

## Intertextuality in Modern Iraqi Selected Short Stories

**Hanan Talib Abdulaziz**

Ministry of Education\_The General  
Directorate for Education of Diyala

hanantalib85@gmail.com

### Abstract

The concept of Intertextuality is a literary theory, it refers to the interrelation of texts. Nearly all literary works influenced by previous works of literature or contain forms of references to another works in which the writers translated their interest of international literature into beautiful literary pieces.

This study investigates the use of intertextuality in three Iraqi short stories, Jalil Al-Qaisi's *My Veins are Turning Violet Now* as an intertextual text of Kafka's surreal novel *The Trial*, Naem Muhalhl's *The Myth... is Not to Be Before to Be* which has a connection with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Muhammad Khudhair's *The Scream* that reflects an influence between a narrative linguistic art and visual art represented by *The Scream* painting by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. The study based on the theory of intertextuality with a descriptive analytical approach, it reveals a great interest in the effect of international literature on modern Iraqi literature particularly short stories. The writers of the stories that are mentioned use intertextuality technique to reveal their hidden messages, indirectly, to criticise politics, colonial forces, violent memories of wars, loss, and

disappointment that has marred recent history. As a result, they put their faith in readers' abilities to interpret concealed meaning that could only be grasped by intellectuals.

Key Words: Intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, Iraqi Short Stories.

## التنّاص في القصّة العراقية القصيرة الحديثة - نماذج مختارة

حنان طالب عبد العزيز

وزارة التربية – المديرية العامة لتربية ديالى

[hanantalib85@gmail.com](mailto:hanantalib85@gmail.com)

### الملخص

مفهوم التّنّاص هو نظرية أدبية تشير إلى الترابط بين التّصوص. إذ ان كل الأعمال الأدبية تقريباً متأثرة بأعمال أدبية سابقة أو تتضمن إشارة إلى أعمال أخرى يترجم فيها الكتاب اهتمامهم بالأدب العالمي إلى قطع أدبية جميلة.

تبحث الدراسة في استخدام التّنّاص في ثلاث قصص عراقية قصيرة هي: قصّة جليل القيسي "انّ عروقي تتحول الآن إلى لون البنفسج" وهي نص تناصّي لرواية كافكا السريالية "المحاكمة"، قصّة "الأسطورة هي ان لا تكون قبل أن تكون" لنعيم عبد مهلهل التي لها صلة بمسرحية "هاملت" لشكسبير، قصة "الصرخة" لمحمد خضير التي تعكس تأثيراً بين فن لغوي سردي والفن البصري المتمثل بلوحة الصرخة للفنان النرويجي إدوارد مونك. وتستند الدراسة إلى نظرية التّنّاص بمنهج وصفي تحليلي، يكشف تأثير الأدب العالمي على الأدب العراقي الحديث، خاصةً القصّة القصيرة، إذ يستخدم كّتاب القصص المذكورة تقنية التّنّاص لكشف رسائلهم الخفية بطريقة غير مباشرة، لنقد السياسة، والقوى الاستعمارية، وذكريات الحروب العنيفة، والخسارة، وخيبة الأمل التي

شوهت التاريخ الحديث، وبالتالي يضعون ثقتهم في قدرة القراء على تفسير المعاني الخفية التي لا يدركها إلا المثقفون.  
الكلمات المفتاحية: التناص، جوليا كريستيفا، القصص القصيرة العراقية.

## Introduction

Contemporary Iraqi literature is successfully documents transformations, disintegration of the nation and its dismemberment by political and colonial forces, because political, historical, and social forces are typically what propel narrative movements. Accordingly, modern Iraqi writers use imaginary characters, sometimes in alienating social and cultural contexts, to convey the mood of the Iraqi people while attempting to elude censorship a storytelling method also employed by other writers from the west. In the past, the writer mobilized his feelings, ideas, the memories he stored in his mind and mixed them to be imaginary characters, loading them with sensory and moral meanings related to his ideology and concerns of his society. This produces an elaborate image from literary and artistic aspects with implicit references to a humanitarian message, or a simulation of a specific issue, but there is no doubt that selecting characters or issues from international literature and making them as starting points to constructing a new narrative in a new environment gives the text a living presence and influential intellectual and historical connotations.

Actually, in examining the role of Intertextuality in the Iraqi narrative, it is important to refer to the first attempts to write story by the pioneer Mahmoud Ahmed Al-Sayyed, as he considered the first who call for the study of international literary works and adopt them. He wrote in Al-Istiqlal newspaper in 1927:

It is the duty of our writers, in preparation for introducing the novel and short stories into our literature, to present to us, by

means of transmission, summarization, and analysis, examples of what has become common and widespread in literature, especially Eastern literature, from Russian to Japanese, Chinese and Turkish, as they suit our tastes and our psyches.

This is an early invitation by Mahmoud Ahmed Al-Sayyed to study and analyze models of international literature and use them to write literary productions in which various literary cultures meet. In fact, Al-Sayyed's ambition in identifying international literature increased due to his translation of many novels thus he learned about masterpieces of Russian literature, which was quickly influenced his writings, and was the reason behind the change of his style of writing to the realistic tendency that expresses political issues such as freedom and independence. In his novel *Jalal Khalid* (1928) he presents new topics far from naive social themes, as it deals with the topics of colonialism, the revolution of the twenties, exile and immigration. This was like the appearance of a new phase of Iraqi narrative, because it was moving at a weak pace in the direction of the prevailing social narratives that based on the relationship of two ideal lovers, whose their relationship finally ended with a reunion, or with miserable, tragic endings like the literary style of *The Lady of the Camellias* by Alexander Dumas and *Werther's Mother* by Goethe, which are two translated novels spread in the Arab world and had strong impact on the decline of the traditional happy endings in Arabic novels. (Ahmed, 2002, P. 98). While the Iraqi writer Abdul Malik Nouri, tried to present characters similar to Dostoyevsky's characters, the Russian writer who delve so deep into the dark corners of human psyche.

The seventies of the last century are considered transitional stage in Iraqi literature, in which many names appeared, such as the storyteller Abbas Abd Jassim, who experienced a new style of writing full of magic, fantasy, and exoticism, in which the reader strongly feels the features of magical realism and the Latin narrative's style represented by the world of Jorge Luis Borges,

the writer who highly influenced Muhammad Khudhair. At that time Iraqi literature introduced a new phase which cannot consider an extension of previous one, due to the writer's belief in Marxist thought, Socialism and Realism (Ahmed, 2002, P. 98). In fact, these serious trends in writing came in response to the surrounding variables, which produced literature aware of modern critical thinking.

The next phase is that which characterized the 1980s and 1990s the time of war and siege. The mobilization phase dominated much of that stage's literary output, and the Iran-Iraq War has been the subject of political literature, this long-lasting bloody war and struggle lasted for eight years. Thus, most of Iraqi literary works at that time represented this terrible circumstance (Boumaaza, 2016, p.3). The Iraqi author and psychiatrist Hussein Sarmak Hassan is highly influenced by western war literature, such as the works of the English poet and soldier Wilfred Owen, Charles Sorley and the masterpiece of the German novelist Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quite on The Western Front*, Remarque used his personal experience as a German soldier in the World War I, to write this novel. He was at age of 18 and he fought on the Western Front of World War I, where he witnessed many of the atrocities he later depicted in his novel which works both as a vehicle for overwhelmingly realistic and graphic depictions of war and as a mode of underscoring the disillusionment of the period. Remarque tied his individual experience to something much larger and more abstract, while focusing specifically on the German-French conflict in World War I, expresses sentiments about the contemporary nature of war itself. Similarly, in his novel *After Hell*, Hussein Sarmak describes his painful personal experience during the Iran-Iraq War. It is about the impact of war on troops at that period. The novelist, who is also a doctor, uses cinematic techniques and an amazing storyline to portray the psychological problems that affect soldiers (p.6).

In fact, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq have shaped modern Iraqi literature. Luma Al-Barzenji and Nahidh Al-Abbasi in their book *Creativity Grounds of Regional Fiction* add:

The fact that could never be either encountered or left is the US invasion on Iraq in 2003 and the subsequence of that occupation. The Iraqi fiction started with the 2003 has fueled the enthusiasm of many Iraqi writers for some sort of literature that witnessed successive wars Iraq had passed through and bitterly experienced. (Al-Barzenji and Al-Abbasi, 2021, p.89)

Thus, literary works after 2003 focus on the negative influence of war, invasion and its aftermath, as terroristic actions like murder, explosions, and kidnapping increased. The writers as other Iraqis lose trust in present and in future. Therefore, most of their literary works criticize the horrible condition directly and this contributed to shaping and highlighting the features of contemporary Iraqi literature.

### Theoretical Background

Intertextuality is a concept that emerged from, a Bulgarian, Julia Kristeva's writings in the 1960s and has remained influential in the field of literary criticism and cultural studies. It is one of the methods of examining texts, which was formed by Kristeva, due to the influence of the theory of conversational logic of Mikhail Bakhtin. According to Kristeva, intertextuality is one of the basic features of the text, which refers to other texts that precede it. The basis of this theory is that, it explains the meaning of the text based on interaction with other texts. Kristeva in her essay *The Bounded Text* states that: "any text is actually a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in a space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another" (Kristeva, 1980, P. 36).

Intertextuality is a prominent issue in the critical analysis because it raises the issue of dependency of texts. Western criticism has focused on the dependency of the text, on its psychological, historical, and social context. Accordingly,

contemporary criticism comes to confirm the non-independence of literary texts. Abrams, in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, defines the concept as:

A term used to signify the multiple ways in which any literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and illusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts, or simply its unavoidable participation in the common stock of linguistic and literary conventions and procedures. (1999, P. 317)

Barthes asserts that separating the text from its past makes it a sterile text with no fertility and without shadow (Cook, 2001, P. 220). Intertextuality, however, is not an intended reference by an author to another text; it is considered a new reading, emphasis and intensification. Foucault believes that a text is nothing but a reproduction of texts that preceded it. He thinks that there is no expression that does not assume another expression, and there is no existence of what is generated by itself, but rather from the presence of sequential and the distribution of functions and roles (Allen, 2000, P. 82).

It must be emphasized that studying intertextuality means resorting to literary history to find the influential sources and such a study cannot be done unless there is an influenced quoted piece of literature, and a source for that influence. In this case, intertextual texts enter the field of comparative literature because it studies the similarities and differences between texts of different languages. So, the study of sources is an important issue as starting points that must be taken into consideration, because most literary works were subject to incoming foreign influences, due to the manifestations of innovation in Arabic literature and the influence of western literature. In addition to that, the word (sources) is not limited to foreign literary works only, as some writers have derived themes or characters from religious heritage, historical, popular proverbs and stories. These sources contributed to form literary production and provided it with an inexhaustible supply of ideal characters and topics pulsate with

modernity. The sources are divided into three types: visual, oral, and written, but written sources are considered the most important, as they pave the way to many comparative documentary studies. While oral sources, such as folk tales and rural songs, cannot be relied as a source unless they documented to avoid exaggeration and misleading. As will explain later in this study, visual sources represent visual impressions that may inspire the writer with a specific work of art and provide him with thoughts and emotions that would turned to special themes and characters. In fact, the influence of one writer on another may appear without separating his literary work from the culture of his society, or making it lose its originality. Shakespeare's plays, for example, are almost all derived from ancient sources, based on Greek myths, Bible, classical myths, or classical texts. Literary sources indicate that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was influenced by the tragic stories of François de Belforest, which were based on the legend of the Danish prince Amleth, a story that contains the basic plot of *Hamlet* with its details. (Mategrano, 2000, P.18). However, these sources were nothing for Shakespeare's genius, but only plots, which he used to formulate them into new literary works characterized by clear originality and genius.

Among the Eastern characters that influenced Western literature and became a clear source of immortal literary works is the character of Cleopatra, who influenced great writers such as Shakespeare and Samuel Daniel, some writers inspired by *The Tales of One Thousand and One Nights* as they used the character of Scheherazade and the stories told by her as starting points for their works. The German poet Goethe is considered a good example of this comparative literary lesson, he was influenced by everything in the East, its religions, peoples, and its literature, as he reflects his inspiration in Eastern culture in his collection, *The West-Eastern Divan*, the reader of Goethe's literary works will discover his influence by Islam, the Qur'an, Arab and Persian literature (Nida, 1991, P. 23). The Austrian



orientalist Hammer Purgstall considered the character of Antarah as a model for stories of love and chivalry, he published in *The Asian Magazine* in 1838, saying:

Without knowledge of Arab equestrian literature, this type of European literature cannot be understood, because that is the origin of this, as it is the one that sprouted the spirit of chivalry in the Middle Ages, and made it as a green tree, and the spirit of chivalry and its essence in all romantic tales with the Arabs migrated to Spain, and from there to Europe. (Ahmed, 1987, P.376)

Jalil Al-Qaisi's *My Veins are Turning Violet Now* as an intertextual text of Kafka's *The Trial*

Iraqi literature is characterized by innovation, experimentation, and its influence by international literature, which has generated the pleasure of exploration among writers. By examining international literature, many scattered ideas are organized in the mind of the writers, thus they reconstruct characters taken from the history of international literature in a way that serves the text and theme, as in the literary works of the Iraqi storyteller Jalil Al-Qaisi (1937-2006), who paid attention to the issue of intertextuality in his literary works. His story *My Veins Are Turning Violet Now* is considered as an intertextual text of Kafka's novel *The Trial*, as the storyteller derived the main character of Sadiq from the character of Joseph K. the central character in Kafka's novel. The storyteller does not hesitate to make Sadiq's fate different from the fate of (K), thus, in the same nightmarish atmosphere, consecutively, the two characters share the same fate. Both of them are attacked by fate from the first moments of the narrative, this fate represented by a strange man who invades the lives of the two characters in the two texts while they were unaware. Accordingly, the story and the novel are an embodiment of the idea of injustice, as the narrative emerges from the novel's opening sentence: "Someone must have been telling tales about Joseph K., for one morning, without having done anything wrong, he was arrested" (Kafka, P. 5), similarly

"when Sadiq said to himself: Do you see where dose he enter from after I close the door? The window of my room cannot accommodate a cat!" (Al-Qaisi, 1974, p.14), it is the same astonishment that appears on the face of Joseph (K), in Kafka's novel, when he notices the strange man in his room "who are you? K. asked, immediately half-sitting up in bed. But the man ignored the question, as if his presence there had simply to be accepted" (Kafka, p. 5).

In studying intertextuality, the point of view is important in the adapted theme as it directs the reader towards certain events and characters. A narrator usually describes, explains and comments so that he/she can penetrate into the minds of characters and the audience as well. This intertextual view supports the idea that the meaning of a text is produced by the reader in relation. Thus, the use of an omniscient narrator in the story contributed to establishing the human side of the character, after it was surrounded by a frame of fantasy through a man appearing in a strange way from the mirror over the course of six nights, in order to judge Sadiq without guilt, making choices about how to kill him, imprisoning him in the refrigerator until death, or crucifying him like (Christ) " What do you choose, the crucifixion or the refrigerator? (Al-Qaisi, 1974, P.16). This symbolic image is a reflection of the condition of the helpless man in the midst of an absurd world that violates human self through exploitation. The philosopher Hannah Arendt writes in her well-known essay on Kafka: "In spite of the confirmation of more recent times that Kafka's nightmare of a world was a real possibility whose actuality surpassed even the atrocities he describes, we still experience in reading his novels and stories a very definite feeling of unreality" (Winterhalter, 2019). Although many critics assert that this novel takes place in a framework of dream, imagination, or unreality, but in Kafka's conception its elements, theme and characters are based on reality. Similarly, in Al-Qaisi's story, the imaginary force represented by the man and those like him who emerged from the mirror with the cruelty,

injustice and tyranny they carry, represent the other side of the authoritarian force that prosecuted Joseph (K), as an indication of the absence of justice in the absurd and corrupt system of authority, which represents a hidden, invisible force that is subjected to a society oppressed by power. The oppressor, the oppressed person and the place devoid of name contributed to the generality of the issue of injustice. The character of Sadiq reflects isolation and the unity of a person with his obsessions about falling before these forces, as the idea of death in the story becomes more painful than death itself, after unsuccessful attempts of salvation. There is no point in resisting if the struggle is spiritual “ Sadiq shouts: Kill me quickly. Even discrimination is impossible” (Al-Qaisi, 1974, p.23), he tried to make death a normal matter realizing, with much sadness inside the dark and cold atmosphere of the refrigerator, the meaning of a person dying alone facing his inevitable fate, which does not differ from the fate of Joseph (K) in his last moments, when he asks about the members of the Supreme Court and the judge, whom he has never met.

Where was the judge he had never seen? Where was the high court he had never reached? He raised his hands and splayed his fingers. But the hands of one of the men were placed on K.’s throat, whilst the other plunged the knife into his heart and turned it round twice. As his sight faded, K. saw the two men leaning cheek to cheek close to his face as they observed the final verdict. ‘Like a dog!’ he said. It seemed as if his shame would live on after him (Kafka, 2009, P. 165).

In a nightmarish atmosphere that unveiled the dark forces controlling society, both of them (K. and Sadiq) are assassinated without knowing the killer, this incident gives the novel and the story their realistic tone. Accordingly, the fictional character is considered a real image that embodies a specific issue in human reality.

In literature, writers share a wide variety of experiences, and intertextuality occurs where authors reconstruct these shared

experiences in a new environment. Thus Al-Qaisi uses Kafka's novel as a mask to present his criticism indirectly, he concerns with how institutions of authority use law and power as authoritarian tools to enable them to subjugate human beings. The story offers political criticism, this criticism demonstrates the story's capacity to represent psychological perspectives and track societal suffering through its main character and this is one of the important functions of intertextuality.

### The Significant of Intertextuality in "*The Myth...is Not to Be Before to Be*"

Literature in general is a form of imagination that separates us from the real world, since imagination is a supernatural ability possessed by a good writer, the literary works that have been produced throughout the ages are nothing but imagination of writers who have passed away and left us a great legacy, which is their imagination. Intertextual texts reflect the power of writing which immortalize that imagination.

In studying intertextuality, all elements of the influential source such as themes, characters, points of view, symbols ...etc. are important, characters on the other hand are the most important as the reader can find the same character in various literary works, as in the story of *The Myth...is Not to Be Before to Be*. In this story Naeem Muhalhal borrowed the character of Hamlet from literary heritage to be the main character of his story, because of its great popularity and raises intellectual problems, philosophical, political and social dimensions that can be renewed. The influence of the play is reflected from the threshold of the text, the title, which according to Roland Barthes' expression, took on an indicative function" (Lombardo, 2010, p. 44), in a clear reference to the famous soliloquy "To be or not to be" in Shakespeare's Hamlet in Act III, scene I, where Hamlet is alone on the stage as he asks this question about whether it would be better to face such problems or end them by dying. Is it better, easier to deal with things you already know

how to handle for the most part, or throw yourself into a new set of issues and have to start all over?

In this story the writer presents the character of Hamlet, as the main character with the same characteristics in its dramatic reality. As the narrator, who describes places, presents events, characters, and expresses their feelings and concerns, begins narration by saying:

Hamlet sat in front of me in a small restaurant in the city of Basra... No one noticed the strangeness of his clothes, as they resembled the clothes of people of Tabriz, with his brocade dress broad and his round hat, which is very similar to the hats of the British soldiers who today roam the streets of the city. (Muhahl, 2006)

The reference to the British troops presence in the city of Basra relates the text with the aftermath of the occupation of Iraq in 2003 and its consequences when British forces occupy Basra again. Accordingly, the imagined place in narrative texts is a space that transcends its physical borders and emerges from its imagined scope into real existence by evoking events based on memory, history, or as a simulation of reality. Thus, the storyteller makes the text as a window through which history emerges as the real world emerges from the literary one, the narrator says:

I did not speak to the English prince, but rather walked behind him while he was contemplating the city and walking along Al-Ashar River...I remained walking behind his slow steps that ended up on the shore of the river, where his eyes sank into a deep contemplation of the ships, the broad river, and the palm forests that lost much of their luster and density due to the cannons that cut off their necks during the harsh war operations that Basra suffered. (Muhahl, 2006)

The spatial anthropomorphism in the story creates a space similar to the realistic one, in this regard Henri Mitterrand confirms that "the place establishes the narrative, because it

makes the imaginary world have an impression similar to the impression of reality" (Al\_Hamedani, 1991, P. 65.). Accordingly, the story does not depict an individual crisis, but rather carries metaphorical connotations that indicate a crisis on a collective level. The text is affected by surrounding factors and reflects those factors narratively.

Although the events of the story take place in a short period of time, the character of Hamlet and his short tour in Basra is loaded with connotations as the storyteller connects narrative with reality by summoning an Iraqi literary character, it is the Iraqi poet Al-Sayyab. The dialogue between Hamlet and Al-Sayyab, reflects the ideology of both of them in which the storyteller reveals hidden secrets of these complex characters, as he exposes the reasons of their brokenness and fragmentation in their reality. The narrator says:

The Prince Hamlet stood in front of the statue of Al-Sayyab. The standing seemed strict in its Victorian form. I heard a warm conversation between two obsessions dressed in betrayal. The poet betrayed by fate and women, Prince Hamlet as a result of family betrayal, the ideas presented the myth of formation and the connection between being and what is hidden through what we are exposed to in the stages of our lives (Muhahl, 2006).

This speech reveals the brokenness of these characters in their reality. When the characters transfer from one literary work to another, they sometimes convey their psychological feelings to their new environment, especially if they are international figures, they represent humanity in general and raise common human issues and this is the reason of their immortality, as the English writer William Hazlitt says "It is we who are Hamlet" (Hazlitt, 2011, P. 91). As he being the perfect model to depict human suffering and his eternal struggle between self and reality in every time and place, and this has been transmitted suffering when the character moves from one dramatic reality to another, and this is evident in his dialogue with Al- Sayyab:

Hamlet: I came to you to realize the impact of sadness on our being.

Al-Sayyab: This fatalism was not the result of your experience...

Hamlet: And why do our choices affect us, we who have hearts devoid of hatred?

Al-Sayyab: I do not claim to be confronted with hatred. However, I was faced with misfortune, my appearance does not allow me to even have a beautiful smile. Poverty also, destitution, drives you to despair that fate will not smile at you one day, and this is what happened to me.

Hamlet: and me too. Betrayal is an eternal dagger that cannot be erased with an eraser.

Al-Sayyab: Everything in my life betrayed me, and despite this, I go on to be.

Hamlet: I stopped... not to be, and that dilemma created for me an eternity distributed over me, Many people through all that comes from the coming ages (Muhallh, 2006).

In a clear reference the significant of intertextuality, Borges says in a well-known text "Every writer creates his predecessors" (Malcolm, 2018), and this is what we see in this narrative text, as Hamlet raises the issue of betrayal that he exposes to in the play and considered it in the story as an eternal dagger and a dramatic element, which contributed to achieve the tragedy of the character. He lived its repercussions in both texts, but in the play, his family betrayal led him to his well-known tragic fate:

Hamlet taking his last breath:

Hamlet: Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

Those are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time, — as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest, — O! I could tell you

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;



Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright..To the unsatisfied (Mategrano, 2000, P. 195).

Between the suffering of Hamlet and Al-Sayyab, complex semantic images come together that raise symbolic issues related to reality. In his study of the character, Greisman refers to the relationship between the character and the issue of significance in the narrative text. Thus, Al-Sayyab, despite his physical and emotional suffering, he represents identity and a symbol responsible of narrating the plight of his homeland. His evocation in the narrative text is linked to the memory of the occupied city, while Hamlet is invoked by the storyteller as a friend who represents the other face of the foreign presence in the city of Basra, refers to the idea of foreign domination over Arabs, which has returned explicitly through a new identity that they claims, it is the identity of the foreign friend, savior, and liberator. Which Dr. Najm Abdullah Kazem referred to in his article *"We and the Other in the Contemporary Arabic Storyteller - in Light of Humanism and Commitment in Literature"* ( Abdullah, P. 85). As Hamlet says to Al-Sayyab:

"Hamlet: We are strangers here.

Al-Sayyab: This applies to you. As for me, I am not a stranger. I stand in my ground I was born in it" (Muhahl, 2006), Hamlet closed his eyes and backed away with some disappointment as the voice of a British soldier in a tank tower recklessly breaking asphalt roads and shouted: "Hey Hamlet.. Come with us" (Muhahl, 2006).

Accordingly, studying and analyzing narrative texts in the light of their theatrical references, is not to compare or to find correspondence and difference between the influential and affected text, or trying to determine the source of influence, as much as an attempt to reveal how to benefit from theatrical techniques and creative methods, which contributed to highlight a specific message in the narrative text.

Intertextuality in Muhammad Khudhair's *The Scream*



Various literary studies confirm that visual arts, such as: painting, sculpture, photography, and other visual arts, overlap with literary works due to the latter's flexibility and ability to use artistic techniques. Thus, mixing diverse styles and melting them in a new literary work reflects rebellion against traditional styles of writing and trend towards innovation and experimentation. Gray Swaby in his article *The Connection between Visual Art and Literature: A Multisensory Exploration of Storytelling* states that:

Visual art and literature are two sides of the same creative coin. While visual art primarily relies on images to convey meaning and emotion, literature uses written language to create imaginary worlds, characters, and narratives. Artists and writers draw inspiration from their experiences, culture, and the world around them, intertwining visual elements with text to create a cohesive and captivating experience. (Swaby, 30th March 2023)

Accordingly, Muhammad Khudhair's story *The Scream* reflects an influence between a narrative linguistic art and visual art, represented by *The Scream* a famous painting by one of the pioneers of the Expressionist movement, the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. The Scream is known as Munch's most central work of art, and it is considered to be a powerful expression of the anxiety-ridden existence of modern man (Elderfield, 1979, P. 30). In fact, Muhammad Khudhair is interested in the artistic works of other cultures and knew the works of the painters of different art movements. Thus, the reader of Khudhair's stories can find allusions to specific paintings of artists of different epochs. So, his story *The Scream* is naturally filled of the philosophy of Expressionism.

In this story, the storyteller inspired by Munch's painting, as he imitates the artist in his painting, in addition to that, he uses cinematic influences that played a role in manifesting his vision. Perhaps the submission to the cinematic influence reflects his inspiration by the approach of some American novelists. In Caldwell's literature, for example, there are only dialogue and

events. American novelists do not present the feelings and thoughts of their characters, but rather objective descriptions of their works and a summary of their words (Muslim, 1999, P. 97). In fact, the description technique is the most important characteristic of the literary works of Muhammad Khudhair. In *The Scream*, the narration starts with an atmosphere of spatio-temporal indicators that suggest depression, similar to Munch's painting, this atmosphere suggests melancholy. Moreover, it is noticeable that the writer used dark colors in describing and presenting events by saying: "Like any slow time, blocked by clouds and mud, that is, dawn or noon, a day like the previous days, extinguished and pale, the color of ash, rock, silver, or old aluminum, is everywhere. The sky is solid and low, it has been raining for fifteen days, and everyone had retreated behind walls" (Khudhair, 1993, P. 25). These images are considered as mental stimuli that reinforce the value of devastation and destruction in the text, as the continuation of rain for fifteen days directs the reader, mentally, towards certain events such as the myth of the Babylonian flood and the destruction it left behind. In fact, these images are loaded with philosophical connotations thus, the reader becomes ready to receive more alienation and mystery.

The events of the story are represented by a circus car moves aimlessly through turns and alleys of a completely deserted city, flooded with water, rubble, and barrels. Its left side is decorated with the painting of *The Snake Charmer* by Henri Rousseau, and on the left side of the car's trunk there is a panoramic scene of circus animals. Intertextuality is evident again in the story by using a method that the storyteller borrowed from the art of drawing, by making two mirrors installed on the sides of the wheelhouse as a mean of re-seeing and describing things. It is known that some international artistic paintings use small mirrors inside the place where the painted scene takes place, similar to the painting of *The Bridesmaids* by the Spanish painter Vlaskin, and some paintings of the German painter Melming, Kentin, and Amasis (Muslim, 1999, P. 97). Then the narrator monitors the

aspects of the city through the mirror and mixes them with the painting of *The Snake Charmer*, as the witch appears from the river and the sunken streets surrounded by snakes, like the painting, the narrator says : "The witch who emerged from the river advances to the entrance of the dark tropical forest, she is playing a huge flute that she holds with both hands in a horizontal position that is difficult to distinguish among the black snakes that surround her neck and her dark naked body" ( Khudhair, 1993, P.).

In fact, the woman in the text reflects an imagined reality deriving its events, characters and style from art, as the circus car appears, with its reflective mirror, seems to bring to life characters and models from international visual arts to integrate with the structure of the text to form an artistic atmosphere. Khudhair conjured another artistic model, which is one of the statues of the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti. The statue is called *The Walking Man*, it depicts a man seems as if he is walking. In fact, the narrator has mastered describing this statue in the story after it came to life, so that it takes a participating role in escalating the events towards climax by saying:

There is someone...He moves between the trees and approaches the edge of the river...a dark giant rising high, as if he is preparing to jump into the river. A black ghost climbed the edge, standing upright under the trees and looking at the river that left it. It is nothing but a huge rock statue... And now the statue is jumping from its platform when the circus car passed it. It takes the first wide step among the boats, and its arm falls on the boats, drowning them... As for the other step, to the street, it is followed by birds that continue to emerge from its holes. The statue staggers behind the car... it suddenly disappears when the car turns, and stops reflecting in the two sides mirrors. (Khudhair, 1993, P.)

This statue is a symbol of contemporary man, as it embodies the continuation of man's journey despite obstacles of the modern era, it may embody Giacometti himself and his

determination to continue walking after his right foot was shattered as a result of an accident in France, which prompted him to use a cane and then continue walking with a limp. He says that he was happy when he learned that the operation would leave him lame, he does not care about the aesthetics of things, and Giacometti confirmed this by saying "I do not work with the aim of creating beautiful pictures or sculptures, because art for me is a mean of seeing" (Jeunet, 2000, P. 111), so his works and sculptures seem as if they refer to the weakness of the artist who provides them with isolation and distinction. The storyteller reproduced this artistic model literarily, with a new vision, as the fantasy circus car that brings life to selected artistic models reflects the extent to which the narrative text is liberated from the restrictions and ancient narrative styles, highly influenced by innovation and experimentation, benefiting from visual arts, and full of fertility, intellectual and aesthetic maturity, and this style of writing of Muhammed Khudhair is different from what was prevalent at that time.

As the narration continues, the text reflects its relationship with the masterpieces of international visual arts. Thus, interaction between two arts literature and painting is seen again in this story, as Khudhair pays attention to the meaning of colors, shapes and lights effects which create an additional semantic layer in the story and have a symbolic meaning that helps the reader to recognize the significance of art in literature criticism. As the narrator says: "A smooth, rounded head appears with two holes beneath a broad...with yellow face... the creature's mouth becomes clear.. a wide, dark slit at the bottom of its smooth head... A screaming mouth "( Khudhair, 1993, P. 34). This mass, which described by the narrator as resembling an animal or a human child, to blend in with the ambiguity of the text, appears to confront the circus car with a sharp scream from its wide mouth, it is an image drawn from the inspiration of the famous painting *The Scream*, which embodies the scream of a man staring in terror and fear, placing his hands next to his head and

standing in a place filled with panic. The sky is red and the sea is angry grey. This painting embodies the anxiety of contemporary man about his own fears, Munch wrote in his diary about the inspiration for the painting:

I walked one evening on a road on the one side was the town and the fjord below me. I was tired and ill I stood looking out across the fjord the sun was setting the clouds were colored red like blood I felt as though a scream went through nature I thought I heard a scream. I painted this picture painted the clouds like real blood. The colors were screaming. (Elderfield, 1979, P. 30)

In fact, the themes of fear and illness, which reflected in his artistic products, stem from the fears of the artist himself , it is linked to Munch's biography, which the German writer Reinhold Heller described as images that embody the isolation and death of Munch's family and then others. Some of his paintings reflect the fear and horror of the population due to the spread of the tuberculosis epidemic that destroyed his family and the city, as Oslo was to Munch is a harsh, gray, and sickly dark geometric city (Elderfield, 1979, P.8). Muhammed Khudhair succeeds in presenting an atmosphere similar to the influential paintings as he presents a deserted city with dark atmosphere and events in their distant meaning reflect identity of human being subject to the control of internal and external forces.

Based on the above, we find that interaction between literature and art produce narrative text with modernist features, the stories that are based on artistic models have been dominated by intentional pessimism, as they represent the new textual realism, in style, language, and subject matter. These models performed the function of exposing reality and monitoring its distortions in a convincing way, and this clearly reflected in this story, as the author does not find difficulty in finding verbal expressions that suggest nothing more than images, he abandons characters and presents linguistic painting full of experimentation and impressionism.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research show that the writers, as intellectuals and good readers of international literature, reflect their inspiration of what they have read in writing new literary pieces full of originality and literary ingenuity to become new, different, independent models, not copy or imitation. The study found that the issue of inspiration and influence of international literature came in response to the surrounding variables, which produced writers aware of modern critical thinking, and played an influential role in transforming narrative structure of modern Iraqi literature on the literary and artistic level. The artistic and thematic transformations in Iraqi literature resulted from the writer's perspective, his awareness of reality and his vision of events, as he turned his passion and influence of international literature into narrative productions for political criticism and monitoring the course of deteriorating reality, as they are non-temporal models characterized by living presence and their influence on the intellectual system of society.

However, intertextuality does not weaken narrative text, but rather increased its influence, as it stimulates the reader's aesthetic sense, artistic taste, and the passion of identifying the original sources as some stories are mysterious to the reader who has not read influential texts, thus the new text turns into an open space historically, geographically, and intellectually.

At the conclusion of its results, the study noted that cultural exchange between civilizations proves the humanity of literature, because it transcends the boundaries of self, nation, and language. Human models, whether literary, historical, mythical, religious, or artistic, do not belong to a specific people, but rather reflect humanity in general, they are suitable to represent man in all times and places.

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