (poverty, homelessness and misery)

If for many it was just a ((piece of iron)) (17), or just a ((huge, beautiful and strange key)) (18). It is pronounced without (al), then for the (Al Jaber) family it did not lose that warmth (al) and it was pronounced with emphasis, making a sound like a door slamming(19).

The duality of (presence/absence): Since time is an extension of place, it was employed in Ghassan Kanafani's stories in a way that serves the mechanism of presenting place, as such an employment refers us in an unambiguous way to the duality of (presence/absence), as the more the homeland is present, the more the characters' sense of time is a stable and natural sense, as time in the homeland is a natural time that flows smoothly and calmly (dawn prayer, morning, quarter of an hour, two hours, night, Friday) (20). While time in the camp and the battlefield leaves the sequence that presents life in a static natural situation to a new level in which time as a temporal extension is disturbed to transform into a psychological time that has no beginning or end, the time of feeling and the time of memory (21). It is (the time of engagement) (22).

The narrator says in the story (The Little One Goes to the Camp) which is equivalent to a million years as the narrator says in the story (The Entrance), ((And after a million years it was my turn and the clean nurse handed me a square red box))(23). It is a cold, heavy time as the narrator says in the story (The Little One, His Father and the Nurse Go to the Castle of Jedin), ((And time passed heavy and cold, pulling its steps from the deep lakes of mud, shackled and tied to a mountain, angry, but also helpless, grinding his teeth together, so their echoes returned in his shaking chest like a spring of steel, mud and terror))(24). Contemplating the two times in the texts that preceded confirms for us the effect of (homeland/place) that is effective in their presence and in the characters' feelings about them. The antithetical dualities are present as a prominent element in drawing the features of the character, as we can see their use (in presenting an antithetical image of each of the two brothers (Qassim) and (Mansour), as this antithetical image will determine the relationship of each of them with the land. If we want to balance between these two characters through their opposing presence in the story, we find (Qassim) in order for people to call him (Doctor), his father sold a plot of olives, and allocated each year a pile of oil cans to be sold to pay for his glasses and books (25). However, this expensive care by the father went in the opposite direction, weakening the doctor's relationship with the land, so that the land - later - turned into a hostile place that Dr. (Qassim) feared for his professional future ((The donkeys and horses will remain in Majd al-Krum, and your friend will open a clinic in Haifa)) (26). The matter did not end there, as the circle of hostility expanded to include even the father, while he was in the midst of his desperate attempts to extend The bonds of communication between the son and the earth. The father realized this hostility through "a fleeting look of contempt that flashed in his son's eyes... He felt it falling on his chest like a thundering mountain" (27).

In contrast to this educated, arrogant character who rebels against his environment and reality, the character of Mansour stands out to us as a character with limited education but who loves the land by nature ((The little boy loves the fields, when he returns from school he dives into the irrigation canal up to his knees, he has the hands of a real farmer.. often he sneaks out of the house at night and sleeps under the olive trees))(28), ((He is a boy who loves the fields, his father always says, and he is like a

purebred horse that only lives in the meadows))(29). This created an impression in the father of the depth of Mansour's roots in this land, so that the little boy would have this impression as a broad hope through which the land would be sustained and preserved. This was achieved through the revolutionary sense that Mansour possessed to liberate the usurped land of Palestine, unlike Dr. Qasim who renounced the land and preferred to pursue the temptations of the city that the Jews were able to control most of its joints. Included within this trend in drawing the features of the fictional character is the narrator's tendency to divide the Jews in Palestine into two opposing categories. The narrator was able to reveal the Jewish character by investing in these dualities in an investment that preserved the closeness of this type of character to the lived Palestinian reality.

In this color, the first category is present, a peaceful category that merges into Palestinian society, humanly and culturally; to be an important part of its social fabric rooted in this land ((In Safed, there were four thousand Jews who were never farmers, but no one cared about that. They lived in their small shops for a long time, sold people their things, exchanged greetings with them and chatted, and invitations were extended to them for lunch and dinner. They had been there for a long time, and therefore they spoke Arabic and had Arabic names, and read books and newspapers, and everything seemed logical to the extent that the residents of Safed called them Arab Jews)) (30). As for the second category, the narrator was keen in building it to crowd it with the ugliest negative qualities that open up to treachery, self-interest, and the tendency toward colonial control over the land of Palestine and its people. ((Edel Maybrook, Edel.. Edel.. Who would have thought that he was from the Haganah? And that his hotels, restaurants, and houses were full of weapons? The foreigner (Bar) who looked out at the people from behind his glass table with a face that resembled a chicken, who would have bet that he was a military man preparing weapons and drawing up plans, Banderly, Bernfeldt.. They were sent especially for the future))<sup>(6)</sup>.

Penetrating the depths of this presentation and contemplating its suggestive level must lead us to a neutral point of view that the narrator tried to present through a group of contradictory historical facts that produced the peaceful Jewish character in contrast to the conspiratorial Zionist character.

## Conclusion:

Through the above, we can be assured of the following:

- The presence of antithetical dualities in the collection (About Men and Guns) is a conscious presence that carries cognitive depth and is not arbitrary, but rather was studied, issued according to the narrator's artistic vision and his clear commitment to his cause.
- The antithetical dualities revealed the narrator's lack of neutrality in presenting many details, as he tried through these dualities to bring the reader closer to some of them and to make him feel separate from others.
- The antithetical dualities contributed to cultivating an artistic narrative language that gave the language of narration a clear luster that does not make the reader feel bored, irritated, or alienated.

## Footnotes:

See: Paul Ricoeur .. Identity and Narration: 78.

2) ) See: Dictionary of Narratives: 195.

3) ) See: The Short Story in Palestine and Jordan: 325.

4) ) The Narrator and the Text: 167.



- 5) ) See: The Term of contradictory duals: 119.
- 6) ) The Philosophical Dictionary, Jamil Saliba, Vol. 1, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, Beirut, n.d., 379.
- 7) ) Interviews, Abu Hayyan Al-Tawhidi, Mishkat Islamic Electronic Library: 20.
- (8) Secrets of Rhetoric in the Science of Rhetoric, Abdul Qaher Al-Jurjani, Commentary: Muhammad Rashid Rida, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, 1987: 131.
- 9)) The Book of the Two Industries, Writing and Poetry, Abu Hilal Al-Askari, edited by: Ali Muhammad Al-Bajawi, Muhammad Abu Al-Fadl Ibrahim, Dar Ihya Al-Kutub Al-Arabiyya, 1st ed., 1952: 339.
- (10) About Men and Rifles: 34.
- (11) About Men and Rifles: 34.
- 12)) About Men and Rifles: 57.
- (13) About Men and Rifles: 18.
- (14) See: □ Gaston Bachelard, The Aesthetics of the Image, Ghada Al-Imam, Enlightenment, Beirut, 1st ed., 2010: 291.
- (15) About Men and Rifles: 100.
- (16) About Men and Rifles: 101-102.
- (17) About Men and Rifles: 103.
- (18) About Men and Guns: 104.
- (19) About Men and Guns: 104-105.
- (20) About Men and Guns: 32-33.
- (21) See: The Art of the Short Story in Morocco, in Origin, Development and Trends, Amad al-Madani, Dar al-Awda, Beirut, n.d.: 41.
- (22) About Men and Guns: 13.
- (23) About Men and Guns: 19.
- (24) About Men and Guns: 84.
- (25) About Men and Guns: 32.
- (26) About Men and Guns: 33.
- (27) About Men and Guns: 35.
- ( 28) About men and guns: 34.
- ( 29) About men and guns: 39.
- (30)) About men and guns: 48.
- ( 31) About men and guns: 49.

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- (C)§ Gaston Bachelard Aesthetics of the Image, Ghada Al-Imam, Al-Tanweer, Beirut, 1st ed., 2010.
- (R)§ The Narrator and the Narrative Text, Dr. Abdul Rahim Al-Kurdi, Dar Al-Nashr Lil-Jamaat, Cairo, 2nded., 1996.
- (P)§ The Image of the Palestinian in the Contemporary Palestinian Story, Dr. Wassef Abu Al-Shabab, Dar Al-Tali'ah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1977.
- (A)§ About Men and Guns, Short Stories, Ghassan Kanafani, Arab Research Foundation, Lebanon, 2nd ed., 1981.

(F)§ The Art of the Short Story in Morocco, in Origin, Development and Trends, Amad Al-Madani, Dar Al-Awda, Beirut, n.d.

(Q)§ The Short Story in Palestine and Jordan since its Inception until the Generation (New Horizon). Dr. Muhammad Ubaid Allah, Ministry of Culture, Amman, Jordan, 2001.

(M)§ Dictionary of Narratives, Muhammad Al-Qadi and others, Dar Muhammad Ali for Publishing, Tunis, 1st ed., 2010.

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