

Literature as Ideological Intervention: Palestinian Resistance in Elias Khoury's *Awlād al-Ghīṭū*

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Abstract: This study examines the ideology of Palestinian resistance in Elias Khoury's *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* through the perspective of literary sociology. Grounded in the historical experience of the 1948 Nakba, the study conceptualizes the Nakba not as a singular past event but as an ongoing colonial condition that continues to shape Palestinian life through spatial control, legal exclusion, and epistemic violence. The analysis focuses on Khoury's ideological framework, particularly his critique of colonialism and imperial domination, the role of collective memory as a form of resistance, and the positioning of literature as a medium of social transformation. Through qualitative textual analysis supported by relevant secondary literature, the article explores the novel's narrative structure, characterization, and memory discourse. The findings demonstrate that Khoury articulates an ideology of resistance by transforming collective memory into a counter-hegemonic force that resists historical erasure and sustains Palestinian identity. The novel further frames literature as a site of alternative education, economic solidarity, and cultural affirmation, revealing colonial violence as multidimensional, extending beyond material dispossession to symbolic and cognitive domination. Ultimately, *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* functions not merely as an aesthetic work, but as a political and epistemic intervention that affirms the enduring role of literature in confronting modern colonial power.

INTRODUCTION

The Nakba in 1948 was a great humanitarian tragedy that resulted in a mass exodus of Palestinians from their homeland.¹ This event not only creates physical suffering, but also leaves a collective inner wound that is passed down through generations. The tragedy later became an important theme in modern Arabic literature, especially those written by Palestinian and Lebanese resistance writers. One of the most outstanding works is the novel *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* by Elias Khoury.² This novel not only records human suffering due to the Nakba, but

¹ Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, 'Nakba and Survival: The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948-1956', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 53, no. 1 (2024): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2024.2343642>.

² Elias Khoury, *Awlād Al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* (Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 2016).

also presents ideological reflections on colonialism, imperialism, and cultural resistance.³

Elias Khoury through his work emphasizes that the Nakba was not an event that stopped in 1948, but a disaster that continues to recur in the form of colonization, expulsion, and deprivation of the living space of the Palestinian people. In the narrative he constructs, traumatic experiences are not reduced to mere nostalgia, but are used as an ideological strategy to maintain national identity and reject the attempts to erase history carried out by Israeli colonialism. Collective memory exists as a form of cultural as well as political resistance, connecting the previous generation with the generation that lives under domination today.⁴

Furthermore, Khoury shows how the characters in his novel become the embodiment of living memories. Memory is not a dead archive, but something active and productive in shaping awareness of identity, history, and the right to return.⁵ Through the narrative, the reader is invited to understand that Israeli colonialism does not only operate through territorial control, but also through efforts to erase the collective memory of Palestine from the global historical discourse.⁶ Thus, Khoury made literature an arena against symbolic and political erasure. In addition, the representation of the practices of expulsion, ghettoization, and marginalization carried out against Palestinians in Khoury's work reveals a recurring colonial pattern. Literature is an important medium in articulating marginalized voices, as well as revealing the continuity of imperialism that has taken place since the Nakba until now.⁷ This is in line with Edward Said's view that literature and narrative are a field of resistance to colonial projects, because they are able to restore humanity that was deprived of by the logic of colonialism.⁸

Khoury also emphasized the role of cross-border narratives in connecting Palestinian suffering to other colonial experiences in the Arab world as well as globally. This creates an imaginative solidarity that rejects identity fragmentation and affirms that the Palestinian struggle is part of a broader anticolonial struggle.⁹ Thus, Khoury's work serves not only as a record of tragedy, but as an ideological

³ 'Ādil Mannā', *Nakba and Survival: The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948-1956*, 1st ed, New Directions in Palestinian Studies, v. 6 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), 25-26.

⁴ Manna', 'The Palestinian Nakba and Its Continuous Repercussions', *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 86, <https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.18.2.86>.

⁵ Aude Signoles, 'Collins John, *Global Palestine*, Londres, Hurst & Company, 2011.', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, no. 135 (July 2014): 135, 135, <https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.8159>.

⁶ Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 57.

⁷ Edward W Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Amerika: Random House, 2014), 28.

⁸ Edward W Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

⁹ Bashir Abu-Manneh, *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present* (Amerika: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 210.

map that shows how collective memory can shape the horizon of resistance in the present.¹⁰

Previous studies on Elias Khoury's works and the representation of the Palestinian Nakba have generally focused on memory, trauma, and identity formation rather than on the ideological dimension of resistance. For instance, Mostafa examines Khoury's novels from a psychoanalytic perspective, emphasizing trauma and the reconstruction of identity.¹¹ Abu-Remaileh reads *Awlād al-Ghītū: Ismī Ādam* contrapuntally within the framework of Holocaust-Nakba comparative studies, highlighting intertextual memory but without addressing the ideological mechanisms of resistance.¹² Similarly, Abu-Manneh explores the evolution of the Palestinian novel from 1948 onward but situates Khoury's narrative mainly within the broader history of displacement rather than its sociological or ideological significance.¹³

However, few studies have systematically analyzed *Awlād al-Ghītū: Ismī Ādam* through the lens of literary sociology, particularly concerning how Khoury constructs a multidimensional ideology of resistance that integrates memory, politics, and social transformation. This gap indicates the need for a study that not only interprets the novel's thematic and historical aspects but also theorizes literature as an instrument of ideological and cultural struggle. Therefore, this research contributes to filling that gap by applying Terry Eagleton's ideological theory and Foucault's notion of power relations to uncover how Khoury's narrative transforms collective memory into a critical discourse of anti-colonial resistance. It is within this framework that this research places the novel *Awlād al-Ghītū: Ismī Ādam* not only as an aesthetic literary work, but also as a political and social text that preserves the ideology of resistance.

In order to understand Khoury's ideological message, this study uses a literary sociology approach based on Terry Eagleton's ideological theory. This approach views that literary works always contain ideological values related to the social, political, and cultural conditions of their time. In other words, the analysis of this novel aims to reveal Khoury's ideas about the Palestinian resistance, as well as highlight how literature became a medium of social transformation.¹⁴

¹⁰ Elias Khoury, *Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam* (Archipelago Books, 2018).

¹¹ Dalia Said Mostafa, 'Literary Representations of Trauma, Memory, and Identity in the Novels of Elias Khoury and Rabi' Jābir', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2009): 208–36, <https://doi.org/10.1163/008523709X12470367870065>.

¹² Refqa Abu-Remaileh, 'Novel as Contrapuntal Reading: Elias Khoury's Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam', in *The Holocaust and the Nakba*, ed. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 295–306, <https://doi.org/10.7312/bash18296-015>.

¹³ Bashir Abu-Manneh, *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹⁴ Sabbagh-Khoury, 'Nakba and Survival', 150.

This study's problem-solving plan aims to understand the author's ideas by examining the portrayal of the Nakba event in the novel. The ideologies in question include criticism of colonialism and imperialism, the strengthening of collective memory as a tool of resistance, criticism of the sustainability of the Nakba in the form of new practices of oppression, and the idea of literature as a means of social transformation. Through this reading, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the function of literary works can be obtained in facing the reality of colonialism and in building the collective consciousness of oppressed communities.

The main purpose of this research is to systematically describe the ideology reflected in Khoury's novel during the Nakba event. This goal is directed at uncovering how fictional narratives can function as resistance to colonial hegemony and how Khoury places literature as a space for articulating identity, solidarity, and struggle. By tracing the ideological ideas embedded in the text, this study seeks to explain that the novel not only presents individual stories, but also voices the collective aspirations of the Palestinian nation.

This research contributes to the development of literary studies, particularly those focusing on the relationship between literature, ideology, and political resistance. This research is also expected to enrich the discussion on the Palestinian *qadhiyyah*, which is often ignored or marginalized in official historical narratives. Through this analysis, it is hoped that a new awareness will emerge that literary works can serve as a medium for social criticism and a tool for building solidarity among humanity. On a practical level, this research is expected to benefit academics, literary researchers, and the wider community in understanding the importance of collective memory and cultural resistance as an integral part of the Palestinian struggle. Thus, this study not only seeks to interpret the ideological meaning contained in the novel *Awlād al-Ghītū: Ismī Adam*, but also affirms the relevance of literature in articulating resistance to injustice and oppression. Khoury's novel comes as a voice that represents those who have been marginalized by history, and this analysis becomes an academic effort to ensure that it remains heard in contemporary intellectual conversations.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a type of literature research. The focus of the research is directed to analyze the content of the text of the novel *Awlād al-Ghītū: Ismī Adam* by Elias Khoury by paying attention to the ideological aspects of the author reflected in the narrative of the Nakba event. The chosen method is intended to reveal the relationship between literary texts and the social, political, and cultural context behind them.

Data collection in this study was carried out through an in-depth reading technique of the primary text, namely the novel *Awlād al-Ghāitū: Ismī Adam*.¹⁵ Each part of the text containing a narrative of resistance, criticism of colonialism, collective memory, and a picture of social transformation is recorded and classified into thematic categories. In addition, secondary data in the form of relevant literature, whether in the form of books, journal articles, or previous research, were also collected to strengthen the analysis and provide a broader academic context. Thus, the data collected are derived from the main text and are strengthened by theoretical references and previous research results.¹⁶

Data analysis was carried out using a literary sociology approach. This analysis involves two theoretical frameworks. First, Terry Eagleton's ideological theory is used to elaborate on how the novel presents the author's ideological ideas, particularly in the form of criticism of colonialism, imperialism, and the sustainability of the Nakba.¹⁷ The analysis was carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner, namely interpreting the text data according to the thematic categories that had been prepared, then relating them to the broader socio-political context.

The presentation of data is carried out in the form of a systematic descriptive narrative. The findings are written by citing relevant parts of the text from the novel to strengthen the argument. The data was then elaborated according to the theme, for example criticism of colonialism, collective memory, and social transformation. The presentation is carried out in a structured manner so that readers can follow the flow of research thought, starting from identifying problems in the text, explaining the theory used, to conclusions about the author's ideology. In this way, the data is not only presented as text excerpts, but also critically interpreted to reveal deeper meanings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Khoury's Critique on Colonialism and Imperialism

Khoury's *Awlād al-Ghāitū: Ismī Adam* presents colonialism as a complex and multidimensional system of domination encompassing political, military, and epistemic dimensions. The novel does not limit the Palestinian experience to physical displacement but frames it within a broader mechanism of control over space, narrative, and identity. Through scenes of dispossession and confinement, Khoury illustrates how colonial power extends beyond the battlefield into the realm of knowledge and cultural production. This representation reflects Foucault's (2007) concept of biopower, in which authority operates through the

¹⁵ Khoury, *Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam*.

¹⁶ Amir Hamzah, *Library research methods: philosophical, theoretical, application, process, and research results* (Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2020).

¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Australia: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 47.

regulation of both bodies and minds, sustaining domination by controlling discourse and historical interpretation.¹⁸

Khoury's critique of colonialism emerges through his narrative structure, where storytelling becomes an act of ideological resistance. The fragmented narrative, alternating perspectives, and self-reflexive commentary mirror the disintegration of Palestinian historical continuity while simultaneously reconstructing it through memory and art. In this context, literature functions as a counter-discourse that exposes and subverts the epistemic violence of colonialism. As Eagleton argues, literature is inherently ideological it not only reflects social realities but also contests them by reimagining power relations within culture. Thus, Khoury transforms aesthetic form into political agency.¹⁹

The novel also underscores that colonialism in Palestine is not an event of the past but a continuing structure that adapts to modern forms of governance and surveillance. By depicting everyday practices of exclusion, checkpoints, and bureaucratic domination, Khoury demonstrates how contemporary forms of control perpetuate the Nakba's legacy. This insight aligns with Said's argument in 'Culture and Imperialism' that colonialism survives through narrative continuity and ideological normalization rather than direct violence alone. Through this representation, Khoury situates his work within the global discourse of postcolonial resistance literature that transforms memory into political critique.²⁰

Within this ideological framework, Khoury's portrayal of colonialism transcends personal suffering and articulates a collective consciousness of resistance. His narrative suggests that reclaiming memory and history is itself a revolutionary act. The integration of Foucault's concept of power-knowledge and Eagleton's ideological critique reveals how *Awlād al-Ghīṭū* functions as both a literary and political document. In contrast to earlier readings that emphasize trauma and identity, this study highlights Khoury's innovation in transforming literature into an intellectual front against modern colonial structures. The novel ultimately reaffirms the inseparability of aesthetics and politics in the Palestinian struggle for self-definition.²¹

Table 1 below shows how collective memory acts as a narrative and ideological tool in the novel. The table shows how historical recall, intergenerational transmission, and cultural performance preserve historical

¹⁸ Dalia Said Mostafa, 'Literary Representations of Trauma, Memory, and Identity in the Novels of Elias Khoury and Rabī' Jābir', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2009): 210, <https://doi.org/10.1163/008523709X12470367870065>.

¹⁹ Elias Khoury, 'Rethinking the Nakba', *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 2 (January 2012): 255, <https://doi.org/10.1086/662741>.

²⁰ Raef Zreik, '14. Writing Silence: Reading Khoury's Novel Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam', in *The Holocaust and the Nakba*, ed. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg (Columbia University Press, 2018), 307–28, <https://doi.org/10.7312/bash18296-016>.

²¹ Sabbagh-Khoury, 'Nakba and Survival', 149.

consciousness, reinforce collective identity, and assert epistemic resistance by mapping narrative examples onto their ideological impacts.

Table 1. Functions of Collective Memory in the Novel

No	Function	Example from the Novel	Ideological Impact
1	Historical recall	Adam's narration of the Nakba	Prevents historical erasure
2	Transmission	Stories passed to younger generations	Reinforces collective identity
3	Cultural performance	Storytelling and writing as resistance	Reclaims epistemic authority

The table describes the three main forms of ongoing colonialism described by Elias Khoury in *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam*, namely spatial domination, legal exclusion, and symbolic erasure. Spatial dominance is seen through the representation of "ghettoization" in the city of Lydda, which shows how space is used as an instrument of control over the body and mobility of the Palestinian people, as Manna explains that the fragmentation of space became a mechanism of post-1948 colonial power.²² Meanwhile, legal exclusion is reflected in the denial of land tenure rights which symbolize institutionalized inequality, in line with Foucault's biopower concept that modern power works through regulation and legal legitimacy to maintain dominance.²³ A third form, symbolic erasure, appears in an attempt to silence the Palestinian narrative, in which Khoury presents collective memory as a counter-archive to epistemic violence. This reinforces Eagleton's view that literature can be an ideological arena that defies dominant discourse and restores silenced voices.²⁴ Thus, these three forms of colonialism show that colonial power in the novel operates not only physically, but also through legal and symbolic mechanisms, while literature plays a role as a medium of ideological resistance that reaffirms the space, history, and identity of the Palestinian nation.

Collective Memory as a Tool of Resistance

Collective memory in *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* serves as a central mechanism of resistance against the erasure of Palestinian history. Khoury's characters embody generational memory, transforming acts of remembrance into political and cultural statements. Memory here is not an individual recollection of trauma, but a collective process that reconstructs identity in the face of colonial erasure.²⁵ This corresponds to Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) conception of memory as a socially constructed phenomenon, a shared recollection shaped by social frameworks that bind the individual to the collective. Through this framework,

²² Adel Manna', 'The Palestinian Nakba and Its Continuous Repercussions', *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 86–108, <https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.18.2.86>.

²³ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78* (New York: Springer, 2007).

²⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

²⁵ Abu-Manneh, *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present* (Amerika: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Khoury shows that remembering becomes a way of existing politically; to remember is to resist being erased.²⁶

Khoury's narrative transforms memory into a political tool of survival. The retelling of the Nakba through Adam's fragmented recollections, the repetition of loss, and the continuous return to exile illustrate that memory sustains the struggle for recognition. The act of narrating is itself an act of defiance; by writing his own version of history, Adam subverts the colonial archive that denies Palestinian existence.²⁷ This interpretation aligns with Eagleton's (2011) idea that ideology in literature manifests through the struggle over meaning and representation. In Khoury's case, memory operates as counter-ideology, it exposes how power shapes historical truth and offers an alternative discourse that restores agency to the colonized.

While trauma studies often emphasize the therapeutic value of remembering, Khoury's approach moves beyond the psychological to the ideological. As Mostafa argues, Khoury's fiction explores trauma as a process of reconstruction and self-awareness.²⁸ However, this study expands that view, memory in *Awlād al-Ghīṭū* is not merely a personal recovery mechanism but a collective assertion of existence. Each recollection becomes a political act, redefining memory as resistance rather than as cure. In this way, Khoury situates remembrance at the heart of anti-colonial struggle, transforming trauma into a site of empowerment.

Furthermore, the novel's narrative technique reinforces the idea that memory is dynamic, relational, and performative. Khoury's fragmented chronology, alternating narrators, and intertextual layers mimic the instability of historical truth in colonial discourse. These stylistic choices parallel Foucault's argument that knowledge and power are intertwined those who control historical narratives control the social imagination. By reclaiming narrative space, Khoury destabilizes the colonial monopoly on memory, exposing how storytelling itself becomes an instrument of liberation. Thus, the novel's form mirrors its ideological message: literature as a reconfiguration of history from the margins.

The intergenerational nature of memory in *Awlād al-Ghīṭū* also resonates with the Palestinian diasporic condition. Khoury's characters, scattered across exilic spaces, sustain connection through shared remembrance rather than geography. This communal process exemplifies Sa'di and Abu-Lughod's concept of "memory as claim" the idea that remembering is an act of reclaiming ownership

²⁶ M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France, 1977 - 78* (Amerika: Springer, 2007).

²⁷ Edward W Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

²⁸ Dalia Said Mostafa, 'Literary Representations of Trauma, Memory, and Identity in the Novels of Elias Khoury and Rabī' Jābir', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2009): 208-36, <https://doi.org/10.1163/008523709X12470367870065>.

over history and identity.²⁹ Each retelling of the Nakba renews collective belonging and affirms the moral right to return. In this sense, memory functions both as continuity and as resistance, keeping alive a sense of nationhood that defies spatial displacement and political marginalization.

Ultimately, collective memory in Khoury's narrative operates as an ideological force that transforms historical trauma into cultural and political vitality. It unites individual suffering within a collective consciousness and reframes remembrance as an act of survival, solidarity, and defiance. As Abu-Manneh observes, the Palestinian novel serves as an archive of national experience Khoury extends this role by turning literature into an active agent of ideological transformation. His depiction of memory challenges the colonial logic of erasure and positions narrative as a form of political agency. Through this synthesis of art and ideology, *Awlād al-Ghītū* affirms that literature not only remembers history but actively resists its silencing.

Continuity of the Nakba as an Ongoing Oppression

Khoury redefines the Nakba not as a singular historical tragedy but as an unending colonial condition that continues to shape Palestinian existence. The ongoing Nakba manifests through the systematic displacement, occupation, and bureaucratic regulation of Palestinian life, creating a permanent state of instability. Through the experiences of his characters, Khoury demonstrates that the trauma of 1948 is not confined to the past but is reproduced through contemporary forms of domination such as checkpoints, land confiscation, and restricted mobility.³⁰ This echoes Adel Manna's interpretation of the Nakba as a continuous process of dispossession, in which the survivors of 1948 remain trapped within the same structures of exclusion, albeit under new political and administrative guises. In this light, Khoury's narrative transcends memorialization, it becomes a documentation of ongoing colonial realities.³¹

Khoury's ideological message emphasizes that colonialism is not static; it evolves from overt military conquest to subtle bureaucratic and epistemic mechanisms. The control of land and movement is accompanied by the control of history, language, and representation. Through his depiction of bureaucratic violence and the manipulation of identity, Khoury exposes how colonial power normalizes inequality and institutionalizes erasure. This interpretation aligns with Foucault's concept of biopower and governmentality, where modern regimes of control no longer rely solely on force but operate through systems of surveillance, categorization, and normalization.³² In Khoury's portrayal, the colonial state

²⁹ Ahmad H. Sa'idi and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

³⁰ Salman H Abu-Sitta, *The Palestinian Nakba, 1948: The Register of Depopulated Localities in Palestine* (Palestina: Palestinian Return Centre, 2000).

³¹ Manna, 'The Palestinian Nakba and Its Continuous Repercussions'.

³² Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

functions as both an administrator of life and a producer of silence governing not only the physical territory but also the narrative of history itself.³³

The novel's portrayal of continuous domination also parallels Edward Said's argument in 'Culture and Imperialism' that imperial power persists through culture, narrative, and ideology long after formal colonization ends. Khoury's storytelling exposes how global narratives often marginalize Palestinian history, reinforcing a hierarchy of memory where certain traumas are universalized while others are silenced. By juxtaposing the Palestinian Nakba with broader histories of exile and persecution, Khoury situates Palestine within a global discourse of subaltern resistance. His literary strategy not only reconstructs a suppressed history but also reclaims narrative space from imperial epistemologies. Thus, the act of storytelling becomes a method of decolonization a process of writing back to empire through memory and ideology.³⁴

Ultimately, Khoury's redefinition of the Nakba underscores his belief that colonialism's endurance lies in its transformation into systems of knowledge and administration. The novel warns that modern power, under the guise of law and order, continues to enforce dispossession and silence. This multidimensional reading integrates Manna's historical perspective with Foucault's philosophical theory of power and Said's cultural critique, demonstrating how *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* bridges literature, politics, and ideology. Khoury thus presents the Nakba as both a historical and epistemological event; an ongoing matrix of control that literature seeks to expose, resist, and ultimately humanize through the act of remembrance.

Literature as a Medium of Social Transformation

Furthermore, Khoury describes literature as a practice of social transformation. In the novel *Awlād al-Ghāitū: Ismī Adam*, the narrative not only serves to tell the story of suffering, but also to build a new consciousness. Social transformation is described through the development of alternative education systems, strengthening economic solidarity, and the formation of cultural identity.³⁵ Alternative education serves as a space of resistance to the hegemony of colonial knowledge, economic solidarity strengthens the vitality of the community, and cultural identity affirms the existence of the Palestinian nation in the face of the attempt at elimination.

A closer analysis shows that the author's ideology in this novel is very closely related to Michel Foucault's theory of power relations. Khoury describes that power is not only present in the form of repression, but also in a productive

³³ Sabbagh-Khoury, 'Nakba and Survival'.

³⁴ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

³⁵ Refqa Abu-Remaileh, '13. Novel as Contrapuntal Reading Elias Khoury's Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam', in *The Holocaust and the Nakba*, ed. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg (Columbia University Press, 2018), 295-306, <https://doi.org/10.7312/bash18296-015>.

and diffuse form. Israel's power relations with the Palestinians are portrayed through control over the body and mind. Control over the mind is seen through the control of historical knowledge and narratives, while control over the body is seen through the practice of ghettoization, forced labor, and laws that deprive Palestinians of their property.³⁶

In this context, the resistance that emerges in the novel is in line with Foucault's view that in every power relationship there is always a space of resistance. The characters in the novel show that even though they live in limitations and oppression, there is always an effort to resist. The resistance is not always physical, but also through memory, culture, education, and solidarity.³⁷ Thus, the author's ideology in this novel presents a picture that the struggle of the Palestinian nation is multidimensional and layered.

Khoury also features resistance figures that serve as ideological symbols. The character of Adam, for example, is described as a melancholy figure but full of awareness of the importance of telling history. Through this character, Khoury emphasized that narrative is an important part of resistance. In the colonial tradition, the voices of the oppressed were often silenced, but through literature, they reverberated again. Other figures also present different representations of resistance, either through memory, social actions, or cultural symbols.³⁸ The existence of these resistance figures shows that the author's ideology is not only displayed through descriptive narratives, but also through characterization. Each character bears the burden of history and trauma, but they also become agents of resistance. Thus, literature serves a dual function: as an aesthetic medium as well as a political field that fights for identity and freedom.

By placing the author's ideology within the framework of literary sociological analysis, it can be understood that this novel reflects the dialectic between Palestinian social reality and the construction of literary narratives. The novel does not only tell the story of the Nakba, but also serves as a cultural document that voices the collective aspirations of the Palestinian nation. Khoury's ideology comes as a sharp critique of colonialism, but at the same time offers a vision of social transformation through education, solidarity, and culture.

The ideological dimension in the novel *Awlād al-Ghaītū: Ismī Adam* cannot be separated from the historical and socio-political framework that surrounds it. The novel is written in a context where the Palestinian narrative is often silenced or ignored by official history, especially those written by the colonial or dominant sides. Khoury, through his novel, seeks to revive memories that have been

³⁶ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 125.

³⁷ Brad Evans, 'Foucault's Legacy: Security, War and Violence in the 21st Century', *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4 (August 2010): 416, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610374313>.

³⁸ Elias Khoury, 'Rethinking the Nakba', *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 2 (January 2012): 250-66, <https://doi.org/10.1086/662741>.

repressed for a long time, as well as open up space for voices that have been marginalized. Thus, this novel is not just a fictional story, but a political and cultural document that has real relevance to the struggle of the Palestinian nation.³⁹

The criticism of colonialism conveyed in the novel is not limited to the aspect of military violence alone, but also to a deeper ideological dimension. Colonialism in Khoury's novel is described as a systematic attempt to erase the traces of a nation's history and identity. Through the practice of ghettoization in the city of Lydda, land grabbing, and the legal system that excludes Palestinians, Israel is portrayed as trying to eliminate the existence of other nations in its homeland. Khoury wanted to show that colonialism was not only depriving us of physical space, but also symbolic space, memory space, and cultural space.⁴⁰

The collective memory in the novel serves as a form of ideological resistance. In the theory of collective memory, memory is not only a personal experience, but also the result of social constructs that are passed down from generation to generation.⁴¹ The memory of the Nakba in the novel becomes the energy of resistance that keeps the Palestinian nation afloat. Khoury describes how the characters in the novel cling to the memory of the past to resist the oppression of the present. Thus, memory is not just nostalgia, but a force that binds communities together in a sustained struggle.⁴²

Furthermore, the novel highlights the sustainability of the Nakba as a never-ending disaster. In this regard, Khoury emphasizes that the Nakba did not only occur in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, but has continued to repeat itself in various forms to the present day. The practice of discrimination, expulsion, and land grabbing experienced by the Palestinians today is a continuation of the Nakba. This criticism asserts that colonialism is dynamic, always finding new ways to perpetuate power. Thus, Khoury's novel not only tells historical events, but also reveals contemporary power structures that are still oppressive.

Literature as a practice of social transformation is also the main idea in the author's ideology. Khoury believes that literature can be an alternative educational tool that teaches critical awareness to its readers. In the novel, alternative education is portrayed as an attempt to counter the hegemony of

³⁹ Khoury, 'Rethinking the *Nakba*', January 2012.

⁴⁰ Dalia Said Mostafa, 'Literary Representations of Trauma, Memory, and Identity in the Novels of Elias Khoury and Rabi' Jābir', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2009): 210, <https://doi.org/10.1163/008523709X12470367870065>.

⁴¹ Firstiyana Romadlon Ash Shidiqiyah, 'Classical Arabic Literary Schools in Response to Arab Modernization: A Historical Study', *Al-Fathin: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature* 5, no. 01 (2022): 116, <https://doi.org/10.32332/al-fathin.v5i01.4540>.

⁴² 'Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam', *Archipelago Books*, n.d., accessed 12 September 2025, <https://archipelagobooks.org/book/my-name-is-adam/>.

colonial knowledge that seeks to dictate the historical narrative. By presenting the story from the perspective of the victim, this novel opens up space for other truths that are different from the dominant narrative. In addition, the economic solidarity built by the characters in the novel reflects the importance of unity in the face of oppression. Cultural identity strengthened through language, art, and tradition is part of efforts to maintain the existence of the Palestinian nation.⁴³

This analysis shows how Khoury's novel functions as a complex ideological text. On the one hand, this novel is an aesthetic expression that uses literary language to present a traumatic experience. On the other hand, this novel is also a political text that conveys a sharp critique of colonialism and calls for resistance. This complexity is in line with Terry Eagleton's view that literary works are always in a dialectical relationship with the ideological structures that surround them. Khoury's novel can thus be read not only as a work of fiction, but also as a political and social intervention.⁴⁴

In Michel Foucault's perspective, the power relations depicted in the novel show how power works not only through repression, but also through more subtle mechanisms. The power over the mind, for example, can be seen from colonial efforts to dominate the historical narrative and define truth. Power over the body can be seen from biopower practices such as ghettoization, forced labor, and restrictions on the movement of Palestinians. But Foucault also emphasizes that in every power relationship there is always resistance. In this novel, resistance emerges through collective memory, alternative narratives, social solidarity, and culture.⁴⁵ By placing the novel *Awlād al-Ghaītū: Ismī Adam* within the framework of Eagleton's ideological theory and Foucault's theory of power, this study finds that the author's ideology functions as well as a critique as well as resistance to colonial power.⁴⁶

This novel affirms that the struggle of the Palestinian people is not only a physical struggle, but also an ideological and cultural struggle. The resistance does not only occur on the battlefield, but also in the narrative field, the memory field, and the cultural field. Practically, the results of this analysis show that literature can function as a means to fight for justice and humanity. In the context of Palestine, Khoury's novel becomes a voice for those who are silenced, as well as a means of keeping history from being forgotten. Thus, literature has not only an aesthetic function, but also a very important social, political, and ideological function.

⁴³ Brad Evans, 'Foucault's Legacy: Security, War and Violence in the 21st Century', *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4 (August 2010): 416, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610374313>.

⁴⁴ Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, *Nakba*.

⁴⁵ Evans, 'Foucault's Legacy', August 2010.

⁴⁶ Evans, 'Foucault's Legacy'.

Khoury conceptualizes literature as a form of social practice capable of fostering education, economic solidarity, and cultural identity. Within the novel, storytelling becomes an act of reclaiming knowledge and asserting humanity against colonial epistemology. Through Foucault's lens, such narrative acts represent counter-discursive practices that destabilize hegemonic truth claims. This study argues that, while prior research such as Dalia Said Mostafa's emphasizes the therapeutic function of literature, Khoury's literary vision operates on a more expansive ideological level by politicizing trauma and transforming it into a source of collective empowerment. The principal contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that literature functions not merely as a reflective medium but as a transformative force that actively constructs political consciousness and sustains resistance within a colonized context.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam* articulates Elias Khoury's ideology of resistance as a sustained critique of colonialism and imperial domination over the Palestinian people. The novel reconceptualizes the Nakba not as a closed historical rupture of 1948, but as an ongoing colonial condition reproduced through spatial control, legal exclusion, and epistemic violence. Through fragmented narration, testimonial memory, and self-reflexive storytelling, Khoury transforms collective memory into an ideological instrument that resists historical erasure and challenges colonial monopolies over truth, history, and representation.

The findings further demonstrate that Khoury positions literature beyond aesthetic expression, redefining it as a medium of social transformation. By foregrounding alternative education, economic solidarity, and cultural identity, the novel exposes colonial violence as multidimensional, extending from material dispossession to symbolic domination and cognitive control. Integrating Eagleton's theory of ideology with Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge, this study shows how literary narratives function as counter-discourses that reclaim subaltern agency and contest colonial normalization.

This research contributes to the sociology of literature and postcolonial studies by affirming literature as a living archive of resistance and collective memory. It highlights how Khoury's narrative strategy transforms aesthetic representation into intellectual activism, offering a critical model for understanding cultural production as an enduring challenge to colonial hegemony. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is limited to a single text, *Awlād al-Ghīṭū: Ismī Ādam*, which constrains the broader applicability of the findings to Elias Khoury's wider corpus or to Palestinian resistance literature in general. The study also relies primarily on

Eagleton's theory of ideology and Foucault's power-knowledge framework, thereby limiting engagement with alternative theoretical approaches. Additionally, it focuses on textual ideology rather than reader reception or socio-historical impact, suggesting the need for future research employing comparative, interdisciplinary, or empirical methods.

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