

# Between the Self and the Collective: An Examination of Palestinian Resistance in Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns*

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## Abstract

In discussing the Israeli occupation of Palestine, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of subjugation and the diverse expressions of resistance against such oppression. Sahar Khalifeh's novel, *Wild Thorns*, illuminates the intricate dynamics between internal conflicts, revolving around individual survival choices, and the external existential struggle Palestinians endure against the Israeli occupation. As such, this paper delves into Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* and its portrayal of Palestinian resistance and identity within the liberation struggle through the narratives of four characters: Adil, Usama, Zuhdi, and Basil. This paper highlights the versatility of resistance, which can manifest through literature as a means for articulating oppression and defiance, serving as an act of resistance in itself. The paper then delves further into how the novel underscores the significance of language and education within the context of both the Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance. Language and education do not only serve as tools of resistance but also as mechanisms of oppression wielded by the occupying forces. The final argument of this paper is the cyclicity and inevitability of violence within the reality of the Israeli occupation, as the novel vividly portrays the concept of armed resistance as a product of the violent nature of the Israeli occupation. Through these narratives, this paper provides a thorough analysis of the complexities surrounding resistance and identity in the face of occupation. Delving into the lives of Khalifeh's characters offers profound insights into the multifaceted nature of the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

**Keywords:** Resistance; Occupation; Language and Education; Violence; Oppression