

Styles and Technical Devices in the Service of Meaning in Muḥammad Naffā‘'s Short Stories

Faṭīma Rayyan, Ph.D.¹

Abstract

This study deals with the local Palestinian literature in Israel and highlights the technical styles that are employed in the service of meaning in the short stories written by the Palestinian writer Muḥammad Naffā‘ (1939).² The technical styles that are intensively summarized here have been collected after a long study that lasted for three years investigating 6 collections of the short stories that Naffā‘ has written since 1976. In addition, the study deals with all the available short stories that were written published on sporadically on *Al-Ġabha Website* since June, 2014. The study sets out from a mere semiotic starting point as I believe that the most productive method to trace meanings through various styles and forms of writing is the adoption of and following the semiotic method being a model that combines all the de-constructural and analytical methods of criticism. In view of this, the study attempts to show how Naffā‘ succeeds in employing specific techniques to make the meaning present on the surface of the text. It shows also the significance of the interconnectivity between form and content and its importance in understanding the text in a profound way as through that interconnectivity, the reader turns into a positive receiver and an active participant in the analytical process of the text.

Keywords: local Palestinian literature, Muḥammad Naffā‘ (1939-) Arabic Literature, Periods of Palestinian Literature in Israel, Local Palestinian Short Story.

¹ Kabul Village, Israel. fatme8@walla.com, + 972 547523153, + 972 4 9942850

²Muḥammad Naffā‘ was born in Beit Jann in the Galilee, north of Palestine (1939). He studied for two years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, but stopped his studies and returned to his village to work in agriculture and construction. In 1971, he joined the Communist Party and has been an active member since then. He rose in the party positions till he became a Member of Knesset for two and a half years. In 1994, he was elected a General Secretary of the Communist Party and occupied this position till 2015, when he resigned voluntarily from that position for reasons of age and out of his desire to give the opportunity to the younger generation to continue the way, as he said. His literary career has been also rich and he has established himself as a prominent short-story writer, who worked constantly on strengthening the relationship between the Palestinian heritage and folklore within his short fiction as a medium of an attempt to crystallize an Arab identity for the Palestinian minority in Israel. He started writing short stories in 1964 and many of his stories have been translated into Hebrew, English, French and German. Naffā‘ is still active and productive and his works are published in *al-Ittiḥād* daily and *Al-Ġabha Website* in serial episodes before they are published in a book form. These works are also included in this study. (This information about the writer's biography is from an interview which I made with the writer).

Arabic Literature or Local Palestinian Literature?

The Palestinian literature in Israel is classified as *minor literature*, which Ṭāhā (2001) calls *formative literature*.³ Some critics maintain that there are essential differences between the local Palestinian literature, particularly in Israel, and Arabic literature in general. These differences are due to the establishment of the State of Israel, which compelled this type of literature to focus mainly on political thoughts and issues, and the search of the Palestinian minority in Israel for their identity and national belonging. Besides, there is a noticeable difference between the Palestinian literature that is written in Israel (known traditionally by the name of: Local Literature) or outside it. The difference is a result of the dual attitude of the Palestinian minority in Israel towards the Jewish majority as a rival and, sometimes, as an enemy at the national Palestinian level. The Palestinian minority generally considers the Jewish majority as a discriminating government at the civil level.⁴ Therefore, dealing with the local Palestinian literature as a separate issue from the conditions and events under which the Palestinian minority in Israel has gone through since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 till the State recognition of them as a minority citizens that hold the Israeli identity card, is not objective, unfair and non-scientific. With the establishment of the State of Israel, large numbers of the Arab citizens had been evacuated from their villages and towns and driven away to the neighboring Arab countries. There were lots of educated people among the evacuees, who were displaced and driven into exile. Such event led to the breakup of the people and their separation from their homeland, and turned them into refugees and people who are living on the hope of return to their homes.

As language is the most prominent medium of expression and communication between human beings, the literary text which is based on specific social foundations and special social authority has become the main means of expression of the individual and the collective national concern and obsession.⁵ Highlighting these facts does not deter us from introducing views that oppose these views; some critics such as Reuben Snīr and Ami El'ad argue that there is a common and essential factor that unites Palestinian writers in Israel, the Palestinian writers in Gaza Strip and the West Bank territories and even in other various places in the Arab world and the Western World. However, despite the possibility of referring to special characteristics of specific Palestinian writings in a specific geographical region, they remain secondary characteristics that result from political, social and economic causes. The Arab minority that lives in Israel has split due to political issues, but they are still struggling to achieve their unity. In view of this, those who claim that there is an essential difference between Arabic literature that is written in Israel and literature that is written outside it undoubtedly claim that physical separation between the members of the same people leads necessarily to an essential and radical difference between the members of a people that come from and belong to unified roots and heritage in their origin.⁶

In my view, it is a natural thing that the members of the same nationality will not divide in their national and spiritual feelings. However, this belonging and affinity should not contradict the legality and legitimacy of their search of their self and achievement of their individual 'ego' (I), and their collective 'superego' (We) on a specific geographical area. After the 1967 War, there was a critical turning point in the life of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel in different aspects including literature. Suddenly, they found themselves facing a new difficult reality, which turned them into a shocked national minority that is overwhelmed by feelings of confusion, perplexity, helplessness, disorientation, difficult security and political conditions, besides other obstacles and difficulties that caused a lot of damage that broke up their unity and caused disorientation.

³See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, "Tawafuq al-Shakl wa-l-Maḍmūn fi Qiṣaṣ Muḥammad 'Ali Ṭāhā," in: *Qaṣṣ al-Athar*. 'Akka, Mu'asasat al-Aswār, (2001), p. 17.

⁴Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *The Palestinian Novel: A Communication Study*. London: Routledge Curson, (2002), p. 26-27.

⁵ See: 'Abbāsi, Maḥmūd, *Ṭaṭawwur al-Riwaya w-al-Qiṣṣa al-Qaṣira fīl Adab al-'Arabi fi Israel (1948-1967)*, Yafa: Dār al-Mashriq, (1998), p. 11-18.

⁶ Snīr, Re'uben, "One of his Wounds: The Palestinian Literature in Israel." *Alfayim*, 2. (1990), p. 245-247; El'ad, 'Ami, "Between Latticed Worlds: Riyad Baidas and the Short Story in Israel." *Mifgash*, (1996/7), p. 56-57 (in Hebrew).

They found themselves compelled to look for ways and tools through which they could face those hard conditions. The Palestinian minority took three tracks to achieve their goals.⁷

- 1) Co-operations with the ruling authority,
- 2) Establishment of political ideological organizations that aim to resist the policy of the Israeli Government,
- 3) Pressuring the Arab side in an attempt to get a unified Arab identity.

Literature has reflected these conditions in a reliable realistic way. A group of writers wrote about the political conditions and criticized the ruling authority for their racial discrimination, while another group preferred to keep away from political issues that agitate the ruling authority of the Jewish majority and resorted to writing about social issues to keep themselves safe from the governmental oppression. A third group mixed between political issues and social ones⁸ belongs to the third group and he is the best to represent this trend. In addition, the Arabs in Israel did not feel of their national Palestinian identity strongly. This is attributed to the influence of the Egyptian President Jamal 'Abd al-Nasser and his call for strengthening the Pan-Arab National feeling and identity. However, after the Six Day War in June, 1967, the stage of crystallization of literature started to emerge noticeably and the local Palestinian writer realized his remoteness from the Arab world and his marginalization on the literary map. Therefore, the local Palestinian writers started their relentless attempts to publish their works to assert themselves and take their social and political place. For example, Emile Ḥabībī published his *Sudāsīyyat al-Ayyām al-Sittah (Six Stories about the Six Day War), Al-Waqā'i' al-Ġariba fī Ikhtijā' Sa'id Abi al-Naḥs al-Mutaṣā'il (which became known later by the name al-Mutaṣā'il/ The Pessimist)*. Educational and literary colloquia were organized, and publishing houses were established. The local Palestinian literature started an era crowned with success and determination.⁹

1. Periods of Palestinian Literature in Israel

Critics divide the local Palestinian Arabic literature into two main periods:

2.1 Literature from 1948-1967.

Literature in this period reflects the ideology and intellectual attitudes that sympathize with the Arab world; keeping away from involvement in individual concerns and issues, and participation in the collective concerns and issues of the people. The writers of this trend are those who raised the flag of socialism and communism.¹⁰ Literature shows that the Arab minority in Israel in this period did not have a unified attitude regarding the type of reaction and resistance. Evidence of this confusion appears in the fact that the Palestinians in Israel did not agree on the issue of collective national identity in that period¹¹.

2.2 Literature in the Period of 1967-1997.

This period is characterized by several political events that took place successively and had a large effect on the future and identity of the Palestinian minority in Israel. The most prominent events in this period include: the Six Day War in June 1967 and the renewal of the reunion between the Palestinian minority in Israel and outside it, which created a feeling of relief and joy mixed with fear that the reunion will be stopped again; the 1973 War; the Land Day in 1976 and the confrontation of the Palestinian minority with the Jewish majority that rules Israel; the establishment of political movements to defend the rights of the minority and face the government unjust and racial policy. All these events led to an essential change in the definition of the collective identity of the Palestinian minority, who started considering themselves as a national minority that seeks to confirm and assert their Palestinian identity as through their attachment and adherence to their Arab nationality, but without ignoring or denying their citizenship in Israel.¹² Due to these changes, circumstances, and causes, the local Palestinian literature exited from the frame of national introversion and reached the borders of infinite openness. At present, it deals with issues that address the present generation and their current issues. In my view, this is a sign and a characteristic of successful literature.

⁷Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *The Palestinian Novel*, (2002), p. 14-15.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹See: Ġanāyim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sa'b: al-Qiṣṣa al-Falastiniyya fi Israel*. (1995), Manshūrāt al-Karmel, p. 50-53.

¹⁰ El'ad, 'Ami, (1997/7), p. 60.

¹¹ See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *The Palestinian Novel*, (2002), p. 27-28.

¹²See: Ġanāyim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sa'b*, (1995), p. 51-53.; Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *The Palestinian Novel*, (2002), p. 15-28.

In spite of the changes and developments, the writer Muḥammad Naffā' is still fully concerned with the national and social issues of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

2. Turning Points in the Development of the Local Palestinian Short Story

When we talk about the development of the local Palestinian short story, the questions that arise are these:

- Does this genre of writing have special characteristics?
- Aren't the circumstances that surrounded the process of the birth of the short story the same as those that surrounded the birth of other genres of literature?

The answer is YES to both questions: the causes, the elements and circumstances are the same. However, the short story is seen as a distinguished type due to its closeness to the life of the people, whether they are ordinary simple people or sophisticated educated ones. It is the first photographer of the social and behavioral life in its different dimensions and its circumstances of conflict and confrontations. These circumstances gain the short story the quality of a living entity that moves in constant process and a more living image than poetry. Poetry tends more to be symbolical and ambiguous, which requires the reader to expand the circle of his cultural knowledge in order to understand the meaning, without being sure that he really understood the meaning fully or not. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' in poetry, and here lies its aesthetic quality. As a result, it is easier for us to define the junctures in the structure of the local short story than in other literary types, mainly poetry. Though the story is something untrue, it has truth in it that embodies one aspect of reality, and therefore, it is a kind of art. The journey of the local Palestinian short story started in 1948, the year of the Nakba and the establishment of the State of Israel till today.¹³ Ghanayim divides this stage into three stations:¹⁴

1. Formation
2. Rising
3. Crystallization

3.1 The Stage of Formation: (1948-1956)

This stage witnessed the immigration of a number of Iraqi Jews to Israel. Among them, there were several writers such as Ḥaddād (1914-1983), Sasson Somekh and others. These writers contributed to activation of the Arabic literature in Israel. Magazines and newspapers started getting interested in literature such as: al-Yawm, Mağallat al-Ġadīd, and Mağallat al-Muğtama'. New writers started publishing their stories in these newspapers and magazines such as: Qaysar Karkabi (1931-1993) and Muṣṭafa Murrār (1930-).

3.2 The Stage of Rising: (1956-1967).

This stage witnessed the appearance of the first seed of the local Arab short story. The major writers of this period include Ḥanna Ibrāhīm (1927-), Emile Ḥabibi (1921- 1996), Muḥammad 'Alī Tāha (1941-), Muṣṭafa Murrār (1930-), Muḥammad Naffā' (1939 -) and others. The theme of 'land' and 'homeland' appeared to be the main theme in all the published works in that time. The local writer introduced the problem of emigration and evacuation. They were described in a tragic way that shows the tragedy of unjust displacement of the Palestinian people from their homeland.

3.3 The Stage of Crystallization after 1967

The period of crystallization started after the Six Day War in 1967. During this period, intensive connection took place between the Arab writers in Israel and the writers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and developed after the establishment of the Union of Arab Writers in 1987 and Association of the Palestinian Writers in Israel.

¹³See: Ġanāyim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sa'b*, (1995), p. 37; Būluṣ, Ḥabīb *Al-Qiṣṣa al-'Arabiyya al-Maḥalliyya al-Qaṣīra*. Nazareth: al-Maktaba al-Sha'biyya, (1987), p. 17; Būluṣ, Ḥabīb, *Qiṣṣatuna al-Qaṣīra ila Ayn?* (2008): WWW.ALĠABHA.ORG/INDEX.ASP?i=38562 (1)

¹⁴Ġanāyim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sa'b*, (1995), p. 37-39; Ġanāyim, Maḥmūd, "New Old Trends in Arabic Literature in Israel." *Hamizrah Hahadas*, (1993), 35, p. 28-29. (in Hebrew).

Undoubtedly, the confusion that took place in the identity of the Palestinian in Israel affected the nature of literary writing. On the one hand, the Palestinian writer wants to share the Palestinian people their aspirations, their happy occasions and their sad ones. On the other hand, he has to live the same conditions of the Palestinians within Israel and express them.¹⁵

As a result of the above conditions, the emergence of the local Palestinian short story was slow and accompanied with several political influences, which caused its slow development and freezing its writing for about 8 years after the establishment of the State of Israel.¹⁶ However, it continued its difficult historical process and rose again to the level it enjoys today thanks to the persistence of certain writers, who compete with international writers in their works. Muḥammad Naffā' is one of that group of persistent writers.

3. Themes of the Local Palestinian Short Story¹⁷

Generally speaking, the local Palestinian writers introduced themes that concern them and their people such as:

1. Strong loyalty to land and struggle against its confiscation
2. Struggle against national oppression intimidation
3. Political intimidation and persecution
4. Exploitation of working classes,
5. Conflict of classes and social injustice
6. Political discrimination based on racial discrimination
7. Psychological and social conflicts
8. The Palestinian rural atmosphere versus the city atmosphere
9. The Palestinian history and the people's practical and oral heritage
10. The Palestinian folklore, customs and traditions
11. The national rights of the local Palestinian identity
12. Peaceful resistance for the people's religious rights
13. Unemployment and its results on the family structure
14. The intellectual person and his concerns
15. The Israeli society, its conflicts and its openness onto the suffering of the Palestinian people
16. The reactionary Arab regimes and their role in the Palestinian catastrophe (Nakba)
17. Sexual relations, romantic love, and general relationship between men and women.
18. The issues of the woman and the problems that she faces in a conservative traditional society such as: polygamy, divorce and depriving her of her right to work and continue her studies.
19. The issue of conflict between the old generation and the new generation
20. Religious issues and intermarriage
21. Conflict and co-existence between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority
22. Historical issues that deal with heroic deeds of Arab leaders.

These themes and others confirm the local writers' involvement with the concerns of their people and their belief that literature should expose reality in a real way. Despite the shortcomings of the short story in its contents and style of didactic and reporting tone, direct oratory approach, and imbalance between the two discourses - the creative and the ideological, it has managed to impose itself on the literary scene locally and internationally. The short story writers benefitted from the literary critics as they were still in the process of creative development seeking to improve the artistic form of the local short fiction. This naturally and necessarily applies to the writer Muḥammad Naffā', whose works are the subject of this study.

¹⁵See: Ġanayim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sā'b*, (1995), p. 52-53.

¹⁶See: 'Abbasi, Maḥmūd, *Taṭawūr al-Riwaya wa-l-Qiṣṣa al-Qaṣīra fi-l-Adab al-'Arabi fi Israel (1948-1967)*, (1983), p. 28, (in Hebrew).

¹⁷ See: Ġanayim, Maḥmūd, *Al-Madār al-Sā'b*, (1995), p. 182-192; Būluṣ, Ḥabīb, (2008); Ṣaliḥ, Faḥrī *Al-Qiṣṣa al-Falaṣṭiniyya fi al-Araḍi al-Muḥtalla*. Beirut: Dār al-Ḥikma, (1985). p. 25-26.

4. Semiotics: Meaning and Concept

Semioticians analyze the literary text by going beyond the borders of superficial meaning and go deeper to find out the hidden indications conveyed by the signs that the text includes such as color, movement, rhythm and sound. Taha agrees with Umberto Eco that the text is a system of signs and therefore it is an explanatory entity in its nature. Each sign exists in a frame of a basic definition of a defined message. The sign, any sign, should inevitably lead to a specific goal, which should not necessarily be clear.¹⁸

5. Muḥammad Naffā' 's Texts and Literary Semiotics

Umberto Eco distinguishes between two types of literary texts: the closed and the open. "The closed text is the one whose meaning is closed and ambiguous to some extent, though sometimes it can bear one explanation only. Its ambiguity or closedness constitute theoretically and practically a catalyzer to a deliberate active and productive reading. The open text is the opposite of the closed one. It is open and clear in its meaning, though it can allow generative reading where meanings can be successive and accumulative."¹⁹

Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, (2012) suggests a tripartite system to deal with the literary text:

- a. Activators of meaning that work as deactivators of productive capacity of reading.
- b. Delayers/ suspenders of meaning that work as activators of productive capacity of reading.
- c. Deactivators of meaning that work as deactivators of productive capacity of reading.

This tripartite system allows two inter-connective functions:

- 1) Showing the ugly points in the literary text according to what the system of activators;
- 2) Showing the artistic beautiful points in the classified texts in the system of delayers, even in the texts that belong to the system of activators, which employs a number of compensatory instruments.

The question that arises here is: According to which systems does Naffā' write?

My study and review of all of Naffā' 's texts since the seventies of the last century, starting with *Al-Aṣṣīb/ The Purebred Mare* (1976) and ending with the stories that he has published in *Al-Ittiḥād daily* and *Al-Ġabha Website* up to now confirm that he writes according to the system of activators that make the meaning ready and visible on the surface of the text, delaying by that the productive capacity of the reader.

Despite the hypothesis that maintains that the literary meaning exists in the text in anyway, and at a certain place, in a certain form, the movement from one meaning with a clear indication – such as historical data, specific deliberate intentions – into textual evasiveness, and reaching non-meaning²⁰ does not necessarily indicate any absolute opposite, but different methods of proposition. Before we clarify and exemplify the styles that Naffā' adopts in his writing, it is necessary to clarify the semiotic foundations that contribute to their definition:

1. "The literary text is the authority."²¹

The literary text is the main element where most of the contents and characteristics can be explained. Here, we find the writer, the expected reader and the historical data. Therefore, it constitutes the starting point of the explanatory operation in literature. The text as a linguistic system is nothing but a bunch of meanings, though language is included in a system of signs that work on clarifying the textual meanings and thoughts.

¹⁸See: Umberto, Eco, *Semiotics and Philosophy of Language*. Beirut: Markiz al-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabiyya. (2005), p. 139-143; Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, (2002), p. 139-139 – ¼ ; p. 263.

¹⁹ Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, "al-Muḥaffizat wa-l-Mu‘awwiqāt wa-l-Mu‘aṭilāt," (1), (2012), *Al-Ġabha Website* : www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=72167.

²⁰ Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, "Semiotics of Literary Meaning: a Dual Model," *Semiotica*, (2002), p. 277-278.

²¹ See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, "al-Muḥaffizat wa-l-Mu‘awwiqāt wa-l-Mu‘aṭilāt," (1): (2012), www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=72167; Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, "Semiotics," *Semiotica*, (2002), 139 – ¼, p. 276-277.

Generally, the literary text aims to serve a specific issue, which can be general or special, important or unimportant, satisfactory or controversial, and exists in the text in a complete or a partial way. Even the text that is written without any commitment to any issue has a specific goal somewhere.

2. "The textual meaning is attributed to the writer and the indication is attributed to the reader."²²

It is important to reconcile between the writer's authority over the text and his intentions behind it, and the reader's authority over his analysis of the text dimensions and indications that are affected by his historical belongings and cultural authorities. The 'meaning' is the outcome of information that the reader finds at the end of the reading process. The information is attributed to the writer "with some precaution, without insisting on the employment of the concept of intention or intentionality." As for the 'indications,' they are "the reader's suggestions that are introduced so that the text and its interpretations will be understood after a process of thinking and analysis, but this cannot be achieved unless two factors are achieved: **a**) textual data that allow leaving the text, **b**) a cultural store that allows the reader to leave the text easily.

The 'indication' in its first meaning according to Charles Pierce is: "a translation of a sign in another system of signs." This translation of the sign is in itself an interpretation operation, as a parallel sign comes to the reader's mind, or probably a more advanced one that contributes to the process of generating indications in an endless way, that does not end when the text ends."²³

3. The Language as an Effective Element

Though the language constitutes the largest part of the text, it is not the only element that affects the structure of meanings and their formation; "the meanings do not necessarily have to exist in the language of the text." Therefore, the following lines will talk in detail about the contents and themes that are strongly interconnected, which makes the meaning present in Naḥḥā's texts. The "compensatory tools" that the writer uses compensate the reader for the deactivation of his productive capacity that is related to his reading of the text, which is subject to a system of activators, which include the interconnected contents and themes. Only with them "can the interaction with the meaning be a substitute for production of the meaning," provided that this interaction is based on interaction from the three stations of: *understanding*, *identification*, and *practical attitude*.

Understanding means 'realization' that leads to internalization. When the meaning is internalized, it is necessary for me to change it into an attitude and build up a way to apply it at a later stage."²⁴ This argument contradicts the Russian formalists who argue that the main effort and interest should be given to the study of the 'manner/ style' in which the literary text is introduced, rather than on its meaning. In other words, the focus should be put on the form and structure of the literary text rather than on its materials and contents. However, I disagree with the Formalists' approach and arguments despite their relentless attempts to prove its effectiveness in literary criticism. In fact, they made desperate efforts to distinguish between poetry, narration, and oration within the circle of lexical and linguistic arts in an attempt to save literature from the paws of ideology, something that politicians could not understand, and continued expanding ideology on every spot of knowledge including literature.²⁵ Naḥḥā represents an applied model for the ideological approach.

²² See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, (2012), www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=69011

²³ See: Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and Philosophy of Language*, (2005), p. 184-189. It is worthwhile mentioning that the 'sign', which is the third component of the semiotic method that is based on the concepts of 'sign,' meaning and sign, "is the tool with which the subjects are constructed and deconstructed continually, and semiotics is "the science that studies how the subject is composed historically." Consequently, the human being is a sign, natural disasters are signs, and language of communication is a sign. See: previous source, pp. 112-113.

²⁴ See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, (2012), (2). *Al-Ittiḥād*.

²⁵ For more information about Russian Formalists, see: Erlich, Viktor, *Al-Shaklaniyya al-Rusiyya* (2000), AL-Markiz al-Ṭaqāfi al-ʿArabi; ʿAnani, Muḥammad, *Al-Muṣṭalahāt al-ʿAdabiyya al-Ḥadiṭa*. Longman (1996): Al-Sarika al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿAlāmiyyah li-al-Nashr, p. 68-91.

Technical Devices: from Theory to Application

Many people think that the term 'style' is related to literature only. In fact, style is one aspect out of the many daily aspects of the discourse that distinguishes the social groups and the individuals alike. This opinion of course does not mean that it denies the traditional definition and explanation of 'style,' which requires the linguistic treatment that is latent in the text due to the fact that 'language' is one of the most important methodological components of different cultures of different societies.²⁶ This oratorical aspect mixed with that practical instrument that the writer adopts in order to polish his literary work is the aspect that made Naffā' employ the following techniques to serve the meaning and convey it in the text:

1. Verbosity

Naffā' employs the technique of 'verbosity' in narration through various instruments such as: digressions, elaborations, and detailed picturesque description with which he celebrates all the details of the situation; the former, the latter and the focal alike.²⁷ This technique draws the narrator to digress from the text and the central event, but to return to it in another place in the story. Through consistent employment of this technique, Naffā' has turned into a very skilled writer in this form of the 'frame story'.²⁸ For example, in the story *Kūshān*²⁹ (*Title Deed/ Certificate of Registration*), the narrator retrieves the story of his meeting with Ḥassan and Ibrahīm, the roaming refugees on foot from a village called Al-Damoun. The narrator's memory returns to childhood through the use of artistic associations and the first moments of the meeting. He describes how the relationship between them strengthened so much that they became one entity.

Each one knows the other by duty and belonging more than by name. The whole story is recollections flashback through artistic associations from childhood. However, it cannot be considered to be 'two separate stories' – a story of a childhood meeting and a story of meeting of two young people after the mountains hid "Ḥasan and Ibrahīm" behind them. It leaves the narrator listening to the roar of the storm "that might carry in its folds the sound of steps, a voice, a call from them." This recall of what took place in the past is a necessary pre-condition for the exposition of the present story; it is this recall that made the meaning present in the text and interconnected with the form; the issue of childhood and Diaspora, and search for identity is the issue that gathered the revolutionary youths, Ḥasan and Ibrahīm and the Narrator, who started their conversation about the issue - their identity; all the conversation is about this issue; it is like bread; it doesn't lose its splendor or its taste. We move in its circle all the time, and every talk about anything ends and connects with the issue..."

In addition, verbosity in narration, excessive digressions, elaborations and circumlocutions in this text (and others), which the story can hardly bear, lengthens the story into 10 pages. However, the technique of verbosity and wordiness in the descriptive scenes impose the use of a large quantity of words as the narrator intends to clarify and convey the meaning in a more detailed and comprehensive way. At first sight, this technique is likely to confuse the reader and might cause him to lose control of the desired focal aspects of the text. The techniques of verbosity, digression and pictorial description will be discussed in the section about 'folkloric' themes of heritage that makes the meaning present in Naffā's works."³⁰

²⁶Ball, Johan, "Style in the Folk tale," in: *Folklore*, (Dec. 1954), vol. 65, No. 314 p. 170.

²⁷See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *Taḥta Sathin Akbar*: on: [article&id=2614:2009-02-15-06-49-03&catid=39:2008-10-17-21-52-16&Itemid=58](https://www.aljabha.org/article&id=2614:2009-02-15-06-49-03&catid=39:2008-10-17-21-52-16&Itemid=58).(2009).

²⁸The Frame Story is a story that consists of two stories or more – one is external and the other is internal. The external story starts and ends in the text, and it oftengives the background or the justification for the internal story. It appears as if it is an extension to it and it is the frame story. See: Wehbi, Majdi, *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Adabiyya fi-l-Luḡa wa-l-Adab*. Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan. (1984), p. 290-291.

²⁹See: *Kūshān*, in: *Kūshān*, (1980), p. 368-377, in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection*, Dār al-Ḥikma: al-Buqī'a'a, (1998).

³⁰For more samples of the Frame Story, see: *al-Qalluṭ* (1978), p. 168, in: *Wuddiyya* (1978) in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection* (1998); *Yawm Ṣaraka al-Ḥarraṭūn fi A'māl al-Tawra*, (1976); *Al-Aṣīlib* (1976); *Ibnat Mua'llimatī* (2011) on: *Al-Ġabha Website*:www.aljabha.org/index.aspx?i=60916.

In the story *Aṣyā' Ġarība/ Strange Things*, the writer starts his story with the following sentence: It was the mercy of my mind that he did not jump from his place like a bitten one to say goodbye to me to go to his soul, with no return, to a closed road that does not reply; that takes and does not bring!! What happened on the bus requires that and more!³¹

Such opening requires explanation, at least according to the reader's expectations. However, the writer surprises the reader by his digression and diversion from the narrative text to relate another story besides the original real one. This hampers the sequence of events in the text. At a certain point, the two stories meet under the effect of the time element. The reader feels surprised that this inflated digression has no direct connection with the opening: The time of the meeting is during the day. "And meeting during the day is awesome!" This day is the day that brought the narrator and Ṣaliḥa together in the digressing story; it is the same day that joined him and her in a love dalliance or an attempt of flirtation, or harassment, in more accurate words, with that girl who sat next to him on the bus...

With these representative texts and other ones, Naffā's style enters the space of gap-system or gapping. This is a system that activates the reader and draws his attention to any narrated thing, whether through the technique of digression or recollection or artistic flashback that is related to the narrative time. The narrator creates queries that arouse the reader's suspense and interest in replying to them. This feeling motivates him to continue reading to fill in the gaps and crystallize a complete or satisfactory meaning to him.³² In view of this, it is possible to include this technique of 'digression' under the title of 'a delaying motivator,' though the 'delay' of the meaning does not reach the border of other techniques such as "alienation."

2. The Third Person Singular Narrator

Naffā' seems to have tendency to employ the third person singular as a narrator of the events of his stories. This technique is likely to increase the power of interconnectivity between the techniques of form and content. Naffā' does not introduce an individual issue but a collective one that concerns the members of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and is relevant to them. He could employ the first person singular (I) as a narrator but this will change the meaning and goal and will lead to an individual admission of the case, and this is exactly the thing that Naffā' does not intend to do. Can Naffā' talk about the cares of the Palestinian minority through the first person singular pronoun (I)? Can he charge the Palestinian Arab memory with historical charges that have cultural and popular features, through the first person singular? I think this would be an impossible mission and therefore, the writer employs this technique tightly and premeditatedly because he is aware of what he wants and he realizes his intentions. The third person singular looks from outside and offers the writer authority to project his opinions on the characters, without making the character commit to his opinion.³³ Naffā's vision is wide and is not limited to the individual ego "I" but open to the collective 'superego', 'we.'

What has been said does not necessarily deny Naffā's use of the first person singular "I" in narration, but this technique is also employed tightly and with awareness. Naffā' generally uses this technique in his description of place, nature and its topography, giving a detailed and accurate picture of all its landmarks. This can be attributed to his strong attachment to land and his deep love to it, and that stems from an individual concern that dreams of achieving collective concerns that seek to regain the stolen homeland. To illustrate this technique, we refer to the story called *al-Muṣarradūn/ The Displaced*, from his collection *Al-Aṣīlib/ The Purebred Mare*, where the first person singular narrator talks using the pronoun "I" after his description of the remnants of Ḥittīn village and its evacuated people:

I walked along the canal that extended from the well winding between the old trees... In one of the house, the swallow build houses of clay... I imagined the people who lived here, cultivated their fields and trees, and drank from the well with jars and ewers of pottery....³⁴ In another story called *Al-Muḥayyam/ The Camp* in the collection of *Rīḥ al-Ṣamāl/ The North Wind*, he says:

³¹A'ṣyā' Ġarība, (1980), p. 440.

³²Tāhā, Ibrāhīm, "Nizām al-Tafġiya wa Ḥiwariyyat al-Qari'." *Al-Karmel*, 1993 (/14), p. 133.

³³Tāhā, Ibrāhīm, (3.11. 2012), www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=69212.

³⁴*Al-Aṣīlib* (1976), p. 4

We dig up the ruins of wood, tin and stones to take out children that were smashed by the shelling completely... The burning, confused, beating, and talking pain of the children; we chase a child who is chasing his only brother.....³⁵

In the story of *A'Ṣyā' Ġarība* from the collection of *Kūshan/ Certificate of Registration*, he says:

The oak sprouts rose, and the storax grew strongly, long and straight, with few untwined branches, and we were looking for such sticks to cut and make long and short canes...³⁶ These and other celebrated samples from the majority of Naffā' 's texts put the self in the circle of confrontation with place.³⁷ The writer intentionally takes this way to prove his knowledge of the place, and he does not appear to be a stranger to the place at all, even though the soul is wavering and confused by an occupation that causes its anxiety and sleeplessness- it is the obsession of being a stranger on his homeland.

In the story *Muṣwār al-Ṣaif/ The Summer Journey* (2013), Naffā' gets away for a short while from the collective concerns to be with himself and looks for a recluse to live in, but we find him resort to himself, employing the first person singular (I) in the narration accompanied by the technique of the monologue:

I overthrew a number of parasitical notebooks and sheets of paper... I felt comfortable... I am always in emergency... I don't know... I declared my anger... I left the last house dormant...³⁸

In a frank admission that the narrator gives confidently and boisterously, he explains the reason why he escapes from reality:

I will have heavy dinner at this late hour of the night; I am not starving but this is a trap to draw dreams and nightmares in heavy sleep... I wander in dreams and nightmares; life has splendor during a dream; it is true that there are rude dreams and malignant nightmares, but we were born in order to sacrifice; I have to be like tree-ants – carrying something up and down...

With this confession, Naffā' confirms that he cannot and will not be able to get away from the collective concerns as the echo of the collective concern controls his thoughts. Employment of the first person singular "I" and escape to the dream points out Naffā' 's realization of the necessity to give interest and attention to the concerns of the individual and to offer the self a pure seclusion with its private world so that it will draw energy from it and goes back to it. Thus, it can continue the journey of struggle for the collective cause. Probably Naffā' wants to convey a specific concern of one of the Palestinian members in Israel. This is an allowed thing and it does not contradict the writer's belief and principle. What concerns us is that his approach compels him to integrate two new tools to his texts so that the form will interconnect with the content.

3. The Interior Monologue and the Heard Monologue

The technique of monologue³⁹ is clearly employed for one time only in the following text:

The elderly fat and very corpulent women on the bus and the taxi cab shout at the driver in two languages:

³⁵ *Al-Muḥayyaym*, (1978). p. 11

³⁶ *A'Ṣyā' Ġarība* (1980). p. 445

³⁷ See: Ṣalḥat, Anṭwān, "Ḥoṣuṣiyyat al-Taġriba/ Uniqueness of the Experience," (2001), in: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *Qaṣṣ al-Athar*, (2001), p. 304.

³⁸ *Muṣwār al-Ṣaif*, (29.9.2013). www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=79674.

³⁹ In an attempt to distinguish between indirect free speech and interior monologue, Abbott (2000), argues that both styles intrude the narrative process without using quotation marks ("..."), and without being preceded by preparatory phrases such as "he said, he thought..." However, the difference lies in what is related to the first type – the free speech, which comes in a longer version than the monologue, and it takes place in the past time and always in the first person singular. The narrator speaks but the reader can distinguish and realize that this voice is the character's voice. For more information, see: Abbott, H. P., *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2002), p. 70-71.

- What kind of conditioner is this!? Make it stronger! We choked! These old ladies are fatty like fatty thighs, with pounds of dangling fat and flesh. They are all aged women and travel and move a lot. I wish they were young ladies!!! I extremely love full fatty ladies... The sentence "I wish they were young ladies!" rose in the narrator's mind, revealing his heart beatings to the reader and turning him into a participant in the picture and event...

This mixture between the first person singular pronoun "I" and the monologue puts the writer in the circle of the self, especially that the content of the story isolates itself moving around various thoughts that take place in the writer's mind. Even the dialogue in the text is with *Ḥayyat 'Aqd al-Ġoz/ The Snake of the Nut Vault* "that hissed in a voice without splendor," and with the bird that was saved from the snake thanks to the narrator. By indirect employment of another heard "monologue," known by the Formalists by the name "Skaz," the narrator enters through it the mind and soul of the snake to express his own thoughts.⁴⁰

4. The Omniscient Narrator

We have already said that Naffā' employs the technique of the *omniscient narrator* in many of his stories. The term refers to the first person singular "I" narrator who knows everything about the characters and the events. The employment of this type of narrator does not mean that it is an artistic shortcoming as the purpose of using such a narrator is to deepen the concept of the "we" and the collective concern, which is not denied by any sensible reader or critic. Therefore, I do not consider it as weakness in the narrator's reliability.

In the story of *Al-Tuffāḥa al-Nahriyya/ The River Apple* (2012), the writer employs the technique of the omniscient narrator, who sees and knows everything about the events and the characters of the story. In fact, the narrator himself is a major character in the text. He knows and realizes the senses and the feelings of all the characters and shares them their attitudes and directs them towards his own thoughts and ideology. The narrator tells the event using the first person singular "I" saying: "I woke up...thought...felt...interfered... and heard hustle-bustle...."⁴¹ However, the omniscient narrator is not the only active element in the text as he is a part of a whole; there is the Father, the Brother Rafiq, and the Women... Besides, the topic does not concern him in a specific way. It is his business to keep the writer out of the circle of the self and make reconciliation with the 'ego' (I), and put him in the circle of the 'superego' (We) and the collective issues. However, the writer makes the narrator an active participant in forming the general indication of the text through variation in the pronouns that narrate.

5. Direct Interference in the Narrative Process

Naffā' interferes directly in the narrative process in his stories by planting slogans on the tongues of his characters. Of course, his slogans stem from his own beliefs, principles and opinions. In this way, the text takes sides with the group that the writer supports. As the ideas of 'good' and 'bad' are clear in Naffā' 's texts, his sidedness is clear to be with whatever is 'good' and against whatever is 'bad' and 'evil'. For example, we see that he sides with the Palestinian farmer whose land was confiscated and robbed of his right over it.⁴² He also sides with the people of the village against the unjust authority that seeks desperately to obliterate the landmarks of their villages and confiscate their lands and implement decisions that serve the goal and interests of the state at the expense of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel.⁴³

In addition, he sides with the Palestinian woman and her rights against any reactionary backward thoughts that seek to suppress her and persecute her under the pretext of 'traditions' 'morals', 'honor,' 'chastity' and 'honesty.'⁴⁴

40. The heard monologue (Skaz) is a term that refers to "the narrator's imitation of the living language by approaching the audience and talking to them, replying to their comments without hearing the audience's comments." In other words, we hear the voice of only one character talking and debating. See: Ġanayim Maḥmūd, Ṭahā, Ibrāhīm, "Muḥammad 'Alī: Kātib Yaltaṣiq bi Arḍ al-Waqi' Ṣaklan wa Maḍmānan." in: *Qaṣṣ al-Aṭhar*, (2001), p. 41.

41. *Al-Tuffāḥa al-Nahriyya*, (2012). p. 10-17.

42. See for example, al-Sammā'i, M., in: *al-Tuffāḥa al-Nahriyya* (2012), *Li Annana Nuḥibbu al-Arḍ*, (1980), p. 378-383, in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection* (1998).

43. See for example the stories: *Qīṣṣat al-'Ayn*, in: *Rih al-Ṣamāl* (1979); *I' ndama Ṣāraka al-Fallaḥoun fi al-Tawra*, p.130-137 in: *al-Aṣīlīb; al-Ġamal* p. 407-413, in: *Kuṣbān/* (1980) in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection* (1998); *TaḤḤṭ Ḡadād li al-Balad* (1998), p. 485-495, in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection*. (1998).

44. See for example: *KhaḤq al-Sindyān* (1976). p. 102-110; *Mu' allimat al-Awlad* (1976), p. 25-29, in: *Al-Aṣīlīb* (1976); *al-Niqdir* (1998). p. 501, in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection* (1998).

What concerns us in this context is not the writer's sidedness and with whom; what concerns us is that his sidedness is a pre-conditioned and decides the writer's direct interference in the narration. The question that arises here is this: Is it possible to locate the place of interference in Naffā's texts? My answer to this question is that it is difficult to determine where it takes place as it can come in the middle or the end of the text. Sometimes it comes after every line. Naffā does not refrain from direct interference. He generally turns to his readers to connect them to the artistic work, and through that connection, he inserts his Marxist and revolutionary thoughts in the text. However, he does not force anyone to accept his views, but he tries to persuade them rationally and through implied dialogue with them. Therefore, we find him commenting directly through one of the active characters in the text, exactly as we see in the story of *Jihaz al-'Arus/ The Bridegroom's Trousseau* in his collection of *Wuddiyya*, (1978), where he declares his political attitudes, which oppose the attitudes of the religious people, the traitors who conspire with the State, through the words of the Bride who is preparing for her wedding and rebels against all the religious preaches that give legal opinions (fatwas) that 'men are in charge of women'. He also denies the fatwa that says and that God curses the women's seeds, even the one who gave birth' and the fatwa that prohibits women from going out to work, and prohibits women from watching television and wearing short dresses:

They say that watching television is illegal and against religion; wearing shorts is illegal, and work is illegal! They, God bless them, did not raise their voices on the confiscation day! It would be better if they demanded the opening of factories in the villages for work near the house! That would be a profit that is gained in an honest way! They would gain greatly from God if they demanded the abolishment of compulsory service! Hundreds of young men throw three years of their life in the army. Some of them return, others do not return!⁴⁵

This outright interference that the narrator does, and which takes place at the end of the story, spreads on seven pages, and it hardly fits in with the structure of the character. It is merely an exposition of the personal opinions that stem from the thoughts and opinions of the writer. This means that the writer filled in the previous pages with digressions and elaborations, and charged them with lots of descriptions and reports about the event in order that he would fill in his opinion briefly in few lines. In this way, he invades the reader's area of authority, and deactivates his productive capacity to contribute to the meaning of the text.

The same thing occurs in the story *Qādim Ġadīd/ A Newcomer* in the collection *al- Tuffāha al-Nahriyya / The River Apple* (2012). The writer tamed the character of the drunken newcomer to serve his personal and intellectual thoughts of brotherhood of peoples, acknowledgement of the Arab villages that are adjacent to the Jewish town Karmiel, and which the Map of the Israeli Zionist Map renounces.

After the bus stopped for an Arab traveler to get off near Mağd al-Kurūm, the Newcomer says goodbye to him in a pretentious tactless manner:

- Goodbye Brother. I do not discriminate peoples, even if he is from **this village, and here is Der al-Asad**, another Arab village.
- Why don't you love this village? (Talking to his wife), Ha?
- Especially this Der al-Asad, You, Yaaa.....⁴⁶

The text ends in this way and the reader finds himself again and again outside the productive creative circle.

In the story of *Khafq al-Sindyān/ Pulsation of the Oak Tree* from the collection *al-Aṣīlib/ The Purebred Mare* (1976), which deals with the issue of murder on the background of family honor, the narrator interferes in more than one place, trying to oppose this backward way of thinking, which is unfair specifically to the woman's rights:

- But what did Yamama do exactly, and is she a criminal?
- She's is alive, and she should be like that!⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Ġihaz al- 'Arus*, (1978), p. 166.

⁴⁶ *Qādim Ġadīd*, (2012), p. 100-101.

⁴⁷ *Khafq al-Sindyān*, (1976), p. 109.

These sentences were mentioned in independently, and no character said them. However, they constitute a direct interference by the narrator.

The story of *Taḡyīr fī Wuḡhat al-Nazar Ittiḡāh Yūsuf al-Ṣiddiq/ Changes in the Attitudes towards Yusuf the Righteous* from the collection of *Rīb al- Šamāl / The North Wind* (1978) is full of this technique. On one occasion, we see the writer interfere and ridicule the devotion of the village people to 'holy men' and Yusuf's grave. For example, he says: "Isn't it enough that their plants and crops are abundant with the Yusuf the Righteous bless?"⁴⁸ At another time, he speaks like a strict preacher who is confident in his opinion and belief: "The world is not loose and uncontrolled!

According to this story, Yūsuf al-Ṣiddiq lived in the days of the Turks (Ottoman Empire), and even in their days he remained as he is. However, "this does not apply to our days in anyway."⁴⁹ There are many other examples, which include texts that represent Naffā's interference.

6. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is anything that makes the text interconnected with another text explicitly or implicitly. This is the only technique that goes under the *delay system* in a positive meaning. It makes the text subject to a dual reading: a reading of the recalled text and a reading of the written text. This necessarily leads us to three stages: knowledge of the real text, following the changes and questioning these changes that lead us to be close to the meaning. In the story *Al-Barq al-Šouri wa al-Ṭayr al-Aḡdar / The Šouri (Ṭyre) Lightning and the Green Bird* (2006). Intertextuality starts in the title, which takes the Palestinian reader back to his folk memory and reminds him of an old tale called *The Tale of the Green Bird*. This sample of intertextuality is confirmed by the writer, who quotes a passage from the tale:

"The girl calls her brother and sheds tears:

-O my brother!

-Come and do not come!

- They put the caldron on fire for you!

- They sharpened knives

And when they slew him, he continued to fly below the ceiling of the house, singing:

-I am the green bird

- I am the ornament of the troops

- My step-mother is my slayer

- My father is the eater of my flesh

- My sister collects my bones

- And puts them in the linen sack

And the sister cries and says:

- O, Bird, sing!

- O how sweet your song is! **(From the words of an old folktale)**⁵⁰

For the reader, **the first stage** is to know the original and real text completely, the event, and the characters. After he activates his productive capacities and recalls his general knowledge and culture, he will be able to understand the popular folktale, its content and significance: the boy's stepmother is an evil woman who slays her step-son, the son of her husband, cooks his flesh, and gives it to her husband' his father, to eat. His only sister collects his bones and buries them, fulfilling her brothers will. The bones turn into a beautiful bird that sings the song:

"I Am the Green Bird". . In the course of time, the bird takes revenge on his father and his wife by killing them by sticking pins and needles into their bodies.⁵¹

The **second stage** is that the reader should be alert and follow all the developments and changes in the present text and the recalled text of the green bird from the past. The text bears different dimensions:

⁴⁸ *Taḡyīr fī Wuḡhat al-Nazar Ittiḡāh Yūsuf al-Ṣiddiq*, (1978), p. 107.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107

⁵⁰ *Al-Barq al-Šouri wa al-Ṭayr al-Aḡdar* (1). 2.12.2006. *Al-Ġabha Website*: www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=23937

⁵¹ For more information about the folktale, see: Badarneh, K.,

Ṭar al- Ṭair. 'Akka, Mu'asasat al-Aswār. (2004), 85-86.

- The stepmother's cruelty and her persecution: "the father's wife is God's anger!"
- The sister's emotions for her brother are strong; her loyalty is true and she fulfills his will.
- Attachment to the land, the family and the homeland appear clearly in the brother's will to his sister to bury his bones in the land of "the garden under the tree.
- Oppression of orphans and torturing them mercilessly.

The folktale of the Green Bird, has internal intertextuality with the Arab legend of the Phoenix (al- ' Anqa'). This hints at the idea of resurrection. The legend says that the legendary bird (al- ' Anqa') is resurrected after it is burnt completely, exactly like the Phoenix.⁵²

The chosen passage from the folktale of *al-Ṭayr al-Aḥḍar/ The Green Bird* in the story *Al-Barq al-Ṣouri / The Lightning of Tyre*, highlights two main scenes that affect the process of the event. The *first scene* is the sister's call to her brother unwillingly and forcibly. This coercion results from oppression and persecution of a higher ruling authority that plots and against her. The *second scene* bears the idea of triumph and resurrection in confidence and pride.

The first scene starts by emphasizing the warm relationship of brotherhood and ends with the same idea:

"The girl calls her brother and sheds tears:
And
And the sister cries and says: O, Bird, sing!
- O! How sweet your mourning song is!

There is no clear and direct mention that revenge is taken on the attacking persecutors though the content of the folktale deals with the idea of persecuting and oppressing orphans, and that God will support them and make them victorious even if long time passes.

The written text, *Al-Barq al-Ṣouri wa al-Ṭayr al-Aḥḍar* leans on the background of the war between Israel and the Lebanese Ḥizbullāh. The war between the two sides started on 12/7/2006 and ended on 14/8/2006. The text refers to this date by saying:

In the season of *al-Ṣouri* in the heat of proud Tammuz and unwary or scared August;but why is Tamuz proud and why is August unwary? Of whom are they unwary or scared? And to whom does this statement apply?

Each line in the text demands a query, which means that it is charged with information that is related to heritage and folklore, ideology and politics. The text satirizes the Arab countries and their heads, and this refers us to the Arab schisms regarding this issue. It also reminds us of the Saudi and Egyptian governments who issued statements attacking what they called "Lebanese elements" and considered this step as "an uncalculated adventure without consulting the legitimate authority." Syria stands outside this opposing frame, and supports and assists Ḥizbullāh. The text is proud of this brotherly attitude, which results from Naffā's inner belief in the Arab unity, especially in hard days.

Questioning the two texts explains and clarifies the causes of choosing the intertext of this tale, and specifically that section. If this last text didn't serve the meaning, the writer would not retrieve it and employ it in the text in order to create a textual interaction that carries in its folds the image of indication, meaning, and sign that the former text drew in the latter text. Since the text is a "movement of texts and interconnection of a text within the space of another text,"⁵³ it is possible to consider the folktale of *al-Ṣatir Ḥasan/ Clever Hasan*, which is employed in more than a story as a literary intertext that serves the general idea in Naffā's texts.⁵⁴ The story of *al-Ṣatir Ḥasan* can be summarized in a few lines. It says that a rich merchant wanted that his son marry four ladies in order that they would give birth to a lot of children. Days passed, and his wish came true and his son lived happily with his four wives till a very beautiful woman visited him in his store.

⁵² Ḥamzeh, Ḥussein, *Murawāḡāt al-Naṣṣ*. Ḥaifa: Maktabat Kul Shai', (2001), p. 122.

⁵³Kristeva, Julia, *'Ilm al-Naṣ / Textology*. Translated by Fārid al-Zāhi. Al-Dār al-Baiḍā' / Dār Topqāl li al-Nashr, (1997), p. 213.

⁵⁴See: *al-Muṣṭa'ī*, (1976), p. 45; *Ḥadīḡ al-Gatmas*, (1976), p. 95.

He asked her to marry him, and she agreed on condition that he would divorce his four wives, and he did so! This woman turned out to be an 'evil ghoul' in reality. One of the divorced wives gave birth to a son and called him *al-Šatir Ḥasan/ Clever Ḥasan*. Hasan grew up and became a supporter to his mother and aunts – the wives of his father. The female ghoul decided to get rid of him. She started plotting against him and pretended to be sick and asked him to do impossible missions such as to bring medicine for her from far unknown dangerous places.

Each time, Hasan did what she asked him to do but God saved him from death. In the third and final time, he succeeded in getting rid of his father's unjust oppressive wife.⁵⁵

In the story of *Ḥadīṯ al-Ġatmas*, from the collection of *Al-Aṣṣilīb* (1976), the text of *al-Šatir Ḥasan* is recalled directly after the scene of the bombing of the Israeli airplanes to the Palestinian houses:

The airplanes did not wait to see if they hit the intended target; they left it for us to know and flew more to the north. When my Grandmother was telling us the story of *al-Šatir Ḥasan*, who used to hit the ghoul's head with his wooden sword and cut it into two halves, the ghoul's head would roll with one open staring eye and say: Hit me again, *Šatir Ḥasan!* *al-Šatir Ḥasan* would say: My mother did not tell me to strike twice, because the second strike, according to the legend, would bring life back to the ghoul. Then, it would relive and kill *al-Šatir Ḥasan* and break his sword. And now, I want to go back to the airplane and ask it to strike twice. Probably the second strike will bring life and rebirth and reconstruction.⁵⁶

The question that arises now is this: Where and how do the two texts interconnect?

In an investigating look, we can notice that the character of *al-Šatir Ḥasan/ the Clever Ḥasan* intersects with *al-Šatira Israel/Clever Israel*, but there is a fundamental difference between the targets of the two. *al-Šatir Ḥasan* follows his mother's advice to save his family and relatives from the evil and threat that are latent in his father's evil wife – the female ghoul. However, *al-Šatira Israel* attacks an isolated unarmed peaceful people randomly and arbitrarily, without sensible thinking or planning. Israel's goal is not noble or elevated as the writer sees it, and he wishes Israel would disagree with *al-Šatir Ḥasan* and 'strike again' so that the whole family would die and no one would feel the pain of separation from the other. Probably there would be rest for the dead ones, and the ones who remain alive would wake up and relive.

Again, the writer's ideology and political beliefs appear on the surface of the text. However, if the 'isolated people', the 'Palestinians in Israel' are 'an awful ghoul' that disturbs the Israeli airplanes, then they will be allowed to strike twice without defining the target. It should be noted here and emphasized that this technique of 'intertextuality' that Naffā' recalls comes from Arabic texts in most cases. He retrieves his characters such as *al-Zināṯi Khalīfa*, *al-Zīr Salem*, *Abu Zaid al-Hilālī*, *al-Jāhiz*, *Abu Nuwās* and quotes their statements, poems, sayings and beliefs. By doing so, he indicates his pride in his Arab nationality and his constant call to national Arab unity, no matter how much ages differ or circumstances change.⁵⁷

Besides, Naffā' does not refrain from employing intertextuality from international literatures to show his knowledge and wide education, 'pushing' the Arab culture within it as he does in his story *Nawba Qalbiyya/ A Heart Attack*: This moly – wild garlic – saved the Greek *Odysseus*, son of *Laertes* and *Anticlea*, from the magic of the witch-goddess *Circe*, who turned his companions into pigs. However the god *Hermes* offered *Odysseus* some moly and negated the effect of magic. It is clear that this list of plants and grains and actions played the role of prevention, deterrence and resistance to rude diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks, and blood clots.⁵⁸

The writer's implied criticizing questions are: If these plants still exist, and agriculture gives such benefits that history has witnessed and science has confirmed, why do you, my Palestinian compatriots, ignore your heritage and follow another lifestyle that does not suit you, forgetting your origin, identity and traditions? Why?

⁵⁵ To see the complete text, see: Sirhan, Nimer, *Ḥikayat Ša'biyya min Falastin*. Ramallah: Maktabat al-Nashir, (1987), p. 41-47.

⁵⁶ *Ḥadīṯ al-Ġatmas*, (1976), p. 95.

⁵⁷ For more information about *al-Zināṯi Khalīfa* and the character of *Abu Zaid al-Hilālī*, see the stories: *Al-Mušarradin*, p. 9; *Al-Moḍa fi Baladna*, p. 81, in: *Al-Aṣṣilīb* (1967); Read more about *al-Zināṯi's* character, which is one of the main characters of the in the *Hilālī* saga in the book by: Muḥammad, Burhāna (1994). *Sirat Banī Hilal*, Beirut: al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya: p. 155-159.

⁵⁸ *Nawba Qalbiyya* (2012), p. 224.

6. Endings of the Stories

In the majority of his stories, Naffā' summarizes what he intended to say in this or that text in one direct and frank statement that ends the story. Some of these endings express a cautious optimistic look about the future of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel as we see in the story of *Al-Muṣarradīm/ The Displaced* (1976). The story ends with a sentence that carries some kind of wise lesson: "We know that the wind flies with the seed, and water drags it, but wherever it settles, life resurrects in it."⁵⁹ Similarly, the end of the story *Zahrat al-Humīng/ the Hummingbird Flower* (2010) summarizes the writer's established faith that security and safety will not be achieved unless the Zionist enemy leaves this land: "It is impossible that you fight and kill and will not be killed, and it is foolish to kill without being killed."⁶⁰

There are other endings that expose a critical satirical sense that laughs out of bitterness as we see in the story of *Mu'allimat al-Awlad/ The Children's Teacher*. The narrator ends the story in one sentence that ridicules the thoughts of the people of his village and its sheikhs, after he introduces a deadly conflict for survival; either religion and norms or that the immoral libertine loose teacher who spread the spirit of corruption among the boys and girls of the village by allowing them sit next to each other and wear 'shorts'! However, when the village people succeed in driving her out of the village for a non-return, the village soon returns to be 'honest' as God created it!"⁶¹ Similarly, the writer ends the story *Qadīm Ġadīd/ A Newcomer* (2011) with a severe satirical and sarcastic sentence: "Thank God! The drunk and the mad love us!"⁶² Any Jew who sympathizes with the Palestinian Arab minority is either a drunk or a madman! Why not? They do not understand what they say! These endings in their different types and styles are inserted endings that are intended to 'enlighten' the reader and 'alert' him, but they are not void of a clear desire to insert hope in the reader's soul, even if that is in contrast with the real circumstances that he lives. The writer's disagreement with the external reality might in his final version succeed in influencing the reader more than in compromising with the reality.⁶³ Therefore, it is not allowed to assert that ending the text with a specific statement is not a shortcoming or a flaw in the narrative writing of Muḥammad Naffā'.

8. Employment of Place

Meaning and purpose are on the land of Palestine; therefore Naffā' does not leave his Palestinian Arab village that perches on al-Ġarmaq Mountain and his village Beit Ġann. If he leaves it for some reason, he mentions it and its different traditions and heritage landmarks.⁶⁴ There is no doubt that al-Ġarmaq and what surrounds it mean to Naffā' the same as any other spot of the Palestinian land. This technique is a planned one, intentionally made. It is his no return commitment to his hometown and homeland. It should be pointed out that place description is not limited to projection of qualities on the place or what is connected to it in a direct way. The writer observes the place with its background, its parts and its dimensions. He can use an indirect description through his employment of an artistic image, which is a production of the activity of imagination, but this activity does not mean copying the world but reforming it and discovering the relations that are latent between the phenomena. It also combines between the opposite or distant elements in one unity.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ *Al-Muṣarradīm/ The Displaced* (1976), p. 10. See also the following texts:

Ḥamid Aḥmad wa Aḥarūn, p.11-15, in: *Al-Aṣīlib* (1976); *Naffā' al-Ġawarda*, p. 32-44, in: *Riḥ al-Shamāl* (1978); *Al-'Ayn*, p. 81-91; *Qarīban Tushriq al-Šams*, p. 467-473. *Anfās al-Ġalīl*, (1998); *Waḥad min Kaṭīrīn*, p. 413-418, in: *Kuṣhān* (1980), in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection*, (1998).

⁶⁰ *Zahrat al-Humīng*, (23/11/2012), *Al-Ġabha Website*.

www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=48325.

⁶¹ *Mu'allimat al-Awlad*, (1976), p. 33. For more satiric endings, see the following representative texts: *A'ṣyā' Ġarība*, p. 440-449; *Kuṣhān* (1980), in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection* (1998); *Al-Mīnfaḍa*, p. 479-485; *Al-Muḥarībīn*, p. 543-551, in: *Anfās al-Ġalīl: The Complete Collection*.

⁶² *Qadīm Ġadīd*, (2011), p. 101.

⁶³ See: Ṭāhā, Ibrāhīm, *Qaṣṣ al-Athar* (2001), p. 23. 'Akka.

⁶⁴ See for example: *Khaffas' ala al-Lawn al-Abīaḍ* (1998), p. 635

⁶⁵ See: 'Asfūr, Jaber, *Al-Šura al-Fanniyya fi al-Turāṭ al-Naqdī wa al-Balāġī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, (1973), p. 340; Baḥrāwī, Ḥasan, *Ġamaliyyat al-Makan fi al-Riwaya al-'Arabiyya*. Beirut: al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya li al-Dirāsā t wa al-Nashr, (1994), p. 60.

This image or artistic portrait can be completed only after it assumes a semiotic orientation that studies the array of signs and the value of the linguistic indications that the writer employs in order to make his position unique and distinguished from other positions, though nature, in its spontaneity produces types that are quite similar. In fact, Naffā's sensitivity and his attachment to 'place' enable us to make it distinguished and unique. The 'object' and any object in its external world carry the function of a 'sign' that refers to the truth of its existence in that world, but its existence within the text compels it to carry a special indication that goes beyond its being merely a sign.

Naffā reformulated places and activated imagination and projected an accurate direct pictorial description to all of their landmarks. He reformulated them in his description of the 'evacuated villages' which used to exist but overnight they turned into archeological landmarks that beat gloomily in the full meaning and indications of the words. He connected between the past and the present by taking them onto a journey through history. He revived the memory with what used to be and what exists now. The place now tells what has taken place and what is taking place now!

9. Summary

This study focuses on one aspect of several literary aspects that are employed in Muḥammad Naffā's fiction, adopting the semiotic method in criticism and analysis. The study shows how the employed styles and techniques in the text and its contents and themes work together to convey the meanings that the author narrator wants to convey. These numerous styles of monologue, intertextuality, digression, elaboration, and the closure of the story through adding 'appendices' that play the role of a succinct 'epilogue' at the end of the stories characterize Naffā's short fiction. Naffā also employs the element of *place* as a technical element which conveys meaning. In addition, he uses variation in the use of the pronouns as narrators.

All these styles and techniques are employed tightly, cleverly and consciously in order to serve the meaning and make it rise to the surface of the text. Through them and by them, the themes are analyzed and understood in a clear way that transparently reveals the writer's intentions, who expressed his deep desire and insistence on registering and documenting everything that is related to the popular Palestinian heritage in general and the Palestinian Arab heritage in Israel in particular. This attitude reflects a deliberate and planned purpose to charge the Palestinian memory and remind the people of what existed in the past and what exists at present. This charge is not void of political hints references that are connected with Naffā's Marxist ideology. Charge involves repetition, and repetition involves emphasis and emphasis involves determination and insistence.

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