



Text Theory In Abdelmalek Mortad - A Critical Approach To His Works

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Received:28/08/2024

Accepted:08 /10/2024

Published: 25/11/2024

Abstract:

The Algerian critic and writer Abdelmalek Mortad has made valuable contributions to the field of literary criticism, especially in his theory of the literary text. His book "The Theory of the Literary Text" is considered a fundamental reference in this field, as it provides a comprehensive and in-depth vision of the literary text and its relationship with the reader, the author, and the cultural context. Therefore, Mortad refers to the openness of the text to others, the extension of its space, and the infinity of its meanings. Mortad also asked how to read the text. He also raised several questions about the rules and procedures that can be followed when analyzing the literary text, exploring its depths, and discovering its secrets.

For this reason, this research aims to approach the works of Abdelmalek Mortad in an attempt to answer some questions: Does the literary text have rules that control it and controls that reveal the artistic values and aesthetic aspects in its unknown? Is it permissible for the critic to arm himself with techniques stemming from cognitive backgrounds and theoretical culture that he relies on in analyzing the literary text in whose depths he wants to throw himself?... What are those rules that can be relied upon in practice and analysis?

Keywords: Text theory, intertextuality, semiotics, level analysis.

1- Abdelmalek Mortad and the theory of the text:

A- At the theoretical level:

Modernity critics have long addressed the problem of intertextuality, its concepts and definitions. This term has imposed itself forcefully on all researchers and students of criticism, and each of them has looked at it in a certain way. However, they have not gone beyond the circle drawn by Kristeva, the creator of this term, in explaining its concept, despite some of them resorting to procedural studies on many modern and ancient texts, such as the critic Muhammad Miftah, Dr. Abdullah Al-Ghadami, Muhammad Binnis, Abdelmalek Mortad, Abdullah Al-Tatawi, and others. These followed Kristeva's approach in their dealings with the issue of intertextuality. Mortad points out that "if the interest of Western scholars has not ceased to be renewed and expanded, we see them competing in exploring the depths of the literary text, competing in going to the furthest possible limits in analyzing it, and distancing it from the traditional procedures that prevailed for centuries, which dictated the superiority of poetry over literary prose, and the allocation of topics for poetry and other topics for prose... then modern Arab scholars, if we exclude a few studies such as the work of Elias Khoury in his attempt "Studies in Poetry Criticism", with structural procedures, and the attempt of "Hussein Al-Wad" in which he studied the text "The Epistle of Forgiveness by Abu Al-Ala Al-Ma'arri" under the title "The Narrative Structure in the Epistle of Forgiveness"... and the work of "Muhammad Miftah" in analyzing the poem of Ibn Abdun Al-Andalusi Al-Ra'iyya" and the work

of “Yumna Al-Eid” in knowing the text”, and the work of Khalida Saeed in analyzing a group of literary works in her book “The Dynamics of Creativity”, and the work of Salah Fadl “In the Codes of the Text”... and there are many who did not care about analyzing Arabic literary texts to reveal their artistic secrets and explore their aesthetic depths.

And they delve into their practices to the extent that the text presented for analysis achieves some of its purpose....(Mortad, 2007, p. 14)

Mortad also confirmed, “For a long time, we dealt with the text by reading and analyzing it, and we wrote a few ideas about its concept in every introduction we wrote to analyze one of the texts that we took the trouble to analyze, and they were close to ten texts. Some friends, especially at the University of Oran, often tempted me to write a book on theory after the applications to the texts had almost passed their stage of interest... And while I was doing that, I was collecting some ideas, and from there, from books on the general theory of the literary text and its related connections, until the determination to undertake this work was settled...” (Mortad, 2007, p. 16)

Mortad asserts that “analyzing a short text may take a huge journey without giving it its due, despite that, in terms of breadth and comprehensiveness, because the literary text is an essence in itself. Studies are numerous, but it is one, and analyses are variable, but it is constant...” (Mortad, 2007, p. 16)

Therefore, Abdelmalek Mortad followed the theory of the text through his contribution to the composition of his book “The Theory of the Literary Text,” which includes eight chapters, each chapter dealing with an issue or a set of central issues that are purely central to the theory of the literary text:

The author began his book with an introduction about: The literary text: the problem of essence, the mercury of the concept. As for its chapters, they were as follows:

Chapter One Theory-text-literature (rooting concepts).

Chapter Two The nature and function of art.

Chapter Three The intertwining relationship between writing and text.

Chapter Four Text and literary semiotics.

Chapter Five The theory of intertextuality among Arabs.

Chapter Six The theory of intertextuality in contemporary Western criticism

Chapter Seven Literary space.

Chapter Eight: Other components of the theory of the literary text. In his previous book, Abdelmalek Mortad addressed several issues related to “text theory,” and I will address some of them:

*** The text and the mercury of the concept:**

Mortad raised several questions about the possibility of defining the nature of the text, since it is mercurial and difficult to contain. Therefore, he asked: “What is the text then? Is it possible to define the nature of the text, so that we can establish a science that governs it and a theory that controls it? Is it possible to define the nature of the text, so that we can establish a science that governs it and a theory that controls it? Is it possible to control what it does not control? Is defining the text in a scholastic manner anything but a kind of naive school?”¹The aspirant answers and promises, “The text is the product of imagination, the productivity of language, the seed of beauty, and the fruit of long practice... Imagination becomes it, reason sharpens it, and practice polishes it. Imagination is its material, water, and texture... The text is transformed from nothingness to existence, from stillness to movement, from arbitrariness to meaning; it is an impossibility from a single to a compound, from language to style, from nothingness to existence, from mere verbal features to the form of a complete literary work, to a great text... The text is

¹Abdelmalek Mortad, op. cit., p. 40.

the dialogicity of texts, and the dialogicity of texts is nothing but the intertextuality of texts, and those are two things that are not separate from each other in the formation of the text and its being together, and the text is intertextuality; an inevitability from which there is no escape..." (Mortad, 2007, p. 4)

Mortad points to the openness of the text to others, the extension of its space, and the infinity of its meanings. The text is "an extended space; a far-reaching space, open in its meaning to an infinity of meanings. It is the fruit of the effectiveness of the beautiful language in its eternal magical game; the game that seems easy for each one of us; if he tries it, it bothers him, and perhaps it incapacitates him, or perhaps it exhausts him, or perhaps it challenges him; so he turns away from his textual project disappointed and regretful..." (Mortad, 2007, p. 5). Mortad also wondered how to read the text? Pointing out that "perhaps it is possible to approach the text at levels... and perhaps its comprehensive reading is taken into account, so it is neither form nor content; but a magical fabric with a complete composition, woven in a woven way; and perhaps the absence of genre is taken into account: so it is neither poetry nor prose; but it is a written literary text... and perhaps it is possible to turn the reading of the text away from the criticism of the text:... so reading takes the place of criticism, judgments disappear, and reading is present to become creativity written about creativity; so the text becomes capable of fertilization; and the dialogue of texts intensifies around it; so one text leads to a second text, and a third text to a fourth text; so you become before an epic that we can call "serial textualization"... and the effectiveness of language at this level of writing reaches its highest peak, and its highest degree... and perhaps it is possible to enter the world of the text without a prior vision... its procedures are from it and in it... it is the controller, the interpreter, and the intertextual...(Mortad, 2007, p. 9, 10)

Mortad discussed some of the opinions that were said about the formation of the literary text and the establishment of his personal theorization of that through a number of problems, including:

First: The problem of the relationship between the text and its creator.

Secondly: The problem of the conceptual relationship between text and writing.

Thirdly: The problem of the conceptual relationship between text and creativity.

Mortad raised several questions about the rules and procedures that can be followed when analyzing a literary text, exploring its depths and discovering its secrets. He asked, "Does a literary text have rules that control it and controls that reveal its hidden artistic values and aesthetic aspects? Is it permissible for a critic to arm himself with techniques stemming from cognitive backgrounds and a theoretical culture that he relies on in analyzing the literary text that he wants to plunge into?... What are those rules that can be relied upon in practice and analysis?" (Mortad, 2007, p. 108). He also goes on to pose other questions through the analysis of the text: "Where do we begin with the text when we intend to analyze it,...then what is the artistic, aesthetic, or textual phenomenon that we must seek in it in order to analyze it? And what is the literary characteristic that makes it a literary text distinct from other texts?...and do we follow the path of a unified procedure and generalize it to the analysis of all texts regardless of their genres, or does each text impose on us what we can take as a special procedure for it, and stop at it?..." (Mortad, 2007, pp. 108-109)

*The text and the rejection of affiliation to the author:

Mortad points out that in the West, in the twentieth century, we have seen new opinions claiming that the writer is not the real writer of his text and what he should be, but rather he is merely an implicit writer, which led him to raise the problem: What is the relationship between the text and its creator? Is it a relationship of fatherhood and sonship, claiming that the text should be attributed to its author... or is the text completely unrelated to its author, as the critics of the new critical school, especially in France, such as Mallarmé, Valéry... then after them came

successors such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Todorov, and Gerard Genette... who went further in extremism when they called for the death of the author himself, and rested (Mortad, 2007, p. 111). Mortad believes that those who called for the death of the author were, in fact, calling for nothing but the death of man himself, and with him the death of the entire history of humanity. Thus, through his question, we must not take these opinions literally and accept them as a destiny sent down from heaven... He says: "We see that they are nothing but opinions that came in a historical context based on a certain whim, and they must remain entrenched and not reach out to broad horizons in which they can take hold, expand, and grow..." (Mortad, 2007, p. 111)

Hence, Dr. Abdelmalek Mortad did not follow the Western approach to the saying of the death of the author, despite his disgust with the contextual reading that distanced the literary text from its aesthetic elements and closed wide areas of criticism for questioning that enriches critical reading and enriches the text in itself. As much as he calls for the independence of the creative text, we see him giving the author his place in the creative process, realizing the danger of being carried away by structural criticism theses in this issue that do not find their philosophical justifications in our Arab culture. On the other hand, he realizes the specificity of the Arab cultural support as a reference in giving the author his right in the creative and critical process alike. He says: "The creator is the master of his creativity and its owner, and no society, time, or people dispute him in it, despite our belief in the idea of intertextuality." (Mortad, in the theory of literary text, 1989, page 201)

Mortad points out that the new criticism is behind the disbelief in the author by denying the belonging of his text to him, which he sees as nothing but something unrelated to anyone else. It is a play with language, in the words of Roland Barthes... considering it a text closed in on itself, rejecting the world around it... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 118). In the theory of intertextuality, the author has become the product of the text; the text is the one that creates the author and not the other way around. Then the reader is the one who creates the text and its meaning, not the text or the author, as the author is killed in both cases. The matter was not limited to the author alone, but rather went beyond that to the exclusion of all the institutions surrounding the text, and the appointment of the text as master of all, and thus the text turns into a being cut off from its roots, but it is the master of contemporary life... (Balaali, 2006, p. 30)

***Intertextuality theory Modern term for an ancient thought:**

Mortad confirms the ancient Arab critical thought is full of theories and applied procedures, and it would be disobedient to ignore the disclosure of what may be in it of the origins of Western critical theories that now appear to us in a dazzling guise of modernity; we are dazzled by them, while in reality they do not lack origins for them in our critical heritage, with differences in terminology, methodology, and procedure... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 188)

Mortad also wonders, perhaps one of the biggest critical issues, after the heated debate over the theory of word and meaning that abounds in Arab rhetorical criticism, is whether the theory of poetic plagiarism that Arab critics have dealt with... is the one that can rise to the level of critical theory in its formal aspect at least? And is it a terminological equivalent to what the new Western critics call: Intertextuality, Intertextuality, that is, intertextuality? Or that the concept of plagiarism differs somewhat or completely from the Western concept of intertextuality? (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 188) Therefore, Dr. Abdelmalek Mortad went to the point that the term intertextuality is almost no different from the term "plagiarism" which Arab critics used to talk about and delve into a lot; where he says: "What people chew their tongues about – intertextuality – is nothing but a manifestation of the plagiarisms that were known in ancient Arab critical thought, step by step..." (Mortad, Writing or Textual Dialogue, 1998, p. 16). Mortad justifies what he has said, considering that contemporary intertextuality tries, in an apparent modernist cleverness, to claim to people that it is not "literary theft," although in reality, it is nothing but it; it acknowledges the existence of its general principles in it, and does not deny them from it. All that matters is that the older critics

might have condemned literary theft and belittled the writer who relies on it in a blatant way, while intertextualists do not condemn the intertextualist at all, and do not even take on the burden of stopping at his writing to ask about the source of its ideas and words... as long as they are convinced that current writing is in reality nothing but a replacement - in the words of Julia Kristeva - for a previous writing, and the present text is nothing but a mixture of many other "unknown" texts, as Roland Barthes puts it... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 264) Dr. Zaal Al-Ghazali states that he does not agree with Dr. Mortad in his previous opinion for two reasons: The first reason is that if the Arabs had known the term intertextuality, they would not have talked about something called plagiarism; because what was forbidden, rejected, reprehensible, condemned and abhorrent in the theory of Arab plagiarism has become acceptable, desirable and strange in the Western theory of intertextuality, according to the expression of Dr. Mortad himself. The second reason is that if we contemplate what the definitions of intertextuality have concluded... we find that intertextuality is not the opposite of plagiarism because plagiarism is part of intertextuality or one of the principles of the theory of intertextuality... (upset)

*** Intertextuality between pluralism and openness:**

Mortad points out that if comparative literature is the exchange of intentional influence, and if it is related to the literature of another language, then intertextuality is the exchange of unintentional influence, and drawing from the forgotten and preserved. This may mean that intertextuality can be of different types; existing intertextuality; Intertextuality based on similarity is similar intertextuality, intertextuality based on the intertextuality of ideas is anti-intertextuality, and intertextuality based on the repetition of specific ideas and words within a single literary work is internal or subjective intertextuality... Intertextuality can extend outside the literary text, so intertextuality exists in music, dance, sewing, the automobile industry, the computer industry, and all contemporary industries and arts of all kinds... However, since industrialists, artists, and others are not professionals in speech, they do not call this issue, which requires all aspects of acquired life based on the exchange of imitation and experiences, "intertextuality," even though they are aspects of acquired life based on the exchange of imitation and experiences, "intertextuality," even though they practice intertextuality but do not realize it, but they call it imitation, theft, and forgery... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, pp. 292-293)... He also confirms that if intertextuality is linked to a large text known to the general public of literature, critics and readers can easily discover its intertextuality; however, if it is linked to a small or inactive text, or to texts from foreign languages unknown to its readers, it is difficult for them to sense intertextuality in its writing... Also, semiotic criticism is no longer concerned much with where the writer intertextualized from, or why he intertextualizes, or even why he did not decide to fall under the circle of intertextuality, but rather what concerns it is that any literary writing cannot be creativity from nothing, and an innocent text that is from the core of the ideas of its writer alone?... And none of them anymore looks at creativity as innovative ideas written by a writer that have not been preceded by them...(Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 293) Dr. Abdelmalek Mortad also confirms that the backward world - technologically, not culturally - is the one that intertextualizes with the technologically advanced world. It is the one that imitates, and it is a civilizational intertextuality. Therefore, Mortad considers it from this expanded perspective to carry a concept of fallacy and deception. From one point of view, its proponents claim that when the writer writes, he intertextualizes with what he has read, memorized, heard, or seen... but they did not examine the theory that intertextuality occurs between people at the highest technological level as well; since it was very difficult to find a writer belonging to the advanced world intertextualizing with a writer belonging to the technologically backward world...(Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 294)

Therefore, Mortad concludes that intertextuality began innocently, but soon turned into a political concept full of passion. After the Arabs used to search for literary thefts in the texts of poets in an attempt to know the sources of their ideas and the stock of their words, the people of the West began to talk about the dialogic nature of texts; but they hardly talked about anything except

specific texts; so the concept of intertextuality, which was originally open, turned into a closed concept in spite of itself!... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 294)

***The problem of open or closed text:**

Dr. Mortad points out that the "open text" can be defined as one that can be started with the same way it ends, and thus is circular in this sense... However, this definition is merely a presentation of an idea about the concept; since the matter is not that simple of representation; otherwise, the open text may not end with the same way it began... that is, it is left open to all interpretations of literary reading... (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, pp. 351-352). He also points out that the "closed text" is like a complete text whose end does not resemble its beginning, and whose beginning does not resemble its end. Perhaps this text is more inclined towards tradition than towards novelty and modernity... Therefore, Mortad declares that the issue of openness and closure is limited to narrative texts, and everything that is capable of being told more than it is limited to the contemplative text, or the abstract text that does not deal with a narrative tape, so it is not subject to the principle of openness or closure, while the narrative text, by necessity, is subject to this principle; it is either closed or open... Many contemporary poetic texts have begun to employ narration in presenting their topics, so if you are reading a poetic story...(Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 353)

The researcher drew attention to the fact that intertextuality may extend beyond the literary text and its criticism, and may be in music, dance, sewing, the automobile industry, and the computer industry, i.e. it is a cultural intertextuality, and he distinguished between two types in it as well, based on the principle of cultural inequality among people, saying: "We have called the intertextuality that does not rise to equivalence the term 'other intertextuality' or 'reverse intertextuality', which is the one that starts from the bottom, while the other intellectual other intertextuality starts from the bottom to the top, i.e. from the weak to the strong, or rather from the poor to the rich..." (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 294) and he admits at the end of his explanation that the first type is the most prevalent, as we rarely "find a writer (given that writing is one of the manifestations of civilization) belonging to the developed world who engages in intertextuality with a writer belonging to the technologically backward world..." (Mortad, Text Theory, 2007, p. 294)

B- At the applied level:

Abdelmalek Mortad is keen to apply a critical, level-based approach, as he puts it, because he approaches the text from different levels, or a complex approach that has been used in the titles of his various books: (Narrative Discourse Analysis - A Complex Semiotic Deconstructive Treatment of the Novel "Midaq Alley"), (Poetics of the Poem, the Reading Poem - A Complex Analysis of the Poem "Yemeni Sorrows"), (One Thousand and One Nights - A Deconstructive Semiotic Analysis of the Tale of the Porter of Baghdad), (A-Y, A Deconstructive Semiotic Study of the Poem "Where is My Layla" by Muhammad Al-Eid Al-Khalifa), (Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse - A Level-Based Analysis of the Poem "Shanashil Bint Al-Halabi")... (Waghlissi, 2008, p. 417)...based on a clear belief that "methodological pluralism is now prevalent in some Western schools..." (Mortad, Narrative Discourse Analysis: A Complex Deconstructive Treatment of the Novel Midaq Alley, 1995, p. 6) Because these schools have become accustomed to the tendency towards systematic composition, when reading any literary text, with an effort to classify the systematic compositions so as not to fall into eclecticism... because the single procedure in analyzing the text, no matter how complete and precise it is, will not reach all of the linguistic, ideological, aesthetic, and psychological components in the analyzed text... (Mortad, Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanashil by Al-Jalabi's Daughter, 2001, pp. 9-10)

Abdelmalek Mortad also points out that "hybridizing any method is necessary to activate its tools and activate its procedures; so that it becomes more capable of giving and enrichment, as a specific method can be selected, by combining it with others or by leaving it without

combining it; based on the literary genre analyzed or read.” (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi’s Daughter*, 2001, p. 15). Mortad also mentions some opinions that can rise to the level of theory, indicating that: if the analyzed text is of the type of socialist realism novel, for example, then it is possible to fabricate the structural composition in its analysis while following deconstruction as a procedure. However, if the text is of the type of the new novel, then it is possible to fabricate the structural composition with the help of semiotics as a tool for understanding and interpretation, and deconstruction as a methodological procedure for the work.

If the text is poetic, it is possible to create:

*Either structural linguistics with an attempt to fabricate deconstruction;

*Or semiotics, with the investment of all the offerings of interpretation, symbol, indication, allusion, icon, displacement, and all the semiotic procedures that the analyst uses to read a poetic text in a manner of high aesthetics. (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi’s Daughter*, 2001, p. 15) Mortad dealt with a poetic text that he read in a way that he tried to invent reading procedures as much as he could. He sought for the text to be read to be a middle ground in terms of its space; it is the poem “Shanashil Ibnat Al-Jalabi” by Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab. He explains that its size and form together forced him to practice semiotic analysis on it. (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi’s Daughter*, 2001, p. 16) Mortad’s reading of the text *Shanasheel Bint Al-Jalabi* was based on a number of principles, the most important of which is perhaps to mention: He noticed in this text a tendency towards the similar fabric more than its tendency towards contrast. This is a matter that is represented in the biography of life itself; for despite the contrast that distinguishes people and the discord that separates them, similarity remains more frequent in their relationships: with each other. This text, in its states of similarity, stages of its contrast, and manifestations of its similarity as well, is based, in terms of meaning, on the accumulation of diffusion and extension, more than it is based on the accumulation of confinement and withdrawal. He strove to read this text, within the verbal and semantic similarity together, a similar reading that is based on the relationship of diffusion. Diffusion is also a well-known biography of life that tends, in most of its aspects, towards this behavior. Bodies spread in space; It changes from childhood to youth, from shortness to height, from tenderness to strength, from smallness to largeness; and natural life itself is renewed every season when the rains provide it, so the trees grow, the crops develop, and the plants emerge... and so on. (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi’s Daughter*, 2001, p. 17). He read this text at three levels:

Level 1 is based on seeking similarities and differences in the language of contemporary Arabic poetry through one of the greatest representatives of this poetry.

Level 2 is based on evaluating the poetic language of this text in the spatial network in an attempt to produce spaces in it, or around it; then in an attempt to give the poetic space a semiotic form that establishes it from its static meaning to living, interactive, responsive fields that are in conflict with what is adjacent to it, or has a role in it.

The final level represents the analysis of this poetic text from an artistic and technical perspective as well. The practical application that took place on it, in this manner of detail and focus, may have occurred for the first time in Arabic. He means by all of this the technical apparatus that he harnessed to interpret colors, visuals, tangibles, smells, and tastes. He may have gone beyond these areas to other similarities and indications that Western semioticians did not apply to. He has deduced, in particular, the complex indication that is not only visual, or auditory, or tactile, or olfactory, or tasteful; but it may take complex stages such that it may

include all of these mixtures, giving the text fertile semantic dimensions. (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi's Daughter*, 2001, pp. 31-32). The semiotic reading has been unified around one axis in comparison to the entire text, which is diffusion; with what may befall it of exclusivity from time to time. That is, we have divided the text of the poem Shanasheel Bint Al-Jalabi into procedural divisions that amount to eleven sections; and each section is formed from a set of reading units, the lowest of which is three, / and the highest of which is nine. (Mortad, *Semiotic Analysis of Poetic Discourse: A Level-wise Analysis of the Poem Shanasheel by Al-Jalabi's Daughter*, 2001, p. 32)

Abdelmalek Mortad also addressed the texts of the seven Mu'allaqat from a semiotic/anthropological approach in his book "The Seven Mu'allaqat: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach in His Book" *The Mu'allaqat: Reading Them in Light of New Data*. This is an explicit call from him to return to the heritage and Arabic poetry in order to interrogate it, explore its depths, analyze it, and delve into the poetic phenomenon, for "he who does not delve into the poetic phenomenon, the ancient Arabic, from the critics, his tools are not complete, his merchandise of knowledge is not spent, he does not have a face of solid knowledge, and his reputation is not spread in the literary clubs; and he cannot, with all of that, or during all of that, claim to the people among his readers that he is able to understand the literary phenomenon in any of the subsequent eras, unless he visits these poems, interrogates them, and narrates their effects... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 9) Which made him wonder before starting to read.

*Before starting to read:

How can scattered flocks of verbal features - when they come together, embrace, harmonize, embrace, coexist, converse, and combine; so that they replicate and do not clash - become a magical fabric of speech, and a fragrant system of saying; that dazzles the minds, and enchants the hearts. How can that fragrant drop flow, and that infused magic be achieved: for this wondrous verbal fabric? And how does that rhetorical and expressive care come to the poet, so that he excels and is distinguished? And why do poets differ in that merit: so that this one draws from a sea, and that one carves from a rock, in the words of the traditional critical saying. Within the procedures of interpretation - or hermeneutics - that are very dominant over any reading we use of a literary, religious, philosophical, legal, or political text... And when we come today to pre-Islamic poetry in general, and to the Mu'allaqat, or the seven Mu'allaqat, or the seven long poems, or the Sumut - each is said - we will try to read them in the light of new data, at least what we believe: It is only in order to highlight, from where we do not seek to seek, the role of this dominant interpretation in tearing the veil of secrecy, the most of which was to conceal the literary load of the text read, analyzed, or interpreted, or to conceal the aesthetic features of the writing. (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 5). Abdelmalek Mortad noticed when he read pre-Islamic poetry in general, and the Mu'allaqat in particular, that the influence of Imru' al-Qais on other ancient Arab poets was clear and apparent. It seems that the ancient poets were not embarrassed to address some verses, or parts of them, or parts of their parts, by way of inclusion, or in modern language by way of intertextuality; so one of them would not hesitate to repeat what someone else had said, without finding any embarrassment or sin in that. He gave an example of some of that in the effects of Imru' al-Qais on Arabic poetry: pre-Islamic, Islamic, and Umayyad, without tiring himself out in following that to other later times, or to other poets, in the early eras of Arabic poetry. (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 367). Mortad asks, "Can we, as a result, consider Imru' al-Qais a poet, and most of the remaining poets in the pre-Islamic era and the early days of Islam, to be in agreement with him, admiring him, and imitating him?" (Mortad,

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The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts, 1998, p. 367) for the aspirant to study and read the seven Mu'allaqat:

***Forelock and intertextuality in the Mu'allaqat:**

Mortad points out that what caught his attention while reading the seven Mu'allaqat was a set of phenomena in the intertextuality in their texts, until he found a good group of them and abundant amounts: so he provided him with what he called the common language, or **Verbal intertextuality**; and what is called intertextuality; and what is called **autotextuality** and what he called the content intertextuality. In his article, he dealt with all the previous levels of intertextuality that govern the interaction relations between the seven Mu'allaqat. (Mortad, The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts, 1998, p. 369)

First level: Verbal intertextuality:

When Mortad read the texts of the Mu'allaqat and reread them, it became clear to him that there were many words that were mentioned by some poets and were circulated by others, in agreement with them, admiring them, and imitating them. In his opinion, this may not be due to a deficiency in the linguistic stock of these or those, nor to a narrow imaginative horizon, but to the fact that the Mu'allaqat writers were gathered around similar issues, to the point that they were deliberately seeking to come closer to them, or to intertextualize around them. In this, Mortad sought to represent the common interests that brought them together, as it embodied what could be called the unity of perception of things and the world. The similarity and resemblance of language indicate the similarity and resemblance of imagination. The language from which or with which poets build their poems also represents the interpretation of the dominance of a particular linguistic material over another material. Therefore, verbal intertextuality is followed by placing it within the fields of:

The first field: the ruins, the drawing, the house, the home, and what is in it.

By presenting some of the similar intertextualities at the level of language - and say if you will at the level of expression - the Mu'allaqat who most adhered to the homeland and wept over the monuments were: Labid and Antarah with six consecutive occurrences, each of them. While we find Zuhair occupying the third position with five times, while Imru' al-Qais occupies the fourth position with four consecutive occurrences. Al-Harith ibn Halza comes in fifth place with only two intertextualities. Tarafa was satisfied with one intertextuality in the last place, so the predominance of these intertextualities makes clear to us how the Mu'allaqat adhered to this artistic structure that was mostly established by poets before Imru' al-Qais... (Mortad, The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts, 1998, p. 372); Mortad points out that since the remaining six Mu'allaqat contained these verbal intertextualities, this required that they be a rule that was followed, a structure that was constructed, and a tradition that was followed; so the later would intertextualize with the earlier and draw inspiration from it in constructing the beginning of his Mu'allaqat. So the house, then, and what is similar to it, was a source of inspiration for the pre-Islamic poet because it was the one that sheltered the departing beloved, then because the poet himself, perhaps, had resided in it for a period of time, or had taken refuge in it for a period of time; then, because it was the community of the clan, the meeting place of the beloved, the home of joy, and the birthplace of happiness and pleasures, it monopolized the attention, and dominated the love and overwhelming longing... (Mortad, The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts, 1998, p. 374)

The second field: Water and rain and their ruling:

Mortad noted that there is another common field among the Mu'allaqat in their technical lexicon, in which they have intertextuality and exchanged, which is water, rain, thunder, and what is similar to these meanings, where we find them either similar, or close, or similar in the use of the words of these meanings, such as Imru' al-Qais' use of the words wabal, sa'il, gharaq, sawb (rain),

sahih, ma'a, and nafyan (the scattering of raindrops)...The intertextuality here is based on water, which is one of the components of the aesthetics of the space that was represented in those drawings and ruins, and in those houses and monuments. The aesthetics of the space are completed by the abundance of water and the flow of torrents... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 376)

The third field: Using "ka'anna":

Mortad presented the compound simile tool "ka'anna" and - as he put it - not from the standpoint of its simile function, but from the perspective of its intertextual function. He wondered, but why did the Mu'allaqat pay attention to this simile tool and not others? Answering, perhaps that is due to its beauty represented in the solidity of its rhythm, in addition to that, it is composed of two elements: the simile tool (kaf), and the emphasis tool (anna): so as if, as if: it is not a tool for simile only, nor a tool for emphasis only, but it is both of them. When Mortad followed the intertextualities that occurred in the Mu'allaqat with this tool (ka'anna - as if she - as if I - as if he - as if they both - as if we are - as if they are), he noticed:

- 1- "Ka'anna" is the word that is most frequently repeated, more than its counterparts that are attached to pronouns or to the comprehensive "ma," with a frequency that reached nineteen times out of approximately forty-two cases of comparison.
- 2- Imru' al-Qais uses "ka'anna" nine times out of thirteen "ka'anna" in a neutral textual way.
- 3- Perhaps the camel is the one that monopolizes the emphatic simile "as if" with a frequency that reached about thirteen times. Tarafa was fond of that and used it in similes of his camel, nine times.

4 - Imru' al-Qais and Tarafa are the ones who monopolize the first position, each using thirteen "ka'anna" (as if). (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 377)

Mortad points out that the aesthetics of associative intertextuality arise, here in particular, on two subjects that had an intimate relationship. The lives of the Mu'allaqat, their emotions and their environment, namely: the camel and the woman, as if these two topics constitute the focus of this intertextual activity based on the use of the tool /as if/ in the similes, which they were. They use it to weave the words in their seven Mu'allaqat. Mortad wonders why the commentators used this tool? How did some of them communicate with each other? Some of it? Or say: How did those who came after it agree with those who came before it? Rather, say: How did the six Mu'allaqat agree with the one who is a man? Qais? To answer: Perhaps this will create an intimate relationship between them. The tool is used to draw the aesthetics of space, and to draw the aesthetics of the beloved and what surrounds her or disturbs around her. So their repetition of it was nothing but To enhance the aesthetic appearance of the poetic space, and the Mu'allaqat's keenness to insist on describing it as such Aesthetics and its claim. (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 380)

Fourth field: The word "alive"

Mortad points out that the word "al-Hayy" was mentioned in the Mu'allaqat about eleven times, and five of them were the most prominent in this verbal intertextuality: Imru' al-Qais, Tarafa, Zuhair, Labid, and Amr ibn Kulthum. While it was absent from the Mu'allaqat of Antarah and al-Harith ibn Halza... It is as if space, embodied in the word "al-hayy," represents poetry for Imru' al-Qais and social life for his peers. If we contemplate, in both cases, the places in which the word "al-hayy" was used, it becomes clear: For us, this meaning falls under the aesthetics of space, the space of the beloved in Imru' al-Qais and Labid... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 381)

Fifth field: Crying, tears and the like:

Mortad noticed that none of the Mu'allaqat poets were charged with repeating the word crying and what it signifies, like what Imru' al-Qais did, which he mentioned about seven times, while

only al-Harith mentioned crying twice, as if Imru' al-Qais was embodying the first Arabic poem par excellence... So crying, then, is a dictionary of the language of Imru' al-Qais, who used crying in different places... Mortad concluded that poets often shared in using certain words, especially when they were dealing with similar or identical topics, and he generally found that these shared words flowed into one outlet: the beauty of the beloved, and the beauty of his space... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 384)

Level Two: Content Intertextuality:

After Mortad spoke about verbal intertextuality in the seven Mu'allaqat, especially in their openings, he discussed with some analysis what he called "content intertextuality." Although this type of intertextuality may also expand to textual intertextuality, the idea of this intertextuality, which many pre-Islamic poets were fond of, including the poets of the Mu'allaqat, came from the origin of the famous verse of Imru' al-Qais from his well-known long poem... There are textual intertextualities at times, content intertextualities at times, and content-textual intertextualities at times. Another: It is based on dual intertextuality, so that we find a textual commentator, And another intertextual commentary with him... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 386)

The third level: Textual intertextuality:

This level of intertextuality goes beyond the limits of inspiration and imitation, to what we can call intertextuality: such that we sense that the other is weaving on the same pattern as the first, and is not content with drawing inspiration from his idea, but has gone beyond it to imitating the weaving, comparing the speech, and opposing the discourse. The truth is that some of that may be represented in what was practiced and called the content intertextuality, where we sense, at times, the closeness of the distance between the two contents to the point of the absence of differences, the disappearance of difference, and the dying of similarity. He mentioned a group of these binary, intertextual, intertextualities, and gave examples of that from the poetry of Imru' al-Qais and Tarafa... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 388), and according to the **practitioner**, this type of intertextuality was between four Mu'allaqat at the most extreme, and this was represented in Al-Washm and Lama' Al-Yadayn: where Imru' Al-Qais, Tarafa, Zuhair, and Labid participated in this intertextuality. Mortad indicates that every intertextuality in which Imru' Al-Qais participated, the starting point of the chronological sequence is that the misguided king is the intertextualist, and that the others are the intertextualists... It is also believed that Labid was in intertextuality with Imru' al-Qais, imitating him and following his example, and that the intertextualities that he encountered frequently represented the topics of the primary interest in the activity of those Mu'allaqat who were disturbed by one disturbance; as if they were seven faces of one personality, or as if they were one voice for seven... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 389)

Level Four: Autotextuality:

Before Mortad addresses this level of intertextuality, he provides a definition of auto-intertextuality, which means "the repetition that occurs in one poet, through his poem or poems, whether he is aware of it or not... Such an act indicates professionalism in weaving, that is, it indicates that the poet, due to the abundance of verbal fabrics he has woven, has developed something resembling a style that accompanies him and never leaves him, and that departs from him and never leaves him..." (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 390). Mortad found some intertextuality in Imru' al-Qais, and he may have been the most prolific of them in creating what he called intertextuality; with five intertextualities... (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 391)... for Mortad to conclude that

if the intertextuality of Imru' al-Qais was disturbed around the aesthetics of space, the aesthetics of time, the aesthetics of women, and the aesthetics of horses, then if the intertextuality of Labid took different paths, but not in the aesthetic overflow: then the two intertextuality of Antarah did not deviate from what satisfied his soul and filled his spirit, which was his dialect of depicting his behavior when he was stabbing heroes and defeating brave men, and they are two intertextuality - according to Mortad's opinion - extremely hideous, in comparison to our modern taste, where there is stabbing and killing, where there is the shedding of human blood, and where the corpses of people are being eaten by wild beasts, as he puts it, and devoured by birds of prey... for Mortad to interpret that image by projecting it onto our era. "The present...but this thing that we, in our time, see as hideous, and that disgusts our souls and disgusts our tastes, was for the ancients a source of pride and a great achievement. Whatever the case, there is nothing more amazing, more hideous, more heinous, or more disgusting than considering the killing of people an honor that raises one's reputation and a glory that shocks the ear..." (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 391)

Abdelmalek Mortad justifies His opinion on the necessity of returning to heritage by "starting from heritage towards modernity, or from or from modernity but based on heritage; and this is on the basis that the Arab critical heritage is rich in critical theories and opinions... and those who are stubborn and attack this heritage are nothing more than one of two things: either because they are ignorant of this heritage, or because they, for some reason, there is a disease in their hearts that they detest, so they fall into stubbornness. They have no argument in the two cases, and their opinion is not sound in the two cases..." (Mortad, *The Seven Hanging Poems: A Semiotic/Anthropological Approach to Their Texts*, 1998, p. 366)

Conclusion:

It is clear from the critical and textual experience of Abdelmalek Mortad that he confirms his insistence on accomplishing a critical project represented in establishing a practice that aims to establish the traditions of textual analysis; because his reference is the text itself in order to contain its various meanings and seize the things that are not mentioned and that he did not declare but are spread within the mechanisms of his work and spread in his space. Mortad points to the openness of the text to others, the extension of its space, and the infinity of its meanings, because the text, for him, is an extended space; a space of far-reaching extension, open in its significance to an infinity of meanings, and it is the fruit of the effectiveness of the beautiful language in its eternal magical game.

Mortad confirms that the ancient Arab critical thought is full of theories and applied procedures, and it would be disobedient to ignore the disclosure of what may be in it of the origins of Western critical theories that now appear to us in a dazzling guise of modernity; we are dazzled by them, while in reality they do not lack origins for them in our critical heritage, with differences in terminology, methodology, and procedure... Abdelmalek Mortad justifies his opinion on the necessity of returning to heritage by starting from heritage towards modernity, or from or from modernity but relying on heritage; this is on the basis that the Arab critical heritage is rich in critical theories and opinions...

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