



Narrative Techniques And Their Manifestations In Contemporary Algerian Theatre

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Abstract:

In this creative work, Azzedine Djellaouji combined the theatrical and the novelistic, thus producing for us a new text that he called "Al-Masradiya," narrativity a work through which we can discern the most important aspects of cognitive integration represented in the coexistence and melting of literary genres and arts despite their distinct boundaries in one text, as if they were found primarily to be one art or genre. The intermingling of literary genres or arts within one text takes many and varied forms and methods, differing in goals and loyalties but united by the objective and conceptual characteristics of this modernist and post-modernist phenomenon. There are three forms of this intermingling: loyalty/non-intentionality, loyalty/intentionality, and intentionality/non-loyalty.

Keywords: Narrative, theatre, narrativity, modernity, postmodernity.

Introduction:

All literary genres and arts have rushed to attract the recipient or reader as some prefer to call him, since their success is linked to his interaction with them. In the absence of this interaction, these creative works disappear and fade away with the passage of time. This is what those interested in the art of theater, which has witnessed a decline in the recent period, have noticed. Its decline was not a coincidence or spontaneity, but rather due to the success of narration in its various forms, especially the novel, in taking over the reader and extending its power over him. The reader has become his private property, and this is according to the admission of the theater artists themselves, such as Azzedine Djellaouji. From here, the alarm bell rang in order to restore what can be restored of the prestige of the theater. I have chosen to address this topic to answer a number of questions, including:

- 1- What is meant by bi-textuality? What are the forms of overlap between literary genres?
- 2- What are the motives for this overlap in the theatre?
- 3- What are the manifestations of this overlap in narrativity of Love Among the Rocks by Azzedine Djellaouji?

First: The textual meaning and limits:

The issue of overlapping texts has raised many problems and has drawn much ink throughout the ages and historical eras. The opinions of scholars have differed and multiplied regarding this literary phenomenon, between those who defend it and those who attack it. The terms and concepts have varied according to the different approaches and sources from which they have drawn. Some have used the term plagiarism, some have chosen dialogism, some have preferred intertextuality, and others have preferred intertextuality. However, most scholars have agreed

on one concept, which is the summoning of a present text to an absent text, i.e. the construction of the concept on the duality of presence and absence.

I have decided to deviate from the familiar and agreed-upon meaning of this term, and to use it to denote something else that is rarely found in critical studies, namely the overlap of literary genres and arts among themselves, forming a new literary or artistic genre, through the overlap of genres, their cohesion and crystallization into one genre and one text, despite their differences in terms of the boundaries and laws that govern them. This is the characteristic of the modern and post-modern text, which has refused to do anything but rebel against all those laws and barriers that have dominated texts for a long time, refusing to submit to the normativity of texts and arts, throwing them to the wall, "since one of the characteristics of the post-modern text is the mixing of literary styles and genres within one crucible."¹ This resulted in this convergence and textual blending, giving rise to an obsession with experimentation and a race towards it among creators, destroying "the gaps between different types of writing, whether literary, intellectual, or even artistic."² From this we can conclude that the simplest, clearest and most accurate concept of the overlap of literary genres is "transcending the creative boundaries of the original genre's specificity and drawing inspiration from elements of another neighbouring genre to create a state of creativity and beauty."³ What resulted from this was the multiplicity of meanings, their openness and their difference from one reader to another, and it achieved what the advocates of modernity aspire to, which is the open text whose sun of freedom has risen and declared its absolute independence from those restrictions that have limited and curbed its creativity for a long time. This openness has never been and will never be the exclusive preserve of a literary and artistic genre, rather it has become a characteristic that everyone shares and adopts. "The story may enter with the theater, the novel may be based on dialogue, and narrativity may enter with what is poetic."⁴ And many more.

Second: The Overlap of Literary Genres, Types and Forms:

The overlap of literary genres or arts within a single text can be defined in multiple and varied forms and methods, which may differ in goals and loyalties, but are united by the objective and conceptual characteristics of this modern and postmodern phenomenon. The first is that the texts include manifestations of artistic or sexual overlap, but "it is mostly not intended by the producer of the text, because it is governed by the internal mechanisms of the (literary textual family), if the expression is correct. This form can be observed in literary texts, regardless of their genre affiliation, as we may find in each of them genre elements that are foreign to the dominant genre to which they belong. In short story texts, there is a presence of theatrical elements, and in the novel there is a theatrical and poetic presence, and we may find in it a presence of the scenario as well."⁵ It is difficult, if not impossible, to completely and absolutely separate literary genres on the one hand and the arts on the other. In this type, we find that the writer, author, or screenwriter belongs completely spiritually to what he writes, but this overlap is a matter of inevitability, not intentionality. Secondly, intentionality and loyalty are two sides of the same coin, and thus the goal of this overlap is "to add a spirit of novelty to the text, through the use of different qualitative elements that take it out of the ordinary stereotype."⁶ While maintaining loyalty to the genre or art that he writes, preserving its characteristics that guarantee its survival and non-segregation, the latter type is completely in conflict with the first type, i.e. the availability of intentionality and the absence of loyalty, and here it is "a reversal of the principle of "literary genre", and represents a state of diluting the system, and its goal is to reach a new text without identity, rejecting diversification and considering it a type of restriction, and it is in most cases an intentional form, and this form often conflicts with the horizon of reception, due to the absence of its presence in the history of the memory of reception."⁷ That is, demolition and reconstruction and travel into the depths of

the unknown in order to crystallize the unknown. We can summarize our words through the figure below:

Third: Narrativity Concept Meaning and Significance:

Narrativity is one of the newly introduced terms that emerged in recent decades, and its emergence was linked to the early beginnings of experimentation witnessed by various arts and literary genres, whether locally, in the Arab world or even globally, which made it the subject of study by many researchers and scholars alike in order to define the concept and significance of this term that the recipient was not familiar with before and does not understand the scope of its use. The first to do so were the early heralds of this hybrid art, mixing theory and creativity in order to bridge the gap that could stand between the recipient and this work of art on the one hand and in order to define the position of these texts on the literary map on the other hand.

The identity and affiliation of this term were separated at the beginning of dealing with it in order to refute all the controversy that could accompany its appearance, as happened with other terms that are familiar to us. It is therefore "a term in its own right that combines narration and theatre, and prepares the text for reading, starting from the visual level, to evoking narration techniques while taking into account the specificity of theatre."⁸ This definition has determined the specificity of this term, the first of which is the intrinsic structure based on the lack of conformity with other terms used here or there. It is a term derived from the duality of narrativity and theatre, and was able to combine two opposite dualities. The second is to combine two different literary genres in terms of mechanisms and method of work in one text in which the different mechanisms are combined, forming for us a homogeneous mixture in which all differences dissolve. A text through which we can "address the dramatist, the director and the actor."⁹ At the same time, it is directed "to the reader."¹⁰ By receiving a visual reading without the need for what the theatrical text requires in its old form, "and the reading began to go from the image to the text, and return from the text to the image to create communication."¹¹ Thus, the theatre succeeded in investing in narration and its techniques in a way that creates distinction and transformation from the classical form, which is not strange for the theatre, as it is called "the spoiled son of the arts," because it is the product of the cross-pollination of a large number of arts that arose before it. It is an art that is created from this beautiful, splendid cohesion between the creative word, dance, rhythm, music, drawing, sculpture, and other things that rebel against confinement.¹² Deriving its uniqueness from this cross-pollination of arts in all their different forms and types.

Fourth: Narrativity; Motives and Reasons:

1- Documentation:

Documentation is one of the most important factors that pushed narrativity to exist and pave its way among the various literary genres and arts, in order to preserve the art of theater from extinction on the one hand after the danger loomed on the horizon as a result of its being characterized by immediacy in its early stages and to ensure its access to future generations on the other hand by transferring it from the theater stage to the pages of books, so that it becomes capable of visual reception through acting and reading or even auditory reception, which is the opposite of what was prevalent before where "playwrights since the Greeks wrote their texts directly to the stage, and perhaps it did not occur to them to direct what they wrote to the reader, and with the passage of centuries the play also came to be issued between the covers of a book, which preserved it from loss and disappearance, and unfortunately thousands of theatrical performances that were linked to the audience at the time were lost and then

disappeared forever.”¹³The modernist text was able to achieve this by combining the theatrical text with narrativity text through what was called narrativity that dealt with this difficult problem, the problem of the loss of plays due to their long reliance on the stage and nothing else, as despite the antiquity of this art, it continued to struggle for a long time to ensure its continuity, and all of this was due to the absence of a historical connection between the beginning of this art and its advanced stages.

2- Reception:

Throughout history, the recipient has been one of the main poles in the creative and communicative process. However, his position has steadily declined in the ranks of the creative process from one stage to another. With the dawn of modernity and post-modernity, the recipient regained leadership in the creative process, and critical theories and trends were built around him. He was given the freedom to deal with creative texts without restriction or condition. He came to be viewed as a complement to the creative process by completing the textual gaps left for him by the author to participate in searching for their connotations, interpretations, and completion, as most of them are included in texts with open endings, based on his culture and intellectual, civilizational, and philosophical starting points.

All literary genres and arts have rushed to attract the recipient or reader as some prefer to call him, since their success is linked to his interaction with them. In the absence of this interaction, these creative works disappear and fade away with the passage of time. This is what those interested in the art of theatre have noted, as “with the explosion achieved by today’s civilization, theatre has become in danger, just as cinema was before it... There is absolutely no objection to our searching for new forms of expression for humanity and life.”¹⁴This decline was not a coincidence or spontaneity, but rather due to the success of narration in its various forms, especially the novel, in taking over the reader and extending its power over him. The reader became his private property, and this is according to the admission of the playwrights themselves, such as Azzeddine Djellaoui, who acknowledges that “the emergence of different media stole the recipient irrevocably, with the means of enticement it was able to achieve, which made the theater largely outcast, as it began to lose its strongholds and its magic, and not only its recipients abandoned it, but even its producers as well. Thus, the theater lost the viewer, which had never won the readers at any stage.”¹⁵Hence, the alarm bell rang in order to restore what could be restored of the theatre’s prestige.

This decline coincided with the time when “narration in all its forms was creeping into the field and winning thousands, even millions, of supporters to its side, which forced us to think about restoring the brilliance of the theatrical text, so that it would fulfill people’s desire to read it without losing its theatrical quality. This is what prompted us to rewrite the theatrical text, but with a narrativity flavour, so that we would win the reader first and take him by the hand to return to the stage without hurting the pride of the theatre, so that the text would also be prepared for presentation on the stage, and the director and actor could benefit from it together.”¹⁶Hence, the theatrical text became a brother to the narrative text, and the latter constituted an incentive for the theatre to follow its example, with the aim of attracting the reader and returning him to the father of the arts as a reader first and as a spectator on the stage second, after abandoning it. It is not “logical to spend hundreds of millions on a play, then it is shown once or twice and forgotten forever. Duty calls upon us today to present a theatre that remains connected to us and we remain connected to it without it tiring us out and without it tiring out the play. Hence came the idea of narrativity.”¹⁷Which gave the theatrical text a written form and enabled it to be read many times and achieved the continuity of this art and ensured its survival for future generations after it lost its compass of communication with these generations in the recent past.

The theater pioneers have succeeded in achieving even a small part of their desired goals. As for the audience's return to the stage, I believe that they still have to exert more and more effort in order to convince them of that. This is what we see daily in the capital's theaters, which present plays in luxurious halls, but unfortunately they are almost empty. Here we pose a fundamental question: Will the audience return to the theater one day? I leave this question to researchers on the one hand in order to answer it, and to theater pioneers through their efforts to do so, and to the audience in and of themselves. In this position, I cannot answer it because the data in my hands does not allow me to answer it. We must take a lot of time and deeper thought in order to think about answering it, which is the question that I believe will impose itself for successive decades.

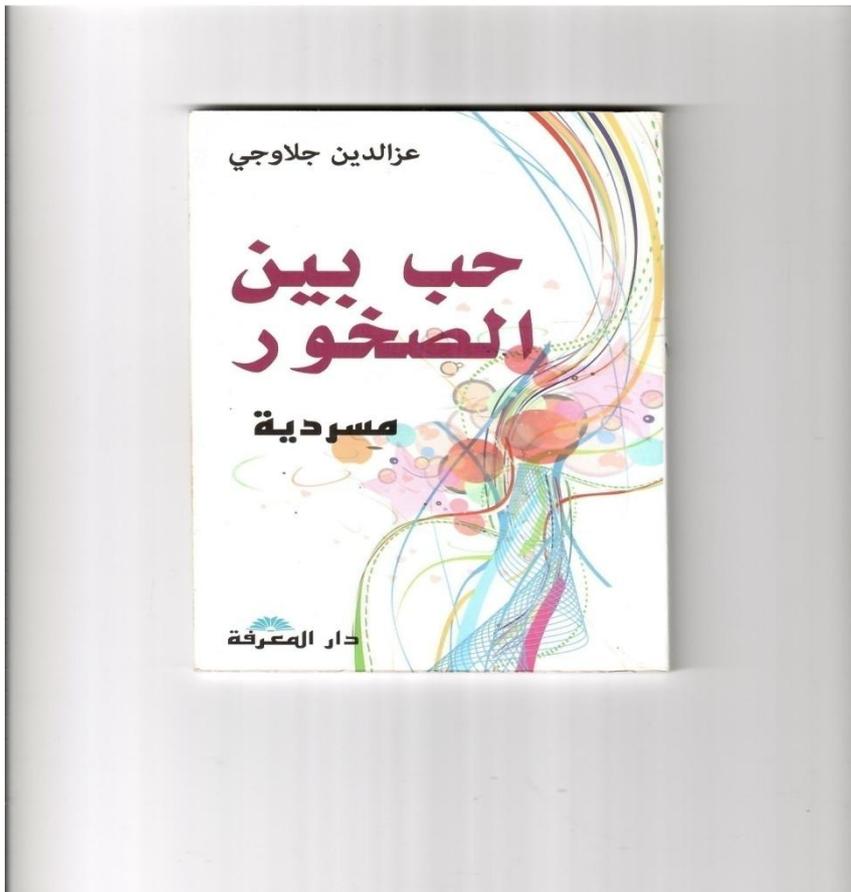
3- Decentralization:

Decentralization played a prominent role in the emergence of narrativity and was directly linked to the self of creators who wanted to be liberated and break all the ready-made and standard molds that any deviation from them is seen as artistic blasphemy, in imitation of the liberal thought that began to spread here and there, especially in Western thought, as a result of globalization and the accompanying transgression of all borders, including geographical, political and even cultural borders. Narrativity is one of the direct results of globalization because it is included "within the framework of the logic of rejecting singularity and unilateralism that resembles the rejection of dictatorships by modern societies. Globalization, in its central concept that seeks to remove mental and logical barriers between cultures and seeks to accept the other without any significant restriction, has combined the arts and literature and brought them closer to each other."¹⁸ Decentralization was also reflected in the intrinsic desire of the innovators themselves, seeking liberation and the love of distinction, which we can sense in the pioneers of theater who carried the banner of innovation in this art, such as Azzedine Djellaouji, who declared it explicitly in most of his plays. This hybrid genre reflected the "urgent and permanent desire to undergo new creative experiences, an obsession that had a presence in all forms of my writing, stories, novels, and theater, out of my belief that true creativity is that which is experimental, that is, transcending the familiar. It is a continuous illumination of the darkness in the unknowns of human imagination, and a constant questioning of the efforts of the ancestors in this field."¹⁹ This indicates the effective role of decentralization in the emergence of Djellaouji's narratives.

Fifth: Bi-Textuality in the Narrative of Love Among the Rocks:

1- The Cover:

Visual or typographic formation is one of the most important elements that modern and postmodern texts have worked on in order to use non-linguistic signs to express the meanings and connotations that creators aspire to, which is something we have not seen before in theatrical texts that focused on the linguistic content alone, as they were directed to performance on stage and were not received as a linear reading. This taboo was broken by Azzedine Djellaouji in his narrative *Love Among the Rocks*, as the typographical production of the cover page was completely consistent with the title, as it included shapes and colors that express love and intermingling, such that it is difficult to separate the form from other things, because the linguistic title includes evidence and intermingling. From here, linguistic signs united with non-linguistic signs in expressing the meaning, thus achieving transcendence and deviation from what is known in classical theatrical texts, which may not be produced in the form of books at all, but rather are written on papers and are rehearsed by the actors.



2- Editorial:

The opening in old theatrical texts is usually a phrase of directions and instructions that define the nature of the characters in the theatrical work and their characteristics, with the aim of introducing the recipient to the atmosphere of the play and through it to learn about the role that each one of them will play on the stage. As for narrativity in our hands, Azzedine Djellaouji departed from this pattern by using one of the techniques of narrative work, which is the descriptive opening, as a means of introducing the reader to the heart of the events and determining the place and time in which the events of this artistic work began, which is what we notice from his saying:

"Despite the creeping dawn, the night still imposes its authority on the city. The movement seems faint. Feet pass by from time to time modestly, the lights of the lamps strive to provide light for the awake eyes. All the shops close their doors, except for a popular café. In the corner of the café sits a group of young men watching a police film with great enthusiasm, and clouds of smoke rise above their heads.

In the other corner of the café sits a sheikh in his seventies, in his traditional dress, sipping his coffee slowly, placing his cane between his legs, and playing with the beads of his prayer beads, raising his head from time to time, moving between the young men and the film.²⁰

This is the narrative technique that Djellaouji adopted in all the scenes of this narrative, so number thirteen, through which he determined the place where the dialogue takes place, the characters that compose it, and its subject. This is in contrast to the classical theatrical work, which relies on the introductory opening of the characters of the theatrical work.

3- Time:

a) Retrieval:

Flashback is one of the new techniques adopted by modernist novels, in which the novel, from beginning to end, is a flashback to events that have already occurred, as we find in the novel *The Guardian of the Shadows* by Don Quixote in Algeria by the distinguished novelist Wassini Laredj and other novels that were built on this style. Djellaouji borrowed this technique in his narrative *Love Among the Rocks*, so this narrative was a theatrical work in a flashback manner, unlike the theatrical works that the recipient is accustomed to, and we can deduce this from what is stated on the first pages of this artistic work:

The Sheikh returns to the center, to tell his story to everyone,

- Dear friends:

May we and you have a pleasant stay, and upon the Prophet be the best prayers and the purest peace.

I will turn the pages of history with you for decades, crossing rivers, mountains and dams.

We are now safely landing in the year fifty-five to all participate in contemplating a bright page from the shining pages of our history.

- Let us all follow closely, my beloved ones, and then we will meet again in good health and safety.

The sheikh withdraws to the background, making room for events that will arise from the womb of history.²¹

The noble Sheikh begins by recalling the events of the Battle of Al-Jarf, which took place in the mountains of Tebessa in 1955. This Sheikh participated in it under the leadership of the Mujahid Abbas Laghrour against the French forces led by General Beaufre. However, this recall was not in the usual way of narration. Rather, Azzedine Djellaouji preserved the privacy of the theatrical text, relying on the most important technique of the play, which is dialogue. Thus, he embodied this recall in watching a play that could be performed on stage.

b) Foresight:

This is the narrative technique that Djellaouji adopted in this narrative through what was said by its characters who tried to anticipate the future in order to influence the addressed party:

"Oh Indians, Arabs and Berbers, this will be the second America.

He was silent for a few moments, then hit his chest with the palm of his hand.

"Glory to you, Beauvais. When you destroy this repulsive herd, your glory will rise. France will honor you with high ranks and lofty statues. History will glorify you. History will glorify me. It will glorify me..."²²

In this passage of this narrative, this character predicted the fate of the Algerian people, which he likened to the fate of the Red Indians, that is, total annihilation, even though they are the original inhabitants of the region known today as the United States of America. This is the end that awaits the Algerians, and they will be replaced by a new entity affiliated with France, or New France.

4- Location:

Place is one of the basic techniques that both theatrical and narrative work on, but each has its own way of dealing with it. In the play, there is no talk about the place where the events take place, nor is a description of it provided, as the viewer or recipient discovers it during the theatrical performance. This is unlike the narrative work, which relies on narration and description in presenting places and informing the recipient of the spatial space in which the events take place. This is what Djellaouji relied on in this work, borrowing this technique from the narrative work and employing it in his narratives. This is what we can infer from the scenes

contained in this narrative, relying on description in determining the places where the events take place. We can infer this from what came at the beginning of his narrative:

"Despite the creeping dawn, the night still imposes its authority on the city. Movement seems faint. Feet pass by from time to time in modesty, lamplights strive to provide light for the awake eyes. All the shops close their doors, except for a popular café. In the corner of the café sits a group of young men, watching a police film with great enthusiasm, and clouds of smoke rise above their heads.

In the other corner of the café sits a sheikh in his seventies, in his traditional dress, sipping his coffee slowly, placing his cane between his legs, and playing with the beads of his prayer beads, raising his head from time to time, moving between the young men and the film.²³

Conclusion:

At the end of these research papers, I reached a set of results, including:

- The textual novel is one of the modern phenomena that many novelists and creatives, whether Algerian or otherwise, have worked on, forming for us the features of a new art that has moved away from the familiar and accepted towards the unfamiliar and unreasonable. The interest of researchers and scholars in this phenomenon has been increasing day after day after critical pens were forced to move towards it.
- In this creative work, Azzedine Djellaouji combined the theatrical and the novelistic, thus producing for us a new text that he called *Al-Masradiyya*, a work through which we can discern the most important aspects of cognitive integration represented in the coexistence and melting of literary genres and arts, despite their distinct boundaries, in one text, as if they were found primarily to be one art or genre.
- The overlap of literary genres or arts within a single text has taken many and varied forms and methods, differing in goals and loyalties but united by the objective and conceptual characteristics of this modernist and postmodernist phenomenon. There are three forms of this overlap: loyalty/non-intentionality, loyalty/intentionality, and intentionality/non-loyalty.
- The emergence of narrativity was the result of a combination of factors and causes:
 - 1- Documentation: One of the most important factors that pushed narrativity to exist and pave its way among the various literary genres and arts, was to preserve the art of theatre from extinction on the one hand after danger loomed on the horizon as a result of its being characterised by immediacy in its early stages, and to ensure its access to future generations on the other hand by transferring it from the theatre stage to the pages of books.
 - 2- Reception: All literary genres and arts have rushed to attract the recipient or reader, as some prefer to call him, since their success is linked to his interaction with them. In the absence of this interaction, these creative works disappear and fade away with the passage of time, and this is what those interested in the art of theatre have noted.
 - 3- Decentralization: It played a prominent role in the emergence of narrativity and was directly linked to the self of the creators who wanted to be liberated and break all the ready-made and standard molds, which any deviation from them is seen as artistic blasphemy, in imitation of the liberal thought that began to spread here and there, especially in Western thought.
- The textual aspect appears in the narrative of *Love Among the Rocks* by Azzedine Djellaouji through a group of narrative techniques such as:
 - 1- Cover: The print layout of the cover page was completely consistent with the title, as it included shapes and colors that express love and intermingling, such that it is difficult to separate the shape from the other because the linguistic title includes evidence and intermingling, and from here the linguistic signs united with the non-linguistic signs in

expressing the meaning, thus achieving transcendence and deviation from what is known in classical theatrical texts.

- 2- The opening: It is represented by the descriptive opening that he adopted as a means of introducing the reader to the heart of the events and determining the place and time in which the events of this work of art began.
- 3- Flashback: Djellaouji borrowed this technique in his narrative *Love Among the Rocks*, so this narrative was a theatrical work in a flashback manner, unlike the theatrical works that the audience was accustomed to.
- 4- Foresight: This is evident in what is said by its characters who tried to foresee the future in order to influence the party being addressed.
- 5- Place: In the play, there is no talk about the place where the events take place, as the viewer or recipient discovers it during the theatrical performance. This is in contrast to the narrative work, which relies on narration and description in presenting places and informing the recipient of the spatial area in which the events take place. This is what Djellaouji relied on in this work.

Footnotes:

¹Haider Ali AlAsadi, *The Intermingling of Literary Genres and Their Aesthetic Impact on the Arabic Theatrical Text*, Dar Al Majd for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 1st ed., 2019, p. 79

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴Haider Ali Al-Asadi, *The Intermingling of Literary Genres and Their Aesthetic Impact on the Arabic Theatrical Text*, Dar Al-Majd for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 1st ed., 2019, p. 79

⁵Louay Ali Khalil, *Overlapping of Species between the Base and the Breach (Theoretical Study)*, *Damascus University Journal*, Volume 30, Issue 3+4, 2014, p. 155.

⁶Ibid., p. 156.

⁷Ibid., p. 156.

⁸Azzedine Djellaouji, *Theatre of the Moment - Very Short Narratives -*, Dar Al-Muntaha, Algeria, 1st ed., 2017, pp. 8/9.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹Kharfi Muhammad Al-Saleh and others, *Book of Lectures of the Fifth Forum - Semiotics and the Literary Text -15/17 November 2008*, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Biskra, Algeria, p. 541

¹²Previous reference, p. 7

¹³Azzedine Djellaouji, *Dreams of the Great Ghoul*, Dar Al-Muntaha, Algeria, 1st ed., 2016, p. 7

¹⁴Previous reference, p. 9

¹⁵Azzedine Djellaouji, *Perforated Masks*, Dar Al-Ma'rifah, Algeria, 1st ed., p. 7

¹⁶Ibid., p. 7/8

¹⁷Azzedine Djellaouji, *Theatre of the Moment - Very Short Narratives -* p. 10

¹⁸Haider Ali Al-Asadi, *The Intermingling of Literary Genres and Their Aesthetic Impact on the Arabic Theatrical Text*, Dar Al-Majd for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 1st ed., 2019, p. 81

¹⁹The previous reference, p. 9 / p. 10

²⁰Azzedine Djellaouji, *Love Among the Rocks*, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Algeria, n.d., n.d., p. 11

²¹Ibid., p. 15/p. 16

²²Ibid., p. 25/p. 26

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- 4- Azzedine Djellaouji, *Perforated Masks*, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Algeria, 1st ed., no date.
- 5- Azzedine Djellaouji, *Love Among the Rocks*, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Algeria, n.d., n.d.
- 6- Azzedine Djellaouji, *Theatre of the Moment - Very Short Narratives -*, Dar Al-Muntaha, Algeria, 1st ed., 2017.
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