The Theater of Resistance in Jordan: Jibrīl Al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat Zarīf Al-Tūl* (*Zarīf Al-Tūl's Alienation*) and Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead*

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Abstract The play *Tagrībat Zarīf al-Tūl* (*Zarīf al-Tūl's Alienation*) (1984) by the Jordanian playwright Jibrīl al-Sheikh is an exemplary model of the theater of resistance in Jordan. The main protagonist Zarīf al-Tūl resists the British Mandate for Palestine from 1922 to 1947 which endeavored to realize the Belfour Declaration in 1917, in which England promised to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine. Zarīf al-Tūl is a hero of resistance, who believes in armed resistance as a means of liberation from the British Mandate for Palestine, or in "violence," as termed by Frantz Fanon. Staging Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* (1936) (*Idfinū al-Mawtā*) at the University of Jordan in 1972 represents the cultural, political, and intellectual mood of Jordanian playwrights and directors, who advocated the necessity of resisting the injustice of wars and colonial politics. This paper aims to analyze the plays from a postcolonial vantage, examining the concept of resistance and bringing to light the experience of the Jordanian theater in addressing Arab regional concerns.

Keywords Jibrīl al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat Zarīf al-Tūl*; Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead*;

Jordanian theater; post-colonialism; resistance; Frantz Fanon; Edward Said

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Introduction: Jordanian Theater and the Search for a Theater

Professional theater in Jordan, albeit its early non-professional school attempts, and theatrical performances, was born as late as 1965. This way it came very late compared to other Arab countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. However, it aligned with the mainstream of Arab theater and added a significant complement to the Arab theater movement and culture in general.[1] It quickly responded enthusiastically to the cultural and political challenges and threats facing the Arab nation, such as the oppression of the late reign of the Ottoman Empire and the Western colonial conspiracies against the Arab world, in general, and Palestine, in particular, in the twentieth century, along with its engagement with local social and political concerns.[2]

1 In his book *al-Masraḥ fī al-Urdun* [*Theater in Jordan*] (Amman: Manshūrāt Lajnat Tārīkh al-Urdun, 1993), Mufeed Hawamdeh considers the year 1965 as a turning point in the history of Jordanian theater because it was the year, in which theater appeared as an independent institution of professional stage acting, direction, and drama writing (17).

2 See Hawamdeh, *al-Masraḥ fī al-Urdun* (Amman: Manshūrāt Lajnat Tārīkh al-Urdun, 1993), pp. 14-15.

According to Mufeed Hawamdeh, theater in Jordan, like the Arab theater in general, has developed through three stages: 1) Birth within "al-Tabaʿiyyah" (dependency) on the European theater. In this stage, the writers of the invaded cultures admire and look up to the invaders' literary achievements and imitate the form with total respect. 2) The stage of gathering a sense of nationalism and anxiety towards "al-Tabaʿiyyah," when writers remain bound to the colonizer's model, yet not without an aspiration, though weak, to develop a native counterpart to it. 3) The stage of independence of native literature from "al-Tabaʿiyyah."[1]These three stages of development are analogous to the three phases of "adopt," "adapt," and "adept," which Peter Barry considers as the phases of development of postcolonial literature (Barry 196). According to Barry, the "adopt" phase indicates the writer's acceptance of the European literary form because it has a "universal validity" (196). The "adapt" phase refers to the "partial rights of intervention in the genre" because writers in colonial/postcolonial contexts adapt the European literary form to their contents (196). The "adept" phase includes a "declaration of cultural independence," in which writers "remake" the European literary form to meet their local needs and subject matters (196).

Similarly, Frantz Fanon, an anti-colonial activist in his numerous writings, elucidates three stages of the development of resistance literature. Firstly, the stage of "full assimilation" to Western culture, values, and literature (Fanon 158-159). In this stage, originality is restricted to the imitation of Western literature and a total detachment from the colonized native culture. Here, the colonized writer's "inspiration" is not established yet because it remains European and connected to the "well-defined trend in metropolitan literature" (159). This stage of "full assimilation" of Western form is equivalent to Barry's "adopt" and "al-Tabaʿiyyah" stages. Secondly, the stage of "precombat literature," in which the colonized writer remains detached from his native cultural reality but tends to look back and remember the pre-colonial past by using the "borrowed aesthetic" (159). Nevertheless, at this stage, the colonized intellectual remains an "outsider" to his/her native culture and does not yet advocate resistance against the invading culture. He/she retrieves the pre-colonial memories of his/her native culture, which were not influenced by colonial thoughts and formulas. This stage is like the "adapt" phase and anxiety towards "al-Tabaʿiyyah" because it includes a slight break from the "full assimilation" or "al-Tabaʿiyyah" to the Western canon and metaphysics. Finally, the phase of "combat," in which the colonized intellectual evolves from the status of the "outsider" to a "spokesperson" of his/her own native culture and an advocate

1 See Mufeed Hawamdeh, "al-Masraḥ al-ʿAraby wa Mushkilat al-Tabaʿiyyah" [Arab Theater and the Problem of Dependency], *ʿĀlam al-Fikir*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1987, p. 63.

of resistance (159). He/she is no longer immersed in the memories of the pre-colonial past but is fully integrated into the reality of the colonized nationals. This phase witnesses the emergence of new literary genres, such as "combat literature, revolutionary literature, national literature" (159), that neither praise nor assimilate the colonizer's culture but instead call for an end to colonization and a declaration of cultural independence. This stage is the counterpart to the "adept" or independence from "al-Tabaʿiyyah."

Likewise, Edward Said expounds on the importance of "ideological resistance," which comes after decolonization or "recovery of geographical territory" (209). He analyzes the nature of the response to colonialism and points out two sequential types of resistance against colonialism in search of independence: "primary resistance" and "secondary" resistance. The former involves combating and "fighting against" colonialism till the regaining of the geographic land; whereas the "secondary" resistance is the cluster of cultural activities in the aftermath of liberation and freedom, including what Said calls "ideological resistance" (209), a stage in which the natives restore their past and reconstruct their cultural independence. However, this process of cultural renovation is not immune from interaction with Western colonial discourse by integrating and altering it "to acknowledge [the] marginalized, suppressed, or forgotten histories," or what Said calls the "voyage in" technique (216). Said acknowledges the "partial tragedy of resistance" because it interpolates "recover[ing] forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire" (210). As a humanist, Said justifies this cultural intervention as a natural phenomenon because cultures intermix and borrow from each other. Culture for him is not a "matter of ownership of borrowing and lending," it is rather a "universal norm" of "appropriations," exchanging human experience, and "interdependencies" among diverse cultures (217). For Said, colonialism, which is based upon oppositional dichotomy and the Western view of supremacy over the cultures of the Other, endeavors to ban cross-cultural communication. Therefore, "ideological resistance" erodes the colonial ideologies of oppositional and negating perceptions, resurrecting and reconstructing the feeble voices of the indigenous independent identities.

Resistance in Jibrīl al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat Zarīf al-Tūl* (*Zarīf al-Tūl's Alienation*)

Jibrīl al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat Zarīf al-Tūl*, *Tagrībat* hereafter, represents Hawamdeh's notion of independence from "al-Tabaʿiyyah," Barry's "adept" phase, and Fanon's "combat stage." Indeed, al-Sheikh transforms the European form of drama into a cultural expression of resistance to the British Mandate in Palestine from 1918 to

1948.[1] As an anti-colonial work of art, the play dramatizes the British activities as a colonial conspiracy to enable the Jewish infiltration and occupation of a significant share of Palestinian land by the Jewish migrating settlers. In his book *al-Masraḥ bain al-ʿArab wa Israʾīl 1967-1973* [*Theater between Arabs and Israel 1967-1973*], Sāmiḥ Mahrān points out that it was only after the Arab swift defeat in the 67-war with Israel that the Arab theater of resistance responded with devotion to the issue of the occupation of Palestine and brought to the fore the need for a new Arab Renaissance to recover the sense of victory and overcome the devastating results of the defeat (140-141).[2]

In the play, Zarīf al-Tūl, a plowman, warns everyone about the dangers of British practices: "الانجليز طردوا الحراثين وصادروا الاراضي" 'The British expelled the plowmen and seized their lands!' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 156).[3] Asmar al-Laun, another Palestinian young farmer, revolts angrily that "للأرض أصحابها" 'the land has its owners!' (our trans.; 156). For Asmar al-Laun, resistance is the only option available to the Palestinians to combat British aggression: "بعت بقرتي، يا سلمان، كي أشتري بارودة. اسمع شوباش وزريف الطول جمعا مالا كثيرا من الناس وسوف نشتري بوارید' I sold my cow, Salmān, to buy a gun. Listen, Shū Bāsh and Zarīf al-Tūl have collected a lot of money from people, and we will buy many guns' (our trans.; 157). Like Salmān and Asmar al-Laun, al-Ghanām, a Palestinian shepherd, refers to the agonies of not only the Palestinians but also the animals from the British confiscation of the land: "سرحت بالغنم فطردوني! وكأن الربيع الذي تنبته الأرض ملك أبيهم!" 'I grazed the sheep, and they expelled me! As if the spring that the earth produces is their father's property!' (our trans.; 158). Al-Ghannām explains that "الأنجليز أقاموا سياجا حول الأرض!!" 'the British erected a fence around the land!!' (our trans.; 158), depriving the Palestinians of the right to cultivate and inhabit their land. Everything now belongs to the British colonizer. ʿAtābā, a Palestinian young widow, complains that even flowers and firewood are confiscated by the British: "أحضرت هذا الحطب من الأرض المسيجة، وميجنا تخيرت ازهارا كي تهديها الى شباب الجليل، في جمعة البنات، ولحق بنا الخيالة كي يلقوا علينا القبض، ويسلبوا الازهار والحطب' I brought this firewood from the fenced land. Mījana[female cousin of ʿAtābā] chose flowers to give to the young men of Galilee at the girls' gathering. Then, the police followed us

1 For more information about the British Mandate in Palestine, see D. K. Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008).

2 Also, in his book *al-Masraḥ fī al-Watan al-ʿArabī* [*Theater in Arab World*] (Kuwait: al-Majles al-Watanī lil Thaqāfah wal Funūn wal ʾĀdāb, 1999), ʿAlī al-Rāʿī explains that theater of resistance appeared in the Arab world after 1967 (June War) (291).

3 Jibrīl al-Sheikh, *Tagrībat Zarīf al-Tūl* [*Zarīf al-Tūl's Alienation*], in *al-Baḥthʿan Masraḥ* [*Search for a Theater*], edited by Mufeed Hawamdeh (Irbid: Dār al-ʾAmal, 1985), pp. 121-239. All citations to this play are to this edition and in our English translation from Arabic.

to arrest us, confiscating both the flowers and the firewood' (our trans.; 159).

In the colonial ideology, the colonizers give themselves the right to become the real inheritors of the colonized people's land, while, ironically, they perceive the colonized people as a gang of robbers. ʿAtābā and Mījana are considered by the British as thieves for their attempts to collect flowers and firewood. Salmān refers to the assumed crime of ʿAtābā: "اترك عتابا في همومها، يا محمد العابد. انها مطلوبة لحكومة بريطانيا العظمى!" 'Leave ʿAtābā in her concerns, O Muhammad al-ʿĀbid, she is wanted by the government of Great Britain!' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 160). Al-Ghannām soothes the pain of ʿAtābā by alluding to his intention to buy a gun in order to fight against the colonizers: "سأشتري بارودة، يا عتابا" 'I will buy gunpowder, O ʿAtābā' (our trans.; 160). Asmar al-Laun declares the time of the Palestinian revolution against British colonization: "سنقوم بثورة، يا جملو، وصوت البارود سيعلن عنا" 'We shall start a revolution, O Jamlū [Asmar al-Laun's fiancée], and the sound of gunpowder will speak on behalf of us' (our trans.; 163).

Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāsh lead the Palestinian revolution. They collect money from the Palestinians to buy guns from Egypt, and insist on the option of "primary resistance," in Said's expression, as the only solution for independence. Asmar al-Laun reports the efforts made by Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāsh to support the Palestinian revolution: "سوف نخسر بلادنا ان لم يشتر كل واحد بارودة. سأقول لك شيئا. شوباش وزريف الطول جمعا كثيرا من الشباب، واتفقنا على ان نحارب الانجليز ونطردهم" 'We will lose our country if everyone doesn't buy gunpowder. I'll tell you something. Shū Bāsh and Zarīf al-Tūl have gathered many young people, and we agreed to fight the British and expel them' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 163). For Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāsh, decolonization cannot happen using peaceful negotiations with the British colonizer, but rather by military confrontation which is equivalent to "violence," in Fanon's concept. Shū Bāsh asserts that the British will not leave the country till they steal it and give it to the foreign Zionists. The only solution to their dilemma is resistance. He adds that young people have collected enough money to buy weapons (176). Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāsh thus ignite the Palestinian vigor and awareness of the value of unity and combating the British colonizer. For Zarīf al-Tūl, it is a shame not to fight the aggressors.

Even though the Palestinian revolution in the play is almost male-oriented, Palestinian women characters play an important role in the resistance. With no exception, all females demonstrate their zeal for combat with the British and show resistance to the colonial existence and practices. They support any steps decided and taken to protect the land and the people. Many women donate their jewels to support the revolution against the British. For instance, Dalʿūna gives away her bracelets and rings in exchange for freedom: " خذ يا زريف الطول انه ذهبي اشتر به سلاحا. اه!. اه!. لا اريد شيئا" سوى ان املك حريتي 'Take it, Zarīf

al-Tūl, it is my jewelry; buy yourself a weapon. Ah! Ah! I want nothing but to have my freedom' (our trans.; 180). Some of them, like Dalʿūna, are worried that Shū Bāsh may fail to bring weapons from Egypt.

The Palestinian female characters are shown as wise, mature, and patriotic enough to stand side by side with their male counterparts in defending their country and liberating the confiscated land. Palestinian women insist on having a role in the battle at least by supplying the warriors with food and water. Liyyah, Shū Bāsh's fiancée, for instance, calls for an active role of women in the revolution and refuses the passive role of observing the sound of the battle and the smoke of fires in the far distance. She suggests that women can at least supply freedom fighters in that fierce battle with water and food (215). Women also show courage and responsibility as they see the martyrs carried by the other warriors. Liyyah, for instance, shows bravery and steadfastness as she celebrates the martyrdom of her husband Shū Bāsh. For her, he is an iconic symbol of resistance and heroism. She does not mourn his death because he dies for the honorable causes of national freedom and dignity (216).

Zarīf al-Tūl plays the role of the savior of the Palestinian people. After the death of Shū Bāsh, the co-leader of the revolution, the British colonizers and Zionists confiscate more lands and build more colonies. The victory of the British and the Zionists in military combat is the result of the division among the national fighters. Zarīf al-Tūl laments the split among the Palestinian warriors, who have not fought united (220). The Palestinian disarray encourages the British to inflict further injustice and cause more damage to the Palestinian natives. The dismayed Palestinians look to Zarīf al-Tūlas as the only remaining hope of liberation and relief. To him, they express their pain and agony. To him, they resort to help. Al-Jamāl, for instance, complains to Zarīf al-Tūl about the confiscation of his camel and the wheat he brought back from Jordan by the British colonizers (221). Zarīf al-Tūl is disappointed by the weakness of the Palestinians against the might of the British colonizers and promises everyone to find a solution to the national predicament.

He plans to travel away to Aleppo in Syria, hoping that he will find wisdom: "باسمكم أخرج من أرض الجليل باحثا عن حكمة جديدة" 'In your name, I depart from the land of Galilee in search of new wisdom' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 222). The writer chose Aleppo for the exodus of his protagonist probably because it was the capital of the heroic Muslim ruler Sayf Al-Dawla Al-Hamadani (916-967), whose armies protected the Arab states from the Byzantine attacks in the North of Syria.[1] The writer possibly wants his protagonist to be inspired by the vogue of victory and glory permeating the

1 For more information about Sayf Al-Dawla, see R. Stephen Humphreys, "Syria," *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1, edited by Chase F. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), pp. 537-540.

place. Also, Aleppo was the city of Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854-1902), the pioneer of the modern Arab Renaissance in the 19th century.[1] Again, Zarīf al-Tūl can acquire the spirit of revival and be recharged with hope and optimism of a new Arab restoration. The two possibilities are valid.

The Palestinian people are frustrated by their leader's long absence in Aleppo as they see their lands crowded with Jewish settlements built under the protection of the British forces. Salmān, for instance, bewails the absence of Zarīf al-Tūl, which brings ruin and damage by the British colonizers and Zionists: "الانجليز فعلو العجائب في غيابه، وأرض فلسطين امتلأت بالمستعمرات، ونحن ما زلنا ننتظر! ننتظر!" 'The British made a lot of havoc in his absence. The land of Palestine became filled with settlements, and we are still waiting! Waiting!' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 237).

Zarīf al-Tūl returns home with the new wisdom of "المحبة" 'love' (our trans.; 235) among the factions of Palestinian freedom fighters. Only with united people can the victims of colonization challenge the aggressor. He asserts that fraction and disruption among the fighters are the certain way to defeat. Zarīf al-Tūl preaches his prescription for triumph and glory which he has acquired from the land of the triumphant Hamdani State in Aleppo and has been ignited by the vogue of hope and optimism emitted by Al Kawakibi's writings.

Zarīf al-Tūl is finally murdered by traitors from his nation by "اشباح بثياب عربية" 'ghosts in Arab clothing' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 236). In his will, he calls for love and unity among Palestinians: "خذوا عني الحب، واحملوه الى وطني فلسطين. ليكن مطرا ينبت منه الربيع والنماء، وبيتا يملأ ساكنيه بالوداعة، لا تكرموا مثواي، بل أكرموا روحي' Take love from me and carry it to my homeland, Palestine. Let it be rain that sprouts spring and growth, and a home that fills its inhabitants with love. Don't honor my grave, but my soul' (our trans.; 236). Zarīf al-Tūl becomes an embodiment and a timeless incarnation of "love" as a method of resistance. His spirit dwells inside the conscience of the Palestinian freedom fighters and instigates them to continue the paths of glory of "love" and resistance.

Zarīf al-Tūl's philosophy of the ideals of "love" and resistance is analogous to Fanon's conceptualization of "violence," as a "cleansing force" (Fanon 51). For Fanon, "violence" brings equality and "self-confidence" to the colonized people because the colonizer is no longer superior: "It [violence] rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It empowers them and retrieves their self-confidence" (51). Violence brings happiness, brotherhood, and love among the colonized natives because it "unifies the people" (51). Just as the colonizer uses "violence" to erode the natives' precolonial past, the colonized will

1 See Joseph G. Rahme, "Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi's Reformist Ideology, Arab Pan-Islamism, and the Internal Other," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1999, pp. 159-177.

use the same tool of "violence" to countermand the colonial ideology and dialectic to restore their confiscated past. In this context, "violence" correlates with liberty, equality, and love. Decolonization is described by Fanon as a process of "creation" since it re-creates "new men," who do not fear the colonizer, nor do they feel inferior (2). Zarīf al-Tūl incarnates two corresponding concepts of "violence" and "love." His efforts to arm the Palestinian revolution with smuggled guns from Egypt indicate Zarīf al-Tūl's awareness of the value of decolonization as a process of "creation," in Fanon's expression, and as a technique of "love" and deliverance. For Zarīf al-Tūl, the principles of resistance and "love" complement each other. His last will of "love" manifests the value of the continuity of resistance as a spring of life and happiness.

Colonialism supports the tribal chieftains against the majority of the colonized peoples to maintain hegemony and control. For Fanon, "the elimination of the *kaids* and the chiefs is a prerequisite to the unification of the people" (51) because the "chiefs" conspire against their people in exchange for materialistic benefits, endowed upon them by the colonizer. Therefore, Fanon describes colonialism as a "separatist" (51) system, which marginalizes the majority and supports few chiefs of tribes. Edward Said refers to the "bourgeois" natives' cooperation with the colonizer for materialistic gains, as represented by the character of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "As a willing servant of Prospero; Ariel does what he is told obligingly, and, when he gains his freedom, he returns to his native elements, a sort of bourgeois native untroubled by his collaboration with Prospero" (214). Muhsin Al-Musawi explains that the colonizer's authority is based upon the established power of the native elite and class divisions: "The colonizer also helped in the process, for, leaning on oligarchy and establishing additional strata of landowners and community leaders from among the native elite, the colonizer set the pattern for further exploitation while creating explosive issues and schisms behind, too, especially in Palestine, Iraq and Sudan" (Al-Musawi 49).

Al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat* presents many Palestinian traitors who work against the interests of Palestine by supporting the Turks before the British Mandate. When the Turks were defeated and left Palestine, the same traitors allied with the British invaders, continuing to act against the interests of their own people. The list of traitors in the play includes Sharīf al-Saif, ʿAlī al-Muḥtad, Faraj Allah, Iqtāʿī, Multazim al-Darībah, and Wujahāʾ, who convert their allegiance from the Turks to the British colonizers. These "chiefs," in Fanon's term; and Ariel-like, in Said's comparison, abstain themselves from all sorts of resistance against the colonizer and prefer submission to whoever dominates the country. They wield fortune, power, and dominance over their people as they follow the colonizer.

The Palestinian natives, however, are aware of these traitors and their betrayal of their country. For example, Zarīf al-Tūl rebukes the hypocrisy and treason of Sharīf al-Saif, whose name ('honor of the sword') is very ironic, with a rhetorical question: "هل اشرع سيفك مرة واحدة في وجه الغرباء؟" 'Have you ever raised your sword against strangers?!' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 146). For Zarīf al-Tūl, Sharīf al-Saif is merely a murderer and a traitor to Palestine and his fellow men. Those chiefs get annoyed when a messenger announces the defeat of the Ottoman Empire: "سقطت تركيا في الحرب! . . . سأنطلق الى عموم فلسطين لانشر الخبر" 'Turkey has fallen in the war! . . . I'll head to all of Palestine to spread the news' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 148-149). Salmān relishes the termination of the Turkish colonization and injustice in Palestine. He is happy that nobody will confiscate their wheat and goods anymore. Whereas Zarīf al-Tūl and his friends celebrate the end of the Turkish annexation of Palestine to the Ottoman Empire, the chiefs are worried and terrified by the defeat of their Turkish masters. At this point of uncertainty and feeling of loss among the malicious characters, Sharīf al-Saif appeals for reconciliation and forgiveness from Zarīf al-Tūl and the Palestinians: "لا تنبشوا الماضي وليكن التسامح" 'Don't dig up the past, Let there be forgiveness' (our trans.; 150).

However, the chameleonic chiefs change their color quickly and welcome the arrival of the new British colonizer as they believe they can restore their lost authority. The second messenger warns against the disobedience of Great Britain, which has taken control. Unfortunately, new arrangements are made, and the new "Bāsha" (pasha) seeks to meet with the pillars of society (151). The Machiavellian Sharīf al-Saif quickly confirms his cooperation with the new rulers. He happily declares that he and the rest of the chiefs will be pleased to meet with the new rulers because they are the pillars of the country. "من يأخذ امي يصبح عمي" 'He who marries my mother becomes my uncle' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 151), says Sharīf al-Saif. His use of the notorious Arabic saying indicates his treacherous compliance with the orders of the new uncle/master. Likewise, ʿAlī al-Muḥtad pledges allegiance to the new British master: "وأمر الطاعة واجب" 'Obedience is a duty' (our trans.; 151). The Palestinian chiefs avoid the warriors' calls for resistance lest they lose influence and the favors of the colonizer. The citizens urge them to side with the national revolt. Salman, for instance, asks whether the chiefs would side with their fellow countrymen in their endeavor to expel the British from their land (166). Sharīf al-Saif, like the other chiefs, feels haughty and declines Salmān's request, saying: "نحن نقف معكم؟! أنتم ستقفون معنا" 'Should we stand with you?! You are the ones who should stand with us' (our trans.; 166). Iqtāʿī, feudal lord, too, supports Sharīf al-Saif's attitude: "كلام السرايا لا يوافق كلام القرويين" 'The words of authorities do not match the words of villagers' (our trans.; 166). For

the chiefs, the option of resistance is naive and suicidal because the British colonizers are too powerful to be defeated. Wajīh, another chief, expresses his view of the absurdity of resistance against Great Britain. He advocates the use of diplomacy rather than power.

The treacherous chieftains of society harbor no resentment towards submitting to the invaders or the loss of their countries' freedom when it comes to protecting their personal interests and social influence. They sustain their privileges by submission to the colonizer. The writer dramatizes them as deprived of dignity and honor and presents them as parasites feeding on the calamity of their people. Their willingness to collaborate with the colonizer is highly condemned by Zarīf al-Tūl and other Palestinian revolutionaries. For instance, ʿAtābā, a Palestinian woman, rejects the submissive approach of the chiefs and insists on resistance as the only way to liberation. Thus, ʿAtābā wonders: "بريطانيا العظمى تلاحق عتابا على حزمة حطب من الأرض المسيجة، فهل تتخلى عن الأرض نفسها بالكلام الطيب؟!" 'Great Britain pursues ʿAtābā for a bundle of firewood from the fenced land. Will it leave the land itself with kind words?' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 167)

Al-Sheikh enhances the dialectics of political and historical struggle in his play by introducing the preternatural element of ghosts, adding an artistic dimension to the narrative. The writer was influenced by Shakespeare, who has been always admired by Jordanian writers.[1] Shakespeare's major tragedies had been translated into Arabic by Khalil Mutran, Muhammad Hamdi, Sami al-Juraydini, and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra long before Al-Sheikh wrote *Tagrībat* in 1984.[2] Al-Sheikh possibly picked the idea of introducing the ghost from Shakespeare's tragedies. The ghosts of Hamlet's father, Julius Caesar, and Macbeth are the spirits of victims. In *Tagrībat*,

1 For more discussion on Arab Jordanian writers' adaptations/appropriations of Shakespeare, see Hussein A. Alhawamdeh and Ismail Suliman Almazaidah, "Shakespeare in the Arab Jordanian Consciousness: Shylock in the Poetry of ʿArār (Mustafa Wahbi Al-Tal)," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2018, pp. 319-335. See Hussein A. Alhawamdeh, "'Shakespeare Had the Passion of an Arab': The Appropriation of Shakespeare in Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*," *Critical Survey*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2018, pp. 1-21. See also Hussein A. Alhawamdeh and Feras M. Alwaraydat, "The Dramatization of the Shepherd Warrior in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and the Jordanian Drama Bedouin Series *Rās Ghlaiṣ* ('*The Head of Ghlaiṣ*')," *Journal of Screenwriting*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022, pp. 171-172.

2 For more information about translating Shakespeare's tragedies into Arabic, see Sameh F. Hanna, "Decommercialising Shakespeare: Mutran's Translation of *Othello*," *Critical Survey*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2007, pp. 27-54. See also Sameh F. Hanna, "Shakespeare's Entry into the Arabic World," *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, edited by Bruce R. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016), pp. 1387-1392.

however, Al-Sheikh expands on the functions of ghosts given in Shakespeare. He introduces ghosts as murderers and as victims. Al-Sheikh's apparitions appear twice in the play. Firstly, the "ghosts" take the role of murderers in the scene which shows apparitions in Arab clothing beating Zarīf al-Tūl to death with batons (236). In this scene, the ghosts symbolize Arab or local traitors who conspire with the British and oppose the Palestinian revolution. They refer to the chiefs, who decide to take revenge upon Zarīf al-Tūl because their authority and privileges wane due to his insistence on spearheading the revolution. Secondly, ghosts appear in the role of victims, as depicted in the scene towards the end of the play, where the "ghosts" of Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāshat are welcomed by the Palestinian people. This time the ghost functions as a murdered victim, as those of Hamlet's father, Banquo, and Julius Caesar.[1] Furthermore, victim ghosts in the last scene play the role of champions. Indeed, the ghosts of Zarīf al-Tūl and Shū Bāsh are celebrated as heroes. Their return home symbolizes the revisit of heroic spirits to further ignite and inflame the Palestinian resistance to the British Mandate. Ghosts in al-Sheikh's play do not function as supernatural intangible phenomena detached from the natural world, as in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Rather, they are perceived and dealt with by the community as real and natural entities. They dwell in the minds of men and become the source of their inspiration for liberation and independence.

Al-Sheikh expands the ghost's function in a way that blurs the dividing line between fantasy and reality. Salmān feels elated at the return of Zarīf al-Tūl's and Shū Bāsh's ghosts: "لقد عادوا الينا جميعهم بعد الغياب" 'They have come back to us after a long absence' (*Tagrībat*; our trans.; 239). Al-Jamāl asks everyone to celebrate the return of the heroes: "لنغني على نغمهم وقد عادوا" 'Let's sing their tunes as they have come back' (our trans.; 239). All the characters join the chorus in chanting the song of the heroes' homecoming and the resumption of resistance. Furthermore, in al-Sheikh's play, all characters can see the ghosts, not just one as in Shakespeare's plays. The ghosts communicate with other characters and share the national celebration of victory. The dramatization of the ghost in al-Sheikh is more like that in Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* (1936) than in Shakespeare's tragedies.

The Staging of Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* (1936) in The University of Jordan

The American playwright Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* (1936), which was translated into Arabic as (*Idfinū al-Mawtā*) or (*Thawrat al-Mawtā*), was directed by Hānī

1 For more discussion about the Shakespearean dramatization of the ghost, see F. W. Moorman, "Shakespeare's Ghosts," *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1906, pp. 192-201. See Kristian Smidt, "Spirits, Ghosts and Gods in Shakespeare," English Studies, vol. 77, no. 5, 1996, pp. 422-438.

Ṣanaubar and performed by Jordanian actors and actresses at the theater of the University of Jordan in 1972.[1] *Bury the Dead*, as an anti-war play, reflected Arab Jordanian anti-war consciousness, especially after the Arabs' defeat in the 1967 war, which resulted in significant losses and causalities for them. Israel managed to occupy the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt; the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and the Golan Heights from Syria.[2] The Arab sentiments after that war were like the state of the six dead soldiers in Shaw's play, who refuse to be buried due to their outrage at the principle of fighting in a meaningless war.

Bury the Dead dramatizes a historical period between the end of World War I and a potential war in the 1930s. The play warns against World War II and the American engagement in another destructive conflict. Christopher J. Herr explains that American playwrights in the 1930s were staging a pattern of anti-war drama: "The dangers of fascism had become obvious to most of America by the late 1930s; however, fears of another world war made many playwrights anxious to avoid American involvement in defiance of Hitler. Several important anti-war plays were written in the 1930s" (Herr 291).

The play foreshadows the possibility of another war that could be disastrous for America and the world. The ghosts of the six dead soldiers lament their deaths and their participation in a meaningless fight. Neither the American Army generals nor the six dead soldiers' women succeed in convincing the dead soldiers to be buried in a formal military funeral. The six dead soldiers' ghosts believe that the American Army deceives them by waging war for other people. The fifth corpse is offended by the notion that the American Army trades him away for a meager sum: "They sold us" (*Bury the Dead* 46). The second corpse expresses his willingness to die for the sake of an honored cause rather than fighting for others' cause: "A man can die happy and be contentedly buried only when he dies for himself or for a cause that's his own and not Pharaoh's or Caesar's or Rome's" (*Bury the Dead* 47). The fifth corpse shows that war has been imposed upon them by force rather than by free will: "Nobody asked us whether we wanted it or not. The generals pushed us

1 In their book *al-Masraḥ fī al-Urdun* [*Theater in Jordan*] (ʿAmmān: Rābiṭat al-Masraḥiyyīn al-Urduniyyīn, 198-?), ʿAbd al-Latīf Shamā and ʾAḥmad Shuqum show that Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* was staged on the theater of the School of Business at the University of Jordan in 1972 by a group of students (135). See also Mufeed Hawamdeh, *Wathāʾq al-Masraḥ al-Urdunī* [*Documents of Jordanian Theater*], vol. 3 (Irbid: Yarmouk UP, 1988), pp. 15-16.

2 For more information about the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, see Eric Hammel, *Six Days in June: How Israel won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War* (New York: Scribner, 1992). See also Muḥammad Hasanain Haikal, *Al-Infijār 1967: Ḥarb al-Thalathīn Sanah* [*The Explosion of 1967, the Thirty-Year's War*] (Cairo: Markiz al-ʾAhrām li-al-Tarjamah wa-l-Nashr, 1990).

out and closed the door on us" (*Bury the Dead* 47).

Like in *Tagrībat*, the ghost in Shaw's play is not portrayed as a detached, intangible supernatural phenomenon, but rather as a tangible individual perceived by other characters. Alan E. Bernstein takes Shaw's *Bury the Dead* as an example of the "belief that bands of the dead display themselves in order to inspire or frighten the living" (Bernstein 115). Mark Dollar refers to the function of the "returning ghosts," in Shaw's play, as "powerful reminders of a cataclysmic experience" (Dollar 238). Shaw expands the significance of the ghost from a mere supernatural element to a real individual who resists politics and criticizes social hypocrisies. In Shaw's play, the ghost, liberated from the metaphysical hold, communicates fully with all characters as a real individual. The ghost becomes a hero of resistance and a savior of future generations. Therefore, the Arabic translation of Shaw's *Bury the Dead* as *Thawrat al-Mawtā* (*Revolution of the Dead*) indicates the translator's awareness of the significance of the ghost as a man of revolution and resistance.[1]

The conversations between the six soldiers' ghosts and their women diminish the dividing line between reality and fantasy. John Schelling, the ghost of the first corpse, refuses his wife's appeal to be buried: "I don't know. Only there's something in me, dead or no dead, that won't let me be buried" (*Bury the Dead* 54). Bess, Schelling's wife, is confused about whether her husband is dead or alive because he still talks about his plans to see his "kid" and the "farm": "That say you're dead, John" (*Bury the Dead* 54). John Schelling does not give up reality easily because he still has many plans to finish before burial: "Later, Bess, when I've had my fill of lookin' and smellin' and talkin'. A man should be able to walk into his grave, not be dragged into it" (*Bury the Dead* 55). Henry Levy, the ghost of the second corpse, renounces his beloved's demand to be buried: "Joan: Yes. Then why__ why don't you let them bury you? / Levy: There are a lot of reasons. There were a lot of things I loved on this earth" (*Bury the Dead* 58).

Levy thinks he is still young to be buried and insists on resuming his life on earth rather than in the "grave's solid mud" (*Bury the Dead* 59). Walter Morgan, the ghost of the third corpse, informs his wife, Julia, about the triviality of wars and the falsity of patriotism: "There are too many books I haven't read, too many places I haven't seen, too many memories I haven't kept long enough. I won't be cheated of them" (*Bury the Dead* 61). Morgan believes that war ends his dreams and profession

1 In the 1960s, Fuʾād Dawwārah translated Shaw's *Bury the Dead* into Arabic as *Thawrat al-Mawtā* [*Revolution of the Dead*]. See Fuʾād Dawwārah, translator. *Thawrat al-Mawtā* [*Revolution of the Dead*]. By Irwin Shaw (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, al-Muʾassasah al-Misrīyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Taʾlīf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Tibāʿah wa-al-Nashr, 196-?)

as a poet. For him, the army generals deceive him into participating in the war and losing his life in exchange for nothing. Tom Driscoll, the ghost of the fourth corpse, tells his sister, Katherine, that he wants to become a savior and an anti-war advocate for future generations: "I got things to say to the people who leave their lives behind them and pick up guns to fight in somebody else's war" (*Bury the Dead* 63). Driscoll, like all other ghosts, thinks that he belongs to the "living" rather than to the "dead": "I didn't get up from the dead to go back to the dead. I'm going to the living now" (*Bury the Dead* 64). Jimmy Dean, the ghost of the fifth corpse of a twenty-year-old soldier, ignores his mother's request to be buried because he has neither enjoyed life nor fulfilled his ambitions: "I was only twenty, mom. I hadn't done anything. I hadn't seen anything. I never had a girl. I spent twenty years practicing to be a man and then they killed me" (*Bury the Dead* 66). Webster, the ghost of the sixth corpse, declines his wife's call to be buried because he prefers the hardship of life to death: "But I guess I was happy those times" (*Bury the Dead* 68). He is determined to "stand up" (*Bury the Dead* 70) against wars and to establish new opportunities he has not achieved yet. For example, he wishes to have a "kid": "It's good to have a kid. A kid's somebody to talk to" (*Bury the Dead* 68).

Just as the ghosts in Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* are determined to resist the injustice of war, the ghosts in al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat* resist the oppression of colonialism. In both plays, the dead warriors are not buried but become symbols of resistance and strike against the hypocrisy of politics. In both plays, the ghosts are not excluded from real communication with all characters because they are given both realistic and imaginary elements. In the two plays, the switching between fantasy and reality empowers the ghost with more potential and influence to criticize and dismantle the colonial discourse. The ghosts, appearing as the saviors of their nations and perfect models to be imitated, show the triumph of soul over body and morality over materialism.

Conclusion

Theater in Jordan responded actively to the politics and challenges in the Arab world. The dramatization of Jibrīl al-Sheikh's *Tagrībat* and Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* represents the cultural and political awareness of Jordanian playwrights and directors to the significance of Arab cultural resistance to Western colonialism and the disorders of wars. The Palestinian issue and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have intensively taken great attention from Jordanian playwrights and directors to

reveal the legitimacy of the Palestinians' rights to independence and human dignity. The Jordanian theater adopted world drama, such as Shaw's *Bury the Dead*, that attacked the injustice of wars to address local Arab concerns. The ghost technique, used in both *Tagrībat* and *Bury the Dead*, produces a more complex dimension of the concept of resistance since it empowers the ghosts to transcend the colonial materialistic limitations and to become spokesmen of freedom and liberation.

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