



RESEARCH PAPER

Contemporaneity of Allegorical Arab Minor Literature

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DOI [http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2021\(5-II\)1.45](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2021(5-II)1.45)

| PAPER INFO  | ABSTRACT   |
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| <b>Received:</b><br>August 28, 2021<br><b>Accepted:</b><br>December 24, 2021<br><b>Online:</b><br>December 26, 2021<br><b>Keywords:</b><br>Minor Literature,<br>Modernist Arab<br>Literature,<br>Postmodern<br>Allegory | In this article, two seminal concepts presented by two important twentieth-century philosophers are taken as a point of departure and it has been discussed how the two concepts get merged in the selected two texts which are representative of postmodern Arab literature and Arab modernism. One of the concepts is that of minor literature by Gilles Deleuze, the French philosopher, and the other is Third World allegory by Fredric Jameson, the American philosopher. The two selected texts are <i>Cities of Salt</i> (1984) by the Saudi-Jordanian novelist Abdel Rahman Munif and <i>Men in the Sun</i> (1967) by the Palestinian Ghassan Kanafani. The study crystallizes how the incompatible strife between capital and labour has unified the postmodern globe. This struggle has given birth to an ever-increasing number of texts which cannot be precisely described as belonging to this world or that. These texts are indicative of disruptions in unilinear teleological narratives, flows, courses and directions. These disturbances intrude upon the discursive space of the traditional Western novel, and the context from which such disruptions arise cannot be simply described as lying 'outside' the context of the Western novel. <i>Cities of Salt</i> and <i>Men in the Sun</i> are examples of such texts. |
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Introduction

Reading a text is never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified, still less a highly textual exercise in search of a signifier. Rather it is a productive use of the literary machine, a montage of desiring machines, a schizoid exercise that extracts from the text its revolutionary force.

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*

Minor literature is a concept proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their joint piece of writing *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975/1986). While they presented the concept to the modern reader as a means “to enter into Kafka’s work” (p. 15) without all worn-out codifications of the prevalent discourse, this concept nonetheless helped to trigger all-new dimensions of research in the Western line of thought. Minor literature is essentially a particular type of literature “which a minority constructs within a major language” (p. 16), in such a way that the language in which it is effected is affected. Such type of literature is revolutionary in the sense that the powerful element of deterritorialization contained in it not only affects the major language but also subjects it to multiple levels of displacement. This is not a deliberate ‘subversion’ or mishandling of the language on the part of the minor writer; rather it is a proposition of using it in quite a new way. Such new usage gives birth to a new ‘language’ which totally short-circuits the appeal of a transcendent reality of domination working as a rule of subjectivization from within the major language. In fact it is the very cogito which is completely deterritorialized by the processes set to work by the ‘new’ language. Such language par excellence destratifies all those power strata which imprison and bind human beings by being “the organism, meaningfulness, interpretation, subjectivization, and subjection” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 167).

While the deterritorialization of a major language is the first characteristic of minor literature, its second characteristic is political immediacy. Everything is political in it. Every individual concern is immediately connected to the larger political concern. This is because of the cramped space available to the ‘multitudes’ existing in the form of minorities, postcolonial subjects and the refugees. The third characteristic of minor literature is its collective value. Here the text is the literary machine which can transform into a would-be machine of revolution. And literature becomes the people’s concern, “the collective assemblage of enunciation” which is lacking everywhere else in the context of the subjugated subjects.

So, the idea of minor literature is very significant. A minor literature is not the literature of a minor language. Rather it is the literature which a minority or colonial subject produces in a major language. In Deleuzian sense, the term ‘minor’ does not mean minority discourse. Deleuze’s (1975/1986) theory of minor writing, expressed in a major language interrogating the majority, is indicative of postcolonial readings. Here minority is a dynamic power which can facilitate crystals of becoming or new postcolonial subjects, and is significant in triggering defiant mobilization among the masses and thus deterritorializing the norms of majority (p. 106).

Deleuze attaches great importance to interpretations of literature. Interpretation becomes codification when as an agency of a dominant social code it reproduces only instances of that code. Among the subjectivized, such codification gives birth to a desire not to be interpreted, not to be produced and expressed in the terms employed by interpretation. Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986) use the word ‘territorialization’ for such codification. The desire to escape this codification, to

decode, to deterritorialize is not so much a matter of “liberation as opposed to submission—it is a matter of line of flight, escape—an exit, outlet” (p.13). They suggest experimentation as an alternative of interpretation. Deleuze’s theory is particularly helpful in justifying the theoretical proposal of examining postcolonial texts as biopolitical fiction where history, art and literature are entwined with the political. Such approach makes literature a theory-in-itself, taking it as something embedded in societal relations instead of interpreting it as a mirror image of its economic or historical eventualities.

For Deleuze (1975/1986) difference is more important than identity. He evolves a subtle proposition of writing-as-becoming relating it to colonial cultures. He argues against the acknowledged idea that identity comes before difference. He makes multiplicity and difference the basic categories of subjectivity. According to him, in repetition nothing is ever the same: it is a recreation different from itself. And minor literature works as a channel to form minor identities. At the same time it serves as a means to deconstruct and collapse the norms of the majority. Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986) elucidate the relation between postcolonial writing and hegemonic culture in these words, “We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature” (p.18). In the manner of Edouard Glissant, Deleuze takes particular interest in the texts that investigate not only the opening among the minor people themselves in the process of becoming but also their relationship to the individual author’s cultural and social strive mingled with a sense of being a component of such ‘multiplicities’ who constitute a unique example of those not still regarded as a ‘people’.

Deleuze (1975/1986) is of the view that the colonizers build their colonies upon the false assertion that ‘the people are missing’. Such colonial conceptualization of the ‘sole absence of being’ causes the creation of choked and cramped spaces where the exploited and oppressed nations suffer from a collective identity crisis and remain in a constant situation of minorities (pp. 133-150-217). When the colonial experience is articulated through and from inside the ruptures of history, it does not mean that the minor ‘reconfiguration of differences’ signifies the marginality of the postcolonial subjectivity as the denial of being. In Deleuze’s view, the fact of being alive on the margin should not impede the process of creation. For Deleuze and Guattari, emphasizing the collective enunciation never excludes the possibility of moulding a space for writing. A minor writer should be from within the multiplicity he represents. The writer is a part of the collective: his persona can extend the collective being and make the boundaries between the collective and the individual indistinct so that a reciprocal relation between multiplicity and singularity can be created. To the colonial declaration of the ‘missing people’ the postcolonial writer responds with his own writing and thus summons those people from the niches of memory.

Some of the prime concerns of the postcolonial domain are to study the cultural productions of the subjugated people, to be ethically responsible to the

narratives inscribed into historical pain, and to take such representations as non-exclusive. There is a problematic spatio-temporality about the term 'postcolonial' which always holds open a new space for writing the postcolonial. It implies the existence of a temporal 'gap' between the 'pre' and the 'post' colonial discourses. The relation between continuity and rupture, sameness and difference is what has to be negotiated. From the standpoint of Deleuze's (1975/1986) concept of desire and becoming, minor literature goes beyond such spatial and temporal ruptures and unlocks new spaces of literary possibility (p.16). Homi Bhabha (1994) similarly characterizes the 'location' of the postcolonial juncture as a transient site which is "neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past" (p.1). Literary imagination has such a transformative power that it carries revolutionary possibilities for neo/postcolonial studies. Its power lies in the fact that it rejects a clear-cut oppositional discourse of anticolonialism.

Since the creation of a new being from non-being, a transformation from being to becoming is the first investigation made by a minor writer, postmodern Arabic literature can be viewed as a mode of minor writing to which the theory of the politics of minor literatures can be applied. The selected writers in this study exhibit a consciousness of the traumatic past and the demanding present, but they resist being over-determined. Their writings are the proof that literary texts can construct a new type of continuum amongst three phases of time as a whole. With them, the relation built among past, present and future is not continuous in a linear sense, rather the continuity is maintained through ruptures. The legacies of the colonial past are retained as a virtual, disjunctive presence which can be turned into innovative actualities in the present. So this historical continuity proceeds through ruptures. Keeping in view Deleuze's philosophy of time and repetition, nothing is ever the same, rather there is only difference. Copies are something new, everything is constantly changing, and reality is a becoming, not a being. The emergence of the postcolonial present/future as an unsettled probability indicates the presence of the colonial past. Although such present is drawn from the past, it is not specified by it.

Rejection of metanarratives by the postmodern thinkers like Lyotard and Foucault is suggestive of a positive development because grand theories as constructs tend to unduly disregard the potential of the individual event and the natural existence of disorder and chaos in the universe. While ignoring the heterogeneity of human existence, metanarratives also become unreliable since they are produced and fortified by power structures. A crisis in historicity and pastiche becomes the characteristic of postmodernity because of this rejection. The postmodern condition is best described by the words 'breakdown' and 'break' because it is essentially a condition of fragmentation and fundamental discontinuity in history and culture.

Hence an inclination to interrogate the efficacy of expression, communication, meaning and language marks the contemporary discussions of culture, art and literature. Postmodern discourse is primarily concerned with the questioning of such fundamental concepts of human existence and human sciences. The rhetoric of

postmodernism hypostasizes the radical break with the past by a revival of allegory. The concept of allegory is typically described in the language of cacophony and disruption. The revival of allegory is significant as being symptomatic of the present cultural and theoretical moment. According to Fredric Jameson (1991), allegory reveals a

... generalized sensitivity, in our own time, to breaks and discontinuities, to the heterogeneous (not merely in works of art), to Difference rather than Identity, to gaps and holes rather than seamless webs and triumphant narrative progressions, to social differentiation rather than to Society as such and its 'totality', in which older doctrines of the monumental work and the 'concrete universal' bathed and reflected themselves. (pp. 167-68)

Traditionally, allegory has been a discourse which exists neither in itself nor of itself but to reveal a loftier order of things. Such order is not directly there in the text of the allegory. In allegory there is always a deliberate acknowledgement of the fact that direct presentation is not possible. So allegory is only an indirect representation of something other than what the text literally says. In it the meaning always exists on the other margin of the signification. Between the sign and the signified a sense of gap is always there. There is a sense that an effort to uncover and decipher is continuously needed. In postmodern criticism, allegory becomes the choice trope because of such sense of discontinuities and gaps, and because of the self-aware demand for being interpreted.

In his article "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," Fredric Jameson (1986) differentiates between First World and Third World literature. He constructs a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of Third World literature, and proposes that all Third World texts are necessarily allegorical, and should be read as national allegories because certain nationalism is still fundamental in the Third World, which has long since been liquidated in the First World (pp. 65-88). He urges the Western readers to re-examine the seemingly naive, and "socially realistic Third World novel" (p. 66), because the third world cultural productions are generally approached dismissively by the Western reading public. The reason he gives for such dismissive reading is the Western readers' privileged (First Worldly) distance from politics. The national and economic stability in the First World is taken for granted, and the luxury of reading fiction is enjoyed there as a key to private, psychological status. Hence, in Jameson's view, because First World reader does not take part in the inferences of a Third World reading community, a bridge should be built between fiction and the world across which the reader must travel for a meaningful reading experience. There must be an interpretive strategy based upon a conscious relation between the political and economic suppositions underwriting the First World reader's encounter with literature.

But the problem with allegory is that it requires a fixed, target narrative in order to be legible. This should be an extra-literary text, or 'reality'. So Jameson (1986)

goes beyond proposing an interpretive method. He offers an extra-literary text. A collective struggle for economic and political independence is significant in the Third World culture, which is mainly organized through the experience and expression of nationalism. Hence, all Third World novels are not only national allegories but should also be read as allegories, because they are always necessarily related to one popular concern, namely "the experience of the collectivity" (p. 15). Taking Jameson's argument as a theoretical framework, it can be said that the difference between European postmodernism and Arab postmodernism is that the former is a form of completed modernization in which the premodern is duly liquidated, while the latter is a form of incomplete modernization where the premodern is still not adequately liquidated.

### Literature Review

In Fredric Jameson's opinion (1998), what is at stake in contemporary cultural production and canonization is how globalization is understood and narrated (pp. xi-xvi). In the postwar America, the opinion of literary figures like John Updike was central to the construction, maintenance and policing of high culture's borders. Most of the reading public turned to their reviews. Such reviews deemed if a new cultural work was worthy to be placed into high culture's vaulted canon or not. And in his review of Munif's *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989), John Updike (1991) proclaimed that this work was not a novel. His aesthetic/ideological borders distinguishing what is and what is not a novel prove to be part of a larger discourse of the United States' exceptionalism, whereas, by recognizing modernity as petromodernity, culture proves not to be bankrupt. Instead, it becomes an important means to map the violence that constitute global capitalism, and a means to better understand the social relations that enable the American empire and the everyday lives of the American subjects.

The fact of Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* (1967/1999) not being reviewed in the Western media is a typical example of a biased self/other Western approach. A deliberate hush prevails with regard to this work. Palestine and the Palestinian literature have always been on the margins even inside the domain of postcolonial studies. In the West, inclusion of Palestinian literature as postcolonial means defending the Palestinians, criticizing the Jews and being inclined towards anti-Semitism. But Kanafani's narrative becomes a rhetoric of simultaneity by echoing a recent tragic history of immigration in the United States. The relevance of Kanafani's tale with the nineteen doomed Mexicans makes it reiterated time and again. Like the three Palestinians in Kanafani's story, these immigrants had asphyxiated inside a truck while being smuggled through the borders (Hegstrom & Feldstein, 2003).

### Discussion

Within the postcolonial context, English as the major language of the Western imperialism has time and again been used as a tool of deterritorialization by the

minor writers. This argument can be furthered to the stances of selected postmodern Arab writers, Ghassan Kanafani and Abdel Rahman Munif, with special reference to their chosen texts. Their texts were originally written in Arabic, their native language. But the moment these and other postcolonial texts are translated into English, they become minor literatures.

### **Men in the Sun: Kanafani's Allegorical Minor Narrative**

National liberation and restoration of national identity were the prime concerns of Kanafani's struggle as a writer-activist. During 1960s Kanafani had become a leading Palestinian political thinker and literary figure. His literary writings have been remarkable in moulding an understanding of the Palestinian experience after the Nakbah. In the late twentieth-century Palestinian literature, the initial part of the 1960s is particularly noticeable. It was during this extended period that the narratives of returning to Palestine had started taking shape: in the form of literary expression as well as the establishment of Palestine Liberation Organization and the initial visibilities of political agitations and armed struggles. Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* (1967/1999) is an exemplary literary expression of such narratives of return. The story is set in August 1958, exactly ten years after the formation of the state of Israel and the exodus of the Palestinians from their land. Within the context of that uprootedness, three Palestinians from different backgrounds, Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan resolve to make their way to Kuwait in order to find work there and hence to 'participate' in the promises of instant wealth that oil-rich and independent Kuwait represents. But after the imposition of Europe-demarcated borders, travelling without the luxury of passports and visas becomes a near-to-impossible task for these homeless refugees. They separately reach Basra and there by accident come across Abul Khaizuran, a fourth Palestinian, who is a driver and works for a rich Kuwaiti businessman Al-Hajj Rida. Abul Khaizuran promises to smuggle them into Kuwait by putting them in the empty tank of his tanker-truck for the final stretch over the Iraq-Kuwait frontier. At the border-post, the driver is sufficiently delayed by the custom officials. By the time he returns to his truck and gets over the border, the Palestinians inside the tank die of suffocation. This is a bleak and grimly allegorical ending. The human-demarcated borders drawn in the sand become the cause of disorientation and death for the three Palestinians. First they have to cross the border between Jordan and Iraq which is a rat-infested desert nightmare. Then comes the border between Iraq and Kuwait which turns out to be a locus of muted death in the infernal heat of the desert. So Kanafani makes the desert a signifier of not only heat, mirage, aridity and death, but also of the military and political boundaries which keep the Palestinians out of their rightly Arab place.

The symbolic value of the persona of Abul Khaizuran is very significant. He is a man without any moral scruples who tries to gain financial advantage from the distress of his countrymen. In the Arab-Israel war of 1948, he had fought for Palestine, got badly wounded and had to be castrated through an operation to be saved. He became disillusioned and a cynic as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Throughout his life, he is haunted by the memory of that loss: the loss of his homeland and the loss of his manhood through a single hard stroke. All the time, he is driven by an irresistible urge to rethink the tale of loss and ask himself in an interior monologue “And what good did patriotism do you? You spend your life in an adventure, and now you are incapable of sleeping with a woman! Let the dead bury their dead. I only want more money now, more money” (*Men in the Sun*, p. 44). His initial scheme for earning some more money is to utilize the empty water-tank of his lorry as a means of smuggling his fellow Palestinians from Iraq to Kuwait.

*Men in the Sun* (1967/1999) does have allegorical connotations. At first sight it appears a historical allegory because its story unmistakably revolves around the 1948 Palestinian exodus. But keeping in mind the numerous interpretations of the term ‘allegory’, the historical reference cannot be a sufficient one. Kanafani wrote this novel from a particular perspective. It had been intended to make its readers contemplate the chaotic situation of Palestinian national identity. Thus the narrative also becomes a moral or philosophical allegory. Abul Khaizuran’s concluding monologue addressed to the three corpses lying on the garbage heap, “Why didn’t you knock on the sides of the tank?” (p. 54), is very significant. These words can be taken as the author’s plea. After a lifelong displacement, Kanafani had come to the conclusion that the Palestinians could assert their national identity only through armed resistance.

After the Nakbah, the border construct had become crucially significant for a redefinition of Palestinian identity. No place was there for a Palestinian other than Palestine. The Arab nationalism envisioned repossession of the lost homeland through joint military action of the Arab states which only culminated in borders. These borders proved a literal and metaphorical signal of death for the Palestinians. The Arabs’ categorical defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israel War made it quite clear that the only alternative available for the Palestinians was to contest the occupation and to depend upon their own endeavours in the battle of resistance.

Taking a look at *Men in the Sun* (1967/1999) as an expounding on borderlands, all the symbolic aspects—the representatives of three Palestinian generations, the driver’s persona and the water-tank—are not merely narrative tactics but also an intrinsic part of the narrative of Palestine itself. No identity exists outside the structure of the relationship to the land. And Kanafani was the man who outwitted time with his writing. Besides his commitment to political activism, he spent his remaining hours in creating the narrative of Palestine from the fragments of a homeland. He brought his men into the sun before they could find their rifles. He recounted the tale of the land where the oranges are sad with the aim that his protagonist Saeed S. might come back to Haifa, and he instructed the Palestinians that it was their business to figure up the losses. This is because the one, who calculates the losses, can also create the dreams. Kanafani’s success lies in transforming dark despair into the ferment of hope. This was because he was intensely aware of the fleeting nature of time and he helped forge a nation from his



words.

### **Cities of Salt: Munif's Allegorical Minor Narrative**

Just like Kanafani, Abdel Rahman Munif had an insistent belief in the power of writing as a tool for change. For that reason, to assault both the Persian Gulf bourgeois elite and their alien collaborators, he appropriated a multigenric tool. His faith in the instrumental value of literature was neither part of an organizational activism nor complementary to an already established literary career. After being disillusioned with organizational resistance, he adopted writing as a compensation for the social transformations he had once dreamt the region's radical movements would bring about. He reentered into politics through the door of literature. The Six Day Arab-Israel War played a major role in propelling Munif to channel his political energies into a literary direction. In an interview to Banipal, Munif recalled the impact how "The defeat of 1967 pushed me toward the novel not as a means of escape but of confrontation. It had an unforgettable effect: to see such a vast area as the Arab world – with all its enormous clamour and slogans – crumble and fall, not just in six days but a mere few hours" (as cited in Hafez, 2006, p. 47).

Munif belonged to a generation which was heartened by the post-World War II decolonization, stimulated by nationalism and socialism, and laden "with an immense load of dreams and desires for change . . . But our dreams were greater than our resources" (Habash, 2003, p. 3). After the possibilities of organized resistance had waned away, Munif became a writer-activist. He chose literature as an alternative resource. Within the precarious situation of exile, he acquired for himself some element of independence and purposeful hope in the diverted realm of literature. Literature became a space of displaced possibility for an unsettled man.

Munif responded to the ongoing region-wide crises through writing either allegorical fables saturated in oral tradition or historical epics mingled with semi-allegorical ingredients. Such allegorical tendency performed a twofold function. On one hand, it granted him a political deniability. On the other hand, in a more significant manner, it labeled him as a resolute regional writer in a transnational sense, unlike a Thomas Hardy. Munif believed that the striking commonalities of his region were politically more consequential than its inner differences. For him, the Arab region from the Atlantic to the Gulf was one extensive carceral state, and he envisioned a world without maps. Once in another regionalist remark, Munif said, "the Bedouin oil blessing, which at one time was confined to the desert, has moved to all Arab cities and become the force defining not only politics but culture, ways of life, and the human concerns in this region" (Habash, 2003, p. 4). Such comments indicate a dual imaginative obsession on Munif's part: on the one hand imprisonment and on the other hand movement. Movement for Munif meant exile, banishment and upheaval. Involuntary mobility and immobility bedeviling the Arab region is a recurrent theme in his narratives.

Munif very rarely named the societies in which his novels are set, even though it could be easily recognizable, for instance the name Saudi Arabia is never mentioned explicitly in his *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989). By not particularizing the sites of his narratives, Munif wanted to delimit the likelihood of his critique being read as specific to a nation, because this could exculpate the other regimes which are equally hideous in the region, as he once explained:

If, for example, we discuss the political prison in a confined territory such as Iraq or Saudi Arabia, it seems as if we are exonerating other places or as if political prisons do not exist in these places, especially when we know they exist from the Atlantic to the Gulf. Thus I consider the generalization of this subject is the ultimate specificity (Habash, 2003, p. 3).

Hence, the use of such inverse specificity makes Munif's fiction desirably more effective. He at once amasses historical, cultural, geographical and sensory details to write against forces of censorship, repression and amnesia. The impression of whole societies is created, but these societies are never reducible to themselves. Munif's inclusive regionalism is emphasized by his persistent dedication to a transnational justice of environmental and cultural dimensions. These are persuasively set up through allegorical counterpoints between petroculture's back room intrigues and resource extravagance, and the regenerative, modest and limpid life of the grove.

Munif's *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989) is a politico-historical allegory in the sense that the setting is an unnamed Persian Gulf Kingdom in the 1930s. Even though the setting and characters are fictional, the narrative is evidently a reconstruction of the events which took place during the early oil exploration years in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the physical and psychological effects of such economic and political intervention on the lives of the indigenous population. It is noteworthy how Munif incorporates historical and political realities into his petrofiction. Before the discovery of oil, for numerous millennia, the basis of Saudi Arabia's economy had been chiefly agricultural and pastoral activities near the wells and oases of the Arabian Peninsula. The indigenous population was divided between nomadic and settled lifestyle. The settled communities maintained their subsistence level through cultivating, shepherding and trading with the caravans of the nomads who came at regular intervals to their settlements. In 1932, after the establishment of al-Saud monarchy and the expansion of the Saudi Arabian kingdom, drastic changes occurred in the agricultural and pastoral lives of the Arabia's population.

While geologically and politically the realm of the oil is opaque, subterranean and rife with confidential allowances and behind-the-scene imperial deals, the grove realm – whether be it date or olive – is the realm of provenance and provender. Long before the American philosopher-environmentalist Aldo Leopold's enunciation of 'Environmental Ethics', Munif had become intuitively aware of the effect of the uprooted grove on ecological system. With Munif, trees become tangible markers of

resistant memory, exemplary carriers of cultural dignity and sustainable life, and stakeholders of bioregions and history. His unusually uprooted life and feeling of its rending, and deep-rooted nostalgia intensify his fondness for humanization of his region's trees and arborealization of its people. In the first volume of *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989), a fictional form is given to the historical events spanning from the first 1933 American Oil Company concession in the Persian Gulf to the completion of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline in 1950 and the revolting strikes of workers in Dhahran (Munif's fictional Harran) in 1953.

Despite containing the elegiac mournings for a lost world, *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989) is not just a threnody for tradition. Munif's approach towards modernity had always been ambivalent. He was not a foe of modernity or mineral wealth as such. His battle was against the cruelly perverted form of modernization in the Arabian Peninsula. This antagonism supplied the content and form of his quintet. A tribal saga is in the foreground of the narrative—the feuds between the tribes of Arabia, the victory of one particular tribe over all others by means of appropriation of religious dogma, violence, betrayal and the security of foreign backing, and the continuation of those feuds within the victorious tribe even after the achievement of complete sovereignty. In the whole Arab world, Saudi Arabia is the only country named after a family. Munif deconstructs the historical lies upon which the legitimacy of this dynasty has been based. Then he etches a portrait not only of its hypocrisy, savagery and treachery, but also of its constant subservience to imperial overlords and wreckings of any advances towards political or economic independence in the Arab world. Since the beginning, the House of Saud can be discerned as reliant upon imperial suzerainty of first Britain and then the United States. Hence at the back of tribal saga stand the empires of oil and their part in frustrating all prospects of progress in the region.

### Conclusion

In the light of Deleuze's (1975/1986) concept of minor literature and mythohistoric narratives, and Jameson's (1986) supposition of Third world national allegories, it can be concluded that the globe has become unified because of the incompatible strife between capital and labour. Because of this struggle, there is an ever-increasing number of texts which cannot be precisely described as belonging to this world or that. These texts are indicative of disruptions in unilinear teleological narratives, flows, courses and directions. These disturbances intrude upon the discursive space of the traditional Western novel, and the context from which such disruptions arise cannot be simply described as lying 'outside' the context of the Western novel. *Cities of Salt* (1984/1989) and *Men in the Sun* (1967/1999) are examples of such texts.

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