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Research Article

A Semiotic Study of "Contemplation of Estrangement Features": "Leave Me Alone" as a Model

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Abstract

Contemplation of Estrangement Features is the title of one of the story series by the Jordanian story writer, Teriz Haddad.[1] This study aims to critically and analytically survey this series according to the semiotic principles, in an attempt to uncover the main narrative elements, aesthetic features, and the ideological, social, artistic and aesthetic contents of the series. This story series is important because it is one of the relatively early models of feminist literature in general and of short stories in Jordan in particular. In addition, this series is written by a Jordanian story writer whose works have not been criticized and studied sufficiently. This is probably because I made an attempt to search for a critical report or study of this story series, but I found nothing. The study consists of an introduction and three parts. The first part deals with the series' title as a "paratext" helping to convey the meaning of the series and sketch it out. The second part, however, gives a general look at the series' stories, where their summaries and paramount occurrences and ideas as well as their paramount techniques are presented. Finally, the last part came to deal, in some detail, with the story Leave Me Alone. This story has been analyzed and its most important artistic elements have been studied. Such elements include: The narrator, language, place, time and impression integrity. In the conclusion of the study, the most important results of the research have been incorporated.

Keywords: Teriz Haddad, Contemplation of Estrangement Features, Leave Me Alone, Short Story, Narrative, Feminist Literature

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[1]-Teriz Mazid Haddad was born in 26th of July, 1948. She was involved in the Jordanian journalism, where she worked in Sawt Al-Sha'ab Newspaper, then in Addustour Newspaper, and finally worked in Al-Rai Newspaper. She has also been involved in feminine activities in Jordan. Teriz is a member of Jordanian Writers Association and Arab Writers Union. Her writings include not only short stories but also phantasms and different documentary studies. Her most important publications are the following: To Meet (phantasms), Amman: Jordan Press Foundation, 1972; Contemplation of Estrangement Features (stories), Amman, Jordan Press Foundation, 1975; The Decisions and Actions on the Palestinian Problem, 1948-1988 (three editions), Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1995; The Roof (story series), first edition, Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1990; second edition, Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1991; The Decisions and Actions, from the Decision to Divide to Signing the Treaty, 1917-1994, Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1995; The Issue of Political Parties in Jordan from 1919 to 1994, Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1995; Life and People (the complete story series: first edition), Amman: Sawt Al-Sha'ab Printings, 1995. (See: Jordanian Writers Association website: www.culture.gov.jo/index.php?option=com_content.) Also see: Jordanian Writers Directory, part 2, volume 1, Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2006.

1. Introduction

Title is among the major paratexts[2] which subsume many of the important significations. These significations in turn pave the way for us to understand and analyze the text, and to clarify many of its unclear aspects. In paratext, clarification occurs often.

Furthermore, paratext is one of the important means that prepare the reader to read the discourse with the details and latent parts it contains. Paratext is a code represented in significations which connect the author with the text, on the one hand, and connect the reader with the text, on the other hand. The investigation and clarification of a title can in turn uncover many of the significations and ciphers in the discourse (Al-Adwani, 1423 AH: 23).

Title of the series *Contemplation of Estrangement Features* is suggestive and written in cipher. It covers two themes: *Estrangement and shattering*. The title of this story series is not merely a suggestive text that has nothing to do with the body text. Rather, it concerns an objective theme that influences all other parts of the text. Off this theme, the emotions of an estranged and shattered self are reflected, whereby the objective and mental states would become manifest and the occurrences and the way they developed would become clear.

The concept of *estrangement*, which has been included in the text, has consequently become an obvious theme that can be investigated and contemplated. The story writer has intentionally highlighted this feature which can perfectly create occurrences. This feature nevertheless seems to be stressful and acts as a motive that awakens the story writer and her personality. What puts stress on this motive is the signification of the word *contemplation*, which is associated with consideration, wonder and surprise. The *contemplation of features* implies that someone takes a close look at something, which emphasizes the significance of the theme, as will be shown when we go through different parts of the series throughout the study. Thus, signification of the title indeed is not separate or disentangled from the story text. Instead, it strongly influences and supports the text, in order to improve the overall signification of the literary work.

Points are not found merely in the title. Rather, taking a look at the other paratexts such as the dedication or citations, which preceded the series' stories, we will find them to center on sadness, sorrow, kindness, opposition and the call for animals of the past, besides the theme of estrangement. All these themes possibly imply the reactions of a *self* that is estranged from itself as well as from the surrounding environment.

2. A General Look at the Series' Stories

This series' two parts incorporate seven stories whose titles are as follows: "*Leave Me Alone*," "*Sundown's Murmur*," "*Life and People*," "*The Vortex*," "*Contemplation of Estrangement Features*," "*The Loser Profit*," and "*The Meeting*."

The topics of these stories have been borrowed from everyday life and they all deal with social, emotional and sometimes psychological problems. Moreover, unlike the many stories that made us get used to see the woman as suppressed, defeated, humiliated and will-less, these stories have a different focus. In the stories by Teriz Haddad, the woman has been illustrated as an effective human striving to make a difference and to transform life by means of the will, love, altruism and ambitions she has and by means of the sacrifice she makes. Nevertheless, the woman has been seldom illustrated negatively. This occurred when an attempt was made to lay bare the truth behind society

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[2]-*The term paratext is among the post-structuralism terms and concerns everything that surrounds the body text, including: The main title, subtitle, introduction, appendixes, footnotes, dedication, notes, cover page words, contents, citations, caution, preface, documentation, images, forward, messages, memories, diaries, acknowledgements, transcripts, author's signatures, author's handwritten writings, etc. See: Hamdawi, Jameel, Semiotics and Titling, Journal of Aalam Elfik, Kuwait, volume 25, No. 3, March, 1997.*

and behind the fruitless practices and ideologies that caused the woman to become estranged from herself and society.

The author is aware of the criticisms she makes at society and the different aspects it has. She opposes many of the dominant traditions and customs, the masculinity and the other negative ideologies that limited women, curtailed their freedom, and sometimes made them will-less, helpless beings. Teriz expresses a fiercer opposition when society with the different aspects it has opposes women and limits their freedom and ambitions. Meanwhile, art came to lay bare the truth behind society and uncover the defects, drawbacks and flaws that cumulated over generations.

The story writer included all these visions and issues through simple narrative techniques. Two foremost techniques are *the tranquil retrieval narrative*, which starts from already existing occurrences until the current occurrences, and *the direct narrative*, which is very similar to the approach used in a report paper. The main focus, however, is on *the retrieval* technique or the so-called *end-to-first narrative*, which refers to "uncovering the conclusion of the narrative and the outcome of characters, occurrences and actions. Next, the remaining words will explicate and describe the same issue" (Al-Sakar, 1999: 231).

The first story in the series is entitled **Leave Me Alone**. We shall later discuss this story under scrutiny and carefully. The second story, **Sundown's Murmur**, is about a young man and woman who got to know each other in secondary education, where they had educational, literary and cognitive commonalities. They met each other in educational seminars, evening parties and lectures. Afterwards, they separated from each other for many years and then accidentally met one another. They became physicians and both worked in a hospital located in the village where the girl had been born and which she loved.

In this story, the story writer has made the main character as the narrator. Thus, the first-person pronoun has been used and the narrating ego has predominated the occurrences and their development. The narrator, who takes part in the occurrences, is not impartial that sees things from distance. The writer usually uses such pronouns in order to make the story connected with his soul and to eliminate the narrative and temporal differences between the narrator, the character and time. Hence, the narrator often plays a central role (Mortaz, 1988: 184).

The *Estrangement* theme, which was observed in the title and ran through the text, is an element which deepened the suffering of the narrating character, especially after "Fu'ad" abandoned to complete his education. As she puts it:

> "...he left the country years ago and nothing was since heard about him. For months, I was depressed and entirely in mourning, and no one had mercy on me. I experienced loneliness that no one could ever remedy" (Haddad, 1975: 41).

In this story, as in the majority of stories in the series, the same narrative technique has been used by the story writer. Thus, no introductions are included, but rather the already existing occurrences are first presented. Next, the preceding occurrences are presented gradually. Using this technique, the story writer notched up a success. To illustrate, the reader is made to fully perceive the occurrence and then is made to raise issues and questions. Following this phase, his tension level is fluctuated as he reads the text and this continues until the heroic moment comes.

The temporal framing technique, as another successful technique in this story, was used by the writer to control the narrative's length of time. Narrative of the story lasted no longer than the period during which the narrating character, *Ghadeh*, conversed with *Fu'ad*. Through this conversation, and by retrieving memories, *Ghadeh* was able to narrate occurrences that started since secondary education, when she got to know Fu'ad. These occurrences lasted until the present moment––the time at which she narrates the story and, as a physician, works with Fu'ad in one hospital. Nothing could stop this warm flow of memories, except the hand of Dr. Fu'ad that kindly pressed hers. At this moment, he says:

"Dr. Ghadeh, it's time to make a visit to the sick" (Haddad, 1975 41).

The third story, **Life and People**, is less artistic compared to the two stories mentioned before. It is clear that many of the positions and circumstances are explicitly admonitory and didactic. This story is about a girl called *Fadieh* who studies in secondary education. As a result of the family problems between her parents, she suffers from psychological stress, causing her to live in a state of mental tension and psychological instability. Only her teacher of the Social Science subject, Mr. *Ahmad*, is able to rescue her from loss and confusion. She falls in love with him, but he naturally refuses this love because it is not convenient––it has resulted from the psychological stress that the girl is experiencing. He makes every effort to help his date address the disturbance in the family, in order that it be happy and cheerful.

The admonitory, didactic and direct sense is about to change the artistic form of the story and turn it into a journal article. The oratorical sense is also obvious, especially when she speaks for Mr. Ahmad:

"The teacher is not only to teach students a lesson, but he also to provide psychological care, which I tried to provide through teaching" (Haddad, 1975: 49)

The heroic moment, which is no less direct than the previous example, came in the last part of the story. This moment degraded the beauty and the artistic aspect of the story. She speaks for the narrating self:

"I realized that the message presented by the teacher is indeed one of the most valuable and sincere humanitarian messages, because he is like a candle burning to lighten others' path. This is also one of the candles that lightened our home" (Haddad, 1975:52).

Like the two aforesaid stories, events of the fourth story, **The Vortex**, occurred at a time that the story writer finds preferable and that seemingly is important to her life––secondary education. Most apparently, this story shows an estranged and shattered self. It concerns a girl in a university environment who suffers from poverty and low freedom. She starts to feel estranged, because the university community is characterized by a luxurious atmosphere, considerable freedom, openness and coeducation. This girl was compelled to marry a man who is about 20 years older than her, in order to live up to her father's expectations. She falls in love with a peer at university, thus experiencing duality––the dream and the reality. The dream concerns freedom, coeducation, contentment and convenient love; the reality concerns poverty, suppression, and a stereotypical life that is empty of love and intimacy.

The sense of estrangement and incongruence between her and community, especially the university community, is implied by several stances, such as: Dissatisfaction with her current personality and the desire to possess another personality––the dream personality. Her friend, *Nadieh*, is the model or the dream person she tries to be like. This tendency is obvious in that she describes *Nadieh*'s personality as follows:

"The prettiest and greatest things she has are her freethinking, mature mind, self-esteem, and her strong personality which dazzles others" (Haddad, 1975: 60).

Not only does she dream to possess *Nadieh*`s personality, but she also dreams to have a family similar to hers. In this regard, she says:

"I realized that her family life is as great as possible, since there is mutual trust between her and her family" (Haddad, 1975: 61).

On other occasions she declares this estrangement, saying:

"My situation in this [university] community is difficult, strange and consequently harsh" (Haddad, 1975: 58).

Thus, things exacerbate and estrangement worsens to influence her relationship with her husband, too. The age difference, emotional emptiness and loving her peer (her friend's brother) are all factors that worsen the sense of estrangement, to the point that the worst thing happens: This girl finds it satisfactory to live with two personalities; one personality manifests itself at university, and the other at home. This fact is clarified in what she says:

"I was careful to take the wedding ring off my finger when I got close to the university gate, and to wear it again when I got in the car on my way home. Therefore, I lived with two personalities; the one that always lived with me, and the other that I always wished to have and that I gained in coeducation" (Haddad, 1975: 61).

The estrangement theme transforms so it manifests itself in conflicting forces and contradictory sounds that are produced by this girl. Therefore, on one occasion the sound of the dream personality rises:

"It's my right to renew myself, to love, to live, to pulse, to ask for my rights, and to live my life which is lost in the sea of estrangement and deprivation" (ibid: 62).

On another occasion, the sound of the real personality manifests itself,

"I'm a wife, tied to a man and not allowed to betray him. It's my duty to protect my husband's dignity, whoever this husband is" (Haddad, 1975: 62).

Thus, the story writer ceaselessly emphasizes the estrangement theme and puts even more emphasis on it by using this explicit method:

"The gap between the first and second personality widened, with the first being a married woman controlled by traditions, and with the second being a girl in the best youth time..." (Haddad, 1975: 62).

Nevertheless, the story writer was able not to present this explicit part, but to provide an opportunity for the personalities themselves to present this theme. This could be done by emphasizing the occurrence and its development, not the yielded result.

Throughout this story and the other stories of the series, there are obviously successful and unsuccessful technical uses. One successful use concerns the way messages are conveyed, where the writer creates the occurrences and shifts from one occurrence to another without this implying inharmonious intentionality or an escaping narrative. This can be clearly understood in what she says,

"A good girl is the one who knows how to take care of her emotions," she continues, "My father taught me this while my tears were dropping, begging him not to force me to be with someone I don't bear living with" (Haddad, 1975: 58).

In this part of the story, as can be noticed, a convenient shift has taken place to present a new occurrence––that the father forces the girl to marry someone with whom she does not bear living. This shift is convenient, intelligent and helps make the story text cohesive, in such a way that each part leads to the other part.

Intentionality, and incoherent and sometimes unsatisfactory creation of an artificial occurrence are among the unsuccessful uses, however. Such uses exist in other parts of the story, for example when she puts it:

"One night my husband insisted that we go to the cinema and I was compelled to agree. When the movie finished, we returned home. In the following day, as usual, I saw Sami waiting for me in the cafeteria..." (Haddad, 1975: 63).

The occurrence that the woman went with her husband to the cinema is inharmonious and unsatisfactory, since it is strange that the husband goes with his wife to such places. Therefore, the occurrence seems to be artificial and intentional. The aim of creating this occurrence is to provide an opportunity for Sami to see the girl with her husband, whom he thought to be her father, given the age difference between them.

The fifth story, **Contemplation of Estrangement Features**, which is the series' title, incorporates techniques that are not much different from the techniques used in the previous stories. In this story, the retrieval technique has been used, where the narrative starts from the existing occurrence and the aware narrator narrates the story using the first-person pronoun.

This story is about a girl called *Sanaa*. She is trapped by a young man named *Adel*, who claims to love her. The result of this love is illegal pregnancy, forcing the girl and her mother to leave the village and move to Amman city in which to give birth. After some time, the woman gets to know *Mahmood*, the manager of the company in which she works. Thus, a new love story begins, however this time it is true. They marry but *Mahmood*, after leaving a generous legacy for *Sanaa* and her daughter, passes away because of a disease. Then the first guy (*Adel*), who claimed to love the girl but who left her in the worst circumstances, returns to parent his daughter and marry this widow, because he covets her affluence. However, she forcefully stands in his way. Her sadness and torture revive, which she finds to be the fate of a mistake she made one day.

This story aims to criticize the reality of society, which pardons a man's mistake very fast but besieges and exaggerates that of a woman, so she is affected by this mistake and its ramifications until she dies. This is while the man and woman are equally forced by the commanding soul and influenced by the body and emotions. At the beginning of the story, perhaps the same point is concerned by the quote from Jesus (peace be upon him):

> *"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."*

The sixth story, **The Loser Profit**, offers a stark contrast that leads to a heroic moment. It shows the necessity for the *self* to strive for success and achieve its wishes on its own. The self is to suffer in this path so as to enjoy the taste of success. At the beginning of this story, as in most of the stories of the series, the story writer quoted the following quote from Nietzsche:

> *"If you want to reach the summit, climb up the mountain on your own feet and do not ask to be burdened on others' backs and heads" (Haddad, 1975: 83).*

This theme has been presented in the story through contradictions and contrasts which serve to motivate the reader. A contrast, as Abu-Deeb argues, is one of "the main causes of a gap" (Abu-Deeb, 1987). The clever reader as well as the shrewd critic are aware of this theme, which has bee, n present since the beginning, that is from the story title––*The Loser Profit*. What human conceives as a profit that brings him happiness and joy may be a loss that causes him torment and suffering. This feature is clear-cut in the story, which illustrates an exploitative, selfish woman who marries a man she does not like. Her attempt to marry this man was only because he is affluent. Therefore, she exploits him to achieve her wish to become rich and her ambition to complete university education. She is not proud of her poverty-stricken family, nor of her husband that she fell short of his rights. Once graduated and felt happy, she was shocked for losing her husband for whom she did not fulfill the most basic rights and needs.

Contradiction lies in the adjacency of two opposites: *profit and loss, pleasure and pain, richness and poverty, happiness and unhappiness,* etc. These contradictions are necessary to strike a balance in life. Meanwhile, circumstances come to compound these contradictions, despite the fact that they are very dissimilar in terms of signification.

The story, in addition to all this, is a protest against the big discrepancy between social classes, where there is extreme richness and debasing poverty. For this reason, she always screamed, asking

questions such as, among others,

"Why were I born as a daughter of that poor man, unlike the other girls? Why the extreme richness and debasing poverty? Why did we come to this life?" (Haddad, 1975: 86).

The echo of these questions is like an arrow going through her heart and she finds no answers that cure herself.

The estrangement theme ran through all stories of the series, from the series' title to its last story. In this story, the estrangement theme is manifested in the girl's insatiable desire to get rid of the poverty which caused her social estrangement in the *luxurious* university environment. She feels estranged among her peers and is too shy to invite any of them to her home, because it is modest and poor.

"Since that time, I started to feel like I'm a different person. I don't know why I was shy of the neighborhood. I was living in a different world. I began to feel like I was disentangling from my origin, feeling shy of it and hoping to get rid of its disgrace" (Haddad, 1975: 86).

The dream personality is rich, educated and free from the abasement of poverty and need whereas the real personality exists in humble reality and indigence. The gap between the two personalities has caused the girl estrangement. This estrangement manifested in the shattered *self* and through the personality of her brother, *Samir*. The story writer symbolized *Samir*'s personality as the real personality that calls for compromising with the reality; he tends to the girl's main personality. *Samir* shook his sister's personality from inside. He was like a frank mirror that lays bare the observer's spuriousness to himself and shows him things as they are. The narrating self characterizes *Samir* as follows:

"He intentionally showed me the real picture" (Haddad, 1975: 89).

The last story, **The Meeting**, is similar to a reflection in terms of its artistic structure, flow of affects, inundation of emotions, absence of conversation, and occasionally avoidance of language and its tendency to poetics. She says,

"Deep inside me and behind the wall of silence, there's an endless scream. It's like I'm made of five kids rupturing at once. I cry and cry. It's as if twenty years of dammed up feelings have decided to explode in my chest at a moment that is close to the departure time" (Haddad, 1975: 105).

This story shows the dominance of time which, as a force, takes away pleasure from the main character, and widens the gap and exacerbates the fracture between her and her desire to achieve the dreams and wishes. The main character makes every effort to bring about a reconciliation between, on the one hand, the picture she created about her internal desires—that are surrounded by the external world of the time—and, on the other hand, the repetitive failures she encounters in achieving her dreams. In other words, it is the conflict between the dream and reality, where the latter wins and the dream and estrangement remain as they are.

While writing this story, perhaps the writer was influenced by an existential conception. Surrounded by the tyrant sound of the time, she was screaming with a tiny voice, thereby the latter was lost like a fruitless dust particle. Hence, she surrendered to the reality which suppressed joys and dreams altogether. Should any wish or desire be about to be fulfilled, time was there to ruin it.

The existential conception of "fulfillment and extinction" would best apply to this case. To put it more explicitly, man makes an arduous effort to fulfill a desire in this life. Once fulfilled, very soon the fire of this desire disappears and it pales into insignificance. She wonders,

"Why were I too zealous about the meeting but once took place, I felt there was a deep gap between us…"
(Haddad, 1975: 1975).

3. *Leave Me Alone*: Investigation and analysis

This story is about the division of the self, which in turn causes another division. The main character, *Fadwa*, falls in love with a young man called *Kamal*. This love develops to turn into a pathological love, such that the girl views the man as having two separate personalities, each of which is related to the place where the man is in. Thus, *Kamal* in the office is not the same as when he is in the street or any other place. This major problem, which results when personality is divided and thus sickened, causes the girl to kill the man whom she loved. She does so because he destroyed the short story which was being written by them.

As usual, the story starts with an existing occurrence whose grounds are apparent since the beginning:

> *"Your Honor, I ask for your mercy...I didn't cause that" (ibid: 105).*

The story begins with this vague statement, kindling a desire to knowing more and putting the following questions: Why does this girl stand in front of the judge? Why does she ask him for mercy? What did she not cause to happen? By these unanswered questions, the story could create tension which keeps the reader mindful, and conscious about the story's beauty.

In the story, the main character keeps saying the phrase "keep me alone," making it somehow an indispensable phrase. The girl, although conversing with one person (*Kamal*) and not two persons, she insists that he has two entirely different personalities. The girl seems to have loved *the dream Kamal*, who innovatively purifies, cleans and enhances his psyche. He does so through a transparent soul which emancipates from the body and preoccupations of the material life. Furthermore, she loved *the innovative Kamal*, who partook in her painful fantasies through writing stories which made both of them seem to have one personality.

The notable thing in this story is that the writer grabs attention to herself, in the sense that she talks about the innovation of stories, the building of fantasies and the compromise with her personalities as if they are real. This is done to the extent that *Fadwa* takes revenge for the personalities that were destroyed by *Kamal*. She loved those personalities and made every effort to make them happy and be piteous to them, such that she got happy when they were happy and got angry when they were so.

The narrator: The narrative methods and patterns differ from one story to another. This difference is attributed to the contexts and forms of each story. What is meant by "method," as viewed by Todorov, is the narrative pattern. In other words, it concerns "the quality with which the story is told and presented by the narrator" (Barthes et al., 1992). Moreover, "it is about the answer to the following question: How the narrator narrates the news and occurrences that he observes or knows?" (Al-Eid, 1990).

At first blush it seems that in this story, as well as in the other stories of the series, the story writer takes the role of narrating. The truth, however, is that the story is told by the narrator, who appears to be the writer herself. The story writer focused all her attention to this aspect of the character, which seems to be herself. Therefore, some readers misinterpret that the story writer herself narrates the occurrences of the story. Although the narrating character, which is responsible for telling the story, does so using the *I* pronoun, the *I* used in the story is not necessarily equal to the *I* used in the real life. Instead, "albeit the characters of a story or play are inspired from reality, they are different from who we usually consider them to be." Therefore, it would be unfair "to deem the human who writes, namely the actual writer, to have the fantasies that are narrated by an artificial narrator who uses the first-person pronoun *I*. Rather, this *I* merely applies to this short story, not to the *I* used in the reality" (Hilal, 1982: 562).

Despite the criticisms made against the frequent use of the first-person pronoun, which is responsible for narrating the whole story, there are nevertheless aesthetic aspects and advantages alongside. Perhaps the most importantly, "the reader will be made to believe that the occurrence may

take place" (Hilal, 1982: 76). This is because the reader is deluded that the narrator has witnessed the occurrences. Thus, equivocation is used, which is regarded as an important feature in narrative works.

In the story *Leave Me Alone*, the narrator can be regarded as a hero narrator who talks to himself frequently and we can therefore listen to his inner speech. Furthermore, we can listen to the injured self through the retrieval of the character's memories. The story writer has frequently employed this technique in the series.

Through the retrieval narrative, the hero character tells occurrences that are so important that cannot be disregarded in the narrative structure and progression. Such an occurrence concerns when she got to know *Kamal*. She says:

> "The stream of my memories took me back to the day in which I was reading a story that had been recently provided in the market..." (Haddad, 1975: 17).

She goes on to tell the whole story through retrieval (flask back) and to relate each occurrence to the present in order to make it seem fresh. It is as if each occurrence has just begun, although it took place much sooner compared to the other occurrences of the story.

4. Place

The place plays a significant role in the innovation process, because a literature text indeed must determine a place where occurrences and events take place (Baghdadi, 1988: 12). The place is important not only because it determines the background of the occurrences, but also because it is a self-reliant element in the narrative, besides the other artistic elements of the story narrative (Azzam, 1993: 65). Furthermore, the place is the element which makes one to believe that occurrences are real and close to the real life (Lahmadani, 1993: 65).

The place mentioned in the story *Leave Me Alone*––the court––plays an important role. The story has successfully used this place to show the case of the suffering character that comes to this place because it has been convicted of murdering. While the narrating self continues talking, her suffering from an estrangement state becomes apparent, which is also compounded with the estrangement of the place. Therefore, through a suggestive language, the story succeeds in creating an injured case through combining the place and the character, with the latter being characterized by a shattered and estranged self. These two things differ a lot from each other, however. Should the place imply alienation, darkness, sorrow, tension and estrangement, the character will too be influenced by all these themes.

The darkness and lifelessness of the place, which influences the narrating character, can in turn uncover her disentangled and estranged inner self. Then it is natural for this place to cause the character to suffer from disappointment, separation and uselessness. Hence, the place is an important determinant of the psychological dimensions of the character. Still, no one can understand her or perceive why she murdered *Kamal*.

5. Language

In the majority of literary works, language does more than convey a message. Also in this story, three levels of language have been used: *(1) Impartial, declarative; (2) Emotional, expressive; (3) Direct, factual.* The language of the story almost has poetic transparency, especially when the story delves deep into the ruined self. Therefore, the language used in this story is at highest level. All these characteristics are the result of the impartiality of the narrating self, which narrates the story using the pronoun *I*. The variety of language levels is still defective, however, because it does not cover all the characters of the story. Furthermore, the aware narrator, who is aware of everything, is frequently present. This technique can be called *the from-the-back perspective*. Genette refers to this technique

as *the non-focused technique* or *the zero-deepening technique* (Gérard: 201).

The language of this story seems to be influenced by destruction, darkness, decay and lifelessness. Therefore, as is the case with the place, the language is an element implying the estrangement which exacerbated the suffering and shuttering of the character. In some instances, the language is so suggestive that it turns out to be very similar to a poem with the deep shifting and suggestiveness, and occasionally with the estrangement it has. She says:

> *"The court's seats were pitch-black. The heads' necks were too high and long, like some gallows...The executioner, with his red mask and big arms, is about to perform the judgement on my neck, so I scream from my deep inside..." (Haddad, 1975: 13).*

Unlike the majority of the series' stories, the conversation in this story was always present. This conversation was not advanced enough to make us perceive the characters' inside as well as their psychological, ideological and social backgrounds. It was rather a self-centered conversation that cannot uncover the hidden parts of the conversing selves. Nevertheless, the superficiality of the conversation was addressed by the internal monologue that was sporadically present in the story.

6. Time

Time is among the primary elements of literature in general and of short stories in particular. Time can be categorized under two headings: (1) The external time: It is the real time at which the story is supposed to have been written; (2) The internal time: It is the period during which the occurrences take place and characters perform. This time helps to develop, and explain the causality of, the occurrences. Moreover, this time allows the characters to change over the story (Sharifah: 139).

Throughout the study, the story approached time artfully and literally, in the sense that time was not approached physically, objectively or historically and sequentially. Rather, it was approached through retrieval. Using this technique, the story could frame time and preserve its development. Time was framed in the discourse that was narrated by the character to the judge in the court. This discourse perhaps lasted for no more than several minutes in which the extensive temporospatial aspects were pointed out.

Such retrieval allows the past tense to take an important role. Moreover, retrieval allows the past tense, with the semantic and psychological aspects it has, to dominate the time of story. All this adds to the temporal aesthetic of the story, which in turn makes the narrative interesting, makes the reader conscious and makes the existing tension inside the reader longer.

Occasionally, the story does not take into account the aesthetic aspect of time as much as it does consider time in the development of the story. The time used is not equivocal, but is rather a primary element used by the narrator as the main theme.

The psychological time, however, has nothing to do with the real time and the ongoing occurrences outside the self. This time has also been present in this story, which concerns the deep side of the narrating self. Those distant psychological and mental pictures have brought about the current harmony in the narrative. As a result, the story uncovers the hidden parts of the characters as well as the secret aspects that lie in the manifest emotions.

7. Impression Integrity

The integrity of impression or, alternatively, the integrity of the work is one of the most important principles on which a short story is written. Impression integrity refers to "the integrated, conscious experience of the reader which results from reading a story that has integrated elements. The reader reads the story usually over half an hour to two hours" (Haddad, 2007: 23).

All elements of the story, including characters, occurrences, time, place and language, come to make up the impression integrity. This integrity rests upon the dialectical relation between these

components, (ibid) where the latter are not to be entirely separate from each other. Rather, they should be mutual, each helping the other to be achieved.

Contemplating this story, we will realize that it integrates the character that suffers from paradox and from dichotomy in her relationship with the young man. At first blush, the reader may be deluded that the story centers around several characters, but it actually pivots on one character––*Fadwa*––who is responsible for narrating the story and the development of its occurrences. Perhaps the only character being as much present as her is *Kamal*, whom she loved. *Kamal* is likely to have played a central role in the dialectic of the conflict. He also played a major role in making the occurrences reasonable and with solid and cohesive basis. All this helps to achieve the impression integrity which we are talking about.

However, the other characters were peripheral, not pivotal. They were to make the characteristics of the main character more dominant and to constitute her conflicting state. Thus, the story has shrunk the voice of the character that was being questioned in the court. We only hear the voice of the main character (the narrating self), who at times directs her screams to outside the self and at other times represses those screams, thus manifesting in the inner speech. She says:

> *"...Your Honor, I ask for your mercy. I experienced hysteria, so I laughed and laughed till my laughs filled the court's seats with people...And the trial ended in my sight. The judge turned into an angel of black death, which was carried by the wind of darkness and flied above my head...Even the court's seats became like trees without leaves, since they were dropped by the autumn and heighted by the owl's croak. But for I'm too unfortunate, I became deaf" (Haddad, 1975: 13).*

Such internal speech of the character, with its highly suggestive language, may conjure up the inside of the shattered and estranged self. The autumn, bareness, darkness and death that she sees everywhere imply nothing but self-abasement that results from her suffering from deep inside.

If we argue that stories concern "the occurrence and narrative," (Imbert, 280) where the occurrence lasts for an actual period and the artistic narrative lasts perhaps as long as the story time or the reading time, we shall find out that this story has employed the temporal framing technique and the retrieval technique. This was done through the character's defense of herself in front of the court's commission and was done in an attempt to control the duration of the story as well as the temporal variation. Moreover, the story succeeded in unifying the story time thanks to this technique, without which the narrative time would be disjunctive and extending.

However, the unity of occurrences is obvious in this story, where one situation was presented which in turn triggered the other associations and occurrences. To put it more explicitly, this situation concerns the disagreement between the young man and the girl, who both partook in writing a story. The opposing viewpoints of the two characters were the first occurrence that caused this disagreement to start and to develop to the point that it led to murdering. Moreover, the fact that the narrating self used the pronoun *I* perhaps helped to achieve the unity of occurrences––the conflict is part of these occurrences, too. In other words, all occurrences revolved around the narrating self. Furthermore, the conflict in the story mostly concerned the narrating self who was talking about herself and thus efficiently uncovered her inside.

The narrating self maintained domination in the speech, for she is a chagrined and spited character who does not find it enough to talk in some occasions and for a while. Therefore, she insisted to speak continuously in an effort to make a plea for the reader's mercy and to create common ground firstly between her and her own self and then between her and the other who sees her as a murderer and criminal. She says:

> *"...You'll ask me how that happened?! But let me say everything, so you're her to listen to me, not to exacerbate my misery" (Haddad, 1975: 15).*

8. Conclusion

Having elaborated on Teriz Haddad's story series, we can notice an apparent cue, or rather a number of cues in all the stories, which imply the domination of *the sense of estrangement*. In other words, there is a strong connection between the series' title, as a paratext, and the stories' texts, as the main texts. The main texts include titles, body texts, footnotes, and narratives with their various manifestations. The texts seemed to have been influenced by the domination of feeling of estrangement and the tendency to make the woman win out––the woman who suffered from a lot of suppression and social oppression, especially when this story series was produced. Furthermore, the majority of the main characters were young, which frequently made them seem to be the voice of the story writer herself. The main characters were the heroines in most of the series' stories.

In this simple series, the artistic techniques used are sometimes almost direct. This does not mean, however, that the series is empty of the aesthetic aspect, especially the aesthetic aspect resulting from clarity and simplicity. Rather, the main elements, such as the idea, characters, occurrences and time framework have been, at least to the minimum extent, incorporated.

Moreover, the aware-narrator technique has dominated the majority of the stories, disabling the other characters to express their mental, social and ideological states by themselves and thus do so only through what has been presented by the narrator. Still there is a justification for why some advanced narrative aesthetics are absent in this series. To put it another way, the series was produced in a relatively infant phase of short stories production in Jordan, where the production of such stories was being formed and developed. In addition, it is the writer's first story series.

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