"Umm al-Rūbābīkā" ("The Pedlar Woman") as Short Story and Play: A Comparative Study of Two Literary Works under the Same Title

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Abstract

Literary genres differ from each other in a variety of aspects. Every genre possesses its own distinctive features, and writers choose whichever one they want in order to transmit their message through the text. Whatever the message is, it can be conveyed with any literary genre. In the present study we focus on two works by Emile Habibi (1922-1996), a short story and a play (a monodrama), which tell very similar stories and have the same title, "Umm alRūbābīkā"/"Umm al-Rūbābīkyā" ("The Pedlar Woman").[1] The study focuses on three primary aspects: Dialogue, narrative and title. These aspects are studied comparatively in order to show the similarities and the differences between both of the literary works.

Keywords: Emile Habibi, Modern Arabic literature, Palestinian literature, monodrama, play, dramatization, short story, dialogue, monologue, narrative, title, symbol.

Introduction

In Emile Habibi's literary career he composed works in a variety of different genres: Short stories, novels, plays and more. Two of his works share a title, although they belong to different genres. One is a short story and the other is a play, both of which were published under the title "Umm al-Rūbābīkā" ("The Pedlar Woman"). Previous commentators on Habibi's works have already noted that his writing is "devious", in the sense that it is sometimes difficult for a reader or a scholar to determine whether a certain text is a novel, a story or an autobiography.[2] A good example of this is his

[1] In the Arabic title, the second word of it differs minimally in the two works (*rūbābīkā* and *rūbābīkyā* = "junk", from Italian *roba vecchia*). For ease of reference we use the former form of the word, except once when referring to the title of the play.

[2] According to al-ʿĀfiya, many scholars when faced with Habibi's writings were confused and uncertain as to how they should be classified. See: Muḥammad al-ʿĀfiya, *Al-Ḫiṭāb al-Riwāʾī ʿinda Imīl Ḥabībī*, Casablanca, Maṭbaʿat al-naǧāḥ al-ǧadīda, 1997, p. 7. Al-ʿĀfiya himself, for example, treats Habibi's *Sudāsiyya* as a novel (ibid., 63-65). Habibi has a well-known tendency to "play with words" in a way

Ḫurāfiyyat Sarāyā bint al-ġūl (*Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter*), which he called a novel, although anyone who reads the text will find it quite difficult to classify, because of the "deviousness" of the narrator's or the narrators' role/s.[3]

The present study presents the results of research on the fundamental differences between the two texts of "The Pedlar Woman"[4]. It is divided into two parts, the first is theoretical and the other is for application. The theoretical part contains a general introduction to the literary terms that will be used in the study, followed by discussions of the following main headings: Dialogue and Dialogical Scenes; The Narrator; The Title; and The Symbolism of the Protagonist's Name. In the application part, the concepts and terminology developed in the theoretical part will be used for a stylistic comparison of the two texts. The part opens with the research question, followed by a digest of the contents of each of the two texts. The main section, entitled "From short story to play", presents a comparison between the two texts with respect to their use of dialogue. We shed light on the narrator in the story and attempt to follow the transformations that he undergoes, and show that this narrator can serve as an aid to the reader. We then discuss the title, the meaning of its use in both texts and why Hind was called a "pedlar". The last section of this part is devoted to an analysis of the main character, Hind, and the use of her character as a symbol for collective memory and the homeland. Here we also discuss the issue of women and their connection to this character, the source of the name Hind, and the allusion it provides to the historical figure of Hind daughter of ʿUtba, with the possibility that this opens to a similarity between the two figures.

Dialogue and Dialogical Scenes

In Arabic, *al-ḥiwār* (=dialogue) is a conversation that can be of two kinds, with someone else (dialogue in the strict sense, external dialogue) or with oneself (monologue, internal dialogue).[5] Through dialogue, we learn about a person's language, voice, the expressions he or she uses, the linguistic varieties[6] and more. A monologue, on the other hand, being an inner conversation of a person, or one exposed to an audience, can tell the reader things about that person. If the monologue is honest, we become acquainted with that person's innermost feelings, expressed with the utmost

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that confuses the reader, who may be lead to an interpretation that differs from the one intended by the author; see: Shimʿon Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī: Bayna al-ḏākira wal-iltizām", *Al-Karmil: Abḥāṯ fī al-luġa waladab* [Haifa], 18-19 (1997-1998), p. 65-66.

[3] For more on this issue, see: Maḥmūd Ġanāyim, *Al-Madār al-ṣaʿb: Riḥlat al-qiṣṣa al-Filasṭīniyya fī Isrāʾīl*, Haifa, Manshūrāt al-Karmil, 1995, p. 249-257.

[4] For the present study, we use a similar methodology of the literary researcher Sasson Somekh (b. 1933) in one of his papers on the literature of the Egyptian author Yusuf Idris (d. 1991). The study will be referred to through the course of the analysis.

[5] 5 For more on the term "dialogic" see: Muḥammad ʿAnānī, *Al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabiyya al-ǧadīda*, Cairo: Al-Šarika al-Miṣriyya al-ʿālamiyya lil-našr, Longman, 2003, p. 17.

[6] From the H variety (High, the classical: *al-fuṣḥā*) to the L variety (Low, the colloquial: *al-ʿāmmiyyah*), according to the classification proposed by Ferguson (Charles Ferguson, "Diglossia", *Word*, (1959), p. 327), mentioned also by Zaki Abdel-Malek, "The Influence of Diglossia on the Novels of Yuusif alSibaaʿi", *JAL*, 3 (1972), p. 141.

freedom, since there is no partner who can have an effect on what is said. Either kind can be realistic, that is, a direct report of the person's actual speech as that person uses it in their everyday lives, using a colloquial dialect in the case of Arabic, or it can consist of reported speech, which in Arabic means reporting in Standard Arabic what was in reality said in the colloquial.[7]

A dialogical scene is a stylistic technique which a writer uses in order to present a dialogue between two or more characters. The narrator chooses the important events and provides the reader with a dramatic presentation of these events in a form that is concentrated, detailed and direct. The basic function of such a scene is to slow the pace of narration, in order to reveal psychological and social dimensions of the personality.[8]

The narrator

The term "narrator" denotes the figure that relates the events in a work of literature. There are several kinds of narrators, which may be subsumed under two basic types. One is a narrator with "internal vision", who is able to analyze the events that take place in the literary work, thus providing the reader with the same kind of vision. Such a narrator may be the story's main character or the hero, who uses the first person to narrate the events from his or her own perspective as a participant. Such a narrator is part of the story. A narrator with internal vision may also be someone else, a so-called "all-knowing narrator" (omniscient), who knows everything there is to tell even though he is not present in the story. This is achieved by annulling the distance between the narrator and the story's events.[9]

The second type of narrator is an "observer of the events" from the outside. This type has what is called "external vision", describing events, places and characters. Such a narrator may be present at the events, but does not intervene in them. The narration may be restricted to reporting what happens, with no attempt at explanation or analysis. For this reason such narrators are said to be absent, that is, the distance between them and the events being related remains.[10]

The title

Writers should choose their titles with care, since these are the first thing which draws the reader's attention to their work, whether novel, short story, play, etc. The title is a part of the text that should comprise the text's overall meaning. It is claimed that "from Romanticism to the present, there has been a tendency in fictional literature to search

[7] See: Sāsōn Sōmēḫ, *Mabnā al-qiṣṣa wa-mabnā al-masraḥiyya fī adab Yūsuf Idrīs: Dirāsa muqārina*, Tel-Aviv, Tel-Aviv University, 1981, p. 65.

[8] See: Āmina Yūsuf, *Tiqaniyyāt al-sard: Fī al-naẓariyya wa-l-taṭbīq*, Latakia, Dar al-ḥiwār, 1997, p. 89.

[9] For more on first-person narration see: Muḥammad ʿUbayd Allāh, *Al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra fī Filasṭīn wa-lUrdunn munḏu našʾatihā ḥattā ǧīl "Al-Ufuq al-ǧadīd"*, Amman, Wazārat al-ṯaqāfa, 2001, p. 275; Yūsuf, *Tiqaniyyāt al-sard*, p. 38-42.

[10] For more on the different types of narrator see: ʿUbayd Allāh, *Al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra*, p. 272-274.

for a concise titles which refer laconically to the protagonist or principal incident or else aim to provide a rapid summary of the subject-matter of the work".[11] The title thus helps the reader achieve some orientation before beginning to read the text itself

The symbolism of the protagonist's name

One of the decisions which a writer must make when creating a literary text is to choose his characters, including their names. Some writers give their characters names, while others leave them nameless, referring to them only by means of pronouns. The choice of name can be based on various aspects of the character or its experiences in the composition. The name can provide the reader with meanings which the author does not express explicitly. Occasionally the name itself symbolizes something in the text, that is, it may allude to a certain event or evoke a certain theme. Because the author chooses names with care in order to make them conform with the text as a whole, it is impossible to detach a character from its name.

If the name symbolizes something specific in the text, it means that it is a loaded word, with meanings that go beyond what the word literally denotes, and thus takes its value from what points to it and evokes it[12]. The name, in turn, gives the text a sense of extension, that is, it provides it with more than one semantic dimension and opens new vistas of multiple meaning before the reader, thus helping him to read the text more profoundly[13]. In other words, the obscurity which resides in the symbol gradually clears up for the reader in the course of his perusal of the texts, and provides him with the ability to analyze its meaning in accordance with the information which the text makes available.

According to Joseph Flora, naming the characters in a literary text is an important and powerful operation. "Fiction-writers quickly learn the power that they wield in the naming (and sometimes not naming) of their characters."[13] This power is the writer's ability to seize the reader's mind through his work, by giving his protagonist the most appropriate name possible in light of the text's style and contents.

"The Pedlar Woman"- Analysis

The present study compares two of Emile Habibi's works, the short story "The Pedlar

Woman" (1968) and the play *The Pedlar Woman – Hind Who Remains in Wādī al-*

[11] See: Alfonso Ray, "The Title of Quevedo's Buscón: Textual Problems and Literary Aspects", *The Modern Language Review*, (2010), p. 122. In his study, Ray speaks about Spanish fiction, but intimates that his conclusions can be applied to other Western literatures as well. In the same vein we may claim that it can also be applied to Arabic literature, which adheres to Western theories of literature.
[12] See: Nāṣir Lūḥīšī, *Al-Ramz fī al-šiʿr al-ʿArabī*, Irbid, ʿĀlam al-kutub al-ḥadīṯ, 2011, p. 10.
[13] See: ibid. 10-11.
[13] Joseph M. Flora, "Names and Naming in Hemingway's Short Stories", *South Atlantic Review*, 69/1 (2004), p. 1.

Nisnās (1992).[14] The author wrote the play based on two short stories of his, "al-

Nūriyya" ("The Gypsy Woman"; 1963) and "The Pedlar Woman".[15] As far as we are aware, the literary works have never been compared in a research before. Thus, we are to examine the differences between them, and will try to figure out the reasons that stand behind those differences.

The story: Outline

The narrator of the short story tells of a woman with whom he was acquainted, quite well apparently. He remembers various details of her life, which he shares with the reader. He does not give her a name, but calls her "the pedlar woman" (*umm alrūbābīkā*), a woman accused of being a thief and robber. Anyone acquainted with Habibi's works will recognize this character in the short story called "The Gypsy Woman" and the play "The Pedlar Woman"; in the former it is Hind, the old woman who picks wild legumes[17] and in the latter it is "Hind who remains in Wādī Nisnās",[18] in the city of Haifa. The narrator asks people why these accusations are leveled at her, especially since in the past she was someone to whom one could turn in all times, good and bad. He rebukes them and pesters them with irritating questions[16] about their suspicions. The people said that a love story was behind her refusal to leave her neighborhood in the days when the people were displaced, although the truth was that she remained in order to take care of her handicapped mother. In one of the story's main scenes, the narrator reports on a conversation he had with her about her and her life.

Although the narrator tries to focus on a single character in the story, Hind, the contents evoke a sense of the absurd and much commotion. It also presents the reader with contradictory signals in the form of irony[17] and mockery. Thus on the one hand he tries to absolve the protagonist of all guilt throughout the text and to give the story a happy ending, but on the other hand he proves incapable of providing any ending at all. He claims that his story is "incomplete", like a story which his grandmother used to tell when he was a child, the story of *al-Šāṭir Ḥasan* (=clever Ḥasan), thus he says it is a

[14] The play was composed in 1992 but first published in the journal *Mašārif* in 1995.

[15] See: Imīl Ḥabībī, *Al-Aʿmāl al-adabiyya al-kāmila: Imīl Ḥabībī*, Nazareth, Salām Imīl Ḥabībī, 1997, p. 928; Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 66. Both were first published under the pseudonym Abū Salām. The short story was first published in June 1968 in the sixth issue of *al-Ǧadīd* as the third part of his sextet *Sudāsiyyat al-Ayyām al-Sitta,* all published under the same pseudonym and in the same journal. [17] See: Imīl Ḥabībī, *Sudāsiyyat al-Ayyām al-Sitta wa Qiṣaṣ Uḫrā*, Amman, Dār al-šurūq, 2006a, p. 114. [18] This is the play's sub-title.

[16] See: Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 74-75.

[17] Irony is a typical feature of Habibi's writing. See: Yāsīn Aḥmad Fāʿūr, *Al-Suḫriyya fī adab Imīl Ḥabībī*, Sousse, Dār al-maʿārif li-l-ṭībāʿa wa-l-našr, 1993. His irony belongs to the type known as black humor. Khater claims that Habibi's irony has its source in the tragic situation of the Palestinians. See: Akram F. Khater, "Emile Habibi: The Mirror of Irony in Palestinian Literature", *JAL*, 24/1 (1993), p. 75-76.

story of which we never knew either its beginning or its end.[18] The narrator is aware of this; in fact, as his last words demonstrate, he does this on purpose: "Let this story remain incomplete so that we can write its ending together".[19] This state of affairs is often encountered in texts by Habibi, who is known for his lack of discipline when writing and his numerous inclinations, driven by thoughts running into each other, giving his texts linguistic substance and semantic richness.[20] This lack of discipline is perhaps a stylistic feature intended to broaden the reader's horizons and to provide him with multiple perspectives on what he reads. This feature also reflects the narrator's own inner instability, as seen in the way he "fumbles" the words that he presents to the reader, that remain without a clear sequential order.

The play/monodrama: Outline

The play consists of a lengthy monologue by one character, Hind, the same woman whose story is related by the narrator of the short story.[21] The author took the dialogue between the narrator and Hind in the story and "translated" it into a play or "dramatized" it, to use another term.[25] But the play is not restricted to this dialogical scene; it is a text that helps the reader to probe Hind's depths by presenting him with her inner self. In this text Hind mentions the fact that people call her "the pedlar woman" and accuse her of stealing from people's homes and selling the stolen goods, although in fact she only enters abandoned homes and takes out whatever she thinks she can sell, in order to provide for herself, a woman alone who has no one to turn to.

Hind lives alone in her home in Wādī al-Nisnās in the city of Haifa. Her family left her during the emigration of 1948 and so far none have returned. No member of her family comes to visit her, not even her children. People liked to visit her because she was goodhearted and always willing to help. She holds extensive imaginary conversations with her acquaintances in order to relieve her solitude. She speaks to her husband and her children, the people who used to visit her, ʿAbdullāh whom she was accused of loving, and others.

Hind's conversation with herself is characterized by irony and running around in circles. It never reaches a conclusion, similarly to the "incomplete" tale of "the clever Ḥasan"

[18] Imīl Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", *Al-Ǧadīd lil-Ādāb wa-l-ʿUlūm wa-l-Funūn*, 6 (1968), p. 13.
[19] Ibid.
[20] See: Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 91.
[21] It is important to mention here that this text it composed in colloquial Arabic, and the author chose a Palestinian dialect to do so. "Palestinian Arabic is spoken in Palestine (Israel, West Bank, and Gaza Strip […]). As more than 50 percent of Palestinians live elsewhere, it is also spoken around the world". Kimary N. Shahin, "Palestinian Arabic". *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, 3 (2006), P. 526. For more information about the linguistic description concerning Palestinian Arabic see: ibid., 527-537.
[25] Sōmēḫ uses the term *tarjama* (=translation) to denote the transformation into another literary genre. See: Sōmēḫ, *Mabnā al-qiṣṣa*, p. 7. He uses *masraḥa* (=dramatization) specifically to denote the act of turning a prose story into a play. See: ibid., p. 44.

which is mentioned in the story; the same is true of the story itself, which may be considered incomplete as well, the author having been incapable of doing away with this element in either of the two genres. In fact, the text remains open no matter what he writes, similarly to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict evoked by the author between the lines. At the same time the collective memory remains alive, as represented by the figure of Hind.[22]

From story to play

Dialogue in the story and in the play

The change in genre led also to changes in the text's structure, most particularly the disappearance of the narration. The dialogue between the narrator and Hind in the story was transformed into a monologue by Hind, because of the time factor. The dialogic scene in the story is related in the past tense, although the dialogue itself is couched in the second person present tense. The short story does not undergo a complete "dramatization"; the only part that does is the scene describing the dialogue between the narrator and Hind. Until this encounter it is only mentioned in both texts but does not actually take place in the present. The voice of the narrator is thus not to be found in the play. Hind's voice, on the other hand, does appear again, although in a form that is different from the way it appears in the story. In the latter Hind's spoken passages are long but her inner thoughts remain unclear, whereas in the play she takes over the dialogue entirely, whether what she utters her own words or those of others. This helps us obtain a clearer picture of this figure's inner self. No one interferes in how she decides to tell the story, since she is the only person present in the play. The play thus develops the narrative text in the story by way of entering into the mind of the figure of "the pedlar woman".

In the story there is a secondary dialogue as well, between the grandmother and her grandchildren through the tale "The clever Ḥasan". In the play the only allusion to this tale is Hind's comment that she considers her "small son Ḥasan […] to be the clever Ḥasan".[23] In the short story the narrator calls the tale "incomplete", without beginning or end. It is reminiscent of "The Tale of the Olive Jar" mentioned in the play. "The Tale of the Olive Jar" is a Palestinian folktale that has no content. It is nothing more than a name or a title running around in a circle. It is often mentioned, but never accompanied by an account of any associated event, since there are none in it.[24] The mention of this

[22] Balāṣ argues that Hind is a living symbol of collective memory. The narrator thus takes on the role of protector of the collective memory, defending it against those who would deny its importance or even forget it. See: Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 75.

[23] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 95.

[24] This closed circle constitutes the tale's outer framework, containing the storyteller and the hearers. The tale is mentioned in the framework that drives the grandmother to begin to tell the tale while her grandchildren await impatiently for the tale to unfold. She never does tell a tale, contenting herself with the announcement that she will do so, constantly asking her grandchildren if they want to hear the tale of the oil jar, until they get bored and fall asleep. It is as if there was one "tale of the oil jar" inside

tale in the play reflects on Hind as a figure with social awareness who deals here with a social issue, and also as a symbol of the soil of the homeland and collective memory, in keeping with the time element, which goes around in circles while nothing changes. As Hind says in the play:

a. الحكاية ما خلصت! حكاية إبريق الزيت قديمة/ قديمة./ وما خلصت وقد لا تخلص./]...[طب بلاش /.

ما هي بتحكي نفسها بنفسها من جيل لجيل[29]

b. *le-ḥkāye mā ḫelṣat! ḫkāyt-ebrīqi-zzēt qadīme qadīme./ u-mā ḫilṣat wu-qad lā taḫluṣ./ ṭab balāš./ ma-hī-btiḥki nafsha bnafsha min ǧīl-la-ǧīl*
c. *The tale is not finished! The tale of the oil jar is ancient/ ancient./ It did not end and may never end./ […] Ok, no matter./ It tells itself from one generation to the next.*

In the play, the author expanded the monologue and provided the figure of Hind with a greater opportunity to express her thoughts, her memories and her life. Her monologue is semi-realistic, in contrast to the dialogue in the story, which is couched in Standard Arabic. We say "semi-realistic" because in her monologue Hind intersperses Standard Arabic expressions within her colloquial speech, as in the following passage:

a. وجاء يوم./ وجدني **على ها القعدة** وصوف دوشك مبعثر/ أمامي ورسالة في يدي وأنا أبكي فسألني عن السبب.[30]

[29] Imīl Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind al-Bāqiya fī Wādī al-Nisnās", *Mašārif* [Jerusalem and Haifa], 2 (1995), p. 120. (Technical notes: 1. The slash [/] in the quote is to mark the start of a new line. 2. For each literary quote [quotes from the texts of the study] you will find three options: *a*, *b*, and *c*; while *a* represents the quoted text in colloquial Arabic alphabet, *b* represents its transliteration, and *c* represents its English translation).
Habibi does the same also in his *Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter*, where he mentions the tale related by the grandmother "Miriam of Haifa", described as "a tale with surprisingly many beginnings and endings, and another, strengthening the irony of the substantive content behind the tale. The text of this tale can be found in:
Nimr Ḥiǧāb, *Ḫabbirnī yā Ṭayr*, Amman, Dār faḍāʾāt li-l-našr wa-l-tawzīʿ, 2014, p. 49.

differences in its details". Imīl Ḥabībī, *Ḫurāfiyyat: Sarāyā Bint al-Ġūl*, Haifa, Dār arabesque, 1991, p. 158-159. In the latter work we find the following lines:

a. - "وبعدين؟ ألم تنته هذه "الخرافية"؟ - هل جاءت النهاية؟ ما أشبه النهاية بالبداية حتى كأنها بداية شيء آخر. فما هو؟"

b. - *"w-baʿdēn? A-lam tantahi hāḏihi 'al-ḫurāfiyya'?*

- *hal ǧå at al-nihāya? Mā ašbah al-nihāya bi-l-bidāya ḥattā kåannahā bidāyat šayʾ āḫar. fa-mā huwa?"* c. - *"And then? Doesn't this fable have an end??*

- *"Is this the end? The end is so much like the beginning that it appears as the beginning of something else. So what is it?"*

Ḥabībī, *Ḫurāfiyyat: Sarāyā*, p. 179.

[30] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 111.

b. *Wa ǧå a yawm./ waǧadanī **ʿalā ha-l-qaʿde**-wa-ṣūf dawšak mubaʿthar/ amāmī wa-risāla fī yadī wa anā abkī fa-så alanī ʿan al-sabab*

c. *And then there was a day./ He found me **sitting** with wool for a mattress scattered/ before me, a letter in my hand and tears in my eyes. He asked me why.*

In this quoted passage, Hind uses only one colloquial expression which appears in bold. Perhaps the reason for this is that Hind wants the narrator to write her story in his newspaper. In the story she says to him: "So would you write about my treasures in your newspaper?"[25] This may be the reason why she embellishes her colloquial speech with some Standard Arabic phrases in the play and tries to formulate what she says in a way that would be fit for publication in a newspaper.

The narrator

The narrator in the story appears in the first person singular. He presents his views forcefully in order to convince the reader of their validity.[26] The narrator in the play, on the other hand, has no significant role to play, not even as an absent figure. The narratoras-observer is present in the short story, but not in the play. In a study by Sōmēḫ (Somekh), in which he compares between a short story and a play that have the same title, he claims that the figure of the narrator-as-observer in the play is absent. This is the figure that is entrusted, from an artistic perspective, with revealing things to the reader through his own personal feelings and impressions. In addition, in the play there is a 'flattening' of this figure, which in the story is very dynamic and now becomes a

[25] 31 Ibid.: 3.

[26] Pēled compares two stories by Maḥmūd Taymūr and also notes that when a story is told in the first person, the reader will not doubt what the narrator says, because if the latter intervenes in the narration the reader gets confused. See: Mātityāhū Pēled, *Al-Uqṣūṣa al-Taymūriyya fī marḥalatayn: Dirāsa muqārina li-qiṣṣatay Maḥmūd Taymūr "Šayḫ Sayyid ʿAbīṭ" wa-"Ḍarīḥ al-Arbaʿīn"*, Tel-Aviv, Tel-Aviv University and Dār al-našr al-ʿArabī, 1977, p. 35-36.

secondary, one-dimensional figure.[27] Consequently, in the case of the present study, this figure identifies with the narrator as presented by Hind.

Does the narrator become ʿAbdullāh?

In the short story, the narrator claims to be better acquainted with Hind than the people who accused her of being unfaithful. This is the closest relationship which is possible for the reader/receiver to deduce from the story. Hind does not show an interest in him as such, but wants him to write about her and her treasures in his newspaper.[28] Furthermore, the reader/receiver learns nothing about the narrator's inner world, since all he does is lead us into Hind's world. But in the play there are a number of indications that the narrator in the story is ʿAbdullāh, one of the plays characters. This may be deduced from the dialogic scene between the narrator and Hind in the story, which is identical with the scene in the play between Hind and ʿAbdullāh.[29] In the play one learns nothing of ʿAbdullāh's inner world, because he never speaks. The only things we hear in his name are said by Hind, who quotes him.

As for the name ʿAbdullāh (literally: servant of God), this may either be the character's actual name, or merely an epithet for someone who worships God, chosen by the author or the narrator in order to refrain from having to give a real name. If this is the case then Hind follows in the footsteps of al-Maʿarrī (d. 1057) in his *Risālat al-ġufrān* (*Epistle of Forgiveness*). In the play she asks ʿAbdullāh: "Who are you, ʿAbdullāh?", and ʿAbdullāh replies: "I am so-and-so son of so-and-so", to which she responds: "Stop glowering, ʿAbdullāh!".[30] It is as if she was contrasts between ʿAbdullāh the character of the play, and ʿAbdullāh the servant of god, and says that ʿAbdullāh is just a servant of god. We may conclude from this that the narrator of the short story is identical with

[27] See: Sōmēḫ, *Mabnā al-qiṣṣa*, p. 40. This claim may also be applied to talk about Hind in both texts. We must not forget that despite the fact that the narrator is dynamic, he is still a "limited" figure, which means that he only expresses his mind about what he thinks of Hind, and he does not give the reader any information about himself personally.

[28] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 13. The newspaper may be an allusion to the author, so that the reader will identify the narrator with the author. This could very well be the case, for Habibi was editorin-chief of the newspaper *al-Ittiḥād* in the years 1944-1989, and before his death he also founded the journal *Mašārif*, in which the play discussed in the present study was published. See: Ḥabībī, *Sudāsiyyat al-Ayyām*, p. 167. We note that the figure of ʿAbdullāh recurs in Habibi's works. In *Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter* the protagonist ʿAbdullāh stands for the author himself. See: Ġanāyim, *Al-Madār al-ṣaʿb*, p. 256.

[29] One can compare the two scenes to find the correspondences between them: Ḥabībī, "Umm alRūbābīkā", p. 12-13 and Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 111-112 (in addition to several other indications throughout the play which allude to sentences in the short story).

[30] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 116.

ʿAbdullāh of the play. We may further surmise that the narrator of the short story is identical with the author, Emile Habibi,[31] who is thus himself "ʿAbdullāh".

The reader has some surprises in store when encountering some of these indications.

Thus the narrator in the story asks:

a. لقد علمت أنكم رأيتموني وأنا أزورها أخيرا. فهل ستبربرون بزيارتي أيضا؟]...[واستقبلتني كأنّ شيئا لم يكن[38]

b. *laqad ʿalimt annakum rả aytumūnī wa-ʾanā azūruhā aḫīran. fa-hal sa-tubarbirūn bi-ziyāratī ayḍan? [...] wa-staqbalatnī kảanna šaỷ an lam yakun*

c. *I know that you saw me visiting her lately. Do you also blabber about my visit?*

[...] She received me as if there was nothing.

The question which arises in the reader's mind is: Why would anyone 'blabber' about the narrator if he visited her?. The answer is: Because he is the man whom Hind has been accused of loving, but she received him "as if there was nothing", as if he was someone new. In the corresponding part of the play Hind says:

a. عبد الله.. عبد الله.. مين جاب سيرته؟ ما حدا جاب سيرته! لا رماني ولا رميته. زمان.. زمان.. كأنه لا كان ولا كان[32]

b. *ʿabd-allah.. ʿabd-allah.. mīn ğāb sīrtu? Mā ḥadā ğāb sīrtu! Lā ramāni-w-lā ramētu. Zamān.. zaman.. kả innu lā kān w-lā kān*

c. *ʿAbdullāh.. ʿAbdullāh.. who mentioned him? No one mentioned him! I didn't leave him and he didn't leave me. A long time ago.. along time ago.. as if it did not exist, as if he did not exist.*

[31] Balāṣ claims that Emile Habibi in most of his oeuvre clothes his protagonists either in the form of the first person or the third person, and usually combines the past and the present into a transparent fabric that makes a mockery of the combination of these two contradictory elements. He takes the raw material for his literary compositions from his own personal experiences. This is why his writings appear as scattered pages from his autobiography. See: Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 65. [38] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 12.

[32] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 94.

[40] Ibid.: 115.

Elsewhere she says: "I'm afraid he is scared of them!"[40] She thus agrees with what he says in the short story; but although she says that it is as if there never was anything between them, the fact that she mentions his fear of the people proves that the opposite is true.

The narrator as the reader's helper

In the short story, the narrator points out to the reader/receiver that Hind occasionally makes metric mistakes when she recites poetry.[33] In the play, however, the reader will not be able to recognize these mistakes in case he or she is not aware of this poetry, it is as if the author assumes that the reader should be educated enough to perceive them without any outside assistance. Hind quotes a line of poetry by al-Ḫansāʾ (d. 645?):

a. ألا يا صخر إن أبكيت عيني// **فقد** أضحكتني **زمَنا** طويًلا [34]

b. *Alā yā Ṣaḫr in abkayta ʿaynī // fa-qad aḍḥaktanī zamanan ṭawīlan*

c. *O Ṣakhr, you have made my eye weep after you made me laugh for a long time.*

Note that the quoted line differs from the original line:

a. ألا يا صخر إن أبكيت عيني // **لقد** أضحكتني **دهرًا** طويلا[35]

[33] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 12.

[34] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 118. The double slash (//) is a caesura.

[35] Tamāḍur bint ʿAmr al-Salmiyya al-Ḫansȁ and Laylā al-Aḫyaliyya, *Dīwān al-Bākiyatayn: Al-Ḫansāʾ wa Laylā al-Aḫyaliyya*, Beirut, Dār al-ğīl, 1992, p. 156. The author retains the original line's metric pattern, proof of his knowledge of prosody. The line is composed in the *al-wāfir* meter, whose integral form is *mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun// mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun*, but it is only used in its shortened form *al-maqṭūf*: *mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun/ faʿūlun// mufāʿalatun/ mufāʿalatun/ faʿūlun*, or in its *mağzū́* form. See: ʿUmar al-Asʿad, *Maʿālim al-ʿarūḍ wa-l-qāfiya*, Amman, Al-Wakāla al-ʿArabiyya li-l-tawzīʿ wa-l-našr, 1984, p. 38. Here the author used the *maqṭūf* version of the meter, as in the original poem.

b. *Alā yā Ṣaḫr in abkayta ʿaynī// laqad aḍḥaktanī dahran ṭawīlan*

The substitution of *zamanan* with *dahran* results in slight changes within the meter, and in no changes in the meaning of the verse. This modification may be explained by the fact that the author did not put the line between quotation marks, indicating that he felt free to adapt it; indeed, whenever he quotes from the *Epistle of Forgiveness* he places the verses between quotation marks and notes the page number of the original passage.

He also mentions before the dialogic passage that Hind "reads".[36]

The narrator also helps the reader in clearly identifying the "wandering ghosts" (*alašbāḥ al-hā ima*) in the story. He gives a full quote of what Hind says about them. In the story she asks the narrator: "Have you not encountered the wandering ghosts?", to which he replied: "The wandering ghosts?". She explains:

> *Men and women, from Gaza, the West Bank and Amman, even from Kuwait, across the bridge, they walk through our alleys in silence, and gaze at the balconies and windows in silence. Some of them knock on the doors and politely ask to come in, to take a look and drink a mouthful of water. Then they depart in silence. This was their home.*
>
> *Some are received by the residents with a sympathetic smile. Some are received with a distressful smile. Some are invited into the house while others face shut doors. Some do not knock on the doors but look for a passerby with dark features whom they stop and ask: Wasn't there a house made of colored stone here? The dark-faced passerby either tries to remember, and remembers. Or he says: I was born after this happened, uncle!.*[45]

The narrator here provides a full account of Hind's definition of the term "wandering ghosts", thus helping the reader understand that these are to be associated with the Arabs who had been displaced. Hind mentions the "wandering ghosts" five times in the play, successively over two pages, once in the colloquial pronunciation (bolded below):

a. ورفقة الصبا أشباح/ أشباح **هايمة**./ عشرين عاما وأنا أنتظرهم./ فلما عادوا ،عادوا أشباحا هائمة./]...[/ يأتون مشياً على الأقدام./ يأتون عبر الجسر /.يعبرون أزقتنا في صمت./]...[/ أشباح هائمة!/ غريب وواقف

[36] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 116.

[45] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 13.

أمام باب مسكر/ لأ، مش شحاد./]...[/ كان البيت بيته/ فيمضي في صمت!/ يمضي في صمت./ الأشباح الهائمة

b. *Wa-rifqat al-ṣibā ašbāḥ/ ašbāḥ* ***hāyme****./ ʿišrīn ʿāman waana antaẓiruhum./ fa-lammā ʿādūʿ ʿādū ašbāḥan hå̈ima./ […]/ yå̇tūna mašyan ʿalā al-aqdām./ yå̇ tūna ʿabra-l-jisr./ yaʿburūna aziqqatanā fī ṣamt. […]/ ašbāḥ hå̈ ima!/ ġarīb wa-wāqif amām bāb musakkar/ lå̇ , miš šaḥḥād./ […]/ kānal-bayt baytah/ fa-yamḍī fī ṣamt!/ yamḍī fī ṣamt./ al-ašbāḥ al-hå̈ ma*

c. *The companions of the youth is a group of young ghosts/* ***wandering*** *[(****hāyme****, in the colloquial pronunciation)] ghosts./ Twenty years I have been waiting for them. / And when they returned, they did so as wandering ghosts. /[…]/ They come on foot. / They come across the bridge. / They pass through our alleys in silence. / […]/ Wandering ghosts!/ A stranger standing in front of a closed door / No, not a beggar. / […]/ The house used to be his / so he leaves in silence! / He leaves in silence. / The wandering ghosts*.[37] The scene is not very clear. Hind expresses herself in symbolic form, and does not explicitly connect this expression to the people who were displaced. Rather, she gives an obscure depiction of people coming back looking like wandering ghosts, but in the story the expression is given a detailed definition.[38]

The title: Umm al-rūbābīkā ("The Pedlar Woman")

The title evokes the collection of the Palestinian Diaspora, as well as the "treasures" that Hind finds and keeps from getting lost, symbolizing the human connections that remained still in the homeland after the residents had been driven away.[39] In the short

[37] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 100-101. "Twenty years" of waiting may be an allusion to the Arabs who were displaced, since the story was first published in 1968, twenty years after the defeat of

[38] On pp. 89-93 of the play Hind describes her imaginings about people passing through the alleys in search of their homes. These are identical with the "wandering ghosts". See: Ḥabībī, "Umm alRūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 89-93.

[39] See: Fārūq Wādī, *Ṯalāṯu ʿalāmāt fī al-riwāya al-Filasṭīniyya: Ġassān Kanafānī, Imīl Ḥabībī, Ğabrā Ibrāhīm Ğabrā*, Beirut, Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya li-l-dirāsāt wa-l-našr, 1981, p. 100-101. For the etymology of the word *rūbābīkā*, which is derived from the Italian expression *roba vecchia* and means "junk dealer", see:
http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191739569.001.0001/b-it-en-000020020525?rskey=a9xbbs&result=1

story Hind says: "They are coming back, coming back"[40] and in the play she repeats the words of a song by Fayrūz,

a. راجعون بالإيمان.. راجعون للأوطان.. راجعون راجعون. راجعون. راجعون!

b. *rāji'ūn bi-l-īmān.. rāji'ūn li-l-awṭān.. rāji'ūn rāji'ūn. rāji'ūn. rāji'ūn!*

c. *They are coming back in faith.. They are coming back to the homeland.. Coming back coming back. Coming back. Coming back!*[41]

1948. While the phrase occurs in the play as well, in the short story the narrator uses it in his very first utterance: "Why are you surprised at what I say? Did not you believe that a break of twenty years would make people forget themselves? Is it a possible break!" Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 11.

Then she laughs and comments: "*Bukra bi-l-mišmiš*" [42] (literally: "tomorrow in apricots", a Palestinian saying meaning "no way, impossible"). At the beginning of the short story, too, the author quotes the words of the song before beginning his narration.[43]

Hind urges everyone to return, especially after the displacement, but she realizes that the homeland can never become what it was in the past. Those who return will find others living in their former homes. She calls those who return "wandering ghosts", meaning that their existence in this homeland is not recognized.[44] The pedlar woman's one and only message is identical to the message of *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām al-sitta* as a whole: The unity of the nation and the soil, and meeting again after the separation.[45] Adherence to the soil of the homeland is an important issue here. Just as Hind remained in Wādī al-Nisnās, so did Habibi ask before his death "to be buried in Haifa, the city in which he grew up and of which he was so proud to belong to. He also requested that his

[40] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 12.

[41] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 97.

[42] Ibid.: 97.

[43] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 11. For more on the story's beginning, see: al-ʿĀfiya, *Al-Ḫiṭāb al-Riwāʾī*, p. 39-40.

[44] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 13; Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 100.

[45] See: Wādī, *Ṯalāṯu ʿalāmāt*, p. 103. Habibi admitted that his aim in composing "The Pedlar Woman" was to deal with two interrelated issues: Separation and meeting. See: Ḥusnī Maḥmūd, *Sudāsiyyat alayyām al-sitta: Al-Ruʾya wa-l-dalāla wa-l-bunya al-fanniyya*, Amman, Wazārat al-ṯaqāfa, 2002, p. 40. Maḥmūd claims that in all of Emile Habibi's works one always encounters this attempt to make this meeting and a constant striving for achieving this occurring thought. See: Ḥusnī Maḥmūd, *Imīl Ḥabībī wa-l-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra*, Zarqa, Al-Wakāla al-ʿArabiyya li-l-tawzīʿ wa-l-našr, 1984, p. 87.

epitaph be: "Emile Habibi remains in Haifa".[46] This leads us to conclude that Hind identifies with Emile Habibi, as represented by the name of the play and by the epitaph which Habibi asked to be inscribed on his grave, through a repetition of the following linguistic pattern: "name + a word from the root *bqy* ("remain") + in + place name".

Hind, symbol of collective memory

The woman and her evolution in the play: From anonymous figure to Hind In the short story, the woman represents a social issue, but in the play she evolves to become a national issue. In the story, the purpose of her being presented as a social issue is to show society's attitude towards her: It regarded her as a traitor, and the narrator saw it as his task to demonstrate her innocence to everyone, especially those who had accused her of high treason. Whereas in the play, the reader/receiver is faced with a contradiction. The way Hind alters some of the events causes the reader to cast doubt on her supposed innocence as claimed by the story's narrator. In addition, she admits her love for him, and at the same time says that she did not do anything wrong

a. ما أنا تعاقبت على خطيةٍ ما عملتها إلا بالحلم / فليش ما نعملها بالعلم / لا حد شاف ولا حد دري

b. *Ma ana tʿāqabit ʿala ḫaṭiyyi mā ʿmiltha ʾilla bi-l-ḥilim/ fa-lēš mā niʿmalha bi-lʿilim/ lā ḥadd šāf wlā ḥadd diri*
c. *I was punished because of a sin that I did not do except in a dream / So why shouldn't we do it on margin / No one saw and no one knew*.[47]

Balāṣ in his study claims that Habibi attempts to hold on to the ends of the threads of memory one by one, but when he tries to tie them together into a single string they slip between his fingertips and scatter. The threads of his memory do not obey his will and do not proceed from one point to the next, like a straight string, from beginning to end, but branch out and become entangled.[57] This confuses the reader as he notices the differences between the accounts in the short story and the play.

[46] Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 92. Balāṣ asks further about this request of Habibi: Did he in this request repeat the words of his heroine who remained in Haifa and who retained the memory of her nation at the end of his last work, 'Whether they visit me or not, I am staying'? See: ibid.
[47] Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 117.
[57] See: Balāṣ, "Imīl Ḥabībī", p. 71.

The woman symbolizes the soil of Palestine, the homeland from which its people were displaced during the defeat of 1948 and which was left to others.[48] Habibi through these two works called for a peace process.[49] On one hand, Hind was abandoned and her husband refused to meet her five years after he left. The people were all convinced that she remained in the country for another man whom she loved. But on the other hand, even if Hind did remain behind for another man, it means that symbolically, as Palestine, she remained for another nation, Israel. In the end, even this other man betrayed and left her.[50] But she is not sad over anyone and accepts everyone, like the land, which did not "blame" its inhabitants for having left it and "accepted" a new nation.

Hind has been always concerned about people; she would serve them coffee, give them presents, and help them in different circumstances. She claimed that people needed her, something that can indeed be clearly seen in both texts. She has a "green" smile, like the natural color of the land. Furthermore, when the narrator asked her about her proceeding in upholstering when he saw the wool scattered on the floor of her yard,[61] she appeared like someone who is stitching the "rip" that the emigrants had left behind as a collective memory because of their absence, emigration, and forgetting. She remained in place, and by the very fact of her living there and working for her livelihood she helped this memory to survive intact. Her request that the narrator write her story in the newspaper constitutes a declaration that she is alive and will not be forgotten, in the hope that the emigrants will read about her and return, thus filling her with glory.[51]

Hind daughter of ʿUtba

Wādi claims that the women in the novel *The Pessoptimist* are symbols of powerful signification; even their names still hold their symbolic associations.[52] The same is true of the two texts under discussion here. As already noted above, in the play the reader is given the opportunity to give the woman in the story a name. The play, thus, serves as a "key" to this signification. Hence, the reader can connect the name Hind with a

[48] For more on "The Pedlar Woman" and its national symbolism, see: Maḥmūd, *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām*, p. 159, 166.

[49] In his *Sirāğ al-Ġūla* (*The She-Demon's Lamp*) Habibi refers to this matter explicitly. He says that there is nothing to be ashamed of in these memories of a relationship with the 'other nation'. For we have throughout the life of our generation tried to have our two nations cooperate for the purpose of achieving just peace under the slogan 'two nations, two states'. See: Imīl Ḥabībī, *Sirāğ al-Ġūla*, Amman, Dār alšurūq, 2006b, p. 24.

[50] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkyā: Hind", p. 112-113.

[61] See: Ḥabībī, "Umm al-Rūbābīkā", p. 12.

[51] The issue of *al-ʿawda* (=return) is the main theme of *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām al-sitta* as a whole. See: Maḥmūd, *Sudāsiyyat al-ayyām*, p. 42. Emile Habibi's works, whether stories, novels or dramas, all have to do with the idea of returning and meeting one's family. See: Maḥmūd, *Imīl Ḥabībī*, p. 88. For more on this theme in Habibi's writings, see: ibid.: 97-98.

[52] See: Wādī, *Ṯalāṯu ʿalāmāt*, p. 115.

wellknown figure in Arab history, Hind daughter of ʿUtba (early 7th century CE). In addition to the fact that the former is a warm-hearted educated person, she is in a state of mourning over her homeland.

In the play, Hind quotes a line from an elegy by al-Ḫansāʾ over the death of her brother Ṣaḫr. According to historical sources, after ʿUtba's daughter lost both her husband and her brother in the Battle of Badr, the camel litter in which she sat stood next to the litter in which al-Ḫansāʾ mourned the death of her father, brother and son, and the two of them elegized the dead together.[53] ʿUtba's daughter said: "I am more unfortunate than al-Ḫansāʾ […] I am Hind daughter of ʿUtba, whom the greatest misfortune among the Arabs has befallen".[65] In the play Hind stands for Palestine, the Arabs' greatest misfortune, for which she mourns.

In addition, both Hind who remains in Wādī al-Nisnās and Hind daughter of ʿUtba were accused of being unfaithful. The former was accused of loving ʿAbdullāh and of having refused to emigrate together with her family so that she could stay with him, while the latter was accused of having slept with another man while in a relationship with Fākiha b. al-Maġīra.[54]

Conclusion

The study deals with three primary aspects: Dialogue, narrative and title. Dialogue is an important element in both works, conveying the author's message of the need "to pick up the pieces". This dialogue, although important, is circular, fruitless and fragmented, like the story of the grandmother, who dozes off before she finishes telling her story to her grandchildren. The dialogue in the short story is the main component that was "translated" or "dramatized" and highlighted, so as to present the inner thoughts of Hind, the main character in both works, and her good intentions, which the other people ignored because of their unfounded suspicions of her.

A prominent literary feature of both texts is the differences in the characters and the narrator's positions. After reading both texts the reader is left confused and finds it difficult to evaluate the relationship the author has with the narrator and with some of the characters. On the other hand, the narrator helps the reader understand the contents of a number of passages in the texts. This is a positive thing for the author to do and shows that he is interested in promoting the reader's awareness and making him or her

[53] See: ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Aʿlām al-Nisāʾ: Fī ʿālamay al-ʿArab wa-l-Islām*, Damascus, Al-Maktaba al-Hāšimiyya, 1940, p. 1617. [65] Ibid.
[54] See: Ibid.: 1614-1615.

familiar with different literary genres; in other words, he wants to educate his works' readers.

Turning to the title, it characterizes Hind as a mother and a homeland that yearns to put together the pieces that were torn apart in war. Hind stands for the soil that expects those who dwell on it to build human relationships and bring together the dispersed families. She thus is a symbol for social relations; her personality evolves towards a collective notion of striving to achieve a reconnection of the bond with the homeland. For this reason, the author has connected his Hind with a well-known figure from Arab history, Hind daughter of ʿUtba. In a symbolic way he sets up a comparison of the two women and so creates a new history for another Arab woman who walks along the same path as the daughter of ʿUtba, who now becomes a national symbol.

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