

## Form/ Content Match: A Study on Tamir's Collection

### "The Neighing of the White Horse"

Yaseen Kittani

#### 1. Introduction

Literature is the art of the language. Through language the writer can create the artistic sensibility. Language is not a minor issue in the literary work, because it is the literary man's only means of expression. Language form determines content. Talking about form without content is impossible because they are the same fabric. At the same time content may differ based on the formulating concepts from which the text takes off. There is always inter-relatedness between form and content in the literary work.

Among the most important issues we face in Zakariyya Tamir's short stories is the clear relative change in the formulating and stylistic concepts which accompany the development of the inner content. Studying the form in this context does not necessarily mean removing the form from its content and separating it from the story. Rather, as Mohammad Badawi says, "That the critic focuses on the form to study it through its relationship with other things (...). In other words: The fact that the critic is obliged to study form as one of the levels of the structure does not necessarily mean being entrapped in dividing the text into two parts (...) We would rather say that his work is similar to that of a physician who studies the heart in light of a live human body's mechanism..."<sup>1</sup>. Therefore our study of the form in this article is a study of the live relationship between form and content and reciprocity between them.<sup>2</sup>

Let us begin now analyzing the most important features of the form in the short stories of the first collection:

#### 2. Intermingling of Times

To provide evidence of this technique, we should start studying the first story of

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Badawi. "The Adventure of Form among the Novelists of the Sixties" *Fusul*. Volume 2, January 1982. P. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Yaseen Kittani: "The Changing Content in Zakariyya Tamir's Short Stories", *JAMI'A*. Vol.14 (2010).

*Neighing of the White Horse*<sup>3</sup> collection, entitled “The Coarse, Blue Song”. The story does not begin with the words “there was” to indicate a story which took place in the past. Rather it begins with a nominative sentence: “The river of human beings fooled around...” (p.9), Even though the verb “fooled around” is in the past, it does lead in the end of the sentence to expressing the instant and present moment: “The visitors of this restaurant are employees who work in the nearby factories... sit down... sip...and chat...”(Pp 9-10). The past tense in the story is used as a tool to retrieve what happened in the near or far past: “He told me few days ago...” (p.10); “Hunger was a naughty child ... she used to live with her parents... one day I have been informed... I was very young then... I loved Omayma” (Pp.11-12)

The time of the story- that of the narrator- is present time “I still hope to become a king... I am a jobless poor man... I never laugh.. never cry... I like singing and wine... I like white hair and bread...” (p.12). “I am the unknown enemy of the city... I keep walking around in its roads like a hungry hyena, keeping an old knife with faded handle” (pp.12-13); “ and handshakes my shoulder and rescues me from my own thoughts...”(p.13).

It is almost axiomatic that any story talks about some events which took place in the past. In this context however the narrator’s position on time is what concerns us. The writer views the story as an indivisible part of the present. Besides, the story has a third tense- the future tense- represented in the “S” letter which indicates the future. It has been used to embody the dream of the narrator. An initially simple dream which stems from the loss of love and bread: “ I need a woman who can sleep very close to me at night, who will intoxicate me with her breath... I will touch her smooth flesh (...) then I will talk warmly about the hunger of our old town” (pp. 11-12). Gradually he shifts to the big dream- Utopia-

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<sup>3</sup>Zakariyya Tamir. *The Neighing of the White Horse*. Nazareth: Fuaad Dan. (N.D.) [1960].

"I will demolish the factories... I will collect the machines in one place (...) I will shout in the faces of people gathered around me: Come on imbeciles return to the land (...) I will turn the town into a big village surrounded by green fields stretched endlessly..."(p.14).

Past, present and future tenses are mixed and intermingled. However, this mixture is not random or anarchic at all. Rather, it is planned and functional. If the present tense represents the narrator's position on time, which fits the first-person narrator's attitude in this story, it still has a different function to help create a kind of "alienation" and separation to attract the attention of the reader<sup>4</sup>. Using the blunt past has several functions. First, to introduce a piece of the past –such as the story of the Café owner or the story of the narrator with Omayma, the lass with whom he got infatuated when she was still young and who became the victim of hunger and need and turned into a prostitute. The past is also used for the purpose of brevity in the narration. To interrupt the ongoing dialogue: "And Abu Ahmad distanced himself from me to reply to the call..."(p.11); "I got out of the coffee house feeling joy and elation" (p.15). As mentioned before the future is used to embody the compensatory dream of the narrator.

This form which has been adopted by the writer meets the content of the story. The hero or rather the anti-hero does nothing except dreaming against a world filled with bitterness. The writer let the event fail and replaced it with the character and shed the lights on a moment of worried human presence. The pain of the past and suffering of the present accumulate- unemployment, hunger, confusion, loss of pure love and justice, with future expectations represented in a compensatory dream to introduce a comprehensive change to the society.

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<sup>4</sup> Sasson Somekh. *The Question of Language in the New Arabic Literature*. Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Education & Tel-Aviv University, 1980. P. 36.

Most stories of this collection don't tell a specific event which is connected to time in the traditional sense of the story. Rather an existential position does spread in it. The narrating hero does not face an event which requires him to take action. Viewing the stories of this collection with some scrutiny reveals that what appeared in this story was not arbitrary. A scrutiny of a story entitled *Saheel*, for example, ascertains that in terms of content the story has the same features like the previous one. The inhuman and boring life- frustration, isolation, loss, pressing desire for escape- the narrating hero sinks in his imagination listening to an internal voice calling him to depart; "A voice which is small and soft" calling him for salvation.

Once again the content responds to this introspective and poetic content. The tense used by the narrator here is also the present. The past with all its blackness and cruelty- the flesh of the employee which burnt as a result of the melting burning iron, the lass who meant for him a town of revels and joy and was taken from him- fights hard for a place with the present and all the isolation, starvation, hunger, alienation, loss, gambling and prostitutes. Past and present also fight for a place with the future and the hope it may imply: "You will laugh with a monstrous merriment. You have left all sorrows behind... Soon you will arrive at a harbor which your feet have not stepped in before... There you will meet strange people... You will sit in an inn and sip its acrid wine slowly... You will listen to an amazing music which recreate you and give you back your lost childhood..." (*Saheel- Neighing of the White Horse*, p.37). The story starts without an action: "The room of the exhausted man is without a light, silent, black, a small box of wet stone" (p.35). The actions follow sequentially, alternating between past and present at one time and intermingling at another: "Night then was a harsh, hot and long song, embracing compassionately in the darkness of its caves the sweetness of spring and the savagery of a hungry tiger. I was an old, blind bat, with broken wings... unable to find my bread and joy... ignorant of my bread and joy... shocked by wild noise wherever I moved" (p.35).

These have been some examples used to prove the style of coincidence which emerges in this stage of the writer's literary work in particular. The reader can realize that the same applies to most stories of this group. (Review for example: *The Negro Man*, *A Man from Damascus*, and *The Dead River*. Based on what has been mentioned-above that the use of the present tense prevails in the stories written using the first person narrator. The present tense is particularly spread in the paragraphs which rely on internal movement, while the use of the past tense prevails in sentences which describe the external movement.

The use of the present tense in the Arabic story is a phenomenon which has not attracted the attention of critics. The use of the present tense however is "a way to dissolve automaticity. Thus the writer draws the attention of his reader to the particular concept of time in literary work via foregrounding"<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. The first person narrator

The first person narrator is another artistic tool used in Tamir's stories. However, its dominance in his literary product at this stage of his writing career is closely linked to the intermingling of the tenses, which was presented in the previous chapter. One might even say that the issue of synchrony is linked to the narration of most stories of the group using the first person narrator.

A statistical look at the stories of this group reveals that all stories were formed from the narrator's point of view, except the two stories *The Treasure* and *The Summer*. If the story "The Tulip" begins with the third person narrator towards the end it resorts to the first person narrator as well. Another look reveals that these exceptional stories themselves are the only stories within the group that begin with "there was" or the straight forward past. While all the other stories do not begin

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<sup>5</sup> Sasson Somekh. *Three Chapters in Najeeb Mahfood's Literature*. Akka: Al-Saruji Press, 1982. P.70.

with “There was”. They all either begin with a nominative sentence or the present tense, or the past which extends to the present.

Yet, every rule has exceptions. In the story *A Man from Damascus*, in the same group, we are presented with the following sentence: “The waiter had a weak body, who stretched his voice in a dull way...” (p.52). This starting point, however, does not represent the skeletal structure of the story. Soon he follows up: I begin sipping my tea slowly with great calmness...I like sitting in this isolated coffee house which provides cheap drink. In this place I like to close my eyes and listen to the rising noise around me...” (p.52). Thus the story continues in the present tense to be interrupted by the past tense once-in-a-while as an evidence to what was mentioned before.

The more problematic story is the one called *The Cellar*. It does begin with the tensed verb *kuntu* (“I was”). Yet the past here does not describe something which began in the past and ended, because the tense used by the narrator is the continuous present and not the far past. Again, the tensed verb *kuntu* (“I was”) does not represent a skeletal framework to the whole story. To prove this, we present the first sentence: “I was sitting in a café which is separated from the street by a glass wall when a certain friend began to advise me...” (*The Cellar*, p.28). The adverb “when” is used to emphasize the present continuous. Then the following sentence appears: “The clock is crucified on the wall of the café ... its handles are rakes which will destroy the yellow disc of the sun”; “I drank sugarless coffee...the handles of the clock move boringly slowly (...). The cock handles are digging a grave for the day. A weak and joyless day. The light is getting dim and the gray color of the sky crawls. Within a short while it will possess the whole town and become its black master” (*The Cellar*, p.29). The launching pad of the narrator is always the present. The exceptions are presented to emphasize the rule.

Surveying the stories of this stage, we conclude that 75% of the stories are formed using the first person narrator and are linked to the historical present. The

real question is: what is the purpose of using the first person narrator in this collection of stories compared to what Tamir uses in almost all of his other collections? Is change in content related to change in style? Undoubtedly any change in content has to be accompanied with a change in the writer's style and vice versa. Later, we will see how the general style of the writer has changed in terms of structure, language and form. What interests us in this situation, however, is to clarify the relationship between the first person narrator and the general content of the stories of this pole.

Mohammad Kamil al-Khateeb discusses the technique in the *Saheel-Neighing* collection: "In regard to narrative technique, this introverted individualism led to forming most stories of this group using the first person narrator. As known, forming the story through the use of the first person narrator is often tantamount to imposing the self on the subject, which means viewing the subject only from the self's point of view rather than as it is. If this technique has its drawbacks it may have one advantage. Presenting the objective world from the self's point of view opens the door quite wide before one's imagination to present the world as it sees it"<sup>6</sup>.

Zakariyya Tamir's hero in this collection suffers frustration. He severs his relationship with those around him and becomes introverted. He finds no refuge for himself except in a romantic dream of traveling to a world without hunger, oppression or pain, a world similar to that described by Jubran in his *Mawakib*. Often there is an external thing which arouses and explodes this fantasy within him: seeing a factory, a girl passing by, feelings of hunger, the death of a young lady or a dialogue with other people. The problems of Tamir's hero in this collection are individualistic ones, even if the starting points of most of his stories are issues of a general nature, such as hunger. Tamir, however, does not view his

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<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Kamel Al-Khateeb. *The Arrow and the Circle*. Beirut: 1979. P. 83.

hero as an individual in a society and does not treat his problem as a general one. Rather, he views it as an personal problem and with total privacy. Therefore, Tamir's hero is enveloped in pain. The bitter memories of the past creep to ally with pressures of the present to help bring forth this fantasy and existential vision. The appropriate point of view for this type of stories thus is the first person narrator.<sup>7</sup> This point of view allows us more than any other point of view to plunge deep in the internal world of the hero and express the modernistic content in the style presented in the stories of this collection. The choice of the point of view of the story is quite essential. Each point of view has a clear frame of action which it should contain. Besides, each type of story requires a particular type of point of view, as described by Norman Friedman<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4. Narration-Sentence structure

Zakariyya Tamir is among those writers who have brought about a revolution in the concept of the artistic form of the short Arabic story. He is a pioneer of the expressionistic story in Arabic literature. Undoubtedly the expressionistic story requires an non-traditional form. At the sentence structure level, in the first phase of Tamir's stories, the writer uses types of sentences side by side: long, stretched and compound sentences and other short, paratactic and disconnected sentences. For the first instance, it appears that the sequence of these two types of sentences within the same story is the result of a stark contradiction, which does not mesh well with the themes presented by the story. Yet, when we study the characteristics of these sentences, we realize that this contradiction is only on the surface. Both types of sentences have been used to serve the content without contradiction or friction.

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<sup>7</sup> See: Yousif Aven. "Author, Narrator, and the Implied Author", *The Literature*. Vol.5, Issue 18-19, December 1974. Pp. 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> N. Friedman. "Point of View in Fiction", *PMLA*. vol.LXX. No.5, Dec.1955, P.1780.

#### 4.1 The long sentence

In Tamir's writings, the linguistic and formal aspects play an important role in forming the characters. We have seen that Tamir's hero is an introvert, who drowns in internal thoughts, hallucinations and compensatory dreams. This subjective viewpoint to reality is embodied in this introspective style. The non-motoric tone in the stories of this collection fits perfectly well with these long sentences: "Ah, I wish I had never met that prostitute whom I met while taking a walk depressingly through the darkness of the evening. Only twenty Liras were in my pocket, all that has been left out of monthly salary which I have distributed on the sellers of cigarettes, oranges, barber, tailor. I have already promised my father to give him forty Liras the moment I receive my salary. I was then trembling with fear whenever I imagined my father's long sermon describing my punishment in case I give him twenty Liras only" (*A Man from Damascus*, p.64).

The sentence is long and compound, yet it contains an adverbial sentence: "While I was walking", and another illustrative sentence: "It is all that has been left out of the month's salary", and the relative clause: "which I have distributed/ which will be my punishment" and the appended sentences "And I was/ and he was". Undoubtedly, this structure is used to express the complexity, a depressing state of being made out of fear and worry, a state which stems from the same causes which fill all the stories of this group: the loss of pure love, depression, poverty, boring life and patriarchal authority. This style does not only apply to this particular story from which the quote is taken. Here are some examples from other stories:

- A. "The river of human beings fools around for a long time in the wide streets which are covered with the bright sun, where the stone buildings are brightened by their inhabitants who are made from soft white cotton which has been pressed well in a good pattern. The river zigzagged through the narrow allies and the clay buildings crowded with yellow faces and thick hands. There

its water has mingled with blood, tears and the noise of eternal wounds. Towards the end of its journey, the river found skillfully scattered points, hidden at the bottom of the town, where it poured its remaining filth..." (*The Thick Blue Song*, p.9).

- B. "At that specific moment the noon sun was still over a road treaded by men with bent heads, following heavily a coffin which used to be in the past a tree liked by the birds and a place where tired people would find a refuge under its shades. However, it has turned into a big box of wood containing yellow cold flesh" (*The Tulip*, p.106).
- C. "I have fed my flesh, memories and old dreams to black crows, which have soared over my head on a day with a cold, weak sun. All its hours are buried under the ashes falling from the wounds of despaired man, crucified in the midst of the noise of a big town" (*Smile, Oh Her Face*, p.44).

As we see, the descriptions are not presented in a report form or an objective manner. Rather, they are grounded in depression and bitterness. The yellow faces and the thick hands, the tears and the pain of the eternal wounds, the bent heads, the yellow cold flesh, and the black crows. These are more than mere external facts. Rather these are pictures seen by the hero of the group. These scenes and descriptions are but a means used by the writer to express the world of his internal hero, a parallel means of characterization.<sup>9</sup> The long run-on sentences are used to convey the meaning of the internal suffering of the hero of the stories. As Sabri Hafid says: "The life of frustration is embodied in the long story with its stretched tone, carrying the details of the boring and inhuman life"<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> See the term in: Yousif Aven. "The Theory of Character in Fiction" *The Literature*. Vol.3, Issue 1, June 1971. P. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Sabri Hafid. "Zakariyya Tamir the Poet of Horror and Beauty", *Al-Tali'a*. Jnuary, 1973. P.168.

## 4.2 The Paratactic Sentences

Parallel to the compound style there appear the short paratactic sentences which are not connected with the known appending, relative and descriptive conjunctions, etc... This paratactic style<sup>11</sup> is paratactic in terms of form. Content and logic-wise, however, it is often linked and connected meaningfully. Even though it may require the reader sometimes to fill in the gaps. This style is not an innovation of Tamir. It has been known among many Arabic story writers such as Yousuf Idris, Najeeb Mahfood and others.<sup>12</sup>

This style creates a sense of worry and headache for the reader. In the stories of this phase, we come across two types of paratactic sentences. Some of which are a part of an internal monologue. The writer dives into the world of the hero/narrator to register his thoughts, internal struggles and worries. The following is a sketch of an internal monologue as it appears in the story *Saheel*:

“The winery will lock its doors and I must depart it (...) Listen Oh you intoxicated man to this merry and long whistling (...) You used to have a lass, a town of revels and joy (...) her breasts used to be yours... The snow which covers the heat of the Summer sun... Her eyes with her mysterious secrets are yours... Her black hair, the depressed cloud falling on the shoulders with charming sadness... You used to have a lass... a town of revels and joy... it was taken from you and here you are a drunk man on a bare street... accumulated clay... rainless cloud (...) What do you live for, you drunk?... why don't I die?... What would I

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<sup>11</sup> See the term: S. Somekh, “Language and Theme in the Short Story of Yusuf Idris”, *JAL*. Vol. 6, 1975. P. 94.

<sup>12</sup> See the use of this style by Mahfood in his Triology, Review: S. Somekh, *Three Chapters of Najeeb Mahfood's Literature*. Akka: Al-Saruji Press, 1982. P. 15; See also: S. Somekh. *The world of Yousuf Idris*. Tel Aviv: Arabic Press House, 1976. P. 130, footnote 3.

have done? Had I had towns of gold...If the prettiest lady loved me... What would I have done? I guess I would stare at the polish of my new shoe and say boringly: or... all things are trivial and foolish” (*Saheel*, pp. 38-39).

The hero of the story views the world with a black look. He sees nothing in life which is worthwhile living for. He thinks of withdrawing from life; he is a new Hamlet with different motives for death and a different way of viewing it. Shakespeare Hamlet views the world: ““Fie on’t ! Ah, fie! ‘Tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature possess it merely.”<sup>13</sup>

He considers committing suicide. Tamir's Hamlet sees all things as trivia and wishes to withdraw from life on a white horse, which can lead him to endless green fields. If Shakespeare's Hamlet is afraid of what follows death “The undiscovered country, from whose bourn No traveler returns”<sup>14</sup>. Tamir's hero is not afraid of what is beyond death and views death as a small soft violin calling in him.

In the previous passage of the monologue, we noticed that the paratactic sentences fit perfectly well with the black psychological state of being of the “hero”. We have also noticed how this internal monologue helps the writer move to the second person narrator: “Listen you drunk...you have her breasts...her hair”. Then he moves again to the first person narrator “Why don't I die?” There are some other paratactic sentences with falling apart short slices. They are a symptom of a technique called the stream of consciousness. Man in nature, particularly the one in crisis, does not think in a continuous logical way. Shaky pictures and thoughts keep running associatively and the psychological experiences keep creeping within the human being. In literature, the writer describes the internal psychological life of the characters of his story by adopting the spontaneous

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<sup>13</sup> William Shakespeare. *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. (Edited by Edward Hubler), New York: A Signent Classic, 1963. (Act I, scene, ii) P. 44.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, (Act III, scene, ii) P. 94.

thinking movement which does not undergo any certain logic or a particular sequenced order. The stream of consciousness "is an expression of the most particular thoughts which lie in the closest position of the unconscious"<sup>15</sup>. Let us take two texts from two different stories as an example of this style:

A) "Shine Oh you her pale face, a fatigued morning... a train whistle... farewell, farewell ...the dry color turns into a war melody with wings... the world opens its doors to Spring... The sky is green... the soil is green... the clouds are green...the seas are green...sadness is green...grey... black...everything is black...the wound eagerly mixes its yellow bandage to receive a crowd of dead people kisses...the clock bell rings announcing the mid-night's deep darkness...the house of the children is ashes...take me Autumn to forests of weakness and tears" (*Saheel*, p.42).

B) "I am a jobless poor man...I don't laugh...I don't cry... I like wine, singing and narrow alleys...I like hair, white bread and young breasts and rain...my eyes are two funerals...to sick wolves...the eyes of Omayma were two stars...my heart is their bread...my heart might be a nightingale with a slashed neck...or it might be a beggar bemoaned by the darkness of the night...at night, Omayma has escaped our neighborhood..." (*The Blue Song*, p.12).

In the first passage we see shaky sequenced pictures, with a fast rhythm, represented in the paratactic sentences, linked only by the various events "train whistle...Farewell, farewell". When he mentions Spring, the sky then is green and everything is green. The word green and its derivatives is repeated six times with strange emotional urgency. Through its repetition, it provides a unique poeticity. The colors keep following one another- green, gray, black yellow. The choice of

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<sup>15</sup> AustenWarren & R. Wellek. *Theory of Literature*. (Translated into Arabic: M. Sobhi), Damascus: Tarabishi Press, 1972. P. 239.

colors is not random. Most of them are grey implying a depressed psychological state. When he mentions the yellow color, he moves to the “kisses of the dead”, “ashes”, “Autumn”, “fatigue and tears”.

In the following passage, the word and its opposite as well as the sentence and its opposite fulfill the role of association.

“I don’t laugh...I don’t cry”, “My eyes are two funerals...the eyes of Omayma were two stars”. If the sentences are paratactic, there is another method to link them through association, by repeating the last word and starting with it after the new comma, a style known as anadiplosis.<sup>16</sup> “Their bread is my heart...and my heart might be”. Then, “it might be a beggar bemoaned by the darkness of the night...at night Omayma escaped”. It is noticeable that most of these short and sequenced sentences are nominative. Korpershoek believes that the proliferation of this type of nominative sentences is linked to the use of the stream of consciousness<sup>17</sup>.

In this context, however, we will concentrate on the paratactic sentences as a characteristic of the narrative of this phase of Tamir’s stories. The following paragraph is an example: “I am not Don Juan... I do not own a car or a tall building in a street not inhabited by the poor... My forehead never touched a carpet in a mosque...I am neither a wrestler nor a boxer... the readers of newspapers and magazines can’t recognize my picture...I work eight hours a day...I get tired...I swallow my food amazingly fast...I smoke thick Tatli Sert cigarettes ...I sit in a café... I take part enthusiastically in deep conversations...” (*Saheel*, pp.35-36). This piece reminds us of Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”:

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<sup>16</sup> P. M. Korpershoek. *The short stories of Yusuf Idris*. Leiden, 1981, P.170.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.180.

“No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two”<sup>18</sup>.

There is a strange similarity between both of them, Prufrock in Eliot’s Love Song is a marginal figure and Tamir’s hero is also a marginal character in this life, lacking all the characteristics he desired to have: Don Juan with a car tall building away from the poor neighborhoods.

Let us refer to the text. Short slices emerge in it. Sentences are not linked with the letters “و” (“wa”) or “ف” (“fa”) or other conjunctions. The short sentences add a rhythm close to poetry, creating a confusing atmosphere which expresses human worry. Read with me the following text from the story *The Cellar*:

“The clock is crucified on the wall of the café...Its two handles are two pickaxes which will destroy the yellow sun disk... I drank the coffee sugar free... the clock handles move boringly...I blew the smoke of many cigarettes... I am a statue made of smooth, solid stone, planted amidst dumb noise... the two handles of the clock are digging a grave for the day...a fatigued, joyless day...the light dims and the grey color of the day crawls...”(*The Cellar*, p.29).

The utterance of the clock is repeated thrice. Thus, adding a poetic atmosphere to the style. With its repetition it provides a new meaningful dimension similar to that provided by repetition in modern poetry.<sup>19</sup>The time which is represented by the words “clock”, “clock handles” is an expression of worry the sense of being

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<sup>18</sup> See the Arabic translation by Badawi, in: Mostafa Badawi. *Studies in Poetry and Theatre*. Alexandria: Second Edition, 1979. P. 70.

<sup>19</sup>See: Shmoel Moreh. "The Impact of the Western Poem on the Modern Arabic Poetry", *The New Orient*. Vol. 18, 1968. Pp. 6-7.

haunted. The short, fast and successive sentences are a true expression of such feelings.

I can conclude, based on what has been said before, that the long sentences with their stretched rhythm fulfill the same function achieved by the short paratactic sentences, in forming the characters, creating the atmospheres without contradiction or schism, so that the form becomes the content itself. It becomes impossible to talk about the form in isolation of the content. They become one flesh and one fabric.

## 5. The Dialogue

What draws our attention when reading the group *Saheel* is the tendency to focus on the narrative in an apparent manner so that the dialogue shrinks next to it. In some stories such as *The Cellar*, the dialogue is almost nonexistent. In some other stories like *Saheel*, *Smile Oh Her Face*, *The Dead River*, and *The Tulip*, it is relatively little. The dialogue, however, increases in three stories: *The Stars*, *The Summer* and *The Treasure*.

If we survey the three stories in which the dialogue dominates the narrative, we will realize that they are, unlike the rest of the stories, told from the third person point of view. This fits well with our previous conclusions that the stories narrated with the third person narrator are dominated by the tale and external movement. They are unlike the stories narrated with first person narrator which lean more towards introspection, non movement and a subjective view point of reality. While viewing the nature of dialogue in stories narrated by the first person narrator, we realize that the dialoguing "he" in most of the stories does not create the impression of the realism of dialoguing. Neither does he help "to strengthen the faith of the

reader and his acceptance of his dialogue as human talk”<sup>20</sup>. The “he” is either the narrator himself or another illustrative character or a cat, monkey, or a ceramic woman or a man imagined in a wakefulness dream.

In the story called *The Nigger*, the writer divides the hero into two personalities to emphasize the impossibility of matching the constraints of the mind with the impulses of the instincts. The well-balanced and wise man and the lusty impulsive one: “Her two purple lips were quite wide in a way which provoked the Nigger who shouted : Enough jabbering ...kiss her! I whispered: I have to prepare a little before the attack. Kiss her, kiss her, kiss her! I obeyed him and my arm moved, and surrounded the hip of the girl. She got closer to my mouth which desired to meet the two lips which are in the color of blood...” (*The Negro Man*, p.21).

This dialogue is unreal. It is an internal dialogue. The Negro man is no more than the second self of the narrator. From the beginning of the story he says the following about him: “The Negro man is my only friend...he loves me truly and never leaves me for even a second...he lives within me (...) I constantly talk with him (*The Negro Man*, p.17).

Even his mother says: “Have you gotten mad? You talk to yourself”. Then the dialogue is not in the familiar sense. We have concluded that through the statements “He does not leave me even for a second”, “He lives within me”. Besides our conclusion is based on his mother’s being astonished that he talks to himself.

Even the only dialogue which does not take place between him and himself is not a real dialogue. The narrator introduces this dialogue in these words: “The

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<sup>20</sup> De Foto. *The World of the Story*. (translated by: Mostafa Haddarah), Cairo: World Book Press, 1969. P. 266.

Youngman might have used to tell the lass: We will get married soon. She replies: We will own a small house. We will quarrel sometimes

Our quarrel will end with a kiss. We will beget smart children, whose beauty is just as stunning and charming as that of their mother” (*The Negro Man*, p.18).

Thus he proceeds with the dialogue to an extent that we forget that it is an imagined dialogue even though he introduces it with the statement: “The young man may have used to tell the lass”. The modal *may* means something is possible but it did not really happen. The very small dialogic sketches in the story, *The Cellar*, are also not a real dialogue. Most of the story takes place at a time of coma in the mind of an intoxicated person. A woman invites him to dance and many men accuse him of killing his father. All this, however, takes place in the unconscious. When the writer transfers us to the area of the unconscious, he does that smoothly, unlike the stories of the second pole. The narrator says:

“My body slept to the ground and piled itself over a lubricious liquid which has poured out of my mouth a moment ago. I stared silently at the face of my stunned mother. All things around me started to drown in an ever swinging gray color. Slowly, slowly, all things start to dwindle and go away. I closed my eyes submitting to a whirlpool of black wavelets” (*The Cellar*, p.31). The hero does not wake up out of his intoxication until the end of the story. Stepping into consciousness again is prepared for here too: “I opened my eyes to find my mother bent over me (...) here I am again in my cellar unable to escape his stony fist ...” (p.34). In “Small Pleasures” of the story *A Man from Damascus*, he imagines himself dialoging with the old man sitting next to him in the café: “On the nearby table, an old man sits...so that I would imagine him a millionaire in shabby clothes (...). After a while he will leave his table and come near me and on his face indescribable signs of joy. He will say to me...” (*A Man from Damascus*, p.56). He proceeds in an imagined dialogue with the man. His imagination is interrupted

however when the man stands up: "But that cursed one moved towards the cafe door shattering my dreams...my small pleasure... I will hurt him... I will curse him... I will kill him... could not he have waited a little longer till I had finished my dreams?" (p. 57).

If we can find in the dialogic samples presented a declaration by the narrator that they are not realistic, we may be surprised to find some dialogues which are realistic only when they are finished. In the story *Saheel*, there is a long dialogue which lasts for more than one page between the narrator and another man sitting beside him. Everything appears as if it were realistic. Yet, by the end of the dialogue he says: "I laughed ridiculing my imagination. The man with the desperate look is still sitting behind his table, drinking and staring and produces a laughter, which is much more depressing than crying. I am still stuck to my seat and did not leave it for a moment" (*Saheel*, p.38).

In *Saheel*, the hero goes through a bitter internal struggle. The neighing of the white stallion calls on him to leave the world which inherits him pain and bitterness. Yet, something in the image of a woman makes him stay: "Do not get sad! My warm flesh will make you forget the whole world. I said with fear hidden behind astonishment: Who are you? She laughed and said: I am your childhood friend...Do you remember? It used to please you to stick to me tightly and kiss me with diffidence.

I said: do not deceive me!...You are an old whore.

She stared at me for a short period astonishingly and started to cry bitterly. I got perplexed and a thorough compassion pervaded me. I said to her excitedly: Forgive me!...I love you.

She said: repeat what you have just said!

I said: I love you, I love you.

She said: Do not you feel while repeating these words that a terrific human being will be delivered in your soul?" (*Saheel*, pp.40-41)

The one who wishes him to stay here is life in the image of a woman who tempts him to remain. The hero, Tamir, suffers duress, deprivation and loneliness. Reality however, does not help him. He seeks refuge in his imagination to find contact with others. But they all fly away from him even in dreams and imagination-like the old man in the "Small Pleasures"- . To compensate for contact with humans, he resorts to having contact with a statue made of ceramics, in front of one of the shops, or to start a relationship with a cat, with a lass made of ceramics. The dialogue starts as the following: "Each time I go to see her, a silent dialogue goes on between us. Today, I said to her:

-I am sad, Suzy.

- Nothing in life deserves to get sad for.

-I love you Suzy.

-Love is a great folly.

-Our love is different than the love of others, Suzy.

-You are a kind man.

-You are a rare creature, Suzy" (*A Man from Damascus*, p.55).

The dialogue with the cat goes as follows:

"Eat my cat, eat...your stomach is big...My mother has the right to complain against you...Our life is unbearably miserable. Several months have passed while I am jobless...In the matter how tired my poor father gets , he cannot afford the house expenses alone. We must help him (...) and now my cat, nothing is left out of these two loaves except this piece... we will share it...a small morsel for you...take it...a big morsel for me...do not go, my cat...come here...(A Man from Damascus, pp. 61- 62). This dialogue with the cat reminds us of a story entitled "Misery", by the Russian writer, Anton Chekhov. When Iona could not find

anyone to listen to him, he went to talk to his horse. The sketch is almost a Tmirite formulation of the following piece of Chekhov's story:

"Iona asked his filly when he saw her beaming eyes: "Do you eat? Well, eat, eat!...if we cannot earn enough to buy oats, let us eat straw (...). And now imagine that you yourself have a small filly and you are the mother of this filly...and suddenly this small filly died, you will feel sorry for its death, isn't it so?"<sup>21</sup>. It is very possible that Tamir has read this story; maybe its Arabic translation. Undoubtedly he had viewed most of Chekhov's writings. The latter has quite a powerful impact on the literary production of the former. Yet, for the purposes of this paper, I do not intend to deal with this issue now.

If revealing the dialoging characters is one of the aims of dialogue, the dialogue in Tamir's stories fails to reveal the character of the other. The other uses another tool to illuminate the central character; a dialogue whose goal is to reduce the monotony of the narrative. This is revealed in a different parallel technique which might be called "The sound and the echo". The writer reveals the internal world of his hero through the internal reaction:

"He said did not you love before?

I said: I did not love before.

He said laughingly: then you have never tasted real happiness, which would be achieved only through love. You, Oh dumb. Should I tell him the truth? I did love one of the girls one time...I loved her strongly the same way I love bread and streets...yet, love granted me nothing but depression...it also granted me a new look to the city in which I live. I started seeing it trivial and cruel.

He kept silent for a short while and then said: which of your wishes would you like to achieve? What should I reply? My head is empty and white... sometimes I

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<sup>21</sup> See: Rashad Rushdi. *The Art of the Short Story*. Beirut: Second Edition, 1975. P. 117.

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wish all people tuned into dogs which do not stop barking annoyingly even for a moment.

I said: I have no wishes.

-I do not believe you. You must have one wish.

What is the avail of accumulating wishes if I do not trust that I will ever achieve even one of them?

I said: What I say to you is derived from my life...there is nothing I wish to achieve after I fill my stomach with bread and make love to a woman.

He thought a little before saying reluctantly: Then you are not one of the humans

Oh! How truthful you are, stranger! ...I am a cruel, harsh and inhuman thing” (*A Man from Damascus*, pp.72-73).

We do notice that the writer follows each dialogic sentence with a comment by the hero/ narrator and his reaction. Then we are allowed to understand the character in depth. The dialoging character becomes only a tool to achieve this aim. The writer employs the dialogue in order to penetrate into the internal world of the character. Undoubtedly, he could dive into the depths of his character through the narrative report or the monologue. However, the dialogue allows him to move - with the help of a question and answer technique- into various and distant contemplations. Finally, it also helps him gather these scattered thoughts in one scene, besides the stylistic variations which help break the routine, as shown before.

To summarize, as narrated these stories are characterized by narrative language, while the dialogue occupies a relatively small space of the general text, as a result of being subjective, and introspective. Despite this fact, the dialogue in these stories meshes well with main themes in these stories and is used as a tool to illuminate the central character.

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#### تلخيص:

يخلق زكريا تامر في قصصه القصيرة إحساساً فنياً عبر اللغة والمباني اللغوية، كما أن اللغة والأسلوب في أدبه يشتركان في تشكيل المضامين والأبعاد الدلالية. وحين تتغير الاستراتيجيات النصية في أدبه، فإن ذلك يعود، على الغالب، إلى تغير في الأبعاد والدلالات.

سنقف في بحثنا هذا عند أهم العناصر الفنية التي تشترك في بناء أيديولوجيا النص في مجموعة "سهيل الجواد الأبيض"، مثل: تداخل الأزمنة؛ ضمير المتكلم؛ مبنى الجملة السردية؛ الحوار والمونولوج الداخلي. وسنرى في التحليل الأخير، كيف أن هذه العناصر الشكلية لا يمكن في الحقيقة سلخها عن المضمون، نظراً للعلاقة الحية والاستجابة المتبادلة بينهما.