

**The Aesthetic Experience of the Kuwaiti Audience:
An Application of Reception Theory**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The aesthetic experience of the spectator has a continuous ability to become a new experience at every theatrical event. This thesis endeavours to explore this phenomenon and test the variables that may influence the theatrical experience of a Kuwaiti spectator through the use and application of a survey questionnaire.

In Chapter One we aimed to provide the thesis with a historical background to serve as a backdrop for the reader of this thesis to better understand the experience of Kuwaiti spectator and to know the main features and historical events that shaped the Kuwaiti society and how various historical events affected as well as shaped the Kuwaiti individual and society. The sea and the desert life, the discovery of oil and the Iraqi invasion are the main events which formulated the features of the Kuwaiti spectator.

In Chapter Two we presented the theoretical framework of this study with emphasis on the reception theory.

In Chapter Three we discussed the development of Arabic theatre as a backdrop of the Kuwaiti theatre.

While the fourth chapter traces the stages of the development of Kuwaiti theatre from its early beginnings to the present, Chapter Five is the presentation of the two study cases examined in this research.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the experimental application and its results, and in Chapter Seven we have examined the correlation between the variables.

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TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Anglicised spellings of commonly used names and locations have been retained for the ease of use in an English language text. In such cases where I have found necessary to transliterate vocabulary, names, or titles from the Arabic I have conformed to the Library of Congress Transliteration System.

1. Consonants

Arabic	LC	Arabic	LC
ء	'	ض	dh
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	'
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	h	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	s	ي	y

2. Diphthongs

ي (ay)	و (aw)
--------	--------

3. Vowels

Arabic (short vowels)	LC	Arabic (long vowels)	LC
ا	a	إ	ā
و	u	و	ū
ي	i	ي	ī

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The Introduction

This introduction describes the significance of the study of Kuwaiti audience's aesthetic experience. It then states the purpose of the inquiry and the methodology used in the study. The introduction ends with a description of the thesis organisation.

Although various studies have been conducted about the theatrical response, very few have regarded the particularities of the aesthetic experience of the spectator, especially in the field of Arabic theatre. The importance of exploring this theatrical phenomenon lies in its continuous ability to be different each time a spectator experiences it.

1. The Significance of the Study of the Kuwaiti Audience's Aesthetic Experience

The significance of the study of the Kuwaiti audience's aesthetic experience will be valuable and convenient when its historical stages and theatrical development are explained within the outline of the broader Arabic theatre scene.

It is vital and interesting to study what influences an individual spectator's theatrical experience, in general, and the Kuwaiti spectator in particular because Kuwaiti society has witnessed massive and significant changes that transformed desert life to modern life within a few decades and become quite distinguished due to its unique geographical position on the Arabian Gulf and due to the successful politics before and after the discovery of oil, then declined during the Iraqi invasion and is still suffering the economic, cultural and psychological effects of the aggression.

As a reflective literary establishment, Kuwaiti theatre was also established and developed for an educational and social purpose, then had been affected by religious, cultural and political factors, as we will explain in Chapter Four.

Regarding the changes of Kuwaiti society and politics, and the essential role of Kuwaiti theatre in reflecting and discussing its reality, considering the variables that might affect the aesthetic experience of the Kuwaiti spectator and how his/her life-experiences could form their conceptual ideas and values in a theatrical event, is therefore a socio-cultural phenomenon worth exploration, and this is the significance of this study.

2. The Aim of the Study

The academic aim is to raise the awareness of individual spectators' response to theatre in general and Kuwaiti spectators in particular. It is worth mentioning that reception theory has been extensively studied in the West, as we will discuss in Chapter Two, while it has received little or no attention in the Arab world, apart from one PhD thesis by Housam Atta, 'al-Masrah al-Muḏād lil-Wāqi' iya', 1997 in which he discusses the aesthetic experiences in Egyptian theatre from 1962 to 1970, and another by Kamal Salhi: *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine: from Francophone Literature to Popular Theatre in Algeria and Outside*, 1999.

3. The Selected Case Studies

We chose two plays as case studies because both were performed at the tenth Al-Qryn Kuwait annual cultural festival (January 2004), and both were nominated not only on this particular occasion but also on other occasions, for example the Youth Theatre

Festival of Arabian Gulf Countries (October 2003). The first is *al-Muqāyada* (The Trade) and the second is *Munāzarah Bayn al-Layl wa al-Nahār* (A Debate between Day and Night).

4. The Methodology of the Study

The originality of this study lies in the survey methodology which applied a questionnaire that was translated and modified to the Arabic language; the SPSS or the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the data and test the hypotheses about the Kuwaiti audience's aesthetic experience which is the main subject of this research.

5. The Validity of the questionnaire

Three measures were taken to ensure the present research's validity. First, the questionnaire was anonymised, in order to obtain reliable information and to protect the informants. Second, I conducted self-observation to ensure the validity of the reflections of the same phenomenon. Thirdly, I compared audience's response with critical opinion in the media and my own observations.

Although the sample is small, as I distributed 120 copies of which 52 were returned, we put to account that many variables were tested and the sample is generally representative to the Kuwaiti audience.

6. The Hypotheses of this Research

We assume that when a spectator views a scene in the theatre he/she perceives it according to his/her life experiences and other visual and non-visual variables.

In the assessment of this experience, my intention is also to identify the influence of the demographic variables for example, the education, the age and the gender of the spectator, on his/her aesthetic experience.

I also assume that there is a link between Aristotle's definition of Tragedy, mainly in the role of Catharsis, and the hypotheses of this research; as Aristotle defines Tragedy according to its ability to purge both the feelings of fear and sympathy, I assume that the spectator feels this purgation when he/she compares what is happening on the stage to what is happening in his/her life.

I discuss this link in Chapter Two within the theoretical framework of this research.

7. Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters in addition to an introduction and a conclusion.

The first chapter describes the historical background of Kuwait as a nation who passed through four main historical stages; before and after the discovery of oil and before and after the Iraqi invasion.

Chapter Two surveys the theoretical framework of this study in several fields and views how the theory of literary aesthetics was found and developed across the ages.

Chapter Three outlines the Arab theatre as the broader scene of Arabic Kuwaiti theatre, and observes Arab audiences from the early stages of pre-Islamic Arabia to the present.

Chapter Four focuses on the beginnings and the development stages of Kuwaiti theatre.

Chapter Five is the presentation of the two selected plays.

Chapter Six is the core application and testing of the hypothesis of this research.

Chapter Seven discusses the correlations that were found between tested variables.

Chapter One

Kuwait: A Historical Background

1.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe how Kuwait transformed from a desert and coastal country whose people led simple lives, to a modern state whose citizens enjoy relative luxury.

This transformation will be discussed through four main historical stages as follows: firstly; Kuwait before the discovery of oil, secondly; Kuwait after the discovery of oil, thirdly; Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion and fourthly; Kuwait after liberation.

The details presented in this chapter will help to explain how Kuwait's cultural identity was formed; elements that are needed to establish the study's historical and cultural context.

Discussing the previously mentioned four stages requires the provision of general information about Kuwait. This information will follow the major changes and developments which took place from the early eighteenth century when Kuwait was established as a settlement after migrants from the Saudi region of Najd settled there until the twenty-first century.

It is convenient to divide the history of Kuwait into phases in accordance with certain major events and developments. Thus the country's history can be seen as consisting of four main stages. The period before the discovery of oil is the longest phase. It can be considered to begin in the eighteenth century, when Kuwaitis endured a hard life gaining a living from sea and desert environments. The high temperature, the scarcity

of water in the desert and the seasonal winds, together with the harm caused by the salty seawater taught Kuwaitis who lived during that period to adapt to their environment. The literature of that phase reflected these hard circumstances and paved the way for the new prosperous phase that took place after the discovery of oil. This discovery, made in 1932, while oil production only started in 1950, brought about radical changes in all sectors of life, which in turn changed the attitudes of Kuwaitis, especially the new generation who did not suffer from the hard circumstances endured by the Kuwaitis of the first phase.

This new generation of Kuwaitis experienced luxury and enjoyed many facilities, especially in education, and therefore literature and culture generally developed, for example in the areas of short story writing, cinema and theatre production, cultural societies and book publishing.

During the period of the Iraqi invasion (1990-1991) life became hard again, perhaps even harder than in the first phase: many Kuwaitis were killed, tortured and detained as hostages. All sectors of life were affected or destroyed including the production of literature, but Kuwaiti Cultural centres abroad continued to produce books, films, theatre and exhibitions around the world.

Kuwait after liberation, in February 1991, was not the same as before; Kuwaitis continued to suffer emotionally from the damage caused by the invasion and occupation. Political, economic and social problems that had been evident before the invasion were exacerbated after liberation because of the emergence of other problems and because luxury could no longer compensate as it had before the invasion.

Kuwaitis' psychology became disturbed; they felt, mostly, unable to trust others, Literary productions expressed these feelings by representing many individual

accounts of the Iraqi invasion. As these key events framed Kuwait's history, they also framed and affected its cultural life, values, literary topics and audiences' aesthetic experiences that are the main subject of this study.

Kuwait is a maritime state, established on the shores of the Gulf. It is surrounded by a barren desert that forced its people to dwell beside the sea and it has been famous as a nation of seafarers throughout its history. Kuwait became the passing point through which Asian goods travelled to the East and the West. This geographical position made the Kuwaitis into a vigorous trading people long before the natural resources of their land were discovered. These voyages have also provided the Kuwaiti theatre with rich sources of traditions, such as African songs and dance.

Kuwait is a tiny sheikhdom, its population is a mixture of settled people and nomads, and its economy was based on trade, ship (dhow) building and pearling.¹

This geographical position provided Kuwaitis with both disadvantages and advantages. The disadvantages are the hot and humid climate and the scarcity of drinking water which used to be brought from Iraq. The main advantage was that Kuwait was a vital Eastern desert route for travellers, and was exposed to different cultures due to its position on the Arabian Gulf, such as those of Asia, Africa and Europe. This exposure later enabled Kuwait to form its unique identity, as it was able to protect itself from external threats. Kuwaiti leaders have been successful in providing protection to their state by different means throughout history. According to Jill Crystal in her book *Kuwait, the Transformation of an Oil State*:

One of the main themes that have dominated Kuwait's history is the development and protection of its small community from external threats.

Since the mid-eighteenth century, Kuwait's people have had a distinct sense of themselves as Kuwaitis. Kuwaitis have also, however, always had a larger political identity as well as Gulfians, as Arabs, as Muslims, and as members of the world community.²

The state of Kuwait witnessed enormous transformations after ship building and the pearling trade which had begun to flourish in 1841 and also after the discovery of oil in 1932³. Although sea life is still part of Kuwait's daily culture, wealth and technology have provided other services such as modern hospitals, housing, transportation, jobs and entertainment.

The Iraqi invasion destroyed many features of Kuwaiti society and tried to destroy Kuwait's identification records.⁴ This invasion was a deeply disturbing and damaging experience not only to Kuwaitis, but it had a far reaching effect on Arab societies in general. On the other hand, the invasion provided rich material for literary productions and tested the Kuwaiti feelings of patriotism, which were expressed in a large number of sophisticated literary productions. It also affected the reader's and audience's perceptions, which is the main subject of the present research.

1.2. Kuwait before the Discovery of Oil: (1752-1950)

1.2.1 Introduction

Kuwait was established in the early 1700s as a settlement by migrants who fled the Najd region in Saudi Arabia. Cleveland states that by 1756 " Kuwait had become an autonomous principality headed by the al-Sabāh family" who faced difficulties in their tribe and migrated afterwards in search of a new home.⁵

From north to south Kuwait extends about 200 km; from east to west, about 170 km. According to Crystal, Kuwait's population is likewise small. The most recent census was conducted in 1985. It indicates that the official number of inhabitants is 1,697, 301, of whom less than half, only 681, 288, were Kuwaitis.⁶

Although Kuwait as a port was described by travellers as "a bustling little pat"⁷ it was regularly exposed to diseases introduced from different parts of the world. In 1831 Kuwaitis were infected by a plague which killed a large number of the population, and in 1841, all parts of the Gulf area were infected by the epidemic. These diseases killed a large number of people; as a result many men from Kuwait had to marry women from abroad because so many of their own women and children had died. Besides diseases, Kuwaitis have also faced poverty and lack of education but, in comparison to other surrounding countries in the Gulf region at that time, we can say that Kuwait was the least affected by these problems. As an example, Lackner reported that illiteracy in Saudi Arabia was almost 100% in the early 1930s as children were only taught to memorise the Holy Qur'ān in the *Kuttāb*;⁸ while in Kuwait five schools had been built by 1912. It was the Kuwaiti merchants who took the initiative of establishing the first private school for boys named al-Mubārakiyah. The school's curriculum included the Holy Qur'ān, local and Islamic traditions, law, ethics, Arabic reading, composition and grammar, arithmetic, geography, history and English.⁹

Once settling into a community, Kuwaitis built houses of mud brick which were once all destroyed when it rained heavily, in addition ship building and the pearling trade were taking place only in certain seasons. Agriculture was restricted to certain areas

such as al-Fintās, and although Kuwaiti soil did not sustain mud agriculture, pre-oil Kuwait had always managed to have sufficient sustenance for its people, and managed to establish political, economic and cultural systems that were needed at that time and which were developed later as Kuwait's status was changing.

1.2.2 Historical Overview and Environmental Influences

Prior to the discovery of oil, Kuwaiti people were successful early in their history in creating a distinct urban socio-economic identity, Al-Mughni explains:

The internal structure of nomadic society- in terms both of residential unit and kinship ties based on a common patrilineal descent-became firmly established in Kuwait. It was however, the '*ashira*, rather than the tribe as such, which evolved as the fundamental socio-economic unit.¹⁰

Kuwaiti leaders managed to avoid paying the taxes that their neighbouring countries were paying to the Ottoman Empire. Discussing the political relations between Kuwait and the Ottoman Empire up to 1866, Slot notes that:

The sources we have for the 19th century differ markedly on the question of Kuwait's status. Geographical manuals of the day speak of a "Republic of Kuwait", an aristocratic republic, prosperous, well administered and independent of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹

Slot also mentions that:

The term "republic" somehow echoes the structure as described in Kniphausen's report of 1756. On the other hand, there are texts, originating from the expeditions of the British-Indian Navy to chart the Gulf in the 1820s that mention Kuwait as a de facto independent state acknowledging some sort of undefined supremacy of the Ottoman Sultan. This supremacy seems to have been entirely nominal, as there was no effective Ottoman presence in Kuwait and no Ottoman taxes or customs duties were imposed there.¹²

Slot adds that some sources state that Kuwaiti ships flew the Ottoman flag. Another source states that Kuwait paid a nominal tribute to the Ottomans, while other sources say the opposite; that the Ottomans paid a kind of protection money to the Kuwaitis to keep the Shatt al-'Arab safe. On the same issue of Kuwait's emergence in the 19th century and the Ottoman attempt to gain control in 1866-67, Slot states that it had been impossible for the Ottomans to intervene in Kuwaiti affairs during the first half of the 19th century because of the weakness of their position in Basra.¹³

Kuwaiti commercial activities were growing at that time, when the neighbouring political entities evidenced different socio-economic patterns that ranged from a feudal agricultural entity as in Iraq under the Ottoman domination, through Persia under its military regimes, to a predominantly nomadic Bedouin entity, as in most parts of the Arabian Peninsula. We should note here that the Ottoman Empire, which was expanding when Kuwait emerged as a distinct state, and which continued, although weakened, until the early 1920s, was identified with the idea of the homeland of Islam, *Dār al-Islām*. This idea was based on the maintenance of a religious connection through applying similar policies in its constituent countries with the aim of broadening Islam. Consequently, there were no political boundaries that might have hampered this aim. The Ottoman Empire was ruled from Istanbul through a complex system of Pashas (*Wālis* or Governors), military troops and followers. Kuwait did not fall under this system because it did not consent to the Empire's financial appropriations unlike other parts of the Ottoman State. This confrontation with the Ottomans laid the foundations of the Kuwaiti political experience.¹⁴

Another part of this universal state existed in the *Wilāyāts* of North Africa, except Morocco, whose relations with Istanbul were those of allies rather than direct

dependencies. These alliances occurred in the case of naval *jihād*, war, in which the Muslims of these *Wilāyāts* endured successive European attacks throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Again Kuwait did not belong to this system. It emerged in 1712 after the European wave of colonialism that accompanied geographical discoveries and survived the wave of imperialism that reached its peak in the last third of the nineteenth century. The state that emerged in Kuwait depended primarily on trade, and endeavoured to maintain its solidarity, facing surrounding land powers: the Ottoman Empire in the north and west, Persia in the east and major European naval powers in the Gulf, like Holland, Britain and France. This state had to maintain a carefully balanced policy to pursue its statehood. Pursuance of this policy may explain the kind of relations Kuwait maintained with the Ottoman Empire and later with Britain.¹⁵

Kuwait's geographical position situated the state within two vital circles; the first being the Arab world and the second the Gulf region. Kuwait is thus a part of the larger Arab structure.

Kuwait is located between the vast desert plateau that forms the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabian Gulf. The Arabian Peninsula throughout history has been a region that witnessed extensive travel to and from the fertile valley of Mesopotamia that became known later as Iraq. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Sheikhs or leaders of the Bani Khalid tribe came to the al-Ahsa and Qatif regions of the Peninsula. The Bani Khalid did not meet with any interference from the Ottoman State nor were they obliged to take part in the Ottoman military followers system as previously mentioned. These circumstances enabled the leader or Sheikh Barak ibn Gharir, to declare himself the ruler over al- Ahsa and Qatif in 1760. Subsequently, the influence

of Bani Khalid extended from Qatar to the border of Basra in the north. Sheikh Barak is historically given credit for the building of the *Kūt* or small castle. The *Kūt* was used as a supply and ammunition depot that was architecturally similar to the military bases and towers of al-Ahsa. This base, especially its centre, was called *Kūt*. The newly built base of Bani Khalid was smaller than a *Kūt*, therefore it was given the diminutive name of Kuwait.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a massive migration occurred from the centre of the Arabian Peninsula; the migrants were the al-'Utab tribes, who first inhabited several parts of the Arabian Gulf, then settled in Kuwait. The Bani Khalid handed over the fortress or Kuwait to the al-'Utab as a prize for their support after a struggle between the al-'Utab and the Ottomans. The al-'Utab finally inhabited and developed Kuwait. So it is clear that the tribe who built the military base, was the Bani Khalid and the second tribe, al-'Utab, inhabited this base and developed it later. Both tribes were from the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁶ Thus, we must emphasise that Kuwait was inhabited solely by Arabian tribes, and so the claim made in some writings that Iraqi territory extended into the Arabian Peninsula is demonstrably false.¹⁷

History indicates that on the fall of the Abbasid Empire at the hands of the Mongols (656 A.H./ 1258 A.D.), Iraq was divided into a group of Mongol emirates. These emirates were allied to the Mongol- Persian union, which was overpowered by the Ottomans three centuries later.¹⁸

As for the features of the Kuwaiti society, in terms of class and politics, we consider these with the purpose of discovering the origins of the characters of Kuwaiti drama,

and the historical backgrounds of these characters that present their meanings on stage or indeed in any Kuwaiti literary production. Because Kuwait was first inhabited by Bedouins, it is important for this research to investigate the tribe's socio-political classification system.

A tribe is made up of groups of families, '*ashīra*, that were related and had a common ancestor. Each '*ashīra* usually camped together in the tribal *dīra*, which may extend as far as 300 kilometers in any direction, and shared the duties of herding with other members of the tribe.

At the head of each '*ashīra* was a sheikh chosen by the *majlis* or tribal council and at the head of the tribe stood the primary sheikh, who is also called *sheikh mashāyikh* or sheikh of sheikhs. The tribal leaders did not enjoy absolute authority over their kin groups. In the Arabic language the term 'sheikh' means a male elder but not a ruler; the sheikh is obeyed by the younger men out of respect and not by compulsion. The sheikhs were elected by the *majlis* to supervise the affairs of the '*ashīra*, that is, to coordinate the different sectors of the tribe and to communicate decisions in matters such as migration, raids, wars and other related economic activities. Kinsmen were consulted and expressed their opinions in major decisions.¹⁹ The concept of *shūrā* or consultation is an important concept of tribal political organisation.

Another important concept in the organisation of tribal society is *asīl* or genealogy. *Asīl* was and still is the central principle of social class in Arab countries including Kuwait. Most power was wielded by the camel-herding tribes, who claimed to have a purer and longer genealogy as they descended from the noble tribes of Arabia. The tribes who were considered to have less defined genealogical roots were situated at

the bottom of the desert social scale. This social classification was based on the nomadic mode of economic organisation.

In the desert, the camel was the source of the wealth and power which gave the nomads authority over large areas of the desert. Therefore the noble tribes were economically and socially prepared to be camel-herders, while the tribes of shepherds were less mobile as they depended mainly on sheep and goats. The noble tribes practiced a close endogamy to maintain their noble origins and authority in their region. Harold Dickson notes in his study of the tribes of northern Arabia, that:

No Arab of a superior or, sheriff, tribe can take a daughter from (or give a daughter to) an inferior one. Should a Bedouin elope with and marry a slave or a girl of inferior tribe, he can never again return to his kin, for to marry down is to defile the tribe's blood and they will kill him.²⁰

When the Eastern trade route changed due to the occupation of Basra by the Persians in 1775, Kuwait became a vital centre for the caravans carrying goods between Basra and Aleppo during the period from 1775 to 1779. At that time, British-Persian enmity resulted in a change of practice: goods coming from India were unloaded in Kuwait, instead of using Basra as a route to Aleppo. Trading goods established a merchant class on land and sea. Merchants bought the raw material, in the form of teak plants, from India and financed the construction of vessels. At first, the neighbouring nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes supplied the necessary labour and furnished the merchants with goods suitable for export such as ghee and horses. Later, shipbuilders came to Kuwait from Bahrain. They did not mix with the Kuwaitis; instead they lived in a separate Shi'a community known as *bahārna*.²¹

Shipbuilding soon became one of the most profitable industries in Kuwait. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the number of vessels built and owned by Kuwaiti merchants matched that of any newly established port along the Arabian Gulf. In 1841, it was reported that Kuwait had 31 large and 50 small vessels engaged in commerce and about 350 small vessels used in pearling and fishing.²²

People from nearby countries were attracted to Kuwait because of the new job opportunities, which prompted tribes from central Arabia to move and settle in Kuwait. In 1845, the population of Kuwait rose to about 22,000²³ and with this increase of the population, the economy flourished. The pearl fishing industry became widespread and a new group of merchants formed a privileged class in Kuwaiti society. These were the *tawāwīsh* or pearl merchants who owned the vessels and financed each voyage. They would always employ a *nūkhidha*, captain, who would usually be from a well-known Sunni family, and also a number of divers, haulers and cooks, for a season of four or five months each summer.²⁴

There were two methods of financing pearl-fishing voyages: the system of fifths or *khāmāmīs* and the system of advances or *salafiyya*.

The *khāmāmīs* involved pre-fixed shares; after the pearls were sold, the ship-owner, usually the merchant, received one-fifth of the income, while the captain and the crew divided the rest of the income on a pre-arranged basis, and in addition, a part of the income went to the diving tax owed to the ruler, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah. The second system, *salafiyya*, was based on an advance cash payment given to the families of divers and haulers while the men were away on their voyage. The payments took the form of a loan or *salaf*. The captain or *nūkhidha* borrowed the

money from the merchant, who would charge high interest. If the income of the voyage did not match the pre-payment, the *nūkhidha* would be obliged to make another voyage for the same merchant. If the *nūkhidha* died, his sons and brothers would have to pay or work in the same industry until they had paid the merchant. Both systems gave advantages to the merchants, who controlled both vessels and pearl marketing. Moreover, the prices paid for pearls in Kuwait were less than those paid in Bahrain and Bombay. This condition created a class of poor employees, whose suffering has been depicted in a rich literature of novels and poems, and later in films, for example; Ḥassan Ya'qūb al-'Alī's short stories, *Ibn al-Baḥār* (The Son of the Sailor), *al-Ḥaṣṣba* (The Pearl), *al-Aṣābi'* (The Fingers), *Mawj, Riāh, Maṭṭar* (Waves, Winds, Rains), and the film *Bass ya Baḥar* (Cruel Sea) by Khalid al-Ṣiddiq. In 1939 the British political agent in Kuwait reported that some sailors were so poor that their sons had to sail with them as they could not afford to leave them at home.²⁵

During this period, the internal structure of nomadic society, in regard to their residential unit and kinship ties based on a common descent, became firmly established in Kuwait; however, it was the '*ashīra* or group of related families rather than the tribe that became established as part of Kuwait's basic socio-economic system. Large families lived in one neighbourhood or *farīj* and the city's districts were classified as East, West and Central. The East, *Ḥayy Sharq*, was inhabited by the pearl merchants, *nūkhidha* and divers. The Western part, *Ḥayy Qiblī*, was inhabited by wholesale merchants. The al-Sabah, the ruling family of Kuwait, lived in the central district.

If we consider the environmental influences on the Kuwaiti character, we notice that the Kuwaiti people have long practised the occupations associated with two environments, the desert and the sea. They were mainly engaged in pearl diving in the shallow waters around Kuwait until the first seagoing ship was built in 1917 when they were able to travel greater distances. However, Kuwaiti people would also reside in the desert at certain times of the year, mainly at the end of the winter and the beginning of the spring when mushrooms and the wood of dry trees could be collected. The relationship with the sea established the different classes of society because certain functions were performed by particular social categories. Merchants who owned the ships and the sailors' houses belonged to the higher rank, while sailors and workers belonged to the lower class and were completely dependent on the merchant class. Sailors were threatened in the sea, facing its dangers, and threatened on land with the loss of their houses if they could not pay their debts to the merchants. They were described in literature as slaves of their profession.

The sea life also included the folkloric arts of singing and dancing accompanied by basic traditional musical instruments that are still in use in modern Kuwaiti songs. Sailors used to sing to encourage themselves to work in severe conditions and dancing to the rhythms of their songs would create a joyful atmosphere through the voyage. In addition, these sailors' arts contained theatrical elements like certain dialogues and body movements that were performed to the accompaniment of particular types of music.

Divers faced many dangers: they would dive holding their breath, to where shells might be found in places known as *hayr*; sharks or other lethal fish might attack them,

and the pearl-oysters would often close their shells on the divers' hands.²⁶ There were also hazards such as chronic lung diseases and sunstrokes. The sailor's hardiness in the face of danger and difficulty gave him a good reputation that encouraged some Bedouins to become sailors or pearl fishers; those who did so are called locally *Hadhar* or the modern people because they left Bedouin life and adopted sea life. To gain this social esteem, Bedouins would travel long distances from the desert and live by the sea to learn the sailors' profession.

Another important figure in the country's sea life was the *tawwāsh* or pearl merchant, who would buy the pearls before they reached the land. He had his own ship and crew. Before the season finished he would go to the *hayr* where the ships were, and would examine the pearls and negotiate prices. The merchant would either sell the pearls to a richer *tawwāsh* or keep them to be sold in the international pearl market, or sell to a nearby Asian country.²⁷

1.3 The Discovery of Oil and the Transformation of Kuwait

1.3.1 Introduction

The transformation of Kuwait's economic status preceded as well as resulted in the transformation of its political and cultural life. The discovery of oil necessitated immediate political and social changes. Two main social changes occurred: first, the increase of the Kuwaiti population in the 1950s, due to the arrival of 100,000 skilled and unskilled workers, encouraged by free health, education and domestic services; second, is the provision of unorganised government work that was inadequately consolidated.

Kuwaiti politics also adopted new changes. The *Shūrā* or consultation system that had been established and maintained since the foundation of Kuwait took a legal form. Both legislative and executive powers of government continued to reside with the Amir, Abd Allah al-Salim al-Sabah. He issued Royal decrees which constituted the legislation of the state and in 1959, the highest advisory and decision-making body, the Supreme Council, was established.²⁸

Social groups that were politically and economically linked continued to grow after oil was discovered. The Emir; the chosen ruler of Kuwait, ordered an immediate wealth distribution among citizens by providing free housing, education and health services, implemented welfare and financial plans and granted the right to employment for every citizen. Kuwaiti social development created a social middle class which forms the main category of theatre audience in Kuwaiti society.

1.3.2 Historical overview

Oil was discovered at the Burgan field in 1938²⁹ or, according to a different source, in 1932,³⁰ but production did not start until after the Second World War during the reign of Sheikh Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah (1950-1965). His immediate policy was to build a new welfare state in which education, medical services and housing were free for all citizens. He employed foreign experts to set up an extended development plan to modernise the country. Within a short period of time houses, schools, hospitals, power stations, government departments and many other social institutions were built. According to Al-Mughni, in the rush to modernise the city, foreign

planners and architects demolished the old houses and created Western-style buildings, ignoring such climatic factors as intense heat and sandstorms. The result was catastrophic, and the town was in chaos. In 1954 the British political agent wrote:

In a short space of time there has been imposed on this society an almost unimaginable increase of wealth, an influx of foreigners (...) and finally the greatly increased impact of Arab nationalist ideas. These new elements have served to increase the power of the Sheikhs of the ruling family because they have access to the newly acquired wealth (...) The rich merchants have become much richer and those less rich have become more envious. The poor have to compete with imported foreign labour (...) each department of the government is headed by a member of the ruling family. Practically no attempt has hitherto been made to restrict their expenditure either departmental or personal of the oil revenues. Moreover, in all matters they are above the law, and are accustomed to impose their personal authority by force if necessary.³¹

As a result, Kuwaiti society continued to suffer from class divisions as it had before the discovery of oil. The situation got even worse in the 1950s, when Sheikh Abdallah al-Salim announced the land purchase programme, with the intention to distribute part of the oil revenues to the people of Kuwait. Al-Mughni comments on this situation in her book *Women in Kuwait*, by stating that,

In expectation of the government project, the merchants and members of the ruling family claimed huge tracts of public land and registered them as private property in the newly created Department of Land Registry. The lands were then sold to the government at high prices. Because the International Bank for Reconstruction recommended that the funds supporting this programme should be reduced, many middle-income Kuwaitis went bankrupt because they had taken loans to invest in land during the period of speculation with the result that they lost the ability to be entrepreneurs and simply became more dependent on the government.³²

The income the Kuwaitis derived from private businesses formed only a small percentage of the total national income. As for the merchants, they established four privately-owned commercial banks in 1964; each family planned their own business

activities, which were managed by their relatives, and each chose a particular trade to run. According to a recent study, 13 percent of Kuwaiti households rely heavily on welfare assistance and the state still provides substantial aid. In addition to cash assistance, needy families received rent subsidies, reimbursement of loan and house finance instalments, subsidies for the purchase of clothes for their school-age children, subsidies for water and electricity consumption (79 percent and 94 percent of the actual costs, respectively), basic food necessities, and even petrol subsidies for private motoring.³³

Another important social phenomenon that became established in Kuwait after the discovery of oil was the entrenchment of a new category of foreign workers, both skilled and unskilled, who became resident in Kuwait and outnumbered the native Kuwaiti population. In 1965 Kuwaiti citizens formed 47.1 per cent of the population, becoming a minority in their own country.³⁴

1.4 Kuwait during the Iraqi Invasion

1.4.1 Introduction

Although the Iraqi invasion is the shortest of the four stages, it is one of the most important events in Kuwaiti history in view of the profound destructive effect it had on society as a whole. Every part of the country was grievously affected. All sectors of life were destroyed including the theatres, which Iraqi soldiers turned into torture chambers where they tortured Kuwaiti citizens. The traumatic effects of the Iraqi invasion were later reflected in Kuwaiti literary and cultural productions.

1.4.2 Historical Overview

In the dawn of 2 August 1990, Iraqi forces invaded the territory of Kuwait with the intention of occupying the country and toppling its legitimate government. The Iraqi forces had been prepared four weeks in advance, and the spurious reason given to the soldiers was the liberation of Jerusalem! The surprise was not only that the Iraqi forces changed their direction to Kuwait, but also their aim.

To invade a peaceful, neighbouring Muslim and Arab country was the real and hidden intention of the Iraqi regime. It is hard to teach Arab children the meaning of Arab Nationalism without referring to the Iraqi invasion as a negative example. This invasion changed contemporary Arab political history because, if we observe the political situation in the Gulf region and the Middle East we notice that the Iraqi army in spite of its previous war with Iran (1980-1988) was a force within the Arab and Islamic region which could have been used for protection and defence instead of invasion and destruction.

Following the march on Kuwait of at least one hundred thousand Iraqi troops, supported by Iraqi aircraft and tanks, and after the proclamation of the establishment of the so-called Provisional Free Kuwaiti Government, an announcement was made on 8 August 1990 that Kuwait had been occupied by Iraq within a framework of unification. The names of two cities were changed and so were the names of some streets, colleges, schools and hospitals which were also given different names referring to Iraqi and Arab figures.

Furthermore, thousands of Iraqi families were brought over to Kuwait to replace families who had been killed or forced to leave their homes and become refugees. On the economic level, the Kuwaiti dinar was replaced by the Iraqi dinar as a step towards complete unity and it was claimed that other projects would be implemented to link Kuwait with Iraq through the railway and water distribution network. Crystal summarises the effects of the invasion on Kuwait as follows:

The most dramatic effect of the Iraqi invasion was the attempted systematic destruction of Kuwait. Iraqi soldiers gutted the downtown business district, ransacked the industrial areas, and looted the residential areas: streetlights, hospital supplies, computers, lab equipment, school blackboards, boats, windows, phone booths, power transformers, food. Kuwait Entertainment City as well as its Islamic Museum were taken to Baghdad, as was most of the Kuwait Airways fleet.³⁵

The Iraqi invasion took on a different international dimension when Saddam Hussein tried to gain time and use the invasion as a double-edged weapon: at the same time as invading Kuwait and stealing its wealth he demanded that the United Nations pay Iraq's expenses for its war against Iran. He was initially hopeful of an international pro-Iraqi attitude or at least a neutral posture that would not lead to international action against him. But this hope proved illusory, as immediate support was given by the Soviet Union and China to the American-sponsored resolution in the Security Council, calling for the imposition of such necessary measures as might enforce the economic sanctions ratified by the Council.

This same attitude was substantiated in all developments and measures, whether within or outside the United Nations. The Iraqi regime manoeuvred with total disdain for world opinion, which demanded withdrawal from Kuwait and the return of legitimacy. On 12 August 1990 Saddam announced that Iraqi forces would withdraw

from Kuwait if Israel withdrew from Arab territories and if Syria withdrew from Lebanon. Saddam added that withdrawal would follow the chronological order of occupation: the first to occupy, the first to withdraw!

The same manipulative approach was used with the hostage issue, whereby all aliens residing in Iraq were detained for eventual bargaining. Saddam released hostages gradually, freeing some rather than others depending on the attitude taken by their respective countries towards Iraq; in other words, whether they were prepared to come to terms with Iraq and the extent of their support for the American attitude towards Iraq.

For six months, the Iraqi regime rejected all initiatives for a peaceful withdrawal from Kuwait. On 15 January 1991, the war of liberation began and lasted six weeks, during which time the Iraqi regime carried out two opposing actions; although Saddam repeated his call for help and for the rescue of the Iraqi people and the holy places, he negated this by his action on January 1991, when the Iraqi regime embarked on the indiscriminate arrest of Kuwaiti citizens, including women and children. In addition, enormous quantities of oil were dumped in Gulf waters from the Al-Fatah pumping station in al-Ahmadi port. This action led to vast environmental pollution and exposed the region to a series of catastrophes, besides the damage done to the desalination stations of the Gulf States. This was followed by setting fire to the Kuwaiti oil fields.

Finally, on 24 February 1991, the Iraqi regime declared its withdrawal from Kuwait. Kuwait was liberated after one hundred hours from the announcement of land operations. On 26 February Saddam announced on Baghdad radio that the Iraqi

forces, in response to Security Council Resolution 660, would complete their withdrawal from Kuwait.

Despite the human, environmental, economic and psychological costs of the invasion and the damage to human values, Kuwait remains sixteen years after that invasion a safe and secure abode.

1.5 Kuwait after Liberation

1.5.1 Introduction

Since liberation, problems both new and old have been exacerbated. The age of prosperity and luxury has ended and Kuwaitis were forced to face the new reality in the form of the enormous amount of destruction caused by the war and the need for restoration and repair in all sectors of life.

1.5.2 Historical Overview

In relation to current Kuwaiti theatre, which this research is concerned with, we need to examine the economic, political and social problems that became evident after the occupation. Although some of these problems certainly existed before the Iraqi attack, the invasion brought them to the surface; for example, Kuwaiti women's political rights.

After the liberation, a group of well-known Kuwaitis provided the Emir of Kuwait with a restoration plan covering several years, but there were a number of problems.

First, the financial problem; such as, the costs of repairing damaged schools, hospitals, offices, roads and oil wells exceeded the state income for 1991 by \$ 10-20 billion.³⁶

Second, the separation between Kuwaitis who had remained in Kuwait and those who had been outside the country constituted a social problem.

The physical, psychological and financial sufferings of those who had stayed in Kuwait made them feel that they had been victims of depredation while those who had stayed abroad had escaped persecution. The third problem concerned nationality.

The *bidūn jinsiyyah* (stateless people) are residents in Kuwait who are unable to prove their nationality. The attitude of some *bidūns* during the occupation had been ambivalent. According to Crystal:

The catchall group also included the more opportunistic, who had discarded valid passports in the hope of becoming Kuwaitis in order to benefit from the state's wealth, as well as others with no other home who considered themselves genuinely Kuwaiti. Those whose papers were not in order could not slip through bureaucratic cracks created by the invasion: Kuwait's citizenship records were smuggled out of the country, complete with names, addresses, birthdates, and fingerprints. The behaviour of the *bidūn* during the invasion was mixed. Many served Kuwait loyally (before the invasion many worked for the army and police), working and dying in the resistance. Others, including many with Iraqi relatives (some of them in the Republican Guard), joined the occupation.³⁷

The government's reaction was to encourage more Kuwaitis to take on positions of responsibility as the reliability of these foreign residents was in question and, according to Crystal, many had served as a fifth column, welcoming the Iraqi invaders. Another solution was to provide more opportunities for Kuwaiti women, who had played an important role during the Iraqi occupation.³⁸ Sheikh Sa'ad, the Prime Minister of Kuwait, in a speech made at Jeddah during the invasion, promised

that Kuwaiti women will play a greater role in liberated Kuwait, and indeed on 16 May 2005, as his promise was kept, Kuwaiti women regained their political rights.

Although the Kuwaiti government, as mentioned above, was decreasing the number of non-Kuwaiti residents in key positions and replacing them with Kuwaitis after the invasion: This law was enacted already in the 1980s by the Civil League but was reinforced after liberation; however, the policy was not implemented with sufficient thought and care. The Kuwaiti ministries replaced an experienced and trained work force with an inexperienced and inadequately trained Kuwaiti work force. The result was a decline in the level of efficiency. Another problem is unemployment; as Kuwait had not expanded its urban parameters, services had remained unchanged since the 1960s making the creation of new work opportunities almost impossible.

1.5.5 Conclusion:

From the discussion of the four historical stages lived through by Kuwaiti society, it has become apparent that Kuwait is a relatively young state, Kuwaiti history has evolved in a very interesting manner; from the pre-oil period when people led simple Bedouin and lives connected to the sea, to a period of extensive wealth which brought massive changes both in the landscape of Kuwaiti society and culture, to the shocking period of invasion by a neighbouring Arab State, which shattered the safe haven of the Kuwaiti people and pushed them into new realities, to a period of liberated Kuwait which put Kuwaitis face to face with new concepts and challenges of a modern life that does not necessarily offer the same wealth as the pre-invasion period, but certainly an expanding cultural wealth generated by the war events.

We can summarise the previous stages by stating that the sea, the desert, the exploration of oil and the Iraqi invasion are the main factors that shaped Kuwaiti modern culture and identity, and accordingly directed the Kuwaiti audience's response.

Endnotes of Chapter One

¹ Dionisius A. Agius, *In the Wake of the Dhow, the Arabian Gulf and Oman*, Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2002. p. 13

² Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p. 19

³ Haya al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait: The Politics of Gender*, London: Saqi Books, 2001. pp. 24-32

⁴ Jill Crystal, *Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992. p. 1

⁵ W. L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000, p. 448

⁶ Crystal, *Kuwait*, p. 1

⁷ W. Facey and G. Grant, *Kuwait by the First Photographers*, London: The London Centre for Arab Studies, 1998, p. 7

⁸ Helen Lackner, *A House Built on Sand- a Political Economy of Saudi Arabia*, London: Ithaca Press, 1978. p. 74

⁹ For more information see, al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, p. 28

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26

¹¹ B. J. Slot, *Mubarak Al-Sabah: Founder of Modern Kuwait 1896-1915*. London: Arabian Publishing, 2005. p. 13

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-20

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9

¹⁶ Al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, p. 23

¹⁷ Abdallah Yusuf al-Ghunaim, *Kuwait: Statehood and Boundaries*, Kuwait: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Aṣrīya, 1992, p. 47

¹⁸ Slot, *Mubarak Al-Sabah*, p. 11

¹⁹ An interesting point is made by the semiologist Susan Melrose concerning her visit to Kuwait in 1980 when she was invited to a *Diwaniya*, which is a social gathering. She described the practice of sitting in a circle to communicate and exchange thoughts, as an indicator of the socio-political system that was inherited from the tribe's ancestors, that is *shura* or consultation.

²⁰ Harold Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, London: 1983. p.99

²¹ Al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, p. 24

²² *Ibid.*, p. 24

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 24

²⁴ For more information about pearl-diving, see Saif Marzooq al-Shamlan, *Pearling in the Arabian Gulf: A Kuwaiti Memoir*, Trans. Peter Clark, London: London Centre of Arab Studies, 2000, and Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sindbad*, London: Arabian Publishing, 2006.

²⁵ Al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, p.25

²⁶ Hayr are places in the sea where the pearl- oysters were found.

²⁷ Most pearl-diving voyages would succeed in finding only one pearl.

²⁸ Slot, *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity*, London: Arabian Publishing, 2003. p. 106

²⁹ Al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, p. 32

³⁰ Ben J. Slot, *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity*, p. 105

³¹ Al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, pp. 32-33

³² Ibid., p. 33

³³ Ibid., p. 34

³⁴ Ibid., p. 34

³⁵ Jill Crystal, *Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State*. p. 155

³⁶ Ibid., p. 162

³⁷ Ibid., p. 167

³⁸ For detailed information about Kuwaiti women's role during the Iraqi occupation see al-Mughni, *Women in Kuwait*, pp. 151-171

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to consider a number of concepts that are believed to be related to the hypothesis of this research, which is mainly concerned with the particularities of the aesthetic experience of a spectator in a theatrical event.

2.2 The Aesthetic Experience

2.2.1 Theology

In theology, *hermeneus* is a Greek word meaning an interpreter, and in Christian theology, hermeneutics is:

The finding and interpretation of the spiritual truth in the Bible. For example, the truths of the Gospels may be interpreted and reinterpreted from generation to generation, and thus made relevant in different eras. Lately, hermeneutics has been generally concerned with the interpretation and understanding of human actions, sayings, and creations, and specifically concerned with human action through what sociologists refer to as political, cultural, economic and kinship institutions.

In the field of literature, it has to do with the way textual meaning is communicated. The most important hermeneutic theory in literature appears in the conflation of German 'Higher Criticism' of the Bible and the Romantic period. The history of hermeneutic theory dates from the work of German Protestant theologians of the 17th century, who developed methods of understanding the Bible to support their theological views.

In the Romantic period, the most prominent figure was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who introduced the concept of the 'hermeneutical circle'. In an essay "Reading and Interpretation", Ian Maclean describes this central feature thus: The circle is that the movement from a guess at the 'whole' meaning of a work to an analysis of its parts in relation to the whole, followed by a return to a modified understanding of the 'whole' of the work. It embodies the belief that part and whole are interdependent and have some necessary organic relationship. In this version of interpretation, the historical gap which separates literary work from critic or reader is a negative feature to be overcome by an oscillating movement between historical

reconstructions on the one hand and divinatory acts of empathy on the part of the critic or reader on the other.¹

The German philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) brought the term hermeneutics from theological studies to the field of philosophy in order to define more clearly the methods of *Geisteswissenschaften* or 'sciences of the human spirit' in contrast to the scientific method of the natural sciences, *Naturwissenschaften*.

In addition, he rejuvenated the term *Geistesgeschichte*, 'history of the human spirit'.

His main concern was with essential meaning and essence, and thus with understanding, *Verstehen*. The influence of his methods on scholarly interpretation was profound and permanent. This is partly the reason why hermeneutical interpretation developed in literary and critical theory. Dilthey's theory relates to a general theory of interpretation, to the methods, procedures, and principles involved in extracting meaning from texts. It has particular application to a reader's involvement in the creation of meaning. A text may have totally different meanings for different readers at different times. Thus, what readers bring to a text, such as knowledge, assumptions, cultural background, experience and insight, affect their interpretations. A reader is in a position to create the meaning of a given text; this is the main assumption of the present research.

In the 20th century, hermeneutical methods and ideas have had an important influence on phenomenology, reader-response theory and reception theory. Such theories were developed by well-known theorists like Wolfgang Iser, Hans-Georg Gadamer, E.D.

Hirsch, and Stanley Fish.²

2.2.2 Psychology

In psychology, 'Aesthetic distance' is defined as:

A term that implies a psychological relationship between the reader or viewer and a work of art. It describes the attitude or perspective of a person in relation to a work, irrespective of whether it is interesting to that person. A reader may dislike a poem, for instance, for subjective reasons, but this should not vitiate his objective reaction. The reader or critic has at once to be involved with, and detached from what he is concentrating on. The work is 'distanced' so that it may be appreciated aesthetically and not confused with reality. The writer bears the responsibility for gauging and determining the distance (not in any spatial sense) at which his work should be viewed. If he bullies the reader into attending, then his reader may be repelled; if he undertakes too much, then his reader may not get the point.³

The concept of aesthetic distance became recognised in the 20th century, though it appears to be inherent in 19th century aesthetics and, in 1790, Kant, in his *Critique of Judgment*,⁴ had already described the lack of direct involvement in our consideration of works of art. In 1912, Bullough published an essay entitled "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle",⁵ which proved important in the history of the concept. Since Bullough, a number of critics have addressed themselves to the matter, including David Daiches in *A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics*, 1948.⁶

More recently, Hans Robert Jauss, in developing his theory of the 'horizons of expectations', has given the term a very different additional meaning.

In his theory, literary value is measured according to 'aesthetic distance', the degree to which a work departs from the 'horizons of expectations' of its first readers.

Another indispensable term in literary criticism is 'stream of consciousness', a term founded by William James in *Principles of Psychology* (1890)⁷ to signify the flow of

inner experiences. The term refers to that technique which seeks to describe the various thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. The technique is also known as the 'interior monologue'. In 1901, the German playwright and novelist, Arthur Schnitzler, published a short novel titled *Leutnant Gust*;⁸ a satire on the official code of military honour in which the interior monologue technique is highly developed. Nevertheless, the first to use the technique and to prove its influence was a minor French novelist, Edouard Dujardin, in *Les Lauriers sont coupés* (1888).⁹ James Joyce, who is believed to have been familiar with Dujardin's work, exploited the possibilities and took the technique almost to a point *nec plus ultra* in *Ulysses* (1922),¹⁰ which recounts the experiences, actions, thoughts and feelings of two men, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus, during the twenty-four hours of 16 June 1904, in Dublin. The following lines give some idea of the method:

Yes. Thought so. Sloping into the Empire. Gone. Plain soda would do him good. Where Pat Kinsella had his Harp theatre before Whitebread ran the Queen's. Broth of a boy. Dion Boucicault business with his harvestmoon face in a poky bonnet. Three Putry Maids from school. How time flies, eh?¹¹

The high point of this extraordinary work is perhaps the forty-odd pages of the interior monologue of Molly Bloom, a passage that has only one punctuation mark. The creation of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)¹² is an early proof of his interest in this technique. During the same period, Dorothy Richardson had begun to bring together her twelve volumes of *Pilgrimage* (1915-1967),¹³ and Marcel Proust was at work on the equally ambitious *A la recherche du temps perdu*

(1913-1927).¹⁴ Henry James and Dostoevsky had already noted, through long passages of reflective writing, that they were aware of the stream of consciousness technique. Therefore, it seems that several original writers had been working, independently, towards a new method of writing fiction. After the 1920s, many writers were influenced by Joyce. For example, Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* (1927)¹⁵, and William Faulkner in *The Sound and the Fury* (1931)¹⁶ are two of the most notable developers of the stream of consciousness method.

This literary technique describes a psychological process that takes place mainly inside the consciousness of the character, and the reader recognises it as an interior monologue; but what happens to the spectator while attending a theatrical event is not very far from this process. It is the assumption of this research that during the performance, the spectator develops his/her own interior monologue and experiences the same stream of consciousness; he/she is in a state that enables him/her to elaborate and evaluate both the events taking place in his/her life, and the theatrical scenes on the stage. This flow of experiences and the evaluation which is conducted more deeply as the performance progresses is the process through which a spectator gains more knowledge, as he would be comparing both situations. When the flow of inner experiences occurs during the performance, the spectator compares both these experiences; his/her own and the one on the stage, then reaches a belief. This process takes place in the spectator's inner consciousness throughout the performances.

2.2.3 Philosophy

In philosophy, the term *phenomena* is a Greek term meaning:

‘Things appearing’, and phenomenology is a method of philosophical inquiry that lays stress on the perceiver’s vital and central role in determining meaning. It derives from the thinking of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the German philosopher. In his view, the proper object of philosophical inquiry is not the objects in the world that are perceivable through the senses but, rather, the prior contents of our consciousness.¹⁷

This method requires a close examination of mental and intellectual conditions and processes. By using this method, Husserl believed, it is possible to reveal the inventive nature of consciousness and phenomena. The suggestion is that an individual human mind is the centre and origin of meaning.

In literature and literary theory the phenomenologist’s significant move towards an entry to and investigation of the underlying nature and essence of the work of literature under analysis provides a kind of access to the author’s consciousness.

A different version of the phenomenological approach is the discovery of the exceptional personality behind a work of literature. In order to do this, the phenomenological critic needs to empty his/her mind of all preconceptions and presuppositions about the author and the text he/she is going to study. Having done this, the critic is or ought to be in a highly receptive and sensitive state, a state that may enable him/her to share the mode of consciousness of the author. This state of mind has been described as ‘consciousness of the consciousness of another’. It is uncertain, however, if any critic could actually bring about such a state of mind; with the best will and intentions in the world the preconceptions of the critic would eventually intervene.

According to Cuddon in *The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, the influence of phenomenology:

Has been widespread since Husserl founded his theories in 1900 and thereafter. Ideas of phenomenology were developed by Martin Heidegger in Germany and by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and, in turn, by Hans Georg Gadamer. The Polish theorist, Roman Ingarden, developed Husserl's ideas in *The Literary Work of Art* (1937, trans. 1973). Important German critics affected by Ingarden are Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss.¹⁸

Cuddon also notes that the influence is especially clear in Iser's reader-response and Jauss's reception theory. The term 'phenomenological criticism' has also been applied to the theory and practice of the Geneva School of critics. The long-term effects of the various theories are also evident in post- structuralism.

2.2.4 Literature

In literature, formalism is:

a literary theory which developed in Russia in the early 1920s. Practitioners and followers were called 'Formalists', a pejorative term to imply limitations. 'Russian Formalism' was also a pejorative label. It was finished by 1930 because of Stalinist and Socialist-Marxist pressure on the individuals involved. The terms 'formalism' and 'formalist' are applied generally, not exclusively, to 'literary', 'linguistic' theoretical approaches.¹⁹

The theory of Russian Formalism had begun earlier, in the Moscow Linguistic Circle founded in 1915 and in OPOJAZ (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language), which was based in St Petersburg and was founded in 1916. The main figure in the Moscow Linguistic Circle was Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), who helped to found the Prague School in 1926. According to Cuddon, the Russian Formalists were mainly

interested in the way literary texts achieve their effects, and in constructing a scientific basis for the study of literature.

In their early work, the human content in literature, such as ideas, emotions, actions, 'reality' in general, did not hold, for them, any implications in defining what was specifically 'literary' about a text. Indeed, the formalists disregard the distinction between form and content and regard the writer as a kind of symbol who only adapts available literary devices and conventions. The writer is of minor importance; all the emphasis is on the 'literariness' of the formal devices of a text. As Cuddon notes in his, *The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, OPOJAZ went so far as to suggest that there are no poets or literary figures, there is just poetry and literature. Victor Shklovsky (1893-1984) summarises the attitude in his definition of literature as 'the sum total of all stylistic devices employed in it'.²⁰ Cuddon notes that, the first stages of Formalism were dominated by Shklovsky's ideas, which were partly influenced by the Futurists. One of Shklovsky's important contributions was the concept of *ostranenie* or 'making strange', later to be called 'defamiliarisation'. The Formalists also developed a theory of narrative, making a distinction between plot and story. *Syuzbet* (the plot) refers to the order and manner in which events are actually presented in the narrative, while *fabula* (the story) refers to the sequence of events. As for the motivation of a literary work, Boris Tomashevsky, another Formalist, used the term 'motif' to refer to the smallest unit of the plot, and distinguished between 'bond' and 'free' motifs. The 'bond' motif is one which the story absolutely requires, while the 'free' is inessential. The concept of 'motif' is clearly linked to 'motive', and thus to 'motivation'. The Formalists considered a poem's content as subordinate to its formal devices. The dependence on external

'non-literary' assumptions was called 'motivation'. Shklovsky defined the motivation of a text as the extent to which it was dependent on 'non-literary' assumptions, and he cited Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as an example of a work totally without motivation. In the later development of the Formalist theory, Cuddon explains that the idea of 'device' paved the way for the concept of 'function' in a work of literature, depending on the purpose or mode or genre. It was no longer the device *per se* which was defamiliarising but its function in the work.

One of the key works in the evaluation of the theories of 'function' and 'structure' is the *Jakobson-Tynyanov Theses* 1929. As important is Tynyanov and Jakobson's essay *Problems in the Study of Literature and Language* 1927. The Prague School was to unite Russian Formalism and Saussurean linguistics. It developed a concept of structure close to Saussurean linguistics.²¹

2.3 The Reader-Response Theory

Following the previously mentioned theories, we can say, as Cuddon notes in the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* that the reader response theory is, 'concerned with the relationship between text and reader, and reader and text, with the emphasis on the different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise in the relationship'.²² Accordingly, the reader-response theory is concerned with the reader's contribution to a given text and it challenges, with varying degrees of plausibility and conviction, the text-oriented theories of Formalism and the New Criticism, which have tended to ignore or under-estimate the reader's role.

According to the Reader's Response Theory, a text of any genre, be it a poem, short story, essay, or scientific exposition, has no real existence until it is read. It is meaning

in potentia, so to speak; a reader completes its meaning by reading it. The reading is complementary; it *actualises potential meaning*. Thus, the reader does not have, as has been traditionally thought and accepted, a passive role; on the contrary, the reader is an active agent in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies, the reader decodes the text. Various theories about this 'collaboration' have been advanced since the mid to late 1970s. For example, in his book *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976, trans.1978) Wolfgang Iser²³ argues that all literary texts have *Leerstellen* (blanks, gaps or lacunae). These blanks have to be filled in or 'concretised' by the reader in order to interpret the text. But this proposition raises a basic question: Is the text itself the cause of the reader's interpretation, or does the reader impose an interpretation on the text? A possible answer to this is that the reader supplies a set of social, historical and cultural norms, but the text calls them forth, and in a sense contains them.

The Italian Semiotician and novelist Umberto Eco published *The Role of the Reader*, in 1979.²⁴ In this, he discusses a division between what he calls 'open' and 'closed' texts. According to Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

An 'open' text (e.g. Finnegan's *Wake*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, or Jacques Lacan's *Theories of the Unconscious*) requires the reader's close and active collaboration in the creation of meaning, whereas a 'closed' text (e.g. *A Whodunit* by Agatha Christie, *A Thriller* by Frederick Forsyth, or *A Scientific Treatise on Lice*) more or less determines or predetermines a reader's response; though, of course, in a detective story, the interpretation of clues would be an important part of this response.²⁵

Another reader-response theory is developed by the Americans Norman Holland and David Bleich. In their view, reading is a form of covert wish-fulfillment, so the reader

engages with a text as with any other form of desire. Holland's *Five Readers Reading*, (1975)²⁶ and Bleich's *Subjective Criticism* (1978)²⁷ respectively, analyse with depth the reading habits and responses of individual readers.

In *Semiotics of Poetry*, (1978)²⁸ Michael Riffaterre claims that the 'Super reader' is the one who 'analyses a text in a search for meanings beyond and below surface meanings', also he is the one who 'represents the sum of reactions to the language of a text manifested in the published work of its interpreters, translators and so on'.²⁹

Cuddon states in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, that Gerald Prince who invented the term 'narratee' in his theory about the reader and the reader's responses, proposed that 'narratee' is not the reader, but the kind of person who is addressed by the narrator.³⁰

The American critic, Stanley Fish, has developed a reader-oriented theory that he calls 'affective stylistics'. Fish on the other hand is more interested in the 'ways a reader's responses develop and change in relation to the words or sentences as they succeed each other in time.'³¹

Another aspect of reader-response theory, which is related to my hypothesis in the matter of the audience's contributions, is referred to as the 'reception theory', asserted by Hans Robert Jauss in relationship with what he calls the 'horizons of expectations'. The Reception theory itself is referred to as a school of literary theory which is associated particularly with the University of Konstanz and the journal *Poetik und Hermeneutik* (published from 1964). Cuddon states that Jauss

is concerned with the general response to literature in terms of reception aesthetics rather than the individual's response, and he suggests that literary work should be studied in terms of the impression or impact it makes on its contemporary audience, and that literary value is to be judged according to how much the view of a text alters over time. 'Aesthetic distance' is the term used by Jauss to denote the difference between the contemporary view of a work of art (at the time of its first publication), and the present-day view. But still the idea holds that the reader has a contribution to make in the process. So there is a kind of balance and co-operation between the text and what it provides and what the reader contributes. However, all readers are different, and therefore may be supposed to bring a different response to any text.³²

Cuddon adds more relevant theories, he states:

More recently, a number of American critics (e.g. Edward Said, Jonathan Culler and Stanley Fish) have become interested in 'reading communities' and institutions as determining forces in the reading of texts. Fish, for instance, holds that it is only within a given community or institution that the facts of literary study (i.e. genres, periods, authors, texts) are available, and that these 'facts' are as much a product of the community as they are of the interpreters. Fish contends that all interpreters are extensions of communities. His collection of essays: *Is There a Text in this Class?* (1980) is relevant.³³

A more recent study in the field is Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences*. She clarifies:

My argument here towards a theorization of audience is then concerned with the material conditions for the production and reception of theatre as it was and is construed as a cultural practice. This book devotes little space to the particularities of an individual spectator's response to seeing a play and prefers to concentrate on the cultural conditions that make theatre and an audience member's experience of it possible. It is, of course, true that live performance has an often uncanny ability to touch those very stories by and through which we understand ourselves.³⁴

Therefore, we may note that the spectator had and still has an important position in the author's mind. The spectator's reaction is also critical during the production, because she/he gives meaning to the imaginary dramatic world and makes it real. Yet,

also after the production, because each spectator takes home his/her own version of the performance that is formulated from the spectator's life experiences.

It is also obvious that the spectator's role changes through time. For example; the ancient Greek spectator used to determine by voting whether a play should win the prize in the Dionysian yearly competitions. However, recently, the role of the spectator started to become less and less significant to the point of passivity.

The spectator seems to have reached a point in which s/he is not only passive, but also needs to be hidden in the dark, far from the stage, and protected by his/her own barriers to formulate his/her own opinion and his own experience. To a certain extent, one could say that these barriers are essential if the audience is not to interfere at the wrong time.

In *Drama Worlds*, Cecily O'Neill discusses the role of the spectator in the following terms:

The spectator has been increasingly installed at the core of the event in such disparate disciplines as science and literary criticism. This refocusing has also taken place in theatre studies, where semiologists have revealed the extent to which the spectator's role in theatre is the reverse of passive. To some extent, the actors and directors are also spectators of the work, as well as being active in its composition, but they are not the masters of its meaning.³⁵

For the actor, the spectator is an acknowledged partner, and must not be forgotten in all decisions that are taken about the presentation of the event. Accordingly, O'Neill notes that every change in the alignment of actors and audience, even altering the physical location of the spectator in relation to the performers, will bring about a difference in response. Roland Barthes also thinks that theatre is precisely that

practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed: 'if I set the spectacle here, the spectator will see this; if I put it elsewhere, he will not'.³⁶

The spectators' point of view thus, determines their reception of events and their attitudes when confronted by the actors. We can see here that O'Neill's concern, in her previous view, is about the immediate and current perceptions of the audience, but what about the audience's permanent perceptions? In other words, what are the thoughts, meanings and ideas that are grounded in the spectators' mind after the production?

In this research, we assume that the theatrical process is a rolling interacting process, each action and reaction is important, not only for the other, but also for the whole process. According to Cameron, the theatrical process is generally considered to be formed of several interacting parts: 'the director, the author; the text, the performers, the technicians, the performance, and the audience',³⁷ in *The Theatrical Response*, he clarifies, 'It is impossible to distinguish between a theatre and its audience, for both are part of the larger phenomenon (the now) that sees performance, performer, and audience as an interacting process, each responding to the others and causing changes in the others and in itself'.³⁸ Therefore, we suppose that the theatrical process does not end with the end of the performance; its impact influences the spectator for hours, days, or maybe years afterwards. Different spectators interpret different meanings from the same production, and the same spectator may view the same production again, but in the second time he/she will comprehend different meanings.

O'Neill also states that the knowledge or the amount of knowledge a spectator has, interferes in the aesthetic response:

An important part of any aesthetic experience is the knowledge that it is just that, and that the parentheses of form are safely in place. The bracketing and distancing of the aesthetic point of view allows the spectator access to different degrees of detachment and involvement³⁹

This point of view directs the attention to the knowledge of the spectator, and also his/her physical distance with the stage. We may say that the knowledge of the spectator which he/she acquires from the life experiences and the physical distance of the aesthetic experience are important to a degree that the history of theatre can be viewed as O'Neill calls it, a history of 'flirtation'⁴⁰ with the physical distance between stage and audience.

In addition, Bullough thinks that: 'both staging and dramaturgy are closely bound up with the evolution of distance'.⁴¹ However, O'Neill concludes that the ideal audience is one that 'maintains some sense of detachment'.⁴² She also views the encounter as a world in which the audience observes with a balance of sympathy and detachment. She thinks that the audience enjoys the double pleasure of seeing through another's consciousness while observing the character; pleasures that include both identification and distance.

On the same matter of pleasure in the aesthetic experience, Fyfe, in his introduction to the *Art of Poetry*, mentions that Aristotle was an accurate observer, and he knew that emotion must have an outlet and therefore assigned to dramatic poetry the moral function of providing such an outlet safely, conveniently and at regular intervals.

Fyfe thinks that: 'if people try to bottle up their feelings, the accumulated surplus may explode in violent and irrational conduct. It is the object of tragedy to produce pleasure.'⁴³

We can see that there are different views about the theatrical experience, indeed one cannot deny that theatre, as a genre has always been an interesting phenomenon to investigate because of its power to reflect people's lives through dramatic forms. Effective methodologies of theatrical presentation are variable; but what are the strategies of receiving those presentations? How do spectators perceive theatre? This is the main question that the present research seeks to explore both theoretically, and practically.

Cecily O'Neill argues that the audience is not only an important part of any theatre, but also the part that takes the play within to other places. She clarifies that it may seem that the playwrights are in charge of the whole process, while what really happens is that the audience, who can choose and are not forced to join the event, is the part that establishes other parts.

O'Neill questions the role of the audience by declaring that: 'their apparent passivity in the interaction is an active choice'.⁴⁴ O'Neill also notes that the audience's response was increasingly focused on and appreciated after it was recognized that the spectator's role is of crucial importance, as s/he is the one who actively masters the production's meanings. Moreover, Pavis insists that: 'since the time of Aristotle, the emotional reaction of the spectator in the theatre has been the aesthetic and ideological touchstone of the art'.⁴⁵

The spectator is important and his/her role is obvious, but why does this research regard it as valuable to investigate the role of the spectator although many previous

studies have explored it? The answer is; we assume that the spectator's daily new experiences add to her/his knowledge, as do the daily new explorations in science or in literature or even the spectator's new beliefs. This research suggests that an individual may view a scene or apprehend a dialogue according to his/her own life experiences.

The basic theory, on which the current research is based, is Susan Bennett's study, presented in her book, *Theatre Audiences*. She discusses theatre audiences under the assumption that they perceive theatre according to their cultural conditions, we aim to extend her theory as we assume that theatre audiences do not only perceive theatre according to their cultural conditions but also according to their individual visible and invisible conditions. My hypothesis is that an individual spectator's aesthetic experience depends upon her/his own life experiences, and that this experience is affected by certain visible and invisible factors. The visible factors are the space, the sceneography, and the location of the seat. The invisible factors are the spectator's psychology, his/her level of education, his/her social conditions, and the political circumstances of the region in which the spectator lives. It is also assumed that there is a link between Aristotle's catharsis theory and the study's research hypothesis concerning self-interpretation, in that the spectator of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, is purged of feelings of fear and pity; we assume here that this fear is aroused by the possibility of being in a situation comparable to that of the protagonist, and the pity occurs when the protagonist faces his or her tragic destiny.

It is also assumed that both feelings occur because the spectator identifies with the protagonist as a human. The spectator might face a comparable situation, and thus, during the performance, his/her mind is comparing between similar situations in both

his/her life and what is taking place on the stage. The spectator sympathises with the protagonist because both of them face the same dilemmas.

Another assumption of this research concerns Shakespeare's 'play within a play' technique, demonstrated in *Hamlet*, specifically in the scene where the murder of the king is re-enacted on Hamlet's instructions in front of the Queen, Hamlet's mother, and his uncle, who conspired to kill Hamlet's father. When the murder is re-enacted Hamlet's mother leaves the room, stricken with guilt, while Hamlet follows her to confront her with the truth. The Queen's conscience is pricked by the dramatic depiction of events directly related to her own experience.

Shakespeare's use of the 'play within a play' theatre technique is connected with our assumption of the spectator's self interpretation according to her/his life experiences or the drama of the self. As in the case of the re-enacted murder in *Hamlet*, the live acting in front of the spectator makes her/him automatically establish a momentary bond between what is happening on the stage and what has happened before in her/his own life, in a similar situation. We add to this assumption that this comparison does not end when the play finishes but keeps processing for many hours after the show until the spectator reaches a belief that s/he may change when he/she sees a different production presenting a different 'solution' to the same situation that he/she experienced. Then the spectator may start asking: Why did I not do the same? Or, the spectator may find the logical reason for a situation that had happened and that he/she could not understand at that time, but understands it when s/he sees it from a distance in the performance. Even if the spectator does not realise the similarities during the production he/she may realise them later on when his/her mind tries by analysing the information, to establish links between the situations of her/his life and the situations s/he witnesses during the theatrical performance.

This process is the normal process of forming values in human psychology. Eugenio Barba thinks that when the spectator sees a performance, even if he/she does not understand it immediately, he/she will recognise its importance later for a certain reason, which he explains in his essay, *Four Spectators*. Barba declares that even if the spectator did not understand a production s/he keeps thinking about it, and that usually happens because the production has touched at least a meaning in the spectator's memory. Barba elucidates:

There is a part of us which lives in exile, which we or others (the others in us) do not find acceptable or sufficiently important. Certain performances burgeon in this rationally, morally, or emotionally exiled region. The spectator does not consume these performances. Often s/he does not understand them or does not know how to evaluate them. But s/he continues to have a dialogue with the memories which these performances have sown deep in her/his spirit.⁴⁶

the impact that a work of literature leaves on the reader/spectator is the essence of art. For example, in 384 B.C, Aristotle, the first literary critic in history, measured the importance of any tragedy through its impact. According to W. Hamilton Fyfe, in his *Aristotle's Art of Poetry* (1948),⁴⁷ Aristotle observed the distinction between moral and aesthetic criteria. He is definite in his view that the aim of tragedy is to give pleasure, a peculiar kind of pleasure which accompanies the release of feelings affected by the stage performance of a tragedy. But does his theory fit the facts? What happens today on the rare occasions when we see a great tragedy performed? The human interest holds us. We share the feelings of people like Othello or Macbeth, or Maurya in Synge's *Riders to the Sea*,⁴⁸ or Lavinia Mannon in Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*.⁴⁹ These are people like us, yet somehow, even in the

modern dramas, they live with greater intensity. However, we fully share their feelings and share them the more easily and exactly because the poet or the reader has excluded all those circumstances and considerations which in real life confuse our feelings and deny us pleasure. The author embodies his emotion in dramatic form and, as we share it, it becomes our own.

Fyfe explains, 'If the tragedy has its way with us, our secreted emotion and perhaps also the bodily secretion of tears is released, and when the storm of excitement subsides, we are left with a sense of pleasurable relief.'⁵⁰ This sharing of feelings has its roots in the common humanity of the spectators and the dramatic characters.

We assume that the spectators must have experienced on one way or another similar experiences to those taking place on the stage, and accordingly they share the characters' feelings. At the same time, the spectators are not actually on the stage, facing the same destiny as the protagonists, therefore they feel safe and secure in their seats.

Feelings of both fear and sympathy, as Aristotle suggests, cause the effect of tragedy which is catharsis or the release of both feelings, the fear and the sympathy; the fear of being in the same situation as the protagonist and the sympathy for the protagonist when he/she faces her/his destiny at the end.

This research assumes that there is a relation between Aristotle's theory of drama (tragedy, comedy), and the present researcher's assumption that during the performance, the spectator understands what is happening on the stage through or in the light of, his/her own experiences. The different story of each spectator's life produces a different version in each spectator's understanding, and finally, each

spectator goes back home with his/her own version. For example, while reading or attending the tragedy of *Media*; the woman who murdered her two sons to exact revenge from her husband who left her to marry the daughter of the king, a given spectator who had two miscarriages in the year of this performance would burst into tears. Although the spectator's experience is different from *Media's*, when she read or viewed this situation, she directly related it to her recent life experience about losing children. Accordingly, the spectator's perception of *Media* was translated to a particular meaning in her own life. This new unique meaning is the production story synthesis of the story told by the drama and the spectator's own experience. The spectator fears being in the same situation as *Media* and sympathises with her because she loses everything, and in the new version of the tragedy, she even loses her mental health. Both feelings of fear and sympathy lead to the experience of catharsis.

2.4 Comparison between Aristotle's Theory of Drama and the Hypotheses of this Research

In order to make the comparison between Aristotle's theory of drama and the hypotheses of the present research, one need to know first, how did Aristotle define catharsis.⁵¹ Although the definition of tragedy is to some extent clear, the last part of the definition is not.⁵² This is the reason behind the enormous literature that analyses the term 'catharsis' and its implications, not only because it is vague in itself, but also because it is so thought provoking. One of Aristotle's analysts, Gerald F. Else,⁵³ thinks that Aristotle added these words at a later date. Kaufmann supposes that any real tragedy should not end in a disaster to achieve the catharsis, because Aristotle did not prescribe this in his *Art of Poetry*; on the contrary, he leaves the author free to decide whether to write a tragic or an 'untragic' ending.⁵⁴ Moreover, Aristotle mentioned many plays as examples of Greek tragedies that had no tragic endings, some of which are still the best Greek tragedies, for example; *Orestes* by Euripides.⁵⁵ In the *Art of Poetry* Aristotle, mentioned Euripides among the tragic writers, in spite of the variety of Euripides' writings in comedy and tragedy. Therefore, an important question arises here: what did the tragedy mean to Aristotle? And what does the tragedy means in modern drama? If a tragedy should not necessarily have a tragic ending, what should it have in particular? We can find the answer to this question in the last part of Aristotle's definition of tragedy. He states that catharsis is the only obligatory or compulsory characteristic of a tragedy. Catharsis is the tragic reaction that achieves the goal of tragedy. According to Aristotle, catharsis should include two

feelings, pity and fear. Many have argued about the precise meanings of these two words, and have enquired about what exactly would the spectator fear or feel pity for?

We will examine the meanings of these two terms which Aristotle used, *phobos* and *eleos*, in order to link the purpose of catharsis to the hypothesis of this research.

It is assumed by Kaufmann that it is inaccurate to translate these terms as fear and pity.⁵⁶ At this point we prefer to consider instead, what these terms meant to Aristotle during his time and whether these terms still hold the same meaning in the twenty-first century. If we focus on the whole of Aristotle's definition of tragedy, we will notice that he states that the tragedy should present a noble action, therefore the protagonist should be of a higher position, a king, a hero or a leader. It should have a particular length and should ultimately cause catharsis.

If we consider the meaning of pity in a tragedy, we may find that this feeling may not happen when the spectator is witnessing the fate of a protagonist of a higher social position. It is more logical to consider that the emotion of pity should be felt by a person of a higher position towards a person of a lower position because the latter is of limited social qualifications. Why Aristotle wants the spectator to feel pity for the tragic protagonist who belongs to a higher position when the protagonist chooses to commit the *hamartia* or the tragic flaw? The dramatic character of the protagonist makes him/her deserve his/her misfortune or crisis; so the spectator should not feel pity for the protagonist who chooses by his/her entire will to commit the tragic flaw. As Kaufmann states, Aristotle meant another feeling which has not been considered in the translation and analysis of the *Art of Poetry*. A more sensible meaning is the feeling of sympathy and not pity; for example, I, as a spectator, do not feel pity for Agamemnon, who has killed his cousin's wife and son, and his daughter Iphigenia as

a sacrifice to the winds that would take the Greek ships to Troy, and then opened his house to his cousin, who sought revenge by seducing Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra, who then conspired with his cousin to kill him. If we go back earlier in the same story of Agamemnon, we find that Agamemnon, the protagonist, had killed his cousin's family and sacrificed his daughter. So he did commit the *hamartia*, and was not wise to leave his wife with the person whose life he had destroyed over ten years.

Agamemnon logically deserves his misfortune and he being a king, makes it even worse because those in great positions must perform great achievements: I also do not feel pity for Oedipus who was proud and arrogant, and did not allow an old man, who was in fact his royal father, to cross the road before him, and killed him without pity. This is what Aristotle meant when he defined the tragic character as noble, but at the same time committed a *hamartia* upon which the tragic character may deserve its tragic ending. We think that Oedipus and Agamemnon deserve their tragic endings, and so the spectator might not feel pity for them. According to Kaufmann:

"Pity" has the connotation of feeling sorry for someone, of looking down rather than up. We do not "pity" those we greatly admire, much less those to whom we look up in awe. "Pity" is not what we feel for Prometheus or Oedipus or Sophocles' Heracles.⁵⁷

What did Aristotle mean then? Did Aristotle really mean sympathy and not pity? If we look at the word sympathy, it means sharing the feelings of someone who is hurt, sad or in trouble. This meaning may be closer: we may sympathise with these protagonists' trouble or sadness, but we should not feel pity for them.

The feeling of sympathy is therefore, essential to achieve the tragic effect; without this feeling, there is no tragedy, and there is no tragedy without sympathy, according to Aristotle.

The second feeling is fear; one might wonder what a spectator may fear and, why should he/she fear it? We will answer this question later when we compare Plato's and Aristotle's points of view regarding the ideal city, but first we need to look at the meaning of the word fear. Fear means the feeling that something unpleasant may happen, or being afraid of somebody or something. David Ross, one of Aristotle's critics, explains pity and fear; he argues with respect to the latter term that the spectator, as a human like the character on the stage, may fear facing the same destiny which the protagonist faces in the tragedy, and Ross reinforces his analysis by citing Aristotle's words from *The Speech*, 'We have to remember the general principle that what we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others'.⁵⁸

On the other hand, we find Aristotle referring to a specific meaning in the definition of the tragedy that may be far from all his analysts' opinions because Aristotle makes it clear that the fear is for the protagonist him/her-self. In John Henry Freese's translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in the Leob Classical Library, we find Aristotle arguing that: 'Men do not fear all evils... but only such as involve great pain or destruction, and only if they appear to be not far off but near at hand and threatening'. Aristotle also notes that, 'Fear is accompanied by the expectation that we are going to suffer some fatal misfortune.' Kaufmann comments that these two sentences are wrong if "fear" is meant.⁵⁹ Kaufmann prefers the word terror instead of fear. He uses Aeschylus' tragedies as an example, to prove that the word terror is more meaningful.

Aeschylus's tragedies cause terror, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and *King Lear* by Shakespeare can cause terror instead of fear.

Wolfgang Schadewaldt, one of the most eminent German classical philologists, noted that Aristotle did not mean pity and fear, nor did he mean terror. Schadewaldt thinks that the term *eleos* is very close to the German words *Rührung*, *Ergriffenheit*, and *Jammer*, but is he right? Schadewaldt fails to explain what is right and what is wrong, and why.⁶⁰

Kaufmann claims that G. M. A. Grube's analysis of the term *phobos*, seems entirely right when Grube mentions that 'the exact meaning of *phobos* lies probably somewhere between fear and terror'.⁶¹

To put the previous discussion into modern and current meaning, no one in the twenty-first century would fear being in the mythical situation of Oedipus, who was Aristotle's ideal example. But if this supposition is to make sense in the twenty-first century, it will only be so if we consider this fear as the vague fear of a hidden destiny that the spectator may not know anything about or, that the spectator may fear his/her own future, which could be the logic result of his/her present circumstances. The spectator's fears belong to his present and past which are composed of all the self-experiences, and the situations that s/he has faced. It is also assumed that this is the reason why classical tragedies still acquire new meanings when re-performed. These new meanings are composed from both the classical texts, and the spectators' life-experiences.

If we consider the same example that Aristotle used in *Oedipus*, it is evident that the spectator does not fear that he/she will suffer exactly the same fate as Oedipus; but

when he/she sees Oedipus approaching his destiny, and has understood his characteristic features as mentioned earlier; that is Oedipus being proud and arrogant, he/she will then compare and align Oedipus's actions to his/her internal fears. The conscious and sub-conscious levels of a spectator's psyche contain his/her own characteristics and features as a human being who shares his humanity with the protagonist. The spectator would imagine him/her-self in the same situation, but with different conditions produced by his/her own personal memories that he/she lived and held in his/her memory.

Aristotle meant a certain meaning that belongs to his time. To find out this meaning, we should go back to the Greek times to understand the term within its historical context. To Homer, *phobos* denoted the horror felt when fleeing from a battle, but later the word took on a less specific meaning, approximating to the word fear. If we consider the word pity in the same way, we find that Aristotle's critics went far beyond the actual meaning of the term *eleos*. Aristotle's meaning is that *eleos* is a kind of pain that is caused by the viewing of evil, an evil that hurts or kills a victim who does not deserve it; an evil that one thinks may happen to oneself or a friend or relative.⁶² Aristotle also argues that people feel *eleos* only when they know that there are kind people who fear God. Because if people think that there are no kind human beings, they would think that these people always deserve their unfair destiny. The human being in general is moved by *eleos* when he/she is greatly affected or influenced, and thinks that such evils might have occurred or might take place in his/hers or others' futures.⁶³

To prove the link between Aristotle's theory in tragedy and the hypothesis of this research, I enquire here as to why did Aristotle think that a spectator or any human

being in general might feel *eleos*? In addition, how could a spectator experience a feeling that has no basis in his/her memory?

The spectator should have a comparable experience that he/she can build his/her fears on. The spectator is a human being, and what is happening on the stage to the character could happen to the spectator too. Besides the previously mentioned conscious and sub-conscious levels of the spectator's memory which may interfere in the spectator's aesthetic experience, the spectator could never experience the tragic effect that Aristotle refers to without having his/her personal memories and meanings that he/she has formulated through life.

Furthermore, Aristotle sets conditional characteristics for the kind of audience who view tragedies; they must be 'kind' and have pity. Otherwise, the spectator may think that the tragic character deserves his/her ending, thus Aristotle has his own point of view about the kind of audiences who watch tragedies.

Why did Aristotle mention these characteristics? We will try to approach the answer through the last part of Aristotle's definition of Tragedy, in his words: *'tēn tōn toioutōn pathēmatōn katharsin'*.⁶⁴ Or, according to Else's translation: 'The purification of those painful or fatal acts which have that quality', and according to Grube's translation: 'The purgation of such emotions'.⁶⁵ As we notice, in both translations, catharsis is the last word in the definition of the tragedy, and it is the result of the previously mentioned two feelings, *phobos* and *eleos*.

Else claims that his translation is close to Aristotle's definition of tragedy in the *Art of Poetry*, but Else also argues that the only other occurrence of the word catharsis in the *Art of Poetry* is 'altogether irrelevant and unhelpful'.⁶⁶ Else comments that it is a fatal weakness to mention a paragraph that discusses catharsis in the *Politics* where it has

no other link to the concept of the book. However, as we are mainly concerned with the audience's aesthetic experience, so we need to approach Aristotle's discussion about catharsis in *Politics* in which Aristotle debates that the feelings that strongly affect some souls are present in all to a varying degree, for example, *eleos* and *phobos*, as well as ecstasy.

He states that the last feeling which is ecstasy, affects certain people greatly. He states that they, the audience, are calmed by the influence of music and religious ritual songs that should move their souls. They also seem to be healed and cleansed emotionally, "Katharseōs". These are the people who surrender to feelings of *eleos* and *phobos*, and emotional people generally, whose feelings are influenced sympathetically by events on the stage.⁶⁷ This suggests that Aristotle dislikes those whose souls are susceptible enough to surrender to sympathy and terror. Also, it is surprising to discover that the feelings aroused by tragedy did not interest Aristotle, this was also the case of Plato.

It is also clear that Aristotle does not put himself among these people, i.e. the audience. He argues that: 'Theatre may provide a great service to audiences, especially for those plain, ordinary people who lack experience, in other words; the emotional and unstable people who feel better after crying.'⁶⁸

Grube imagines Aristotle telling Plato: 'Of course, this catharsis affects only people who lose control of their emotions. You and I, as philosophers, will remain unaffected. At least I do; I'm not sure about you'⁶⁹ In the *Art of Poetry*, however, Aristotle never states that in catharsis, there are differences between vulgar and the

educated people.⁷⁰ As for Plato, he thinks that it is essential to banish Tragedy from his ideal city because it could undermine courage and social stability. He argues that a spectator of a tragedy is likely to become weak when he views the protagonist giving in his courage, surrendering to pain and screaming, like, for example, Sophocles' *Philoctatese* and *Hercules*.

On the other hand, one can see that Aristotle's discussion of catharsis indicates that attending tragedies may have the opposite effect on audiences, because it would release their imprisoned feelings and thus bring about stability, as we mentioned earlier.

Why does Aristotle think that those whose feelings are unaroused by tragedy are 'clear souls'. What does Aristotle mean by clear or stable souls? And why or how do 'emotional' spectators clear their souls? A possible answer to Aristotle's thinking may depend on the personal experience of each spectator. Aristotle considers emotional audiences to be weak, because they are threatened or terrified by the experience the protagonist is going through, while people who have really experienced difficult situations, or who know how to deal logically and calmly with dangerous situations, would not be affected. This is why Plato did not want the citizens or audiences of his ideal city to experience terror, even from a distance, because the common inexperienced people would be affected, and from his point of view, these experiences would cause cowardice to infect a perfect world, both philosophers believed that audiences are affected by what they are; that is, by what they have become through the experiences they have undergone, whether they are emotional or not, these audiences can be influenced by tragedies through their personal ways of behaving or dealing with life. However, both philosophers disagreed on the method

that the members of the audience may use to become better citizens; Aristotle advised emotional people to clear their souls by exposing themselves to the experience of tragedy, and be strengthened by getting rid of their weak emotions, while Plato argued that audiences should not even go through such experiences.

We must then ask ourselves: If we want to reach a belief about a horrible fact, should we prove it through experience or should we just believe in it without being brought close to its circumstances? That is a question that everyone may answer differently, according to his/her own personal experiences in life. That these differences exist proves the validity of our assumption, and its crucial importance in creating the meaning of a dramatic work influenced by the spectators' private self-experience, or as we may call it the 'Theatre of the Self'.

As we noted earlier, Aristotle and Plato both agreed on one point, which is that audiences are affected according to what they are and what they may think about themselves when watching a tragedy; but what about the second type of drama, comedy? Do audiences still view comedies in the same way as tragedies or in a different way? We first need to know how Aristotle defined comedy.

The section on comedy in Aristotle's *Art of Poetry* has been lost, and so we have only two places in which Aristotle mentions comedy, which are in the fourth and fifth chapters of what survived of his book. Aristotle considers comedy to be a different kind of drama from tragedy. He adds that the major difference between comedy and tragedy is the type of person imitated. Comedy presents people of lower social positions, while the tragedy presents people of higher positions.

Tragedy imitates the life and actions of superior persons, while comedy imitates those of low-born people who have comic faults, which are part of their ugliness.⁷¹

Aristotle notes that the comic mask is ugly, but causes no harm or pain. In 1938, a Greek manuscript was found⁷² which goes back to the Peripatetic era. Its subject is poetry written following Aristotle's methodology. The manuscript includes a definition of comedy which is similar to Aristotle's definition of tragedy, adding a sentence that recalls Aristotle's remarks on comedy: 'The comedy is an imitation of a laughable action by people of a lower position ... that brings about the purgation of souls through the emotion of mirth and through laughter.'⁷³ To Aristotle, it was good to free one's soul through mirth and other trivial emotions by laughing without harm. Aristotle and Plato both agreed on this point; however, both believed that laughter was dangerous to certain people. Its danger lies in its influence, which is contagious. Plato thought that imitation in comedy was not safe, and advised that only maids and hired barbarians should see comedies.⁷⁴ Aristotle advised that it should be forbidden for young men to view comedies before they reached an age at which they were allowed to sit with older people at one table.⁷⁵

The role of catharsis in comedy is to free souls, but differently from its function in tragedy, in which the treatment occurs by facing danger; *homeo pathie*, in comedy, the treatment occurs by facing the opposite of danger; *allo pathie*. The comedy results in the peace of the soul. In *The Speech*, Aristotle mentions that humans are quiet when not confronted by violent emotions such as anger, and so imitating and laughing may free souls by exposing them to the opposite of such negative emotions.

It seems that the ancient Greeks laughed at ugly people, or people of a lower social position. Drama in general and comedy in particular has developed into different definitions. In other words, what was considered comic during the ancient Greek era might not be perceived similarly in the twenty first century. For example; an ugly character on stage or a character of a lower position may cause the opposite of comic reaction in a modern play. We assume that in addition to the spectator's experiences, the content of the text and the current political and social circumstances of the performance interfere in the aesthetic experience of the spectator.

The audiences' perception changes as societies change. In addition, audiences may laugh according to their way of understanding or viewing certain situations. The main theme of the text, the political and social circumstances, and the spectator's experiences are some of the visible and invisible variables which we are going to discuss later on in this thesis.

Comic characters are not aligned with certain positions, but aligned to the spectators' thoughts and beliefs about certain social phenomena, especially with regard to contradictions, incongruities and absurdities, and various levels or positions of society. That means that the comic text could be about a character that belongs to any social position. For example, when a spectator sees a homeless character on the stage using a laptop on a windy, cold night, the spectator may laugh because he/she may use his/her computer in his/her office or at home, sitting on a comfortable chair and in better conditions. Another spectator may cry at the same scene or feel sad for this homeless, hopeless character who is trying to capture every little pleasure. In a production, we may see some spectators laughing at a certain situation, while others find it sad, or are unmoved, finding no meaning in it.

2.5 The Reception Theory

In this section we will mention the most relevant studies in reception theory as applied to theatre audience, which constitutes the main focus of this research.

If we reconsider Susan Bennett's reception theory, we may find that her aim is mainly to analyse the theatre audiences' reception as a politically implicated act. According to Bennett, the relation between production and reception is positioned within and against cultural values because all art forms rely on those cultural values for their existence, and among them is theatre, which is an obvious social phenomenon. It is an event which relies on the physical presence of an audience to confirm its cultural status. In the third chapter of *Theatre Audiences*, Bennett discusses varied pieces of research applied to different audiences; the results of one of these supported Bennett's assumption.

Jacques Leenhardt demonstrated the difficulty of examining audiences through an analysis of social organisations, although the social nature of theatre demands this method of assessment. This difficulty is the reason for the recent academic disregard of the audience's role in the theatrical process. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz found that the audience has a limited role. Bennett argues that Dayan and Katz's analysis is applicable only to a specific type of theatre. She also points out that neither Leenhardt nor Dayan account for the changing role of the audience in different types of theatre; for example, the type of recent non-traditional theatre which includes the spectator in the performance and demands

his/her participation. In addition, the simple description of the passive role of the spectator neglects the ideology of the cultural institution that produces theatre.

Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz may not have addressed the changing role of the spectator, but they did discuss a type of audience which may be considered typical.

The study, 'The Audience-Some Face-Sheet Data' was conducted on specific types of audience in 1973, by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen.⁷⁶ It surveyed audiences in the United States and Britain, and its data were collected from surveys inserted into programmes at 160 performances, yielding over 30,000 usable replies. The study noted a remarkable consistency of the composition of audiences from one art form to another, from city to city, and from one performance to another, and identified that the audiences came from a very narrow segment of the national population. In the main, the audience consisted of persons who were extraordinarily well educated, whose incomes were very high, who were predominantly in the professions, and who were in their late youth or early middle age.⁷⁷

Australian and American audiences were the subject of the second study which was conducted by Throsby and Withers (1979), called *The Economics of the Performing Arts*. The aim of their study was to determine the characteristics of the main economic supporters of the performing arts. This study also used data from Canada, New Zealand, and Britain, and the results supported those of Baumol and Bowen: the proportion of the population exposed to the performance consisted largely of middle-aged, high-income, highly educated, professional, managerial, and white-collar groups; thus when attending a play or a concert in New York, London or Sydney in the late 1970s one was likely to be sitting among a group of people whose financial status, education and occupation were strikingly similar.

Both studies note that high income is a factor in engaging in leisure activities such as attending theatres. Another factor is a high level of education; it was found that teachers made up a significant proportion of the audience. The results of this research

provide additional proof that level of education is an important factor.⁷⁸ In view of these findings, Bennett suggests that because of this high proportion, academic institutions might well play a significant part in determining the cultural products available (in mainstream theatre at least), as well as the horizons of expectations brought to bear by those choosing to attend.

A national idea of culture is certainly an important, and probably overriding, factor. In 1985, Andrzej Wirth compared German, Polish, and American audiences, who 'were raised in the atmosphere of an institutionalized state theatre'.⁷⁹ Bennett cites the German theatre as an example of supported theatre, and explains that the majority of theatres in Germany are state controlled and dominate the country's theatrical culture.⁸⁰ According to Bennett, state support has several effects upon the financial support of performances, and on the permanence of a 'state-controlled' education system. She concludes that because of state support, German and British theatre both ensure a 'more broadly based audience', used to a certain cultural tradition, and that this leads to a specific homogeneity of product. She argues that although state support may widen theatre's availability to audiences, it limits the kind of theatre that is considered acceptable for all cultures. Wirth reaches the same conclusion as Bennett, noting that:

In communist Poland generous state support constitutes also a form of control, and the theatre in Poland has developed refined forms of (slave talk) Sklavensprache, to articulate the view of the intended audience of the national literature. Bennett's analysis of these studies concludes that the issues that emerged as central to reader response criticism had an obvious and inextricable link to the institutions that produced them. Similarly mainstream art is produced and consumed by people with well above-average education, both are then products of the same institutional matrix.⁸¹

A more detailed study was conducted by Coppieters in 1976,⁸² based on audiences who attended two performances at outside venues. The aim is to have a better idea about the audience's response contemporary theatre. Coppieters based his project on two sample performances from *The People Show* (Fringe Theatre from London) staged at his own university (Antwerp Belgium). He assessed the responses of the audience which consisted of the students of two university classes, by interviews and written expressions. He found that: 'audience members made categorical remarks, describing the show in terms of its difference from what was usually available for consumption at local theatres'⁸³. The general reaction of this audience was embarrassment, because there was no frame or defined stage-auditorium barrier, and especially during the second performance, which was given in daylight, in which the audience felt disturbed by the gaze patterns of the actors and other members of the audience. The second show also required visible participation which resulted in the discomfort of some spectators; others were annoyed at being prevented from employing their usual, 'traditional' methods of reception. Traditional methods, although they do not seem to include the audience within the content of the performance, allow audiences, as previously mentioned, to create their own atmosphere in which they formulate their own experience. Coppieters' study concludes by making the following points about audience perception:

1. One's attitude toward / perception of / relationship with the rest of the audience is an important factor in one's theatrical experience.

2. Perceptual processes in the theatre are, among other things, a form of social interaction.
3. Inanimate objects can become personified and/or receive such strongly symbolic loading that any anxiety about their fate becomes a crux in people's emotional experience.
4. Environmental theatre goes against people experiencing homogeneous group reactions.⁸⁴

Another interesting study in the field was conducted by Anne Marie Gourdon (1982) *Théâtre, Public, Perception*.⁸⁵ It is a comparative sociological analysis of audience perception. Gourdon analyses three productions at different French theatres: Giraudoux's *Ondine* at the Comédie Française; *Les Anges Meurtriers*, directed by Joan Littlewood at the Théâtre National Populaire; and *1793* by Théâtre du Soleil, staged at Vincennes. Gourdon used a questionnaire to assess the audience's expectations and responses with regard to each play according to the history of the institution, director and company, place of performance, and stage environment. She found that 'those who attended performances by the Comédie Française expected a conservative production with conservative values; those who attended performances by the Théâtre du Soleil did not.'⁸⁶ She also found, like the other previously discussed studies, that the audiences had a similar social composition. The contribution of Gourdon's study is that 'her analysis of the audience's perceptions of the theatrical experience shows significant differences in ideology, in appreciation, in taste, and in the importance accorded to entertainment.'⁸⁷

Bennett thinks that these studies by Coppieters and Gourdon 'encourage us to see complex connections between actual theatre audiences and social systems, between the notion of a theatre-going public and contemporary culture.'⁸⁸

The last two relevant studies that discussed the reception theory as applied to theatre audiences are those of Janet Wolf (1981), and Kamal Salhi (1999). Wolf demonstrates that:

The forms of artistic production available to the artist play an active part in constructing the work of art. In this sense, the ideas and values of the artist are themselves socially formed, and mediated by literary and cultural conventions of style, language, genre and aesthetic vocabulary. Just as the artist works with the technical materials of artistic production, he also works with the available materials of aesthetic convention. This means that in reading cultural products, we need to understand their logic of construction and the particular aesthetic codes involved in their formation.⁸⁹

According to Bennett, Wolf's study suggests that just as the artist works within the technical means available and within the scope of aesthetic convention, so audiences read the work according to the scope and means of a culturally and aesthetically constituted interpretive process.

Wolf's analysis leads us to Kamal Salhi's analysis of Kateb Yacine's theatre in the formation and cultural aesthetic codes. Kateb Yacine's innovation was in the creation of an authentic, popular style of performance that he took to the people because as Salhi explains, Yacine failed to reach his Algerian society through the first genre he used that was the Francophone novel. As a result he chose to turn to popular theatre. Yacine believed that theatre is the genre through which he could directly reach people. To reach his targeted audience Yacine took his performances to the people,

using the traditional Arabic technique of the *Halqa* (the circle) to represent the tribe in its unity.

As sound and gesture circulate, each performer, of actors and audience, become involved in turn. The aim of this technique, as Salhi explains, is

the performance offers a theatrical opportunity for the audience to demonstratively renew their commitment to an ideology in which they already believe. In this way the performance invites the audience to share in an act of creation. The public is no longer a mere witness to the repetition of lifeless words and gestures: it shares in the adventure of creation. This is an innovative theatrical form of direct action, which has a wider symbolic function. It indicates that society is still in the process of formation and that it is each individual's duty to contribute to this process. Helping the audience to act creatively means, from this point of view, making the duration of the performance a time for creative renewal. The transformation of social and personal relationships is presented as a creative act. The audience and performers do not confine themselves only to acting. They also seek to go back to go back to their roots and renew their relationship to history as they unite with the actors in recreating its defining moments.⁹⁰

A similar form of theatre was initiated in the 1970s in Brazil by Augusto Boal. In this form, called the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' the audience participates in solving a situation that happens on the stage. The spectator simply raises his/her hand, then he/she will be allowed to perform the role that he/she thinks needs to be changed. The situation will be re-performed according to the spectator's beliefs and ideas in a particular situation. To ensure that the spectator is taking an active part in the theatrical event and applying what he/she believes, the spectator is asked to react the action himself/ herself in the same theatrical event.⁹¹ The process is educational and highly political as well as creative.

In light of all the studies discussed above I would like to argue that a spectator reads a theatrical production according to his/her cultural institutions, beliefs, language and social position. Furthermore, the spectator understands a meaning according to his/her every day circumstances that he/she accumulates before, during and after the performance, because as well as being part of society he/she retains his/her own individual features, conventions and attitudes which formulated his/her character and accordingly his/her own perception of theatre.

The studies considered above analysed groups of audiences in Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Brazil and Algeria in traditional and non- traditional theatres, and with regard to specific companies, institutions and directors, and measured their aesthetic experiences as a cultural event that takes place among a particular group of people who experience it simultaneously.

The present research is interested in the aesthetic experience not only with regard to its group practice, but also as an individual one. For example, what makes a particular spectator laugh or cry in a particular scene? Why is one spectator especially affected by a scene and why does he/she remember that scene, while another spectator is affected by or remembers a different scene? It seems reasonable to argue that what makes a spectator laugh or cry or remember a particular scene that has special meaning for him/her is the meaning presented through this scene that matches another very similar and private meaning in the spectator's consciousness.

It also seems reasonable to assume that preparation for attending the theatrical event, the purchase of a ticket, finding one's seat, the special atmosphere of the performance venue, and the productions' scenography, all affect the aesthetic experience. Besides, there is the period before the performance begins, in which, we assume that one's consciousness is prepared to receive the information presented by the production.

Because these preparations are the traditional ways of attending and receiving a theatrical event, some spectators, as previously mentioned in Coppieters' study (1981), could be annoyed by the frustration of their expectations, as they were prevented from having their full theatrical experience, in which their consciousness or subconscious is prepared to receive information before the performance starts, and in the same traditional way the spectator uses the atmosphere of the dimmed lighting and the space between the proscenium⁹² and the seats to shape freely his/her own meanings. The inner experience of the spectator contains many situations that have happened in the past or are happening in the spectator's present, or could happen in the future; this mixture of situations and experiences constructs meanings that have equivalent meanings on the stage. These meanings are then modified and organised in the spectator's mind. A good example of using memory to reach actual present meanings in the field of theatre is the method that Peter Brook uses during rehearsals. In the rehearsals, performers are asked to go back in time and find in their memories a situation or a moment in which they felt free and innocent. The aim of this exercise is to help the performer find simplicity from within and then reflect it to the audience. The performer translates this meaning into actual movements, steps, sounds or gestures to create a scene, using the innocent, simple feelings that he/she recalls from particular memories.⁹³

I would like to argue that the non-traditional theatre prevents the spectator from fully constructing his/her own meanings during the production and, instead, leaves him/her to draw conclusions after the performance ends.

The idea of the non-traditional theatre to include the spectator as part of the production would enable her/him to experience the theatrical event while being part of

it. However, as I have been part of several similar theatrical events, I may say that it was an unusual experience, but I found I could not formulate meanings at the time of the performance. My colleagues had the same reactions too, therefore; we can note here that these non-traditional theatrical events lead to non-traditional theatrical experiences, because they do not allow the audience to construct immediate meanings. I ought to note here that although I experienced these productions a few years ago, I still physically feel the experience when I remember them, may be because I was physically there as I physically participated in the non-traditional performance. My physical experience, however, still acquires new meanings on every occasion when I remember the event. Another example from contemporary English theatre is *Le Costume* by Peter Brook. After I attended the performance at the London Young Vic on 30 January 2001, it was clear to me that Peter Brook expected the audience to imagine what was not physically presented on the stage.

Now, how is the spectator going to translate these meanings? The translation depends on visible and invisible elements that will be discussed later in this chapter, but before doing so, it will be useful to examine Susan Melrose's notion of theatre reception using the concept of semiotics. Melrose argues that there are three ways for actors to send meanings to the audience as groups and as individuals:

First: To use signs have their likeness in the world.

Second: To read signs as a convenient metaphorical arrow.

Third: To use the opposite meanings of signs.

According to Melrose, these are the three principal ways in which actors use the signs on the stage. These ways are formulated and presented by the director, who decides how the piece will be produced. The director, the actors, and the rest of the production team collaborate in presenting the production. The spectator, however, does not

decide in advance how to receive the same production. Does he/she have the choice? Can the spectator control his/her personal feelings while entering the theatre? Can the spectator prevent a feeling, an idea, or an experience from happening while watching a play or even reading it? These are variables that we assume have an influence on the audience's perception, which the present research will attempt to qualitatively assess when studying the results of the survey questionnaires. If we want to know how the spectator perceives theatre, and if he/she can control the way he/she receives it, it is necessary to follow the process of perception from the very first moments. Firstly, the spectator chooses to go to a production either because he/she has made an independent decision to go, or because others, like reviewers in newspapers and magazines or friends, have encouraged him/her to attend. If the spectator has made his/her own decision to go, and sometimes without knowing the story, he/she would not be affected by others' opinion, and this would certainly affect his/her perception of meanings during the performance.

The spectator's choice of a particular production does not only mean that he/she wants to be entertained. It also means that the decision to attend this kind of theatre was made for reasons having to do with his/her own personality. On the other hand, if the spectator's decision to attend a certain production has been influenced by a critical review, then the critic's point of view is likely to interfere with the spectator's experience.⁹⁴

There are many theories in the field of the media that explain how vital advertisements are in raising the income generated by a given play, but only few researches have been done about the influences of these productions on audiences after the curtain has fallen.

Secondly, when a spectator chooses to go to a production, whether he/she selects it without any prompting or after being influenced by a review, a conversation or an advertisement, he/she purchases the ticket, and reaches his/her seat, and waits for a few moments before the performance begins. What happens in these few moments? What are the sorts of ideas and experiences that might face that spectator? What are the factors found in the theatre environment that might influence her/him?

Thirdly, with whom did the spectator come to this theatrical event? How could his/her company possibly affect his/her theatrical experience? Fourthly, during the production, how did the actors play their dramatic roles? Is there a harmony between the story presented and the colours selected in the scenography?

All of these are some of the variables that we assume do affect the aesthetic experience of the spectator ; some of these variables can be seen, so we will call them visible, while others are invisible and those also will be called after their nature.

2.6 Visible and Invisible Factors

2.6.1 Visible Factors

2. 6.1.1 Seat Position as a Visible Factor

When the spectator arrives at a theatre he/she begins to look around for his/her seat. Is it in the front row, in the middle, or in the back seats far from the stage? Or is it upstairs on the balcony, or in a box? Why is his/her seat in this position? Why did he/she not choose another seat? Was his/her choice constrained or did he/she choose freely?

The process of purchasing a ticket to attend a theatrical event may greatly affect the mood or the attitude in which the spectator enters the place of the performance. The purchase may, most of the time, depend on the availability of seats, and perhaps especially those spectators who have booked their seats in advance choose their seats for a certain reason.

Choosing a particular seat is an indication of one's financial status and, ultimately, social status. In addition, choosing a seat may be affected by others: if the spectator is attending alone he/she may choose a different seat from the one chosen if attending the event with others. Choosing a seat in company with other spectators will depend on the kind of relationship between them, and again on their financial status.

If we consider the position of the seat it is obvious that if the spectator is sitting, for example, at the front, very near to the stage, he/she will have a different experience from the spectator who is sitting at the back of the theatre. If the spectator is seated at the front, so that there are only a few metres between him/her and the performers.

They are very close to each other, and logically, this spectator's experience is likely to be stronger than that of a spectator seated further from the stage. One whose seat is in

the middle of the auditorium will tend to have a less strong experience, but stronger than that of the spectator who is seated at the very back, or in the balcony, or in a box. He/she will have a distant and less powerful experience of the production, because the stage has the greatest influence on the spectator whose seat is closest to it.

The spectator, who is sitting at the back, may think that he/she will get a better view of the stage, will find after the start of the performance that he/she is not able to view every aspect.

This position, far from the stage, might not give the spectator the chance to hear properly or to see well all the performers' movements that transmit meaning to him/her. In spite of all the new technology and the techniques that facilitate the viewing of productions, like microphones on the stage and headphones in the far seats, we assume that the actual physical condition of being far from the stage has inevitable effects.

A good example, is one of the productions that I have attended and worked on as an assistant director. The production was a Master's level project at Rose Bruford College for Drama and Speech in London in 2001, the Japanese director placed the audience's seats on the stage amidst the decor. In this performance, some scenes were acted among the audience, and the performers used a spectator's shoulder to lean on; the director did not want any obstacles to come between the production and the spectators. Thus, it is apparent that the position of the spectator's seat has an effect on his/her perception. It is a 'visible factor'.

2.6.1.2 Architecture and Scenography as Visible Factors

Another two visible factors are the architecture of the playhouse and the scenography of the production. We mention them together because of the way they affect each

other. In the first few minutes before the performance begins, the spectator becomes aware of the structure of the theatre architecture and what meanings can be taken from this architecture that may relate to the production. Perhaps a production of an old story will resonate with an old building, or if the building is new, a contemporary performance would especially suit it. Is the style of the production or the director's ideas suitable to the architecture? The architecture of the playhouse has an effect on audiences. It is like the frame in which the spectator perceives the era of the performances' scenography, the period evoked by the designs, and the concepts presented by the designers, which are part of the production. The scenography and costume design may make the spectator feel as if he/she is living at the time depicted by the production.

The spectator might not only feel that he/she is comfortable in the seat, but may also identify with, and even behave like the people who lived at the time in history to which the design refers.

The scenography is an important factor in the aesthetic experience; we can say that after the theatrical event, the scenography could be the only visible factor a spectator could remember. If we consider a modern abstract design as an example, its free shapes, sharp angles, and meaningful colours will prompt the spectator to respond freely rather than formally; he/she will be influenced by these forms and colours when responding to the performance. For example; the performance of *Medea* at the Queens Theatre, in London January-February 2001 which was directed by Deborah Warner. This performance was a modern presentation of the Greek legend *Medea*, the modern architecture of the Queens Theatre, the modern scenography of the performance and the modern presentation of the legend, provided a modern experience to the Greek classical story of *Medea*.

The media received this work as being 'distinguishably modern', 'Deborah Warner's marvellous modern-dress production of *Medea* gives you a shattering sense', according to *Theatre Record* (January-February 2001).⁹⁵

We also assume that subsequent visits to the same playhouse have different influences according to the spectator's recent life-experiences after the first visit, and according to the drama type. As we consider the playhouse architecture as a part of the aesthetic experience, we think that the effect is most intense on the first visit; subsequent visits may not be like the same first impression, but it would have its meanings according to the new impression of each visit and the performance type. Therefore, the spectator may find him/herself establishing new relationships with the architecture, the design and the performance on each subsequent visit. I personally try to view every performance as a special event which has its own particular features. Aspects of the theatre's architecture may not give a meaning to the performance on one occasion but may do so when the spectator experiences another performance on another occasion. The event of attending a performance does not include only the physical, unchanging condition of the architecture, but also the inner condition of the spectator on the day or night of the performance, which makes him/her see familiar things differently. The assumption underpinning this research's objective is that personal experiences are part of the perception of a theatrical performance. As a human being faces new experiences every day, it is not only the architecture that may have different meanings on different occasions, but also, if the spectator goes to a play more than once, the same performance and scenography may have a different set of meanings for him/her according to the new experiences he/she has gained since first attending the production.

Cameron's view about the audience's aesthetic experience in his *Theatrical Response* argues that audiences respond to theatre to the degree they find it 'real' just as there are many theatres, so there are many audiences. Cameron considers that it is impossible to distinguish between a theatre and its audience, for both are part of a larger phenomenon (the now) as noted earlier in this chapter; he explains: 'To speak of the objective of a theatre, therefore, is to speak of the effect on its audience, and the response of that audience; moreover, an idealised aim presupposes an idealised audience.'⁹⁶

The most important problem, according to Cameron, is how human beings respond to the theatrical event; the individuals making up an audience will respond differently to the theatre to the degree that they can find it 'real'. He also declares: 'questions of reality have become highly complicated in recent years, and one must simply accept the idea that one person's reality is not another's, each being limited by his/her own special attitudes and experiences'.⁹⁷ According to Cameron, there are three modes of audience response, each with its related type of performance in the theatre. These responses are:

1- Delusion: The belief that whatever happens in a play is happening to real people who are not actors but human beings whom one observes. This is often seen in children's theatre.

2- Illusion: Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief', the adult attitude that human beings are actors and characters, but that they are totally believable, and their whole stage existence is a perfect rendering of recognisable experience.

3- Reality: The sense that whatever is happening in the theatre is *happening*, both to the performer as a performer, not as a character, and to the audience at the same time,

and that what happens needs to have no specific points of contact with any other experience, because it is sufficient in itself.

According to Cameron, both spectators and reviewers are 'ignorant', because both lack practical knowledge of performances.⁹⁸ Contrary to what Cameron claimed, he does not consider the spectator who may have an insider's knowledge of theatre. It is possible that spectators who are also practitioners of drama will be attending, and they may also have attended all the rehearsals; we assume that this sort of audience is not ignorant. The only problem they may face is being bored, and they will not enjoy the performance because they are already familiar with the production.

Spectators of this kind tend to receive the performance differently: it would not be the first time they would have experienced the production, and they would already be familiar with the techniques being used. They know what is going on behind the curtain, and the time and effort it took to present that production. Some spectators, who work in the fields of drama and literature, and sometimes in close relation with actors, will also respond differently to the production, and especially to certain moments, mainly because they will already have experienced those moments. In this situation, the experienced spectator may experience two feelings: amusement and depression.

1- Amusement: this happens because the experienced spectator knows what the other members of the audience do not know.

2- Depression: because he/she cannot enjoy the production, because nothing is new to him/her except viewing the performance from a different angle and distance.

2. 6. 2: Invisible Factors

Besides the previously mentioned three visible factors, there are also invisible factors,

2.6.2.1 Time of Arrival as an Invisible Factor

If the spectator arrives before the commencement of the production, he/she will certainly have a few minutes between entering the theatre and the beginning of any performance. He/she will have time to receive new information; even if the spectator has decided to attend after being influenced by a review, he/she will still not be fully informed about the details of the production. These few minutes of waiting put the spectator in another condition. At the same time, they may enable his/her inner experiences to come to the surface. This psychological condition he/she experiences in the theatre prepares him/her to compare his/her memories and experiences with the experiences undergone by the characters on the stage.

2.6.2.2 Social, Political and Cultural Backgrounds as Invisible Factors

The broad context in which the production takes place is an invisible factor. What are the political and sociological circumstances of the audience? Is it a time of war or peace? Are there any figures that are forbidden to be shown on the stage? What are the audience's values and tastes? The political 'message' or ideology of the production may be the main reason for continuing to present a play or the reason the production is banned or abandoned after the first show. The political context will influence both the performer's performance and the spectator's reception of any meaning, because every aspect of the production will be seen in relation to questions of the state's political ideology. The audience will also find a way to react for or

against their political circumstances through reacting towards the production as they experience it. For example, in his theatre Kateb Yacine presented a political ideology to be performed by both audience and actors. They both form a circle that represents the tribe, which was the basic political unit of Algerian society, in the circle or the *Halqa* they express their emotional and physical reactions, according to Salhi in his book *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine*,

Changing and recreating the Algerian world means going back to its beginnings and restoring the circle of society to its primeval unity. The actors place themselves in a circle which represents and recreates the circle of the tribe. In this way the group recovers a primeval unity. This recreation of group cohesion is expressed on the vocal level by the chorus, which reflects the alienation of language within society by a detached use of sounds and voices, to which the voice of each actor is added one by one.⁹⁹

It is also essential to consider the social circumstances of the production because every society has its dominant values, and if the production attacks or challenges these values in one way or another, either by making fun of them or using them as a tragic element, the spectators are likely to react negatively, and leave the theatre with unhappy or even angry feelings that may prevent them from comprehending the main aim of the production.

The production will not transmit any valuable meanings if it does not respect the culture of the audience. The opposite may happen, however, if the production has respected and considered the audience's social values positively. In this case, the spectator will respond positively to the goals of the production and fully comprehend them.

It is my hypothesis that throughout the performance the spectator is thinking and feeling in relation to two levels: one taking place on the stage and the second is in the memory of the spectator. Both levels work in synergy to create a third psychological level inside the spectator's persona, that is the values he/she formulates from this

theatrical event and his/her own experiences, which I will call 'The theatre of the Self'. The spectator's awareness of his/her everyday life includes his/her values and the norms of his/her society and culture. If the production has dealt with these norms and values negatively, there will be a struggle at both levels: externally, with regard to the perception of the action on the stage, and internally in the spectator's memory. This struggle concerning values and norms is likely to cause feelings of anger or discomfort, which may hinder the spectator's interpretation of meanings, and vice-versa.

The psychological condition formed by cultural norms and individual taste is unstable because of the constant change of the demographical factors, such as the level of education and age, in addition to the personal experiences that we assume are affecting the spectator's psychological condition.

2.7 Conclusion

Because the spectator is an active part in the theatrical production and the master of its meanings, this research endeavours to explore the response of the spectator taking into account the influence of visible and invisible variables.

There are defined variables that influence the audiences' interpretations which together create a theatrical experience which also holds the spectator's beliefs and his/her own self-experiences. The most relevant methodology to measure the psychological condition of the spectator in a particular theatrical event is to do a survey on a group of spectators to assess their aesthetic experiences in light of the influence of invisible and visible factors.

Several studies have assessed the theatrical responses of different European and American audiences and have chiefly found that spectators having the same social position, educational level, and financial status attend the same kinds of productions and choose similar positions for their seats as suggested by Bennett.¹⁰⁰

This research will analyse the Kuwaiti audience's response through examining individual responses by means of this survey, the results of which will be presented in Chapter Six of this thesis.

It is also the aim of this research to expand Bennett's argument concerning the 'uncanny ability of productions to touch those very stories by which and through which we understand ourselves'.¹⁰¹ when Bennett and other critics in the field of theatre, suggest that productions must touch each spectator with a meaning, they are referring to this ability, which permits the spectator to draw a comparison through the theatrical event.

The spectator compares what is happening now on the stage to what is happening now in his/her life or what had happened in the recent past; sometimes he/she may also face a situation in the future and compare it to what he/she had seen in the production. Furthermore, this research assumes that visible variables like the architectural and stage decor and the position of the seat do, to some extent, determine the spectator's response. Some invisible factors, such as the spectator's level of education, social position, political circumstances and psychological condition, also contribute to the shaping of the spectator's response.

The interpretation of a literature text from a very different era is a challenge not only for the author's abilities to make the text comprehensible and meaningful, but also for the receiver whose knowledge and ability to understand will interfere with the aesthetic response. The present research is mainly interested in different individual

interpretations and the variables that may affect them. It assumes that each spectator views a production within the context of a unique set of circumstances and perceptions and that this may be the reason for the audience's variable understandings of one single production.

To measure this theatrical phenomenon, a general questionnaire designed by Patric Pavis (1985) was translated, and modified to apply to a Kuwaiti Arab, audience. The contribution of this research lays mainly in that it extends the previously mentioned theoretical studies of self-interpretation into a socio-cultural context hitherto under-explored in this fashion. For this end, a theatrical sample from Kuwaiti theatre was selected and will be the subject of the investigation in Chapter Six. Nevertheless, before attempting to do so a chapter on Arabic theatre will put the research in the general framework of Arabic theatre.

End notes of chapter two

- ¹ J.A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th ed. London: Penguin, 1982. pp. 376- 377
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- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 664
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 328
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 726
- ²³ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
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- 28 Micheal Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, Bloomington; London: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- ²⁹ Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, p. 727

- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 727
- ³¹ Ibid., p.727
- 32 Ibid., p. 387
- 33 Ibid., p. 733
- 34 Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 1997. p. vii
- 35 Cecily O'Neil, *Drama Worlds*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995. p. 112
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- 37 M. Kenneth Cameron, *The Theatrical Response*, 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1969. p. 69
- 38 Ibid., p. 9
- 39 O'Neil, *Drama Worlds*, pp. 113-114.
- 40 Ibid., p. 114
- 41 Ibid., p. 114
- 42 Ibid., p. 114
- 43 W. Hamilton Fyfe, *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press, 1948. p. xvi
- 44 O'Neil, p. 112
- 45 Ibid., p. 111
- 46 Eugenio Barba, *Beyond the Floating Islands*, New York: PAJ, 1986. p. 97
- ⁴⁷W. Hamilton Fyfe, *Art of Poetry*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948. p. xviii
- 48 J. M. Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, Dublin: Maunsel, 1911[c 1904].
- 49 Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, London: J. Cape, 1993.
- 50 W. Hamilton Fyfe, *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, p. xviii
- 51 In the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Catharsis or the 'purgation' as Aristotle uses this term in his definition of tragedy in chapter VI of *Poetics*, and there has been much debate (still inconclusive) on exactly what he meant. The key sentence is: 'Tragedy through pity and fear effects a purgation of such emotions'. So in a sense, the tragedy, having aroused powerful feelings in the spectator, has also a therapeutic effect; after the storm and climax there comes a sense of release from tension. p. 115
- 52 Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992. p. 43
- 53 Ibid., p. 43
- 54 Ibid., p. 44
- 55 Euripides, *Orestes*, London: Simpkin, Marshall, [1823].
- 56 Kaufmann., p. 44
- 57 Ibid., p. 45

89 Ibid., p. 92

90 Kamal Salhi, *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine*, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1999. p. 245

91 Augusto Boal, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, trans. Adrian Jackson, London: Routledge, 2006. pp. 36-38

92 The proscenium is a Greek term, it indicates the stage opening that takes the shape of a big box in which the performance takes place. It is as if the spectator is looking into a room closed on three sides. Ibrahim Hamāda, *Mu'jam al-Mustalahāt al-Drāmiya wa al-Masrahiya*,. Cairo: Dār Al Ma'ārif, 1985. p.106

93 D. Williams, 'Theatre of Innocence and Experience: Peter Brook', Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Kent.1983. p. 108

94 Cameron. *Theatrical Response*, pp.16-17

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96 Ibid., p. 9

97 Ibid., p. 11

98 Ibid., p. 14

99 Salhi, *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine*, p. 245

100 Bennett, *Theatre Audience*, p. 88

101 Bennett, *Theatre Audience*, p. vii

Chapter Three

An Overview of Arabic Theatre and its Audience

This chapter aims to provide an overview of Arabic theatre and its audiences as a backdrop for Kuwaiti theatre, which will be the focus of the next chapter and the main subject of this thesis. In order to present a comprehensive overview of Arabic theatre, this chapter endeavours to trace the development of Arabic theatre, present its dramatic elements and finally discuss Arab audiences and their reception of theatre.

3.1 Development of Arabic Theatre

There are different views about the development, the dramatic elements and the audience of Arabic theatre, in this chapter we will discuss selected views of a selection of scholars including Maati Moosa, M.M.Badawi, Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Abdarī, Paul Starkey, Muḥammad Ghunimi Hilāl, Shmuel Moreh and Philip Sadgrove, Essām Abu al-Ela, Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm, Jacob M. Landau, and Jamshid Malekpour.

In his book *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, Maati Moosa claims that: 'Unlike the West, the Arab Middle East did not have a tradition of recognisable and generally accepted literary forms to reflect the ethos of Arab culture.

The development of Arabic literature came late, and did not attain fruition until the end of the first half of the 20th century'.¹

In his book *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*, Badawi declares that: 'It is an established fact that modern Arabic drama was borrowed from the West independently by Mārūn al-Naqqāsh, in Lebanon in 1847, and by Ya'qūb Sannū' in Egypt in 1870.'²

Badawi goes on to assert 'Yet the Arab world did have certain indigenous types of dramatic representations at the time, some even going back to medieval Islam.'³

In contrast to Badawi's views, Ibn al-Hājj al-Abdarī (d. 737/1336)⁴ suggests that the Arab Middle East had such a tradition since the Pharaonic age of Egypt.

Furthermore, one should note that Arabic literature was fully developed even in the *Jāhiliyya*,⁵ the pre-Islamic era, when Arabic literature appeared in mature forms, and reached the peak of its glories during the Abbasid era (749-1258). Paul Starkey notes in his *Modern Arabic Literature*:

Classical Arabic Literature makes its first appearance around the middle of the sixth century AD, when we find a corpus of tribal Bedouin poetry emerging in and around Arabian Peninsula, with well-developed metrical and rhyme schemes indicating a considerable period (several centuries, presumably) of prior development.⁶

According to Starkey, like the Greek theatre, Arabic literature entertained its audience,⁷ and, the origins of both the classical literature of Greece, and the literature of Arabia were lost in time because they were transmitted orally and were not written in their time.

As our main concern is the Arab audience, we need to have an idea of how theatre, as a Western genre, was imported and gradually adopted by both Arab playwrights and Arab audiences, here we will address and compare the views of both scholars; Paul Starkey in his book *Modern Arabic Literature*, and Muḥammad Ghunimi Ḥilāl in his book *al-Naqd al-Adabī al-Ḥadīth*.

While Starkey declares in *Modern Arabic Literature* that it is impossible to understand the way in which the imported forms were received and regarded by the Arab audiences, Ḥilāl, in his book *al-Naqd al-Adabī al-Ḥadīth*, traces the development of the forms of Arabic literature including theatre. He firstly discusses the question why the Arabs did not develop a theatrical tradition, or dramatic forms, similar to those found in Western Europe; to do so he refers to the development of the Arabic story as an important drama supplier to theatre production.

Ḥilāl states that the sources of Arabic literary genres are two fold. One is originally Arabic, such as *al-Maqāma*, *Risālat al-Ghufrān* and *Hayy ibn Yaqzhān*. The second source comprises translations from other cultures, such as *Alf Layla wa Layla* and *Kalīla wa Dimna*, both being translated from Persian and Indian sources.⁸

Ḥilāl claims that the major difference between Arabic and Western literature lies in the nature and the function of the two traditions. The Arabic story, whether it contains philosophy or not, did not reflect the conflict between the protagonist and other characters, or natural and unnatural powers, as the Greek classical stories did.⁹

He also claims that the authors of the Arabic stories did not aim to direct their audiences' attention to agree or disagree on a general social or philosophical issues.¹⁰

He also suggests that the lack of legends in Arab history may be another reason for the shallow characterisation found in these stories, and goes on to assert that the most important difference lies mainly in the conflict between the idolatry (*al-wathanyah*) that characterised the religions of the ancient Greeks and that of the Arabs of the *Jāhilyah*.

Even in their age of idolatry, *al-Jahilyah*, the Arabs did not create, as the Greeks did, heroes being treated as gods or gods having weaknesses like humans, or confronting humans and unnatural powers.

According to Hilāl, this is the reason why Greek dramatists had the imagination and the ability to produce deep characterisation, while the Arabs rejected this form of literature.

Furthermore, Hilāl assumes that Muslim Arabs did not apprehend Aristotle's *Art of Poetry* thoroughly because the Greek's religion was clearly pagan, and idolatry is prohibited by Islam.

Moreover, Hilāl argues that pre-Islamic Arabic literature was based on true stories and real situations which they described often with extensive detail, and therefore did not dwell into imaginary myths as in Greek literature.

We should state however, that Hilāl's statement does not mean that the *Jahilī* literature was unimaginative; we suggest that imagination was used, but in different ways because the Arabs' environment and culture were different from those of the Greeks.

Hilāl attributes the lack of development of Arabic theatre to a lack of the type of imagination that was encouraged in the Greeks' culture because of their religion, in which human individuals became gods, and that gods and demigods acted in a similar way as humans.

It is important to highlight here, that in contradiction to Hilāl's argument, there is a great deal of imagination in pre-Islamic poetry. We argue here that their environment, by the desert, oases, palm trees, birds, mountains, rivers and other features, stimulated the Arabs' imagination.

The literature of any part of the world needs to be suited to the nature of its environment, otherwise it will not convince its readers and audiences. Accordingly, concerning Hilāl's explanation that the Arab authors' lack of imagination was the reason why Arabic theatre did not develop, that it is not convincing, because classical Arabic genres contained a fertile corpus of images, which emanated out of a physical, social and cultural environment different from that of the Greeks.

Regarding the stages of the development of Arabic theatre, Hilāl considers the influences of both Arabic and Western cultures, while Badawi only mentions the Arabic influence and how a specific genre developed using the old Arabic popular performances of the likes of shadow play. Badawi described Ibn Dāniyāl's (1248-1311) shadow plays as: 'they all share several features. They include singing, music and dancing; they are written

in a mixture of verse and rhymed prose, a clear indication that the shadow theatre developed out of the Arabic form of '*maqama*'.¹¹

First; came *Ḥadīth Isā bin Hishām* by Muhammad al-Muwayliḥī, in which the Arabic genre of *al-maqāma* is mixed with Western influences; the reader cannot fail to note the classical Arabic influence in, for example, the characterisation of the protagonist and the narrator, the protagonist's speeches and the organisation of the actions and events that establish the relations of the protagonist with the other characters. The Western influences, on the other hand, can be found in the variation of images, the development of the plot, the psychological analysis of the characters, and in the social criticism of the conflict between the old and the new societies. The conflict is about old family traditions, police regulations, national and local courts, and issues of daily life, and the end of the plot emphasises the importance of keeping what is beneficial from the old traditions while adopting what is suitable from Western culture.

Hilāl notes that this literary work refers to a stage in which modern Arabic literature first developed.¹² The development of this stage does not only appear in the mixed techniques of both the Western and Arabic literatures, but also in the final message that it addresses; keeping what is beneficial from the old and what is suitable from the new. This valuable advice to the audience encourages them to raise their awareness by comparing between what they had inherited from the old Arabic culture and what they were experiencing then in the late nineteenth-century in their modern, almost, Western, culture.

The second stage of development can be seen in *La Disias* by Aḥmad Shawqī, in which he was influenced by *the maqāma*, *Alf Layla wa Layla* and the Western action stories,¹³

for example in his descriptive style and in using the time factor to develop events.¹⁴ In *la Disias*, the prince Hamas marries the Greek princess la Disias, as a result he loses both his Pharaonic crown and la Disias who is kidnapped. The prince leads a heroic fight until he regains his crown and his princess.

The third stage of the development of Arabic literature came when it added French literature to its sources. We noted earlier that there had hitherto been two sources: Arabic itself, and translations from Persian literature. In this stage, Hilāl mentions that the style of Arabic drama developed further when it became clearly influenced by European models, and especially by French literature, notably *the Fables* of La Fontaine (1621-95). For example, *Adab al-'Arab* by Ibrāhīm al-'Arab did not keep La Fontaine's *Fables* as they were, but exaggerated his comic style for an educational aim.

Muḥammad 'Uthmān Jalāl re-translated La Fontaine's *Fables* into the Egyptian dialect in his book *al-'Uyūn al-Yawāqiz*, which he claimed was a translation from Aesop.¹⁵

Shawqī also translated La Fontaine's *Fables* during his stay in Europe with the aim of adding a richer content to Arabic literature. He declared in the introduction of this work that he was imitating La Fontaine's style. According to Hilāl, Shawqī's innovation was in the presentation of true-to-life images, in the symbolism in which animals represented human beings, and in the introduction of modern values, such as national awareness and the criticism of contemporary social mores.

The fourth stage of development occurred between the mid 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when Arabic literature started to depend more on foreign

cultures and less on classical Arabic literature, but with applying certain modifications. For example, Arab authors changed the names, places and sometimes the events of the works that inspired them. Although these translations were not accurate in plots or in values, they, as Hilāl claims, stimulated Arab authors' imaginations, and were admired by Arab audiences. For example, *Waqā'i' al-Aflāk fī Ḥawādith Tilimāk*, was a translation by Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwi of a story by the French author Fénelon. Also *al-Amānī wa al-Minna* by Muḥammad 'Uthmān Jalāl, was a translation of *Paul et Virginie* by Bernardin de St Pierre. The same story was also translated by Muṣṭafa Luṭfi al-Manfalūtī with the title *al-Faḍhīla*. Al-Manfalūtī translated other works that are considered as belonging to the same stage, such as *Magdalene* by Alfonse Kar and other French short stories which were all gathered in *al-Nazarāt*. Also *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo was translated as *al-Bu'asā'* by Ḥafīz Ibrāhīm.¹⁶

Hilāl claims that between the two World Wars, Arab audiences' awareness increased and they began to demand more accurate translations, which were supplied by Ṭāhā Hussein, and by 'Abd al-Raḥāman Badawi, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sidqi and Muḥammad Awwād.

In Hilāl's view these translations paved the way for modern Arabic literature because they provided examples of mature art.¹⁷ Thus, Arabic literature was influenced by Western classical literature then by Western romantic literature and finally by Western historical-romantic literature, resulting in such works as the historical tales of Jurgī Zaydān, the historical-romantic stories of Muhammad Farid Abū Ḥadīd, for example in *Zanūbiya* and *al-Muhalhal*, and Muḥammad 'Aaḍh's *Sanawhī*.

According to Hilāl, after the above-mentioned stages, Arabic drama started to address society's problems and attempted solutions in a mature way, such as in *Anā al-Sha'b* by Muhammad Farīd Abū Hadīd, *'Awdat al-Rūh* (The Return of the Soul) by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm.

We will go back now to Moosa's claim that the numerous attempts to produce an Arabic theatre did not result in a polished drama in the Western sense. He argues that: 'Arabic drama until the first few decades of the 20th century remained unpolished mainly due to the absence of a literate and appreciative public'.¹⁸

Contrary to Moosa's view, Moreh and Sadgrove in their book, *Jewish Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Arabic Theatre*, declare that: 'without doubt, imitation and mimicry are an integral part of human nature, so it cannot be that in Arabic society shadow theatre flourished without its human parallel'¹⁹ As Moreh explains in his *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World*:

...for a considerable period before the end of the tenth century, the oral genres of *hikāyā* and *khāyāl* in the sense of live theatre, preceded both *khāyāl-zill* (shadow play) which reached the Arab world from the Far East sometime during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the dramatic genre of the *māqāmā*,(sic) which adopted the dialogues of the oral farces prevailing before its emergence.²⁰

We note here what we have previously mentioned that Arabic literature was already mature in the sixth century.

Moosa could be partly correct when he claims that the attempt to produce an Arabic drama remained unpolished until the first few decades of the 20th century, but his view that the Arabic drama remained unpolished mainly due to the absence of a literate and appreciative public needs further investigation.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, in Arabic literature, and in Greek and Syriac works translated into Arabic, 'theatre' is rendered as *mal'ab* or *dār mal'ab* and rarely called *tayātir* (theatre).

In Smith's *Thesaurus Syriacus*,²¹ the Greek 'theatron' is given in Syriac as *teatron* and in Arabic as *shuhra*, *manẓar* (spectacle) and *mal'ab*. In Muslim Spain, the term *mal'ab*, together with its synonym *masrah*, continued to be used to mean theatre until the fall of Muslim Granada and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.²² In the Muslim East, only the term *mal'ab* was current until the mid-nineteenth century, when it was replaced by *masrah* and *marsah*.

According to the same source, there are three pieces of evidence, which demonstrate the important role of theatre in the mediaeval Middle East. One is the ruins of Hellenistic and Roman theatres in Turkey, Mesopotamia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Egypt and North Africa, which is regarded as concrete evidence of the theatre's power in the Hellenistic religious, political and cultural life of those areas. Further evidence is found in two written pieces; one is by the Prophet Muhammad's poet, Ḥassān Ibn Thābit (d. 54/674?),²³ who mentions one of his

poems: *Mayāmisu Ghazzatin*, as an example of something feeble;²⁴ the second occurs in an episode by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās (d. 42/663), who recounted that, during one of his visits to Egypt as a merchant at the time of the *Jahiliya*, he attended a celebration in Alexandria where various plays were performed in a *mal‘ab* (theatre or amphitheatre). The third consists of references to the live performances of the Jewish conjurer and actor Bustānī, who came from a village near Kufa, and performed many kinds of magic, illusion tricks and acts of buffoonery before al-Walīd ibn ‘Uqba, the governor of Iraq, in 35/655. These pieces of evidence reveal that, on the eve of Islam, impersonators, clowns and buffoons had replaced the classical theatre in the Near Eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire. The same source stresses that Islam was no less hostile to theatre and drama than Judaism and Christianity were. However, the original meanings of the pagan religious dramas among the Greeks, Romans and Persians had long been forgotten. Instead, these dramatic ceremonies came to be understood as commemorating some legendary or historical events, and became seasonal folk theatre.

Therefore, we can say that some forms of Arabic theatre existed in the sixth century; and as Starkey notes here that:

The Shi‘ite, Islamic world had a tradition of the ‘passion play’ (*ta‘ziya*) from at least the eighteenth century, and probably considerably earlier. Still older and more widespread was the phenomenon of the ‘shadow play’ (*khayāl al-zill*) the earliest accounts of the shadow play date from the eleventh century AD...composed in a blend of classical and colloquial Arabic, and a mixture of verse and rhymed prose that suggests a development from the maqāma form.²⁵

Arabic theatre, because Arabic playwrights were interested in translating and adapting European theatrical productions. The third stage was a period of great creativity in which many talented Arab playwrights, directors and actors, while continuing to be influenced by the West, developed original creative visions. The fourth stage was one in which two conflicting approaches emerged in the Arabic theatre.

The first approach called for the return of the Arabic folk-theatre that the Arabs had inherited from their ancestors, and it was thought this could be achieved by using the traditional types of drama but using modern texts. The second approach produced texts that utilised Arabic folk techniques but also included Western theatrical characteristics. The first approach was adopted by well-known Arab playwrights like Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm and Yūsuf Idrīs.²⁸ The second approach was used by other well-known Arab playwrights like Nagīb Surūr after the publication of Yūsuf Idrīs's three essays *Towards an Egyptian Theatre* in 1964.

In the history of Arabic theatre, there were important individual attempts like those by Tawfīq al-Hakim in Egypt and earlier the Syrian Mārūn al-Naqqash (1817-1855), who was influenced by European theatre when he visited Italy and France, and when he came back to Syria, he taught members of his family the art of theatrical performance. The most important plays he presented in Beirut were based partly on certain comedies of Molière, which greatly entertained his audience. In 1847, he presented *Al-Bakhīl* (*The Miser*), which he based on Molières *L'avare*. He added to his plays some Arabic folk songs, an innovation which intrigued his audience. In 1853, he presented *Al-Ḥasūd al-Salīḥ* (*The Impudent, Envious One*), a modern, social, ethical comedy and Abu Alhasan Al-mughaffal which was influenced by the Arabian nights. Members of Al-Naqqash's

troupe continued its theatrical activities for a long time after his death, and a new troupe was framed under the direction of his nephew Salīm al-Nāqqash.²⁹

Another important figure in Syrian drama was Abū Khalīl al-Qabbānī (1871-1902) the founder of Arabic musical theatre. In Damascus he wrote and produced his first plays by himself. His theatre presented plays adopted from stories in *The Arabian Nights*, and he directed and performed in sixty plays, fifteen of which were his own compositions. In his plays, the major concerns were music and dance.³⁰

Ya'qūb Sannū',³¹ or Abū Naḍḍāra (1839-1912) is well known to scholars of Arabic as founder of Egyptian theatre. The Khedive Isma'il (1863-1879) invited him to present his plays in the Qaṣr al-Nīl (The Nile Palace), where the courtiers admired his work and called him Egypt's Molière. He was aware of the problems confronting Egyptian society, and addressed political and social issues in his drama. His most important works are *Ānisa 'Ala al-mawda* (The Fashionable Miss), *Al-Amīra al-Iskandarānīya* (The Alexandrian Princess), *al-Bint al 'Asriya* (The Modern Miss), *Al-Boursa* (The Bourse), *Al-Hashshāsh* (The Drug Addict), *Al-Durratān* (The Two Wives), *Zubayda*, and *Al-Waṭan wa al-Huriyyah* (The Nation and Freedom).

Sannū' was concerned with the significant issues of his time, and wrote exclusively for the stage. Also, the music was specially composed and well adapted to the meaning of each play, and to satisfy the audience's taste.

Other individuals later attempted to add to the Arabic theatrical repertory by adopting Western theatrical forms. They include 'Aziz Abāza, George Abyaḍ, and Faraḥ Anṭwan. These attempts, however, remained copies of Western theatre.

In Tunisia, the most widely recognised playwright is 'Izz al-Dīn al-Madanī (1930-). In his plays he drew on the Arab literary and historical heritage to discuss questions of contemporary relevance such as oppression, tyranny and liberation.³² His most important plays are *Thawrat Sāhib al-Ḥimār* (The Revolution of the Donkey owner) in 1970, *Diwān al-Zinj* in 1972, *Riḥlat al-Ḥallāj* (Journey of al-Hallāj) in 1973, and *Mawlāy al-Sultān Ḥasan al-Ḥafsī* (The Hafsīd Sultan) in 1977.

In Morocco, al-Ṭayyib al-Ṣiddīqī 1938- , followed al-Madani in presenting the heritage within a modern context.

As for Algeria and Libya, although Starkey claims that serious drama in these countries has yet to establish a solid basis for future development,³³ al-Rā'ī notes in his *al-Masrah fī al-Waṭan al-'Arabī*, that the Algerian theatre is a unique phenomenon in that in the early years of the century its audience did not engage with performances presented in classical Arabic. In 1921, George Abyaḍ and his travelling theatrical troupe, which had performed successfully in many countries of North Africa, found out that they were received more coolly in Algeria, because most of the Algerian literati were educated in French. It needs to be highlighted, however, that Algerian theatre has its own features; it was a popular theatre because it was performed in the Algerian dialect. Algerian actors took on the task of writing and editing texts. Rasheed Qasantini (1887-1944) enriched

Algerian theatre with his innovation in acting technique. Other important figures were Mohiy Al-Din Bashtarzi, Kaki abd al-Rahman, and KatebYasine, who mixed documentary and comedy in his *Muḥammad Khudh Ḥaqibtek* (Muhammad, Take Your Bag).³⁴

In twentieth-century Arabic drama, according to Starkey, in *Modern Arabic Literature* was dominated to an unusual degree by a single figure; Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm (1898-1987).³⁵ According to Badawi in *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*, al-Ḥakīm followed in Muḥammad Taymūr's footsteps. Badawi explains,

In many aspects al-Hakim seemed to follow in the footsteps of his distinguished predecessor, Muhammad Taymur (1891-1921). Like Taymur, he fell under the spell of the theatre while still a student in Egypt. They each went later to France to pursue their higher legal studies, but instead of law they devoted most of their energy to the study of the French stage. In France their interest in drama was further developed, their taste refined, their ideas sharpened, their views of what Egyptian drama should be like formed.³⁶

Although, during his stay in France in 19 September 1925, al-Ḥakīm wrote in one of his two letters which both were reprinted recently, that he decided to: 'work as a lawyer, not because of his love for the profession but because it would enable him to study in depth some of the social ills of his country and therefore qualify him to write better drama',³⁷ and he called for a return to the Arabic folk tradition, as Abu al-'Ela stated above, he preferred not to present his most important works to the Arab audience. When al-Ḥakīm was asked why he would not allow performances of these plays, he answered that this kind of story needed a special production in a special theatre. Al-Ḥakīm explained his

opinion of the Arab audience in a letter to the eminent Egyptian writer Ṭāhā Hussein (1889-1973):

All the Arabs' thinking and all the Arabs' literature are concerned with tangible and material pleasure, rapid pleasure snatched hastily, for everything to the Arabs is characterized by haste and snatching. The Greeks have movement that is life; Arabs love haste that is rapid pleasure. To the Arabs, everything is decoration. Literature, whether prose or poetry, is not based on structure; there are no epic stories or stage performance, but there is instead beautiful, elaborate decoration enjoyed by the senses.³⁸

Was al-Ḥakīm contradicting himself when he mentioned in his letter that he wanted to know his society's problems and also by his call for a return to the folk tradition. Why did al-Hakim prevent his Arab audience from judging his work and practicing its role as an audience? It seems that because al-Ḥakīm was influenced by the French theatre. He disparaged the taste of the Arab audience, as we can see from the extract quoted above. However, while al-Hakim decided not to present his work in performance, successful productions were mounted by others. We assume here that, if a theatrical work manages to make its essential elements: text, performers, decor, music, director, costumes, stage management, and audience complement each other, there should be no reason for the production not to succeed.

Although al-Ḥakīm decided that presenting his last plays to the Arab audience would not succeed at that particular time, this research assumes that the spectator's life experiences will give meaning to any performance. Therefore, dramatists can present their work without the fear of being misunderstood or not understood at all, because they could give the spectators firstly, the choice to interpret performances on the basis of their life

experiences; secondly, the responsibility to give the same production further meanings by passing their self-interpretation to others; finally, the power to ensure that the performance will stay alive because it has been given different meanings by different spectators.

So even if a dramatist or a playwright thinks that his/her work is not suitable for production, he/she needs to put the work into performance and give the work, the Arabic audience and him/herself a chance.

Let us now take a closer look at the plays which were classified by al-Ḥakīm as not suitable for production on the stage for an Arab audience and needing a special production in a special theatre. One of these is *Ahl al-Kahf* (The People of the Cave, 1933), which tells the story of three Christians who escape from the injustice of a tyrannical ruler, who wants to divert them from their faith. They take refuge in a cave, where they hide from the tyrant. God causes them to lie apparently dead for 309 years, after which he revives them. On coming to life again, they find themselves in conflict with time, because they have to deal with a different era.

The play ends with the failure of the men of the cave to cope with life; so they return to the cave to face death. This story was taken from the Holy Qur'ān.

It would not be impossible to achieve a successful performance; on the contrary, the story may not need a lot of scenography because it is mainly about two different ages separated by three centuries. So the costumes, props and the lighting could create the effect, or the costume alone could provide the meaning.

Another play in the same category is *Shahrazād* (1934), whose story al-Ḥakīm took from the *Arabian Nights*.³⁹

Briefly, the story is that the king Shahrayār marries a maiden every night. He kills her in the morning because he does not trust women. When he marries Shahrazād, she resolves to teach him a lesson. When night falls, she starts to tell a story but stops before the end, promising to continue the next evening. Shahrayār grows to love her and consequently changes as a person. Finally, she tests his trust and finds that he trusts women after all. This story is very suitable to be performed on stage, and I have seen many productions, both old and modern, on the same theme by other playwrights.

Although these two plays were not performed on the Arab stage, they were performed successfully in France in the 1950s by the Comédie Française. The critic Kritzek, on the other hand, claims that *Ahl al-Kahf* and *Shahrazād* brought Arabic, and especially Egyptian, theatre from its early stage to that of a truly modern and tragic theatre. It shows how far Arabic theatre came in a relatively short time.⁴⁰

One can note that this stage of al-Ḥakīm's writings was during his stay in France when he was exposed to the European theatre, and he compared the literature and the audience of both Arab culture and European culture. Such a comparison, as previously noted is dubious and not based on the same criteria. We think that al-Hakim should have presented his work to the Arab audience and let them decide. Although, these plays were not performed in the Arab world, they were performed and admired by non-Arab critics and audiences. Furthermore, such productions in Germany, England and France were very successful.

In 1953, the Mozarteum theatre presented *Pygmalion* in Germany, directed by Jizarish. In 1995, BBC radio presented *Shahrazad* in English, directed by Christopher Sykes. *Ahl al-Kahf* and *Shahrazad* were both presented in London and Paris, and the European audiences were highly interested in these productions. Other plays of the same kind: *Ūḏīb al-Malik (Oedipus the King)*, 1949; *Sulaymān al-Hakīm (Sulayman the Wise)*, 1943; *Isis* and *Al-Sultān Al-Hā'ir (The Sulta's Dilemma)*, 1960, which al-Hakim called collectively his 'Theatre of the Mind'.

Perhaps the most important recent theatrical figure in the Arab world is the Syrian dramatist and critic Sa'd Allāh Wannūs (1941-1997), who in the 1960s and 1970s called for 'Politicising Theatre' or *Tasyīs al-Masrah*. He used the traditional folk form of the *hakawātī* and the tradition of puppet theatre.

Besides using these traditional forms, he created certain innovations influenced by Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre; for example placing actors among the audience. His works include *Mughāmarāt Ra's al-Mamlūk Jābir (The Adventures of the Slave Jabir)*, 1972, *Sahra ma'a Abī Khalīl al-Qabbānī (An Evening with Abu Khalil al-Qabbani)*, 1972, *al-Malik huwa al-Malik (The King is the King)*, 1977, and his final play, *Yawm min Zamaninā (A Day of our Time)*, 1996.

We can conclude that the issue of the Arab audience is rarely mentioned in the history of the Arab theatre, and that it played a bigger role in the Arabic folk theatre than in any subsequent stages although Wannūs regretted the loss of this role and tried to include the audience in the performance, especially in his 'Theatre of Politicisation'.

3.2 Dramatic Elements of Arabic and Islamic Theatre

In this part of Chapter Three, we consider the significant dramatic elements of Arabic and Islamic theatre⁴¹ in order to understand how they differ from other dramatic elements found in other parts of the world and how those elements with time became the features of Arabic and Islamic drama.

In general, according to Aristotle, the elements of drama are the unities of text, the performers, time for the presented story (which should be a day), and the place at which the presentation occurs. Therefore, we can say that every human action that includes those elements is a drama.

However, the elements of the pre-modern Arabic drama were affected by the purposes of presenting these performances and certain props were added to the performances.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, Arabic drama began as seasonal folk theatre that became secular entertainments tending towards imitations of earlier customs and rituals. These early manifestations incorporated certain Persian and Central Asian elements that had entered the Islamic world, such as the hobby-horse (*kurrāj*).⁴² These elements are also found in the performances of *Nayrūz* festivals that are still practiced in Iran every year in March, to celebrate spring.

Performers used fire, splashed water and knocked on doors. If we look more closely at the hobby-horse performance, which was used in various dramatic rituals such as

shamanic rites and seasonal fertility rites, we find that the same props (horses, fire, water), accompanied by music and dancing, were used for celebrating feasts or producing a delirious and excited state in combats and military exercises. The performance of the *Amīr al-Nayrūz* was presented in a carnival called the Feast of Fools.

In this festival, a play featuring a temporary king or false *Emir* was presented, and this performance symbolised the sudden changes of weather brought by spring. This performance used to take place in the market places of Persia, Iraq and Egypt.

In Egypt, it became a festival celebrated by both Copts and Muslims.⁴³ In addition, masks were generally used in mediaeval drama to keep evil spirits away.

Therefore, performances of pre-modern Arabic theatre included props used for certain ritual purposes, in addition to the purely dramatic elements which were their main feature.

Elements such as props, place and subject or text certainly existed in early Arabic drama, but have not been regarded by some scholars as being evidence of theatre, because they were comparing early Arabic drama to modern theatre, which is the result of many centuries of experience. This comparison is dubious because the criteria are different; each period of time is marked by particular conditions giving rise to the specific factors which form its literary productions. In the realm of theatre it is impossible to make a final judgment regarding pre-modern Arabic theatrical performances, and so their nature as drama remains an open question.

Place, as previously mentioned, is the third theatrical element that one can find in the drama of the pre-modern Arab world and its theatrical performances. At this time, performances took place in the open air, creating a lively atmosphere in which the performers would experience immediate audience reaction. These performances were given in market-places, squares, courtyards or palaces.

Much contemporary Arabic drama is trying in the 21st century to recreate the atmosphere of these live performances. Modern performers are trying to perform 'among the people', to apprehend the audience's response directly, and share the whole theatrical experience with them.

In pre-modern Arabic theatre, performances would generally proceed as follows: the troupes would play their drums and other instruments to attract the attention of the audience, who would form a circle around them to watch their plays and exchange comments. Music was thus a way of promoting or advertising the performance, and the comments which were exchanged often took the form of sharp retorts and jokes.⁴⁴ These sometimes obscene comments are assumed by Moreh and Sadgrove to be a factor in the decline of the pre-modern Arabic drama and a reason for its rejection by the nineteenth century pioneers. In *Jewish Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Arabic Theatre*, they note that traditional Arabic drama was:

considered by many as immoral and degenerate, corrupting the population with its vulgar sexual comments and gestures. This may be the reason why the nineteenth-century Arab pioneers turned to Europe, and why traditional drama was frowned upon by the literati, and subsequently rejected and not adapted to the modern stage. Medieval Arabic drama, in its criticism of the rulers, the judiciary, government officials and the other targets of its satire, may have innocently amused the

majority, but it had over the centuries declined in the eyes of many into a socially unaccepted, salacious, satirical dramatic form.⁴⁵

This argument raises the question, was the Medieval European theatre so different in terms of being vulgar and sexual? Has not every form of popular theatre, in any part of the world, from its early beginnings until its modern form, included sexual terms or gestures?

Ancient Greek drama was performed in festivals honouring Dionysus, and included not only tragedies, many of which contained overtly sexual allusions, but also Satyr plays and Satirical comedies, most notably Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, which did not shrink from 'vulgar' portrayals of sexuality. But it may be true that in the 19th century the opinions of puritanical critics influenced the direction taken by the pioneers. Moreover, the questionable performances which were given in pre-modern Arabic theatre were not presented to young audiences who might have been negatively affected. On the contrary, performances for young audiences were appropriate to their experience of life and were used to instil moral values.

Pre-modern Arabic drama reflected life as it was lived, and its audience responded by participating and exchanging comments. This could not have occurred if there had been no free minds and spirits who were rich in their human experience, and capable of discussing it and sharing it in open places. This also indicates the importance of these performances in their social context, because they functioned as a popular form of parliament in which commoners - as well as the performers- could express their points of view.

In this social context, the pre-modern Arabic drama established the cultural habit of attending theatres. Landau, in his *Studies in the Arabic Theatre and Cinema*, devotes the first part of his book to the description and analysis of those elements which contributed, before the 19th century, towards an awareness of drama in the Arab world.

He discusses mimicry, the passion play or *Ta'ziya*, and the shadow play.⁴⁶

Like Moosa, Landau argues that in the Arab world there was no theatre as understood by the West until the 19th century, and claims that this phenomenon may be explained by two main factors: first, the peoples with whom the Arabs came into close contact had no well-developed theatre; second, women, particularly if unveiled, were strictly forbidden to appear on the stage.⁴⁷

Evidence exists, however, that women participated in pre-modern Arabic theatre, particularly in the festivals of *khayāl*. Moreh and Sadgrove in *Jewish Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Arabic Theatre*, cite the philosopher Maimonides (1135-1204), who describes one performer as follows:

The actress who performs with a mask, and performs on the hobby-horse, while going from one house to another in the same street, wears a net upon her hair and a shirt of fine fabric, but of hideous shape, for comic purpose, in her theatrical performance.⁴⁸

Thus, we know that women took part in some forms of theatre in the pre-modern period.

Moreover, in Greek drama, men acted women's roles on stage, and that did not affect the

development of theatre. On the contrary, the Greek theatre has served and still serves as the classical foundation of theatre history, in texts, acting, decoration, props, even in theatre techniques. Therefore, we can say that women were not absent from theatre in the Arab world at that time, and it should not have delayed the development of theatre. Accordingly, the evidence suggests that the Arab world, as a culture and a civilisation, did develop its own types of theatre, which expressed the Arabs' culture and milieu.

3.3 Arab and Islamic Audiences

The third part of this chapter explores the Arab audiences' reception of the pre-modern and the modern theatrical performances. The subject of the Arabic audiences' reception has been neglected by academic studies because the main focus of those studies was mainly on the dramatic elements of pre-modern Arabic theatre. Therefore, in this part we will try to investigate the available sources to shed some light on this matter, and will consider how audiences reacted to literary and theatrical performances.

In the *Souk 'Ukāz*, poets used to gather for competitions in which the audience chose the poem that deserved the prize. As in classic Greek drama traditions, the audience was the judge. *Al-Naqā'iz* or 'the opposites', was a famous poetry competition in the Abbasid era. In this competition, audiences would gather in a courtyard to choose the best poet. The poets would challenge each other to improvise a poem opposing the one presented immediately before. This competition entertained its audience as much as any play in the early Greek drama.

Regarding the matter of the Arab audience's involvement and response, Landau in his *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema* states that the dramatic element, considered the chief artistic factor in the theatre, as it is chiefly responsible for the impression left on the audience, was not entirely absent from the Muslim Near East. Landau considers this impression to be the only sign that the dramatic element has achieved an effect. Thus, whether or not the audience participates as judges or in some other way still has a role in achieving the drama by just being part of the performance. We agree with Landau and have a further explanation of the audiences' silent role. As we assume in this research that the life-experiences of the spectator interfere in his/her aesthetic experience, we can say that the silent role of the spectator is not merely negative, as it may seem. We assume that the spectator establishes relations between what is happening in the performance and what has happened in his/her life and, finally, reaches his/her own story. About the favourite genre of the pre-modern Arabs, Landau mentioned in the same source above that the favourite 'pastime' to pre-modern Arabic audiences was mimicry:

Mimicry, since time immemorial, has been a favorite pastime, not only of children but of adults as well. Its scope is admittedly narrower than that of the theatre, for its range of subjects is strictly limited to amusing imitation, whether of voice or manner, more often than not through exaggeration. This imitation of the phenomena of life -behaviour and manner of speech- was found in Greece as well in the ancient East.⁴⁹

Landau adds that mimicry was used as a form of a comic relief for the audience of the *Maqāma*,

Another popular literary form which often contains the elements of mimicry is the Arabic *Maqāma*, in which the theme was frequently presented in the guise of conversation, parts of which imitated various characters. However, in this genre the artistic-literary factor is more important than in the *Hikāya*, and linguistic sophistication is valued more than successful imitation (...) At times, they would use this means as a sort of "comic relief" from the tension their captivating stories would create amongst the listeners. As they seldom found time to dress, they limited themselves to a change of headgear in order to represent various professions, age-groups, and types of different nationalities. They often used a handkerchief and a cudgel to aid their mimicry, and accompany by the latter's knockings their imitations of beasts and birds.⁵⁰

Among the most important genres of the pre-modern Arab theatre was the Shadow play (*Khayāl al-Ẓill*). Al-Rā'ī, in *al-Masrah fī al-Waṭan al-'Arabī* states that Arab audiences were acquainted with different kinds of theatre for many centuries before the nineteenth century. He argues that theatre was part of their religious and social rituals, some of which, in certain regions, did not develop to be a performing art, as occurred in other parts of the Muslim world, i.e. Iran. Al-Rā'ī provides much evidence in his book that the shadow play was a well-known performing art in the Abbasid era.⁵¹ The shadow play can be a short scene of pantomime, (*faṣl* or *bābah*) or a dramatic play performed by one or more actors, with a dialogue and props, including the puppets whose shadows appear on the screen. The actor is hidden behind a cloth screen, performing his repertoire with songs, and changing his voice according to the different characters appearing on the screen. While these dramas were sometimes performed according to written texts, they were more often improvised. Hamada, in his *Dictionary of Drama and Theatre Terms*, defines the shadow play as a sort of puppet performance, and notes that according to some scholars, it originated in the Far East, probably in China, or perhaps India. According to Hamada, it is believed that the shadow play moved to the Arab East, then

Turkey, then traveled to Greece, Italy and other European countries, and finally to the United States. Performances take place against a light white curtain stretched on a square wooden frame. The performers stand behind this curtain with different puppets made of leather, which represent dramatic characters, animals (camels, donkeys), or objects (ships, trees, houses), which have a major role in the show. The performers use sticks to move the puppets by placing them in holes in the joints.⁵²

In the show, lights fade on the audience, the performers place the puppets very close to the stretched cloth, then lights are shone behind the performers so the audience views the puppets' shadows clearly. Then the performers start to move the puppets and speak their parts, as well as singing and playing music according to the scenario. The audience used to comment on the scenes as they did in other forms of drama. Hamada notes that the oldest historical reference to the shadow play is found in the reign of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, and the shadow play as a cultural heritage remained the amusement of Arab countries for many centuries; but it started to disappear, especially in Egypt in the early decades of the 20th century when the cinema appeared, replacing the shadow play as a form of popular entertainment. Only a few early texts have survived; these were written in prose by Ibn Dāniyāl al-Mawsilyi (1238-1311).

His three plays, each called *bāba*, are: *Ṭayf al-Khayāl* (The Shadow Dream), *Ajīb wa Gharīb* (The Strange and the Unusual), and *al-Mutayyam wa al Dā'iyā al-Yatīm* (The lover and the Orphan's Prayers).

The most obvious example of interaction between audience and stage can be seen in the *Ta'ziya* or, as some scholars call it, Islamic drama.

As we have noted, many scholars consider *al-Ta'ziya* a form of drama; but it is essentially a religious ritual which includes several dramatic elements. Moreover, the members of the audience do not consider themselves to be attending a theatrical performance. They believe that they are attending and participating in a ritual practice. We refer on this point to Landau's view, who equates dramatic influence with the impression left on the audience. Indeed *al-Ta'ziya* leaves a powerful impression on the audience; nevertheless it should not be regarded as a theatrical event, because its audience neither conceives nor perceives it as such.

The impression left on the *Shi'a* audience is a religious impression as a result of their religious intention to take part in a religious ritual.

In his book *The Islamic Drama*, Jamshid Malekpour has conducted a thorough study of the *Ta'ziya*. He defines it as a ritual form of drama requiring both participation and belief to reach its theatrical realisation. The earliest known versions of such performances date back to the 10th century.⁵³ The *Ta'ziya* is identified not only as being Islamic, but more specifically as a *Shi'a* ritual. Iran follows the *Shi'a* tradition, and therefore the tragedy of Karbala is commemorated every year by nearly 70 million Iranians. The *Ta'ziya* is practiced yearly in the first month of the Islamic calendar, which is the month of mourning for every *Shi'a* Muslim. Landau suggests that:

the *Ta'ziya* lacks a very important element found in both Eastern and Western Passion plays, i.e. the leading character's resurrection. This is even stranger

considering the fact that the sectarians who celebrate this ten-day rite *do* believe in the return of a scion from the Prophet's house to serve as a sort of Messiah.⁵⁴

The *Ta'ziya* commemorates the martyrdom of the venerated al-Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad, in Karbala in 680 A.D. In the tenth of the cycle of plays, the tragic events of his death are ritually reenacted. We should note at this point that Islamic theatre is different from Arabic theatre: the Arabic theatre is the theatre produced by Arabs, while Islamic theatre is theatre produced by Muslims, who are not necessarily Arabs.

Ta'ziya is performed yearly during the ten days preceding 'Ashūra (the tenth of Muḥarram). While Sunni Muslims fast for one day, and give to the needy, *Shi'a* Muslims reenact the events of Karbala in a dramatic form called *Ta'ziya*. For ten days they commemorate the tragic events of the martyrdom, and remember with grief and lamentations and in some cases flagellations the suffering of al-Hussain and his followers, and on the tenth day they abstain from eating and drinking for the length of time that the battle lasted for, in an attempt to feel the hunger and thirst felt by al-Hussain and his family prior to their martyrdom.

Thus, the *Ta'ziya*, its preparation and enactment, is a religious ritual observance involving extreme emotions and grief, which are true emotions and not just a staged event, as in the case of drama, though it undeniably contains dramatic elements.

To describe the *Ta'ziya*'s main structure, we refer to Malekpour, who notes in his book *The Islamic Drama*, that it was completely developed by the 18th century. Since then the writers of the cycle have added elements and styles of presentation, while keeping the story of the original historical event along with its sorrow and appeal to the faithful. The

reason for the *Ta'ziya* to be considered a form of theatre is mainly its structure, which includes ritual and historical elements as well as poetic recitation, story telling, music and song. There are also elements of improvisation that provide space for political and religious interpretation. It is particularly that part which causes debate, and due to the controversy aroused by the ritual performers they were removed by the government from large cities to smaller ones early in the twentieth century.⁵⁵

In 1979, after the Iranian revolution, the *Ta'ziya* slowly started to reappear in many parts of Iran. The aim of the *Ta'ziya* is to make the audience so emotionally involved that they entirely empathise with the martyrs. The *Ta'ziya*, as it was originally formulated and developed, is meant to express a religious faith, and participation by the audience is a religious duty more than a theatrical experience. Participation is almost an obligation for *Shi'a* Muslims: the whole community is asked to grieve for the martyrs and express strong emotions. The audience is required to dress in black. At certain moments of the scenario, flags and banners are waved by the participants. Men play the roles of both males and females. The music composed for the performance is a noteworthy part of the event, as are the choral laments, structured eulogies, and shared recitations. The *Ta'ziya* also includes enormous communal processions, with the carrying of coffins and posters.

Obviously, a huge space is needed for the performance, especially with the numerous actors involved together with as many as 4,000 participants. When the prominent English director Peter Brook saw this event in 1970 during his visit to a village in the north of Iran, he described it as being very powerful, and it influenced his experimental productions, such as *Orghast* and *Conference of Birds*.⁵⁶

We conclude that, despite its emotional power, the *Ta'ziya* as a form of tragic Islamic drama, should be regarded as a ritual event more than a theatrical one, and the participation of the audience is a religious obligation rather than prompted by an interest in experiencing a theatrical event. Therefore, one cannot consider the participants of the *Ta'ziya* as a real theatrical audience, and we can reach the view that the whole event is a religious one that includes theatrical elements.

The aim of this research is to question a real audience of a real theatrical production to assess their reception, but it would be impossible to assess the *Ta'ziya* audience, due to the nature of the event.

3.4 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter we can say that Arabic theatre went through several stages of development. Various views disagree about when and how this form of literature appeared and developed but one can be certain that Arabic theatre formulated its identity mainly from its language and its culture since it began. However, what was happening on the stages of the Arab world had been more advanced than that of the Kuwaiti theatre. The Kuwaiti theatre started and remained a 'school theatre' for a quarter of a century as we will demonstrate in the next chapter.

Foot Notes of chapter three

- ¹ Maati Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* 2nd edition, London: Lynn Rienner, 1997. p. ix
2. M. M. Badawi, *Modern Arabic Drama In Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. p. 1
3. Ibid., p. 1
- ⁴ Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 2. p. 767
- ⁵ *Al-Jāhiliyya*: is the age before Islam and it was called *Jahiliyah* or the era of illiteracy to indicate the profits of Islam as a cultural, educational and spiritual method of life.
- 6 Paul Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. p. x
- ⁷ Aristotle in his book *Art of Poetry*, states that any drama text should cause Catharsis only by reading it. Aristotle who is the first critic in the history of Greek drama is giving the plot more importance than the performance, therefore, we may reevaluate the view of Moosa in the light of Aristotle's view.
- ⁸ Muḥammed Ghunayimi Hilāl, *al-Naqd al-Adabī al-Ḥadīth*, Cairo: Nahḍat Miṣr, 1977. p. 493
- 9 Ibid., p. 498
- 10 Ibid., p. 498
- 11 Badawi, *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*, p. 2
- 12 Hilāl, *al-Naqd al-Adabi al-Ḥadīth*, p. 500
- 13 For more information about the development of the Western action story, see Hilāl, *al-Naqd al-Adabi al-Ḥadīth*, pp. 464-504.
- 14 Ibid., p. 500
- 15 Ibid., p. 501
- 16 Ibid., p. 502
- 17 Ibid., p. 503
- 18 Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* 2nd. p. ix
- 19 Shmuel Moreh and Philip Sadgrove, *Jewish Contributions to Nineteenth-century Arabic theatre*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. p. 13
- 20 Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1991. p. 13
- 21 Scott Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 767
- 22 Ibid., P. 767

- ²³ Ibid., p.767
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 767
- ²⁵ Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 9
- ²⁶ 'Isām abū- al-Ela, *al-Masrahīya al-'Arabīya: al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Zayf al-Fanī* Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misrīya al-Amma Līl-kitāb, 1994. pp. 23-24
- ²⁷ Abu- al-Ela, *al-Masrahīya al-'Arabīya: al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Zayf al-Fanī*, p. 23
- ²⁸ For more information see the introduction of *al-Farāfir* in which the theatrical experience of Yūsuf Edris is found, and in Badawi, *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*, 1987. p. 154
- ²⁹ Scott Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. 2. p. 579
- ³⁰ Al-Qabbanī, Abu Khalīl. (1871-1902), Syrian playwright and actor, Ibid., vol. 2. p. 625. and M. M. Badawī, *Early Arabic Drama*, Cambridge: CUP, 1988. pp. 56-67
- ³¹ Ya'qūb Sannū', or James Sanū' (1839-1912), Jewish Egyptian journalist, dramatist and actor who wrote using another name, which is Abu -Naḍḍāra (The Man with Glasses), Ibid., vol. 2 .p. 688
- ³² Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 195.
- ³³ Ibid., p.196
- ³⁴ 'Ali al-Ra'ī *Al-Masrah fī al-Waṭan 'Al-'Arabī*, 2nd ed. Al-Kuwayyt: al-Majlis al-Waṭanī līl Thaqāfa wa al-Funūn, 1999. p. 476
- ³⁵ Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 178
- ³⁶ Badawi, *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*, p. 9
- ³⁷ Ibid., p. 12
- ³⁸ A letter published by al-Ḥakīm in *Majallat al-Risāla* (June, 1933), pp. 5-8.
- ³⁹ According to Abu al-Ela in *al-Masrahīya al-'Arabīya: al-Ḥaqīqa wa al-Zayf al-Fanī*, most of The *Arabian Nights* stories are not originally Arabic but Indian or Persian. The names of the characters are evidence of this: for example, Shahrazād and Shahrayār are not Arabic names.
- ⁴⁰ Richard Long, *Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm: Playwright of Egypt*, London: Ithaca Press, 1979. p. 32
- ⁴¹ Islamic theatre is the theatrical productions of Muslims who are not necessarily Arabs, such as Persian theatre.
- ⁴² As found in *The Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. Vol. 2. p. 767
- ⁴³ Ibid., p.767
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 767
- ⁴⁵ Moreh and Sadgrove, *Jewish Contributions to Nineteenth-century Arabic theatre*, pp. 15-16

⁴⁶ For more information about the development of the shadow play and the misunderstanding of some scholars between Khayāl and Khāyāl al-Zill, see *The Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol 2, p. 701

⁴⁷ Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema*, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Moreh and Sadgrove, *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema*, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema*, pp. 2-3.

⁵¹ al-Ra'ī, *al-Masrah fī al-Waṭan al-'Arabī*. p. 33

⁵² Ibraheem Hamaada, *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Dramiyya wa al-Masrahiyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'ārif, 1985. p. 111.

⁵³ Jamshid Malekpour, *The Islamic Drama*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004. pp. vi-vii.

⁵⁴ Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema*, p. 5

⁵⁵ Jamshid Malekpour, *The Islamic Drama*, p. vii

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.1

Chapter Four

Kuwaiti Theatre: Beginnings, Development and Current Status

4.1. Introduction: The Beginnings of Kuwaiti Cultural Life

It is widely recognised that a country's geographical position and the socio-historical events it experienced have direct effects on its cultural life and literary production. Kuwait is no exception in this regard. The various historical phases experienced by Kuwaitis, as demonstrated in Chapter One, are faithfully reflected in Kuwait's literature as they provide its subject matter.

Khalīfa al-Wuqayān in his book *al-Thaqāfa fī al-Kuwait* (Culture in Kuwait) devotes a whole chapter to the discussion of the four main factors that he considers have played a part in establishing Kuwaiti cultural life since 1613. They are: the nature of the country's inhabitants, its geographical position, its political system and the external influences affecting its culture.¹

The first factor is the nature of the people who first inhabited Kuwait at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. They were seeking security away from tribal conflicts in their original lands. They came from well-known cities that had developed advanced cultures such as; *al-Ḥaḍar*. *Al-Ḥaḍar* was the original land and city of al-Atub, the family who first inhabited Kuwait, as mentioned in Chapter One. *Al-Ḥaḍar* was established on the remains of Banī al-Ḳḥuraysh, which had many castles and

wells; for example, the castle of Mūsā ibn Numīr al- Ḳhurayshī which has survived to this day. The castle covers three thousand square metres and it has, within its walls, natural wells that were sufficient to supply a besieged army. It is believed that al-Atub emigrated from this city because of a conflict with their cousins, not because they were searching for a better standard of living. Al-Wuqayān refers to these inhabitants' usage of their individual and family names, and not their tribal names, as evidence of their social development. It is also believed that al-Atub inhabited Qatar first, where they learned the skills of sailing and pearl-fishing before coming to Kuwait. ²

Kuwait became a secure place to live and work, and these conditions encouraged immigration from other Arabian islands and Emirates on both the eastern and western coasts, in addition to the immigrations from Iraq and Iran for financial, social and religious reasons. Al-Wuqayān notes that those immigrations included numbers of scientists and scholars who brought their precious books, and this, besides the general scientific interests of these families, explains the long-held and deep interest in science and literature in Kuwait, which would otherwise be surprising in such a small country.

Some of the families that moved to Kuwait were rich traders who transferred their funds, experiences and cultures to Kuwait, and this explains the rapid development of trade and commerce at that time.

The early inhabitants were not only accomplished in the fields of science and literature, but they were also eager to know more. They sent scholars abroad during the nineteenth

century; the first was 'Isā bin 'Alui, who went to Egypt to study religious sciences, and later, medicine. 'Aloi studied in Egypt until his death in 1863. Other Kuwaiti scholars followed him; they were sponsored by the rich businessmen who were also the sponsors of educational and cultural establishments inside and outside Kuwait since 1911. For example, Qasem al-Ībrāhīm funded the establishment of the Modern Islamic College and donated towards the building of the Kuwaiti hostel in Egypt in 1911.³

The inhabitants, who were by then called Kuwaitis, joined international newspapers which reported global news. Other families used to invite scientists from other parts of the world to their homes and provided them with financial and academic support; these included men such as Rashīd Riḍa, Muḥammed al-Shankittī, 'Abd al-'Azīz al-'Algy and Ḥafīz Wahba.⁴

Other business men established cultural and literary clubs in the countries in which they were staying to conduct trade and business. These included Khālīd al-Faraj, who established the Arabic Club in Bombay, where he was resident from 1917 to 1922, and Khālīd 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥamad, who established the Literary club in Aden in 1925. In addition, 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Rushīd's substantial achievements in Indonesia included establishing and editing newspapers and participating in several cultural and educational activities.

These Kuwaiti businessmen were also donatoers who established the first Kuwaiti schools, which taught mathmatics, Arabic, English, science and crafts in the main curriculum.

In 1913, Farḥān Fāhid al-Khālid established al-Jam'īya al-Khayriya (The Charity Society); its main aim was to send scholars into the wider world to study Islamic sciences and acquire knowledge. In addition, the Orphans' school was founded by Shamlān bin 'Alī Saiyf in 1924.⁵

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Kuwait had a large social sector of highly educated scientists. This encouraged King 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Sa'ūd to ask members of this professional and educated sector to work in Saudi Arabia and teach Saudi workers. For example, the poet Khāled al-Faraj was responsible for the establishment of al-Katyf city, and other scientists and artists also participated in the establishment of Saudi cultural sectors, such as the poet and writer Khālid Sulymān al-'Adsanī, the poet Hajj bin Gāsim al-Hajj, the poet 'Abd al-Latīf Ebrāhīm al-Nesīf, the artist Hāshim al-Rifā'i and other highly educated Kuwaitis.⁶

We conclude by emphasising that in the twentieth century many of Kuwait's inhabitants, some of whom were scientists, brought with them their cultural experiences and their books, and thus enriched the beginnings of Kuwaiti culture and established among Kuwaitis a deep interest in acquiring knowledge that was later fed by sending scholars, inviting scientists and founding educational establishments in Kuwait.

The second factor that influenced the early formation of Kuwaiti culture was the harsh conditions created by Kuwait's geographical position, which drove the Kuwaitis to struggle hard to make a living. Kuwaitis made use of their knowledge of sailing and pearl-fishing and soon became famous for their talents in boat-building, sailing, pearl-fishing and for their wide experience as voyagers and travellers.

The geographical position of Kuwait at the northern edge of the Arabian Gulf enabled it to be a transfer point for the goods coming by sea from India and East Asia and continuing on the land route to Europe. Those goods included Arabian horses, which were carried from central Arabia to India on Kuwaiti boats. Al-Wuqayān asserts that in 1758 a Dutch Baron, Knbha (sic), advised some English travelers who wanted to reach Syria to use Kuwait's eastern road as a safe and fast route and mentioned that a friendly sheikh in Kuwait would facilitate this journey. The company contained five thousand camels and one thousand travelers. Thus, already in 1758 Kuwait was able to protect travelers passing through its land.⁷

Kuwaiti boats sailed across the Indian Ocean from East Asia to East Africa and would often dock in the harbours of other Arabian Gulf countries. It is known that they reached Russia in the nineteenth century to trade goods of wool and leather. In the twentieth century Kuwaitis traded pearls in France and Italy, visited the United States in the 1930s to trade dates and even voyaged as far as Tokyo.⁸

We can conclude that the geographical position of Kuwait enabled the Kuwaitis to transfer goods and through their aptitude for trade, they established connections with other cultures, whose influence on them enriched the beginnings of Kuwaiti culture. The following factor is the nature of the Kuwaiti political system that was established on democracy or *Shūra*.

The nature of the political system in Kuwait, and particularly its roots in *Shūra* (democratic consultation) was the third factor that affected the beginnings of Kuwaiti cultural life. According to Ben J. Slot in his book *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity*:

The open nature of the Āl Ṣabāḥ style of government and, in particular, their relationship with the other social groups comprising Kuwait society, has always given Kuwait its distinguishing feature. A close consideration of each of the social groups that made up Kuwaiti society, namely the ruling family, the merchants and the mariners, in addition to the Bedouin, and the relationships among these groups prior to the advent of oil wealth, is therefore essential in attempting to understand Kuwaiti society and its politics.⁹

Before the Kuwaitis chose a ruling family, they used to advise each other and make their decisions within a democratic system known as *Shūra*. This system was not found in Kuwait's neighbouring countries, in which the ruling family used to inherit governmental authority. In addition, the judgment system was totally independent, the first judge being Muḥammed bin' Abd al-Wahhāb bin Faiyrūz, who died in 1722.

This democratic atmosphere encouraged writers and artists to express their views in literary productions, which was an unusual activity at that time, and in that part of the

world. The fourth factor influencing the beginnings of Kuwaiti cultural life was the external influences, introduced mainly by the scientists who visited Kuwait or were resident there. According to al-Wuqayān, many scholars visited the country; the earliest was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Abd-Allah al-Suwaydī, who visited the Kuwaiti mosques in 1772 and gave public lectures on religious matters. ¹⁰

Al-Wuqayān also points out that during the nineteenth century and particularly from the beginning of the twentieth, the number of scholars and Arab leaders visiting Kuwait started to increase and it is well known that the Kuwaiti people were able to meet those scholars and discuss religious, scientific and literary issues. Many of those scholars stayed in Kuwait to teach; for example, Ḥāfiẓ Wahba taught for many years in al-Mubārakiya and al-Aḥmadiya schools. ¹¹

An important event that took place in 1926 and that demonstrates the external cultural link occurred when the Egyptian newspaper *al-Shūra*, supported the Kuwaiti writer ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Rushayd, who was mistreated because of the views expressed in his *History of Kuwait*, in which he questioned the importance of some Kuwaiti religious leaders. In addition, Kuwaiti writers made constant reference in their articles and books to their colleagues in the Arab world. For example, Yousef al-Qna‘ai stated that his reading of the magazines *al-Hilāl* and *al-Muqtataf* formed his moderate and modern views. ¹²

We will now explore the beginnings of the Kuwaiti theatre as a reflection of the factors discussed above.

4.2. The Beginnings of Kuwaiti Theatre: 1939-1947

In the midst of the cultural revival of the first half of the twentieth century, Kuwaiti theatre emerged as part of the schools curriculum in 1939 and was therefore used for educational purposes. It was developed during the 1950s, when social issues became its main subject, and reached its current form after being exposed to other forms of theatre after 1961.

Because Kuwaiti theatre was established as a school theatre that took the form of an educational theatre, its main audience consisted of students, together with their families and concerned people who attended these school performances.

It is agreed among scholars that the first play written for performance in a Kuwaiti school was *Islām 'Umar*, which was performed in 1939 in the al-Mubārakiya school, and that this play marks the beginning of this stage.

In his research *The Kuwaiti Theatre: A Search for Identity 1939-1980*¹³ M.M. Bilal notes that there are different opinions about which play marked the actual start of Kuwaiti theatre; he mentions that for some, *Islām 'Umar* marks the start, while others claim that *Umm 'Anbār* (1943) marks the start because it was the first farce performed in the al-Aḥmadiya school.

A third opinion regards the farces and interludes performed by scout troupes as the beginning of Kuwaiti theatre, while the Kuwaiti actor Muḥammad al-Nashmī considers his play *Mudīr Fāshil* (A Failing Manager), which was the debut production of his troupe al-Masraḥ al-Sha'bīn 1956, as the true beginning.

Maḥbūb al-'Abd-Allāh, a Kuwaiti critic, disagrees with all these opinions, claiming that the year 1959 marked the start of the Kuwaiti theatre when *Taqālīd* by Saqir al-Rishūd was performed.

While each of these claims could be considered acceptable on different grounds, it is possible to trace the beginning of Kuwaiti theatre to a much earlier production.

According to the Kuwaiti magazine *al-Bayān*,¹⁴ in the summer of 1921, 'Abd 'Azīz al-Rushayd performed a short play in the al-Aḥmadiya school for the benefit of modern education.

I consider this the true start of Kuwaiti theatre, because it was an attempt to put theatrical activity, as a form of literature, in the context of the country's modern educational system. This modest beginning influenced Kuwaiti theatrical efforts for a quarter of a century.

If we examine the first twenty plays performed in Kuwait we find that all of them were performed in schools by students and teachers. These performances also presented stories that were taught in history and Arabic language classes. Students and teachers performed dramatisations of these stories as part of the school curriculum and took part in yearly

competitions between schools in which various theatrical skills such as playwriting, acting, stage managing, lighting and scenography were evaluated.

In this stage, theatre reflected Kuwaiti society's general religious attitude, and the significance of Kuwait's geographical position as a neighbour of Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam, and how that relationship may have influenced the religious attitude of Kuwaiti society. The first twenty school theatre plays were influenced by this social and religious attitude. Moreover, Kuwaiti school performances were regarded as an extension of the role of the mosque where religious and moral themes were presented.

4.2.1. The Presentation of the Plays

The performance by 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Rushayd was, as noted above, mainly staged for the benefit of modern education. It is stated in *al-Bayān* that this performance was short and took place at the al-Aḥmadiyah school in 1921.

As in most of the subsequent school performances, the actors used the *Liwān* as a stage. This is an open fronted, roofed space. It contains rooms and faces the main yard of the school building.¹⁵

During the performance, the audience sat in the open yard facing the stage on seats taken from classrooms or hired from nearby cafés. School tables were used in the *Liwān* to form a suitable stage, being placed next to each other between two pillars of a room. Al-

Nashmī notes, 'we would build the stage using the teachers' tables' ¹⁶, while Bilāl explains that:

The organisers would have only half of the project accomplished and they were left with a stage that had two open sides, because the back of the stage would be blocked by the wall and the front should be left open to form the proscenium. Apparently, the thick hems of tents were the means by which they filled these two gaps and established the first (coulisse) or the side curtains in the history of the theatre in Kuwait.¹⁷

As religious and moral themes were the main subjects of these plays, a style of acting was applied which, though considered suitable, tended to the melodramatic, employing exaggeration of the actor's voice, hand movements and body gestures. Bilal suggests that a similar style of acting was practiced in Egypt after World War II, especially by the two well-known actors Yūsuf Wahbī and George Abyaiḍ. Their melodramatic style of performance has been described by Zakī Ṭuliaymāt in the following terms:

It was a method of exaggeration and gave the impression of affectation when the actor exaggerated in the way he utilised his voice, and overstated his gestures by waving his hands. Moreover, he would be affected in the manner in which he pronounced the letters of each single word, to the extent of bragging and boastfulness...his main concern was to produce a thundering voice which was exceedingly clear.¹⁸

Performances in Kuwaiti schools took place after the afternoon prayer and finished before dusk. Because these performances were presented in daylight lighting was not necessary but on those occasions when plays were performed in the early evening, gas-operated lamps were used. As al-Nashmī testifies: 'We would utilise more than twenty

lamps, which were lined up on the stage in an artistic manner, to provide an adequate amount of light for the audience to see'.¹⁹

The make-up was simple, as all that was needed was to make the young boys resemble men belonging to the old Islamic era. Bilal explains: 'The make-up designer, who was the local barber, used sheeps' wool for beards and moustaches, and occasionally burnt corks, and in order to attach the beards to the actors' faces he would utilise a certain type of gum.'²⁰

Costumes were designed using descriptions found in historical books and closely resembled Kuwaiti traditional dress. Props such as swords and daggers were borrowed from merchants and sheikhs, especially because there were young sheikhs acting in the performances. The recent ruler of Kuwait, Ahmed Al-Gābir Al-Sabāh acted in one of these school performances.²¹

Bilal notes that the ruler of Kuwait at that time encouraged these performances by attending them. When he attended *Islām 'Umar* in 1939, the Kuwaiti ruler remarked: 'Why has this been hidden from us?'.²² According to Bilal, this question was regarded as providing 'implicit consent' for the teachers who organised these performances and had founded school theatres.

On the other hand, the ruler's remark was partly misunderstood; religious and moral themes were not abandoned even after the school theatre developed into the youth clubs' theatre, and remained part of the main subject of the performances.

There was another reason the same themes continued to be presented: the same teachers who were performing in and organising theatre in schools became the organisers of the youth clubs.

The foundation of the Kuwaiti youth clubs in the 1950s did not result in the complete decline of the school theatre, which continued to be an important element in Kuwaiti schools. By the 1950s the founders of the Kuwaiti youth clubs had become experienced actors, whose talents exceeded the school theatre's limits.

At this stage individual theatrical works started to appear such as those by al-Rujayb, who wrote *Mahzala fī Mahzala* (Chaos in Chaos)²³ in collaboration with al-'Adwāni in 1947, *al-Khuli al-Mufattish* (The Worker Who Was Distinguished as an Inspector) in 1950, *Idrāb al-Khabābīz* (The Bakers' Strike) in 1951, and *'Arūs al-Zunūj* (The Black Bride).

The value of these individual attempts is that they laid the foundations of Kuwaiti popular theatre, which started in the 1950s. The Kuwaiti audience started at this point to attend various performances outside the schools. Although these were still partly influenced by the school themes, they presented the lived experiences of Kuwaiti people in a comic manner. This comic manner has perhaps been the dominant feature of Kuwaiti theatre since the 1950s.

We can conclude that the Kuwaiti school theatre was established as an example of modern education and continued to present educational and religious plays in what was

then considered a suitable acting style. Its organisers and its audience may be described as belonging to a religious society that required a religious theatre.

4.3. The Development of Kuwaiti Theatre: The Popular Theatre of the 1950s

The Kuwaiti popular theatre was so called because it presented popular issues and the daily concerns of Kuwaiti citizens on the stage. The earliest play belonging to this theatre was produced in 1943, when the farce *Umm 'Anbār* ('Anbār's Mother) was presented in the al-Aḥmadiya school theatre.

This play was considered by many to have marked the true start of Kuwaiti theatre, because it presented a story addressing a problem prevalent in Kuwaiti society, that of unemployment. Although *Umm 'Anbār* was followed by similar types of interludes presented in the religious school theatres, it did not greatly affect the general taste of the Kuwaiti audience because, as mentioned earlier, Kuwaiti society was mainly religious in the 1940s. However, as the young performers of the Kuwaiti school theatre became mature actors who were also able to write and stage works addressing these new conditions, the prominent Kuwaiti actor al-Nashmī was encouraged to establish a scout troupe in 1950 with the aim of providing a workshop for amateur actors; 'These workshops were a medium for the discovery and training of talent'.²⁴ Al-Nashmī recalls,

In 1950, when I was a student in the al-Mubarkiyah school, I realised that I was extremely drawn towards theatrical acting. Therefore, I began to develop my talent by organising Scout review parties in which we performed certain comic short plays, composed and improvised principal roles.²⁵

Al-Nashmī's early attempts introduced the Kuwaiti audience to the popular theatre. These audiences became familiar with it and started to react positively to it. Nevertheless at first the popular theatre faced several difficulties. Although al-Nashmī was strongly motivated to become a comic actor, he had no intention of forming a popular theatre company. At this stage, he was only aiming to practice his craft and discover new theatrical talents in Kuwait, *but in order to achieve his goal he needed government financial support which was not available.* The Administration of Education, which was the old title of the current Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, would not provide al-Nashmī's theatre with the financial assistance he needed, as it had done to the school theatres. Instead, al-Nashmī sought individual members who could support the workshop financially, which meant they needed to be employed as well as be able to act and improvise without a script.

The actors' ability to improvise was important for two reasons; on the one hand, to demonstrate the type of acting required in this theatre and on the other to be able to react to the audience's objections if these were openly expressed during the performances. As we might expect, financial security remained a problem and certainly affected not only the quality of props but also the facilities offered to the audience, to the extent that sometimes there were not enough seats and many members of the audience had to watch the play while standing.

While overwhelmed by these difficulties, al-Nashmī was profoundly influenced by an event that was to change his life and practice, and encouraged him to establish the popular theatre. In 1950 he travelled to Egypt and stayed for three months, during which

time he was exposed to Egyptian theatre while participating in scout training courses. He recalled: 'I attended at least thirteen performances at Masraḥ al-Rīḥānī, and I even managed to establish a friendship with many artists such as Mary Munīb, al-Qussarī (...), who took me to the back stage to learn more about theatre.'²⁶

This exposure to the Egyptian popular theatre, which was undeniably more developed than its Kuwaiti counterpart, encouraged al-Nashmī to work for three years to establish a similar type of popular theatre in Kuwait.

Through the scout workshops, he transformed his dreams to reality by developing ideas and new techniques, which enabled him to announce the foundation of al-Masraḥ al-Sha'bī (The Popular Theatre) in 1954.

In an interview given in 1983 he stated: 'In 1954 we were convinced that it was time to form a theatrical group to present popular plays, and we began to perform short colloquial farces in the stadium of the Ma'ārif.'²⁷ The establishment of al-Masraḥ al-Sha'bī prompted al-Nashmī to continue to search for qualified actors, and he also discussed his theatrical intentions with all those whom he believed could support the Kuwaiti popular theatre.²⁸

Some critics have cast doubt on the originality of al-Nashmī's work, claiming that the circumstances in which he founded his theatrical company were particularly favourable. They maintain, for example, that Al-Nashmī used al-Rujayb's departure to study in Egypt as an opportunity to take over the leadership of improvised theatre and that 'Abd al-Malik Al-Ṣāliḥ's death in 1946 left the field open for him.

These criticisms seem baseless, and in any case the Kuwaiti audience continued to encourage al-Nashmī by flocking to attend his plays, which reflected their actual lives.

Both al-Rujayb and al-Ṣāliḥ were active and prominent in the field of Kuwaiti theatre. Al-Rujayb was in Kuwait when the popular theatre was founded by al-Nashmī and did not travel to Egypt to study theatre until 1948; after he returned in 1950, he acted and collaborated with al-Nashmī in the writing of many farces, in particular *Umm 'Anbār*, the first farce in the history of the Kuwaiti popular theatre. As for the death of al-Ṣāliḥ, this did not benefit al-Nashmī in any way. These opinions hostile to al-Nashmī were based on their holders' disapproval of the popular theatre and their support for the plays performed in standard Arabic in the school theatres.

Al-Nashmī's critics did not approve of a theatre established for the Kuwaiti people, which they saw as a threat to classical theatre of the kind presented in schools, with its overwhelming focus on classical history and its imposing religious and moral agenda. The popularity of the popular theatre resulted in a decline in the attendance of the school theatre. The reason being, the Kuwaiti audience identified itself more in the performances of the popular theatre. Members of the audience saw familiar characters from their everyday lives presented on the stage and found that this raised their awareness of their deficiencies, not through heavy drama but through light comedy.

This style of drama increased the popularity of al-Nashmī's theatre to the extent that his audiences reached 12,000 in the 1950s.²⁹

In his evaluation of this form of theatre, Ṭulayimāt, states that: 'It represents the major theatrical activity in Kuwait, due to the fact that its performances are attended by an audience which consists of all social ranks. It treats this audience's own environment, and utilises the Kuwaiti dialect.'³⁰

Basing our view on Ṭulayimāt's statement and al-Rujayb's occasional comments in the Kuwaiti press about the importance of finding a lively drama that reflects Kuwaiti peoples' social problems, we can conclude that even some of the intellectuals or the groups who encouraged the classical Arabic play and opposed the popular theatre in the vernacular helped in forming the basis of the popular theatre.

Others who opposed al-Nashmī's popular theatre based their opinions on a particular play first performed in 1955, namely *Mudīr Fāshil* (A Failing Manager).

Both M. H. 'Abd-Alla and Khamis S. al-Zayd did not consider that this play provided a professional theatrical performance, but 'Alī al-Rā'ī states in his *al-Masrah fī al-Waṭan Al-'Arabī* that al-Nashmī's popular theatre was appreciated by the Kuwaiti audience and this improvisational form of theatre was being developed at the same time in other parts of the Arab world.

Al-Rā'ī also supposes that if al-Nashmī's theatre had not existed, the Kuwaiti theatre might have merely continued to present performances of the kind found in the school theatre. About *Mudīr Fāshil* we may say that it represented a new form and a transition

from the short farce to the full-length play. The Kuwaiti popular theatre subsequently presented twenty full-length plays from 1955 to 1960.

We may conclude that the productions of the popular theatre mark the beginnings of a genuine Kuwaiti theatre by presenting familiar characters and real situations on the stage. We could measure the success of this form by the enormous encouragement of the Kuwaiti audience, who often insisted after several performances on providing al-Nashmī with further information about the situation presented on stage. The audience would also ask for certain favourite scenes to be repeated.

Al-Nashmī's theatre included Kuwaiti folklore and traditional arts that entertained Kuwaitis of all ranks, but the most important feature of his theatre was its utilising of colloquial Kuwaiti Arabic.

Finally, the Kuwaiti popular theatre made attending the theatre a widespread social practice and thereby developed a national Kuwaiti audience.³¹

4. 4. The Coming of Age of the Kuwaiti Theatre in the 1960s

The impact of the traditional ways of life on Kuwaiti literature, for example, can be seen especially during the 1960s, probably because that decade was a period when Kuwaiti society was changing radically from its old ways. These literary works contrasted the old times, in all their cruelty and poverty, with the new, in all their luxury and wealth brought about by the discovery and exploitation of oil. Poetry, short stories, plays and films were

produced to show the present generation the difficulties and hardships of the past, so that the young people would appreciate both their present and their past.

The year 1961 was significant in Kuwaiti history for several reasons: most notably, Kuwait gained its independence of the British mandate on 19 June 1961.

These events increased the Kuwaitis' feelings of patriotism, and adherence to pan-Arabism. At that time there was strong support for the idea of Arab nationalism and deep feelings of unity, and when the United Arab Republic was formed between Egypt and Syria in 1958 it was greatly encouraged by Kuwaitis, who hoped it might lead to a larger unity under Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Egypt's President. And despite the break-up of the UAR in 1961, the Arab world continued to be dominated by the idea of pan-Arabism.

In accordance with the idea that Egypt was the head of the Arab Unity movement and the key power in the struggle to create an Arab identity, and with the encouragement of many Kuwaiti intellectuals who opposed the Kuwaiti popular theatre, *al-Masrah al-'Arabī* (The Arabic Theatre) was founded by the Egyptian theatre instructor, Zaki Ṭulayimāt. He returned to Kuwait in 1961, having first visited in the 1950s to make a report about the Kuwaiti theatre, and established this theatre on 10 February of the same year with the Kuwaiti government's assistance. Ṭulimāt remained in Kuwait for ten years, during which time he controlled the administration of art and theatre, besides running *al-Masrah al-'Arabī*, which was sponsored by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work.

Despite generous encouragements by the government and many Kuwaiti intellectuals, the Kuwaiti audience's attendance was very poor. Perhaps Ṭulayimāt's scripts and acting

techniques were an important factor in this matter, as they were classical and lacked vivacity.

One cannot say, however, that the reason of this poor attendance was the language barrier as it was the case, for example, in Algeria, for three reasons; first, the Kuwaiti audience was familiar with the Standard Arabic of the school theatre. Second, the Kuwaiti dialect itself is similar to Standard Arabic, and the third reason is that the state of Kuwait had never been controlled by a foreign coloniser who would dominate the usage of Standard Arabic, as was the case in the states of the Maghreb, where Standard Arabic was banned from schools during the colonial period.

In addition to the lack of vivacity in Tulimāt's scripts and acting techniques, if we consider the radical social changes that took place in Kuwait in the 1960s, we may comprehend why the Kuwaiti audiences preferred the modern comedy or the light comedy to the classical satiric performances of *al-Masrah al-'Arabī*.

These changes were evident in all aspects of life, in politics, economy, and education. The 1960s coincided with the government of the Kuwaiti ruler, 'Abdallah al-Sālim al-Sabāh, who ordered that the old city of Kuwait be transformed into a modern capital. In order to change the old city, old houses needed to be demolished and their owners compensated. The owners of the old houses felt great emotional bonds to their homes, which contained all their memories and which they left with heavy hearts, and saw the modern life of luxury as a compensation for the loss of their beloved simple old ways; however, they began to enjoy prosperity and cease to feel nostalgia for the sufferings of

the old life. Therefore, we may agree with Bilal's opinion that the light comedy form was more attuned to the mood of Kuwaiti audiences at that time.³²

There were also other intellectual factors such as the wide popularity of the popular theatre, which had dramatised the changes between past and modern ways of living, and the appearance in 1961 of television, which presented, among other kinds of drama, the comic plays of al-Rīyḥāni who, as previously mentioned, influenced al-Nashmī's theatrical beginnings when the future actor attended al-Rīyḥāni's plays while in Egypt in 1950.

Ironically, while *al-Masrah al-'Arabī* was poorly attended by the Kuwaiti audience and *al-Masrah al-Sha'bi* was widely attended, the first was fully sponsored by the Kuwaiti government without conditions or even a yearly evaluation. In spite of this unequal treatment, the situation in general created a healthy atmosphere for other playwrights, actors and theatre professionals who were eager to contribute to the field of Kuwaiti theatre. In this atmosphere, two other companies were established: *Masrah al-Khalīj* and *al-Masrah al-Kuwaiti*.

Each company had and still has its own playwrights, actors, directors and board of administration, besides government sponsorship. There were now four important theatrical companies and it was felt in government circles that some form of censorship was required, and so a government department was instituted. This department encouraged some playwrights, while discouraging or even preventing others from

contributing. It is believed that the officials of this department had no knowledge or experience of the field of theatre.³³ As a result, the four Kuwaiti companies traveled around the Arab world seeking a wider audience and different theatrical experiences.

The most obvious measurement of the success of the theatre of that time was the behaviour of Kuwaiti audiences, who had become increasingly sophisticated and demanding, having been educated by the school theatre and al-Nashmī's theatre, which had established Kuwait's theatrical conventions.

As for *al-Masrah al-'Arabī*, in the 1960s poor attendances forced it to close down; perhaps the problem was that its performances were limited to classical topics and provided no innovations. But it reappeared in the 1970s, after a break of ten years, to perform political Arabic drama.

The innovations of the 1960s were not only due to these factors; Kuwaiti playwrights began to look abroad for inspiration. They started to adapt international plays which added to their theatrical knowledge and gave their audience new experiences. For example, Jerome K. Jerome's play *The Soul of Nicolas Snyders* was presented by *Masrah al-Khalīj*, having been adopted by its director, Saqir al-Rushūd.

Al-Masrah al-'Arabī, on the other hand presented only Egyptian adaptations, which were major failures apart from two plays, namely, *Hatt al-Ṭayr*, *Ṭār al-Ṭayr* (The Bird Has Landed, The Bird Has Flown), and *Badawiyān fi al-'Iyāda* (Two Bedouins in a Clinic).

Al-Masrah al-Kuwaiti adapted *The Common Room* by John Madison, which was directed by Sa'dūn al-'Ubaydi and performed in February 1970. *Al-Masrah al-Sha'bi* presented an adaptation of George Theotaka's *The Boat*. This play was chosen by *al-Masrah al-Sha'bi* because it concerned the life of the sailor and the Kuwaiti version had the resources to portray the old Kuwaiti sea life.

Another innovation of the 1960s was the appearance of women on stage, a change that was encouraged by both al-Nashmī and Ṭulayimāt. This movement against Kuwaiti social traditions was commenced by two actresses, namely Mariyam al-Ṣaliḥ and Mariyam al-Qaḍbān, who were to be followed by many others.

We have discussed the important factors that transformed the Kuwaiti theatre and created a more experienced audience: early movements and experiments, the transformation of all aspects of Kuwaiti life including literature, the trips to learn from other Arabic theatres, and the international adaptations. These factors did much to raise theatrical standards in Kuwait, notably in the establishment of the four main theatrical companies, which have continued to present performances since the 1960s. It is believed that the Kuwaiti theatre reached its mature stage in the 1970s for a number of reasons that we will discuss next.

4.5 The Maturity of the Kuwaiti Theatre in the 1970s

We can call the 1970s the mature age of the Kuwaiti theatre because of the theatrical achievements that occurred during this period. Bilal calls this period a 'boom', one in which Kuwaiti society enjoyed prosperity.³⁴ I would argue that in this period the Kuwaiti theatre was affected by three main factors: first, the experience of both the Kuwaiti playwrights and the Kuwaiti audience; second, the political circumstances, which were at first democratic then changed towards the end of the period; third, the theatrical experiences which the Kuwaiti theatre gained from the visits of foreign theatrical groups invited to Kuwait and, in response, the participation of Kuwaiti groups in theatrical festivals outside the country.

Regarding the first factor, one notices that by this period, the new generation of Kuwaiti playwrights no longer referred to the old Kuwaiti hard life as the previous generation had in the 1960s; on the contrary, they started to discuss new issues on stage and disapproved the old Kuwaiti theatrical conventions. One could cite, for example, the Absurdist plays of Sulaymān al-Ḥuzamī, and note that the new generation of the Kuwaiti audience who encouraged these developments by attending in large numbers, while ignoring the plays written in Standard Arabic by not attending such performances.

In the 1960s the unpopularity of *al-Masraḥ al-'Arabi* had led to the closing down of the company, as mentioned earlier; and in the 1970s the Kuwaiti audience's taste had not changed. The failure of both attempts to present the 'Arabic play' or plays written in

Standard Arabic show that the Kuwaiti audience were not inclined to accept this style of theatrical presentation, not in the 1960s nor in the 1970s.

Nevertheless at the turn of this century things seem to have taken a different turn; the two cases studied by this research were written in Standard Arabic and both were well attended by the Kuwaiti audience in 2004. This research measures the development of the taste of the Kuwaiti audience over forty-four years; the results of the survey will be presented in Chapter Six.

I ought to mention here that although the Arabic play did not achieve much success, it did act as a transitional stage between the Kuwaiti social play and the Kuwaiti political play that played an important role in the 1970s; also, presenting all these various types of drama required several directing methods, such as those required by the Epic theatre.

The second factor that may influence the condition of theatre in any part of the world, and necessarily influenced the Kuwaiti theatre is a country's political atmosphere, which in Kuwait was democratic at the beginning of the 1970s or even from the establishment of the country, as we demonstrated in Chapter One; but on 28 September 1976 the Kuwaiti Parliament was dismissed, and certain items of the Kuwaiti constitution were suspended³⁵.

M. H. 'Abd Allāh described the impact of this situation on the Kuwaitis, as 'the most crucial event of the 1970s, which shocked the Kuwaiti conscience'.³⁶ At this difficult time, two plays presented this situation. The first was *Mughāmarāt Rās al-Mamlūk* by the

Syrian playwright Sa 'd Allāh Wannūs, which took corruption, opportunism and dictatorship as its main themes.

The second was *al-Thālith* by the Kuwaiti playwright Ḥasan Y. al-'Alī, which discussed the right of the ruler to legitimately claim authority.³⁷

The third factor was the theatrical experiences that the Kuwaiti theatre gained through witnessing the work of foreign theatrical groups invited to Kuwait and, conversely, the participation of Kuwaiti groups in theatrical festivals outside Kuwait. We mentioned earlier in regard to the Kuwaiti theatre of the 1960s that the Kuwaiti theatrical companies started to look for external inspiration at the end of the 1960s; then in the 1970s, when the theatrical atmosphere started to be of more importance in Kuwaiti society, some Arabic theatre companies visited Kuwait and performed multiple plays. For example, in 1974 the Moroccan National Theatre staged two plays: *Maqāmāt Badī' al-Hamadhānī*, and *Sidi 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Majdūb*. Later on, the Company of the City of Tunis presented *al-Lughz* (The Quiz), and *Bayram al-Tūnisī* in 1976. The year after, the Syrian National Theatre presented: *Sahra Ma'a Abi Khalil al-Qabbānī* by Sa 'd Allah Wannūs, and *al-Ghura 'bā* by 'Alī 'Uqla 'Irsān.

In exchange and to gain further theatrical experience, the four Kuwaiti companies were taking their parts in the annual Arabic theatrical festivals, for example, the ones in Casablanca, Tunis, and Damascus. At this stage, when the Arabic play and particularly the performances of *al-Masraḥ al-'Arabī* were particularly appreciated by Arab audiences outside Kuwait, it was more appropriate for the Kuwaiti acting companies to stage their

performances utilising Standard Arabic in order to be understood by other Arab nationalities. Accordingly, more government sponsorship was given to the company that performed mainly in Standard Arabic: *al-Masrah al-'Arabī*. Such sponsorship was considered necessary because conducting these kinds of plays required particular costumes, props and décor. *Al-Masrah al-'Arabī* benefited from this experience and came to realise that the political play was the genre most appreciated by the audience, and accordingly they staged other Kuwaiti political dramas, which led to the company finally attaining success.

A notable and positive reaction to the Kuwaiti theatrical activities that were taking place inside and outside Kuwait was the growth of theatrical criticism, which started in the local newspapers. Although some of these articles were not informed by theatrical experience or serious attempts to evaluate Kuwaiti theatrical activities, others were based on adequate theatrical knowledge and experience, such as those of Ḥassan Y. 'Alī, Maḥbūb al-'Abd Allāh, and M. Ḥ 'Abd-Allāh.

Another positive reaction to the new atmosphere created by the activities of the theatre companies and the start of the media documentation of those activities was the establishment of the *Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts* in 1973.

This institute consisted of three major departments: acting and directing, critical research and studies, and theatrical design. Only at this stage did academic, and later, professional performances start to take place in Kuwait. Regarding the Institute's contribution, Bilal remarks:

The Institute of the Dramatic Arts participated enormously in the enrichment of the Kuwaiti theatre in several ways such as producing highly qualified artists in all fields of theatre, like acting and directing, design and criticism. The institute also produces two full productions in the scholastic year as an examination for the acting students of the final year and all these performances are attended by the public and televised by Kuwait television.³⁸

The last theatrical phenomenon that appeared in the 1970s and continued through the early 1980s was the establishment of 'private' theatrical companies. Two prominent artists who were members of al-Masrah al-'Arabi first established this trend: 'Abd al-Husayn 'Abd al-Riḍā and Sa'd al-Faraj founded their own art establishment, which was not attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs as the previous theatrical companies had been, and so it did not receive any governmental support, and was treated as a business venture operating within the purview of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Riḍa and al-Faraj called their establishment *al-Masrah al-Waṭanī* (The National Theatre); as the name may suggest, they presented performances addressing local issues using the Kuwaiti dialect. These included the three successful plays *Banī Ṣāmit* (The Silent People), *Daḥiyyat Bayt al-'IZ* (The Sacrifice of the Rich), and *'Alā Hamān yā Fuir'ūn* (Those Days are Gone Pharaoh).³⁹

Al-Masrah al-Waṭani achieved wide success, and its independence enhanced its reputation. According to M. H. 'Abd Allāh, in his article *al-Khishya Wa al-Raja'* (Fear and Hope):

This team, which left al-Masrah al-‘Arabī to engage in wider private theatrical activities, achieved a notable success when they became unique by funding their own work, because al-Masrah al-Waṭanī, which was founded by ‘Abd al-Ḥussayn ‘Abd al-Riḍā and Sa ‘d al-Faraj is presenting a good standard of work and has a wide audience, it is probably the creator of the wide audience in this period.⁴⁰

Bilal insists that *al-Masrah al-Waṭanī* should not be called ‘commercial theatre’, a pejorative name that was given to this company by some envious individuals working in certain local newspapers. His view of the ‘commercial’ Kuwaiti theatre is that:

It is unfair to accuse them all of "Running after profit", because they participated in the enrichment of the Kuwaiti theatre with several good standard plays, which created an atmosphere of competition and played a positive role in preserving the authenticity of the Kuwaiti themes.⁴¹

Al-Masrah Al-Waṭanī not only presented many serious and artistic productions in the field of theatre, but also presented television plays and serials, and radio plays.

The last substantial achievement of the Kuwaiti theatre in the 1970s was the development of children’s theatre, an achievement that began with positive intentions but later adopted a negative attitude overly concerned with financial profit towards the end of the 1970s. This attitude was the main feature of the Kuwaiti theatre in the 1980s that we will discuss next.

4.6 The Decline of Kuwaiti Theatre in the 1980s

The Kuwaiti theatre of the 1980s experienced a decline for two reasons; the first was the death of the prominent Kuwaiti director Şāqir al-Rishūd, the second was that the majority of theatre productions were more concerned with financial profits.

Although the sudden death of Şāqir al-Rishūd in 1979 was regarded by the local press as signalling the death of the Kuwaiti theatre, Bilal disagrees, arguing that there were other directors who were capable of producing competent Kuwaiti vernacular plays; moreover, al-Rishūd's company, Masraḥ al-Khalīj, mounted several productions after his death, in which his surviving colleagues' views were expressed regarding the needs and problems of Kuwaiti society. Bilal explains the attitude of the local press as stemming from a desire to create an 'illusion' that would enhance the status of Şāqir al-Rishūd. However, one cannot deny that the majority of the Kuwaiti theatrical productions in the 1980s were not up to the level of those of the 1970s, or that the decline followed the death of a prominent artist, which can certainly be regarded as a great loss to the Kuwaiti theatre of the 1980s. As to the 'illusion' that the local press created, one can consider it a celebration of an eminent artist who deserved to be better appreciated, and an attempt to create a healthy competitive atmosphere.

The competitive atmosphere created by the local press encouraged a few directors to make substantial contributions to the children's theatre: for example, in 1979 al-Badir Establishment presented *al-Bisāṭ al-Sihrī* (The Magic Carpet) by Maḥdī al-Şāiq, which

told the story of a lazy, young prince who learns the importance of work after being kidnapped by a gang who force him to work during his captivity. Another good example is *al-Zarzūr* by the academic playwright, Fahad Ṣultān, which was produced in 1982. The play presented the theme of fear and how it should be managed. *Zarzūr* is the name of a little bird, a sparrow that is known for its cowardliness.

The competitive atmosphere, however, led to a more negative phenomenon: the drive to make a quick profit whatever the consequences. The majority of the productions of this kind were for children's theatre and this situation continued to be characteristic of the Kuwaiti theatre of the 1980s. According to the director, Sulaymān al-Ḥuzamī:

Unfortunately, theatre in Kuwait has, during the last five years, lost its balanced form and its human dimensions and came into the hands of some people who are outsiders to the theatre in an enterprise which is being run according to the commercial principle of supply and demand ...this phenomenon can be seen, I repeat, in some people who represent the majority of children's theatre.⁴²

In 1990 the Iraqi invasion halted Kuwaiti cultural life as it halted and damaged other sectors of life, but Kuwaitis were eager to continue their cultural life outside Kuwait through the Kuwaiti Cultural Centres around the world. The invasion had profound effects that were reflected in Kuwaiti literature, as will be explained next.

4.7 The Impact of the Invasion on the Kuwaiti Theatre and the Cultural Life from 1990 to the Present.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its traumatic effects on Kuwait, the Iraqi invasion left a rich source of dramatic events to represent in the country's literature. The fact that one Arab country had invaded another, besides the destruction of much of the infrastructure of Kuwaiti society created a painful heritage of many social, political and economic stories that might be presented on stage after liberation.

During the invasion no plays were presented in Kuwait, but Kuwaitis outside the country did manage to produce drama; for example *Azma wat 'adī* (A Temporary Crisis) was performed in Egypt in October 1990, presented with the support of the Kuwaiti Media Centre in Egypt. After liberation several productions presented the story of the invasion, the most successful being *Saiyf al- 'Arab* (The Sword of the Arabs) by the al-Masraḥ al- 'Arabī company, which concerns the character of Saddam Hussein and his ways of manipulating the Iraqi people.

Another production was *Makhrūsh Ṭāḥ Bi Khrūsh* (The One with the Good Luck)⁴³ by the playwright Mubārak al-Hashshāsh, which makes black comedy out of the story of the Iraqi invasion. The director, Ḥussein al-Ṣaliḥ, framed the people's real sufferings within a comic style. *Makhrūsh Ṭāḥ Bi Khrūsh* presents the author's experience as a Kuwaiti individual who suffered through many tragic situations during the invasion and occupation, and in the production the actors, as Kuwaiti individuals, acted as if reliving

their everyday experiences. The décor was a naked skeleton surrounding the Kuwaiti flag, indicating the dire condition of the country during the occupation. The play documents the forms of physical abuse and activities of the spies and traitors⁴⁴ who helped the Iraqis. This form of post-invasion theatre can be categorised together with a variety of cultural productions that allows us to gauge the impact of the invasion on literature. The post invasion short stories are a good example. 'Abd Allāh al-Qatam in his book *Ḥawla al-Ghazw* (About the Invasion) described the impact according to the chronology of events: 1. The Invasion, 2. The Resistance Movement, 3. Captivity, 4. Patriotism, 5. Departures, 6. The Invaders' Behaviour, 7. Liberation.⁴⁵

Barbara Michalak- Pikulska in her book *The Contemporary Kuwaiti Short Story in Peace Time and War 1929-1995*, adds more themes to those of al-Qatam: 'the reaction on the part of Kuwaiti society to the occupation, the situation of threat to state, family and spiritual identity, the situation of the civilian population: children, women and men, the military destruction-as equally external as internal.'⁴⁶

Al-Qatam and Michalak- Pikulska attempt to systematically connect the range of war literature as it appeared with the chronological order of the events; they succeeded in the task of addressing the historical issues, and this has certainly been the main aim of Kuwaiti authors.

Similarly, the aim of Sulymān Al-Bassām, the Kuwaiti playwright of the first case study in this research is mainly to address the socio-political issues confronting Kuwaiti

society. He chose to present his work at the al-Qurayn Annual Theatrical Festival, an important event that appeared after the liberation. The government recognized the great importance of the role played by culture and the arts during the invasion; the Kuwaiti Cultural Centres' exhibitions, which included work by the older and younger generations, had directed international attention to the Kuwaiti crisis of 1990. As a result, theatre became one of the main concerns of the Kuwaiti government after liberation.

4.8 Theatre as the Core of Cultural Life in Liberated Kuwait

After liberation, cultural life was mainly devoted to expressing the Kuwaiti people's reactions to the invasion, the national feeling of belonging, and the distinct Kuwaiti identity that had almost been lost as a result of the invasion. Literary productions were enriched by a myriad of individual experiences, and theatrical productions which were mainly concerned with what had happened during the invasion and occupation. However, different opinions were expressed about the causes of the invasion, the invaders' attitude and the Kuwaitis' attitude during that time and after liberation.

Because of the trauma of the invasion, which has not been erased from the minds and hearts of Kuwaiti people, plays such as *The Trade*, are effective, not in suggesting solutions for the country's social problems, but in making the audience more aware of these problems, which affect everyone.

This research's survey aims to analyse how each spectator interpreted the events on stage in terms of his or her own life experiences.

Although there are several Kuwaiti annual theatrical festivals, we chose al-Qurayn because it is the most popular festival, and it does not only include theatrical performances; the festival lasts for a month, during which time many cultural activities take place, such as lectures, seminars, art exhibitions, book exhibitions, poetry evenings, and musical performances, and ends with a ceremony in which Kuwaiti and Arab artists are rewarded. The al-Qurayn festival was established in 1972 by His Highness Gaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah when he was Prime Minister. He ordered that a 'Higher League' be formed; its main aim is to raise the standard of literature and art in Kuwait. The League then formulated urgent plans; theatrical festivals were conceived and planned and started three years after liberation in 1994. Al-Qurayn is an old name for Kuwait as a country, and means 'the small fortress'.

Among the most important activities that were organised at the first few al-Qurayn festivals, we might mention three lectures about the critical issues in Arabic literature, seminars on *Modern Art and Traditional Arabic Music*, five poetry evenings under the title of *Dīwān al-'Arab*, a lecture celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the magazine *'Ālam al-Fikr*, and other important cultural activities that were both thought-provoking and entertaining.

4.9 The Conclusion

We have argued that there were four main factors: the nature of the Kuwaitis, Kuwait's geographical position, its political system and its external connections, that created the cultural conditions in which the Kuwaiti theatre could be established and progressed. In the 1940s the Kuwaiti theatre was mainly restricted to school stages as a part of the curriculum, in the 1950s it began to address popular issues and was able to attract larger audiences due to its vivid presentations, in the 1960s oil was discovered and the Kuwaiti theatre dramatised the differences between the old life and the new. The 1970s was a unique stage owing to the new methods that playwrights explored, and large audiences were drawn to the private theatre; but the success of some artists in the late 1970s negatively affected the majority of performances in the 1980s, especially of children's plays, although the possibility of commercial success encouraged a few Kuwaiti playwrights to create successful productions.

In 1990, the Iraqi invasion and occupation proved to be a double-edged weapon: on the one hand they left Kuwait with massive destruction of the infrastructure including in the theatre sector; on the other they provided Kuwaiti writers with a wealth of dramatic material. Theatre in liberated Kuwait was rich with these stories, drawn from the bitter experiences that deeply affected the Kuwaiti audience's aesthetic response. The Kuwaiti spectator's cultural experience now does not only include the difficult past and the luxurious standard of living after the discovery of oil, but also the tragic present after the destruction wrought by the Iraqis and the unknown future that will emerge from this

present. Festivals such as al-Qurayn encourage Kuwait's contemporary arts with the aim of maintaining and developing the country's cultural life and building national confidence in the future.

Endnotes of chapter four

1. Khalīfā al-, Wuqayān, *al-Thaqāfa fī al-Kuwait: Bawākir wa Ittijāhāt*, Matba'at al-Magahwy al-ūla, al-Kuwait: 2006, pp. 13-41
2. Ibid., p. 15
3. Ibid., pp. 18-19
4. Ibid., p. 19
5. Ibid., p. 22
6. Ibid., p. 22
7. Ibid., p. 26
8. Ibid., p. 26
9. Ben J. Slot, *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity*, London: Arabian Publishing, 2003. p. 101
- 10 al-Wuqayān, *al-Thaqāfa fī al-Kuwait*, p. 35
- 11 Ibid., p. 36
- 12 Ibid., pp. 37-38
- ¹³ Muhammad M. Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre: A Search for Identity (1939-1980)', PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 1985. p.120.
- 14 Khālīd S. al-Zayd, *al-Bayān*, no.195, Kuwait: June, 1982. p. 37
- ¹⁵ The *Liwān* was part of the old-style Kuwaiti houses.
- ¹⁶ Al-Nashmī, '*Alam al-Fann*', October/November, 1971. p. 39
- ¹⁷ Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p. 125.
- ¹⁸ Zakī Tulayimāt, *Fan al-Mumaththil al-'Arabī*, Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣrīya al-'amma lil-Ta'lif wa al-Nashr, 1971. pp. 37-38.
- ¹⁹ Al-Nashmī. '*Alam al-Fann*', p. 39.
- ²⁰ Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p. 126.
21. Sālih al-Khliḫī, *al-Haraka al-Masrahyia fī Duwal Majlis al-Ta'āwun al-Khalijī*, Kuwait city: Maṭābe' al-Anbā al-Tujāria, 1989. p.176.
- ²² Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre'. p. 127

23. Here al-Rugīb meant *Mahzala* or (Chaos) in its Arabic context, and did not use *Mahzala* as a theatrical term. *Mahzala* in its theatrical context would mean farce which is not the case in this play.
24. 'Abd Allāh M. H., *al-Ḥaraka al-Masraḥīya Fī al-Kuwait*, Kuwait: Masraḥ al-Khalīj, 1976. p. 16.
25. *Ibid.*, p.16.
26. An interview with al-Nashmī by M. M. Bilal, October 1983.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p. 182.
- 29 Khālid S. al-Zayd, *al-Masraḥ fī al-Kuwait*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat al-Rubay 'ān, 1983. p. 93.
- 30 Zaki Tulayimāt is a prominent figure in the Egyptian theatre who was asked to evaluate the theatrical activities in Kuwait by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1950s.
31. Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p.190.
32. *Ibid.*, p.233
33. *Ibid.*, p. 234
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 234
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 357. For more information see *al-Kuwait al-Ra'y al-Ākhar*, A. F. al-Nifīsī, Tā- Hā, advertising, London, 1978, p.p. 229-236. Also see *al-Ṭalī'a fī Ma'rakat al-Dimūṭīya*, Sāmi al-Munayss, Sharikat Kazma, Kuwait, 1984, p. 121-146
- 36 M. H. 'Abd Allāh, *al-Khashya Wa al-Rajā'*, Kuwait: Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiya, 1978. p. 37
- 37 Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p.358
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. p. 353-354
39. Haman is a magician who was well known to be more professional than the Pharaoh.
40. 'Abd Allāh, *al-Khishya Wa al-Rajja'*, Kuwait: Dār al-Kutūb al-Thaqāfiya, 1978. p.37
- 41 Bilal, 'The Kuwaiti Theatre', p.p 351-352
- 42 Sulaymān al-Ḥuzamī, *al-Anbā'*, 8/11/1984, Kuwait.
43. The title of this play is an old Kuwaiti proverb, in Kuwaiti dialect *Makhroosh* is the one who likes food, *Ṭaḥ* means found, *Bi Khrūsh*, is the stomach of the sheep that used to be expensive in Kuwait before the discovery of oil.
- 44 M. M. Bilal, *Maqālāt Fī al-Naqd al-Masraḥi*, no place of publishing: no publisher, 1994. p. 58.
- 45 'Abd Allāh al-Qatam, *Ḥawla al-'Ghazw al-'Irāqī*, Kuwait: al-Bayān, no. 294, May 1994, pp. 227-260.
- 46 Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, *The Contemporary Kuwaiti Short Story in Peace Time and War 1929-1995*, Poland: The Enigma Press, 1998. p. 94

CHAPTER FIVE

The Selected Productions

5.1 Introduction: The Occasion

The two selected productions as case studies for this research were both performed at the tenth al-Qurayn Kuwaiti Annual Cultural Festival (January 2004), and both were nominated not only on this particular occasion but also on other occasions, for example the Youth Theatre Festival of Arabian Gulf Countries (October 2003).

The first play is titled: *al-Muqāyadha* (The Trade) and the second is *Munāzara Bayna al-Layl wa al-Nahār* (A Debate between Day and Night).

Al-Muqāyadha was performed at al-Dasma theatre on 4 January 2004; it was a Kuwaiti youth production sponsored by the Kuwaiti General League of Youth and Sport.

It staged two main styles of modern theatre: the conversational theatre and the critical social theatre in order to dramatise the play's central ideas.

The play addresses two contemporary social problems facing Kuwaiti society, and the production was performed by fifteen performers.

For a better understanding of the production, a brief description of the occasion at which it was staged would be relevant.

Al-Qurayn festival is a significant annual cultural occasion sponsored by the Kuwaiti Organisation of Scientific Research and has been organised every year since 1994 by the Kuwaiti National League of Culture, Arts and Literature. The festival's main concern is to

put a spotlight on, and to increase the appreciation of local and international masterpieces of art and literature. The festival provides a wealth of events which every year leave the public looking forward to attending the next festival.

5.2 *Al-Muqāyadha* (The Trade)

5.2.1 The Setting of the Play

Al-Muqāyadha, (The Trade), was presented to the public in standard Arabic, with some interspersed dialogue in Kuwaiti dialect. The general outlines of the plot were inspired by Shakespeare's romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. The aim of the Kuwaiti scenarist, Sulymān Al-Bassām who was also the director, was to add new perspectives to the original romantic theme. In this production, he wanted to present new solutions to some problems experienced by Kuwaiti youths such as unemployment and corruption, which can be considered as one aspect of the story that runs parallel with the romantic side, and the romantic side also reflects other parts of the story.

This romantic aspect acts as a mirror that shows all the themes within one fine frame. We can say that the production's central idea was not new, but the way of presenting it was different. The first successful device was the updating of the romantic framing of events, and reusing it to express different points of view.

The second device was the language, which was not solely standard Arabic, nor fully Kuwaiti dialect, which added a comic dimension to the play. For example, while one of

the characters may speak formally in one situation, another may comment informally using the Kuwaiti dialect.

The third and the most surprising device was the décor, which was simple but deeply reflective; for example, the yellow prop placed in the middle of the stage to reflect the main quarrel of the play which was the piece of land and the enormous chandelier hanging from above the middle stage to indicate the wealth in a scene then a big spider or a trap for the lovers in a different scene.

The fourth device was the lighting, which was used to emphasize the changes indicated by the text, and the screen at the rear of the stage that was used to provide the audience with specific information. The props included a car, a big crystal chandelier above the central point of the stage, a tent and a number of chairs.

The four devices created an unusual aesthetic experience for the audience. As a spectator who had attended many previous Kuwaiti productions, I found this production a truly satisfying theatrical experience in all its essential elements.

5.2.2 The Story:

The main aim of the text was to alert Kuwaiti society to its weakness by arousing feelings of anxious concerns and disappointment. The play is a romantic tragedy of two cousins, Jamīl and Jamīla, who love each other greatly, but the lovers and their love are destroyed. They are the victims of greed and family problems in a materialistic society that sacrifices the precious values for the sake of money.

The play begins when Jamīl returns from abroad and wants to claim his rights, which were taken from him by his uncle, Jamīla's father, who stole Jamīl's piece of land after his father's death. The land was taken by illegal means, and thus the play addresses a problem in Kuwaiti society.

In the middle of this moral darkness a bright light of love appears, joining Jamīl and his cousin Jamīla. This latter's greedy father does not only use the intervention of a very influential friend, but also ruins his daughter's future by forcing her to marry his friend's son in exchange for a favour, that is keeping the land illegally.

Jamīla's father succeeds in accomplishing the exchange. Jamīl refuses to accept this outcome and tries to rescue Jamīla, but he fails. Finally, Jamīla and Jamīl commit suicide.

5.2.3 Text Analysis

It is interesting to mention here that the acts of these scenes were written upon several workshops in which young Kuwaiti actors and actresses improvised their life experiences. Sulymān al-Bassām, the director and the playwright of *The Trade*, declared that:

The Trade is a free text which took its main acts from the life experiences of the Kuwaiti youths; their problems in their society along with a critical vision into the Kuwaiti society.

The aim of this text is to remedy the reality with an emphasis on change. I wanted the spectator to go out of this performance with an irritated condition, different from the feelings he/ she had when he/she entered the event.¹

The text is presented in three acts, Act One consists of six scenes, the second consists of five scenes, and the third act consists of nine scenes.

5.2.3.1 Act One (six scenes)

Scene One:

This scene takes place around the land, there are seven characters; the first watchman, the personal assistant, Muḥammed, the second watchman, Jallāl (the lawyer), Tāriq and Jamīl.

This scene is an introductory scene, its purpose is to provide the spectator with the historical background of the main story of the performance, which is the fight about the land, Gameel says: 'This is my land', his cousin Tareq says: 'This land is not yours...your father's greed did not leave anything', the personal assistant comments: 'No knife goes as deep, no cut bleeds as much, no wound is as fatal, as the knife wielded by one's own blood. But in my experience in this country nothing protects a man like money',

Scene Two:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's house. There are two characters in this scene, Jamīla and Fayza. Fayza is helping Jamīla to dress up for a concert in which Jamīla will sing. The spectators understand from this scene that Jamīla and Fayza are two different female characters, one is romantic while the second is realistic. Jamīla says: Don't you believe in love Fayza? , Fayza answers: 'No, I believe in exchange...it is part of economy. You give

yourself to a man, you give your entire empire to a man, your beauty, your body, your life, do not give it for free’.

Scene three:

This scene takes place in a government ministry. There are seven characters in this scene, Jamīl, Nabīl, Sāmī, Khālid 1, Employee, Khālid 2 and Ṭāriq. The spectator understands from this scene about the irresponsibility of some employees in a Kuwaiti ministry as Jamīl says to an employee: ‘Every time I come to this office, I find your head buried in that newspaper, don’t you ever do any work? ... A generation of wrecks, how you are going to build a country?’.

In the same scene two men, while waiting for the lifts ridicule the fact that the building has 4 lifts, two of which are reserved for the minister. One character says: ‘There are one thousand employees in this building, 20 floors and four lifts, two of them, two! Are for the minister alone-what’s going on, people?’ the other replies: ‘The jungle is big, my brother, you and me are as small as mice’.

Scene Four:

The post-concert reception. There are nine characters in this scene, Abū Ṭāriq, Abū Khālid, Ṭāriq, Jamīl, Jamīla, Sāmī, Nabīl, Khālid and Fayza.

Jamīl and Jamīla meet for the first time in this scene, Tareq (Jamil's cousin and Jamila’s brother) reject Jamīl’s contact with his sister Jamīla in public as Ṭāriq says to his father Abū Ṭāriq: ‘I am going to teach him a lesson in Kuwaiti public manners, did you not see how he was staring at Jamīla?’.

Scene Five:

This scene takes place in Nabīl's car, who is Jamīl's friend. There are three characters in this scene, Jamīl, Sāmī and Nabīl.

The scene is about text messages which appears on a digital screen in the backstage.

Both Jamīl and Jamila are in the rage of love despite all the danger around this relationship. Sami reminds Jamīl that he is already engaged and his marriage is within two days, Jamīl does not care, he replies: 'That's off, cancelled, finished, tell my mother, where's the phone, I'll tell her myself'.

Scene Six:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's room, there are two characters in this scene Jamīla and Jamīl.

They meet in the balcony of her room, a romantic scene that was designed in accordance with the Shakespearean text, *Romeo and Juliet*. Both lovers know how dangerous it is to be in contact with each other and decide to accept the consequences. Jamīla: 'If this is our curse, then I am cursed to love it'.

5.2.3.2 Act Two (five scenes)**Scene One:**

This scene takes place in Jamīl's house. There are three characters in this scene, Jamīl, his mother (Başīra), and the maid.

Jamīl's mother asks him to get ready for his marriage, while he informs her that he has already been involved in a relationship. She gets angry and blames Jamīl for the dark future awaiting for both himself and his lover.

Jamīl defends himself and insists on his choice, he tells his mother: 'I refuse to marry her. I am already married, yes! Married to a woman whose name would make you weep!'

Scene Two:

This scene takes place in Nabīl's and Sāmī's flat, both are the characters of the scene, they discuss the problem of unemployment which the Kuwaiti society has been facing before since 1980s and how they are both bored and tired from hunting for a job. Nabīl: 'We are running round the back corridors of ministries like rats'. They finally decide to help their friend Jamīl by guarding his land before anybody puts their hands on it.

Scene Three:

This scene takes place in Tāriq's car, he and Khalid, his friend are taking drugs (sniffing cocaine). This scene reveals a homosexual relation between Tāriq and Khālid who kiss each other on the lips.

Scene Four:

This scene takes place by the sea, Jamīla and Jamīl are the characters of this scene, they are married and thinking of the future, the scene ends by the two not knowing where to go.

Scene Five:

This scene takes place, in a tent. There are eleven characters in this scene. Nabīl, Sāmī, Faiyza, Ṭifla (Fayza's friend), Ṭāriq, Khālid and four guards.

Sāmī, Nabīl, Faiyza and Ṭifla were preparing for a friendly night when Ṭāriq appeared with Khālid together with four guards to protect the land. The fight ends by the first group tied in the tent. Jamīl appears later, he hits Ṭāriq on his face and unties his friends.

5.2. 3.3 Act Three (nine scenes)

Scene One:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's room, There are three characters in this scene, Jamīla , her father (Abū Ṭāriq) and Khālid.

Jamīla's father tries to convince her that it is time that she gets married and brings Khālid to her room as a surprise, she refuses the marriage.

Scene Two:

This scene takes place in a shopping mall and in a café. There are seven characters in this scene, Jamīla, Jamīl and five police secret-agents.

Jamīla and Jamīl dialogue on the phone, each is sitting at a separate table in a café, Jamīla wants to run away with Jamīl, but he asks her to wait, she collapses and he gets hunted by the police secret-agents.

Scene Three:

This scene takes place in Abū Tāriq's house. There are two characters in Scene Three, Abū Tāriq and the lieutenant, Şaffaḥ.

Abū Tāriq is urging the lieutenant to find Jamīl as soon as possible and to keep this matter away from the press, especially what happened in the café. Abū Tāriq gives the lieutenant a car as a gift. Abū Tāriq: 'Just catch this insect that's eating my land, my girl'.

Scene Four:

This scene takes place in Sāmī's flat. There are three characters in this scene, Fayza, Sāmī and Jamīl.

Sāmī, is informing his friend Jamīl about the time of the flight in which he will escape abroad. Fayza, Jamīla's friend wants to take the marriage documents from Jamīl and destroy it, so Jamīla could marry Khālid because Jamīla has no choice now but to obey her father as she cannot escape with Jamil who will not be able to afford their living costs abroad. Fayza: 'you can't give her a roof to live under, not even a meal!'.

Scene Five:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's room, she and her brother Tāriq are the characters of this scene. He shows her the scar on his face and how he lost one eye after the fight with Jamīl.

She hates the scene but Tāriq tells her that this scar is his curse and he will keep it as it is.

Scene Six:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's house. There are three characters in this scene, Abū Ṭāriq, Fayza, and a tailor.

Abu Tāreq tells Fayza while she was entering with a veiled lady that she is late because Jamīla needs help in getting ready for the wedding and she needs the tailor. Fayza explains that she brought the tailor with her. The tailor is Jamīl hiding in a lady's costume.

Scene seven:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's room. She and Jamīl are the sole characters of this scene.

He blames her as he thought that she agreed to marry Khālid. She tells him that she decided to commit suicide and not to marry Khālid. He asks her to run away with him.

Jamīl: 'I have Sāmī waiting for us in the car; we will go together, across the desert, across the borders, into a new life'.

Scene Eight:

This scene takes place outside Jamīla's house. There are three characters in this scene, Sāmī, the lieutenant and a policeman.

The lieutenant and the policeman suspect Sāmī who has been driving around Jamīla's house, waiting to help the lovers to escape. They arrest him.

Scene Nine:

This scene takes place in Jamīla's house. There are nine characters in this scene; Jamīla, her father (Abū Ṭāriq), her brother (Ṭāriq), her friend (Fayza), Jamīl, his mother (Baṣīra), his friend (Sāmī), Khalid, and the lieutenant.

Jamīla and Jamīl are trapped in her room, Jamīl's mother urges him to surrender, Jamīla asks Jamīl to die at once together; both lovers commit suicide. Jamīla: 'They will kill you, and I will kill myself. Let us die together now'.

5.2.4 Scenery Analysis: Décor, Colours and Lighting:

This production contains particular scenes that I think are most influential on the spectator's aesthetic experience.

5.2.4.1 Scene Two/ Act One:

Here we witness a conversation between Jamīla and her friend Fayza.

This scene reflects a warm atmosphere, with a huge array of colours, which makes it the most colourful scene. It can also be described as exciting, which is due to the mixture of different shades of hot colours, starting with a lively red that gives the feeling of activity and life, through the lighter shades of red which express mobility and motion, to the orange colour around the stage that gives the feeling of flammability, and reflects the meanings of the conversation between the two friends. Also, the yellow spot, on which the two characters are standing indicates the importance of the subject of the

conversation. In addition, the mixture of all these colours on the front stage indicates the unknown, which both characters are trying to control each in their own way.

5.2.4.2 Scene Three/ Act One:

This scene takes place in the ministry which is regarded as a centre of power. It incorporates a good number of techniques; at the back of the stage the spectator can see television screens and an electric lift, while the walls of the ministry are created by lighting.

The lighting in this scene is mainly focused to highlight the dialogue of the employees, to indicate their empty gossip and the irresponsible behaviour of some of them.

5.2.4.3 Scene Four/ Act One:

This is the scene of the post-concert reception in Jamīla's house. It is visually effective; the décor includes a prop of a raised front stage to indicate the land that is the subject of the quarrel; the lace curtains and the crystal chandelier in the house indicate the wealth of Jamīla's father. The colour of the land is bright yellow, which indicates the strong feelings about this piece of land, around which the plot revolves, and suggests the power of the land owner.

The colour of the backdrop is cold blue, with a dark shade at the top, then getting gradually lighter and lighter until it is very pale at the bottom of the back drop. The blue colour expresses fear and coldness, but the combination of the blue with the yellow creates a harmony and the general effect produces a feeling of happiness.

The brightness of the crystal seems to indicate riches and the glory of dreams, which may glitter but are also fake. This scene prompts an internal conversation in the spectator's mind, and he/she starts to ask several questions. The characters in Scene Four are distributed on the strong points around the piece of the décor which indicates the land. ² The dialogue between the characters, in the same scene, is enhanced by the lighting and props; in other words, each element is playing its role at the appropriate moment. In the same scene, when the dialogue got more tense, it was emphasised by the use of a spot focused on the centre stage, so one can say that both the lighting and the dialogue are working in a mutual rhythm.

The same scene contains the meaning of the play (The Trade) or the exchange in which Jamīla's father arranges the marriage of his daughter to the son of his influential friend in return for bending the law, so that Jamīla's father could keep the land he stole from Jamīl. A spotlight on both men indicates and emphasises the meaning of the exchange. Also, other weaker spots light the other characters, who are waiting to know the results of the dialogue about the exchange. The scene of the exchange may arouse strong feelings in the spectator. The lighting is the most effective device in this scene because it indicates not only the physical movement of the main characters and their dramatic positions, but also their conditions, and unseen feelings. The lighting thus acts as another dialogue which is taking place on the stage, but this dialogue contains no words.

5.2.4.4 Scene Six/Act One:

The scene of the balcony. This scene is borrowed from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It shows the lovers' attempt to escape from their destiny, their resistance and devotion. The colours are dark but there is an orange light effect on the moon which indicates desire.

5.2.4.5 Scene One/ Act Two:

This scene indicates the psychological condition of Jamīl as he rejects the reality. The colour of the scene is black in all its shades, which expresses the sadness of the situation. The second colour of the scene is blue, used in this scene to indicate the tenderness of Jamīl's feelings, and the blue is mixed with the black to indicate the melancholy character of these tender feelings. Both colours combine to create a harmony between the text and its visual meanings.

5.2.4.6 Scene Four/Act Two:

This is a romantic scene that includes the different reactions of the lovers to their disparate situations. Each character expresses their own feelings, how they suffer and the reasons for their sufferings. In this scene, the spectator can see the inner conflict of the two main characters, the conflict between their reality and their dream. Their rejection of their parents' deal is conveyed by the mixture of the stage colours, particularly orange and yellow.

5.2.4.7 Scene Five/ Act Two:

This scene takes place in a tent. There is a simple small lamp and some ropes to indicate the tent's interior.

The colours of the props are yellow and black to indicate the disagreement of some characters who are taking part in the dialogue, and the dishonesty of others.

In this scene there are many colours and light effects, all mixed in synchronisation. In spite of the obvious aggression, the spectator can still see the slight spotlight in the middle of the stage to indicate that there is always hope in the middle of problems and darkness.

In this scene, the director creates a setting that correlates to the subject, using chairs placed around the piece of décor that indicates the land at the front of the stage. The chairs look as if they are about to fall. The rapidly cut conversation and the difficult, heavy movement of the actors combine to indicate that this is a key moment in the performance.

This scene creates an unstable and questioning mood in the spectator; for example, what will happen next. Although most or maybe all of the spectators may be familiar with the original story, this does not prevent them from being anxious to know the end of this production. This anxiety, which is created by the décor, lights, and dialogue, may echo similar feelings experienced by the spectators. As human beings who may have faced a similar situation before, they are eager to know what will happen to the lovers.

In the same scene the chandelier has been transformed into an enormous net resembling a spider's web to indicate that the two lovers are trapped. The lights are dimmed but bright enough to give the spectator a little hope for the following scene. The chairs are

revolving rapidly as if about to fly off the stage, making the spectator breathless. In spite of the gloominess of this scene, the spectator can still see the sharp white spot light falling across the middle of the stage, indicating that one must not abandon hope.

5.2.4.8 Scene Two/ Act Three:

The scene of the shopping mall where both lovers try to meet far from their families' sight. The dialogue, the slow movement, and the slightly dimmed lights indicate the depressed mood of both characters. The black mixed with the blue indicates sadness and the blue alone expresses worries and instability. The two yellow spots in which both characters are moving indicate the warmth of their affection. Another physical code that appears in the same scene is the detective who is sitting on the left side of the stage. A spotlight is focused on the detective to create a feeling of fear in the spectator. There is an obvious harmony in this scene, so we can say that this scene expresses all the meanings of the text through both verbal and visual means.

5.2.4.9 Scene Seven/ Act Three:

This scene emphasises the miserable condition of the couple in love. The warm colours disappear gradually and are replaced with dark, cold colours. The chandelier is now completely on the floor, while in the previous scenes it was descending slowly; its final position on the floor, where it looks like a spider's web indicates a disaster is about to happen, and there is no way to escape. Jamīla feels that all hope is lost. The lights are dim in contrast with the white gown she has in her room, the contrast between black and

white indicates the difference between evil and innocence, and also the spotlight has disappeared.

5.2.4.10 Scene Nine/ Act Three:

The spectator's eye is directed to the two main characters under the spot -light and the event that is about to happen. In this scene Jamīl also decides to commit suicide. Both lovers participate in making this decision. They explain that they are going to die for love together.

The scene is full of warm colours, which grow in intensity. In this last scene subject and setting match: the chandelier is totally collapsed on the floor, and the time for hope is over. Here more than in other scenes, the spectator can interpret the meaning and relate it to the meaning he/she finds in his/ her consciousness. The lighting, the live music and the décor transform the text into a performance in which each element interacts appropriately. The appropriate use of dramatic elements in this particular production, as in any other, demonstrates the play's meanings and gives the spectator the chance to interpret those meanings in accordance with his/her life experiences.

We conclude that this production has used a number of techniques to indicate the meanings suggested in the performance. We analysed above the techniques and how these may be received by the audience. However, different interpretations may occur according to the influence of different variables that may have affected each individual of the Kuwaiti audience's aesthetic experience. Further development of this analysis will be illustrated in the application of the survey in Chapter Six.

5.2.5 The Reception of the Play in the Kuwaiti Media

The two productions *The Trade* and *The Debate between Day and Night* are unpublished plays and are not included in any academic research, so the best resources to use are what were published soon after the performance. In *al-Siyāsa* Politics which is one of the five main newspapers in Kuwait, the first production *The Trade* was described as totally belonging to Kuwaiti society. Another critic said that the aesthetic experience of the production is created by a pessimistic director. A third critic said that the society needs such plays to expose corruption.

The Trade is an experimental production that has a pessimistic outlook with features of Brecht's techniques of defamiliarisation.¹ The décor is the most efficient element but the lighting technique did not work in intervals. The technique of using television screens worked as a brilliant way of presenting the work. *The Trade* is a cry against corruption.

Al-Qabas (The Light) is another Kuwaiti news paper that described the author as a brave dramatist who faces the truth of a dark side of Kuwaiti society. According to *al-Qabas*, Kuwaiti society needs this kind of brave writer and *al-Qabas* encouraged Sulyman al-Bassām, the playwright and the director of *The Trade* to continue their serious approach to solve social problems and prevent any dangerous consequences for Kuwaiti society.

The descending of the chandelier resembles the sand clock and that is the message of the production which means that danger is close if the society is not aware of its weak points.

al-Anbā' (The News), reported that al-Bassām transformed a previously presented play, *Ḥāmī AL-Diyār*, (The Protector of the Land), into *The Trade* and that al-Bassām did not

do his reputation a favour by simply adapting another play under a new title. According to the same report, which pointed out that one character of the play looks like another character in *Hāmī al-Diyār*, pointed out that this character has appeared in one scene and the character's main role was the inspector. The inspector refuses to accept their misbehaviour and the strange habits that do not belong to the Kuwaiti Moslem, Arab society. The same report declares that al-Bassam is a brave writer who sent out huge number of important messages through his play like the irresponsibility of some employees, which is strange but becoming acceptable.

In the same newspaper it was mentioned that Kuwaiti youth are active participants in theatrical competitions, it was also mentioned that *The Trade* is a perfect theatrical experience. Al-Anbā described the lady who played Jamīla in *The Trade*, Heṣa al-Nabhān, as a follower of her father Gasem Al-Nabhān who is a professional actor on the Kuwaiti dramatic scene. Al-Ra'y al-'Āmm or (The Public Opinion) is also a local newspaper that expressed its view on *The Trade*; for them al-Bassām as a director was successful in directing the production depending on the light effects that reflected the scenery changes, the experimental décor and the new presentation of ideas. The only element that needed to be modified is the language which should have been only spoken in the Kuwaiti dialect instead of Standard Arabic which was expressed with no sense of being suitable for dramatic moment. The décor, the lighting, the chandelier, the car, the mobile messages, sound effects and the television screens created a great connection between the scenes and transmitted the meaning of time and space to the audience.

Another critic in the same newspaper encouraged the use of standard Arabic language, because non Kuwaiti spectators may not understand the dialogue. According to al-Waṭan newspaper (The Nation), *The Trade* urged the audience to change the reality of their lives by staging the events in an atmosphere of worry and despair. The critic mentioned that direct, and forward advice is missing in the text. The lighting creates sadness but the spot lights in Jamīl and Jamīla scenes create the opposite feeling. Using the sound of mobile messages as intervals was emissive and did not work with the appearance of the narrator in the last scene. In addition, the production includes acts encouraging the action of suicide.

According to another critic, the language of the production is sophisticated and the lighting's pessimism embodied the required feelings of worry. The same critic did not agree with the narrator's idea at the end, because he was not there at the beginning of the production so why does he appear at the end. He also disagrees with the previous critic who thinks that the text encouraged suicide because this is a mature text attended by a mature audience and each spectator can make up her/his own mind to decide whether to carry on with life or not .

5.2.6 The Play in a Kuwaiti Social Context

As we demonstrated earlier in Chapter One, Kuwaiti society has faced several historical events. The Iraqi invasion was the last and the most destructive event which is still influencing Kuwaiti society, in economical, political and social terms. *The Trade* has reflected these negative influences and the purpose of the play, as al-Bassām declared, is

to urge this society to wake up and solve its problems before they become too complicated. Al-Bassām has taken the story of the play from the many stories about Kuwaiti youth to introduce it to the Kuwaiti youth including his view that the Kuwaiti society needs to change some of its archaic traditions.

The romantic frame of the play reflects the romantic side of youth's dreams to achieve what they hope for, but as the lovers of the story face social and the economic obstacles, Kuwaiti youth faces the same. Al-Bassām emphasised on the bright side of youth's dreams visually in the décor by the chandelier and the bright spots of lights in almost all the scenes apart from the last scene, when the lovers lose their hope in being together in life so they decide to be together in death.

Al-Bassām is giving an example for the Kuwaiti youth to advise them to check the reality of their dreams, before they pursue them by all means. The sad end of the play indicates that the characters' choice of dreams was not realistic. As for Jamīl who has just finished his University education and has no job, it was not sensible for him to marry. Jamīla, who got used to living at a high standard, it was not reasonable for her to marry someone who is of a lower economic level, even if this person is her cousin. Fayza, who said the key words of the text, answered Jamīla, who asked her if she believes in love by saying: 'No, I believe in exchange.'

One can say that Fayza's character, who was fairly realistic, reflected a logical response to Jamīla's romantic side and that gave balance to the text, in addition to Basīra, Jamīl's mother, who tried to prevent her son from dwelling in his unrealistic dreams. Jamīla's father and his son Ṭāriq were the evil characters in the story who used violence and bent the law to achieve their goals while Nabīl and Sāmī were the faithful friends who tried to

protect their friend from danger inspite of their social and economic problems as young men who are suffering from unemployment. They played the positive roles in the play.

The romantic side was complemented by the sensible and the evil side was complemented by the good; all these factors worked to balance the theatrical text and present reality to the spectator. The audience's personal lives are a mix of sensibility, lies and truth. It is the role of the theatrical text to offer what the audience may have experienced in reality, but from the playwright's view, then the audience may formulate its own aesthetic experience.

The text in a modern Kuwaiti social context , bravely includes the problems of corruption, unemployment and drug addiction which are somehow inter-connected. There are other productions that may have addressed the same issues, but the unique presentation of this production lays in the harmony between its elements; the text, the décor, the lighting, the acting, and the music.

5.3 *Munāzra Bayn al-Layl wa al-Nahār* (A Debate between Day and Night).

5.3.1 Introduction:

The second production is a debate between day and night. The production was presented on 10 January 2005 at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait. The play is a monodrama performed by one actor in one scene, and the production was accompanied by live music on the stage. The text was adapted from classical Arabic literature, and it represents a reasoned

debate between day and night; which one of them has more advantages and virtues than the other? The conversation is a symbolic debate between good and evil, love and hatred, presence and absence. The production was sponsored by Masrah al-Khalīj. It was adapted, directed, designed and performed by the prominent actor and director Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥaddād, and the music was performed by Rashīd Gomea.

The production was presented, together with (The Exchange), at the Al-Qurayn Kuwaiti Cultural Festival in 2004 as part of the festivals' programme. Recently, *A Debate between Day and Night* was a prize winner in two festivals; in February 2005 at the Bichelia Peace Festival in Italy, and in October 2005 at the Al-Kurafi Theatre Festival in the United Arab Emirates.

The production was presented in standard Arabic, with dialogue adapted from classical Arabic literature, and the actor added action to the text. In addition, he created the décor, costume, lighting and props. The dialogue is a levelheaded conversation between day and night, and each tries to convince the spectator of its advantages and beneficial features. The dialogue is suitable for all age groups.³ The production was developed from a simple dialogue that inspired the actor, who imagined a real situation and translated it into a play.

Al-Ḥaddād played both characters by dividing costume, décor and dialogue. In the monodrama which is the genre of this production, one actor runs the show; even if there are other performers, they have to be silent. The idea of the monodrama is to create a high level of concentration from the audience by focusing on one actor during the production. The monodrama does not differ from any other sort of drama, and like all

other theatrical productions it has a dynamic relation with its audience. The relation between the actor and the spectator will obviously differ from one production to another, and furthermore, it might take a different path due to the way it presents the literature. work and to the extent of the performer's commitment to his/ her mask or the performed character. In addition, the same performance will differ due to the kind and the degree of spectator response, negative or positive.

According to Seliha,⁴ the audience's response to monodrama is positive or negative, depending on whether spectators completely accept the illusion and momentarily believe in it or partly accept the illusion, and participate in establishing the illusion in a condition that swings between believing and not in a play or a ritual which is not religious.

According to Seliha,⁵ monodrama started when human beings started to imitate and use the mask for different goals, religious, educational, or for entertaining. This imitation does not include the solo or individual performances or the presentational performances in which the performer exposes his/her own abilities or capabilities. The monodrama also does not include the usual daily human activities. Although the normal performance may have similarities with the monodrama, the latter still has its own characteristics, these may be, as described by Seliha:

1. The mask or the imitation of other characters or creatures or imaginary things through physical or verbal imitation of the original object in real life, in myth, or in history. The imitation may be completely or partly realistic, or not realistic. The performer can use his/her body and own voice or he/she can use dolls or puppets, and recorded voices.
2. A narrated story, continual or separated, logical or rational, spoken or silent, within a dialogue or part of a monologue (for example, a monologue directed to another who does

not exist, in a situation formulated from the past, or imagined from the future) or an internal confession in a separate imaginary situation with the audience, or within a direct conversation with the audience, or a mixture of both or more than two styles.

3. The reception by the audience is another different element because the performer is actually performing to the audience, and whether the spectator is positive or negative, he /she is still part of the performance materially or signally. ⁶

5.3.2 Synopsis: (The Story, Text and Scenery Analysis)

Text analysis

The play is a dialogue presented by one actor who acts each character separately wearing the same costume that is coloured half silver and half gold. The silver is to resemble night and the gold resembles day light, the same character plays the narrator too.

Night and Day are in a head to head debate, each lays claim to its benefits. The night starts the dialogue by saying a verse from the Qur'ān, which means that: 'the night time is like dropping curtains on the world, the war starts by words then it brings a victim or a prisoner.' The narrator comments: 'by the dawn all surrender.' Night goes on defending itself: 'I am the privacy for lovers, the time for weddings, God created me to be the rest for humans, silence for researchers, moments of creations, the moon adds glory to my charm' . The day answers:

'Oh, night, do not be so proud of yourself! You hide criminals, are the chance for maneuvering and tricks, oh you are evil. What is so good about being the theme of

privacy for lovers, what happens if they are apart? You become the lovers' agony. They start to count your stars and their hearts are enflamed with lust. Do not claim the glamour of the moon to be yours, it is mine I gave my shade to it, it is just a little of my light. Being the time for rest should bring shame to you because the time of work is what makes life worth living. Do not forget Gods' gift to me in Ramadhan when the Qur'ān, was sent to people. Surrender or I will make your present like your past.'

Then Night defends itself by saying: 'Damn it, Day, get lost, do you argue while you came out of me, you think you are better and I have been always the end of the troubles you cause, all evil comes from you, the evil and black is only in the heart. You think wickedness happens at night, no, it happens during the day. How can you be proud of Ramadhan, would fasting be right until I show the time of beginning and end, I am the one who provides fasting people with rest and gives them time for praying. Enough of your lies, I am the one who hides all the troubles you caused'.

Day ends the argument by saying: 'I swear to God to cut you into pieces, how dare you compare heights with grounds, if you think that you are first, that's normal for servants to precede their masters. Stop being overconfident, which of us is more beautiful, I am white and bright and you are black and dull. I hear promises from you but I do not see actions, wake up or I will cut you to pieces'.

The narrator ends the discussion by blaming Day and Night for their endless arguments and says a verse from the Qur'ān, that goes to mean, it is God who created day and night and they are both some of God's creations.

One can understand from the dialogue that both Day and Night were providing logical reasons to prove that each is better than the other. For example, day lightens the earth, and provides living things with energy to work and do their jobs, while night provides the relaxation that people need, and the romantic atmosphere for lovers and in any case night is more beautiful than day. Day defends itself by saying that it has more benefits for humans, then the Night says that it is the inspiration to artists. The conversation between Day and Night goes on, and each of the two characters is acted in one side of the stage. The actor changes his position each time he indicates Day or Night; he turns to the right side of the stage when he acts Day, showing the audience the golden side of the costume then turns to the left side of the stage to act Night, showing the silver side of his costume. Each turn has different light effects, different props, and different live music.

The analysis of the scenery

The production is one uninterrupted scene. The dialogue is divided between Day and Night, and the performer presents each character as a different person. As a spectator, I would say that the comparison which took place on the stage took place in my consciousness too.

The comparison was not only between day and night, it was between beauty and malice, between love and hate, between good and evil. These contrasted abstractions were demonstrated through two different characters, Day and Night. The application of the idea of contrast gave the opportunity to each character to defend himself with logical reasons, and allowed the performer to present his skill in convincing the spectator of the

truth of each character's argument, especially in the middle of the performance, when the dialogue reached its peak. Both characters seemed to have endless vitality. By the end of the production, it was hard to decide which was better, but it was clear that both day and night are indispensable. One needs day as much as night, each completes the other in some way. Finally, one simply admires this unique way of presenting an every day and night matter.

5.3.3 The Play in its Social Context:

The play gave the audience the opportunity to see a unique kind of debate between two natural features. The debate between Day and Night may provoke the same debate in the spectator's conscious, what is good and why? The reevaluation of previously believed factors is needed for the development of any society. For example, the spectator would start thinking about the kind of job he/she does, is it good enough, how can I make it better, what are the ways of developing it? the role of the tent in this context to encourage the spectator to reevaluate his/her every day life affair and determines why they are useful.

Endnotes of Chapter Five

¹ An interview with Sulayman al-Bassām, the director and the playwright of the performance in Kuwait on 11/ 4 /2007.

² The strong points are the eye catching points for the spectator on stage.

³ The production has been presented to a young audience to measure their response. My own child attended this production when she was four years old and she was totally involved.

⁴ A conference on 'The Historical Routs of Mono-drama and its Development' Al-Fujayira International Festival of Monodrama, 2-12 December 2005

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid

Chapter Six

The Main Field Study: Experimental Testing of the Hypothesis

Introduction

To test the hypothesis of this research; that is, when a spectator views a scene in the theatre he/she perceives it according to his/her life experiences and other visual and non-visual variables, I conducted a survey questionnaire in Kuwait in December 2003 and January 2004. This chapter presents the application of this methodology through the survey questionnaire that I adapted, modified and translated from Patric Pavis's general questionnaire, which was designed to test the aesthetic experience of the theatre audience. The questionnaire was employed to obtain data about the Kuwaiti audience's perceptions of two productions presented at the al-Qurayn Annual Theatrical Festival. The research also used self-observation, description and analysis, in addition to making recommendations. I also made use of critics' reports in the press about the two plays used as case studies. I attended all the performances of both productions to observe systematically the different circumstances that may have affected the audience's perception, like change in the venue or a change in a piece of décor or any other relevant factor. Another reason for attending all the performances was to distribute and collect the questionnaires.

6.1 The Aim

My argument is that the spectator mainly perceives theatre according to his/her experiences and according to the visual and non-visual variables which I assume, may affect the aesthetic experience of any spectator. Thus, different spectators may perceive the same theatrical scene differently. The questionnaire was adapted from Pavis's questionnaire and then modified to test the influence of several variables that I assume influence the spectator's theatrical experience.

6.2 Methodology: Applications and Limitations

The survey questionnaire was chosen to examine the aesthetic experience of the Kuwaiti audience because of its methodological advantages. First, the survey can assess a large sample at the same time; second, the questionnaire can be designed to collect detailed data for later analysis in order to test the research hypothesis; thirdly, others can be asked to administer the questionnaire.¹ On the other hand, the main limitation of the use of the questionnaire as a methodology lies in the risk of a low rate of response. In the case of this questionnaire I distributed 120 copies of which 52 were returned. The other potential problem of using a questionnaire is that the respondents may interpret the same questions differently. Because respondents complete the questionnaire in their own time, they cannot ask the researcher for explanations of specific questions. Therefore, to overcome this problem I provided my telephone numbers and my e-mail address along with my home address on the first sheet of the questionnaire in case there were further inquiries.

6.3 The Case Studies

The case studies of this research are two productions which were carefully chosen to provide both qualitative and quantitative information on the responses of the Kuwaiti audience as a representative sample, thus enabling the assessment of the controlling variables with respect to the audience's perception. Both productions had won awards at previous theatrical festivals, and both received awards at the al-Qurayn Festival and went on to receive awards at other theatrical festivals.

6.4 Composition of the Audience

It was thought useful to divide the audience into three education-based categories: highly educated, an average level of education and a low level of education. The highly educated category comprised the spectators who had a university degree and / or a higher degree; 'average' indicates the spectators who had gained a secondary school certificate or equivalent and 'low' indicates the spectators who had completed only primary education.

These three levels were chosen because I assumed that education level would be the main variable affecting the spectators' aesthetic experience. As I expected, the largest group consisted of highly educated respondents, but it was still surprising that such a high number of educated people could be found in one place in a country with a small population. Another reason for classifying the audience was to enable me to compare categories and distinguish similarities and differences, then find relationships to explain the response.

6. 5 The Rationale of the Study

The reasons for choosing the Kuwaiti audience in particular are as follows:

First; there are hardly any studies adopting the same approach that have been conducted on the Kuwaiti audience or Arabian Gulf audiences or even Middle Eastern audiences.

After lengthy research only three studies were found; two Master's degree theses have been written in Egypt: one by 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd-al-Fattāḥ (2001) entitled "Strategies of Perception", and the second by Ḥussām Atta (2005) "The Reception of Realistic Theatre in Egypt 1960-1969". The third study is a book, a published PhD by Kamal Salhi, *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine* (1999).

None of the above studies adopted an experimental approach nor conducted field work, interviews, survey questionnaires or monitoring of events.

The second reason for choosing the Kuwaiti audience was to explore the Kuwaitis perceptions in relation to recent political events, especially the Iraqi invasion and its financial, social and psychological influences on Kuwaiti society.

The last reason is related to my own academic experience: I noticed a phenomenon while participating in a seminar that was part of my MA course in Theatre Practices at the Rose Bruford College for Drama and Speech, in London in 2001; it was evident that although all the group on the MA course had attended the same performance, each student perceived it differently. After listening to each student's perception, I realised that each one was interpreting the same scene according to his/her own experiences. I assumed that the reason was probably a socio-cultural influence as every student was from a different

nationality, but after several readings in the field of reception theory, I realised that self-experience might be another factor for these different perceptions. It follows that each spectator will construct his/her own version of the play. At this point, I decided to investigate how a spectator's life experiences may affect his/her perception, what these factors are and how the producers of the production might control these factors.

As a Kuwaiti spectator, I thought I should ask myself first, how I personally was affected by those factors and, second, what variables might affect my aesthetic experience. Then I should develop a method to assess the theatre audience's aesthetic experience in general. I subsequently discovered a questionnaire designed to assess the audience's general aesthetic experience of a theatrical event, but found that it included many technical questions that the average spectator might not easily comprehend; also it was not in Standard Arabic, but in English.² So I adapted the questionnaire devised by Patric Pavis to suit the Arab spectator and approached this assessment by making use of the research elements mentioned previously.

6.6 Ground Theory

The ground theory underpinning this research's hypothesis is Bennett's theorisation of the audience and in this thesis we aim to extend her study.

Her theory is concerned with the material conditions for the production and reception of theatre as it was and is construed as a cultural practice, while we are especially concerned with the particularities influencing the individual spectator's perceptions in the course of a theatrical experience.

We assume that these particularities can be regarded, according to their nature as, invisible and visible variables.

In her book *Theatre Audiences*, Bennett acknowledges that she devotes little space to the particularities of an individual spectator's response to seeing a play and prefers to concentrate on the cultural conditions that make theatre and an audience member's experience of it possible. However, she also points out in the introduction that live performance has an often uncanny ability to touch those very stories by and through which we understand ourselves.

Bennett, and the other researchers cited in her book argue that cultural conditions and government organizations decide the kind of theatre presented to a given public. These researchers, however, do not discuss the audience's reception of these kinds of theatre, how they construct meanings from particular scenes, and the influences of their various life experiences on their aesthetic experience.

On the other hand, Eugenio Barba in his essay *Four Spectators* is mainly concerned with the influence a theatrical production has on spectators according to their type; and he divides the audience into four types of spectators.³

Nevertheless, all the previous researchers chose not to investigate the aesthetic experience of spectators in detail, due to the difficulty of conducting such studies. As Cameron claims in his book *Theatrical Response*, it is an almost impossible task to test the aesthetic experience of an audience.

Truthfully, I cannot deny the difficulty of this research nor can I deny that conducting such research was an interesting challenge. I also recommend that the same study be repeated every five years to assess and compare findings.

6.7 Validity

Three measures were taken to ensure the present research's validity. First, the questionnaire was anonymised, in order to obtain reliable information and to protect the informants. Second, I conducted self-observation to ensure the validity of the reflections of the same phenomenon. Thirdly, I compared audience's response with critical opinion in the media and my own observations.

6.8 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adapted and translated into Standard Arabic from Patric Pavis's questionnaire (1985), which was designed to assess the theatre audience's aesthetic experience in general.

Pavis's questions, with a few exceptions, may be easily answered by any spectator, and were designed with special reference to the particularities of an individual spectator's response to attending a theatrical event. The questionnaire consists of 38 questions about various aspects of the production including text, performance, use of colours, décor, the spectator's seat position, his or her companions (whether he/she attended with a group of relatives or friends or colleagues), how the play first came to his/her attention, his/her reactions during the performance, his/her psychological condition before and after the show, the moment in which he/she felt 'almost alone in another world away from the atmosphere of the theatre', his/ her level of education, age and gender.

This research aims to assess these different variables through the questionnaire. I did not expect that the informants would be able to answer or even be interested in answering 38

questions after attending a performance partly designed to entertain besides its educational aim, but surprisingly the questionnaires were answered by 52 respondents including a small number who needed further explanation of some technical questions, which I was able to provide; this, I think, is the main difficulty with Pavis's questionnaire.

Besides its length, which may discourage some respondents, some questions are intended to be answered by professionals rather than the average spectator. When I first translated and adapted the questionnaire to suit the Arab spectator, I recognised this difficulty but left my informants free to choose whether or not to answer these questions. The questionnaire's purpose is to assess the aesthetic experience of all kinds of spectators: specialists, those with some knowledge and those with none. It was also interesting to find that almost all the informants answered all the questions fully.

Another difficulty I faced was distributing the questionnaire. I contacted the organisers of the festival six months before the event and asked about the best way to distribute the questionnaire. I was informed that it would be distributed on the same evening of the performances by employees who are responsible for the organisation of the show, but that did not happen, so I obtained permission to distribute them myself.

Another difficulty was deciding when would be the best time to give the questionnaires to the spectators: before the performance, so they could have some idea of the questions while watching the performance, or after the performance, so they could experience the event and then answer questions about it. I found that it would be impossible for one person to distribute the questionnaire to the whole audience after the show as they would

all be leaving at the same time, so I decided to distribute them while the audience was entering the venue and while the spectators were taking their seats.

6.9 Analysis of the Responses

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was applied to process the data. To enter the data into the SPSS system I coded the answers; for example, yes=0 and no=1 in questions (4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 26, 28, 33, 35, 37, 38).

In addition, I gathered the answers in which the spectators express different opinions, and then grouped them in a list to facilitate counting the respondents' number of answers; such as questions (6, 8, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 25, 29, 34, 36).

The data analysis will be presented in two parts. Part One includes the tables that show the number and percentage of the audience who actually answered each question and the number and percentage of their answers. The significance of the answers will be considered in Part Two, where we present the tables that indicate the correlation between the highest positive or negative correlations between variables.

Table 1: Age Group

Question 1 asked the spectators to indicate their age group. Group 1 comprises the ages 21-31, group 2 the ages 32-41, group 3 the ages 42-51, group 4 the ages 52-61 and, group 5 the ages 62-71. The table below shows the ages of the spectators who attended both shows.⁴

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	1.	20	38.5	38.5	38.5
	2.	27	51.9	51.9	90.4
	3.	5	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 1 the audience fell into three groups: 1, 2 and 3, the majority were under 41 years old in group 2, and only 5 were between 42 and 51 years old in group 3, while there were 20 spectators in group 1.

Table 2: Level of Education

Question 2 asked the members of the audience to provide information on their level of education, choosing one of three categories: higher, intermediate and primary.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	High	41	78.8	78.8	78.8
	Intermediate	8	15.4	15.4	94.2
	Primary	3	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 2, almost 80 percent of the audience fell in the highly educated category. Thus as expected, the great majority of the Kuwaiti audience for these productions were highly educated.

Table 3: Gender

The third question asked the audience to indicate their gender,

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Male	25	48.1	48.1	48.1
Female	27	51.9	51.9	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see, there were slightly more females than males in the total audience. The result indicates that the Kuwaiti audience consisted of almost equal percentages of male and female spectators with a slightly higher percentage in the latter gender.

Table 4: Convenience of Seat Position

The fourth question asked the members of the audience to say whether they thought they had chosen a convenient seat position or not.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid No	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
Yes	47	90.4	90.4	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As the above table shows, only 5 members of the audience thought that they had not chosen convenient seats; 47 had chosen convenient seats. The importance of this question will be seen in part two when we present the correlation between different variables regarding the aesthetic experience of theatre in general.

Table 5: Influence of Seat Position

Question 5 asked the spectators whether or not they were aware that their seat position might affect their aesthetic experience. By asking this question, I aimed to direct the spectator's attention to the possible importance of his or her seat position. I used the same data in part three in the correlation between awareness of the influence of seat position and level of education, and with the perception of other theatrical elements in the same theatrical event.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	19	36.5	36.5	36.5
	Yes	33	63.5	63.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 5, 19 spectators answered 'no' while 33 were aware of the importance of their seat position in the theatre.

Table 6: The Reasons for the Influence of Seat Position

As an extension of the previous question, those spectators who had answered 'yes' to that question were asked to indicate the reason. Their answers were grouped and counted.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	The seat had a restricted view	1	1.9	16.7	16.7
	I did not choose the right seat	4	7.7	66.7	83.3
	Minimal choice of seat	1	1.9	16.7	100.0
	Total	6	11.5	100.0	
Missing	Unanswered	46	88.5		
	Total	52	100.0		

The response here was low: although 33 members of the audience were aware of the importance of their seat position, having answered 'yes' to the previous question, only 6 answered the question concerning the reason for the importance of their seat position.

Table 7: Influence of the Architecture

When the audience were asked if they were affected by the architecture of the playhouse, 47 answered 'yes' and only 5 answered 'no'.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
	Yes	47	90.4	90.4	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: The Reasons for the Influence of the Architecture

In question 8, I asked the spectators who had answered 'yes' to the previous question to indicate the reason they were influenced by the architecture of the playhouse.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
The architecture helped me to establish meanings	16	30.8	30.8	30.8
There is a live relation between architecture and performance	10	19.2	19.2	50.0
Affected by architecture but meaning does not suit the performance	4	7.7	7.7	57.7
The architecture is the frame of the author's work	19	36.5	36.5	94.2
Successful play=Suitable architecture +professional actor+educated audience.	3	5.8	5.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Influence of Colours

Question 9 asked members of the audience to indicate whether or not they had been affected by the colours used in both productions.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid No	6	11.5	11.5	11.5
Yes	46	88.5	88.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In the table above we can see that almost 90 percent of the spectators were affected by the colours used.

Table 10: Harmony of the Colours with the Subject of the Performance

Question 10 asked members of the audience about the harmony between the colours of the décor and the subject of the performance; in other words, whether or not the colours were suited to the subject of the performance.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	16	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Yes	36	69.2	69.2	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 10, 36 members of the audience answered 'yes' while 16 answered 'no'; thus the great majority thought that the colours were suited to the subject.

Table 11: Harmony of the Lighting with the Subject of the Performance

Question 11 asked members of the audience to indicate whether there was a harmony between the lighting used in the performance and the subject of the performance.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	16	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Yes	36	69.2	69.2	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

We can see that the same number of spectators who thought that there was a harmony between the colours and the subject of the performance also thought that there was a harmony between the lighting and the subject of the performance.

Table 12: Harmony between Musical Effects and the Subject of the Performance

Question 12 asked members of the audience to indicate if there was a harmony between the musical effects and the subject of the performance.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	9	17.3	17.3	17.3
	Yes	43	82.7	82.7	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In Table 12, we can see that the number of spectators who thought that there was a harmony between the musical effects and the subject of the performance has increased considerably from the numbers of those answering 'yes' to questions 10 and 11.

Table 13: Arrival Time

Question 13 asked spectators to say whether they had arrived early for the performance or not.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Yes	49	94.2	94.2	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see in Table 13, 49 out of 52 spectators arrived early for the performance, while only 3 did not.

Table 14: Effect of Early Arrival on the Performance

Question 14 asked members of the audience to indicate if they thought that arriving early for the performance was going to affect their aesthetic experience or not.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Yes	49	94.2	94.2	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

We notice that the number of spectators who arrived early (Table 13) exactly matches the number of spectators who thought that arriving early would affect their aesthetic experience.

Table 15: The Reason for being Influenced by the Arrival Time

The spectators who answered 'yes' to the previous question were asked by question 15 to provide a reason. Their answers were grouped in the list below and then counted to extract the percent age of each answer.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Arriving early gives me time to adapt myself to the place	11	21.2	21.2	21.2
Arriving early allows me to relax my body and mind	13	25.0	25.0	46.2
Arriving early allowed me to find a seat quickly; then I started to think about personal matters before the commencement of the show	23	44.2	44.2	90.4
Unanswered	5	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In Table 15 we notice that the highest number of spectators gave the third reason, which confirms what we have discussed earlier in this research about how the spectator may perceive the theatrical event. We mentioned earlier that when the spectator arrives early, some minutes before the start of the show, he/she will sit on his/her seat, relax his/her body and then start thinking about personal matters. This flow of the subconscious takes place before he/she experiences the event taking place on the stage. The spectator will keep comparing both levels of information during the show and finally, by the end of the show he/she reaches a third level of meaning, which forms his/her aesthetic experience of this particular event.

Table 16: General audience response

Question 16 asked members of the audience to indicate if they noticed any common audience response to a particular scene.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid No	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
Yes	49	94.2	94.2	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

We can see in Table 16 that 49 of the audience noticed a common response among the members of the audience and only 3 did not.

Table 17: Specification of audience's common responses

Question 17 asked the spectators to specify the responses they felt were shared by the whole audience.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
There was common audience response regarding negative behaviour of the rich	5	9.6	9.8	9.8
There was a negative response regarding the forced marriage in the play and its instances in society	3	5.8	5.9	15.7
There was a negative common response but the respondent could not remember	2	3.8	3.9	19.6
There was a positive common response but the respondent could not remember	3	5.8	5.9	25.5
There was an enthusiastic common response to a particular scene	6	11.5	11.8	37.3
There was a positive response when the truth was revealed	7	13.5	13.7	51.0
There was a common response toward the frightening scenes	1	1.9	2.0	52.9
There was a common response to every scene	11	21.2	21.6	74.5
There was a common negative response when the spectators felt they were being ridiculed	12	23.1	23.5	98.0
There was a common negative response when the spectators felt bored	1	1.9	2.0	100.0
Total	51	98.1	100.0	
Missing				
System	1	1.9		
Total	52	100.0		

As we can see in Table 17, 12 spectators out of 52 noticed a common response when the audience reacted negatively to being made fun of by the actors on the stage. We have discussed this point previously when considering the invisible factors that may affect the audience's perception. The highest number of spectators chose this answer and this supports our assumption that the audience might dislike being ridiculed on the stage and that would certainly affect both their aesthetic experience and the success of the production.

Table 18: Themes that were not Well Addressed

Question 18 asked members of the audience to indicate whether there were any aspects that were not well presented in the performance. This question concerns the current political and social circumstances of the region in which the audience lives, because those circumstances create the general atmosphere in which the performance is presented.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	6	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Yes	46	88.5	88.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see from the Table above, 46 of 52 spectators answered 'yes' to the above question while only 6 did not.

Table 19: Specification of the Themes that Were Not Well Addressed

Question 19 asked members of the audience to indicate the theme, the spectators answers were grouped in the list below.

Themes that were not well addressed

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Drug addiction in Kuwaiti society	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
Psychological history of the main character (The protagonist)	12	23.1	23.1	32.7
Conflict between social classes was not well presented verbally	14	26.9	26.9	59.6
Nothing in particular	2	3.8	3.8	63.5
The issue of the Kuwaiti civil law was presented vaguely	11	21.2	21.2	84.6
Unanswered	8	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 19, 14 members of the audience stated that the conflict between social classes was not well presented verbally on stage, 12 thought that the psychological history of the main character was not well presented, 11 considered that the issue of Kuwaiti civil law was not well presented, 5 remarked that the theme of drug addiction was not well presented, 2 did not indicate a particular theme and 8 did not answer this question. This question was designed to reveal the influence of current social and political circumstances in the perception of the theatre audience. The spectators then supplied the information that they realized during the event. This particular question is able to raise the spectators' awareness of their aesthetic experience, because it prompts them to compare the political and social events in their lives to the events and themes presented on the stage and decide whether these were well presented or not. In the future, they may be able to judge theatrical productions more discerningly owing to their enhanced ability to assess the presentation of themes in any performance. We would argue here that regular assessment of audience response may be able to raise a nation's general awareness of the social and political issues.

Table 20: General Feelings about the Performance

Question 20 asked members of audience to indicate their general feeling about the performance.

General feeling about the performance

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	Sad	8	15.4	15.4	15.4
	Happy	30	57.7	57.7	73.1
	Bored	1	1.9	1.9	75.0
	Nothing in particular	13	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

We notice in Table 20 that the general feelings of 30 spectators about the performance were happy, 13 had no particular feelings, 8 were sad and 1 was bored.

Table 21: Involvement in a Certain Scene

Question 21 asked members of the audience to indicate whether they had become totally involved in a certain scene or not.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	18	36.5	36.5	36.5
	Yes	34	63.5	63.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 21 shows that 34 members of the audience felt totally involved in a certain scene to the extent that they were unaware of other spectators, while 18 did not feel involved.

Their comments on their involvement are given in Table 22.

Table 22: The Occasion on which the Spectator Felt Totally Involved

Question 22 asked members the audience to indicate the scene in which they felt involved. The 34 respondents who had felt totally involved provided the answers.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid There was a moment when the spectator felt totally involved but now cannot remember it.	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
Spectator felt totally involved when actors discussed a social issue.	9	17.3	17.3	21.2
Spectator felt involved in the romantic scenes.	3	5.8	5.8	26.9
Spectator felt totally involved in a certain scene but would rather not discuss it.	2	3.8	3.8	30.8
Spectator felt totally involved in the comic scenes.	7	13.5	13.5	44.2
Spectator felt totally involved when lies were uncovered on stage.	3	5.8	5.8	50.0
Spectator felt totally involved in the tragic scenes.	8	15.4	15.4	65.4
Unanswered	18	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 22 shows that 9 of the spectators felt involved when the actors discussed a social issue, 8 felt involved in the tragic scenes, 7 in the comic scenes, 3 in the romantic scenes, 3 when lies were uncovered on stage, 2 felt involved in a certain scene but could not remember it, 2 were involved in a certain scene but would rather not to discuss it, and 18 did not answer this question.

Table 23: A Certain Scene which Awakened a Certain Memory

When members of the audience were asked if there was a scene that awakened a certain memory connected with their life-experience , their answers were as shown below.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
No	20	38.5	38.5	38.5
Yes	32	61.5	61.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In Table 23, we can see that 32 spectators' memories were awakened by viewing a certain scene on the stage and 20 had no such experience. This result does not support totally the research's assumption that the audience's memories are awakened by certain scenes. We must therefore conclude that not all spectators will experience an awakening

of memory, but in this case at least the majority of the audience (61.5%) were awakened. It is also strange that some spectators who chose the answer 'No' to question 23, provided specific memories in the following question as we will see in Table 24. I assume that those spectators did not link a certain scene to a certain memory, but the production, in general, awakened a specific memory.

Table 24: Specification of the Memory

Question 24 asked the spectator to specify the memory that was awakened during the performance. The aim of this question is to prove that spectators recall their own experience while a similar situation is being portrayed on the stage.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Memories of the Iraqi invasion.	10	19.2	19.2	19.2
Romantic memories.	4	7.7	7.7	26.9
Family memories.	8	15.4	15.4	42.3
Memories of a friend.	2	3.8	3.8	46.2
Scene awakened a certain memory but spectator would rather not say what it is.	13	25.0	25.0	71.2
Unanswered	15	28.8	28.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see in Table 24, members of the audience remembered different personal experiences. For example, 13 mentioned that a certain scene had awakened memories of something that happened in their lives but they would rather not say what it was, 10 spectators stated that they had remembered certain experiences they had undergone during the Iraqi invasion, 8 had recalled family memories, 4 had recalled romantic memories, 2 had recalled memories of friends, and 15 did not answer the question.

Table 25: The Images that Lingered in the Spectator's Mind Even after the Performance

Question 25 asked the spectator to mention the scene that lingered in his/her mind even after the performance was over. I aim here to demonstrate what was previously said about the way in which the spectators form their own version of the theatrical performance. I assume that the spectator's mind chooses a certain theatrical image or perhaps a particular scene and keeps analysing it for some time after the performance until reaching an opinion about it. This particular image or scene may connect to the spectator's personal experiences, and this could be one reason why different spectators perceive a particular production differently. As Barba explains:

There is a part of us which lives in exile, which we or others (the others in us) do not find acceptable or sufficiently important. Certain performances burgeon in this rationally, morally, or emotionally exiled region. The spectator does not consume these performances. Often s/he does not understand them or does not know how to evaluate them. But s/he continues to have a dialog with the memories which these performances have sown deep in her/his spirit.⁵

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	The image of the protagonist	18	34.6	34.6	34.6
	The décor	15	28.8	28.8	63.5
	The frightening images	6	11.5	11.5	75.0
	The romantic images	10	19.2	19.2	94.2
	The digital images	3	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In Table 25, we can see that the protagonist lingered in the mind of 18 spectators even after the performance had finished. In 15 cases it was the décor, in 10 the romantic images, in 6 the frightening images, and in 3 the digital images used in the performance.

Table 26: A Scene that Took on Further Meaning after the Performance

Question 26 asked the spectator if there was a scene in the performance that took on further meaning after the performance in his or her own life.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Yes	39	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As Table 26 shows, 39 of the spectators answered 'yes' to this question while 13 answered 'no'. That means that for 75 percent of the spectators certain scenes took on further meaning after the performance had finished, and this result supports our assumption about the process of the spectator's aesthetic experience; that is, the spectator *perceives* and interprets a certain scene that is usually linked to his/her past experience, or, it may be, to an experience occurring after the performance, in which case the scene will acquire further meaning. I assume that a scene may take on further meaning in this way because as a spectator I have had similar theatrical experiences.

Table 27: Those Accompanying the Spectator

Question 27 asked the spectator to indicate who accompanied him/her to the performance.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
Friends	12	23.1	23.1	23.1
Family	21	40.4	40.4	63.5
Work Colleagues	5	9.6	9.6	73.1
Nobody	14	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see in the table above, 21 spectators attended the show accompanied by their families, 14 alone, 12 attended with friends and 5 with work colleagues.

Table 28: The Influence of Different Companions on the Aesthetic Experience

Question 28 asked members of the audience to say if they thought that attending the same theatrical event with different companions might influence their aesthetic experience.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid No	14	26.9	26.9	26.9
Yes	38	73.1	73.1	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see from Table 28, 38 members of the audience thought that their aesthetic experience might be different if they were accompanied by a different person; while 14 did not think that a different companion would affect their perception. It is interesting that 73.1 percent of the spectators recognised the influence of their companions. The high percent age who answered 'yes' to the above question is good evidence in favour of the hypothesis that the spectator's companions not only may influence his/her aesthetic experience but actually, strongly influence it.

Table 29: Reasons the Spectator might be Affected by the Views of Companions

Question 29 asked the 28 spectators who answered 'yes' to the previous question to specify the reason for their answers.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Spectator's perception would be affected by hearing the companion's ideas.	14	26.9	26.9	26.9
Spectator's perception would be altered if the companion had very different views.	12	23.1	23.1	50.0
Spectator's view would be different if companions were theatre professionals.	1	1.9	1.9	51.9
Attending the performance with a group would affect the individual's view.	11	21.2	21.2	73.1
Unanswered	14	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see in Table 29, 14 respondents admitted that their perception would be affected by their companion because ideas would usually be shared between them, 12 mentioned that their perception would be altered if their companion had different views, 11 acknowledged that attending the performance with a group affects the individual's perception, 1 spectator stated that if his/her companion were a professional in the field of theatre, his/her perception would be different, and 14 spectators did not answer this question.

Table 30: How the Respondents First Heard about the Performance

Question 30 asked the spectators to indicate how they first heard about the performance.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Media	34	65.4	65.4	65.4
Friends	9	17.3	17.3	82.7
Work	5	9.6	9.6	92.3
Other	4	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see in Table 30, 34 spectators heard about the performance through the media, such as television and newspapers, 9 from friends, 5 from work, and 4 from other sources that were not mentioned in their answers. Accordingly, the media was the main source of information. We had assumed that the source of information might affect the spectator's perceptions because it would provide a number of perceptions about the performance. We will be able to find out how much this source of information affected the audience's perceptions when we compare the results of Table 30 with those of Table 36, which shows the spectator's conceptions of the play's central theme. We chose the central theme as a measurement because it is a general variable that enables us to assess the spectator's perception of the performance.

Table 31: The Most Important Element of the Performance

Question 31 asked the spectators to indicate the most important element of the performance.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	Acting	23	44.2	44.2	44.2
	Decor	8	15.4	15.4	59.6
	Music	5	9.6	9.6	69.2
	Lighting	6	11.5	11.5	80.8
	Text	10	19.2	19.2	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see from the table, 23 spectators indicated that acting was the most important element, 10 indicated the text, 8 indicated the décor and 5 indicated the music. Thus, while there was some disagreement, by far the largest proportion of the respondents (44.2 %) chose acting as the most important element.

Table 32: The Relationship between the Theatrical Elements

Question 32 asked the spectators to describe the relationship between the theatrical elements as they viewed them.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	Excellent	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Very good	17	32.7	32.7	57.7
	Good	21	40.4	40.4	98.1
	No relationship	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As Table 32 shows, 21 spectators viewed the relationship between the theatrical elements as good, 17 described it as very good, 13 as excellent and 1 considered that there was no relationship.

Table 33: The Relationship between the Performance, the Audience and the Text

Question 33 asked the audience to indicate whether there was a relationship between performance, audience and text.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
No	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
Yes	39	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see from the Table above, 39 of the spectators thought that there was a relationship between the performance, the audience and the text, while 13 did not.

Table 34: Reasons for the Relationship between Performance, Audience and Text

In this question those spectators who thought there was a relationship between performance, audience and text were asked to indicate the reason.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
The text was the foundation of the performance.	19	36.5	36.5	36.5
The text was the literary aspect of the performance.	4	7.7	7.7	44.2
Shakespeare's original text provided the romantic aspect of the performance.	6	11.5	11.5	55.8
The performance was the living modern translation of the classic text to the audience who in return brought its own perceptions to the performance.	15	28.8	28.8	84.6
Unanswered	8	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see from Table 34, 19 spectators thought that the text was the foundation of the performance, 15 thought that the performance was the living and modern translation of the classic text to the audience who in return brought its own perceptions to the performance, 6 thought that the original Shakespearian text provided the romantic aspect of the performance because the main issues of the performance were social and political,

4 thought that the text provided the literary aspect of the performance or, in other words, it expressed the performance's human values, as some of them indicated.

Table 35: The Pace of the Performance

Question 35 asked spectators to indicate whether the pace of the performance was fast or not.

		Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid	No	36	69.2	69.2	69.2
	Yes	16	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 35 shows that 16 spectators answered 'yes', while 36 answered 'no'. In the hypothesis, it was assumed that spectators who have seen the performance in advance or have been involved in the production process may find the pace of the performance slower when they view it again. According to my personal knowledge about my informants I noticed that their answers matched this hypothesis.

Table 36: The Main Theme of the Performance

Question 36 asked the spectators to indicate the central theme of the performance

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid Domination of materialism in modern Kuwaiti society.	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
Corruption in modern Kuwaiti society.	8	15.4	15.4	40.4
The everlasting struggle between evil and good.	9	17.3	17.3	57.7
The different faces of the truth	6	11.5	11.5	69.2
The social problems of modern Kuwaiti society	16	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we see in table 36, 16 spectators thought that the social problems of modern Kuwaiti society was the main theme, 13 thought that the theme was the domination of materialism in modern Kuwaiti society, 9 thought that it was the everlasting struggle between evil and good, 8 thought that it was the corruption in Kuwaiti modern society and 6 considered that it was the different faces of the truth. If we compare this table's results with the

results of Table 30, which shows the ways in which the spectators gained prior information about the performance, we can reach the conclusion that the way of informing the spectator about the performance does not necessarily influence his /her aesthetic experience. This result contradicts our assumption about the audience's perception.

Table 37: The Innovations of the Production

Question 37 asked the spectators to say whether or not the production was innovative in terms of its changes to Shakespeare's text.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid				
No	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
Yes	50	96.2	96.2	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 50 spectators - the overwhelming majority - considered the production to have been innovative; only 2 did not.

Table 38: The Degree of Reality of the Events on the Stage

Question 38 asked the spectators to indicate whether they thought that what was happening on the stage was real to them or not. We added 'maybe' to the multiple choices to give the spectators another option.

	Frequency of persons who answered	Percent of persons who answered	Valid Percent of persons who answered	Cumulative Percent of persons who answered
Valid No	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
Maybe	21	40.4	40.4	42.3
Yes	30	57.7	57.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

As we can see that 30 answered 'yes', it was real to them, 21 answered 'maybe' and 1 answered 'no'. This question aims to test Cameron's theory proposed in his *Theatrical Response*, by applying it to the contemporary Kuwaiti audience.

Cameron claims that the audience responds to theatre according to the extent that it finds theatre 'real'. We added the choice 'maybe', to find out if the spectators who doubted the reality of the performance would respond to the performance or not. As we can see from all the previous tables, the contemporary Kuwaiti audience responded to the performance but their responses were different.

Accordingly, we can conclude that the audience responds to theatre whether it finds it real, unreal or close to reality.⁶

End Notes of chapter Six

¹ Dorothy Faulkner, *Methodology Hand Book*, Southampton: Hobbs, 1991. p. 51.

² The original questionnaire can be found in Elaine Aston and George Savona, *Theatre as Sign System: a Semiotics of Text and Performance*, London: Routledge, 1991. p. 111

³ For more information see Eugenio Barba's essay 'Four Spectators' in his book *Beyond the Floating Islands*, New York: PAJ Publication, 1986. pp. 96-100.

⁴ The 'Valid frequency' statistical term: is the number of spectators who answered, then their percent and their valid percent, and 'The cumulative percent': is the percent that counts each row subsequently.

⁵ See Barba, *Beyond the Floating Islands: Four Spectators*, p. 97.

⁶ Charts showing all the percentages will be provided in appendix.4

Chapter Seven

The Correlation between Variables

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims first, to analyse the structure of variables and second, to assess the effect of these variables on each other. We mentioned previously the method of the present study. We then clarified our hypotheses and sample selection. The time and place of data collection were also explained. In this chapter we will explain the structure of the questionnaire as a main instrument of data collection as well as the conceptual definitions of variables, definitions of statistical tests, and eventually the measurements of variables.

7.2 Method

This study applied qualitative research carried out by the survey method. The quantitative phase was formative and was undertaken to improve the understanding and the knowledge of attitudes and concerns of the general public related to the aesthetic experience of any theatrical performance.

7.3 Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is a relationship between the age and the perception of the audience members who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.
2. There is a relationship between the level of education and the effects of arrival time.
3. There is a relationship between the level of education and the list of themes that were not well presented in the performance.
4. There is a relationship between the level of education and the reasons for the influence of seat position.
5. There is a relationship between convenience of seat position and the audience's perception of the stage colours.
6. There is a relationship between the influence of the seat position and the perception of the architecture of the playhouse.
7. There is a relationship between the effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.
8. There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the influence of the stage colours.
9. There is a relationship between the perception of musical effects and the perception of the stage lighting.
10. There is a relationship between the arrival time and the perception of musical effects.
11. There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the perception of musical effects.
12. There is a relationship between the arrival time and the reasons given concerning the themes that were not well presented on stage.

7.4 Samples and Data Collection:

The questionnaire was distributed to 120 spectators of whom 52 returned the questionnaire, in the capital city of Kuwait. The field work was carried out during the period 20 December 2003 - 24 January 2004.

7.5 Instrument:

The questionnaire was the main research instrument applied in this survey and consisted of, first; socio-demographic module, second; visible variables module, third; invisible variables module.

7.6 Definition of Variables:

The present study incorporated 38 different variables, which have been operationalised according to the general aesthetic experience of any spectator. Here are the explanations of the measurements of the variables.

7.6.1 Age

Age is measured by a direct question to get a raw number of years and then classified into five groups. These groups are coded as 1 = 21-31 years old, 2 = 32- 41 years, 3 = 42-51 years, and 4 = 52-61 and 5 = 62-71 years old.

7.6.2 Gender

The gender answers were coded using a dummy variable with 1 = male and 2 = female.

7.6.3 Level of Education

The level of education was measured by asking the respondent to indicate their level of education: Higher= 1, Intermediate = 2, Primary = 3.

7.6.4 Convenience of Seat Position

To measure the variable convenience of seat position, we asked the respondents: Was your seat position convenient? Their answers were coded as Yes = 1, No = 2.

7.6.5 Effects of Seat Position

The effect of seat position was measured by asking the respondents to answer the question: Do you think your seat position affected your response? The responses were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.5.1 Reasons for (Seat Position) Influenced

The respondents gave reasons why they thought their seat position may have affected their perception and their answers were coded as: the view was restricted = 1, I didn't choose the right seat = 2, and Minimum choice of seat = 3.

7.6.6 Affected by the Architecture of the Playhouse

To measure whether the audience had been affected by the architecture of the playhouse or not, the respondents were asked to answer the following question: Were you affected by the architecture of the playhouse? The answers were coded Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.6.1 Reasons for Being Affected by the Architecture of the Playhouse

Respondents were asked to mention the reasons why they were affected by the architecture of the playhouse and their answers were coded as: the architecture helped me to establish meanings in relation to the show; it was my first impression = 1, there is a relation between architecture, performance and audience = 2, I was affected by the architecture but its meaning did not suit the performance = 3, the architecture is the frame of the authors' work = 4, successful play = suitable architecture + professional actor + educated audience, this answer was coded as choice number 5.

7.6.7 Affected by Colours

To measure whether the respondents were affected by the stage colours or not, we used the question: were you affected by the colours of the décor? Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.8 Harmony between Décor, Colours and the Issue Presented

The perception of harmony between the décor colours and the issue presented was measured by a direct question: Was there a harmony between the décor, colours and the issue presented on the stage? The answers were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.9 Harmony between Lighting and the Presented Meanings

Perceived harmony between lighting and the presented meanings was measured by this question: Did the lighting suit the meaning presented on stage? Here the possible answers are represented by dummy variables, Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.10 Harmony between Music and the Presented Meaning

To assess the musical effects on the audience, they were asked: Were the musical effects suitable to the meaning? Their responses were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.11 Arriving Early

To know if arriving early influenced the spectators' experience of the performance, it was necessary first to ask the question: Did you arrive early? Their responses were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.11.1 Effect of Early Arrival

We asked the respondents: Do you think arriving early affected your aesthetic experience? In order to measure the effects of arriving early to the show. The answers were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.11.2 The Reasons for the Effects of Early Arrival

To measure the reasons of why some given by those spectators who answered 'yes' to the previous question, the respondents' answers were grouped into three forms: arriving early gives me some time to adapt to the place =1, arriving early allows me time to relax my

body and mind in a convenient seat = 2, arriving early allowed me to sit and begin to think about my personal matters before the commencement of the show = 3.

7.6.12 Common Audience Response to a Certain Scene

We measured this variable by the question 'Did you notice a common response of the whole audience to a certain scene?' The answers were coded Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.12.1 Reasons for the Common Response to a Certain Scene

Question 17 probed the reasons for the common response to a certain scene, and ten different answers were grouped from the audience's responses.

These answers were coded as: there was a common audience response towards the negative behaviour of some rich Kuwaiti characters on stage =1, there was a common negative audience response towards the forced marriage in the play as a phenomenon which is still happening in Kuwaiti society = 2, there was a common negative response but I cannot remember it = 3, there was a common positive response but I cannot remember it = 4, there was a common enthusiastic positive response during the show = 5, there was a common positive response when the truth was revealed eventually =6, there was a common response to the frightening scenes =7, there was a general audience response to every scene = 8, there was a common response when the audience rejected being ridiculed through the presentation of negative behaviours ironically = 9, there was a common audience response when spectators felt bored = 10.

7.6.13 Themes that were not Well Presented in the Performance

To measure the audience's view about the themes that were not well presented, we asked the question: Are there any themes that were not well presented in the performance? The responses were coded as Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.14 Specifications of Themes that were not Well Presented

The respondents answers produced 5 statements designed to measure the variable influence. The theme of drug addiction in Kuwaiti society = 1, the psychological history of the main character = 2, the conflict between social classes was not well presented verbally = 3, Nothing in particular = 4, the issue of Kuwaiti civil law was presented vaguely = 5.

7.6.15 The General Feeling about the Performance

The respondents' general feeling about the performance was measured with a direct question: What was your general feeling about the performance? Their responses were coded as, sad =1, happy = 2, bored = 3, nothing in particular = 4.

7.6.16 The Spectators' Involvement in a Certain Scene

To measure the audience's involvement in a certain scene, we asked: Did you feel totally involved in a certain scene? The answers were coded Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.16.1 The Particular Scene that Caused the Involvement

The answers concerning the particular scene that caused total involvement during the performance were coded into 7 responses as follows: there was a moment that I felt totally involved but I can not remember it =1, the moment that I felt totally involved was when the actors discussed a social problem =2, I felt involved in the romantic scenes = 3, I felt totally involved in a certain scene but I would rather not to discuss it = 4, I felt totally involved in the comic scenes to the extent that I became oblivious of the other audience members =5, I felt totally involved when lies were uncovered because a similar situation happened in my life =6, I felt totally involved in the tragic scenes =7.

7.6.17 The Scenery that Awakened a Certain Memory

To find out about the ability of a theatrical scene to awaken a certain memory connected to a spectator's life, we asked the question: Was there a particular scene on stage that awakened a certain memory connected to an experience in your life? The answers were coded Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.17.1 The Memories that were Awakened by a Particular Theatrical Scene

The question that asked about the memories that were awakened by a particular theatrical scene produced a number of responses from the spectators who had answered 'yes' to the previous question. These responses were coded in a list of five: memories of the period of the Iraqi invasion =1, romantic memories = 2, family memories = 3, memories of a friend = 4, there was a scene on stage that awakened a certain memory but I would rather not to say what it is = 5.

7.6.18 The Image or Scene that Lingered in the Spectator's Mind even after the Performance

To find which scene that lingered in the spectators mind even after the performance, we asked a direct question: Which scene lingered in your mind even after the performance?

The answers were coded as: the image of the protagonist = 1, the décor = 2, the frightening images = 3, the romantic images = 4, the digital images = 5.

7.6.19 A Scene that Took on Further Meaning after the Performance

To assess whether the spectators were able to derive further meanings after the performance or not, we asked: Was there a scene in the performance which took on further meaning after the performance? Their responses were coded: Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.20 The Spectator's Companions

To measure the influence of the spectators' companions we asked three questions. The first was: With whom did you come to the show? Their answers were coded: friends = 1, family = 2, colleagues = 3, nobody = 4.

7.6.20.1 The Companion's Influence on the Spectator's Experience

The second question intended to measure the companion's influence: If you came to the show with a different companion, would your theatrical response be the same? The answers were coded as Yes = 1, No = 0.

7.6.20.2 Reasons for the Companion's Influence

In the third question, concerning the reasons for the companion's influence, the spectators' answers produced four distinct statements which were coded as: my perception would be affected by the ideas I share with my companion = 1, my perception would be altered if my company had different views from mine = 2, my perception would be different if my companion were professionals in the field of theatre = 3, I think that attending a performance with a group would influence the individual's perception = 4.

7.6.21 The Source of the Respondent's Information about the Performance

The spectators' initial source of information about the performance was revealed by a direct question: How did you first hear about the performance? The respondents' answers were coded as: media = 1, friends = 2, work = 3, other = 4.

7.6.22 The Most Important Element of the Performance

The audience's view about the most important element in the performance were coded as: acting = 1, décor = 2, music = 3, lighting = 4, text = 5.

7.6.23 Evaluating the Relationship between the Elements

Four items were coded to measure the spectator's opinions on a scale ranging through excellent = 1, very good = 2, good = 3, not related to each other = 4.

7.6.24 Correlation between the Audience, Performance and Text

To measure the audience's perception about the existence of correlations between the audience, the performance and the text, we asked them directly: Do you think that there is a relationship between the audiences, the performance and the text? The answers were coded Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.24.1 The Reasons for the Correlation between the Audience, the Performance and the Text

The spectators' answers produced four statements designed to measure the reasons why they thought that there was a relationship between the audience, the performance and the text. Their statements were coded as: the text was the foundation of the performance, providing dialogues and the main scenes = 1, the text was the literary aspect of the performance because the text holds its human values = 2, the text provided the romantic side of the performance while the actors' actions provided the realistic side of the same performance= 3, the performance is the living modern translation of the classic text = 4.

7.6.25 The Pace of the Performance

To measure the spectator's view about the pace of the performance, we asked: Was the performance fast? The answers were coded: Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.26 The Main Theme of the Performance

The respondents' answers were used to construct five statements encapsulating what they considered the main theme of the performance: the domination of the materialism of

modern Kuwaiti society =1, the corruption of the modern Kuwaiti society = 2, the everlasting struggle between evil and good =3, the different faces of the truth = 4, the social problems of modern Kuwaiti society = 5.

7.6.27 The Innovation of the Production

This aspect was explored by a direct question asking the respondents, If you are already familiar with the text, do you think this performance was innovative in terms of its changes to Shakespeare's text? The answers were coded: Yes =1, No = 0.

7.6.28 The Degree of Reality of the Events on Stage

The aim of this question aim is to reassess Cameron's theory in his book *Theatrical Response*, in which he claimed that spectators respond to theatre to the degree that they find it real. In this question we added the third possibility of (maybe) to provide the spectator with a third choice and as we mentioned in our comments on the results of this question that was demonstrated in table 38 and chart 38, we found out that spectators do respond to theatre of different reality levels. The degrees of reality perceived by the spectators were measured by a direct question: Do you think what you saw happening on the stage could happen in real life? The responses were coded as: may be =1, yes = 2, No = 0.

7.7 The Definitions of Statistical tests

To assess the correlation among highly effective variables I used a number of statistical tests, they are:

7.7.1. Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) is one of a variety of chi-square tests-statistical procedures whose results are evaluated by reference to the chi-square distribution. The correlation between two variables are related. The most common measure of correlation is the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (called Pearson's Correlation for short), and it is also called so because its properties were first investigated by Karl Pearson. It tests a null hypothesis that the relative frequencies of occurrence of observed events follow a specified frequency distribution. The events are assumed to be independent and have the same distribution, and the outcomes of each event must be mutually exclusive. Pearson's chi-square is used to assess two types of comparison: tests of goodness of fit and tests of independence. A test of goodness of fit establishes whether or not an observed frequency distribution differs from a theoretical distribution. A test of independence assesses whether paired observations on two variables, expressed in contingency table, are independent of each other. ²

7.7.2. Cramer's and Phi tests are also called Cramer coefficient and Phi coefficient because they are two statistical tests that measure the association of variables. It is a non-parametric Statistical test especially for nominal or categorical level of measurement. The Cramer-Von-Mises Criterion is generally a test to assess the goodness of fit of a probability distribution. The criterion is named after Harold Cramer and Richard Edler von Mises who first proposed it in 1928-1930. The generalisation to two samples is due

to Anderson 1962. Phi is referred to upper case Φ , lower case ϕ or φ , pronounced [fi] in modern Greek and [fai] in English, is the 21st letter of the Greek alphabet. In modern Greek, it represents [f], a voiceless labiodental fricative. In Ancient Greek it represented [ph], an aspirated voiceless bilabial plosives. In the system of Greek numerals it has a value of 500 ($\varphi\alpha$) or 500.00 ($\alpha\varphi$).

7.7.3 Likelihood-ratio test is a statistical test in which a ratio is computed between the maximum probability of a result under two different hypotheses, so that statisticians can make a decision between two hypotheses based on the value of this ratio. The numerator corresponds to the maximum probability of an observed result under the null hypothesis. The denominator corresponds to the maximum probability of an observed result under the alternative hypothesis. Under certain regularity conditions, the numerator of this ratio is less than the denominator. The likelihood ratio under those conditions is between 0 and 1. Lower values of the likelihood ratio mean that the observed result was less likely to occur under the null hypothesis. Higher values mean that the observed result was more likely to occur under the null hypothesis. The likelihood ratio, denoted as Λ (the Greek letter lambda), is a random variable with a probability distribution. If the distribution of the likelihood ratio corresponding to a particular null and alternative hypothesis can be explicitly determined that, directly, can be used to form decision regions to reject or not reject the null hypothesis.

7.7. 4 Linear by Linear association is also called the Mantel-Haenszed statistic test. It is appropriate if both measures are at least ordinal. Linear by linear association is mainly a symmetric measures for Ordinal data. The output from crosstabs is organized into table of statistics that are symmetric or directional. Directional measures yield different values depending upon which measure is considered to be dependent variable. The symmetric measure for ordinal data include the linear by linear association test, gamma test, Kendall's tau -b, dall's tau -c, and Spearman's rank order correlation.

7. 7. 5 Two tailed tests or (2-tailed), the purpose of a hypothesis test is to avoid being misled by chance occurrences into thinking that the effect one is investigating (for example, a difference between treatment and control) is real. If one is investigating, say, the difference between an existing process and a (hopefully improved) new process, observed results that do not show an improvement would not interest him/her so s/he do not need to protect her/himself against being misled by "negative" effects, no matter how extreme. A 1-tailed test would be appropriate. If, on the other hand, one is interested in discerning a difference between samples A and B (regardless of which direction the direction goes), a 2-tailed test would be appropriate. We would use a two tailed test to see if two means are different from each other, (i.e. from the same population or from two different populations). In a two-tailed test, we are looking for either an increase or a decrease.

7.8 The Significance of statistical tests

I need to note here that the main significance of using the previously mentioned statistical tests is to test the strength of the correlation between variables and their association, in other words we are looking at the influence of variables on each other in the same direction for example if one variable is increasing would it mean that the other is increasing? or decreasing?. In a statistical test a result is called statistically significant if it is unlikely have occurred by chance, a statistically significance difference simply means that there is statistical evidence that there is a difference; it does not mean the difference is necessarily large. The significance level of a test is a traditional frequent statistical hypothesis testing concept. It is defined as the probability of making a decision to reject the null hypothesis when, the null hypothesis is actually true.

7.9 The Statistical Tests

We applied two levels of statistical tests: descriptive tests and inferential tests. In the descriptive section, we used frequency tables to show the frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percentage of each variable. We also benefited from pie chart diagrams in order to provide further illustration of data, which will be provided in the fifth appendix. In this test of inferential statistics we tried to test the survey hypotheses by cross-tabs, Chi-Square and Phi- tests to assess the possible associations of variables.¹

7.10 The Results of the Study

7.10.1 Descriptive Results

We applied descriptive tests to show the frequency, percentage, valid percentage and cumulative percentage of each variable. We also benefited from the use of different diagrams, to provide an illustrative description of the data analysis.

7.10.2 Testing the Hypotheses

In this section, we applied inferential statistics to test the survey hypotheses. We used mostly cross-tabulation, Chi-Square and Phi- tests to assess the possible associations of variables.

7.10.2.1 Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the age and the perception of the audience members who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.

To assess the relationship between the age and the perception of the spectators who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse, we applied cross-tabulation and Chi-Square test. The cross-tabulations result is given in the following table.

Correlations between the age group and the influence of the architecture

Test	variable		Age.Group	Architecture Influence
Kendall's tau_b	Age. Group	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.251
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.064
		N	52	52
	Architecture Influence	Correlation Coefficient	-.251	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.064	.
		N	52	52

The data results, based on Kendall's tau_b test, show that there is a relationship between age and the influence of the architecture. In other words, the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture and their age groups are associated together, and the association is negative. This means the younger audience was more affected than the older audience. This result confirms our survey hypothesis on the existence of a relationship between age and the influence of the architecture.

7.10.2.2 Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the level of education and the effects of arrival time. The aim is to find if there is any relationship between the level of education and effects of arrival time. The results of correlating the data are shown below:

Level of Education * Effects of Arrival Time Cross-tabulation

		Effects of Arrival Time		Total
		No	Yes	
Level of Education	Higher	3	38	41
	Intermediate	5	3	8
	Primary	0	3	3
Total		8	44	52

As we see from the table, the majority of the audience who were highly educated believed that their arrival time affected their aesthetic response. We then examined the relationship between the education levels and the reasons for the influence of the arrival time. The results are shown in the following table.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.237(a)	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	12.600	2	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.760	1	.052
Number of Valid Cases	52		

3 cells (50.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .46.

The Chi-Square test result shows that there is a relationship between the level of education and the effects of arrival time and this confirms our second hypothesis. To measure the strength of this relationship we used Phi and Cramer's V tests.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.559	.000
	Cramer's V	.559	.000
N of Valid Cases		52	

A. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

B. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The results of Phi and Cramer's V show that there is a strong relation between the two variables (value = .559) and this result is 100% statistically meaningful. This result provides an experimental support for our study hypothesis and confirms that there is an association between level of education and the perception of the spectators concerning the effect of arrival time.

7.10.2.3 Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the level of education and awareness of the themes that were not well presented in the performance. The cross tabulation result shows the distribution of the spectators based on two variables: the level of education and the themes that were not well presented.

Level of Education * and themes that were not well presented in cross-tabulation

Count

		Themes that were not well presented					
		The theme of drug addiction in Kuwaiti society	Psychological history of the character was not well presented	Conflict between social class was not well presented verbally	Nothing in particular	The issue of Kuwaiti civil law was presented vaguely	Unanswered
Level of Education	Higher	4	10	11	2	8	6
	Intermediate	1	1	1	0	3	2
	Primary	0	1	2	0	0	0
Total		5	12	14	2	11	8

The Chi-Square test was applied to see if there is a significant relationship between

the two variables in the table.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.483(a)	10	.773
Likelihood Ratio	7.708	10	.657
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.963
Number of Valid Cases	52		

14 cells (77.8%) have an expected count of less than 5.
The minimum expected count is .12.

The Chi square result shows that the relationship between the level of education and the reasons that the spectators mentioned the themes that were not well presented, cannot be supported by the evidence. This result means our hypothesis is rejected by the analysis of the data.

7.10.2.4 Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the level of education and the reasons for the influence of the seat position.

Correlations : Level of education and the reasons of the influence of the seat position

		Level of Education	The Reasons for Influence of seat position
Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	1.000
	N	52	6
The Reasons of Influence of seat position	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.
	N	6	6

The correlations table shows that there is no relationship between level of education and the reasons that the audience mentioned the influence of their seat position. Based on this result, we can conclude that the hypothesis number 4 was not confirmed.

7.10.2.5 Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between convenience of seat position and the audience's perception of the stage colours. The association is shown in the next table.

Convenience of Seat Position * and influences of colours in cross-tabulation

		Count		Total
		Affected by Colours		
		No	Yes	
Convenience of Seat Position	No	2	3	5
	Yes	4	43	47
Total		6	46	52

The following table was produced through the SPSS statistical programme to provide a correlation test and the statistics are illustrated below.

Correlations: Convenience of seat position and the influence of colours

		Convenience of Seat Position	Affected by Colours
Convenience of Seat Position	Pearson Correlation	1	.291(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.037
	N	52	52
Affected by Colors	Pearson Correlation	.291(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.
	N	52	52

- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table indicates that there is a positive relationship between the convenience of seat position and the influence of colours. These results confirm hypothesis number 5 of the survey.

7.10.2.6 Hypothesis 6: There is a relationship between the influence of the seat position and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.

Correlations: Seat position influence and the spectators affected by the architecture

		Architecture Influence	Seat Position Influence
Architecture Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.294(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.034
	N	52	52
Seat Position Influence	Pearson Correlation	.294(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.
	N	52	52

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Examining the results produced by the correlation test, we can say that the hypothesis has been confirmed: the evidence shows that there is an association between the influence of the seat position and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.

7.10.2.7 Hypothesis 7: There is a relationship between the effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.

Correlations: effects of arrival time and architecture influence

			Effects of Arrival Time	Architecture Influence
Kendall's tau_b	Effects of Arrival Time	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.139
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.321
		N	52	52
	Architecture Influence	Correlation Coefficient	-.139	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.321	.
		N	52	52

The survey result, as the correlation indicates, is that there is a negative relationship between the effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience who was affected by the architecture of the playhouse. In other words, the hypothesis has been rejected by the analysis of the empirical data.

7.10.2.8 Hypothesis 8: There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the influence of the stage colours.

Effects of arrival time * and perception affected by the colours in cross-tabulation

		Affected by Colours		Total
		No	Yes	
Effects of Arrival Time	No	1	7	8
	Yes	5	39	44
Total		6	46	52

Correlations between effects of arrival time and the audience affected by colours

		Effects of Arrival Time	Affected by Colours
Effects of Arrival Time	Pearson Correlation	1	.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.928
	N	52	52
Affected by Colours	Pearson Correlation	.013	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.928	.
	N	52	52

Inspection of the last two columns shows that there is no relationship between effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience affected by the colours. Here the eighth hypothesis was not supported by the analysis of the empirical evidence and has been rejected statistically.

7.10.2.9 Hypothesis 9: There is a relationship between the perception of musical effects and the perception of stage lighting. Cross-tabulation is presented in the table below.

Musical effects * and the stage lighting in cross-tabulation

		Lighting		Total
		No	Yes	
Musical Effects	No	1	2	3
	Yes	8	41	49
Total		9	43	52

Correlations between musical effects and stage lighting

		Musical Effect	Lighting
Musical Effects	Pearson Correlation	1	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.460
	N	52	52
Lighting	Pearson Correlation	.105	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.460	.
	N	52	52

The association between the perception of the musical effects and that of the stage lighting was not confirmed by the statistical test. In other words, applying the correlation test leads to the rejection of the assumption that there is a relationship between the perception of musical effects and the perception of lighting.

7.10.2.10 Hypothesis 10: There is a relationship between the arrival time and the perception of musical effects. The correlation table below provides information about the testing of this hypothesis.

Correlations:

		Arriving Early	Musical Effect
Arriving Early	Pearson Correlation	1	.293(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035
	N	52	52
Musical Effect	Pearson Correlation	.293(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.
	N	52	52

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test confirms the relationship and that it is positive. This result confirms hypothesis number 10.

7.10.2.11 Hypothesis 11: There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the perception of the musical effects.

Musical effects * and the effects of the arrival time in cross-tabulation

		Effects of Arrival Time		Total
		No	Yes	
Musical Effects	No	1	2	3
	Yes	7	42	49
Total		8	44	52

Correlations between the perception of the musical effects and the effects of the arrival time

		Arriving Early	Musical Effect
Arriving Early	Pearson Correlation	1	.293(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035
	N	52	52
Musical Effects	Pearson Correlation	.293(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.
	N	52	52

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the perception of the musical effects has been confirmed by the correlation test which runs a significant figure of .293, as illustrated above.

7.10.2.12 Hypothesis 12: There is a relationship between the arrival time and the reasons given concerning the themes that were not well presented on the stage.

Correlations between the themes that were not well presented and arriving early

		Arriving Early	Lists of theme were not well presented
Arriving Early	Pearson Correlation	1	-.371(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
	N	52	52
List of themes that were not well presented	Pearson Correlation	-.371(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
	N	52	52

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above results show that arriving early is negatively associated with the reasons that the audience provided regarding the themes that were not well presented. The result supports our hypothesis and our assumption is confirmed based on an analysis of the empirical data.

7.11 Conclusion:

Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies about our research subject, which is the aesthetic experience of the theatre audience and particularly the Kuwaiti audience, we constructed twelve hypotheses. The data analysis and the application of different statistical tests produced the following results:

- A. Nine hypotheses were confirmed out of the total of twelve.
- B. Consequently three of the twelve were rejected.
- C. Of the nine hypotheses which were confirmed, six positive and three negative relationships were found.

End notes of Chapter Seven

1 cross-tabs, Chi-Square and Phi tests are statistical tests to measure the influence or the strength of association between two variables by a numerical percentage, for more information about choosing the suitable statistical test see, Paul R. Kinnear and Colin D. Gray, *SPSS for Windows Made Simple*, Hove: Psychology Press, 2000. p.17

2 Chernoff H, Lehmann E. L. *The use of maximum likelihood estimates in X^2 tests for goodness-of-fit*. The Annals of Mathematical Statistics , 1954. p. 579-586

The Conclusion

This conclusion consists of four sections. Section one summarises the chapters of this study, section two explains the interrelationship between the various theoretical approaches, section three states the findings of this study, and section four makes recommendations, and lists some areas for further research.

1. The summery of the research chapters

In Chapter One we discussed the four historical stages lived by Kuwaiti society, that despite its short span, as Kuwait is a relatively young state, Kuwaiti history has evolved in a very interesting manner; from the pre-oil period when people led simple Bedouin and sea related lives, to a period of extensive wealth which brought massive changes both in the landscape of Kuwaiti society and culture, to the shocking period of invasion by a neighbouring Arab State, which shattered the safe haven of the Kuwaiti people and pushed them into new realities, to the period of a liberated Kuwait which put Kuwaitis face to face with new concepts and challenges of a modern life that does not necessarily offer the same wealth as the pre-invasion period, but certainly an expanding cultural wealth generated by the war events.

The historical stages lived by Kuwaitis demonstrate that the sea, the desert, the exploration of oil and the Iraqi invasion are the main factors that shaped Kuwaiti modern culture and identity, and accordingly directed the Kuwaiti audience's response.

In Chapter Two, we considered a number of concepts that are believed to be related to this research's hypothesis developed in Christian theology, psychology, philosophy and literature.

In Christian theology, the related concept is the finding and interpretation of the spiritual truth in the Bible. In psychology, 'Aesthetic distance' is defined as: a term that implies a psychological relationship between the reader or viewer and a work of art. It describes the attitude or perspective of a person in relation to a work, irrespective of whether it is interesting to that person. A reader may dislike a poem, for instance, for subjective reasons, but this should not vitiate his objective reaction. The reader or critic has at once to be involved with, and detached from what he is concentrating on. The work is 'distanced' so that it may be appreciated aesthetically and not confused with reality. In philosophy, the term *phenomena* is a Greek term meaning: 'Things appearing', and phenomenology is a method of philosophical inquiry that lays stress on the perceiver's vital and central role in determining meaning. It derives from the thinking of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the German philosopher. In his view, the proper object of philosophical inquiry is not the objects in the world that are perceivable through the senses but, rather, the prior contents of our consciousness. In the field of literature, it has to do with the way textual meaning is communicated.

We then defined the reader's response theory according to Cuddon in the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* as it is concerned with the relationship between text and reader, with the emphasis on the different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise in this relationship. I also presented various theories about this 'collaboration' that had been advanced since the

mid to late 1970s. For example, Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976, trans.1978), and the Italian semiotician and novelist, Umberto Eco's *The Role of the Reader*, in 1979. Another reader-response theory was developed by the Americans Norman Holland and David Bleich, in their books, *Five Readers Reading* (1975) and *Subjective Criticism* (1978) by Holland and Bleich respectively. The study then discussed Michael Riffaterre's *Semiotics of Poetry* 1978, postulating what he describes as the 'Super-reader' and Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, when he (1981) attempts a structuralist theory of interpretation in the analysis of reader's strategies, with an emphasis on the operation of interpretive moves rather than the content of the moves. In addition to developing the theory about the reader and the reader's responses, Gerald Prince also invented the term 'narratee'. The 'narratee' is not the reader, but the kind of person who is addressed by the narrator; and

The American critic, Stanley Fish, evolved a reader oriented theory which he calls 'affective stylistics'. He is concerned with the ways a reader's responses develop and change in relation to the words or sentences, as they succeed each other in time.

In addition to the 'reception theory', which is discussed by Hans Robert Jauss in connection with what he calls the 'horizons of expectations', the Reception theory itself is referred to as a school of literary theory which is associated particularly with the University of Konstanz and the journal *Poetic and Hermeneutik* (published from 1964). Jauss is concerned with the general response to literature in terms of reception aesthetics rather than the individual's response, and he suggests that literary work should be studied

in terms of the impression or impact it makes on its contemporary audience, and that literary value is to be judged according to how much the view of a text alters over time. 'Aesthetic distance' is the term used by Jausss to indicate the difference between the contemporary view of a work of art (at the time of its first publication), and the present-day view.

I also discussed recent American critics (e.g. Edward Said, Jonathan Culler and Stanley Fish), who have become interested in 'reading communities' and institutions as determining forces in the reading of texts. Fish, declares that it is only within a given community or institution that the facts of literary study (i.e. genres, periods, authors, texts) are available, and that these 'facts' are as much a product of the community as they are of the interpreters.

Concerning literary theory, I referred to the first critic in history, Aristotle, 384 B.C who measured the importance of any tragedy through its impact or in other words to its aesthetic experience. In his book *Art of Poetry*, Aristotle explains how he observed the distinction between moral and aesthetic criteria. He is definite in his view that the aim of tragedy is to give pleasure, a peculiar kind of pleasure, which accompanies the release of feelings affected by the stage performance of a tragedy.

I argued in Chapter Two that, the sharing of feelings with the protagonists' feelings comes from the fact that both the spectators and protagonists are humans. The spectators must have experienced in one way or another the same experiences represented on the stage, and accordingly he/she shares the feelings of the characters. At the same time, the spectators are not actually on the stage, facing the same destiny as the protagonists,

therefore they feel safe and secure in their seats. Feelings of both fear and sympathy, as Aristotle suggests, about the effect of tragedy which is catharsis or the release of both feelings, fear and sympathy; fear from being in the same situation as the protagonist and sympathy for the protagonist when he faces his destiny at the end.

This research concludes that there is a relation between Aristotle's theory of drama (tragedy, comedy), and the present researcher's hypotheses, because during the performance, the spectator understands what is happening on the stage through or in the light of, his/her own experiences. The different story of each spectator's life produces a different version in each spectator's understanding, and finally, each spectator goes back home with his/her own version.

I then introduced the main study that links to this research, and on which I built my own hypotheses, which is the research by Susan Bennett. According to her, the relation between production and reception is positioned within and against cultural values because all art forms rely on those cultural values for their existence and among them theatre, which is an obvious social phenomenon. It is an event which relies on the physical presence of an audience to confirm its cultural status.

Finally, I introduced the contribution that this research might make and to test my hypotheses I conducted a survey questionnaire to know how the spectator perceives theatre, and if he/she can control the way he/she receives it. To do this, it is necessary to follow the process of perception from the very first moments of the theatrical event in which I assume visible and non-visible variables may interfere.

In Chapter Three I discussed different views about the nature and the development of Arabic theatre as a backdrop for the Kuwaiti theatre that was discussed in Chapter Four. In Chapter Three I argued, after referring to different sources, that Arabic theatre started by containing its cultural issues then was influenced by the drama elements of the European theatre, mainly French and Italian in works written by Arab dramatists who had visited Europe and came back to the Arab world to apply what they had seen. This stage was discussed by Hilāl and Abū al-Ela along with their influences and outcomes on the Arabic theatre. I then noted the most important figures in Arabic theatre and their contributions to the genre.

I also discussed the dramatic elements in general, as Aristotle regarded them in the Greek theatre, and the concept of Islamic drama and the misunderstandings about the differences between attending a ritual with dramatic elements and attending a play that is built on dramatic elements not on the idea of worshipping God.

Finally, I discussed the beginnings and the development of the Arabic audience's aesthetic experience until now.

In the fourth chapter I refer mainly to the Kuwaiti theatre, its development and its audience; how it started in the 1940s as a school theatre then developed in the 1950s to a popular theatre which reflects the issues of Kuwaiti society on the stage. It then evolved in the 1960s greatly along with the great development of all sectors of life in Kuwait after the discovery of oil, then how it reached in the 1970s the age of maturity. In the 1980s Kuwaiti theatre declined, and in the 1990s the Iraqi invasion destroyed all sectors of life

including theatre, but the bitter experience supplied Kuwaiti drama with an enormous amount of real experience.

The fifth chapter is a discussion, text analysis and the presentation of the selected productions in their Kuwaiti social context. The sixth is the testing of the hypotheses by means of a survey questionnaire covering selected case studies. The seventh is the correlation between variables that I assumed affecting the aesthetic response. In addition to an introduction, there is a conclusion and four appendixes.

2. The Interrelationship between the theoretical approaches

The interrelationship between the theoretical approaches in this research, I believe, is in the essence of the theatrical aesthetic experience. Each reception theory approached this essence differently, in the beginning of the 17th century it was thought that the text is the essence, on the 18th it changed to be the author, and now on the 21st century, it is becoming to be realised that the audience is the essence of the aesthetic experience because it is the one that provides the text with new meanings.

When I compared Aristotle's theory in tragedy with the hypothesis of this research, I found out that the audience as the essence of the aesthetic experience is not a totally new concept because Aristotle stated that the tragic effects would not occur without Catharsis and I explained in chapter two that the Catharsis would not happen if the spectator is not actually comparing her/his life experiences with what is happening on stage. Therefore, we can see that the audience used to be the essence of the aesthetic experience but it has been neglected for few centuries. In this research I assume that the theatrical aesthetic experience of any spectator, in general, and of the Kuwaiti spectator, in particular, has its

own influential variables which will be discussed in the following point that is the findings of this research.

3. Findings

Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies about our research subject that is the aesthetic experience of the theatre audience and particularly, the Kuwaiti audience, we have drawn twelve hypotheses that were mentioned earlier in this part. The data analysis and the application of different statistical tests concluded that:

- A. Nine hypotheses have been confirmed out of the total of twelve hypotheses.
- B. Among twelve hypotheses, three hypotheses were rejected.
- C. Of the nine hypotheses which have been confirmed, there were six positive relationships, and only three negative relationships have been found.

As for the nine hypothesis that have been confirmed, they are

1. There is a relationship between the age and the perception of the audience members who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse. The correlation test results, based on Kendall's tau_b test, showed that there is a relationship between age and architecture influence. In other words, the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture and their age groups are associated together, and the association is negative. This means the younger audience was more affected than the older audience. This result confirms our survey hypothesis on the existence of a relationship between age and the influence of the architecture.

2. There is a relationship between the level of education and the effects of arrival time.

The correlation test result showed that there is a relationship between the level of education and the effects of arrival time and this confirms our second hypothesis. To measure the strength of this relationship we used Phi and Cramer's V tests.

Symmetric Measures. The results of Phi and Cramer's V show that there is a strong relation between the two variables (value = .559) and this result is 100% statistically meaningful. This result provides an experimental support for our study hypothesis and confirms that there is an association between level of education and the perception of the spectators concerning the effect of arrival time.

3. There is a relationship between the level of education and the list of themes that were not well presented in the performance. In the correlation test result showed that the relationship between level of education and the reasons that the spectators mentioned about the themes that were not well presented, can not be supported by the evidences. This result means our hypothesis is rejected by the analysis of the data.

4. There is a relationship between the level of education and the reasons for the influence of seat position. The correlations test showed that there is no relationship between level of education and the reasons that the audience mentioned about the influence of their seat position. Based on this result, we can conclude that the hypothesis number 4 was not confirmed.

5. There is a relationship between convenience of seat position and the audience's perception of the stage colours. The correlation test indicated that there is a positive relationship between the convenience of seat position and the influence of colours. These results confirm hypothesis number 5 of the survey.

6. There is a relationship between the influence of the seat position and the perception of the architecture of the playhouse. Examining the results produced by the correlation test, we can say that the hypothesis has been confirmed: the evidence shows that there is an association between the influence of the seat position and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse.

7. There is a relationship between the effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience who were affected by the architecture of the playhouse. The survey result, as the correlation indicated, is that there is a negative relationship between the effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience who was affected by the architecture of the playhouse. In other words, the hypothesis has been rejected by the analysis of the empirical data.

8. There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the influence of the stage colours. The results showed that there is no relationship between effects of arrival time and the perception of the audience affected by the colours. Here the eighth hypothesis was not supported by the analysis of the empirical evidence and has been rejected statistically.

9. There is a relationship between the perception of musical effects and the perception of the stage lighting. The association between the perception of the musical effects and that of the stage lighting was not confirmed by the statistical test. In other words, applying the correlation test leads to the rejection of the assumption that there is a relationship between the perception of musical effects and the perception of lighting.

10. There is a relationship between the arrival time and the perception of musical effects. The correlation test confirms the relationship and that it is positive. This result confirms hypothesis number 10.

11. There is a relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the perception of musical effects. The relationship between the effects of the arrival time and the perception of the musical effects has been confirmed by the correlation test.

12. There is a relationship between the arrival time and the reasons given concerning the themes that were not well presented on stage. The correlation results showed that arriving early is negatively associated with the reasons that the audience provided regarding the themes that were not well presented. The result supports our hypothesis and our assumption is confirmed based on an analysis of the empirical data.

We can conclude that the statistical test proved that there are nine variables influenced the aesthetic experience of the Kuwaiti spectators used as a sample in this research, I recommend the application of the same research on theatrical festivals and compare it with the results of our research to reach facts about the theatrical aesthetic experience of

the Kuwaiti spectator. It is also convenient to apply the same questioner as a psychological study case in the field of Drama therapy which I intend to do next after this research.

4. Recommendations and Suggestions for further Studies

1. We recommend that this study be followed by another assessment of the Kuwaiti audience perceptions yearly in the theatrical festivals, in order to build the socio-cultural awareness that is desired in this study.

2. We recommend other researchers to study each variable influence separately applying the methodology of group-focused study.

3. We recommend that the questionnaire used in this study be distributed at every theatrical event as a general questionnaire to assess any spectator's aesthetic experience, especially in the Arab world.

4. We recommend that further studies on the aesthetic experience of a spectator be carried out in the field of drama therapy as an efficient method of exploring the visible and invisible variables that might cure a patient from psychological illnesses, especially the self-experiences variable, by using a drama work . This method of treatment has been recently approached in Kuwait in al-Sabāh General Hospital as well as in different parts of the world.

**The Aesthetic Experience of the Kuwaiti Audience:
An Application of Reception Theory**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the PhD degree

The University of Leeds
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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The aesthetic experience of the spectator has a continuous ability to become a new experience at every theatrical event. This thesis endeavours to explore this phenomenon and test the variables that may influence the theatrical experience of a Kuwaiti spectator through the use and application of a survey questionnaire.

In Chapter One we aimed to provide the thesis with a historical background to serve as a backdrop for the reader of this thesis to better understand the experience of Kuwaiti spectator and to know the main features and historical events that shaped the Kuwaiti society and how various historical events affected as well as shaped the Kuwaiti individual and society. The sea and the desert life, the discovery of oil and the Iraqi invasion are the main events which formulated the features of the Kuwaiti spectator.

In Chapter Two we presented the theoretical framework of this study with emphasis on the reception theory.

In Chapter Three we discussed the development of Arabic theatre as a backdrop of the Kuwaiti theatre.

While the fourth chapter traces the stages of the development of Kuwaiti theatre from its early beginnings to the present, Chapter Five is the presentation of the two study cases examined in this research.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the experimental application and its results, and in Chapter Seven we have examined the correlation between the variables.

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TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Anglicised spellings of commonly used names and locations have been retained for the ease of use in an English language text. In such cases where I have found necessary to transliterate vocabulary, names, or titles from the Arabic I have conformed to the Library of Congress Transliteration System.

1. Consonants

Arabic	LC	Arabic	LC
•	'	ض	dh
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	z
ث	th	ع	'
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	h	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	s	ي	y

2. Diphthongs

ي (ay)	و (aw)
--------	--------

3. Vowels

Arabic (short vowels)	LC	Arabic (long vowels)	LC
	a	ا	ā
	u	و	ū
	i	ي	ī

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APPENDIX 1

The Research Questionnaires

I- The Patric Pavis Original Questionnaire in English

1. General discussion of performance
 - a. what holds elements of the performance together
 - b. relationship between systems of staging
 - c. coherence or incoherence
 - d. aesthetic principles of the production
 - e. what do you find disturbing about the production; strong moments or weak, boring moments

2. Scenography
 - a. Spatial forms : urban, architectural, scenic, gestural, etc.
 - b. Relationship between audience space and acting space
 - c. System of colours and their connotations
 - d. Principles of organisation of space- relationship between on-stage and off-stage- links between space utilised and fiction of the stage dramatic text

3. Lighting system

4. Stage properties:
type, function, relationship to space and actors' bodies

5. Costumes
How they work; relationship to actors' bodies

6. Actors' performances
 - a. individual or conventional style of acting
 - b. relation between actor and group

- c. relation between text and body, between actor and role
 - d. quality of gestures and mime
 - e. quality of voices
 - f. how dialogues develop
7. function of music and sound effects
8. Pace of performance
- a. overall pace
 - b. pace of certain signifying systems (lighting, costumes, gestures, etc.
 - c. Steady or broken pace
9. Interpretation of story-line in performance
- a. what story is being told
 - b. what kind of dramaturgical choices have been made
 - c. what are ambiguities in performance and what are points of explanation
 - d. how is plot structured
 - e. how is story constructed by actors and staging
 - f. what is genre of dramatic text
10. Text in performance
- a. main features of translation
 - b. what role is given to dramatic text in production
 - c. relationship between text and image
11. Audience
- a. where does performance take place
 - b. what expectations did you have of performance
 - c. how did audience react
 - d. role of spectator in production of meaning
12. How to notate (photograph and film) this production
- a. how to notate performance technically
 - b. which images have you retained

13. What cannot be put into signs

- a. what did not make sense in your interpretation of the production
- b. what was not reducible to signs and meanings (and why)

14. {sic}

- a. are there any special problems that need examining
- b. any comments, suggestions for further categories for the questionnaire and the production

II- The Adapted Questionnaire Used in this Research

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

إستبيان

عن

العروض الكويتية المقامة في مهرجان القرين الثقافي – يناير 2004 .

وزارة التعليم العالي
المعهد العالي للفنون المسرحية
جامعة ليدز-بريطانيا
امنى العميري.

إن هذا الإستبيان يهدف إلى خدمة البحث العلمي في المسرح الكويتي الحالي و خاصة عن العروض المقامة في مهرجان القرين الثقافي الكويتي .

مساهمتم في الإجابة بوضوح عن الأسئلة المطروحة لها أكبر الأثر في تزويد البحث المقام حالياً بالمعلومات الهامة لرفعة شأن المسرح الكويتي و البحث في عروضه الحالية على مستوى المتلقي ، لذا نرجو المساهمة الفعالة .

كما نحيطكم علماً بأن كل المعلومات التي ستقدمونها، شاكرين ، ستعالج بسرية تامة وبدون ذكر أسماء .

(أسئلة البحث قامت الباحثة بإعدادها على أساس إستبيان عام لقياس التجربة الجمالية عند الجمهور للأديب المسرحي الفرنسي باتريك بافيس (1985).

أ.منى العميري

-مناقشه عامه عن العرض:

1. ما هي العناصر الهامه في العرض ، كما شاهدتها ؟

2. ما هو أهم عنصر شاهدته في العرض و كيف إكتسب هذا العنصر أهميته ؟ في رأيك ؟

-الاداء -الديكور -الموسيقى -النص -الإضاءه

3-كيف تصف العلاقه بين عناصر العرض ؟

-ممتازة -جيده جداً -جيده -ضعيفه -غير موجوده

4. ما هو الشيء الذي أسعدك في العرض ؟ متى شعرت بسعاده أو بحزن أو بفخر أو بندم أو برضى أو غير رضى أو بأي شعور آخر أثناء العرض ؟ ولماذا؟

5. ما هو الشيء الذي أزعجك في العرض و لماذا؟

6. هل شعرت بملل أثناء العرض ؟ متى ؟

7. هل شعرت بلحظة تفاعل شديد مع العرض لدرجة أنك نسيت من حولك أو شعرت أنك في مكان آخر ؟ متى و لماذا إنتابك هذا الشعور ؟

8. هل تعتقد أنك جلست في المكان المناسب ؟ (إذا كانت الإجابيه بلا الرجاء تحديد السبب) .

9. هل أتيت مبكراً أم متأخراً عن العرض ؟ هل تعتقد أن وقت وصولك يؤثر على مدى تلقيك للعرض المسرحي ؟
و هل أتيت بصحبة أصدقائك ، عائلتك ، زملائك في العمل أم بمفردك ؟ هل تستطيع ذكر السبب ؟

10. كيف علمت عن العرض ؟ ولماذا قررت الحضور ؟

11. سؤال إفتراضي : لنفترض أنك أتيت الى العرض مصطحباً أشخاص آخرون عن الذين حضروا معك
اليوم هل تعتقد أن إستجابتك و تلقيك للعرض سيتأثر ؟ لماذا؟

12. هل تعتقد أن جلوسك في مكان مختلف ، سيغير وجهة نظرك عن العرض أو يؤثر بشكل أو بآخر على
تلقيك للعرض ؟ لماذا ؟

13. هل تعتقد أن هناك علاقه بين المتفرج , الممثل ، مكان العرض ؟ كيف ؟

14. هل تأثرت بالألوان المستخدمه في العرض ؟ كيف؟

15. هل هناك تجانس بين الألوان المستخدمه في العرض أم أنها ألوان متنافره و غير متجانسه؟

16. هل تشعر أن ما يحدث على المسرح واقعي ؟

نعم -لا -قريب من الواقع ويمكن حدوثه .

17. إذا كانت القصة واقعيه ، هل جسد الممثلين أو الممثل هذا الواقع بشكل جعلك تصدقه ؟ كيف؟

18. إذا كانت القصة خياليه ، هل إستطاع الأداء تجسيد هذه الطبيعه للقصة ؟ أم أنك شعرت بالحيره بين الواقع
الخيال ؟

19. هل كانت الإضاءه المستخدمه تتناسب مع هدف العرض؟

20. إذا لم تكن الإضاءة المستخدمة مناسبة؟ هل لديك إقتراحات عن كيفية استخدام الإضاءة في العرض؟ ماهي؟ وماذا يجب استخدامها بهذا الشكل؟

21. هل تعتقد أن عناصر الديكور المستخدمة وُظفت بشكل جيد؟ كيف؟

22. هل شاهدت استخدامات مختلفة لنفس أدوات الديكور في نفس العرض؟ أو في عروض أخرى؟

نعم - لا - لا أتذكر

23. هل تعتقد أن الممثل يستخدم إمكانياته الجسديه والصوتيه بأبعادها بشكل مناسب؟ كيف؟

24. هل كان التمثيل فردي أم جماعي؟ أيهما تفضل و لماذا؟

25. إذا كان التمثيل جماعي ما هي علاقة الفرد بالجماعه في العرض هل كانت عكسيه أم طرديه؟

26. إذا كان التمثيل فردي كيف كانت علاقة الممثل مع أدواته و مع عناصر الديكور؟ ما هي؟ وكيف أثرت عليك شخصياً؟

27. هل حدث موقف على المسرح أو لحظه أيقظت لديك ذكري أحداث موقف آخر ذاكرتك؟ ما هو الموقف؟ (ذكر الموقف إختياري).

28. هل تستطيع أن تحكم على جودة الأداء من ناحية استخدام الحركات الجسديه ماهي درجة الجوده؟

29. هل كان صوت الممثل واضحاً و مؤثر؟ هل هناك أسباب في رأيك؟

30. إذا كان هناك حوار، هل تشعر أنه كان متطور في المسرحيه، هل بدأ بسيطاً ثم تعقد وإنتهى الى حل؟

31. كيف تطور الحوار؟ هل تستطيع تذكر بعض الكلمات التي جعلتك تشعر بأن هناك توتر للموقف أو هدوء له؟

32. هل إستتمعت بالموسيقى في العرض ؟ هل أدت وظيفتها في العرض؟
33. هل إستتمعت إلى المؤثرات الصوتيه في العرض ؟ هل كانت مستخدمه بشكل يتوافق مع غرضها الأساسي ؟
34. هل كان العرض سريع عموماً ؟
35. هل كان إستخدام الأضاءه وتبديل الأزياء سريع أم في وقت قياسي و مناسب ؟
36. هل شعرت ان العرض فقدّ وقته المطلوب للعرض في مشهد معين ؟ ما هو المشهد ؟
37. ما هي القصه المقدمه أو الموضوع المطروح أو الفكره المعالجه ؟
38. ما هي نوعية الدراما المسرحيه المقدمه؟
39. ما هي النقاط التي عولجت بغموض و ما هي النقاط التي عولجت بوضوح؟أذكر مثال؟
40. كيف تم بناء القصه في المسرحيه المعروضه ؟
41. كيف تم تجسيد القصه من خلال الممثلين على خشبة المسرح؟
42. هل اختلفت نوعية الدراما للقصه عن نوعية الدراما المقدمه في العرض ؟
43. هل تعتقد أن النص تم طرحه كعمل مسرحي مثلما قدم كنص أدبي ؟
44. ما هو الدور الذي لعبه النص الأدبي في العرض؟
45. ما هي العلاقه بين النص الأدبي و الصوره العامه للعرض ؟
46. أين تم العرض ؟

47. هل كانت لديك تصورات أخرى للعرض ؟
48. هل كانت هناك ردة فعل للجمهور في أي لحظة ؟ ما هي اللحظة و ما هي ردة الفعل ؟
49. هل تعتقد أن للجمهور دور مهم في هذا العرض ؟
50. إذا أردت أن تتحدث عن العرض من الناحية التقنية ، ماذا ستقول ؟
51. ما هي الصورة التي ظلت متعلقه في ذهنك حتى بعد إنتهاء العرض؟
52. ما هو المعنى الذي لم يكتسب أهميه لحظة إستقبالك له و لكنه إكتسب أهميته فيما بعد ؟
53. ما هو المعنى الذي لا يمكن التعبير عنه بإشارات أو كلمات و لكنك شعرت به كمتفرج ؟ و لماذا في رأيك لا يمكن التعبير عنه؟
54. هل هناك أي مشاكل في العرض تحتاج إلى معالجه في نظرك أو إعادة صياغه و إختبار ؟
55. ما هي الحاله العامه التي دخلت بها إلى دار العرض ؟ وماهي الحاله التي خرجت بها من العرض ؟ ولماذا؟
56. هل هناك أي تعليقات ،إقتراحات ، أو أسئله كان من المفترض وجودها في هذا الإستبيان؟
57. العمر:
- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 70-60 | 60-40 | 40-30 | 30-20 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
58. التعليم:
- | | | |
|------|-------|---------|
| عالي | متوسط | ابتدائي |
|------|-------|---------|
59. المهنة

60.الجنس: أنثى ذكر

لا يسعني في نهاية هذا الأستبيان إلا أن أشكركم لحسن تعاونكم
في رفعة شأن المسرح الكويتي خاصة و رفعة شأن وطننا الحبيب
الكويت عامه و رفعة الوطن تتم على يد أبناء مخلصين جادين في
عملهم ، كل أملهم هو مستقبل باهر .

III. The modified questionnaire applied in the SPSS

The questionnaire

1. Please indicate your age: -----

2. What is your level of education? (Please tick)

Higher education Primary school Intermediate

3. Please indicate your sex by ticking the appropriate box: Male Female

4. Was your seat position convenient? Yes No

5. Do you think your seat position affected your response? Yes No

6. if not, please clarify the reason(s)

The seat is of restricted view I didn't choose the right seat

Minimum choice of seat

7. Have you been affected by the architecture of the play house? Yes No

8. If yes can you mention the reason?

The architecture helped me to establish meanings according to the show, it was my first impression

There is a live relation between architecture, performance and audience

I was affected by architecture but its meaning does not suit the performance the architecture is the frame of the authors' work

Successful play = Suitable architecture + Professional actor + cultured audience

9. Have you been affected by the colours of the décor? Yes No

10. Was there a harmony between the décor colors and the issues presented on stage?

Yes No

11. Did the lighting suit the meaning presented on stage? Yes No

12. Were the musical effects suitable to the meaning? Yes No

13. Did you arrive early? Yes No

14. Do you think arriving early affects your aesthetic experience? Yes No

15. If yes, can you mention the reason?

Arriving early gives me some time for adaptation with the place

Arriving early allows me time to relax my body and mind in a convenient seat

Arriving early allowed me to sit then start thinking about my personal matters before the commencement of the show

16. Have you noticed a common response of all the audience to a certain scene?

Yes No

17. If yes, can you mention the reason?

A common audience response towards the negative prestigious behavior of some Kuwaiti characters on stage

A common audience response towards the forced marriage in the play which is still happening in Kuwaiti society.

There was a common negative response but I cannot remember it

There was a positive common response but I cannot remember it.

There was a common enthusiastic positive response during the show

There was a common positive response from the audience when the truth was revealed eventually

There was a common response towards the frightening scenes

There was a general audience response according to each scene

There was a common response when the audience rejected being rescued through presenting negative behaviors ironically

There was a common audience response when spectators felt bored

18. Are there any themes that were not well presented in the performance?

Yes No

19. If yes, can you mention the theme?

The theme of drug addiction in Kuwaiti society

The psychological history of the character was not well presented

The conflict between social classes was not well presented

The sexual issues were not well presented verbally

The issue of Kuwaiti civil law was presented vaguely

20. What was your general feeling about the performance?

Sad Happy Bored Nothing in particular

21. Did you feel totally involved in a certain scene? Yes No

22. If yes, can you remember it?

There was a moment that I felt totally involved but I cannot remember it

The moment that I felt totally involved was when actors discussed a social problem

I felt involved in romantic scenes

I felt totally involved in a certain scene but I would like not to mention it

I felt totally involved in the comic scenes to the extent that I forgot the audience around me

I felt totally involved when lies were recovered because similar situation happened in my life

I felt totally involved in the tragic scenes

23. Was there scenery on stage that awakened a certain memory in your life?

Yes No

24. If yes, can you mention it?

Memories occurred during the Iraqi invasion Romantic memories in my life
Family memories Friend's memories
There was scenery on stage that awakened certain memory in my life but I would not like to mention it

25. What is the theatrical scene that kept appearing in your mind even after the performance?

The image of the protagonist

The décor

The frightening images

The romantic images

The digital images

26. Was there a scene that you have seen in the performance which took a further meaning after the performance? Yes No

27. With whom did you come to the show?

Friends

Family

Colleagues

Nobody

28. If you came to the show with a different company do you think your theatrical response would be the same? Yes No

29. If yes can you mention the reason?

My perception would be affected by the ideas I share with my companions

My perception would be distracted if my companions had different views from mine

My perception would be different if my companions were professionals in the field of theatre

I think that attending a performance with a group would influence the individual perception

30. How did you know about the performance?

Media Friends Work other

31. What is the most important element in the performance?

Acting Décor Music Lighting Text

32. How do you describe the relation between previously mentioned elements in the show? Excellent Very good Good Not related to each other

33. Do you think that there is a relation between the audience, the performance and the text? Yes No

34. If yes can you mention the reason?

The text was the basic subject of the performance that provided dialogues and the main scenes

The text was the literary aspect of the performance because the text was the human values

The text provided the romantic side of the performance and action of the actor's provided the realistic sides of the same performance

The performance is the live modern translation of the classical text

35. Was the performance fast? Yes No

36. What is the general subject of the performance?

The domination of materialism in modern Kuwaiti society

The corruption of modern Kuwaiti society

The everlasting struggle between evil and good

The different faces of the truth

The social problems of modern Kuwaiti society

37. If you know the text in advance do you think this performance presented an innovation to the text? Yes No

38. Do you think what is happening on the stage could really happen in life?

May be Yes No

IV. The Translated version of the Arabic questionnaire:

-General discussion about the production:

1. What are the important elements of the production?

2. What is the most important element in the production?

- The performance of the actors

- Décor

-Music

-Text

-Lighting

3. How would you describe the relation between the production elements?

-Excellent

-Very Good

-Good

-Poor

- Does not exist

4. Was there a certain moment in the production that caused a certain feeling, for example: happy, sad, proud, pity, satisfied, not satisfied or any other feeling? And Why?

5. What is the thing that you did not like in the production and why?

6. Did you feel bored during the production? When?

7. Have you been involved in a certain scene in the production to the extent that you forgot all about the people around you? When? And why did this feeling occur?

8. Are you satisfied with your seat position? If not please indicate the reason?

9. Did you arrive early or late to the production? Do you think that the arrival time influences your theatrical reception? Who accompanied you to the theatrical event; friends, family, colleagues, alone, can you mention the reason?
10. How did you know about the production? And why have you decided to attend?
11. If we suggest that you attended the production with another company, do you think that your perception would be different? Why?
12. If your seat position was different do you think your perception would be different too? Why?
13. Do you think that there is a relation between the spectator, performer, and the play house? Why?
14. Have you been influenced by the colures of décor? How?
15. Is there a harmony between the colures of décor?
16. Do you think that what happened in the production is true?
-Yes
-No
-Could happen in real life
17. If you think that the story of the production can really happen in life, do you think that the performers have successfully reflected this reality? How?
18. If the story of the production is a fantasy, did the performers succeed in reflecting this fantasy? Or you were hesitated between reality and fantasy?
19. Do you think that the lighting reflected the aim of the production?
20. If the lighting is not suitable, do you have suggestions about it? Can you explain?

21. Do you think that the décor's props were efficiently used? How?
22. Did you see different usages to the same props in the production? Or in other productions?
- Yes
 - No
 - I cannot remember
23. Do you think that the performer have used his/her tools effectively? How?
24. Was the acting in groups or solo (individual) for example the monodrama? Which one do you prefer and why?
25. If the acting was in groups, what was the relation between the individual and the group? Was it relationship that succeeds in parallel or in contrast?
26. If the acting was solo (individual), did the actor use his/ her tools effectively? Could you describe his/her relation with the décor? And can you describe how you psychologically was influenced?
27. Did any scenery on stage awake a certain memory in your life? (It is optional to mention the memory).
28. Can you assume the quality of the performance of the performers? What is it?
29. Was the actor voice clear and efficient? Were there reasons for this efficiency?
30. Was there a dialogue? Do you think it was developing from a start then it got complicated then sorted at the end?
31. How did the dialogue succeeded? Do you remember any words that made you feel that the dialogue is getting complicated or getting sorted?

32. Did you enjoy the music of the production? Do you think it was well used?
33. Did you hear the sound effects of the production? Do you think it was efficient?
34. Was the production generally fast?
35. Was the changing of lighting and costumes fast? Or in a suitable time?
36. Did you feel that the performance lost its base in any of its sceneries? Which scenery?
37. Can you mention the main story or the subject or the idea of the production?
38. Can you specify the kind of drama presented on the production?
39. Can you mention the ideas that were vaguely presented and the points that were clearly presented? Can you mention an example?
40. Can you mention the story structure as presented in the performance?
41. Can you mention how did the performers present the story on the stage?
42. Is there a difference between the kind of drama of the main story and the kind of drama presented in the production?
43. Do you think the theatrical production has been presented on stage like it was presented in literature, as a text?
44. What was the role of the literature text in the production?
45. What is the relation between the literature text and the general image of the production?
46. Where did the production take place?

47. Did you have other thoughts about the production?
48. Was there any reaction from the audience in any moment? What is it?
49. Do you think that the audience has an important role in this production?
50. Can you mention the technology presented in the performance?
51. What is the image that lingered in your mind even after the performance?
52. Was there a meaning that took a further explanations after the performance?
53. Was there any meaning that you felt as a spectator but was not presented in the performance? And why, in your view, it was not presented?
54. Is there any problem in the performance that needs to be reviewed or modified?
55. What is your general feeling when you arrived at the production and what was it when you left? Why did you feel so?
56. Is there any comments, suggestions, or questions which should have existed in this questionnaire?
57. Age :
- 21-31
 - 32-41
 - 42-51
 - 52-61
58. Education:
- High
 - Intermediate
 - Low

59. Position:

60. Gender:

-Female

-Male

The TRADE

By Sulyman al-Bassam

2003

Act One

Scene 1:

The Hares and the Mandoub are measuring a plot of land.

Mandoub: Yes, if you'd seen the mourning, you'd understand the meaning of greatness- what's the width?

Hares: Up to here it's 2,349 metres.

Mandoub: The line of Mercedes' and Jaguars from here to the sea, the grand *diwan* was heaving, bushoot worth more than your 5 year's salary, hundreds of them, fanning the air in black and gold like giant wasps gathering over spilt honey.

Hares: I saw them outside- from the biggest men of state in their immaculate white *thowbs* down to the smallest sycophant's scuttling around like cockroaches on the marble tiles, sticking their noses up like this, looking for who to kiss. 2,354- write it down and bring the rock.

Mandoub: And how would you know the difference between a big man and a small one ?

Hares: What am I – a wall ?

Mandoub: Enlighten me then.

Hares: You can always tell a poor man from the cloth of his *dishdasha*

Mandoub: Oh, really

Hares: And by their sandals also-

Mandoub: Also!

Hares: And how far away they park from the mourning *diwan*

Mandoub: Why?

Hares: If the motor's an embarrassment, better keep it hidden.

Mandoub: You're better than a wall, you're at least a fence.

Hares: I'm no analyst- 2,359, write it - but if you want my opinion it doesn't look good for the boy, Jameel.

Mandoub: All this land and you say it bodes badly, bucket brain. Do you know how much a square metre of this sand is worth- thousands!! It's the inheritance of a King; look at it- it's the size of a cemetery.

Hares: The envy of his uncles knows no bounds. When his father was alive he had to use all his power and influence to keep his own brother's from locking him up- didn't you notice that they stayed away from his funeral? The fires of envy that burn in their chests aren't quenched yet: they want their revenge. They want it. Jameel is young and new to the country; he's easy prey and they won't waste time in settling their scores.

Mandoub: No knife goes as deep, no cut bleeds as much, no wound is as fatal, as the knife wielded by one's own blood. But in my experience in this country nothing protects a man like money.

Hares: Ay, ay.

Mandoub: Money protects you from it all: the corruption of judges, the sewers of Bureaucracy, the vanity of officials, the barking of banks, the engines of war, the envy of uncles; money, my friend, money is the greatest weapon; it silences them all.

Hares: So what lies under this soil then?

Mandoub: What?

Hares: A weapon of mass destruction !

(They laugh)

Mandoub: Shut up! They might hear us and bomb us.

(They laugh)

Hares: Who are they, over there, measuring the land?

Mandoub: They are not with us.

Hares: I know that shape- it's their Hares, Mahmoud.

Mandoub: Who's Hares?

Hares: The Uncle's , Abu Tareq, look at them walking across our land, sniffing at it like dogs- *wallah* I will strike them, give me that rock.

Mandoub: Wait, idiot! Don't hit them first, they'll charge you and you'll be sent back to the fields of Upper Egypt.

Hares: Who will see ?

Mandoub: Who's the legal advisor, peasant? You or me?! A car might drive by over there.

Hares: There is no car, *wallah* I will hit them!

Mandoub: Wait! Let's talk to them... Mahmoud?

Mahmoud: Yeah.

Mandoub: Come here a little, would you mind?

Mahmoud: What is it, Mister?

Mandoub: Do you know this man?

Mahmoud: In the same way I know my shoe.

Hares : In the same way you will know my shoe when it cracks you on the skull.

Mahmoud: Your shoe can never crack my skull because you are my shoe; you are what is under my shoe the stink of the gutter and the shit of goats. I spit on you.

Hares: Spit, if your mother who is the daughter of a whore has a drop of dignity in her dirty rags spit.

Mandoub: Behave, boy! Tell me what are you doing measuring this land, you know this is private land.

Jallal: And who are you to ask?

Mandoub: And who are you ?

Jallal: I am the lawyer to the State Courts of Justice, Jallal Al-Saluki, and next time show more respect when-

Mandoub: My God- say no more- your reputation proceeds you. To what do we owe the privilege of having the dirtiest lawyer in the country on our land?

Jallal: As ever, I am pursuing the ideals of justice: on this occasion I am returning this land to its rightful owners.

Mandoub: It's sole owner is Jameel al-Kabir and I am his representative.

Jallal: Your information is out of date.

Mandoub: Court decree no. 6598 dated (two days ago).

Jallal: This decree is dated today and it overturns that decision.

Mandoub: It was a decision of 2nd degree cassation- that's final.

Jallal: Through article 27 of the land ownership laws, there was an appeal made directly to the High Court. This is final.

Mandoub: Nothing can overturn a final decision, not even your tricks and bribes and treachery!

Jallal: Poor child. Escort them from the land, Mahmoud, unless these gentlemen would prefer me to call the police and have them forced out... like dogs.

They fight.

Enter Tareq and Jameel, who separate the men.

Tareq: What do you want?

Jameel: I am your cousin and this is my land.

Tareq: Jameel ?! Yes, *wallah*, it is you. You look like a mouse, all your life you've looked like a mouse, I know that face.

Jameel: From the days I tried to teach you how to read, because you were stupid; are you still so stupid, are there no laws in this country ?

Tareq: None. And this land is not yours.

Jameel : What?

Tareq: Now you are educated, you are civilised, I want you to understand that there is no ill feeling between us, we are cousins, it is like brothers, you and I (*Jameel hugs Tareq*) of course that is your nature, you are like us, you love peace and wellbeing between people. We won't be unfair with you and your mother, but what is due is due .Listen, let me take you to the café, we'll leave my workmen to begin their plans, put your head right with a nice little *shisha* and we'll discuss things, man to man-

Jameel : What plans?

Tareq: There's so much to tell and hear-

Jameel : What plans?

Tareq: Your father's greed didn't leave anything untouched, it spread like a plague

Jameel: Your father spent his life borrowing out of my father's pocket.

Tareq: That was before, Jameel, before you went away. These last 10 years the world has changed big people became midgets and everybody wants to eat, this country is a cake and everyone wants to stuff his face in it, don't you read the papers- your father died with millions in debt to us. It is our right this land, not yours.

Jameel: I'll call the under-secretary for Justice

Tareq: Do you want the Head of the Inspectorate, here.

Jameel: He's a friend give me his number.

Tareq: No, I will call the Minister of Justice

Jameel: I have the number of 5 MPs

Tareq: I am owed a favour by 8.

Jameel: I know the President of the Parliament, he was a close friend of my father's.

Tareq: I know the Prime Minister, he's like a brother to my father.

Jameel: I will call the Emir.

Tareq: Call him, it's beyond him!

Lights.

Scene 2:

Fayza is brushing Jameela's hair

Fayza: You will look so beautiful tonight, if I was a prince I would ask for you.

Jameela: But how do you know it is not love then?

Fayza: For a man you've seen in the street!!

Jameela: Why not! It happens doesn't it? That you see a boy that you like, he stares and you pretend to be troubled. Well I don't know but I've heard it.

Fayza: When?

Jameela: Yesterday in the supermarket, with my mother.

Fayza: With your mother too, you are a tart! Go on, speak then

Jameela: Nothing.. he followed us around with his trolley and I was pretending not to pay him any attention, only I turned my head to glance at him each time we went round an aisle. From the pasta to the vegetables, a glance, from the jams to the biscuits a dart, just a little dart and he'd come running with his basket... and then as he came down the aisle of the soaps and moved by us, he dropped his number into the bag I was carrying.

Fayza: Let me see it.

Jameela: Here it is. But don't make a scandal will you?

Fayza: Let me see, girl.

Jameela: It could be love couldn't it? It feels like love, really it does.

Fayza: *(reading)* 'Khalid' and to the next girl he'll be called Bashar and to the next Mohammed and to the next Sadiq.

Jameela: Why? Why would he change his name?

Fayza: What do you think you pretty fool. How old are you now exactly?

Jameela: Don't, stop it Fayza! Give it back!

Fayza: He'll have dropped his number at least ten times yesterday.

Jameela: What do you know, you don't know him.

Fayza: Let's see shall we?

Jameela: what are you doing are you mad?

Fayza: Have you called him yet?

Jameela: Don't be stupid.

Fayza: Swear!

Jameela: I swear, I swear! What are you doing?

Fayza: hello? hello Khaled.

Voice - yes, who is it ?

Fayza: do you remember we saw each other yesterday,

Voice: Of course, in the supermarket, how could I forget?

Fayza: (appearing put out) In the supermarket? It wasn't in the supermarket- is this the right number?

Voice: Maybe you wanted Bashar?

Fayza: Yes, yes I want Bashar, what do you think I said?

Voice: I am Bashar... I mean some of my friends call me Khaled but I am Bashar

Fayza: Do you remember me then ?

Bashar: Of course, of course

Fayza: Where did we meet?

Bashar: Yesterday?

Fayza: Yesterday.

Bashar: I loved you from the moment I set eyes on you.

Fayza: WHERE?

Bashar: At the traffic lights near the towers on the Gulf Road.

Fayza: you dog, you filthy dog spreading your numbers to every piece of flesh you see and coding them in different names, if I ever see you again, I will scream and tell the police you tried to touch me, wallah I'll teach you a lesson and shame you in front of the world and make your parents wish they'd never had you.

She hangs up.

They are giggling and laughing

Fayza: Did you see how I turned him into a stuttering gimp.

Jameela: They are not all like that Fayza, I cannot believe all men are like that liar.

Fayza: All of them. Without exception. Worse, they are liars, connivers, hypocrites and weak- all of them. Even the best of them! Why do I tell you to develop your imagination, why ?

Jameela: Because it's secret, it's allowed, I can do it and nobody can catch me, I can't be broken... Don't you believe in love Fayza?

Khlada; No. I believe in exchange.

Jameela: That is part of love and marriage.

Fayza: No, it's part of the economy. You give yourself to a man, you give your entire empire to a man, your beauty, your body, your life, don't give it for free, he must pay you back.

Jameela: In love and respect and kindness.

Fayza: In cash.

Jameela: I don't need to marry for marry for money, I have.

Fayza: The world turns, women grow old and nothing turns faster than a man's love. Make sure he's got enough cash to pay you when he's done with you or what will you do- look for another husband when you are ugly and alone?

Jameela: You are so bitter, Fayza, you make my hair stand on end. Its because you have never truly loved.

Fayza: I am bitter because I have loved, Jameela. I have loved so deeply, I thought my body would leave me and rise up into the sky like a cloud. And I was loved too, I don't deny that I was loved too. He made me feel I was the only woman who could walk into a room and silence it, he made me feel I was a sun emerging out of the dark ocean of night, he brought me flowers and showered me with gold, and when we married he took me to his bed and gave me his child. Then one day he left me like you leave a hotel room, with three hard words he drove the sun out of the sky and drove my head into the sand and left me; empty, opened and soiled. He marched on, a man! without a turn of the head the ogre moved on, hungry for more flesh, a man, Jameela, a man!

Jameela: There must be love, there must be room for it in this world, there must, or why do we live in it, why ?

Fayza: To serve, to please, to avoid our master's rage and hand, to get some sleep when we can, to bring up children to serve the nation, to buy make up, to walk in the malls, to go to weddings, to holiday in Geneva, to feel eternally tired: there is no love without freedom Jameela, none. I tell you this because I love you.

Jameela: I love you too, Fayza, but I don't give a damn for a word you have said. *She stands up*

Fayza: You are as beautiful as the moon. Who's opening the event tonight ?

Jameela: Jassim Al-Kabir, even my father is going, can you believe it?

Fayza: It's not the first time he's been to one of your concerts.

Jameela: It is! He's never been once; he says he watches them on the television.

Fayza: He worships the ground you walk on.

Jameela: May God give him long life. But I will sing only for you tonight. Only for you. Which one do you want?

Fayza: I want this one..

*Fayza starts a song, Jameela picks it up and sings.
Lights.*

Scene 3:

Inside of a Ministry building, offices running off a long corridor.

On the left the office of Sami and Nabeel where Jameel sits frowning and listening to one of Sami's stories.

On the right the office of the Under Secretary, Khaled, where Tareq sits drinking tea.

In between the two offices a lift opens from time to time whilst hoards of people mill about in the corridor. The lieutenant atmosphere is of indolence with people reading newspapers, others smoking, others on their mobiles.

From time to time, an important official walks down the corridor, pursued by a cluster of suitors with papers held in the air.

Nabeel: (To Jameel) He thinks his Don Juan! With that mug of his that looks like it's been squashed between two air conditioning units!

Sami: Do you want to hear the story or not ?

Nabeel: We do, we do, carry on.

Khaled: *(on the phone)* Tell him the Undersecretary orders him to do it.... Don't worry what the document says just do as I tell you...tell him I said so...yes...yes..

Sami: So we are leaving that party and going to another one and as we pull out, you know the street there is narrow so you drive slowly, a car pulls up...two girls, originals; that long hair, that firm chest, those big eyes... and rolls down its window. What do they want? The guy in the car with me is nudging me with his knee, the girls are giggling, so I ask them -"What?" . So not the one at the wheel, the other one says "do you know of any parties round here?" But when you are looking at them, I'm telling you, they are mermaids; that sweet make-up, that perfume wafting through the petrol; So I tell them to pull over and park and we stop the car. Me and the guy with me, the plan's clear, we're taking them straight back up to the flat, so they're walking across the road in their long lean bodies, arse twitching, you know and then-

Jameel stands up abruptly

Nabeel: Damn you, you frightened me!

Sami: What is it, Jameel ?

Jameel: I'm here to talk to you about the shit I'm in and your telling me your 1001 nights !

Nabeel: Don't get upset, we're trying to call our Judge -his number's busy- calm your nerves, calm.

Jameel: How do you want me to be calm when my mother's about to marry me off to a woman I've never met,

Nabeel: give me the number again Sami!

Jameel: my only inheritance is going to be swooped out of my hands and I don't know what Hell God has thrown me in.

Employee: Keep your voices down, people, what's wrong with this guy anyway, there are counseling centers if you are deranged.

Jameel *(To the Employee)*: Every time I come to this office, I find your head buried in that newspaper, don't you ever do any work ?

Employee: What's wrong with this guy, people?

Jameel: Answer me !

Employee: Habibi, I'm not paid to work, I'm paid to be; so I can sit on my arse and be without your rattle. If anyone wants me to work, they'll have to pay me on top. Understand ?

Jameel: A generation of wrecks, how you going to build a country in the name of God?

Nabeel: Shh....Shhh... *(on the phone)* I'll pass you over to him Uncle, thank you.

Passing phone to Jameel

Jameel: Hello uncle Bu Rashid, do you still remember me from when I was your student at the University? You are too kind...I got back about a month ago... *(in response to condolence)* your wages and mine. Uncle, I don't want to take up much of your time, but I need your advise on something... In sum, I have a problem with the inheritance from my father.. No, it's harder than that, it's my uncles, yes, they were partners and now they are claiming he left the company with millions of debt and trying to lay claim to the land that was left me...

Lights shift to focus on Khaled and Tareq

Tareq: So is he going to let them all through, then?

Khaled: Did'nt you hear me speaking to him ?

Tareq: Yeah, but when? now ? Tomorrow, when? There are 12 trucks worth you know. And can we trust him this guy on the border?

Khaled: He is the supervisor of the post, trust him like a gun, not the first time I've dealt with him, what's wrong with you?

Tareq: I don't know Khaled it's a big risk, you know.

Khaled: Aren't I your partner?

Tareq: Yes.

Khaled: And nothing is in your name ?

Tareq: Do you think I'm mad ?

Khaled: I'm underwriting this- *gives him money*- this is for the driver's. Forget it. Drink your tea, clam your nerves. Did I tell you I was thinking of getting married ?

Tareq: You!?! *(laughs)*

Khaled: Yes, what's so funny.

Tareq: We've just bought the yacht together, just fitted it out, two bedrooms and showers.

Khaled: So?

Tareq: The summer's coming and the lady fish are waiting to be fished.

Khaled: Where's the problem? It's killing me this life; the white nights, the cigarettes, the girls. I need a little stability to regain my strengths.

Tareq: God help the poor girl you marry.

Khaled: What's wrong with me?

Tareq: Nothing you are a respectable man, promising future, educated, you've got your businesses your father is a big famous man.

Khaled: Do you have anyone in mind who'd suit me?

Tareq: I don't know many virtuous girls.

Khaled: What about your cousin.

Tareq: Who ?

Khaled: Your cousin, I don't know her name, I heard my mother talking about her the other day-

Tareq: Jameela?

Khaled: Jameela!

Tareq: No, no, no. she is far too young.

Khaled: No she isn't.

Tareq: And anyway... she is engaged, she's been promised. No, no, really, like this you would cause me a great problem.

Khaled: I saw her.

Tareq: Where?

Khaled: With her mother in a mall one day, that's all. I thought you more free than that in your family.

Tareq: Of course she goes out with her mother, if that's what you mean.

Khaled: I think I like her. I think I could make a good husband for her.

Tareq: She's engaged. Believe me. Really I don't think you would get on, she is very strong minded you know, she lacks manners, she is terrible in public and knows nothing about the house.

Khaled: I'm telling you she would make a fine match for me, all I want to do is to see her. And many would agree with me? Many. What has friendship turned sour, Tareq ?

Tareq: It's not that, Khaled you know I would walk over coals for you, but my cousin-

Khaled: But one man in particular would agree with me at this point in time more than any other. You know who? Guess? Our friend the border post supervisor. Really he agrees with me. Think about it. Anyway, I'm not going to rape her, am I? When could I see her ?

Tareq: She is singing in the national concert tonight.

Khaled: I know, my father's is opening the event.

Tareq: It would be an opportunity for you to see... things and see other beautiful girls; more... more beautiful. I promise you, when you see some of her friends, Jameela will fly from your mind like a dream just before you wake up.

Khaled: Let's see.

Man stood in the corridor who has been waiting for the lift throughout.

Man: There are 1000 employees in this building, 20 floors and 4 lifts. Two of them, two! Are for the Minister alone- what's going on, people !?

Another Man: No: one is for the Minister only and one is for his guests only. The jungle is big, my brother, and you and I are small as mice.

Lights.

Scene 4:

Post-concert Reception.

Bu Tareq: It was a splendid evening, my heart filled with national sentiment, a flood of feeling came into my chest, our love for this country knows no bounds and the reason is men like you, Bu Khaled, how beautiful your opening remarks, that blinding flurry of rhetoric, you are an architect of meaning; no, you are a leader, first class.

Bu Khaled: This is our duty, Bu Tareq

Bu Tareq: I've never seen such a splendid display, I confess: my eyes filled with tears like a woman.

Bu Khaled: That's when you heard your daughter sing, my friend, she is so resplendent in beauty and charm, her voice so melodious, she would fill any father's heart with pride and glory. Tell me is she promised to anyone?

Bu Tareq: Her? She is still so young, my little gazelle, let her get out of University first and then we would be honoured to give her to the one who deserves her. But who amongst this young generation of hoodlums could deserve her, Bu Khaled? The boys aren't like we used to be, there's not a man between them. Ah, there she is- let me introduce you to her-. Jameela, come and pay your respects to your Uncle.

Jameela approaches.

Meanwhile, in another part of the hall.

Nabeel: Are you ready ?

Sami: I've already numbered 3.

Nabeel: Liar.

Jameel: Who is that girl ?

Sami: It's true, as we were leaving the theatre- one of them even took it out of my hand in the crowd.

Nabeel: Jameel, that one gave you a look, it would burn your *dishdasha* if you'd seen it.

Sami: Which one?

Nabeel: That one over there in the red.

Jameel: I want to know who that one is, talking to the patron of the party- give me the program.

Nabeel: Not that one, there in the red, you don't know where your interests lie.

Sami: There are so many of them, the hunter doesn't know here to start.

Nabeel: We have to get strategic here, out of the way, Jameel, you're blocking my view.

Sami: Oh that's hot, that's too hot that look. I'm going, my brain has been blown away.

Jameel reads her name in the program

Jameel: Jameela- my cousin!

Sami moves towards girl accompanied by Nabeel.

Jameel: What seas have parted; what rivers joined,

What current carries me, what sun blinds me,
What wind roars to deafen me ?
Tell me, friends,
What stars lie hanging in these chandeliers,
What snakes hide hissing in the sofas
Eyeing me with fatal malice as I lunge
Unguided, unsought for,
shipwrecked on this marble shore
Gasping for air-
Tell me friends:

(spotlights on Jameel and Jameela)

Why cannot eyes speak and
What night is this, what birth ?

The dialogue of the eyes:

Jameela: That is the second time I caught your eyes staring at me-

Jameel: I will pluck them out and give them to you to keep; unless they are allowed to see you, they are no use to me.

Jameela: You are mad to come so close in so public a place- I don't know you!

Jameel: Do not look to the floor, you will force me to crawl between their feet.

Jameela: Where should I look then?

Jameel: Let your eyes rove around the room, when they meet mine, let them linger a while- there! Yes, now let us start our secret dance.

Jameela: Stop! What are you doing! My father is next to me. Look away!

Jameel: Can the earth look away from the moon?

Jameel: Turn your gaze, I can't keep my balance.

Jameel: Fall: I will catch you.

Jameela: Enough!

(He turns away)

Jameel: These are the pains of the blind: to drink from empty cups of dust.

Jameela: Can sight penetrate so deep into the soul ?

Jameel: If eyes are windows onto the soul, then the sight of you has smashed the glass, my eyes are bleeding, and your body has broken into my soul.

Jameela: Am I a thief, to break and enter your soul ?

Jameel: You are crueller than a thief, you are an addiction without a cure, I must have you again in my eyes, I must-

Jameela: Come then, poor addict, drink from the sight of me, fill your eyes.

Jameel: I must touch you.

Jameela: The world around me has turned to stone and you are the only thing that moves.

Jameel: Like the believer that moves around the holy stone (Ka'ba),

Jameela: The believer must circle 7 times...

Jameel: Then approach...

Jameela: ...then gently kiss

Jameel: Not gently: hard!

Lights to full.

Bu Khaled: What do you want, boy?

Jameel: Excuse me ?

Bu Khaled (to Bu Tareq): Maybe he's deaf.

Bu Tareq: You! You've been stood next to us for an hour- what do you want !?

Jameel: Sorry, Uncle- sir, I... just wanted to say hello to you.

Bu Khaled: Ok, very nice- would you mind standing over there, give us some room?

Bu Tareq: you see what I mean, Bu Khaled, in truth you are the only one who can help us with this.

Bu Khaled: The land can't be put in your name until proper accounts are made of the company.

Bu Tareq: We've finished the accounts and had them approved.

Bu Khaled: We'll have to find a loophole, give me a couple of days

Bu Tareq: We're not the kind of people that forget their friends. I have telexed your account in Switzerland.

Bu Khaled: Nothing smoothes the way like the hard hand of cash.

Khaled and Tareq are approaching

Khaled: This is our chance, she is stood there with your father and mine- come on move, introduce me, man!

Tareq: Good evening Uncle; hello father,

Khaled: Good evening father; how do you do uncle ?

Tareq: This is my friend, Khaled, father, and this is my sister Jameela.

Khaled: I am honoured to meet you Uncle; good evening, sister.

Tareq: (*seeing Jameel*) What the hell are you doing here?

Jameel: You're going to tell me this is your land too?

Tareq: Whether you like it or not this is my land, move away I warn you, or I'll wipe the marble with you.

Jameel: Respect yourself or I'll rip your pants off in front of your father.

Bu Khaled: we don't want any scenes, this is a national event!

Bu Tareq: Tareq! What the hell are you doing.

Tareq: You don't know who he is, father !

Bu Tareq: I don't care who he is! Appearances, appearances! They are the key to success! I am making a deal with Bu Khaled and he's tonight's patron. Don't spoil what you can't fix, boy!

Tareq: It's your brother's son, Jameel!

Bu Tareq: What?

Tareq: I told you he was back from the States. I'm going to teach him a lesson in Kuwaiti public manners, did you not see how he was staring at Jameela?

Bu Tareq: Control yourself, this is not the time or the place- sorry Bu Khaled, don't worry, no problem, no problem, go and say hello to some of the guests, I'll be with you in a moment.

Tareq: Look he's staring at her still! The bastard! Let go of me father.

Bu Tareq: I will discipline you with my 'iqaal, boy, behave now! Respect appearances!

Sami: *(to Jameel)* Come on, Jameel, it's time we left.

Nabeel: Come, let's leave.

Tareq: *(shouting)* If I see you again, I'll skin you.

Bu Tareq: Shut up, child!

Khaled: *(to Jameela)* You're not hurt are you?

Jameela: I'm fine, thank you.

Khaled: You're sure you don't need anything.

Jameela: You are too kind.

Jameel is staring like a statue at Jameela, his friends drag him away. As they are leaving Fayza crosses their path and drops a number at Sami's feet.

Sami: That's how I like it, when they fall from the sky!

Fayza: It's not for you, pumpkin head, it's not even my number so don't get any ideas. Give it to your friend- the crazy guy, the statue.

Sami:* I'll deliver your message, but in return you must take my message from me.

Fayza: What is it ?

Sami: My number.

Lights.

* Alternative dialogue:

Sami: If you're a messenger, I want to be one too: but even messengers can exchange gifts.

Fayza: I would wrong you by refusing.

Sami: Take it, then and with it my promise.

Fayza: Say it.

Sami: I'll be free for you anytime.

Fayza: God willing.

Scene 5:

In the car, driving. The message sequence appears on a screen above them.

MESSAGE: “ When do I see you?”

Jameel: *(receiving a message)* Look! “ When do I see you?” Take me to her, take me to her!

Nabeel: You've just seen her and nearly got your arse kicked and now you want to marry her! Are you mad ?

Jameel: Yes I'm mad, I don't care, sod the world, take me to her ! Which way! *Dahiyah!* That way!
(typing a text message)

MESSAGE: ' t.o..n..i....t..e

Sami: Jameel, breathe deeply, take some breaths,

Jameel: Put your foot down and drive, I haven't got time to waste

Sami: You're supposed to be getting engaged to Khulud Al-Jabbar in two days time.

Jameel: That's off, cancelled, finished, tell my mother, where's the phone, I'll tell her myself. *(reading latest message)*

MESSAGE: “I am burning inside”,

- and I am burning, burning so much I'll set fire to the night like a tyre, a pyre, a black sacrifice to your beauty.

Nabeel: Woah, woah, slow down big boy, think logically about this- she's your cousin, her father and Tareq your cousin are trying to take your inheritance from you. How are you going to start a relationship with her, when her father and brother are ready to take the *dishdasha* off your back.

Sami: And you can't go round falling in love and canceling weddings and turning the world upside down, you have to think about society, about people,

Nabeel: *About your interests and her interests.*

Jameel: To hell with all your interests! To hell with society to hell with the land, to hell with all your two plus two philosophy, what am I an animal to be tied to a trough and married to a cow! This is the woman I love woman and I will marry her and I'm responsible, I'll see her tonight, if she is behind 20 walls, inside the highest towers, with guards at her door- what is my life? A dirty cloth! Away with it, I'll see her tonight. *(typing)*

MESSAGE ‘ h.o.w... do.. i.. see.. you ?”

Sami: He's turned into Tarzan!

Nabeel: And he doesn't even know how to wear a *ghutra* yet.

Jameel: Either you stop the car and I get out or you drive me to her- no other options! *(receiving message)*

MESSAGE: “the roof of the servants quarters is by my window”

Sami: What should we do?

Nabeel: Drive, man, we can't leave this fool, he'll have us all in prison before dawn.

Jameel: Decided ? Good! Now turn up the music and burn some petrol ! Burn, burn, man, burn me right into the night! *typing message*

MESSAGE: "I...l...f...l...y"

Loud Music (Aseel Abu Bakr)
Lights

Scene 6:

Jameela: He keeps me, wakes me, stirs me from my bed-

I'm sweating, is the air conditioning on-
Why can't I sit, where can I sit,
He's coming now, don't sit
It's cool outside, by the window
It's so silent, never been so dead the night
Turn the light off, how will he know
His foot must not disturb a rock
They'll think he's a cat, yes
Oh cats, cats, I love you cats
Come and maul by my window
Come and have children by me
And wake them, no! Shoo! Shoo!
Shut up! Mad girl, wake the neighbours
Shhht.

So dark. How will I see him, how will he see me?
Better, better that we cannot see, nor see each others faces,
Safer, like a dream no one can see, we'll meet without a trace
And kiss without a trace. Kiss? What is a kiss? What does it mean,
What does it do ? Will it hurt me ?
No, he *must not come*, I'll hide, he'll think it's the wrong house and go away,
text, telephone, tomorrow, better that is better. What if he taps the window-
Oh God, no, he'll tap the window and call my name : what have I done?
Brought shame into my home- my cousin, my cousin whose father gave
shame new meanings, brought misery and debt to our door, who had millions
and laughed in my mother's face when she dared to ask, a man with no
mercy, a brute, a criminal a monster. But what of it?! A son's father is not his
father, crime cannot carry through generations, or they would hang all the
sons of Cain! But if they see him here tonight they'll kill him and pull me
into the street by my hair.- "Cousin!" wretched word, cursed word, no name
brings us closer and cleaves us further apart.
I can hear him! No! That's him!
You can't be here.

Jameel: Then I am not here,

I am dead
And gone
I am dead
I am gone
Killed by your sweet words, my love.

Jameela: No stay- I'll take them back if you will give me them.

Jameel: No I am too jealous of them. These immigrants that have crossed your lips, let me keep them, detain them, close my lips around them and sense the heat of their tales.

Jameela: Let them go, I'll give you more, hotter and sweeter than those you hold.

Jameel: I'll let them all go but one, that I'll keep hostage.

Jameela: Which one are you keeping?

Jameel: The one that gives you pain, that intriguer, that liar, that masked attacker, the two-faced dog, the naked contradiction-

Jameela: Which word?

Jameel: 'Cousin!'. I will keep it and charge it and squeeze it for truth, till it confesses its crime, then I will write it down and eat it, kill it and rinse the dead body of the dead word of all its filthy meaning.

Jameela: Don't kill it. It is the tie that binds us.

Jameel: Then it must be doubly punished. Come, let us punish it together, let me lay it between our two hands, here I have it prisoner, bring me your hand- open it, take my hand, there can you feel it? Can you feel the curse moving between us

Jameela: If this is our curse, then I am cursed to love it.

Jameel: This is our curse and our curse is to love. Press it, squeeze it; harder. Make it beg for life and speak its true identity.

Jameela: Cruel torturer.

Jameel: Your torture is crueler.

Jameela: Bring me your face, I want to lay the curse across it., I want to see it moulded on your beauty.

Jameel: Here is my face, release the criminal.

Jameela: Cousin.....

Jameel: Tell me again..

Jameela; Cousin...

Jameel: Again.

Jameela: Tell me if you love me.

Jameel: By what should I swear ?

Jameela: By what is dearer to you than yourself.

Jameel: If I swear by my father's honour, you will hate me,
If I swear by my mother's life, my word's will curse us,
If I swear by the Creator, my God will hate me because He knows I
worship you more than I could ever worship Him.

Jameela: Pretty words laid many maidens,
but a laid maiden is not pretty word-
she is a foul thing!
You must go, dawn and the muezzin are coming to expose you.

Jameel: Let them come, let them kill, but don't leave me.

Jameela: My father will wake to pray, you must go now.

Jameel: These are my prayers.

Jameela: I will close the window- look the sky is breaking into red- go!

Jameel: No.

Jameela: Will you marry me.

Jameel: Yes.

Jameela: When ?

Jameel: Tomorrow.

Jameela: What time ?

Jameel: I don't know.

Jameela: Text me and I will be there.

Jameel: My heart is like a bird in your hand, don't break it.

Jameela: It's in a cage inside mine.

Jameel: One kiss.

Jameela: No.

Jameel: One kiss before the hell of dawn.

*Jameela kisses him as the muezzin calls to prayer.
Blinding light.*

End of Act One.

Act Two.

Scene 1:

Basira: Where do you go at night? For a week now, I never see you until you come crawling out of your bed at noon, then you escape like a bat. Your engagement is tonight, we are to be at Khuloud's house at 9 – speak to me, child!

Jameel: I am here, here, mother. I've been mad these last few days, my father's death has been eating me from the inside, and the situation of the country has changed so much, corruption in every corner, hypocrisy on every tongue, every man stays awake late into the night plotting his brother's downfall, it is like a sack full of hungry snakes. I am trying to clear my head.

Basira: I am worried you are traveling down the wrong path, Jameel, talk to me- are you playing with drugs; alcohol; women.

Jameel: If they were what I wanted, I would have glugged myself with them when I was abroad, not here in my country.

Basira: Our cruel sun and endless deserts create a thirst for vice America has never seen.

Jameel: All my thirst is for justice, mother. I am going to the court this morning to appeal the judgement on the land.

Basira: The only person who can help you and I now and in the future is Abu Khuloud, Issam Al-Jabbar. You'll marry his daughter and I want you to become like a son to that man. He teaches these bastards how to run, a word from him and the biggest men of state tremble. I haven't chosen this marriage for you without deliberation, Jameel, believe me.

Jameel: About this engagement.

Basira: Tonight, yes-

Jameel: I must talk to you-

Basira: I will not become one of those wrecked widows on the fringe of poverty! Never! This marriage brings us back into the frame and flow of society. Nothing can stand before you when you are the son in law of Issam Al-Jabbar, no one can turn you away, play as you will!- I need you to shave. You will be glorious in your father's bisht.. I have invited 40 women and for you 20 men.

Jameel: But mother, I do not know this girl.

Basira: What do you mean? I've showed her to you 20 times- have you forgotten her? Where are the photographs? (*Maid brings photographs*) Anyway, you have heard of her beauty, it is famous, the whole of Kuwait is talking about this marriage.

Jameel: I mean, mother, don't you think there is time for me to marry?

Basira: Yes, the time is now.

Jameel: Am I not too young?

Basira: No you are fully formed and in desperate need.

Jameel: The more stable I am, the more established, the more I will be able to give happiness to my wife and the more I will be able to enjoy her.

Basira: A wife will live through your problems with you, she will share them and help you overcome them. This wife I have chosen for you, will open the doors of the world for you. What is the matter with you, you look like you've stepped on an urchin !?

Jameel: I don't know how to tell you.

Basira: What are you going to tell me ? What! That you do not want to be engaged to her- is that it? That you want me to call it off-

Maid: If I may, madam-

Basira: Forget it! Tonight you are engaged!

Maid: What Jameel tries to say, mama, is-

Basira: Shut your mouth! Filthy mannered bitch!

Jameel: Let her talk ! I've known her for 20 years. She is like a mother to me! Speak, Kamila!

Maid: Jameel means because he does not know this girl, let him have time to meet her, to know her, before making engagement, and then he would not have any problem to marry her, because he knows. That's all he wants to say.

Basira: Eat shit! We do not have time! Have your uncles left us anything called time? The engagement will happen tonight ! Before anybody hears about the inheritance problems.

Jameel: Mother! I need a few weeks.

Basira: Who will marry you in a few weeks if you have no house to live in ?! If they brand your father as a thief and take everything! Who will offer you shelter, who?!

Jameel: I can't get engaged tonight.

Basira: Is it up to you, you dog ? All these years I stood by your father, whose name did you think I was guarding? Yours! Your name. I knew that if I left him, he'd go to the kerb, the kerb do you understand! and you would be dragged out with him. Do you want to start again from nothing in this society, do you want to spit on me and your father's memory!! Oh, you ungrateful dog! Wild animal, you would eat you're your mother's flesh!

Jameel: My father was free and proud! He married who he loved. So did you! I am free. I am free of you and him and I will marry who I will. In this I honour you both. Not Khuloud Al-Jabbar, not even the daughter of the Emir himself, I will not marry for you to stick a knife into your sick mother. Cancel it! Send the guests away, all 400 of them unless you prefer to receive them and wait for me and make the room writhe in ecstasies of untold shame. Do not force me: I will shame you- I refuse to marry her. I am already married, yes! Married to a woman whose name would make you weep!!! Beware of me, mother, I am a man and I will make you proud of me whether you want it or not !

(He exits)

Basira: This is your doing! This is your upbringing! Snake, witch, sucking my blood, infecting my infants with your poison, spells and venom!!

Maid: No, mama, no!

She beats the Maid. She beats her.

Lights.

Scene 2:

Nabeel: Throw the dice, then!

Sami: Leave it.

Nabeel: Forget it, I whipped your arse, ok? *(pause)* Cards ?

Sami: *(Tuts vigorously)*

Nabeel: *(pause)* Billiards, then.

Sami: Do you want me up and playing bloody football next!

Nabeel sighs heavily.

Nabeel: What day is it?

Sami: How should I know?

Nabeel: Are you high? *(mastool)*

Sami: What mastool, is this the sort of atmosphere you can get mastool in?

Nabeel: What's with you, brother ?

Sami: Show me one face you can call a face, show me one sight you can look at without souring your gut.

Nabeel: It's because its day time, I've told you daylight does'nt give us our kayf.* Do you want the truth? Daylight here is exile lived in solitude.

Sami: It wasn't like this before. In our grandfather's and father's day, the day had flavour, salt and mystery. How I'd love to see that girl with the pomegranate cheeks and the big dark eyes walking across my path, carrying sweet dates and warm *laban*. In those days travel meant something! Adventure! If you ever went to Baghdad that meant you were- ooofff- a king, a king merchant ! Or if you went to India, you went with hope, get yourself some rupees from a pearl, pick up some of their rhythms, love one of their girls, smuggle back gold.

Nabeel: And now all you've got is "your ears and your eyes, sir, running round the back corridors of ministries like a rat, looking for *wastas* in the *baladiya* (municipal council) banks, bills and loans, running around in circles chasing your shadow till you flop down like a seal and moan ' bring me a head for my *shisha*, bring me coals*, get me rid of this life!'.
(Sami starts to sing the Kuwaiti love song about a guard in a pomegranate grove, who catches the beautiful girl stealing pomegranates.)

Nabeel: Oi! Is'nt Jameel supposed to be getting engaged one of these days.

Sami: But when? And where is he anyway?

Nabeel: We have *(قصرتنى فى حته)* shortchanged him.

Sami: The boy won't have us near him and he won't listen to reason.

Nabeel: Still we've shortchanged him.

Sami: What to do?!

Nabeel: Do you know the way to his plot of land.

Sami: Of course.

Nabeel: That's it, then. We'll go there and pitch a tent. We'll get a change of atmosphere and stand by our boy; we'll keep an eye on the land for him- you don't know what court messengers might come by, or they might start putting up fences, you never know.

Sami: Allaaah- a camel hair tent ?

Nabeel: A coal fire...

Sami: The *Oud*, good coffee.

Nabeel: And if we get bored... who knows maybe that girl will pass by to steal some pomegranates.

Sami: Let's go!

Lights.

Scene 3:

*Khaled and Tareq, Tareq at the wheel, swerving between cars, 160 kmh.
Khalid sniffs a line of cocaine and offers one to Tareq who snorts it.*

Khalid: Cool hard snow.

Tareq: What snow, what ice, what fire and what ummmmmh!!

Khalid: So when do we see your father ? I want her.

Tareq: Tonight, God willing, he has his *diwaniyah*, we could go to check out the plot before, if you like and by then he'll be free.

Khalid: You did not mention anything?

Tareq: I've prepared the groundwork.

Khalid: I'd die for you. Go, step on it!

Tareq: That edge of desire in his throat, that hard knife of lust. I feel it. Must he strip me of everything, must he refuse me all his love, retract all the entry permits from the doors, must every gentle glance be turned into spit, must every hope of love be banished into exile, or turned into debt. Let me be in debt, I will not own his love, I will have it on loan, to be mine in 5, 10, 20 years time, I accept the terms, suck my blood, I accept but please, God, let me live, let me live with the hope of love. Must I become his slave ? I will be his slave, but with not one single drop of dignity left, not one single drop of blood. Oh, my father *, what is this monstrous love the sky is planting in my chest!? Unable to speak or be heard it grows inside me, a malignant love, reaching into my veins, suffocating me, let it speak, oh night, let it be told. Hypocrite moon- won't you lend me two cheap words to speak of love? Night! Lover's bank! Oh dirty night, wont you rent me two loose stars- come on you tight and dirty night, packed full of slappers and whores, rent me two loose and filthy stars- I need them to make a image for my love!!!

Oh shame, pitiless shame-
How do I speak of a love that cannot be spoken ?

Khaled: Slow down! Madman!

Tareq takes his hand off the wheel and kisses Khaled on the lips.

Lights.

Scene 4:

Jameel and Jameela, by the sea.

Jameela: All right, what if we say the whole sea is our love?

Jameel: The whole sea, our love ? Then we are the boat riding over it.

Jameela: No, that's bad.

Jameel: Why ?

Jameela: Storms, Jameel. What if there is a storm and the sea swallows us?

Jameel: On the contrary, let it swallow us.

Jameela: What ?

Jameel: If we are the boat and our love is the sea and then the boat disappears into the sea, what's left?

Jameela: Our love!

Jameel: Exactly.

Jameela: This sea's too meager.

Jameel: Why ?

Jameela: Look at it! It's small! You can feel its edges. If you squint your eyes you can see the shores of Iran on that side and the Shatt Al-Arab on that side. Too small for me: this entire sea couldn't hold one drop of my love for you.

Jameel: Then keep your love to yourself, or it'll drown the earth in floods.

Jameela: I will then.

Jameel: No, turn your face back to me.

Jameela: Let it drown this earth, let it sweep up the houses and the roads, the tribes and the kings. The more I love you the more I hate this world.

Jameel sighs.

Jameela: Why this sadness?

Jameel: I am frightened, Jameela.

Jameela: Do you regret marrying me?

Jameel: I'd regret being born before I could regret marrying you.

Jameela: Where can we go?

Jameel: Nowhere without money.

Jameela: I have money.

Jameel: My beautiful love, my life, my soul – you don't have a fil. Your money is your father's, all of it, and maybe tomorrow all of mine will be his too.

Jameela: I must speak to him.

Jameel: You think it is a minor thing we have done? You imagine it is something he can flare up in anger about and then brush aside, do you think he would allow things to be brought back to what they were?

Jameela: I don't know, maybe.

Jameel: It's you that regrets our marriage!

Jameela: Don't !

Jameel: You treat it as if it were a toy, your childish toy, that's broken now and you want to cry to your father about it and ask him for a new one!!

Jameela: I have buried my life for you and you dare to compare my love to a toy !

Jameel: Forgive me, my love, forgive me please. I feel as if the sky has turned to lead and I am propping it up to stop it from crushing us.

Jameela: I would walk by you, even into the grave.

Jameel: I will solve it, my love, I will solve it.

Jameela: The wind is rising. Hold me, Jameel, hold me in your arms...

Jameel: A storm is coming.

Jameela: Close your eyes.

Storm rising on the sea.

Lights.

Scene 5:

A tent, on the plot of land.

Nabeel: (*hammering in a tent peg*) That will hold it – did you get the blankets from the car ?

Sami: Come and sit now, smell this fantastic coffee – (*calling*) Rajiv blankets from car, baba.

Nabeel: Have you tuned the *oud*?

Sami: You call this an *oud*?

Nabeel: Don't start philosophizing ! We want something jumpy, dancey (*nagazi*).

Sami: Nagazi ? At your service! Fayza, my love, try to turn the bulb on will you?

Fayza: Where's the switch?

Light bulb comes on revealing Fayza.

Fayza: It's cold.

Sami: The warmest place on earth awaits you in my lap.

Fayza: I'm visiting you here out of courtesy, to listen to some songs with you- either you respect me in the way you talk or I'm going.

Sami: What I respect about you, Fayza, is your directness.

Nabeel: And your thighs, of course.

Fayza: What did you say?

Nabeel: Nothing, I didn't say anything.

Fayza: That's it, we're going, come on Tifla.

Sami: Wait Fayza, Nabeel you bastard, with your street-manners: wait Fayza!

Fayza: That little asshole! He thinks that because a couple of girls pass by to say hello that we are Thai girls! Only fit for abuse! And I thought maybe you two might have had class. But where is class and where are you two bums!! I am the daughter of a big family, I despise your ignorance, you think because you have balls that the world was made for you to shit in! Why don't you grow yourselves some beards- at least be less hypocritical !

Tifla: Fayza!

Fayza: No I won't shut up, I wasn't married to an asshole like them for 3 years and then divorced for nothing. He couldn't even get it up and these two are the same- no class, gays. Let's go.

Sami: Wait.

Nabeel: What's that car ?

Sami: Two, not one.

Nabeel: Did you invite anyone?

Sami: No.

Fayza: Move, girl, let's get out of here.

Sami: Fayza, what's the problem, relax, it's nothing. Really. Go stand round the back of the tent; we'll get rid of these two cars and then we'll start our evening. Ignore him, he's like a child.

Fayza: I'll give you exactly 3 minutes to get rid of the new arrivals. My car key is with me.

Sami: Make it two minutes, I'll teach these two buffoons a lesson, coming to disturb people on private land.

Fayza and Tifla start to head to the back of the tent.

Nabeel: Forgive me, Fayza, *wallah* I respect you.

Fayza: Out of my face!

Exit.

Sami: They'll be lost and have seen the light. Sure you did not call anyone?

Nabeel: I told Jameel we were here, that's it. Rajiv!

Rajiv: Yes, baba !

Nabeel: Stay close by.

Sami: They've arrived.

Nabeel: How many are they !?

Sami: Shit!

Tareq and Khaled get out of one car; 4 large, strong men get out of the second car. All carrying sticks.

Tareq: Every day I see a new form of insolence (*kalak**). You've come, settled in, put up your tent, are grilling meat, making music on land that you know is private and I don't think that its owner is a friend of yours, tomorrow you'll be entertaining whores!

Sami: If you are from the *baladiyah*, then show us your i.d.-

Fayza: I know that voice.

Sami: ... write us a fine and hurry up.

Nabeel: If you're a policeman then ask for my i.d. and I'll oblige you.

Fayza: I know it, I'm telling you.

Tifla: Shhht.

Sami: But if you are a Muslim come to swear and threaten, then...

Nabeel: ... please turn us your back, because your face is turning my stomach.

Tareq: If you want a lesson in Arabic, I will teach you with my tongue and you will leave like good children. But if you want a lesson in manners-

Fayza: It's him, it's that bastard.

Tifla: Stay here!

Tareq: I will instruct you with palms across your face; but if you want a lesson in decency, then just say- I have not one, but six sticks to whip your arse red.

Fayza: Even into the desert, even into the desert you follow me you prick !

Tareq: Oh! You whore!

Fayza: After what? Now you look at me with hot eyes, don't make me laugh- after what!

Tareq: I will rip your heart out through your throat.

Sami: Where are you going, my friend- her honour's with me.

Tareq: She's my wife!

Fayza: Was! You divorced me and would like to kill me, because you cannot love and I know why!

Tareq: I'll shut your mouth, little bitch, I'll shut it tonight once and for all.
Move your little black arse, slave, or I'll open your stomach to the sand.

Fayza: Are you now a man? Do you want me now or do you just want to hit me again? Ejaculate your rage on me ! HA! In front of your man friend ! Your sweetheart!

Sami: Are you the gay boy? The one who couldn't get it up and started hitting her about! Aie! Lift up your *dishdashas*, *shabab*, hold onto your pants. Keep away, gay boy, you want to tickle my arse.

Tareq hits Sami.

Fight breaks out between Nabeel, Sami and Rajiv and Fayza and Tifla against Tareq, Khaled and the 4 big men.

Fight sequence.

By the end Rajiv has been knocked out, Nabeel and Tifla are tied up and gagged, Sami is tied with his face to the floor. Fayza's dress is ripped and she is being held from the hair by Tareq.

Tareq: Tie them! Tie them!

Khaled: What a rich catch!

Tareq: Is'nt this shame itself! (Aaar*).

Khaled: It is more than shame it is offense (thal*).

Tareq: It needs a lesson in shame and offense, in filth and ugliness, to teach them the meaning of the words. Take her.

Khaled: Who?

Tareq: The one you want, but I recommend this one.

Fayza: What will you do to me!

Khaled: Your wife?

Tareq: Not my wife, my divorcee. She bore me no children and he carries her honour.

Khaled: Between brothers, nothing is property.

Tareq: What was mine is now yours. And whilst you are making her beg for more, I will make this black boy scream.

Fayza: You are sick!

Tareq: How many times you told me? But now I have consigned you to a real man, you will thank me.

Fayza: Your blood will fly for this- you'd better kill me afterwards, or I will have you hung by the neck.

Tareq: And who said I won't?

Khaled: Calm down, *habibti*, calm down, I'm coming to calm you. Tie her tighter!

Car approaching fast. Jameel descends from the car picks up a poker from the coal and hits Tareq across his face.

Tareq: You burnt through my face, you burnt through my face.

Jameel: So you know what cousin means- cousin! Should I poke you again, would you like that! Should I kill you?

Tareq, Fayza, Nabeel, Sami, Tifla, and Rajiv leave in one car.

End of Act Two.

Act Three

Scene 1:

Knocking on door, enter BuTareq.

Bu Tareq: Habibti, you're not sleeping I hope?

Jameela: No, father, come in. Tell me the news- how is Tareq? Have they caught Jameel?

Bu Tareq: Your brother is blind in one eye.

Jameela: No!

Bu Tareq: His face they think they can repair surgically in America, but he'll never have his eye back, that's certain.

Jameela: Father this is too awful and what about my cousin, Jameel?

Bu Tareq: Anyone'd think you cared for that animal !?

Jameel: What! I care for that butcher, that liar, that thief of honour and breaker of promises, of ties, of law, of blood. I hate him like I hate my enemy!

Bu Tareq: He's in hiding, we don't know where. We've put a travel ban on him, he won't get far. And when they catch him then he will taste torture.

Jameela: What will they do to him ?

Bu Tareq: Sweat his youth away in a prison cell.

Jameela: How many years ?

Bu Tareq: Not less than ten. Not less then ten.

Jameela: How!

Bu Tareq: What do you mean 'how' ?

Jameela: Is that all ? It's not enough! He deserves 15, 20, life, every day of his life and every day of mine too, I wish that he would spend all the days of both our lives combined in one hellish cell, with no one near him, in wretched solitude, no sound and no light, floating in a vacuum of days and nights without beginning or end.

Bu Tareq: That is the least he deserves. Like-father-like-son; My God, do you see, my little gazelle, how history turns on itself? I want you to learn from this catastrophe. You're no longer my little girl, and I don't have much longer to teach you things.

Jameela: I hope that you will always teach me things, father.

Bu Tareq: You will be married soon and then when will I see you to teach you my nonsense?

Jameela: Not so soon, father.

Bu Tareq: Why not ?

Jameela: I have not started university yet.

Bu Tareq: So what ?

Jameela: We talked about this and

Bu Tareq: It doesn't matter what we said. Are there rules to marriage? No. You are a woman now and if the right man comes along from the same standing in society; good background; educated; ambitious, and if you like him or think you could like him, then where is the catch?

Jameela: I am as far as you can be from thinking such things, father. I have studies waiting for me and I do not have time for marriage now in my life- do you want me a housewife, bearing children to a stranger!

Bu Tareq: Nobody is a stranger in this little country of ours. Four streets, a police station and a supermarket is all it is. Everybody knows everybody else amongst the good families. And if you marry a boy from a good family, from people we know and trust, people with noble history, then you have a recipe for a happy life. I have to weigh up your short term and long term interests, you have only me.

Jameela: I don't have any interests.

Bu Tareq: You have many! Which I try to manage them for you, preserve and develop for you. Marriage to the right man is a suitable step for a girl of your age.

Jameela: But father, I do not know any men!

Bu Tareq: Of course do. Sometimes there are matters in life that appear to eye of wisdom with the clarity of the sun. Come here, Khaled, come on, son!

Enter form behind the door.

Bu Tareq: Khaled Waleed Al-Hamour : Jameela Talib Al-Shaab.

Jameela: Khaled Waleed Al-Hamour !

Bu Tareq: Don't be surprised, my daughter, you are one of the most beautiful and sought after prizes in the land and your happiness cannot be given to just any man.

Khaled: I did not want to get to know you like this-

Bu Tareq: Do you remember when I used to come to your room when you were a little girl carrying a present for you? Do you remember how you used to dance with glee?

Jameela: Get him out! Get him out!

Khaled: What have I done!

Bu Tareq: I would spend hours looking for that present for my little daughter, my pretty daughter, and how your face would light up.

Jameela: You know what you did! I know who you are! You dare to come into my room! Criminal!

Khaled: I don't know what is wrong with her. I am sure she loves me. I just wanted to tell you-

Bu Tareq: Like a moon. You would dance all night with your present. It is not easy to choose the gift. It is a responsibility, for through it I teach you what to appreciate and attach value to, through gifts, I try to educate you.

Khaled: I just wanted to confess to you that I love you and want to marry you.

Jameela: Rapist ! Rapist! Rapist!

Khaled: It's not true. I was born to love you.

Bu Tareq: For every gift I brought you, you danced and held my hand for days afterwards. Hold my hand now-

(tries to take Jameela hand)

Khaled: Bu Tareq, gently.

Bu Tareq: Hold my hand! Give it to me! This hand in mine! Give me your hand ! How it hurts me to do this! Oh the pain of this moment ! Oh God, why do you force me to live this pain! Put it in! Put it in!

Lights.

Scene 2:

Jameel is inside a mall. He sits at a table on the verandah of a cafeteria in the mall square (meedan al markaz al-tijari).*

Jameel is in disguise: he has a light beard (the week's growth of hair) wears a winter dishdasha, red ghutra and large, dark sunglasses. He glances around nervously.

Jameela enters and sits at an empty table within a few metres of him. She wears a blouse, white pants and shades. They proceed to communicate through the following telephone conversation, stealing fervent glances at one another:

Jameela: Is that you?

Jameel: Alive. Keep your head turned away.

Jameela: Talk to me. Say anything.

Jameel: I went to the cemetery and could not find my father's grave. There are so many dead. The dead outnumber us. They come in hordes storming out of the desert. Do not buy the newspapers, do not believe what you see.

Jameela: You are frightening me.

Jameel: Act normal. Let me speak. Three nights I have not slept, I hear the wind.

Jameela: What does it say, the wind ?

Jameel: It says the era of Jahiliya is not past, it is yet to come. It comes in storming hordes out of the desert. Then all the books of love will be burnt and poets will have their tongues cut out because poets are the dogs of kings. When a virus enters the body, it is surrounded by white blood cells. The virus is put under siege. They are hunting us, my love, society must hunt us, we are the virus attacking its body, but the body is sick, riddled with disease, and longing for death. Let it die. Let it die.

Jameela: I can't follow you, talk to me normally. Please, or I will go mad.

Jameel: Shut up. Talk to me as if I were a girlfriend. They will be listening.

Jameela: *Shloonich ya ba'ad chabdi?*

Jameel: I'm leaving tonight.

Jameela: *Waynich ma ta'tina akhbarich ? Wayn rayiha, wayn jaya.*

Jameel: I can't tell you. I'll tell you from there.

Jameela: *Ma adri sha sawwi bidoonich?*

Jameel: 10 days. Give me ten days, I'll find you a way out.

Jameela: *Lestu qadira a'ish 'ashrat ayam!*

Jameel: Live, I beg you, live! Don't look at me.

Jameela: I can't stop myself.

Jameel: They're watching you.

(Over the course of what follows: 5 men in white dishdashas, and red ghutras- From the mabahith al dawla- secret police circle the couple and slowly start closing in.)

Jameela: I need you! I need you!

Jameel: How? Describe how your need. Let me hear you.

Jameela: Like an eye needs light, like a wound needs blood! I need you like a wound needs blood! Without you I am an open wound, gaping with pain.

Jameel: Listen.

Jameela: Tell me.

Jameel: Do not look for death, death is like the demon. It is a liar. It will lie to confuse you. But it will also mix lies with the truth to attack you and draw you close to him. He will attack your imagination and then your mind. That is his power. So don't listen to the demon, Jameela, do not listen.

Jameela: Where can we hide?

Jameel: In the bowels of the earth and the face of the sun.

Jameela: You liar! You hypocrite!

Jameel: What ! What have I done?

Jameela: Where is the man who made me believe in his love and married me, is this you? Is this the man who took me in his arms and vowed to never leave me, is this the man or the ghost!

Jameel: I never lied to you.

Jameela: You did! You are a liar!

Jameel: Never lied to you. Fate! Fate is chasing us and death is on his horse in this city.

Jameela: Take me with you then.

Jameel: How?

Jameela: Find a way! I do not care if I die.

Jameel: You will join me or I'll come for you.

Jameela: You want to forget me.

Jameel: You will make me cry , wail, scream. No.

Jameela: Come to me then.

Jameel: Save me. This hemorrhage in my body, this hemorrhage is too strong!

(Jameel kisses her. The mabahith are closing in from all sides: on the escalators, behind the fountains, from inside the café.)

Jameel: I go. Run!

Jameela: Don't leave me. Don't leave me to die.

Jameel: I go now. Run, you dog!

Jameela: No! Don't leave me like this! Not like this!

Jameel: I'll never leave you. Catch your life! Catch it!

Jameela collapses and wails on the floor, holding her stomach in fits of pain.

Jameel sprints away. The Mabahith give chase.

Chase scene. Jameel escapes by climbing up a balcony inside the mall.

Scenic note: Mall background and *mabahith* chase episode should be pre-filmed and projected life size on the back wall of the stage.

Scene 3:

Saffah- Lieutenant of Secret Police, Bu Tareq . Inside Bu Tareq's house.

Saffah: Don't worry, Bu tareq, I have my men on strict instructions to keep this matter from the press.

Bu tareq: But you know how hot the tongues of this society are- our reputation, Lieutenant, our reputation! What does a man have but his reputation? It is harder to develop than a child- how slowly it grows and how quickly it is ruined!

Saffah: I am with you. Many of my colleagues say that the only way to keep away from trouble with daughters is to teach them the principles and give them the responsibility for their lives. But it is not logic! How can a girl be responsible when there are so many wrong influences on her- the television,

Bu tareq: The internet, the schools.

Saffah: You are right! I have two daughters myself and I keep them under lock and key, watch them like a hawk until they are married and thanks be to God I have never had even an echo of scandal.

Bu tareq: Marry them off and then relax.

Saffah: Of course! Anyway, I have to be going, and anything you need, Bu tareq, don't hesitate to call me.

Bu tareq: Have you finished with your questioning of her?

Saffah: Finished. She knows nothing. Got involved with the wrong crowd, forgot herself in public, at least it went no further than that.

Bu tareq: Thanks to you. We are proud of your work, but I want you to arrest that demon, Jameel.

Saffah: Within 24 hours. The net is tightening.

Bu Tareq:: We don't forget our friends, Lieutenant Saffah, and anything you desire, just let me know.

Saffah: There is one thing.

Bu Tareq: Just say.

Saffah: My car is in the garage these last few days and you know with the school journeys and my wife's back that gives her terrible pain and the worries of the world, they said it needs a new gear box, but on a Mercedes' that is like needing a new car and with summer coming and I need to book holidays for the children and-

Bu Tareq:What Mercedes, what nonsense? Here take these keys.

Saffah: What's this?

Bu Tareq: I just bought a Jaguar for my daughter- take it, its yours, plastic's still on the seats.

Saffah: Don't misunderstand me, Bu tareq.

Bu Tareq: She won't be using it! It's yours, I tell you. Go now!

Saffah: Only the mean can refuse the offerings of a generous man.

Bu Tareq: Just catch me that insect that's eating into my land, my girls, my chest. Bring him to me!

Saffah: Even if he is under the earth, I'll get him.

Bu Tareq: Go, go.

Exit Lieutenant Saffah.

Lights.

Scene 4:

Fayza, Jameel, Sami.

Jameel: But you said it would be tonight!

Sami: It is tonight ! I have spoke to the man. We'll get to the airport for midnight, your plane's at 1.30.

Fayza: Then what will you do?

Jameel: Then we'll get her out the same way.

Fayza: What will you do in Europe? What will she do?

Jameel: What do you mean?

Fayza: You don't have anything, how will you live Jameel? Do you want her washing dishes

Jameel: I'll find a way.

Fayza: Or waitressing! Do you want to ruin her forever? Is it not enough for you what has happened so far? You are going into exile and she is imprisoned in her house!

Sami: He'll be back as soon as things calm down.

Fayza: And how will they calm down, *ya hubbi*, when Khaled Al-Hamour is engaged to marry her!

Jameel: What!?

Fayza: Go back, go back, gentle one, to your castles of romance.

Jameel: What are you saying Fayza!

Fayza: What are you imagining? You had a love affair, you married her in secret, it's over, it's finished, do you want her to die with the end of the film! *(To Sami)* Have you brought me the file?

Jameel: What file?

Fayza: From your guy in the Ministry of Justice. Don't stare at me ! if she's getting married do you think I'd leave a file in the Ministry saying she's your wife! *(To Sami)* Have you got the file or not?

Jameel: *(To Sami)* What have you done ?

Sami: There is no other way, Jameel.

Jameel: You filth!

Sami: Explain to him, Fayza!

Jameel: Are you working with them!

Fayza: Jameel, control yourself. You are going to Europe- you will need all your wits to survive there. Do you think your uncle will let you go unpunished? He'll have people after you there, following you down every alley. We're Arabs, *baba*, we don't forget our enemies!

Jameel: You are like contractors and your hearts are like plots of land. Now you've sniffed money and evicted my tenancy with theirs! Do you trade in friendship, you dogs!

Fayza: You can't provide for her, you can't give her a roof, not even a meal !

Jameel: Cowards! Liars! Traitors ! Contractors!

Fayza: I will prove to you I'm faithful.

Jameel: By proving to me she should marry with that pimp, Al-Hamour!

Fayza: At least he will keep her in a style she is accustomed to. They say he loves her, she will keep her father's love in tact and time will do the rest. She is convinced of this too.

Jameel: After what he did to you how can you say that?

Fayza: He loves her and what other choice does she have? I will take you to her to hear it from her lips.

Jameel: I would walk into hell to hear that from her lips and if I hear it, then leave me there with the devils pouring lava on my back.

Fayza: You can see her tonight; on the condition that you will never see her again. *(pause)* Don't pull her to the bottom with you, Jameel; if you love her, give her the chance to live on.

Jameel: Tonight?

Fayza: Tonight.

Jameel: Agreed!

Sami: Jameel! Enough Antariyaat.*

Jameel: Quiet. What do you know about life? What do you know about meaning? What ? You scuttle between days like ants, worship in chat rooms and get your kicks over the phone while the sands of boredom settles on your faces. Don't you fear death? Don't you fear your God? Get your hand off me! I have one small love, one tiny hope, that opened like a crack in the walls of my life. I want to live inside that crack, or I'll bring the walls crashing on my skull.

Lights.

Scene 5: Tareq / Jameela.

Tareq enters, Jameela is afraid, he signals her to be calm.

Tareq: Do you want to see it ?

Jameela: Yes.

Tareq: *(removes bandage)* Look at it.

Jameela: I cannot.

Tareq: You must look.

Jameela: It is ugly.

Tareq: It is the truth. Give me your phone.

Jameela: What truth? Why all this violence? This ugliness.

Tareq: What do you want? The chip as well. Father is furious.

Jameela: I don't know. To be normal, why can't we be normal?

Tareq: Normality? What is it? Were we born normal? Normality is the system we are taught by society in order to protect the interests of our fathers. I am not normal. I am abnormal. This scar speaks the truth, it announces it and I will keep it.

Jameela: You can have it removed, beautified, there are surgeons, doctors-

Tareq: I do not want to beautify the truth. I am done with masks, I am finished with lies. It is written for me, it is mine.

Jameela: And me? What is written for me?

Tareq: Take this dress. We had it made for you.

Jameela: I don't want it.

Tareq: It does not matter what we choose. It makes no difference. You must go into your room.

Jameela: Don't lock me in.

Tareq: We are all locked in rooms, Jameela, not only you.

Jameela: Don't lock me in!

Tareq: Wear your dress, the seamstress will come tonight to alter it.

Jameela: Wait!

Tareq: The pains of this world are not yours alone, my sister. Beg forgiveness of your God.

Jameela: Do not leave me alone.

Tareq: Beg forgiveness of your God.

Scene 6:

Bu tareq: Where have you been, you are late !

Fayza: I have brought the seamstress, Uncle.

Bu tareq: Where is she?

Fayza: Here.

Bu tareq: This is a seamstress !

Fayza: She works for the best houses. But she is shy of men.

Bu tareq: That is manners, that is modesty! If only you would teach my daughter some of your education. What is your name?

Fayza: Her name is Um Ahmed.

Bu tareq: She won't even talk to me! That is manners! Go, go it hurts my heart to look at you and compare you to my daughter! (*seamstress goes upstairs*) Stay here, Fayza, explain to me the internet- I need to understand where the source of vice is from- what is it, this internet, they say it ruins generations, what is this thing, this devil's book, what is it?

Lights.

Scene 7:

Jameel enters still covered in hijab.

Jameela: Have you scissors?

Jameel: I have.

Jameela: Give them to me.

Jameel: Why ?

Jameela: Give them to me, old woman, I want to alter my dress.

Jameel: I will alter it for you.

Jameela: I know what is needed. Give them here.

Jameel reveals himself.

Jameel: What is needed?

Jameela: Jameel! Jameel! Jameel!

Jameel: Shhh. Keep your voice down.

Jameela: I never thought I would see you again.

Jameel: Obviously. Compliments on your dress.

Jameela: What are you saying?

Jameel: Shame I'm not dead. So sorry.

Jameela: How did you get here?

Jameel: Not through your invitation. Remember me? Your husband?

Jameela: You don't know what they've done to me.

Jameel: Oh, 'them', 'them'. Should I discuss this with your father ?

Jameela: Stop it! Stop it! Do you want to kill me?

Jameel: Kill you? The fiancé of Khaled Al-Hamour? What a thought! Shame on you. House, children, the future awaits you, when is the party tonight, tomorrow-

Jameela: Know that their party is my funeral! I have planned my suicide

Jameel: Honeyed words-

Jameela: I'll do it in front of you. Give me your scissors, old woman!

Jameel: Have you prepared the flowers, chosen the colours, the theme?

Jameela: Give me them , or I'll scream!

Jameel: Take them!

Jameela: I will kill myself, rip this dress, pierce my heart!

Jameel holds her.

Jameel: Enough! Enough!

Jameela: You don't know, you don't.

Jameel: I know everything. Shht. We are together now, the world will melt around us.

Jameela: Is it you, is it you, Jameel?

Jameel: I have Sami waiting for us in the car, we will go together, across the desert, across the borders, into a new life, Jameela, away, away from here.

Jameela: Keep still, let me look at you, let me look at your face.

Jameel: No time. You wear this *abbat* (veil), go down as the seamstress into the car and I will follow you.

Jameela: There are police around the house.

Jameel: It will work, don't worry.

Jameela: (*seeing gun*) What is that!

Jameel: They are chasing me like an animal. I have not used it yet.

Scene 8:

Saffah, Policeman, Sami.

Saffah: Stop the car. Get out. Who are you ?

Sami: I am just looking for a friend's *diwaniyah*.

Saffah: Why have you been circling this house for the last 30 minutes?

Sami: Because I don't know the way- what is your story?

Saffah: I've seen this face in the file.

Policeman: He is one of the suspect's friends.

Saffah: Yes! 'Sami.' That is your name.

Sami: I am not Sami.

Saffah: Don't lie to me, boy. I will get more than a one star promotion out of you and a couple of cars on top of that.

Sami: You're hurting my arm!

Saffah: Shut up! Surround the house! He's inside the house. Get in! Move!

Scene 9: Jameel / Jameela

Electricity current begins to flicker.

Enter Sami followed by Saffah.

Jameela: What is going on?

Jameel: Electricity, that's better, the confusion will make it easier to get out.

Jameela: I am frightened, Jameel, so frightened, I cannot move.

Jameel: My love, look, look at the night, look how vast it is.

Jameela: Where are the stars? It is so black!

Jameel: It loves us, it will hide us.

Enter Fayza and Abu Tareq

Jameela: Look at the moon, the moon is turning to black.

Jameel: A cloud, only a cloud.

Jameela: The blackness will devour us.

Jameel: No, the night awaits us, it loves us, it is our palace, our carriage, our road, our home.

Noise growing round lovers. Enter Basira and other characters.

Saffah: Boy, you are surrounded, come out of the room, with your hands above your head.

Basira: Jameel, I am your mother, come home, come home, I have prepared you mumawash.

Jameela: Jameel, they are here! They have come for us!

Jameel: Open the window!

Khaled: Jameela, I have bought us a house!

Jameela: There are bars on the window!!

Jameel: What can we do?

Jameela: Tell them you have a gun! Tell them I am your hostage! Tell them you will shoot me, if they do not let us out! Tell them! Speak!

Tareq: Jameel, no more fighting, my brother, let us forget the past.

Jameel: Listen to me! I have a gun! I will kill her! Bu Tareq! I swear I will kill her! Tell them to let us out or I will kill your daughter!

Jameela: He has a gun, father, tell them to let him out! Father! Please!

Saffah: Put down your weapons and no harm will come to you! Don't act the hero, boy! You will regret it.

Fayza: Jameel, you lied to me! Stop this, stop this please, let me in.

Saffah: Stay back, girl.

Bu Tareq: Jameel, I am your Uncle, leave my daughter in peace, I will give you the land, I will write the release documents now and pass them under the door! Do you hear me.

Jameel: I don't want the land, take the land, bury me in it! Keep away.

They start to bang on the door.

Jameela: Let us die now, now while we are together, there is no life for me without you.

Jameel: Do not be afraid, my love, our love is stronger than this life.

Jameela: They will kill you and I will kill myself. Let us die together now.

Jameel: They can't kill me. You can kill me, but they can't kill me.

Jameela: Give me the gun.

Jameel: No.

Jameela: Kill me then.

Jameel: What?

Jameela: Now.

Jameel: Kill me, but I won't kill you.

Jameela: Don't be afraid.

Sami: Jameel, it will all be arranged, come out, brother, come out.

Jameel: Why?

Jameela: I don't know. Are you my husband?

Jameel: Yes, I am.

Jameela: Do what I ask of you.

Jameel: Really ?

Jameela: Really.

Jameel: Is this a dream, Jameela?

Jameela: We were the dream, my sweet, and now our eyes must open.

Jameel: Come, then.

Jameela: Yes.

Lovers kill each other with one bullet. Door is broken. Chandelier falls to floor.

Epilogue:

Sami: This is what remains of our tale:

Two cold bodies, burnt by the fires of a love
that moved contrary to the spinnings of the earth;
And a piece of land
ignored by the wind
wet now with tears that pour
from the eyes of greedy men.

END.

المقايضة

تأليف : سليمان يحي البسام

2003

قائمة الشخصيات:

جميل

جميلة- ابنت عمه

طارق- اخ جميلة

ابو طارق

خالد وليد الهامور- زميل طارق و وكيل الوزارة

وليد الهامور- تاجر كبير

بصيرة- ام جميل

سامي- صديق جميل

نبيل- صديق جميل

فايزة- طليقة طارق و صديقة جميلة

الحارس

المستشار

محمود

جلال الصعلوكي

المقدم سفاح- مقدم في مباحث الدولة

الخادمة

تدور الأحداث في دولة صغيرة ما و في زمن شبيه بزماننا.

المشهد 1

(تسلط الأضواء على الصحراء الواسعة ويتدلى من اعلى ثريا ضخمة)
(الحارس والمستشار يقيسان أطوال قطعة أرض)

المستشار : أجل. لو أنك شاهدت حفل العزاء كنت ستفهم ما معنى العظمة – كم العرض ؟

الحارس : حتى الآن 2350 مترا.

المستشار : كان طابور سيارات المرسيديس والجفوار من هنا حتى البحر. وكان الديوان الكبير يعج بالناس : البشوت وحدها أثمانها تعادل أكثر من راتبك لخمس سنين.

الحارس : رأيتهم في الخارج – من أكبر رجال الدولة بأثوابهم البيضاء حتى أصغر متملق يتراكم هنا وهناك مثل الصراصير فوق الرخام – سجل عندك 2354 مترا.

المستشار: لكن ، كيف أنت تميز الفارق بين الرجل العظيم والبسيط؟
الحارس : لماذا أنا لوح؟

المستشار : هات ، نورني إذن .

الحارس : الفقير دائما معروف من قماش دشداشته.

المستشار : آها. صحيح!

الحارس : ومن الصندوق الذي ينتعله.

المستشار : جميل !

الحارس : وكمان من مكان وقوف سيارته عن ديوان العزاء .

المستشار : لماذا ؟

الحارس : إذا كانت السيارة ليست كما يجب ، فالأفضل إيقافها في مكان غير مكشوف للناس.

المستشار : باين اتك أكثر من لوح, على الأقل عامود !!

الحارس : أنا لست محلا , لكن إذا أردت رأيي ، الأمور ليست في صالح ولدنا ، جميل .

المستشار : كل هذه الأرض عنده ، وتقول ان الأمور ليست في صالحه ، يا غبي

!؟ هل تعرف كم هو ثمن المتر من هذه الأرض ؟ آلاف الدنانير! ما ورثه هو

تركة ملك. لاحظ مدى اتساعها ، وسع مقبرة .

الحارس : حسد أعمامه لا حدود له. يوم كان والده على قيد الحياة كان يستخدم كل قوته ونفوذه . ألم تلاحظ كيف انهم لم يقتربوا من جنازته ؟ انهم يطالبون بالانتقام ، يريدون الانتقام!

المستشار : خبرتي في هذه البلاد علمتني ان لا شيء يحمي المرء كالمال .
الحارس : أجل، أجل.

المستشار : المال يحميك من كل المصائب : فساد القضاء، ودهاليز البيروقراطية، وغرور المسؤولين ، ومطالبات البنوك ، وآلات الحروب ، وحتى حسد الأعمام. ذلك هو المال يا عزيزي، هو أهم سلاح تتسلح به.

الحارس : ترى، ما الذي تخفيه هذي الأرض ؟
المستشار : ماذا ؟

الحارس : سلاح دمار شامل !
(يضحكان)

المستشار : اصمت! ربما يسمعوننا ويهاجمونا بالقنابل .
(يضحكان)

المستشار: من هؤلاء؟

الحارس : من تقصد ؟

المستشار : ليسوا معنا .

الحارس : أعرف ذلك الشكل - انه شكل محمود : حارسهم .

المستشار : ومن يكون ذلك ؟

الحارس : تابع لأبو طارق. انضر كيف يذرعون الأرض، وهم يتشمونها كالكلاب - والله لأضربهم .

المستشار : مهلا يا مغفل ! لا تبادرهم بالهجوم .

الحارس : ومن سيرانا ؟

المستشار : من منا المستشار القانوني، يا فلاح! أنت أم أنا ؟ من المحتمل ان تكون هناك سيارة عابرة.

الحارس : لا توجد سيارات . والله لأضربهم!

المستشار : لحظة ! سنتحدث إليهم محمود؟

محمود : نعم.

المستشار : تعال الى هنا لحظة .

محمود : ما الأمر ، سيدي ؟

المستشار : هل تعرف هذا الرجل .

محمود : كما أعرف حذائي!

الحارس : بل كما ستعرف حذائي حين يكسر جمجمتك .

محمود : حذاؤك لا يقدر على تكسير جمجمتي لأنك أنت حذائي. أنت أوطأ من

حذائي . أنت نتن وقذر . سأبصق عليك!!

الحارس : افعلها! إذا كان عندك نقطة شجاعة ، هيا ابصق!

المستشار : تأدب يا ولدا! قل لي ، لماذا أنتم تقيسون هذه الأرض ؟ أنتم تعلمون انها ملكية خاصة.

جلال : ومن حضرتك حتى تسأل ؟

المستشار : وأنت، من تكون ؟

جلال : أنا محام بمحكمة الدولة ، واسمي جلال الصعلوكي...

المستشار : سمعتك تسبقك ! وهل نحن مدينون لأحد حتى نتشرف بحضور أقدر محام في البلد على أرضنا؟

جلال : مثل العادة ، أنا انفذ أوامر المحكمة : وبالمناسبة مهمتي إعادة هذه الأرض الى أصحابها الشرعيين .

المستشار : صاحب الأرض الوحيد هو الأستاذ جميل ، وأنا مستشاره القانوني .

جلال : معلوماتك بايئة .

المستشار : بموجب قرار المحكمة رقم 56 \ 2003.

جلال : هذا القرار تاريخه اليوم وهو يلغي قرارك ذاك.

المستشار : هذا القرار من محكمة الاستئناف – فهو نهائي.

جلال : حسب المادة 27 من قانون ملكية الأرض يمكن تقديم دعوى استئناف

مباشرة للمحكمة العليا. وهذا نهائي .

المستشار : لا شيء يلغي قرارا نهائيا لمحكمة ، حتى ولا حتى حيلك ورشوتك وخداعك.

جلال: مسكين انت. محمود : رافق هذين الرجلين الى خارج الأرض، إلا إذا كانا

يفضلان ان أستدعي رجال الأمن لإخراجهما منها بالقوة...كالكلاب.

(يتعارك الطرفان)

(يدخل طارق وجميل، ويفصلان بين الطرفين)

طارق: ماذا تريد ؟

جميل : طارق، أنا ابن عمك ، وهذي أرضي.

طارق : جميل !؟ حقا. والله انت جميل ذاته. تبدو كجرذ ، طوال حياتك كنت كالجرذ. أعرف هذا الوجه، وجهك .

جميل : من أيام الدراسة ، حين كنت أعلمك القراءة ، يومها كنت غبي. هل ما

تزال كذلك ، غبي ؟ ألا توجد قوانين في البلد تكافح الغباء ؟

طارق : لا. لا توجد قوانين في هذا البلد . وهذي الأرض ليست أرضك .

جميل : هل تمزح ؟

طارق : انت الآن رجل متعلم ، ومتحضر . أريدك ان تفهم انه ليس بيننا بغضاء. نحن أبناء عم ، يعني شقيقين. (يداعب جميل) . لا شك ان هذا طبعك. أنت تشبهنا، تميل للسلام والصلح بين الناس. : لا نية لدينا للتعامل بقدارة معك و لن نقصر معاك انت و والدتك. لكن الحق حق! اسمع مني يا جميل. دعنا نذهب الى مقهى . وسأطلب من عمالي مباشرة العمل في المخطط -

جميل : أي مخطط تقصد ؟

طارق : هناك الكثير من الأمور التي تحتاج للنقاش.

جميل : لكن ما هو المخطط ، قل لي؟

طارق : جميل ، يجب ان تعرف جشع والدك لم يسلم منه أحد كاطاعون.

جميل : وأبوك كان طول عمره يستقرض المال من أبي.

طارق: هذا كان ، قبل ان تسافر انت. ولكن العالم تغير خلال هذه السنوات

العشر . كبار الناس صاروا اليوم أقزما ، الجميع في حاجة

للعيش. وبلدنا كعكة. كل شخص يريد أن يمرغ وجهه فيها.ألا تقرأ الصحف ؟

أبوك مات وهو مدين بملايين الدنانير لنا . ولذلك فالأرض من حقنا وليس من

حقك.

جميل : سأطلب وكيل الوزارة للتحقيق.

طارق : وهل تريد رقمه، تفضل- لن يفيدك بشيء !

جميل : إنه صديق. اعطني رقم هاتفه .

طارق : لا . سأطلب وزير العدل شخصيا!

جميل : لدي أرقام هواتف لخمسة من أعضاء مجلس الأمة.

طارق : وأنا أعرف ثمانية منهم شخصيا.

جميل : وأعرف رئيس مجلس الأمة. كان صديقا حميما لوالدي.
طارق : وأنا أعرف رئيس الوزراء، كأنه أخ لوالدي .
جميل : سأتصل برئيس الدولة.
طارق: اتصل به، الأمر لم يعد شأنه!!
(أضواء)

المشهد 2

(في غرفة جميلة. نهار.)

جميلة: كيف عرفت ان الأمر ليس حبا إذن ؟
فايزة: لأن الشاب قد رأته في الشارع !!
جميلة: ولم لا ؟ ذلك يحدث ، أليس كذلك؟ ترين فتى فتميلين إليه. يحدق فيك،
فتتظاهرين بأنك مرتبكة. حسن . لست أدري، لكن سمعت بذلك.
فايزة: متى رأيتيه؟
جميلة : أمس ، في الجمعية، وأنا مع أمي .
فايزة: مع أمك أيضا ؟ يا لك من فتاة مشاكسة! هيا تكلمي، وماذا بعد؟
جميلة : لا شيء...كان يتبعنا لبعض الوقت مع عربته ، وكنت أظاهر بأنني
منشغلة عنه. واكتفيت بالالتفات إليه أحيانا.

نظرة عند المعكرونة ، ونظرة عند الخضروات. وبين المربي
والبسكويت نظرة حادة فيلحق بنا مسرعا مع عربته... أخيرا ، عندما
وصلنا الى رف المنظفات وضع رقمه في حقيبتي

فايزة: دعيني أراه.

جميلة : ها هو . لكن لا عملها فضيحة، ها ؟

فايزة: لحظة ، لحظة يا بنت.

جميلة : قد يكون ذلك هو الحب ، أليس كذلك ؟ يبدو هكذا . حقا .

فايزة: (تقرأ) : " خالد " . ومع أخرى أكيد هو بشار، ومع ثالثة محمد،

ومع الرابعة صادق.

جميلة : لماذا ؟ لماذا يغير اسمه ؟

فايزة: وماذا تظنين أيتها المغفلة ؟ كم عمرك الآن بالضبط ؟

جميلة : كفى، فايزة. اعطني الورقة!

فايزة: لا بد انه قد وزع رقمه على عشر فتيات على الأقل يوم أمس .

جميلة : انت لا تعرفينه.

فايزة : سنرى ، ها ؟

جميلة : ماذا تفعلين ، أجننت ؟

فايزة : هل اتصلت به ؟

جميلة : لا تكوني غبية !

فايزة : احلفي ؟

جميلة : أقسم ، أقسم بالله ! ماذا تفعلين ؟

فايزة: آلو ؟ مرحبا خالد ؟

صوت : نعم . من يتكلم ؟

فايزة : هل تتذكرني .. رأينا بعضنا أمس ؟

صوت : طبعا ،، في السوق. وكيف لي أن اتسى.

فايزة : (تتظاهر بعدم المعرفة) في السوق ؟ لا، ليس في السوق. هل الرقم خطأ؟

صوت : ربما أنت تطلبين بشار ؟

فايزة : أجل، أجل. أنا أريد بشار. ماذا قلت ؟

صوت : أنا بشار ... بعض الأصدقاء ينادونني خالد ، لكن اسمي بشار.

فايزة : وهل تتذكرني ، تقول ؟

صوت : طبعا، طبعا.

فايزة: وأين التقينا يا ترى ؟

صوت : بالأمس ؟

فايزة : بالأمس .

صوت : لقد أحببتك منذ أول لحظة رأيتك فيها .

فايزة : وأين ؟

صوت : عند الإشارة على شارع الاستقلال.

فايزة : مخادع. أنت مخادع، توزع رقمك على أية امرأة تصادفها وتعطي مع كل

رقم اسما مختلفا. إذا رأيتك مرة أخرى سأصرخ وأطلب الشرطة وأدعي

بأنك راودتني .

(تقفل السماعه)

فايزة : رأيت ؟

جميلة : لا أصدق ان كل الرجال مثل هذا الكذاب.

فايزة : بل كلهم سواسية، دون استثناء. هل أدركت لماذا أقول لك بأن تستعملي خيالك

أمر مهم ؟ لهذه الأسباب!

جميلة : فايزة ، ألا تؤمنين بالحب ؟

فايزة : لا. أو من بتبادل المنفعة .

جميلة : ذلك جزء من الحب والزواج.

فايزة : لا. انه جانب من الاقتصاد. حين تسلمين نفسك لزوج، تسلمين كل

ما تملكين: جمالك ، حياتك . ويجب ألا تقدمينها له مجانا. عليه

ان يدفعك ثمن ذلك كله.

جميلة: على شكل حب واحترام ومعاملة لطيفة.

فايزة : بل نقدا- كاش!

جميلة : لا حاجة بي الى الزواج من أجل المال، المال موجود لدي.

فايزة : العالم متقلب . تكبر المرأة وعندها لا شيء أسرع من تغير الرجال. يجب أن تتأكدي

من ان لديه ما يكفي من المال ليدفعه حينما ينهي علاقته بك ، وإلا فما العمل ؟

جميلة : يا لقسوتك ، فايزة! كلامك يجعل شعر رأسي يقف. وانت لم تجربي

الحب، تجربتك مع أخي سلبتك الأحساس.

فايزة : لا، يا جميلة ، أنا شديدة لأنني أحببت. أحببت بعمق. يومها شعرت ان

جسدي يغادرني ويرتفع ، ليحلق في السماء . وقد بادلني هو

الحب أيضا. لا أنكر أنني وجدت حبا مقابل حبي. وقد جعلني أشعر

أنني كالشمس البازغة من جوف الليل المترامي كالمحيط. أهداني الزهور

وقطع الذهب. وعندما تزوجته حملني الى نعيمة وعشنا معا.

و ذات يوم هجرني كما تهجر غرفة في الفندق ، طرد بعيدا الشمس المتألقة

عاليا في السماء ومرغ رأسي في الرمال ، ومضى. وهكذا صرت

عقيمة ، ومنفتحة على الاحتمالات ، ومطعونة. أما هو فقد ذهب ، فهو

رجل! مضى دون التفاتة ، باحثا كالغول عن أجساد أخريات ؛

لأنه رجل يا جميلة، رجل !

جميلة : يجب أن يكون هناك حب ، ان يوجد هذا الحب في العالم ، وإلا لماذا

نعيش فيه، لم، ها ؟

فايزة : نعيش للخدمة، لتوفير المتعة ، لتجنب غضب السيد وبطشه، نعيش لكي

ننام ، لتربية الأولاد ، لشراء

أدوات التجميل ، والتسوق، وحضور الحفلات للاصطياف في جنيف ،

ولكي نشعر بالملل الذي لا ينتهي أبدا: جميلة، ليس هناك حب دون حرية، أبدا. أنا

أصارك بكل هذا لأنني أحبك.

جميلة : وأنا أحبك أيضا، يا عزيزتي . لكني لا أومن بكلمة من ما قلتني.

(تهب واقفة)

فايزة : انت جميلة كالقمر. من سيفتح الحفل الليلة؟

جميلة : وليد الهامور. وسيحضرها أبي . أتصدقين ؟

فايزة: هو يعبد الأرض التي تمشين عليها .

جميلة : أطل الله عمره. لكنني سأغني لك هذه الليلة، من أجلك فقط. أي أغنية

تختارين ؟

فايزة: أحب هذه الأغنية

(فايزة تبدأ الأغنية المقصودة ، بينما جميلة تتناول لحنها وتقنيها)

أضواء.

المشهد 3

داخل مبنى إحدى الوزارات . المكاتب على طول الممر.

الى اليسار مكتب سامي ونبيل ، حيث يجلس جميل مقطب الوجه ويستمع الى إحدى حكايات سامي .

الى جهة اليمين مكتب وكيل الوزارة ، خالد وليد الهامور . طارق يجلس هناك ويشرب الشاي .

في ما بين المكتبين مصعد يفتح بين حين وآخر، وتخرج منه مجموعة من الناس ويتجمعون في الممشى . الجو العام يوحي بالكسل ، حيث بعض الناس يقرأ للصحف اليومية ، وبعضهم الآخر يدخن ، بينما آخرون منشغلون بهواتفهم النقالة . بين الحين والآخر ، يمر أحد الموظفين المهمين عابرا الممشى الطويل ، يتبعه عدد من أصحاب المعاملات ، رافعين أوراق معاملاتهم في الهواء.

نبيل : (لجميل) إنه يظن نفسه " دون جوان " زماته ! مع رأسه!

سامي : هل تود ان تسمع القصة أم لا ؟

نبيل : أجل ، إننا منصتون ، هيا تابع .

(في الغرفة الأخرى...)

خالد : (يتحدث بالهاتف) قل له ان تلك هي أوامر الوكيللا تلقي بالا الى

ما جاء في الأوراق، واعمل كما أقول لك... قل له انني أنا أمرت

بذلك...أجل..أجل.

(في الغرفة الأخرى...)

سامي : وهكذا، كنا نمضي من حفلة الى حفلة أخرى. وحين خرجنا ، وانت

تعرف ان الشارع في تلك المنطقة ضيق ، لذلك كان ينبغي ان نخفف

السرعة. وفجأة توقفت سيارة ... وظهرت منها فتاتان، شغل أصلي

وعدل: شعر طويل مسدول، عيون واسعة ... وأنزلتا

زجاج السيارة . "ماذا تريدان؟" . قالت تلك التي تقود السيارة ، " هل هناك حفل يقام

هنا

" ؟ ولكن لا أكذبك، حين تنظر إليهما ،الله ، الله: حوريتان!! ذلك الجمال،

المكياج، العطر الفواح الذي يطغى على رائحة البنزين .

وهكذا ، قلت لهما أن تتوقفا وتضعا السيارة في المكان . وقد عبرتا الشارع ، بقديهما

الممشوقين النحيلين،

و – انت أدري – ومن ثم اتضح انهما رجال!!!

(جميل يهيب واقفا بسرعة.)

نبيل : لعنك الله ، لقد أفزعتني!

سامي : ماذا بك ، جميلو؟

جميل : لقد جئت لتحدث عن الورطة التي انا فيها، وأنت تقص علي سلسلة

حكايات ألف ليلة وليلة!

نبيل : لا تتضايق. سنحاول الاتصال بقاضينا – لكن خطه مشغول – اهدأ قليلا ،

اهدأ.

جميل : كيف تريدني أن أكون هادنا وامي على وشك أن تزوجني من امرأة لم

أرها في حياتي ؟

نبيل : اعطني الرقم مرة ثانية ، سامي.

(تنتقل الإضاءة لتتركز على خالد وطارق)

طارق : إذن ، سوف يحسم الأمور كلها بينهم ؟

خالد : ألم تسمعني أتكلم معه ؟

طارق : بلى . ولكن متى ؟ الآن ؟ غدا ؟ متى ؟ هناك 12 جرارا تساوي مبالغ،

كما تعرف . وهل هناك من يثق " بالأخ " وراء الحدود ؟

خالد : هو مراقب الموقع . عليك ان تثق به كما تثق بنفسك. هذه ليست المرة

الأولى التي أتعامل معه. ما هي مشكلتك انت؟

طارق : لا ادري يا خالد . انت تعلم ان المسألة مغامرة كبيرة .

خالد : ألسنت أنا شريكك؟

طارق : أجل .

خالد : وان لا شيء مسجل باسمك ؟

طارق : تظنني مجنون ؟

خالد : أنا متكفل في الشغلة (يعطيه فلوس) هذه لنسخة السائق. انت انسى الموضوع ، واشرب الشاي ، واهدأ.

(تنتقل الإضاءة لتتركز على سامي و نبيل و جميل)

جميل : وتركتي الوحيدة تكاد ان تسلب مني . لا أدري من اين تنزل على رأسي المصائب .

الموظف : خففوا أصواتكم يا جماعة . ثم ما قصة هذا الرجل هنا ؟ هناك الكثير من المكاتب الاستشارية النفسية إذا كنت قد فقدت عقلك.

جميل (للموظف) : في كل مرة أحضر الى هذا المكتب أرى رأسك مدفون في تلك الجريدة. أليس لديك عمل تؤديه؟

الموظف : يا عالم ، شوفوا ما حكايك يا أخي ؟

جميل : جاوبني !

الموظف : حبيبي ، لا أحد يدفع لي مقابل عملي . يدفعون لي لأعيش فقط. ولذلك أبقى جالساً ومستريحاً، وبعيدا عن جعجعتك لو تكلمت. إذا كان هناك من

يريد مني عملا عليه ان يدفع لي أجره اضافية. مفهوم ؟

جميل : جيل مخرب ! بالله عليك ، كيف ستبنون البلد ؟

نبيل : أص...ص.. (في التلفون) أجل سأوصلك إليه، عمي. شكرا .

(يعطي الهاتف لجميل)

جميل : عمي بو راشد ، مرحبا. هل ما تزال تتذكرني من أيام كنت طالبك

بالجامعة ؟ ...أنا عدت من حوالي الشهر... أجركم وأجرنا ان شاء الله .

خالد : هناك موضوع يجب أن افاتحك به. هل أخبرتك بأنني أفكر بالزواج ؟

طارق : أنت ؟!

خالد : أجل. ما يضحكك ؟

طارق : لقد اشترطنا معا في شراء اليخت . وجهزناه معا : سريرين وحمامات .

خالد : والمعنى ؟

طارق : الصيف مقبل . و"أسراب السمك " في انتظار من يطاردهن .

خالد : وأين المشكلة ؟ هذه الحياة تثقلني: الليلي البيض، السجائر ، التضاحم . أريد

بعض الاستقرار لأستعيد نشاطي .

طارق : كان الله في عون من ستتزوجها !

خالد : وممّ أشكو ؟

طارق : لا شيء . أنت رجل محترم ، ولك مستقبل واعد ، ومتعلم ، ولديك تجارة

تتابعها، والدك رجل مشهور جدا.

خالد : هل لديك صبية مناسبة لي ؟

طارق : لا أعرف الكثير من الفتيات الفاضلات.

خالد : ما رأيك بأختك .

طارق : من ؟

خالد : أختك . لا أعرف اسمها. سمعت أمي تتكلم عنها قبل أيام ...

طارق : جميلة ؟

خالد : نعم، جميلة .

طارق : لا . لا . بعدها صغيرة جدا.

خالد : لا . ليست صغيرة .

طارق : على كل حال ...جميلة مخطوبة . مربوطة. لا . لا . هذا طلب يسبب

صعب ، مستحيل . يا خالد.

خالد : أنا رأيتها مرة .

طارق : أين ؟

خالد : كانت مع أمها في السوق يومها. كنت أظن انك أكثر تحررا من هذا في

المسائل العائلية.

طارق : طبعا هي تخرج برفقة أمها . هل هذا ما قصدته ؟

خالد : أظن اني احببتها. ومحتمل أن أكون زوج مناسب لها.

...

جميل: عمي ، لا أريد ان أشغل وقتك كثيرا : باختصار ، عندي مشكلة تتعلق بورثة الوالد...

لا ، المشكلة أعقد من ذلك . هي مع أعمامي ... إي نعم . هم كانوا شركاء الوالد . والآن

هم يدعون انه ترك الشركة غارقة في ديون بالملايين . وبالتالي يطالبون بالأرض التي تركها لي...
...

طارق : الموضوع يا خالد ليس كما تتصور . من جهتي ، انت تعرف اني مستعد أن أمشي على الفحم الحارق. لكن المشكلة ان جميلة — خالد : أظن ان هناك رجل واحد بصفة خاصة سيقف الى جانبي في هذه النقطة ، غير الآخرين كلهم. هل تعرف من هو ؟ قل ؟ صديقنا المراقب عند الحدود. الواقع انه موافقني الرأي .فكر انت بالأمر. وعلى كل حال ، أنا ما راح أغضبها ؟ متى يمكن ان أراها؟

طارق : ستشارك في الحفل الخيري الليلة.

خالد : أعرف ذلك . أبي سيفتح الحفل.

طارق : قد تكون هذه فرصتك ان تفكر... بالأمر ، وفرصة للتعرف على فتيات جميلات غيرها ، وربما أجمل منها ، أجمل بكثير . أنا واثق بأنك عندما ترى بعض صديقاتها سوف تتبخر جميلة من بالك، مثلما يتلاشى الحلم منه بعد ان تستيقظ.
خالد : سنرى إذن .

(يظهر رجل في الممشى كان في أثناء ذلك في انتظار المصعد)

الرجل : يا أخي، هناك ألف موظف في هذا المبنى، موزعين على عشرين طابقا. وما في غير أربعة مصاعد ، اثنان منها مخصص للوزير وحده. ما الذي يحصل في الدنيا، يا ناس ؟

رجل ثان : لا. واحد فقط للوزير ، والثاني مخصص لضيوف الوزير فقط. يا صديقي، الغابة كبيرة ، ومثلي ومثلك أقزام كالفئران.

المشهد 4

استقبال بعد حفلة موسيقية

بو طارق: لقد كانت أمسية رائعة . قلبي مفعم بالوجدان الوطني ، موجة من المشاعر الوطنية تتزاحم في صدري . ان حبنا لهذا البلد لا يعرف الحدود، والسبب في ذلك الناس من أمثالك. بو خالد، ما أروع تلك العبارات الافتتاحية التي قلتها ، كانت عبارات متوهجة في بلاغتها، وكأنك رسّام تنقش الكلمات والمعاني. لا ، بل أنت قائد من الطراز الرفيع.

بو خالد : هذا واجبنا يا بو جميلة.

بو طارق: أعترف بأنني لم أر من قبل مثل هذا العرض المؤثر. لقد دمعت عيناى كالنساء .

بو خالد : بكيت عندما سمعت ابنتك تغني . انها فتاة مشرقة وصوتها يطرب الأذن ، انها مثار فخر واعتزاز أي أب . لكن قل لي : هل هي مخطوبة ؟
بو طارق: انها لا تزال صغيرة على هذا ، غزالتي الصغيرة. لننتظر حتى تتخرج من الجامعة ، ومن ثم سيشرقنا أن نقدمها هدية لمن يستأهلها. لكن يا بو خالد ، من من شباب هذا الجيل العيارين يستأهلها؟
شباب اليوم ليسوا مثل أيامنا ، فقد لا تجد شابا بمعنى الكلمة بينهم. أخ. ها هي ، دعني أعرفك بها. — جميلة : تعالي يا ابنتي وسلمي على عمك .

(جميلة تقترب)

(في الوقت نفسه هناك في ركن آخر من القاعة حوار آخر)

نبيل : هل أنت مستعد؟

سامي : لقد اصطدت ثلاث .

نبيل : كاذب.

جميل : من هي تلك الفتاة ؟

سامي : والله ، حتى حين كنا خارجين من المسرح أحدهن اختطفت رقمي وسط الزحام.

نبيل : جميل ، تلك الفتاة رمفتك بنظرة ، نظرة كانت ستحرق دشداشتك لو لاحظتها.

سامي: أي منهن ؟

نبيل: تلك التي تقف هناك وترتدي الأحمر.

جميل: أريد ان أعرف من تكون تلك الفتاة، تلك التي تتحدث الى راعي الحقل.

هات البرنامج.

نبيل: ليست تلك، بل التي ترتدي الأحمر. أن لا تعرف اين مصلحتك.

سامي : هناك الكثير من الفتيات. والصياد يختار كيف يختار وكيف يبدأ.

نبيل : ينبغي ان نعمل بشكل استراتيجي هنا – ابتعد قليلا جميل، انت تسد الطريق

علي، لم أعد أرى.

سامي : آه ، انها نظرة حارة الى حد يصعب مقاومتها. أنا ذاهب. لقد طار عقلي!

نبيل: خذني معك.

(جميل يقرأ اسمها في البرنامج)

جميل : جميلة . ابنة عمي .

(سامي يخرج بصحبة نبيل)

جميل : أيُّ البحار تشفقتْ وَغداً طَريقٌ بيننا ،

أم أيُّ أنهارٍ تلاقَتْ !

أيُّ تيارٍ قويٍّ راحَ يجرفني ، وَ شمسكِ ابهرتْ كلَّ الدنا

من أيِّ ريحٍ جاءني هذا الزنير يصمُّ آذاني!

رفاعي ، أخبروني .

أيُّ النجوم الآن تستلقي على تلك الثريات المنيرة !

أيُّ الأفاعي أطلقت نحوي فحيحاً منذراً بالموتِ ،

أبصرها على تلك الأرائك ،

تاتة إني بلا هدفٍ دُفِعتُ على رخامٍ شواطئِ كسرتْ قلعوي ،

حيثُ اجلس لاهناً ، متقطع الأنفاس

أسأل ، وأصدقوني القول :

(تسلط الأضواء على جميل وجميلة)

لماذا هكذا لغة العيون توقفتْ ،

أي الليالي ليلتي هذي ، بل أي ميلاد ؟

حوار العيون:-

- جميلة: انها المرة الثانية التي أرى عينيك تحديقان في .
- جميل : سأقتلعهما وأقدمهما لك هدية ، فلا فائدة ترجى منهما لي إذا لم تكتحلا برويتك.
- جميلة : اقتحامك لهذا المكان بهذه الطريقة ضرب من الجنون - من أنت.
- جميل : لا تنظري الى الأرض، وإلا جعلتني أرتمي زاحفا بين قدميك.
- جميلة : وأين تريدني ان أنظر إذن ؟
- جميل : دعي عينيك تتجولان في أرجاء الغرفة ، وستلتقيان بعيني . وعندها اتركيهما تتوقفان قليلا هناك . أجل . والآن ، هيا بنا نبدأ رقصتنا السرية .
- جميلة : مهلا . ما الذي تفعله ؟ أبي بجائبي ، أبعد عينيك عني .
- جميل : وهل تملك الأرض ان تتخلى عن القمر؟
- جميلة : ابعد ناظريك . أكاد أن أفقد توازني.
- جميل : (يسقط أرضا) وليكن . سامسك بك.
- جميلة : كفى!
- جميل : إنه ألم العمى : الشرب من كؤوس مترعة بالتراب.
- جميلة : وهل يمكن للنظر ان يخترق حجب الروح؟
- جميل : إذا كانت العيون شبابيك مفتوحة على الروح، فإن رؤيتك قد حطمت زجاجها. عيناى تنزفان دما، وجسدك قد انتهك روحي واستلبها.
- جميلة : وهل أنا لصة حتى أتسلل الى روحك وأسرقها ؟
- جميل : بل أنت أقسى من اللص. أنت إدمان لا شفاء منه، وعلي أن أحملك مرة أخرى في عيوني ، علي ان ...
- جميلة : هيا إذن ، أيها المدمن. تعال اشرب من نظراتك الي، واشبع عينيك.
- جميل : اقتربي .
- جميلة : العالم من حولي تحول الى صخور، وليس غيرك من يتحرك فيه.
- جميل : كفراشة تدور حول نارها بجنون .
- جميلة : الفراشة تعشق النار ...
- جميل : و تقترب اليه....

جميلة : ثم تلقي بنفسها فيها .
جميل : حياتي للحضة الأحتراق !
جميلة: فلتنك هادنة خاطفة
جميل: بل هائلة، تحرق الدنيا و ما فيها.
(إضاءة كاملة)

بو خالد : ماذا تريد يا بني ؟

جميل : عفوا...

بوخالد : ربما هو أصم.

بوجميلة : هي ، أنت! منذ ساعة وانت مسمر جوارنا، ما الذي تريده؟

جميل : عفوا ، عمي ، سيدي ، أناإنما أردت إلقاء التحية عليكم .

بو خالد : حسنا . هذا لطف منك . هل لك أن تبتعد قليلا ، وتفسح المجال لنا ؟

بو طارق: انت تفهم ما نريده يا بو خالد . انت الإنسان الوحيد الذي يمكن أن

يساعدنا في هذا الأمر .

بو خالد: الأرض لا يمكن تسجيلها باسمك حتى يتم الانتهاء من السجلات

المضبوطة للشركة .

بو طارق: لقد انتهينا من السجلات ووافقنا عليها.

بو خالد: يجب ان نجد ثغرة ما . امهلنا يومين آخرين .

بو طارق: نحن لسنا ممن ينسون الأصدقاء. لقد بعثت تيليكس على رقم حسابك

في سويسرا.

بو خالد : لا شيء أفضل من المال لتسهيل الأمور .

(خالد وطارق يقتربان)

خالد : هذه فرصتنا. انها واقفة مع أبيك ووالدي. هيا بنا. عرفني بها يا رجل!

طارق : مساء الخير ، عمي . مرحبا أبي .

خالد : مساء الخير يا أبي . كيف حالك عمي ؟

طارق : أبي ، هذا صديقي خالد . وهذه شقيقتي جميلة .

خالد: تشرفت بلقائك يا عمي . مساء الخير أنستي .

طارق : (يلحظ جميل) : ماذا تفعل هنا أنت بحق السماء؟

جميل : وهل ستقول لي ان الأرض أرضك أيضا ؟

طارق : هي أرضي نعم ، شنت أم ابيت . هيا ابتعد ، والا مسحت فيك الأرض .
جميل : احترم نفسك ، والا مزقت سروالك أمام عيني والدك .
بو خالد : لسنا في حاجة الى عنتريات طائشة . هذي مناسبة وطنية !
بو طارق : طارق ، ماذا تفعل بالله عليك ؟
طارق : انت لا تعرف من يكون هذا يا أبي !
بو طارق : لا يهمني من يكون ! نحن في صدد عمل صفقة مهمة مع بو خالد . وهذه
أمسيته .

طارق : هذا جميل ، ابن شقيقك !

بو طارق : ماذا تقول ؟

طارق : أنا أخبرتك انه عاد للتو من الخارج . وسأعلمه درسا في

الأخلاق العامة . ألم تلاحظ كيف كان يحدق بجميلة ؟

بو طارق : اهدأ . هذا ليس الوقت ولا المكان المناسب - العفو يا

بو خالد . لا تقلق .

طارق : انظر . لا يزال يحدق فيها ! الحقير ! احشم نفسك الآن .

سامي : (لجميل) : تعال جميل ، يجب ان نذهب .

نبيل : تعال ، دعونا نذهب .

طارق : (يصرخ) والله ان شفتك مرة ثانية لأسلخ جلدك .

بو طارق : اخرس يا ولد !

خالد : (لجميل) : هل تضايقت ؟

جميل : لا ، أنا بخير . شكرا لك .

خالد : ومتأكدة انك لست بحاجة الى أي شيء ؟

جميل : شكرا للطفك الزايد .

(جميل يحملق بثبات كالتمثال بجميلة . فيشده صديقه بعيدا . ولدى

مغادرتهم تعترض فائزة طريقهم وترمي برقم تلفون عند قدمي سامي)

سامي : هذا ما أريده ، ان تسقط الأرقام علي من السماء . هكذا

فائزة : ليس لك ، يا بو صماخ . اعطها لصديقك ، ذاك المجنون

، التمثال .

سامي : سأقبل اذا قبلت ان تحملين رسالة مني .

فائزة : الى من ؟

سامي: اليك!
(يسلمها ورقة).
أضواء

المشهد 5

في السيارة على الطريق . تبدو عبارات الرسالة التلفزيونية على شاشة فوق رؤوسهم.

الرسالة: " متى أراك " ؟

جميل (يتلقى الرسالة) : انتبهوا ! " متى أراك " ؟ خذاني إليها، خذاني إليها!
سأتزوجها الآن .

نبيل : لقد رأيتها منذ لحظات ، وكدت ان تقع في صدام عنيف وتُضْرَب .
والآن تريد

الزواج بها . هل جننت؟

جميل : نعم . أنا مجنون . ذلك لا يهم . بنس هذا العالم الشاذ . خذاني إليها . على
أي طريق كان ، الضاحية . أجل ، من هنا (يطبع نص رسالة) .

رسالة : " ال..ل..ي..ل..ة "

سامي : جميل ، عزيزي خذ نفسا عميقا واهدأ.

جميل : انت اضغط برجلك على البنزين ، أحرق ما تستطيع وتحرك . لا وقت
عندي لأضيعه .

سامي: لكن، من المفترض أن تعلن خطوبتك على خلود الجبار في اليومين
القادمين .

جميل : هذا ماض، والآن ألغي ، انتهى . أخبروا أمي بذلك . أين الهاتف؟ سأخبرها
بنفسي (يقرأ آخر رسالة) .

رسالة " أنا أحترق من الداخل "

— وأنا أيضا أحترق، أحترق بقوة. سأشعل هذه الليلة كما يشعل الإطار،

على الأسفلت فداءً لعينيك .

نبيل : هيبه، هيبه . اهدأ يا عزيزي . شغل مخك وفكر منطقيا: انها ابنة عمك.

الذي يسعى لسلب تركتك. طيب ، كيف ستبدأ معها هذه

العلاقة في حين أبوها وشقيقها مستعدان لأخذ حتى دسداشتك ؟

سامي : وفوق ذلك ، ليس بإمكانك الآن الوقوع في الحب وإلغاء الزواج ، وقلب

الأوضاع رأسا على عقب. هناك مجتمع يجب أن تحسب حسابيه، فكر

بالناس من حولك.

نبيل : وفكر بمصالحك أيضا.

جميل : إلى الجحيم ، كل المصالح . ليذهب المجتمع الى الجحيم ، ومعه الأراضي

، ولتذهب كليهما الى الجحيم أنتما ولفسفتكما أيضا. ما رأيكما: هل أنا

حيوان لأربط الى معلق وأتزوج بقرة ؟ هذه هي المرأة التي أحب، هذه

هي ، وسأتزوجها. وأنا مسؤول عن قراري. الليلة يجب ان أراها ، والله

لو كانت وراء ألف سياج ، أو بأعلى برج والحراس على بابها سأراها .

وما هي حياتي ؟ قطعة قماش قدرة . الى جهنم . يجب أن أراها الليلة.

(يطبع الرسالة) .

الرسالة " ك.. ي.. ف.. أر..ا..ك " ؟

سامي : صاحبنا صار طرزان.

نبيل : وحتى الآن لا يعرف كيف يلبس الغترة .

جميل : إما ان تأخذاني إليها أو توقف السيارة لأسوقها وأذهب إليها بمفردي.

لا حل آخر . (يتلقى رسالة) .

الرسالة " سطح غرف الخدم بجوار نافذتي "

سامي : ما العمل ؟

نبيل : معه يا رجل. ليس بوسعنا ان نترك هذا المغفل لوحده ، سيقودنا كلنا الى
السجن قبل حلول الفجر.
جميل : هل أنتما مصممان ؟ حسنا . الآن شغل الموسيقى واحرق أكثر من الوقود.
احرق يا رجل. احرق. دعني أحترق هذه الليلة . (يطبع رسالة)

الرسالة " س..أط..ي.. ر "

موسيقى صاخبة.

أضواء

المشهد 6

جميلة : انه يحبسني، يورقتي في منامي ، يهزني في فراشي —
أنا أتعرق . هل التكييف يعمل ؟ —
لماذا أعجز عن الجلوس، أين أجلس؟
ها هو قادم الآن ، لا تجلسي.
الطقس بارد في الخارج . وبجانب النافذة
الصمت مطبق. هذه الليلة شديدة الوحشة كما لم أعهد من قبل
إذا أطفأت النور، فكيف سيعرف الطريق ؟
يجب ألا تعثر قدمه بحجر
إذا سمعوا شيئا سيعتقدون انها قطة ، أجل ،
آه، أيتها القطة ، إنني أحبك أيتها القطة
اقتربي وأرسلني مواءك حول نافذتي،
تعالى لتضعي صغارا من حولي
وأيقظيهم ، لا . كش ، كش!
اخرسي. فتاة مجنونة. ستوقظين الجيران
صه، صه!

العتمة مطبقة. كيف لي أن أراه؟ وكيف سيراتي ؟
ذلك أفضل ، أفضل ألا نستطيع الرؤية ، ألا يرى أحدنا وجه الآخر
، كحلم لا أحد يراه ، نلتقي دون أثر
ودون أثر نتبادل القبلات . القبلات ؟ وما القبلة ؟ ما الذي تعنيه ؟
ما فعلها ؟ هل تؤذني ؟
لا ، يجب ألا يأتي. سأختبئ. وسيظن انه قد أخطأ البيت ، ويعود
راجعا. وفي الغد نعود الى الرسائل والمكالمات . هذا أفضل ، أفضل.
وماذا لو انه ضرب بيده على النافذة ؟ يا إلهي، لا سيضرب النافذة
ويناديني باسمي : ما الذي فعلته؟ جلبت العار الى البيت — ابن عمي،
عمي الذي أعطى للعار معاني جديدة . انه رجل بلا رحمة ،
وحش ، مجرم . ولكن ماذا يعني ذلك كله؟ الابن ليس هو الأب.
الجريمة لا تورث ، وإلا لكانوا اعدموا كل ذرية قابيل. ولكن إذا رأوه هنا
الليلة فإنهم سيجرونني من شعري في الشارع. " ابن العم " — يا للكلمة البائسة ،
الملعونة : ليس ثمة كلمة أقدر منها على التقريب و التفريق في آن واحد.
اني أسمع خطواته. لا . بل انه هو .
أوه! ليس بوسعك أن تأتي.

جميل : إذن أنني لست هنا.

أنا ميت

ومنسي

ميت

ومنسي

قتلتني كلماتك العذبة، يا حبيبتي.

جميلة : لن تبقى هنا — وسأسترد كلماتي منك .

جميل : لا . فأنا غيور منها، تلك العبارات التي هجرت ثغرك ، اتركها لي ،

سأحتفظ بها ، وسأطبق عليها شفتي ، وأستشعر حرارة بوحها.

جميلة : تلك الكلمات دعها وشأنها. سأعطيك المزيد مما هو أكثر حرارة وأشد

حلاوة منها.

واعيها تستجدي من أجل البقاء وتتعرف بحقيقتها الفعلية .

جميلة : يا القسوة عذابك .

جميل : بل تعذيبك الأقسى .

جميلة : قرب وجهك مني . أود أن أكسوه باللعنة . (أريد أن أرى اللعنة نسخة ثانية

على قدر وجهك الجميل).

جميل : ها هو ذا وجهي ، فأطلقى سجينتك .

جميلة : ابن العم ...

جميل : أعديها ..

جميلة : ابن عمي ...

جميل : أعديها أيضا

جميلة : قل لي : أتحنني؟

جميل : بأي شيء أحلف فتصدقين ؟

جميلة : بما هو أقرب إليك من نفسك .

جميل : إذا حلفت بشرف والدي ، هل تكرهينني؟

جميل : سأتاركها كلها عدا واحدة تبقى رهينة عندي.
جميلة : وأيها ؟

جميل : الكلمة التي تسبب لك الألم ، تلك المحملة بمعاني الغر ، المزيفة ،
الدوائية المقنعة ، الكلية ذات الوجهين .

جميلة : ما هي ؟

جميل : " ابنة المم " . هذه الكلمة التي سأسجنها ، وأعتصرها بحثا عن الحقيقة ،
سأتكفل بها الى أن تعترف بجرمتها ، ومن ثم سأوزعها وأتهمها ، أقتلها وأنقض جنتها
لأخلصها من كل معانيها السقيمة .

جميلة : لا تقتلها . فهي الرباط الذي يجمعنا .

جميل : إن لا بد من معاقبتها عقابا مضاعفا . تعالي ، دعينا نعاقبها معا . انها أسيرة لدي .
هات ، اعطني كفاك مفتوحة ،

و هناك يدي . يمكنك ان تشعري بها ؟ هل تحسني باللغة التي تسير

بيننا ؟

جميلة : إذا كانت تلك لغتنا فإني ملمونة إن أحببتها .

جميل : تلك لغتنا ، ولغتنا ان نحب . اضططها ، اعصر بها .. أقوى ، أقوى .

- وإن حلفت بحياة أمي ، فإن حلفي لعنة لك .
 جميلة : معسول الكلام أوقع العديد من الصبايا.
 لكن الصبية المخدوعة ليست كلمة حلوة – انها شيء بانس.
 عليك ان تذهب الآن ، الفجر والنهار سيفضحان أمرك.
 جميل : دعيهما يأتيان ، يقتلاتني ، لكن لا تتركيني.
 جميلة : سيستيقظ أبي للصلاة . يجب أن تذهب .
 جميل : لا يهمني .
 جميلة : سوف أغلق الشباك – انظر ، كيف تطل حمرة الشفق – امض الآن
 يا جميل.
 جميل : لا .
 جميلة : هل تتزوجني .
 جميل : نعم .
 جميلة : متى ؟
 جميل : غدا .
 جميلة : وفي أي وقت ؟
 جميل : لا أدري .
 جميلة : ارسل لي "مسج" ، وسأكون رهن إشارتك.
 جميل : قلبي مثل عصفور في يدك ، فلا تحطميهِ.
 جميلة : انه سجين قفص في داخلي.
 جميل : اعطني (بهمس كلمة) .
 جميلة : لا.
 جميل : ارجوك قبل بزوغ الفجر.
- (جميلة تقترب اليه حين أضواء تعلن الفجر و تعمي الصالة) .

نهاية الفصل الأول

صفحة حب
الفصل الثاني

المشهد 1

بصيرة : جميل ، الى أين تذهب في الليل ؟ منذ أسبوع لم أرك إلا حين تتسلل
زاحفا خارج سريرك عند الظهر، ثم سرعان ما تختفي كالحفّاش. وخطوبتك
الليلة. موعدنا في بيت العروس في الساعة التاسعة. حدثني يا بني بالله عليك !
جميل : أنا هنا ، هنا ، يا أمي . أكاد أن أجن هذه الأيام . موت أبي يقتلني من
داخلي. والبلد قد تغير كثيرا عن قبل: الفساد يستشري في كل مكان،
والنفاق على كل لسان، أصبح الأخ يقضي الليل وهو ينصب فخا
لأخيه. والواقع كله أشبه بصرة مليئة بالأفاعي الجائعة. أنا أحاول ان
أرتاح وأجعل ذهني يصفو.

بصيرة: جميل ، يساورني القلق من أنك تسير في الاتجاه غير الصحيح.
قل الحقيقة : هل أنت متورط في مسألة المخدرات، المشروبات
الروحية، النساء ، ماذا ؟

جميل : أماه، لو لكانت هذه الأمور تشغلني، لأغرقتني في الخارج ، وليس في
بلدي هنا.

بصيرة : حرارة الشمس هنا والصحراء يخلقان عطش غريب ، لم تعرفهما هناك.
جميل : أمي ، حقي هي كل ما أتحرق إليه. اليوم صباحا سأذهب الى المحكمة
لاستئناف الحكم.

بصيرة : الرجل الوحيد الذي يستطيع الآن مساعدتك ومساعدتي أيضا هو أبو
خلود، عصام الجبار. أريدك ان تكون ابنا له بزواجك من ابنته. هو
يعرف كيف يجعل هؤلاء الأوغاد يخرسون. كلمة منه تجعل أكبر راس
في الدولة يرتجف. ولقد رتبت لك هذا الزواج بدراسة، يا
عزيزي، صدقتي!

جميل : هذه الخطوبة ...

بصيرة : أجل ، الليلة.

جميل : أمي، يجب أن أفاتحك ...

بصيرة: لن أكون أرملة متهاككة ، أعيش على حواف البؤس! لا ، لن يكون ذلك! ان خطوبتك تلك ستعيدنا الى المجتمع وتياره الواسع. أن شينا لا يمكنه ان يقف في طريقك حين تكون صهرا لعصام الجبار. ولا يمكن لأحد ان يثنيك عن فعل ما تشاء! أريدك ان تحلق ذقتك. يجب أن تكون متألقا الليلة في " بشت " والدك .

لقد دعوت 40 امرأة وعشرين رجلا من أجلك.

جميل : لكن ، أمي : انا لا أعرف تلك البنت !

بصيرة : ماذا ؟ لقد أتحت لك رؤيتها عشرين مرة . نسيتهما ؟ أين الصور ؟

(الخادمة تجلب الصور) وعلى أية حال، لقد سمعت بروعة جمالها. هي

مشهورة بجمالها. وزواجكما حديث أهل البلد .

جميل : لا أدري كيف أخبرك !

بصيرة : ماذا ستخبرني ؟ ها ، ماذا ؟ أنك لا تريد ان تتزوجها ؟ هل هذا ما

ستقوله؟ أنك ستفسخ خطوبتك....

الخادمة : عفوا ، ماما

بصيرة: الليلة الملكة! وانس كل ما عدا ذلك!

الخادمة : ما يحاول جميل ان يقوله ، ماما ، هو ...

بصيرة : اخرسي أنت! ولا كلمة!

جميل : دعيتها تتكلم . لقد عرفتها منذ عشرين سنة. هي كام بالنسبة لي. تكلمي،

كاملا.

الخادمة : جميل يقصد انه لا يعرف هذه الفتاة . فأعطه فرصة اللقاء بها والتعرف

عليها أفضل، قبل الخطوبة-

بصيرة : أنت اخرسي! لا وقت لدينا الآن. هل ترك أعمامك لنا ما يسمى وقتا؟ أقول :

الخطوبة الليلة ! قبل أن يسمع أحد بمشكلة التركة.

جميل : امه ، دعينا نتريث لبضعة أسابيع أخرى.

بصيرة : ومن ستقبل بالزواج منك إذا أصبحت بلا بيت تسكنه ؟ فكيف إذا وسموا

أباك بالسرقه وأخذوا كل شيء ؟! من سيستقبلك عند ذلك ، ها ، من ؟

جميل : لا يمكنني ان أعلن خطوبتي الليلة .

بصيرة : وهل الأمر متروك لك ، يا غبي ؟ لقد قضيت سنوات طويلة الى جانب

أبيك . هل تعرف لحماية من ؟ لحماية اسمك أنت! كنت أدرك انني لو

تركته لتشرذ فوق الأرصفة . هل تفهم ذلك؟ وكنت ستجر الى مصيره

أيضا. أيلو لك ان تبدأ حياتك من الصفر الآن ؟ أم
تريد ان تبصق على أمك وعلى ذكرى أبيك؟ آه. يا لك من ولد عقوق!
وحش مفترس! ستأكل لحم أمك !

جميل : كان والدي حرا . وتزوج المرأة التي أحب. وكذلك أنت! وأنا
حر بنفسي. ولي حريتي في أن أتزوج من أحب. بفعلي هذا.
ابيض وجوهكم. لن أتزوج خلود الجبار ، بل ولا بنت أغلى رجل في البلد.
أعلمي بأنني قد تزوجت. نعم ! تزوجت منذ أيام ، من فتاة ستفجرين بالبكاء لمجرد
ذكر اسمها!! فاحذري مني، أماه! لقد غدت رجلا . وسأجعلك تفخرين بي - شنت
أم ابيت!

(يخرج جميل)

بصيرة: هذا من تدبيرك أنت ! هذه تربيتك ، أيتها الأفعى ، يا حقيرة ! تمصين
دمي ، وتسممين أطفالي بسمومك، وشعوتك !!
المربية : كلا. كلا.

(بصيرة تضرب الخادمة)

أضواء

المشهد 2

في مقهى شعبي اثناء النهار.

نبيل : هيا إذن ، ارم الزهر!

سامي : اتركنا، يا أخي !

نبيل : سيدي، بلا النرد بعد ما أهلكتك. طيب، الجنفة .

سامي : (يتذمر بشدة)

نبيل : بلياردو ؟

سامي : وكرة قدم ايضا ؟ ، اصمت وإلا حطمت رأسك !

(نبيل يتنهد بحسرة)

نبيل : أي يوم هذا ؟

سامي : الحقيقة، لا أدري .

نبيل : ماذا بك ، مسطول ؟

سامي : مسطول؟! هل في مثل هذا الجو ما يسطل الـ "بني آدم" ؟

نبيل : وبعدين معك يا أخي ؟ ما المشكلة، ؟

سامي : قل لي أين الملاح الطبيعية، الجميلة في هذه الوجوه ؟ اي منظر من حولك

لا يدعو للقرف ؟

نبيل : هكذا هي أوقات النهار. قلت لك، ما فيها كيف ! الحقيقة، النهارات هنا

غريبة للإنسان ، تجعله يشعر بالوحدة .

سامي : هذا الآن . اما في السابق لم تكن الأحوال هكذا. أيام أجدادنا وآبائنا كان

لها طعم، صعبة لكن جميلة . أنا مشتاق لرؤية تلك الصبية أم خدود

وردية وعيون سوداء وواسعة. كنت أراها في طريقي عابرة وهي تحمل

التمر الحلو واللبن الطيب! حتى السفر في تلك الأيام كان له معنى! كان مغامرة! إذا قدرت تزور بغداد، أو ووه!! معناه أنت سلطان زمانك، شيخ التجار! أما إذا سافرت الى الهند فأنت رجل طموح . فمقابل لؤلؤة تحملها معك تعود بحفنة روبيات ، وتتمتع بأحان الهند ، وتحب إحدى صباياها، بل تعود بالذهب المهرب.

نبيل : فرق كبير. اليوم الإنسان تحول الى مجرد " خشمك و اذنك " ، يقضي يومه لاهثا في ممرات الوزارات مثل الفأر: يبحث عن واسطة في البلدية، أو وراء البنوك، والفواتير، والقروض ، و الغرامات ويظل يدور و يدور حتى يقع مثل الفقمة . هات، اعطني راس شيشة ، هات. وفحم. خلصني من هذه الحياة!".

يدخل عامل المقهى مغنيا اغنية حب من التراث و حامل شيشة.

نبيل: أخ، الحب! الحب!

سامي: يقتلنا و لا نعرف عنه شيء.

نبيل : أليس من المفترض ان يكون زفاف جميل في هذه الأيام ؟

سامي: لكن متى ؟ وعلى كل حال، لا أحد يراه الآن.

نبيل : نحن قصرنا بحقه.

سامي : هو لم يقبل ان نبقي بجانبه ولم يستمع لصوت العقل.

نبيل : ومع ذلك قصرنا معه!

سامي : وما الذي يمكننا فعله؟

نبيل : هل تعرف الطريق الى قسيمته؟

سامي : طبعا.

نبيل : حلو . وجدناها. فلنذهب الى القسيمة وننصب خيمة فيها. من جهة نغير جو ،

ومن جهة ثانية نبقي قريبين منه، نحرس له الأرض. من يدري، من

المحتمل أن ترسل المحكمة مندوبين لها الى هناك ، أو ربما يشرعون

بإقامة سياج حولها.

سامي : الله، الله ، رائع ! (بيت شَعْر) ؟

نبيل : الفحم موجود

سامي : ودندنة عود وكيف وكيف، وقهوة عربية !

نبيل : وإذا شعرنا بالملل، من المحتمل ان تمر تلك الفتاة حاملة الثمر اليبس.
سامي : حلوا! يا لله بنا.

أضواء

المشهد 3

(خالد وطارق . طارق يقود السيارة بين السيارات بسرعة 160 كم / ساعة .
خالد يشم قطعة كوكايين ويقدم واحدة لطارق ، فيشمها هو الآخر .)

خالد : قطعة ثلج بارد

طارق : أي ثلج ، أي جليد ، أي نار ، أي أم م م م م م م اه !!

خالد : طيب . متى ستري والدك ؟ أنا أريدها .

طارق : الليلة . هو عنده ديوانية . ونحن بإمكاننا معاينة قطعة

الأرض قبل ذلك ، إذا شئت .

خالد : لم تتحدث بشيء ؟

طارق : هيات لك للموضوع .

خالد : عظيم ، أموت فيك . اسرع .

طارق : (مونولوج) تلك الرغبة الجارفة في حنجرته، تلك الشهوة الحادة ، أنا

الذي أحسها . هل ينبغي أن يجردني من كل شيء ، في حين يرفض أن

يعطيني حبه ، يأخذ كل مفاتيح الأبواب المقفلة ! هل ينبغي أن تتحول

كل نظرة رقيقة الى احتقار، وأن يواجه كل أمل في الحب بالنفي .

لن أتمكن من امتلاك عشقه، فلأملكه إذن مقسطا ، أستوفيه بعد خمس أو عشر سنوات ،

أو حتى عشرين سنة . ساوافق على هذه الشروط . إنها باهظة تمتص دمي ، وأقبلها،

دعوني أعيش على أمل الحب .

هل علي أن أصبح عبدا له؟ إذن ، ساكون عبده . آخ ، أي حب كالوحش زرع في

صدري؟! أي حب ينمو في أعماقي دون أن تتاح له فرصة التعبير . إنه حب خبيث ، وقد بلغ

عروقي ، وهو يختقني .

أيها القمر المنافق: ألا تعيرني عبارتين بسيطتين لأفصح عن هذا الحب؟

وأنت أيها الليل ، يا من يستريح به العاشقون ، أيها الليل القذر: ألا تعيرني

نجمتين منفلتتين لرسم بهما حبي!!

أه ! أيها العار، أيتها المهانة — كيف لي أن أعبر عن حبي المستحيل .

يسقط باكيا على سكان السيارة .

خالد : هون عليك ، يا مجنون!

أضواء.

(جميل وجميلة على الشاطيء)

جميلة : حسنا. وماذا لو قلنا ان البحر كله حينا؟

جميل : إذا كان البحر كله حينا ، فنحن المركب الذي يمخر عبابه!

جميلة : لا . ذلك بانس.

جميل : لماذا ؟

جميلة : العواصف، يا جميل! تصور ما هو حالنا إذا هبت عاصفة هوجاء

وابتلعنا البحر!

جميل : بالعكس . دعي البحر يبتلعنا.

جميلة : ماذا تقول ؟

جميل : إذا كنا نحن القارب ، وحبنا البحر، فما الذي يبقى حين يبتلع البحر

القارب ؟

جميلة : يبقى حينا !

جميل : بالضبط!

جميلة : هذا البحر يبدو لي هزيلا.

جميل : لماذا ؟

جميلة : انظر اليه. بإمكانك ان تشعر انه محدود. لو تأملت في فضائه

بإمكانك رؤية الشواطيء من الطرف الآخر .

هذا البحر محدود في نظري. وهو لا يمثل قطرة صغيرة من حبي لك.

جميل : إذن احبسي هذا الحب الكبير في داخلك، وإلا سيفرق العالم بسيوله.

جميلة : سأفعل !

جميل : لا . انظري ثانية إليّ.

جميلة : دع الحب يفرق هذا العالم ، وتكنس سيوله البيوت والطرقا كلما ازداد حبي لك ،

ازداد كرهى لهذا العالم.

جميلة : لم أنت حزين ؟

جميل : جميلة ، أنا خائف.

جميلة : نادم على زواجنا ؟

جميل : قد أندم على أنني ولدت قبل أن أندم على زواجنا!

جميلة : أين يمكن أن نذهب ؟

جميل : كل الأمكنة بحاجة إلى مال.

جميلة : لذي المال.

جميل : حبيبتي الرائعة، حياتي ، روعي : أنت لا تملكين فلسا واحدا . ما لديك

من المال كله ملك أبيك. وربما غدا سيكون ما عندي له أيضا.

جميلة : يجب أن أفتحه بالأمر.

جميل : وهل تظنين ان الذي فعلناه شيئا بسيطا؟ تتصورين انه سينفجر غضبا ومن

ثم يهدأ ويطيب خاطره ؟ أو تظنين أنه سيسمح بعودة الأمور الى ما كانت

عليه ؟

جميلة : لست أدري . ربما.

جميل : أنت التي تبدين نادمة على زواجنا !

جميلة : لا تقلها !

جميل : تتعاملين مع الأمر كما لو كان لعبة ، دمية طفولتك، وقد تحطمت

الآن ، وتريدين ان تشكي همك لأبيك ، وتطالبيه بلعبة جديدة!

جميلة : عمري دفنته من أجلك ، وتتجراً الآن على اعتبار حبي دمية!

جميل : حبيبتي، سامحيني! أرجوك أن تسامحيني. أشعر كأن السماء قد تحولت

الى رصاص وأنني أسندها بيدي لمنع سقوطها .

جميلة : لن أتخلى عنك حتى في القبر .

جميل : سوف أجد الحل ، سأجده.

جميلة : الريح تشتد. جميل ، احضني ، خذني إليك ...

جميل : هناك عاصفة قادمة.

جميلة : اغمض عينيك.

(العاصفة تهب على البحر)

أضواء

(خيمة داخل قطعة أرض)

نبيل : (وهو يدق وتد الخيمة) : هذا الوند سيثبتها. هل جلبت البطانيات من السيارة؟

سامي: تعال الآن لنجلس. تمتع برائحة القهوة الرائعة.

(سامي ينادي على خادم)

راجيف ، بابا — أحضر البطانيات من السيارة .

نبيل : والعود، ضبطت دوزانه ؟

سامي : بربك، هذا تسميه عودا ؟

نبيل : حبيبي ، بلا فلسفة! نحن بحاجة الى شيء يرقصنا (شيء نقازي).

سامي : نقازي ؟ حاضر ، من عيوني . فائزة،ارجوك: اشعلي اللمبة.

فائزة : من أين ؟

(فائزة تظهر عند إضاءة اللمبة)

— الجو بارد عنديكم .

سامي : بردانة ؟ حضني لك أدفا مكان !

فائزة : زيارتي الآن مجاملة ،القي التحية وأسمع بعض الأغاني معكما — فإما

ان تحترما وجودي هنا بالشكل الذي وصفته أنت أو سأرجع.

سامي : فائزة ، الذي أحترمه فيك هو صراحتك .

نبيل : وسافيك !

فيزة : ماذا قلت ؟

نبيل : لا شيء. لا شيء .

فايزة : هذا هو اتفاقنا؟ طفلة، هيا بنا نذهب.

سامي : فايزة ، لحظة. نبيل : يا لوح. هذه أخلاق شوارع. لحظة ، فايزة .

فايزة : أنت ما سمعت هذا المسخرة ؟ نحن مررنا بكما للسلام في طريقنا. وهو

يعتقد أننا من فتيات الهوى ، كنا نعتقد انكما شباب من

طبقة راقية ، لكنكم مليونيين الاستهتار ! أنا ابنة عائلة ، وأحتقر جهلكما. أنتما تظنان

ان الناس كلها بخدمتكما لأنكما خلقتما وعلان ؟ لماذا لا تطلقا لحييتكما – على الأقل لتكونا

أقل نفاقا!

طفلة : فايزة ! كفى!

فايزة : لا، لن أسكت. لم أتزوج من وعمل مثلهما ثلاث سنوات ثم أطلق بلا سبب!

هو مثلهما ، ليس كالرجال ، بل من أولئك الناعمين. هيا بنا.

سامي : لحظة .

نبيل : ما تلك السيارة ؟

سامي : سيارتان ، ليست واحدة .

نبيل : سامي ، هل دعوت أحدا الى هنا ؟

سامي : لا .

فايزة : طفلة، هيا بنا. لنذهب .

سامي : فايزة ، ما المشكلة ؟ اهدأي . الأمر لا يستحق، فعلا. اخرجي واستريحي

خلف الخيمة. سنتخلص من هاتين السيارتين، ثم نبدأ سهرتنا. تجاهلي نبيل،

هو كالطفل.

فايزة : سأنتظركما ثلاث دقائق للتخلص من القادمين الجدد.. وإلا مفتاح سيارتي

في جيبى.

سامي : بل اجعلها دقيقتين. سألقنهم درسا. ليس من الأخلاق إزعاج الآخرين في أملاكهم

الخاصة.

(فايزة وطفلة تهمان بالخروج الى خلف الخيمة.)

نبيل : سامحيني ، فايزة . والله أنا أحترمك.

فايزة : إليك عني ، ابتعد !

(تخرجان)

سامي : لا بدّ أنهما ضنّعين ، وقد شاهدنا الضوء. هل أنت متأكد أنك لم تدع أحدا ؟
نبيل : أخبرت جميل فقط بأننا سنكون هنا. هذا كل شيء. راجيف !
راجيف : نعم ، بابا.
نبيل : ابق بجانبنا.
سامي : لقد وصلوا.
نبيل : كم عددهم ؟
سامي : ولييييييييييه !

(يظهر طارق وخالد خارج إحدى السيارات ، ومن الثانية 4 رجال
أقوياء. وكلهم يحملون العصي.)

طارق : كل يوم أرى شكلا جديدا من الجميزة . لقد جنّتما، واستقرتتما
في خيمة. وها أنتما تشويان اللحم في أرض تعرفان أنها لا تخصكما.
ولا أظن بأن صاحب الأرض صديق لكما. وفي الغد ربما تستضيفان
نساء هنا.

سامي : إذا كنت من البلدية أرنا بطاقتك الشخصية .
فايزة : ذلك الصوت، أعرفه أنا.

سامي : سجل غرامة بحقنا وخلصنا.

نبيل : إذا كنت شرطيا، سأكون مدينا لك لو طلبت بطاقتي.

فايزة : أنا أعرفه، أقول لك.

طفلة : ص...صه !

سامي : ولكن إذا كنت تبحث عن مشاكل، إذا ...

نبيل : اعطنا ظهرك. فوجهك يثير اشمزازي.

طارق : وأنت إن كنت في حاجة الى درس بالعربية، سأعلمك إياه بلساتي .

وستخرجان كالأطفال الطيبين. أما الدرس في الآداب العامة ...

فايزة : إنه هو . الحقيير .

طفلة : فايزة ، ابق مكاتك !

طارق : وسأعلمك إياه بأصابع كفي على وجهك. أما الدرس بالاحتشام ، فيمكنك

الاختيار! لدينا هنا ست عصي لضربك بدل العصا الواحدة!

فايزة : حتى في الصحراء ، حتى هنا تلاحقتي، يا سافل !؟

طارق : أوه! أهذا أنت، يا لعينة !؟

فايزة : بعد ماذا ؟ الآن ترمقتي بعيون حمراء حاقدة. فلا تضحكني منك ، لا

تضحكني !

طارق : والله لأشق كبدك ، أيضا!

سامي : لا تتورط ، يا صديقي! شرفها بحمايتي.

طارق : لكنها زوجتي .

فايزة : كنت ! واثت طلقنتي وتريد قتلي ، لأنك غير قادر على الحب، ولا على...

أنا أعرف السبب.

طارق : سأسكت صوتك يا كاذبة. الليلة سأسكته الى الأبد. تحركي من هنا وإلا

فتحت ثغرة في بطنك !

فايزة : الآن صرت رجلا ؟ هل تريدني الآن أم أنك تريد ضربي ثانية ؟ هل تريد

تفريغ غضبك المجنون علي، ها !؟ أمام صديقك ، أمام حبيبك ؟

سامي : أنت ذلك الولد الناعم ؟ كونو حذرين الشباب! تمسكو بأثوابكم جيدا

(طارق يضرب سامي)

(تشبب معركة بين نبيل وسامي ومعهما فايزة وراجيف ضد طارق

وخالد والرجال الأربعة)

(جو عراك)

أخيرا يصاب راجيف ويسقط أرضا ، ويتم تثبيت نبيل وطفلة

بجبل مع عصابة على الفم، بينما يوثق رباط سامي ووجهه الى

الأرض. يتمزق ثوب فايزة ، ويثبتها طارق من شعرها .

طارق : أوثقهم جيدا.

خالد : يا له من صيد ثمين .

طارق : أليس هذا هو العار بعينه؟

خالد : ذلك أكثر من العار . إنه ذل ومهانة.

طارق : الأمر في حاجة الى درس في العار والمهانة ، في الفسق والبشاعة ، لكي يتعلموا معنى هذه الكلمات. خذها.

خالد : أخذ من ؟

طارق : التي تريدها ، وإن كنت أفضلك هذه.

فايزة : وماذا ستفعلون بي ؟

خالد : زوجتك ؟

طارق : ليست زوجتي . مطلقتي. فهي لم تنجب لي أي طفل ، وهذا الأخ يقول انه مسؤول عن شرفها.

خالد : لا ملكية بين الأخوة.

طارق : من كانت في السابق زوجتي هي الآن حلالكم. وفي الوقت التي تعيد صياغة معاني الشرف و العار، من جهتي سؤلن هذا الولد الشرير درسا ايضا !

فايزة : أنت مريض !

طارق : هذا كلام كررته أكثر من مرة . ولكني في هذه المرة سؤلنك درسا حقيقي. وستشكريني على ذلك.

فايزة: سيفور دمك عند ذلك. ومن الأفضل ان تقتلني فيما بعد، وإلا سأعلق مشنقتك.

طارق : ومن قال بأنني لن أقتلك؟

خالد: اهدأي. اهدأي. وها أنا قادم اليك. أوثقوها بقوة!

(تقترب سيارة مسرعة . جميل ينزل ويحمل ملقط الفحم من بين الجمر ويضرب به وجه طارق)

طارق : لقد أحرقت وجهي، أحرقت وجهي!

أضواء.

نهاية الفصل الثاني.

الفصل الثالث

المشهد الأول :

(بو طارق يرق الباب ويدخل)

بو طارق : حبيبتي، أرجو ألا تكوني نائمة ؟

جميلة : كلا ، يا أبي . ادخل . أخبرني : كيف حال طارق؟ هل قبضوا على جميل ؟

بو طارق : شقيقك فقد إحدى عينيه.

جميلة : لا!

بو طارق : بالنسبة إلى وجهه فيمكن إجراء عملية جراحية له في الخارج. أما

عينه فلا يمكن إعادتها .

جميلة : هذا مرعب جدا ! وماذا عن ابن عمي جميل ؟

بوجميلة : الكل يظن أنك تهتمين بذلك الوحش !؟

جميلة : ماذا ؟ أهتم بذلك الجزار ، ذلك الكاذب ، الذي لا يراعي القرابة ولا القانون ولا

المواثيق. أكرهه مثل كرهى للعدو !

بوجميلة : لا أحد يدري أين يختبئ . وهو الآن ممنوع من السفر خارج الحدود .

. وسينال جزاءه حين يقبضون عليه .

جميلة : وماذا سيفعلون به ؟

بو طارق : سيرمى به في زنزانة .

جميلة : كم سنة ؟

بوجميلة : ليس أقل من عشر سنوات . ليس أقل .

جميلة : كيف ؟

بوجميلة : ماذا تقصدين ؟

جميلة : فقط؟ ذلك لا يكفي. يستحق خمس عشرة سنة ، أو عشرين ،

بل السجن مدى الحياة. أتمنى لو قضى مجموع أيام عمرينا معا في غيابة السجن ،

وحيدا، معزولا . لا نور ولا صوت ، فيسبح في فراغ الزمن حتى النهاية.

بو طارق : ذلك أقل ما يستحقه ! إنه كأبيه. يا إلهي، هأنت ترى ! حبيبتي الصغيرة.

كيف يعيد التاريخ نفسه ؟ أريدك أن تتعلمي درسا من هذه

الفاجعة . أنت ما عدت طفلتى الصغيرة، ولا أنا قادر الآن على تعليمك

كما كنت .

جميلة : أرجو أن تبقى معلمي دائما يا أبي .
بو طارق: ستتزوجين قريبا , ولن يكون بوسعي الجلوس معك وتعليمك بعد ذلك .
جميلة : لا . ليس قريبا جدا .
بو طارق: ولم لا ؟
جميلة : حتى الآن لم ألتحق بالجامعة بعد .
بو طارق: وماذا يعني ذلك ؟
جميلة : لقد تحدثنا حول الموضوع، و.....
بو طارق: ما ناقشناه ليس مهما . هل تمنع الجامعة الزواج ؟ لا طبعا .
أنت امرأة الآن. وإذا تقدم لك شاب مناسب من مثل وسطنا الاجتماعي ,
متعلم و طموح , وكنت تحبينه أو يمكن لك أن
تحبينه , فما يمنعك؟
جميلة : أبي ، أنا بعيدة عن التفكير بالزواج. لا أظنك مستعجلا على رؤيتي
ربة منزل ، انجب أطفالا من رجل غريب !
بو طارق: لا أحد غريب عن الآخر في بلدنا الصغير . فهو عبارة عن بضع
شوارع ومحطة وقود وجمعية تعاونية لا أكثر . هنا الكل يعرف الكل
وإذا تزوجت ابن إحدى الأسر التي نعرفها ونثق بها ، فستعيشين حياة سعيدة .
وليس غيري من يستطيع الموازنة بين مصالح الآنية والبعيدة .
جميلة : ليست لدي أي مصالح .
بو طارق: بل لديك مصالح كثيرة ! وأنا أحاول تأمينها وتطويرها والمحافظة
عليها. والزواج من شاب مناسب أمر مهم لفتاة في مثل عمرك.
جميلة : لكني لا أعرف أي شاب الآن !
بو طارق: هذا صحيح دون شك . امر مثل هذا يبدو للعاقل
واضح وضوح الشمس . تعال يا خالد ، ادخل يا بني !
(خالد يدخل من خلف الباب) .
بو طارق: هذا خالد وليد الهامور . وهذه جميلة
جميلة: خالد وليد الهامور !
بو طارق: لا تتعجبي يا بنيتي . فأنت أجمل وأغلى هدية يسعى لها الشباب
في البلد. وسعادتك عندي لن أفرط بها مع أي رجل!
خالد: ما كنت أنوي التعرف بك بهذه الطريقة

بو جميلة: هل تذكرين و أنت طفلة حين كنت أدخل إلى غرفتك حاملا لك الهدايا ؟
و كيف كنت ترقصين طربا ؟

جميلة: أخرجته من هنا ! أخرجته يا أبي !

خالد: ما الذي فعلته ؟

بو جميلة: كنت أقضي الساعات أنتقي أجمل هدية لطفلتي المدللة ، ابنتي الحبيبة ،
و كان وجهك يشرق بالبهجة .

جميلة: أنت تعرف ماذا فعلت ! أنا أعرفك . و تتجراً على الدخول إلى غرفتي !

أنت مجرم !!

خالد : لست أدري ما الذي أصابها . أنا متأكد من أنها تحبني . كل ما أردته هو
أن أقول لك

بو طارق: كنت كالبدر . ترقصين طول الليل مع هديتك . ليس من السهل
اختيار الهدية . إنها مسؤولية . و من خلال الهدايا كنت أعلمك كيف
تقدرين قيمة الأشياء.

خالد : كل الذي أريده هو أن أقول لك أنني أحبك وأريد الزواج بك .

جميلة : أنت مجرم، مجرم !

خالد : ذلك ليس صحيحا . لقد خلقت لحبك !

بو طارق: كنت ترقصين لكل هدية أقدمها لك وتقبلين يدي لأيام بعدها . والآن ،
امسكي بيدي

(يحاول أن يمسك يد جميلة) .

خالد : بو طارق ، اهدأ.

بو طارق: خذي يدي ! واعطني يدك ! هات يدك ! أوه ! ما أقسى هذه اللحظة ! يا إلهي !

لماذا جعلتني أواجه كل

هذا الألم ! لطفك يا رب ! لطفك يا رب !

أضواء.

المشهد الثاني :

(جميل في السوق، يجلس إلى طاولة في شرفة الكافيتريا بساحة المركز التجاري.
هو متكرر : لحية خفيفة عمرها أسبوع، ويلبس دشداشة شتوية وغترة، ويضع نظارات
عاتمة وكبيرة. يجلس مراقبا حوله بعصية.
تدخل جميلة وتجلس إلى طاولة أخرى على بعد أمتار منه. وهي ترتدي بلوزة وبنطالا أبيض
وكنيية. ويدور بينهما الحوار التالي عبر الهاتف، وهما يختلسان النظرات إلى بعضهما
البعض).

جميلة : أهذا أنت؟

جميل : ما زال حيا . لا تنظري نحوي.

جميلة : تحدث إلي. قل لي شيئا.

جميل : ذهبت إلى المقبرة. ولم أجد قبر أبي. هناك قبور كثيرة الموتى
أكثر من الأحياء. يأتون جماعات من عمق الصحراء. لا تشتري الجريدة،
لا تصدقي ما تريه.

جميلة : أنت تخوفني.

جميل : تصرفي بشكل طبيعي. دعيني أكمل. لم أنم منذ ثلاث ليال، وأنا أصغي
لعواء الريح.

جميلة : وماذا تقول الريح؟

جميل : تقول إن عصر الجاهلية ليس ماضيا، بل هو آت أيضا. الجاهلية مقبلة
بكل جحافلها من الصحراء. وسوف تحرق كل كتب الحب، وتقطع السنة
الشعراء. نحن محاصران يا حبيبتي. المجتمع يحاصرنا كأننا فيروس يهاجم جسد

المريض المبتلى بالعنة ويتمنى الموت. إذن فليمت! ليمت!

جميلة : لا أستطيع متابعتك. حدثني بشكل طبيعي، وإلا سأجن!

جميل : اسكتي. حدثيني وكأنني صديقتك. فهم ينتصتون علينا.

جميلة : ها، واشلونش يا بعد تشبدي؟

- جميل : أنا مغادر الليلة.
- جميلة : وينتش ما تجينا أخبارتش؟ وين رايحة، وين جاي؟
- جميل : لا أقدر أقول الآن. أخبرك من هناك.
- جميلة : والله ما أدري ش أسوي بدونتش !
- جميل : كلها عشرة أيام . اعطيني عشرة أيام وسأدبر أمرك .
- جميلة : مو قادرة أعيش عشرة أيام !
- جميل : لا، عيشها ، أرجوك عيشها ! لا تنظري نحوي .
- جميلة : مو قادرة أمنع نفسي .
- جميل : إتهم يراقبونك .

(في مدى الزمن التالي : خمسة رجال يلبسون الدشداشة البيضاء والفترة الحمراء من مباحث الدولة سيطوقون جميلة و جميل) .

- جميلة : أنا محتاجة لك ! محتاجة لك !
- جميل :صفي لي مدى حاجتك . دعيني أسمعك .
- جميلة : أحتاجك حاجة العين للضوء ، وحاجة المصاب للدم ! ومن دونك أنا جرح نازف ، مفتوح على الألم.
- جميل : اسمعي .
- جميلة : ماذا ؟
- جميل : لا تتطلي إلى الموت . الموت كما الشيطان . إنه كاذب . وهو يتربص بك ليشوش عليك . لكنه أيضا يخلط الكذب بالحقيقة ليتمكن من خداعك ويجرك إليه . ينقض على خيالك ومن ثم يهاجم عقلك . وهنا تكمن قدرته .
- حبيبتي جميلة لا تصغي للشيطان ، لا ، لا تصغي إليه .
- جميلة : وأين يمكن أن نختبئ ؟
- جميل : في أحشاء هذه الأرض و في وجه الشمس .
- جميلة : أنت كاذب ! ومنافق ؟
- جميل : ماذا ؟ ماذا فعلت ؟
- جميلة : أين ذلك الرجل الذي أقتنني بحبه وتزوجني ؟ هل هو أنت؟ هل أنت الرجل الذي أخذني بين ذراعيه وأقسم ألا يتركني ؟ هل أنت ذلك الرجل أم أنت سبوح ؟

جميل : أنا ما كذبت عليك .

جميلة : بل كذبت ! أنت كاذب !

جميل : لم أكذب عليك .إنه القدر ! القدر يتعقبنا والموت فوق ظهر جواده في هذه المدينة .

جميلة : إذن احملني معك .

جميل : كيف ؟

جميلة : تدبر الأمر ! ولا يهمني لو واجهت مصيري .

جميل : إما أن تلحقني بي أو سأتي إليك .

جميلة : تريد أن ينساني .

جميل : ستجعليني أبكي , سأنتحب , أصرخ . لا .

جميلة : تعال إلي إذن .

جميل : وأنت أنفذي . كأن جسدي ينزف بقوة ولا غيرك يمكنه وقف السيل .

(جميل يقترب اليها . رجال المباحث يضيقون الخناق عليهما من كل جانب : عند المصاعد ، خلف النافورة ، من داخل المقهى) .

جميل : أنا ذاهب . اهربي !

جميلة : ابق معي . لا تتركني حتى أموت .

جميل : سأمضي الآن . اهربي , يا غبية !

جميلة : لا . لا تتركني هكذا . ليس هكذا !

جميل : لن أتركك . تشبثي بالحياة , تمسكي بها .

(جميلة تنهار و تنتحب على الأرض , و هي تشد يدها على معدتها من الألم . جميل يقفز مبتعداً و المباحث يطاردونه . جميل يهرب , إذ يتسلق إحدى شرفات السوق) .

اضواء .

المشهد 3 :

(سفاح - ملازم في المباحث - بو طارق. داخل منزل بو طارق) .

سفاح : لا تقلق يا بو طارق. أعطيت رجالي تعليمات لإخفاء الأمر عن الصحافة .

بو طارق: لكنك تعرف, يا بو بندر, حدة الألسنة في مجتمعنا , أيها الملازم . سمعنا , يا

عزيزي سمعنا! ما للمرء غير سمعته ؟

سفاح : معك حق . أنا عندي ابنتان , و قد بقيتا حبيستان في المنزل تحت المراقبة

حتى تزوجتا بحمد الله , دون فضاح .

بو طارق: زوجهم واسترح.

بو طارق: شكرا لك.إننا فخورون بجهودك، ملازم, لكن ينبغي القبض على ذلك العفريت،

جميل.

سفاح : سنقبض عليه هذا اليوم. الشبكة تضيق عليه.

بو طارق: ونحن لا ننسى أصدقاءنا يا ملازم سفاح. وإن احتجت إلى أي شيء

فقط أخبرني.

سفاح : هناك شيء واحد فقط.

بو طارق: قل ما هو!

سفاح : السيارة في التصليح منذ بضعة أيام.وأنت أدري في عذاب زوجتي في
ذهابها وعودتها من المدرسة.الحياة غدت صعبة.والسيارة بحاجة إلى
جير جديد ،وهذا بالنسبة إلى سيارة المرسيدس يعادل شراء سيارة
جديدة.ثم إننا مقبلون على الصيف،وعليّ أن أحجز لإجازات أولادي
و....

بو طارق: أي مرسيدس يا رجل! وأي كلام هذا. خذ هذا المفتاح.

سفاح : ما هذا؟

بو طارق: لقد اشتريت سيارة جاغوار لابنتي، فخذها. إنها لك. وهي جديدة.

سفاح : بو جميلة، لا تخطئ الظن بي.

بو طارق: ابنتي لن تستخدمها. فالسيارة لك. هيا، خذها.

سفاح : لا يرد كرم الكريم إلا الاتيم.

بو طارق: كل ما أريده منك أن تمسك بذلك الحشرة التي تؤذي ارضي وابنتي،

وتحرق صدري، وأحضره لي.

سفاح : أجل. ولو كان تحت الأرض.

بو طارق: هيا، هيا.

يخرج الملازم سفاح

أضواء.

المشهد 4 :

(فايزة، جميل، سامي في كافاتيريا)

جميل : لكن أنت قلت أن ذلك الليلة!

سامي : أجل، الليلة. لقد كلمت الرجل. سنصل المطار في منتصف الليل.

وطانرتك في الواحدة والنصف صباحا.

فايزة : وماذا ستفعل بعد ذلك؟

جميل : سأهربها بنفس الطريقة .

فايزة : وماذا ستفعل في أوروبا ؟ وماذا ستفعل هي ؟

جميل : ماذا تقصدين ؟

فايزة : ليس لديك أي شيء ، فكيف ستعيش يا جميل ؟ هل تريد منها أن تعمل في

غسل الصحون ؟

جميل : سأتدبر الأمر .

فايزة : أو تعمل نادلا ؟ هل تنوي تدمير حياتها ؟ ألا يكفي ما حدث حتى الآن ؟

أنت ستعيش منفيا ، وهي سجينه المنزل .

سامي : سيرجع طالما تهدأ الأمور .

فايزة : وكيف سيترونها تهدأ يا حبي إذا كان خالد الهامور خطيبها ؟

جميل : ماذا ؟!

فايزة : ارجع الآن أيها الرجل الوديع إلى قلاع رومانسيك .

جميل : ماذا تقولين يا فايزة ؟

فايزة : ما الذي تتصوره ؟ انتهى كل شيء . هل تريدها أن تموت مع نهاية الفيلم ؟

(تخاطب سامي) : سامي ، هل أحضرت الملف ؟

جميل : أي ملف ؟

فايزة : لاتحملك في ! إذا كانت ستتزوج خالد ، فهل تظن أنني سأترك ملفا في الوزارة

العدل عن اعتبارها زوجتك أنت ؟ (تتوجه إلى سامي) هل أحضرت الملف أم لا ؟

جميل (لسامي) : ماذا فعلت ؟

سامي : لا يوجد خيار آخر ، يا جميل .

جميل : يا لك من فاسق !

سامي : أفهميه يا فائزة .

جميل : وهل أنت إلى جانبهم ؟

فائزة : جميل , هدى نفسك . أنت ذاهب إلى أوروبا . وهناك ستحتاج لكل قدراتك .

جميل : أنتم كالمقاولون ! وقلوبكم مثل القطع الأرضية المعدة للبناء . وهأنتم تشتمون بأنوفكم رائحة المال . وقد قايضتم ملكيتي بملكيتهم . هل تتقايضون بالصدافة أيها الكلاب ؟

فائزة : لن تستطيع تأمين مسكن لها , بل ولا حتى وجبة طعام !

جميل : جنباء ! منافقون ! خونة ! مقاولون !

فائزة : سأثبت لك أنني مخلصه .

جميل : من خلال إثباتك أنها ينبغي الزواج من ذلك التافه , الهامور ؟

فائزة : على الأقل سيكون قادرا على جعلها تعيش كما اعتادت . يقولون أنه يحبها . وهي ستحتفظ بحب لأبيها . والزمن كفيل بالباقي . وهي مقتنعة بذلك أيضا .

جميل : لا أصدقكم .

فائزة : سأخذك إليها لتسمع منها ذلك .

جميل : اقتحم جهنم لأسماع ذلك من فمها . وإذا سمعت ذلك فتركوني هناك يصبون النار علي

فائزة : يمكنك الاجتماع بها الليلة , بشرط ان لا تراها ثانية جميل , لا تجرها إلى الجحيم معك . اترك لها الفرصة للعيش .

جميل : الليلة ؟

فائزة : الليلة .

جميل : اتفقتنا !

سامي : جميل .

جميل : اسكت . ماذا تعرفون عن الحياة ؟ وعن المعنى ؟ ماذا ؟ إنكم تمضون

أيامكم كما النمل بين تلال التراب : والممل يتراكم عليكم كالصدي على سفن معدومة . ألا تخافون الموت ؟ ألا تخافون الله . اتركوني وشأني ! إن لدي حبا صغيرا , أملا بسيطا , انفتح كشق صغير في جدران حياتي .

وأريد أن أحيا داخل ذلك الشق الصغير , وإلا فلتهدم الجدران فوق رأسي !

أضواء.

المشهد 5: (يدخل طارق . جميلة خائفة . يؤشر لها مهدنا من روعها)

طارق : هل تريدان رؤية الجرح؟

جميلة : نعم.

طارق (يزريح الضمادة): هذا هو .

جميلة : لا أستطيع النظر .

طارق : بل يجب أن تتظري !

جميلة : إنه بالغ .

طارق : تلك هي الحقيقة ..

جميلة : أي حقيقة؟ لماذا هذا العنف كله , هذه البشاعة كلها ؟

طارق : ماذا تريدان , وما العمل ؟

جميلة : لست أدري . أريد أن نكون بشرا عاديين .

طارق : عاديين؟ طبيعيين؟.. ما معنى ذلك؟ ما هو السوء؟ هل خلقنا كذلك؟

السوء سلوك نتعلمه من المجتمع حولنا لكي نحمي مصالح آباءنا. أنا لست انسان

عاديا ! أنا شاذ في هذا المجتمع. وهذا الجرح دليل على الحقيقة أجل, دليل

عليها, وسأحتفظ بها.

جميلة : لكنك تستطيع إزالتها و تجميلها-

طارق : لا رغبة عندي في تجميل الحقيقة . أصبحت أكره الأفتعة, وأكره

الكذب. ذلك مكتوب علي. إنه قدرتي.

جميلة : وأنا؟ ما المكتوب علي؟

طارق : خذي هذا الثوب. لقد فصلناه لك.

جميلة : لا أريده.

طارق : ليس مهما ما نختار. ذلك لا يغير شيئا. يجب أن تدخلني إلى غرفتك.

جميلة : لا ترمني في سجن الغرفة.

طارق : كلنا سجناء غرفنا يا جميلة, وأنت لست الوحيدة.

جميلة : أقول, لا تغلق علي الباب.

طارق : البسي ثوبك الآن. وستأتي الخياطة الليلة لتبدله لك.

جميلة : صبرا.

طارق : أختي, آلام هذا العالم ليست آلامك وحدك. فاستغفري الرحمن.

جميلة : لا تتركني وحدي.

طارق :استغفري الرحمن !

المشهد 6:

في منزل ابو طارق

بو طارق : أين كنت ؟ لقد تأخرت !

فايزة : أحضرت الخياطة يا عمّاه.

بو طارق :وأين هي؟

فايزة : إنها هنا.

بو طارق :.هذه الخياطة !

فايزة : وهي تعمل لدى اكبر العائلات لكنها تخجل من الرجال.

بو طارق : لأنها مؤدبة.هذا هو الأدب.هذه هي الحشمة.ليتك يا عزيزتي تعلمين

ابنتي شينا من تربيتك.ما اسمك؟

فايزة :اسمها أم أحمد.

بو طارق : إنها تخجل حتى من التحدث إلي!يا لها من مؤدبة !أذهبي.أذهبي.إن

قلبي يستحي من النظر إليك ومقارنتك بابنتي !

(الخياطة تصعد للدور الثاني)

فايزة,ابق أنت هنا.لم اعد اثق بأحد واخشى خداعك ، تعالي معي .

أضواء.

المشهد 7:

(يدخل جميل وهو ما يزال متسترا بحجاب).

جميلة : ماذا تريدین أنتِ أيضا ؟

جميل : انا خياطتك يا عروس .

جميلة : لا تتلفظي بهذه الكلمة مرة أخرى .

(جميل يكشف عن نفسه).

جميل : بل انت عروس .

جميلة : جميل ! جميل ! جميل !

جميل : صه ! اخفضي صوتك .

جميلة : اعتقدت انني لن أراك ثانية .

جميل : واضح ... أهنئك على هذا الفستان الجميل

جميلة : ماذا تقول ؟

جميل : آسف لأنني لم أمت . لكان اريح لك .

جميلة : كيف اتيت ؟

جميل : ليس بدعوة منك .. هل تتذكريني ؟ هل تتذكرين زوجك ؟

جميلة : انت لا تعلم ما الذي فعلوه بي .

جميل : آه . فعلوه .. هم .. هل يفضل ان اتناقش امري مع والدك ؟

جميلة : كفى ! كفى ! هل تريد قتلي ؟

جميل : قتلك؟؟ انا اقتل خطيبة خالد الهامور ؟ حرام عليك .. المدعوون والحفلة بانتظارك

.. آه صحيح متى العرس ؟ الليلة ؟ ام غدا ؟

جميلة : اعلم ان عرسهم هو جنازتي

جميل : معسول الكلام ...

(جميلة تنهار باكية على الأرض)

جميل : انا آسف يا حبيبتي . انا آسف. نحن الآن معا ، والعالم سوف ينقشع من أمامنا .

جميلة : ينقشع ؟ انه يزداد ضيقا على عنقينا

جميل : سامي ينتظرنا في السيارة ، سنذهب معا ، نعبّر الصحراء والحدود ،

سنبدأ حياة جديدة ، بعيدا عن كل هذا .

جميلة : فات الاوان , دعني أتملى وجهك قليلا .

جميل : لا وقت لدينا . ارتدي هذه العباءة واخرجي للسيارة ، سيعتقدون

انك الخياطة ، وانا سأتابعك .

جميلة : لكن المباحث والشرطة يحاصرون البيت . كل شيء ينتهي

جميل : لا عليك سننجح .

جميلة (ترى المسدس) : ما هذا ؟

جميل : انهم يطاردونني كحيوان ، لم استعمله بعد

أضواء

المشهد الثامن :

(سفاح ، سامي ، نبيل ، شرطي)

سفاح : اوقف السيارة ، انزلو . من أنتم ؟

سامي : انا ابحت عن ديوانية صديقي .

سفاح : لماذا تدور حول هذا البيت منذ نصف ساعة .

نبيل : لأننا لم استدل على البيت .

سامي : ما بك ؟

سفاح : لقد رأيت هذا الوجه في احد الملفات .

الشرطي : انهم اصدقاء المتهم ، سيدي .

سفاح : نعم .. سامي ، يقاللك ، و انت نبيل؟

سامي : انا .. انا لست سامي .

نبيل : و انا لست نبيل .

سفاح : لا تتذاكى علي يا ولد . ارني بطاقتك . (ياقي القبض عليهما)

... سوف اترقى بأكثر من نجمة من خلاك ، و سوف أحصل على الاقل على

سيارتين كمكافئة .

سامي : اتركني .. انت تؤلم ذراعي .

سفاح : و انت تؤلم قلبي! اخرس ، حاصروا البيت ، المتهم في الداخل ، هيا

تحرك ، تحرك .

أضواء

- سفايح : جميل ، انت محاصر ، اخرج وضع يدك فوق رأسك .
- فايزة : : جميل لقد عرفوا كل شي ، كشفوا امرنا ، دعني ادخل .
- جميل : اللعنة قضى علينا .
- سفايح : (الى فايزة) ابتعدي .
- جميلة : جميل . كل شي انتهى
- جميل : ماذا ؟

(جميلة تمسك ببطنها وتحاول كبت الالام)

- جميلة : حبيبي جميل ، لا يهم ، ما نفع هذه الحياة .
- جميل : جميلة ما بك ، وجهك اصفر ، تفانلي قليلا ، لا بد من مخرج .
- سفايح : سلم نفسك ولن نؤذيك ، لا تلعب دور البطل يا ولد سوف تندم .
- بصيرة : انا امك يا جميل ، لا تضيق نفسك يا ولدي ، لن تتزوج إلا من

المشهد التاسع :

(تبدأ الأضواء باللتفت ، تطفأ وتشمل)

(سامي يدخل يتبعه سفاوح)

جميلة ما الذي يجري ؟

جميل : الكهرباء تنقطع . هذا افضل ، الارتباك سوف يجعل تسلسلنا سهلا .

جميلة : جميل ، يجب ان تعرف شيئا .

جميل : حبيبتي ، انظري إلى الليل ، كم هو كبير وهائل .

جميلة : انه حالك دامس ، انظر إلى القمر ، انه يفرق في الظلمة .

جميل : انها غيمة ... مجرد غيمة !

جميلة : جميل اسمعني ...

(فايزة تدخل مع بوطارق)

(ضوضاء تزداد حلو الاثنين)

(تدخل بصيرة وباقي الشخصيات)

تريد ، اخرج يا ابني .

بوطارق: جميل ، انا عمك ، اترك ابنتي وسأعطيك الارض ، سأكتب

التنازل الآن وارميه اليك من تحت الباب ، اسمعني ؟

جميل : لا اريد الأرض ، خذ الارض وادفني فيها . ابتعدوا لأن . (بيدعون

بالضرب على الباب)

جميلة : فلنمت الآن ما دمنا مع بعض ، لا حياة لي دونك .

جميل : لا تخشي يا حبيبتي ، حبا أقوى من هذه الحياة ؟

جميلة : سوف يقبضون عليك . ويزوجوني من خالد .

خالد : جميلة ، لا تخافي انا هنا .

جميل : لا يستطيعون ، لن يقدرُوا .

سامي : جميل سوف نعالج الامور ، اخرج يا اخي ، اخرج .

جميلة : سوف يقتلوننا عاجلا أم آجلا .

جميل : لا

جميلة : انتهى الحلم .

جميل : ماذا أي حلم؟

جميلة : نحن كنا حلما ، وأن لعيوننا ان تفتح . كنا خطيئة لا يمكن ان

تغتفر . نحن لم نخلق لبعضنا يا جميل .

جميل : لا تكلمي . انت تقتلينني .

جميلة : لا يقتلُ المقتول يا حبيبي .

جميل : ماذا ؟

جميلة : لا عليك ، كل ما اتمناه ان اكون زوجتك ، وأن...

(جميلة تتداعى امامه ممسكة ببطنها من الألم)

جميل : جميلة !! ما بك يا حبيبتي ؟ .

جميلة : آه بطني آآههه .

(جميل يلحظ عبلة دواء فارغة ملقاة على الأرض)

فقط جتان بنيران حب يسير على العكس من دورة الكون احرقنا .
ابصروا ان روجيهما نائمة .

وقطعة ارض ، ذرتها الرياح واهنتها الصنبح ، متروكة كالخطيبة بكتها
الآن دمع العيون المريضة جوراً ومصنحة آتمة .

ان ايها الجمع ما انها الخاتمة .

أضواء.

النهائية.

جميل : ماذا فعلت بحق السماء؟؟؟؟

جميلة : قل لهم معك مسدس والتي رهينتك ، واثق ستقتلني اذا لم يفسحوا الطريق لنا ، قل لهم ، تكلم .

جميل : اسمعوا ، لدي مسدس ، سوف اقتلها . بوطارق اقسم سوف اقتلها ، امرهم بان يفتحوا لى الطريق والا قتلت ابنتك.
جميلة : ساموت زوجة لك... احضني ، ارجوك.

(جميل يحضنها ويتحجب ، تموت)

جميل : لالا لالا....

(باتفعال يمسك بالمسدس ويطلق النار على رأسه)

(على اثر صوت الطلقة يكسر الباب ويدخل الجميع)

(جميل وجميلة جثتان على الأرض)

: سامي :

...وهذا الذي قد تبقى من القصة الحالمة.

APPENDIX 3

A. The translation of *Munāzara Bayna al-Layl wa al-Nahār* A Debate between Day and Night.

When the day revealed its whiteness, the night met it with its blackness, then the joking became seriousness, and they started a big argument, each revealed its secret. Suddenly, the night started to argue the day and colored the redness of the day's flower with the yellowish of spices colore, and said:

Night: When the nigh drops, its drop should be a lesson for the one who have fears.

Narrator: The night then started the conversation with its reasons of confrantation and said:

Night: the war starts with words then makes a victim or a prisoner.

Narrator: When the night came to an end and reached its aim, the dawn arrived and showed its flage in the middle of this fight for life, and said :

Day: I am the son of the glammour .

Narrator: Then the day positioned it self on the throne of the sky, and raised the Sun all over, in land and sky. Then Night came closer and said:

Night: thanks to who made me the privacy of lovers, and the peak time for weddings, and the optaining time of precious literature, he created me to be a rescue for humans to rest, a shelter for private prayers and worshipers. I bring about variations for those who work hard to find strange things, and I please the eyes of those who have desires. I bring about beauty and glammour, and I let entertainment and pleasure

to be handy; those moments revive people along with tones of happiness and charming atmospheres. My times are enlightened by the Moon light, and my creative givings are blessed, and it is enough for me to mention that I am the best haven for people, and my nice company protects them from the hardships.

Day: Oh, night, don't be so proud of yourself! Who invited you to fight or to prove who is better? And why are you showing off? Have you ever worked hard on something but evil and wickedness?! You always wait for the chance inside the den! I hope that God protects me from your evil, and helps me to face the variations of your wickedness. If we say that you gather lovers, what is so good about being the privacy for lovers, what happens if they are apart, and there was no meditation...they will suffer because of you until the dawn comes?! You become the lovers' agony; the lover would spend the tiring night with his fiery heart full of flames. He would start to count your stars and his heart is enflamed with lust. In addition, don't claim the glamour of the Moon to be yours, it's mine I gave it my shade; it is just a small part of my light. Don't try to imitate, no body can say that the Sun takes its light from the Moon; there is a big different between Suns and candles. It is me who enlighten the beauty of this world, and it is me who provide bright colors. No body can deny my beauty and charm, I do not need a witness for this, isn't that enough as an evidence, I will give you another evidence from the words of God when he says: We erased the proof of night and made the proof of day clear. Does the person who see clearly like the blind? Is darkness like light? How can you compare those who are not aware of themselves with those who are alert and present? Being the time for rest should bring shame to you, because the time of work is what makes life worth living. Don't forget God's gift to me with the middle prayer and Ramadan when the Qur'ān was sent to

people. My blessings are well known in the past and the present, and the things that I should be proud of are mentioned in the Holy book and in the Prophet sayings, also to those who can see, the Sun can't be hidden in the middle of the day, so do not claim the beauty to be yours. Surrender or I will make your present like your past.

Night: Damn it, Day, your building is based upon a deep hall, are you arguing the one that you came out of? Are you fighting the source of your present, do you think that you are better than the one who brings your years and months to an end? You should be wiser and surrender! You should know who should be mentioned first. Are you blaming me for my black color! The black is only in the heart. Black is the sign of perfection. Don't you know that I have more luck than yours in being perfect, to the extent that the Musk took some of my descriptions? Then how could you blame me for being clever? Do you think wickedness happens at night? No, it happens during the day. Do not feel proud about having the middle prayer because the time in which all prayers were obliged, was in the night of M'rage. And how can you be proud of Ramadan? Would fasting be right unless I show the time of its beginning and end? I'm the one who provides fasting people with the rest they need and give them time for praying, so enough of your lies, or I will make you a sample for those who tries to fight with me, I'm the one who hides all the troubles you causes. Stop it because you have a lot of scandals.

Day: I swear by the one who provided me with the reasons to be beautiful, and gave me the courage to be fluent, that I am going to erase the dark lines in the world, and prove, in the present of witnesses, that I have always been honest and true, Hpww could the night claim having values while I were talking about God's gifts in me? Night is

the one who rejected God's gifts and it is me who revealed its mischief. Day time is when God starts giving people their daily income and it is in my time that people do their starts. How do you dare to compare heights with plains, if you think that you're first, that's normal for servants to precede their masters. Can you tell me what is your role in the day of 'Arafa, or on both feasts? Do you claim that you are better than me because of one time of praying? Stop being overconfident, which of us is more beautiful? I'm white and bright and you're black and dull. I hear promises from you but I don't see action, wake up or I'll cut you into pieces. It is not true that you can go away with it every time.

Narrator: Stop it you two fool; each of you is still mislead since the beginnings of this world. Each has proved to be better with fair evidences, no judge can say one of you is right or wrong; it's God who created day and night and they are both part of God's features. Right is truthful, right is truthful, right is truthful.

APPENDIX 3

B. The Original Arabic text of :*Munāzara Bayna al-Layl wa al-Nahār* A Debate between Day and Night.

مناظرة بين الليل والنهار

لمحمد أفندي المبارك الجزائري

لَمَّا أُسْفِرَ النَّهَارُ عَنِ بِياضِ الْغُرَّةِ ، قَابَلَهُ اللَّيْلُ بِسَوَادِ الطُّرَّةِ .. ثُمَّ صَارَ الْهَزْلُ جَدًّا وَاشْتَدَّ
النِّزَاعُ بَيْنَهُمَا جَدًّا . وَأَفْشَى لَهُ سِرَّهُ . وَإِذَا بِاللَّيْلِ حَمَلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ ، فَصَبَغَ حُمْرَةً وَرَدَّتْهُ
بِصَفْرَةِ الْبَهَارِ . وَقَالَ ..

الليل : " وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى .. إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَى " .

الراوي : فَفَتَحَ اللَّيْلُ بَابَ الْمُنَاقَشَةِ ، وَعَقَدَ أَسْبَابَ الْمُنَاقَشَةِ بِقَوْلِهِ
الْفَصْلِ ..

الليل : " فَإِنَّ الْحَرْبَ أَوْلَاهَا كَلَامٌ .. ثُمَّ تَجَلَّى عَنِ قَتِيلٍ ، أَوْ أُسِيرٍ بِكَلَامٍ .

الراوي : وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اللَّيْلُ غَايَتَهُ .. بَزَغَ الْفَجْرُ وَرَفَعَ رَايَتَهُ ، وَقَالَ إِذْ جَالَ فِي
مُعْتَرِكِ الْمَنِيَا .

النهار : " أَنَا ابْنُ جَلَا وَطَلَّاعِ الثَّنَائِيَا " .. " وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا تَجَلَّى "

الراوي : ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى عَرْشِ السَّنَا وَالسَّنَاءِ ، وَأَطَّلَعَ شَمُوسَ طَلْعَتِهِ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ . فَانْتَدَبَ إِلَيْهِ " اللَّيْلُ " وَمَالَ عَلَيْهِ كُلَّ الْمِيلِ ، وَقَالَ ..

الليل : " أَحْمَدُ مِنْ جَعَلَنِي خُلُوعًا لِلْأَحْبَابِ ، وَجَلُوعًا لِعَرَائِصِ الْعَرِفَانِ وَنَفَائِصِ

الآدَابِ ، وَخَلَقَنِي مَثْوَى لِرَاحَةِ الْعِبَادِ ، وَمَأْوَى لِمَخَاصِئِ النَّسَاكِ

وَالْعِبَادِ : أْتَرَدُّ عَلَى أَرْبَابِ الْمَجَاهِدَةِ بِفَنُونِ الْغَرَائِبِ ، وَأَتَوَدُّ إِلَى

أَصْحَابِ الْمَشَاهِدَةِ بِعَيُونِ الرِّغَائِبِ ، تَدُورُ فِي سَاحَتِهِمْ بِدُورِ الْحُسْنِ

وَالنِّبَاهِ ، وَتُدَارُ مِنْ رَاحَتِهِمْ كُؤُوسُ الْأَنْسِ وَالنِّهَائِ ، فَتُحْيِيهِمْ نَعَمَاتُ

السَّمْرِ ، وَتُحْيِيهِمْ نَسَمَاتُ السَّحْرِ ، فَأَحْيَانُ وَصَلِّيَ بِالنَّهَائِي مُقَمَّرَةً ،

وَأَفْنَانُ فَضْلِي بِالْأَمَانِي مُثْمَرَةً ، وَحَسْبِي كِرَامَةٌ أَنِّي لِلنَّاسِ خَيْرٌ لِبَاسٍ ..

أَقِيهِمْ بِطُفِّ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ كُلِّ يَاسٍ .

النهار :

أيها الليل ، هَلَا قَصَّرْتَ من إعجابك الذليل ؟! فما دعاك إلى حلبة المفاضلة ؟ وما دهاك حتى عرضت بنفسك للمناضلة ؟ وهل دأبك إلا الخداع والمكر ؟! وترقب الفرصة وأنت داخل الوكر ؟! فبريتي يستعاض من شرك ، ويستعان على صنوف صروف غدرك وهب أنك تجمع المحب بالحبيب ، إذا جار عليه الهوى وحرار الطبيب.. فكم يقاسي منك في هاجرة الهجر وبين أنين التلكى حتى مطلع الفجر ؟! يبيت كما بات السليم مسهدا وفي قلبه نار يشب لها وقد فيساهر النجوم ، ويساور الوجوم ، فكم قطع أناةك بمواصلة أنينه متمللاً من فرط شوقه وحنينه . ولئن افتخرت ببدرك الباهر الباهي ، فإنما تباري ببعض أنواري وتباهي . وهل للبدر عند إشراق الشمس من نور ؟ أو لطلعة حسنه من ظهور ! ومن ادعى أنك تساوني في الفضل والقدر ! أو زعم أن الشمس تقتبس من مشكاة البدر ! وما أغنى الشمس عن الشموع . فبي تتجلي محاسن المظاهر الكونية، وتتحلى بجواهر الأعراس اللونية . وأنى يخفى حسني وجمالي على مشاهد؟ أو يفتقر فضلي وكمالي إلى شاهد؟ أما كفاك بيئة ، وزادك ذكرى وتبصرة ، قوله تعالى :

" فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً " و " هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ " . وأين منزل أهل الغفلة من منزل أهل اليقظة والحضور أو إن كنت مغنى الأفس والأفراح ، تفعل بعقول الناس فعل الراح ، فهل حسبت أن السكون خير من الحركة ، وقد أجمع العالم على أن " الحركة بركة " . فإن لي بكل خطوة خطوة ، وليس لجوادي كنبوة . وقد أتحنني الله بالصلاة الوسطى فأوتر بها صلواتي، وكفاني شرفاً " شهز رمضان الذي أنزل فيه القرآن " فمآثري ماثورة في القديم والحديث، ومفاخري منثورة في الكتاب والحديث ومحاسني واضحة لأولي الأبصار، وهل تخفى الشمس في رابعة النهار! فاكف عن الجمال وأمسك، ولا تجعل يومك مثل أمسك، وسالم من ليس لك عليه قدرة، فقد قيل " ما هلك امرؤ عرف قدره " . أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله من آفة العجب والكبرياء .

الليل :

سُحِقاً لك أيها النهار ، فقد أسست بنيانك على شفا جرف هار ،
تُناضلني ومني كان انسلاخك وظهورك ، وتفاضلني وبني أرخت
أعوامك وشهورك - ألم يأن لك أن تخشع للذكر ! فتعترف برتبة
التقديم في الذكر ، وكيف يعيرني بلون السواد ! وهل يقبُح السواد إلا
في الفؤاد؟! وعلام جعل السواد على النقص علامة ، وهو مُشتق من
السودد لدى كل علامة ؟ أما درى أنني حُزت من الكمال الحظ الأوفر ،
حتى تحلى ببديع وصفني العنبرُ والمسك الأذفر ! أو كيف يعيبنني بالخداع
(والحربُ خُدعة) وليس الشيء في موطنه بغريب ولا بدعة؟!
وافتحارك عليّ بالصلاة الوسطى ، ليس لإنصافاً منك ولا قسطاً ، أما
كان افتراض الصلاة في ليلة العروج؟! فما بالك تدعي الارتقاء إلى
هذه البروج؟!

وأما افتخاره عليّ بشهر رمضان، هل صح له صيامه إلا بي بدءاً
وختاماً؟! وقد تميزت عليه بفضيلة إحيائه تهجداً وقياماً، هذا : وإني
أنتكف الصائم بمديد الراحة ووافر الأجر حتى يتبين له الخيط الأبيض من
الأسود وهل في مطالع سعودك أشرقت بدور العيدين؟! أم على جناح
جُنحك أسري بنور طلعة الكونين؟! وهل في تجليات أسحارك يقول
الرب : هل من سائل ؟ فيناجيه العبد متضرعاً إليه بقلب خاشع ودمع
سائل . أقسم بالشفق ، والليل وما وسق ، والقمر إذا اتسق " لأسبين
روميّ النهار ، ولأجعلنه عبرة لذوي الاعتبار فلقد تزياً المملوكُ بزوي
الملوك ، وادعى مقام الوصول إلى صاحب السير والسلوك ، أما كفاه
ازدرائي وتحقيري؟! حتى حكم بتضليلي وتفكيري، فكم أسبلت على
عزراته ذيل ستري ، وهو لا يُبالي بهتك أستاري؟! أف له من فاضح
أما يكفيه ما فيه من المفاضح؟!

النهار :

والذي كساني حُل الملاحه ، وأطلق لساني بالبلاغة والفصاحة ،
لأمحون سطور الدجى من طرُوس الوجود ، ولأثبتن حسن أحوالي في
مقامات أهل الشهود ، فإنني معروف بالوفاء وصدق الخير ، موصوف
بالصفاء الذي لا يشوب صفوه كدر ، كيف يُباهيني (الليل) بمكارم

الراوي : أيها النهار والليل البهيم، أنكما لفي ضلالكما القديم .
: أ الشمس ينبغي لها أن تُدرك القمرَ وأن الليلُ سابقُ النهارِ وكلُّ في ذلكِ يسبحون
كل منكما برهن على فضله بشهود عدول ، ليس للمنصف عن تركية شهادتهم
عدول ، " فقد خصص الحقُّ ، " فقد خصص الحقُّ ، " فقد خصص الحقُّ .

الأخلاق ، ومحاسن الشَّيْم ، وأنا أتحدث بنعم الله وهو موسوم بكفران
النعم ، وكم ظهرت منه عيباً كان غيباً فابيضت عينه حزناً " واشتعل
الرأس شيباً " وكيف يزعم هذا الأبق أنه أسيدُه في حلبة الشرف

سابق .

أنا مفتاح خزائن الأرزاق ، وبي يُستفتح بابُ الكريم الرزاق وأما انسلاخي منك من أمْلَح
الملح لي وهل تحق لأصناف الأصداف أن تتنافس نفاس الدرر ، وأما تقدُّمك عليَّ فمن
العادة تقدم الخدم بين يدي السادة .. وأما خيرُ الإسراء ، فما لاحت أسراره إلا
بمطالعي ، ولا زاحت أسناره إلا بطوالعي ، فأين أنت من يوم عرفة الذي عرفه بابهي
الخصائص من عرفه ، وناهيك بسمو شان العيدين ، فما أجلهما من موسمين
سعيدين ، وكيف تُفاخرني بساعة تبدو منك مرة في كل عام . أيها المعجبُ بنفسه ، ألم تعلم
أيُّنا أبهى مُحياً ، وشتان ما بين الثرى والثريا ، أين سوادك من بياضي ؟ ! وما زهر
نجمك إن تتلألاً زهر رياضي ! كيف تَسَمَّنتُ ذُرَّة هذا المنبر ؟ كأنك تَكْتَبُ بالمسك
وتختتم بالعنبر ! لقد أطلت فيما " لا طائل تحته " ولا معنى ، فكم ذا " أسمعُ جمعةً ولا
أرى طحناً " ففتيته من غفلتك أيها " الليل " قيل أن تدعو بالثور والوبيل ، وإلا فَرَّقْتُ
طلائع سوادك أي تفريق ، ومرقت سوايح ظلامك أي تمزيق " فما كل مرة تُسلم الجرة "

Appendix 4: The Results of the Study illustrated by Figures

The charts are numbered according to the table's numbers in sequence. Please note that the questionnaire questions, tables and charts have the same numerical order.

Figure 1

Age Group

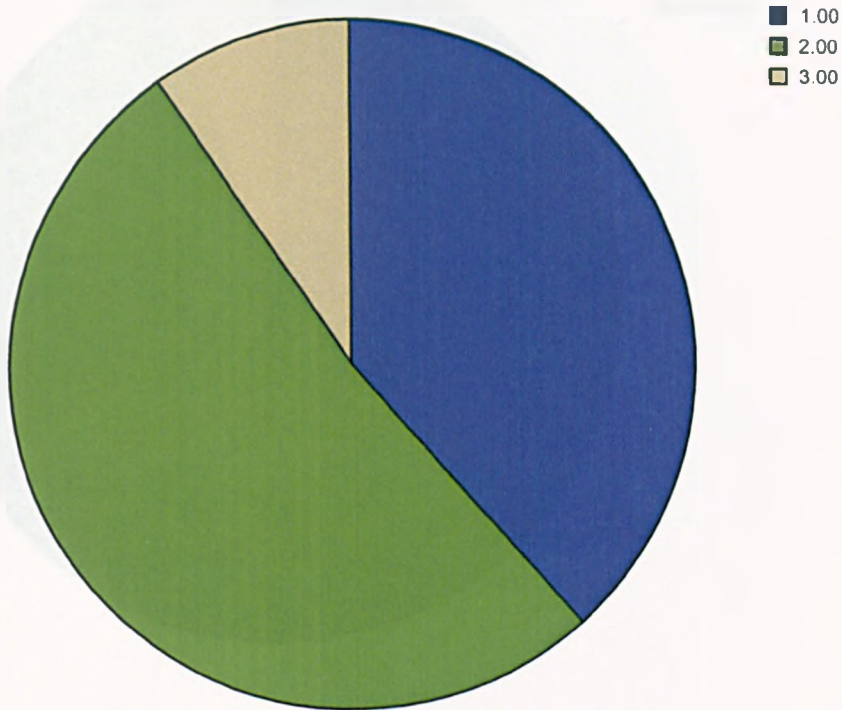


Figure 2

Level of Education

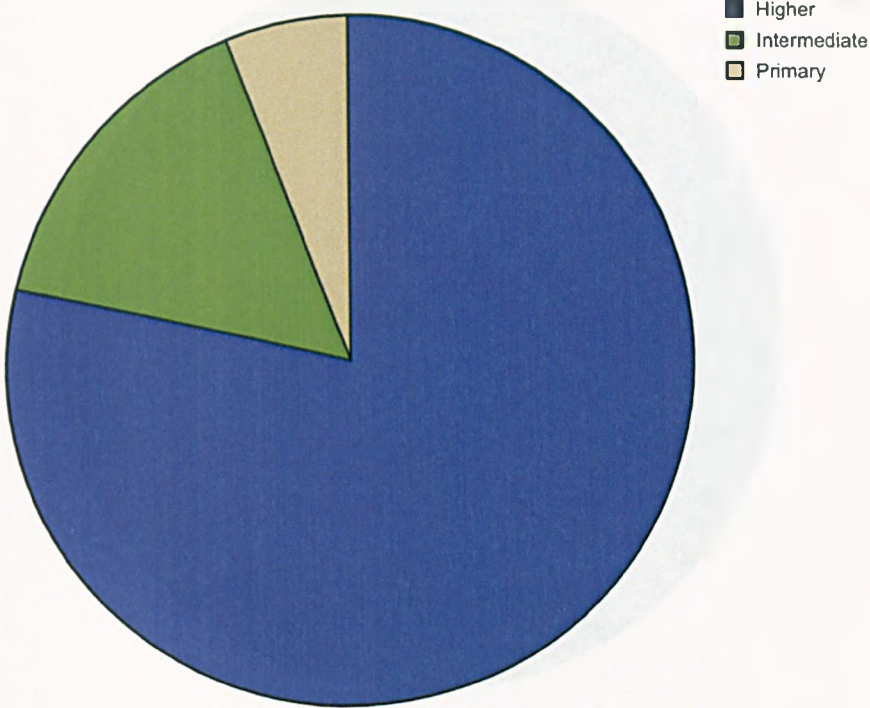


Figure 3

Gender

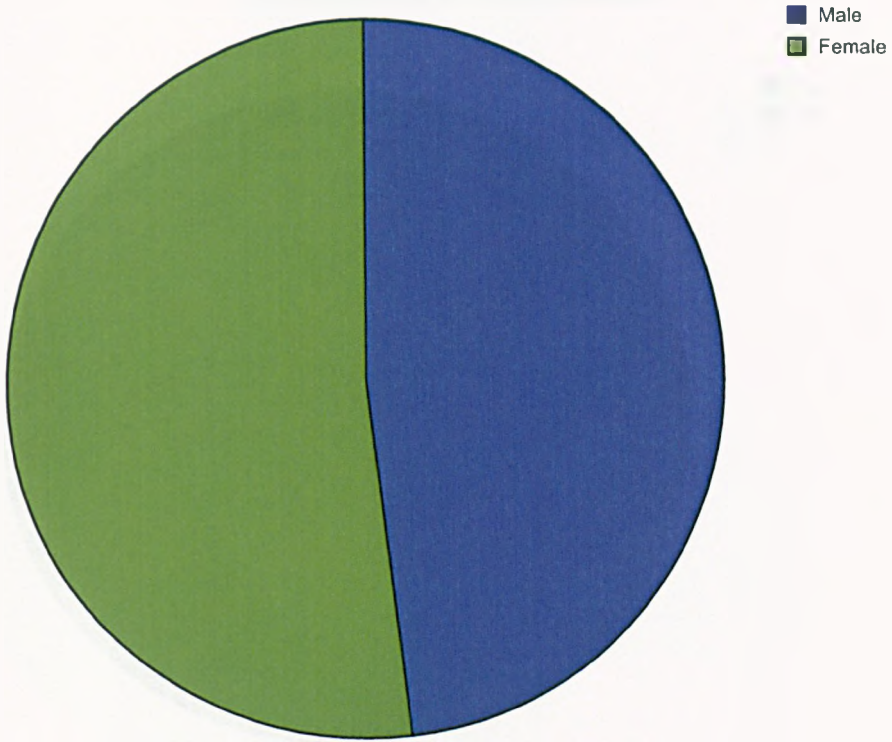


Figure 4

Convenience of Seat Position

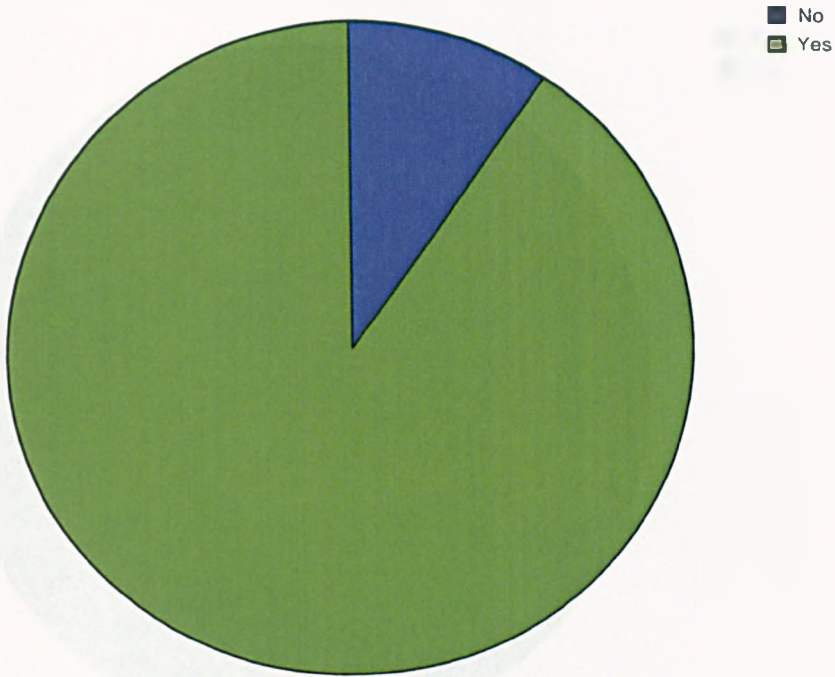


Figure 5

Seat Position Influence

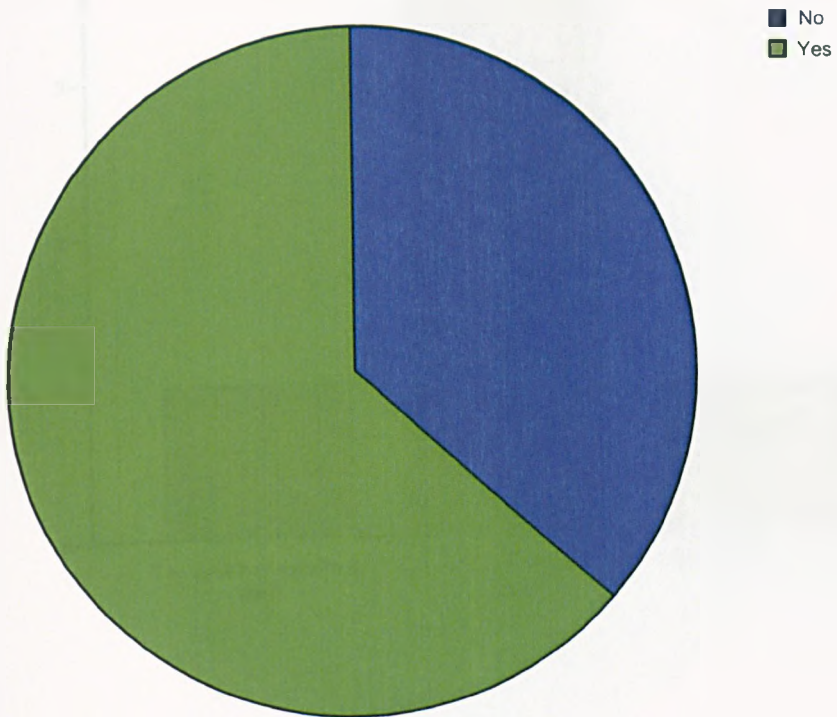


Figure 6

The Reasons for the Influence of the Seat Position

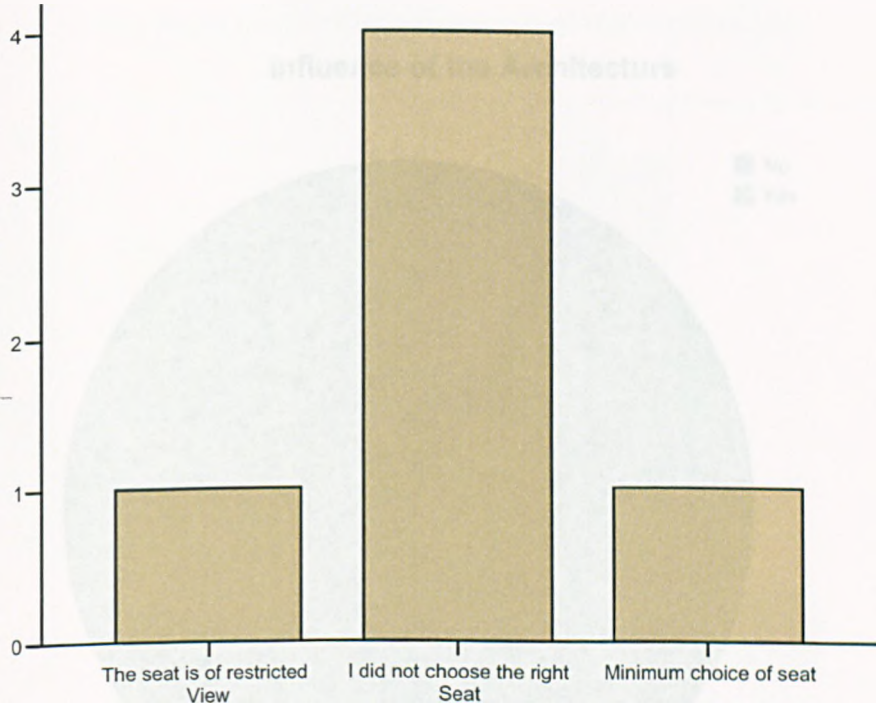


Figure 7

Influence of the Architecture

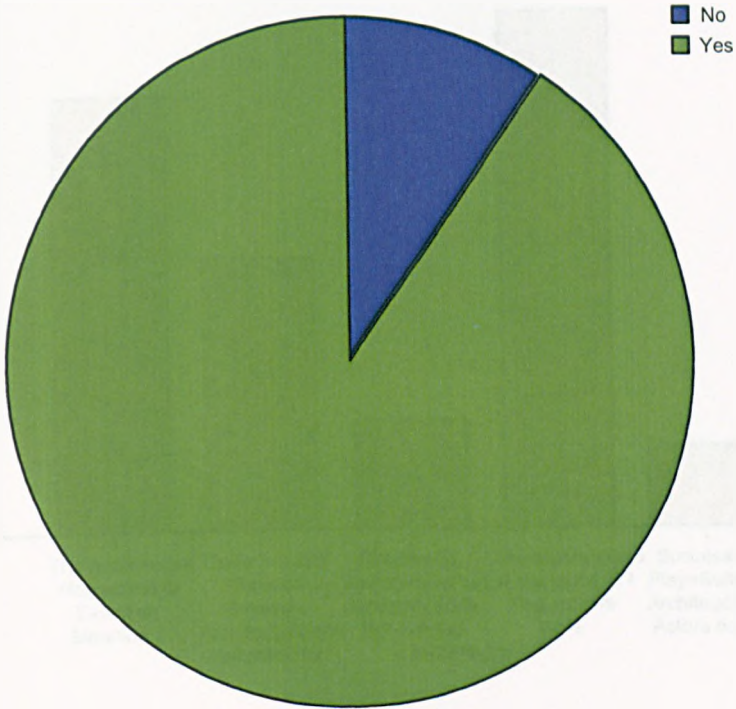


Figure 8

The Reasons for the Influenced of the architecture

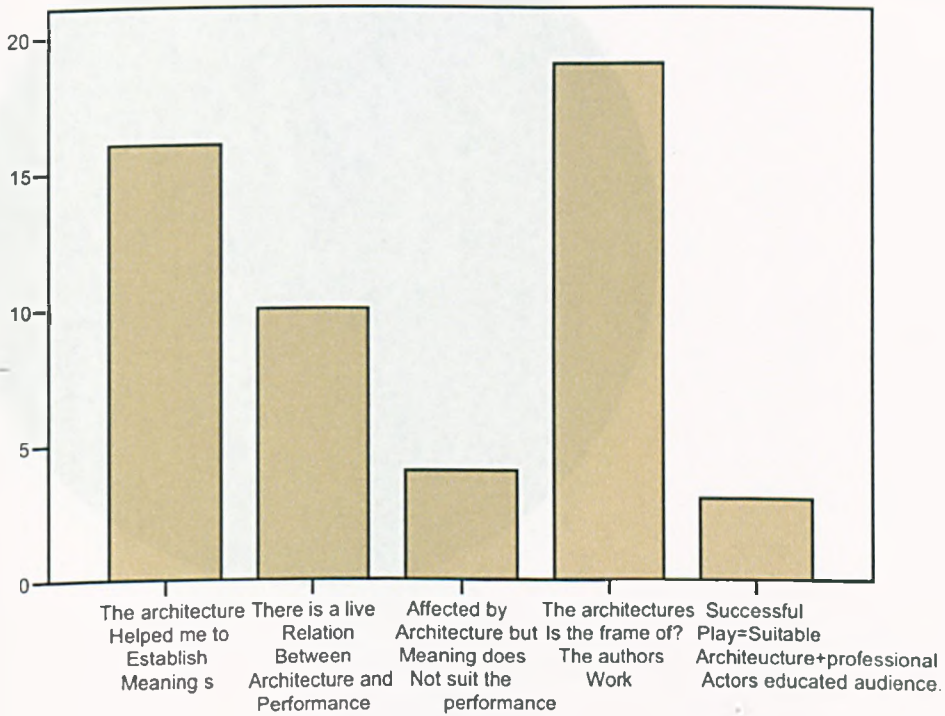


Figure 9

Influence of Colours

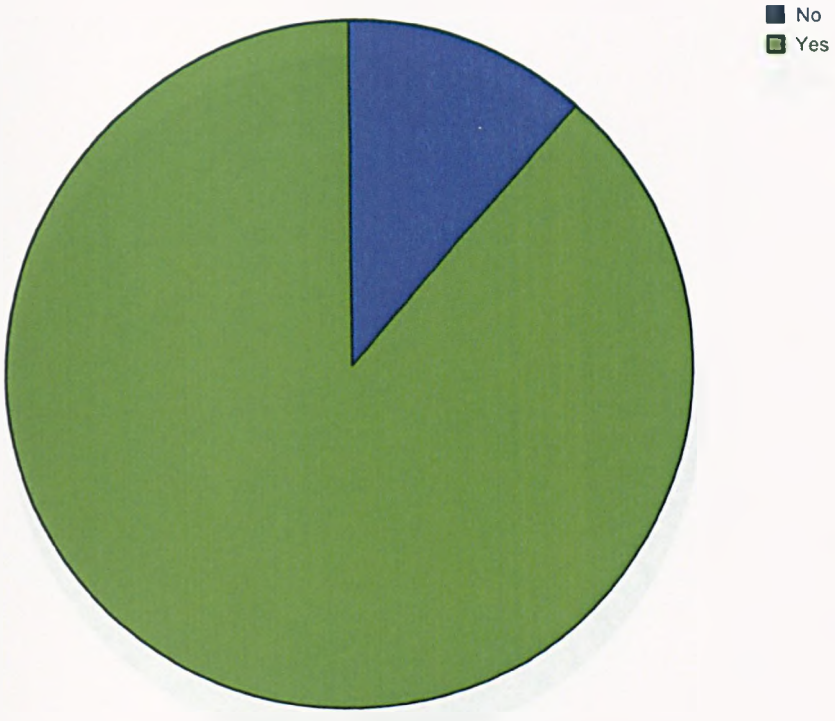


Figure 10

Harmony of the colouring with the subject of the performance

Harmony of Colours with the Subject of the Performance

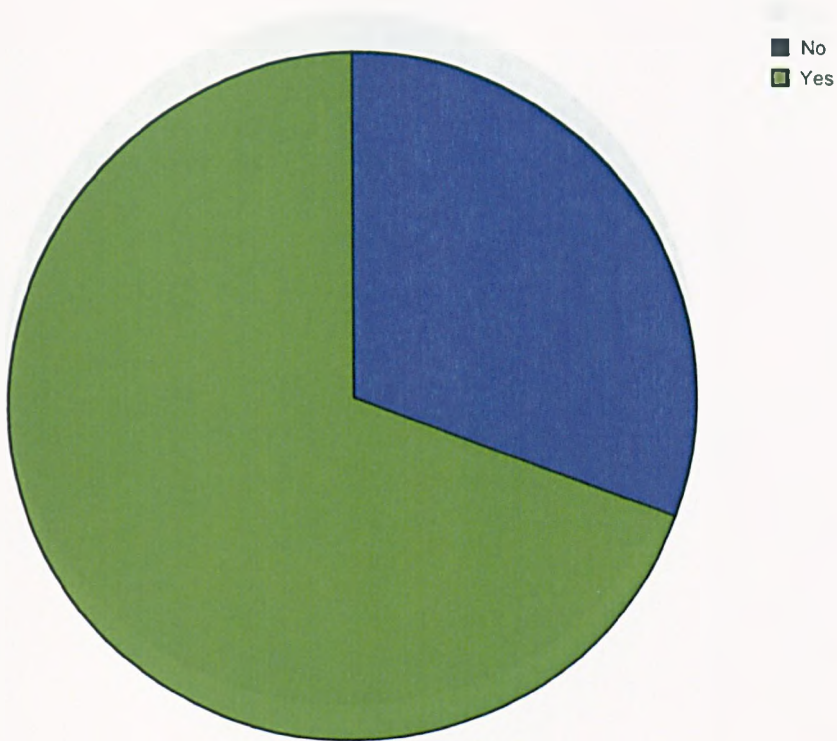


Figure 11

Harmony of the Lighting with the Subject of the performance

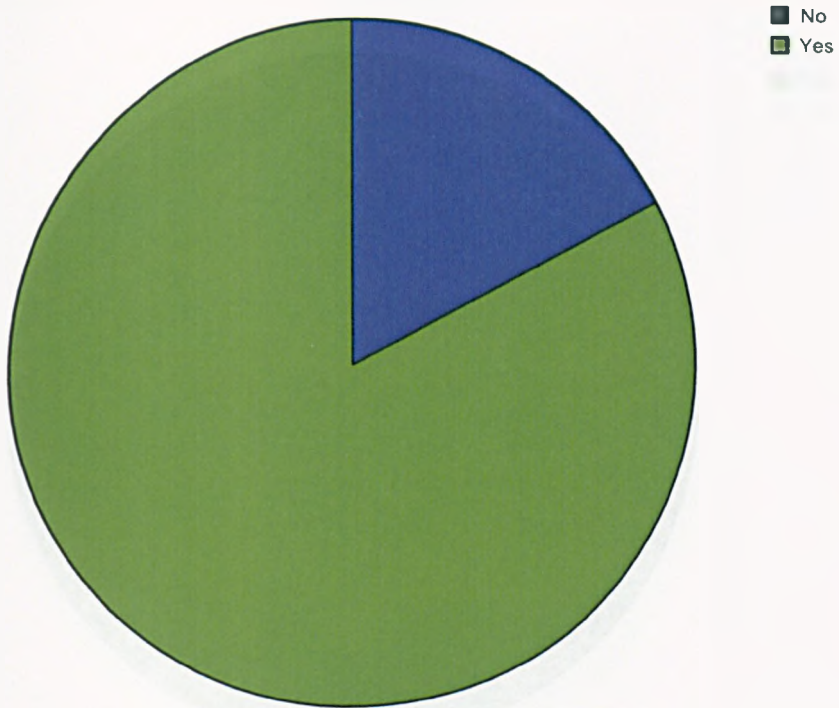


Figure 12

Harmony between Musical Effects and the Subject of the Performance

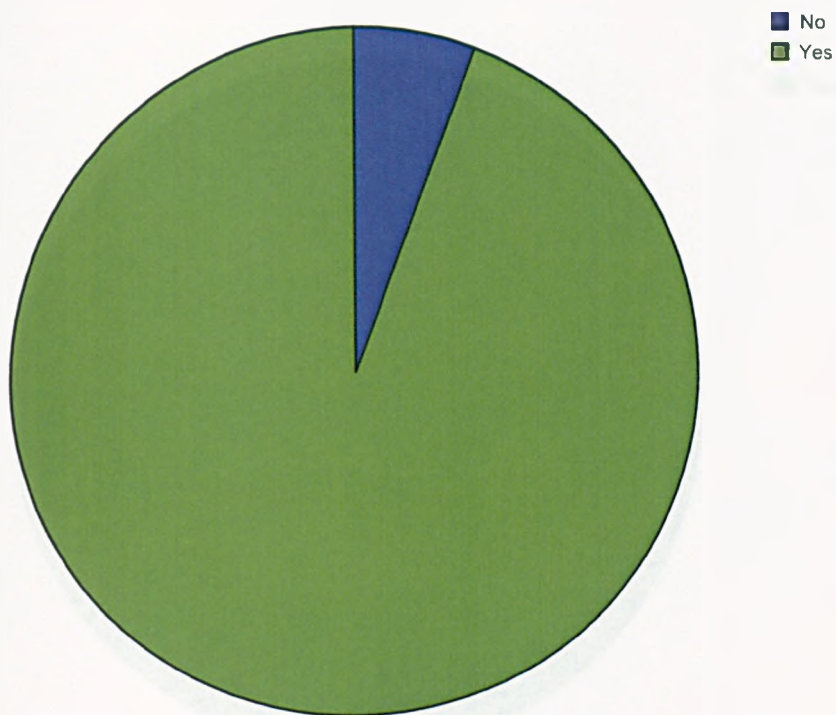


Figure 13

Number of Respondents Who Arrived on Time

Arrival Time

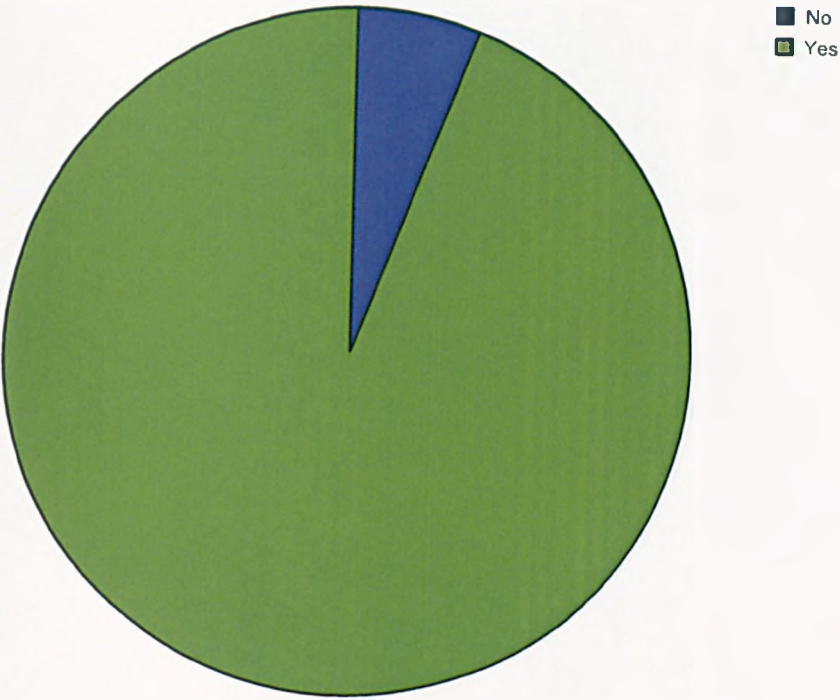


Figure 14

Effect of Early Arrival at the Performance

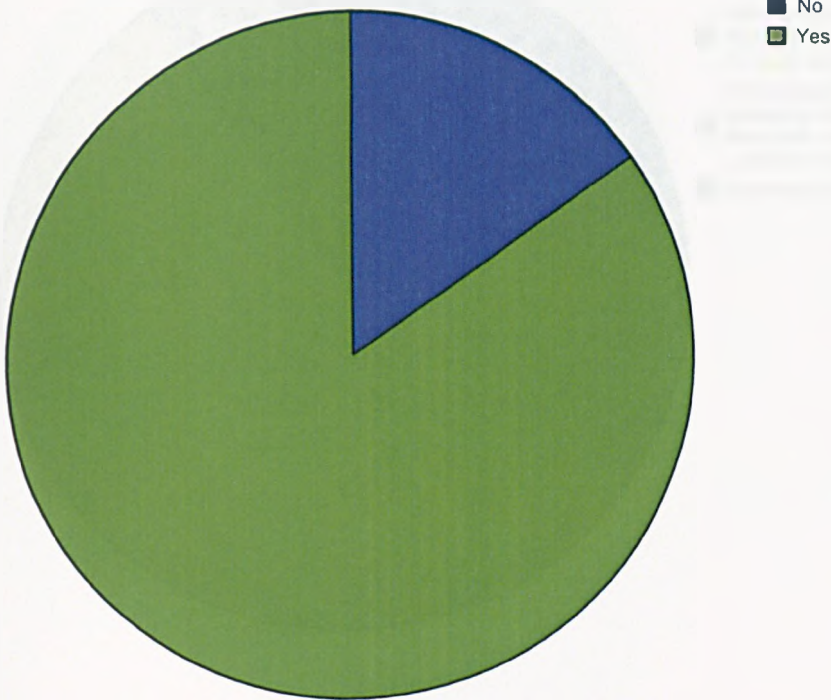


Figure 16

General Audience Response

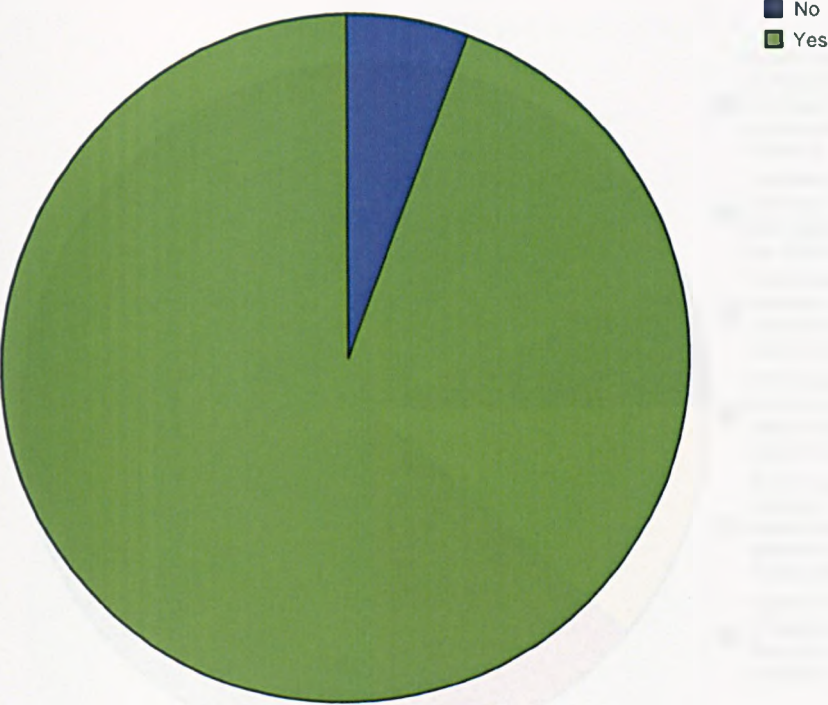


Figure 17

Specification of Audience's Common Response

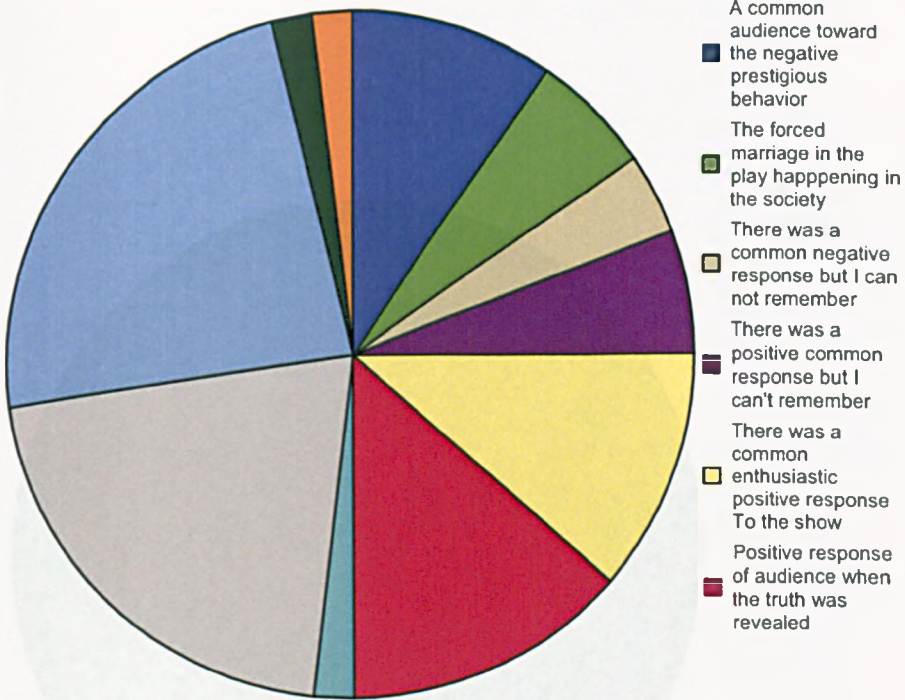


Figure 18

Themes that were not Well Addressed

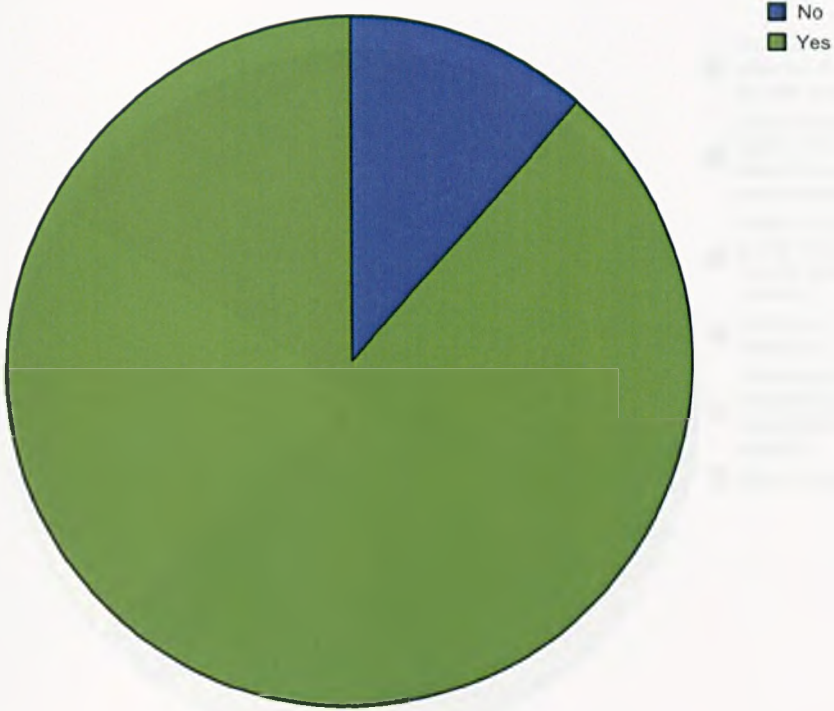


Figure 19

Specification of the themes that were not Well Addressed

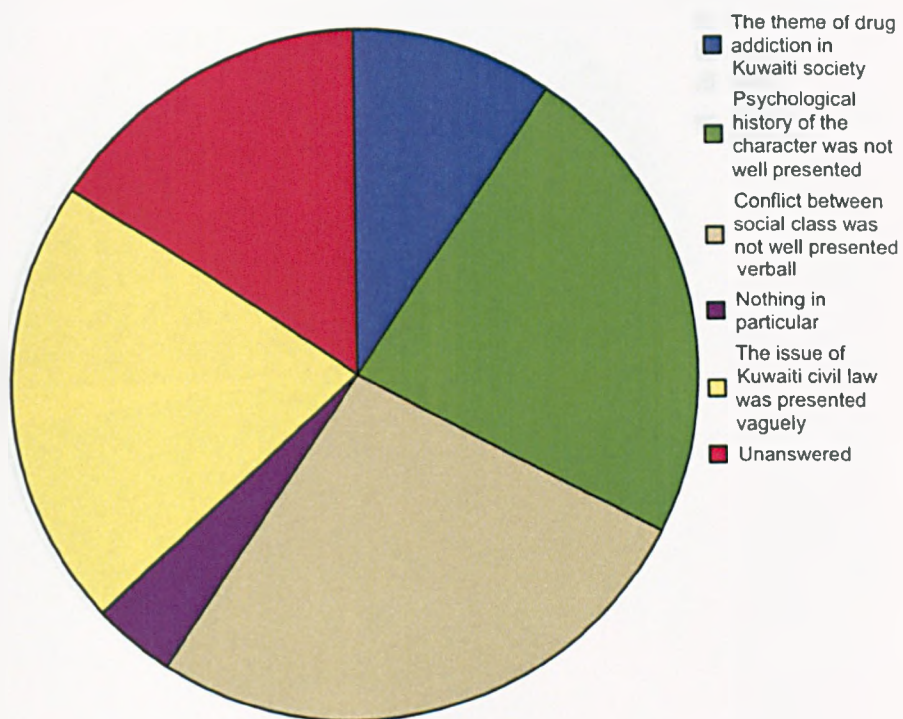


Figure 20

General feeling about the performance

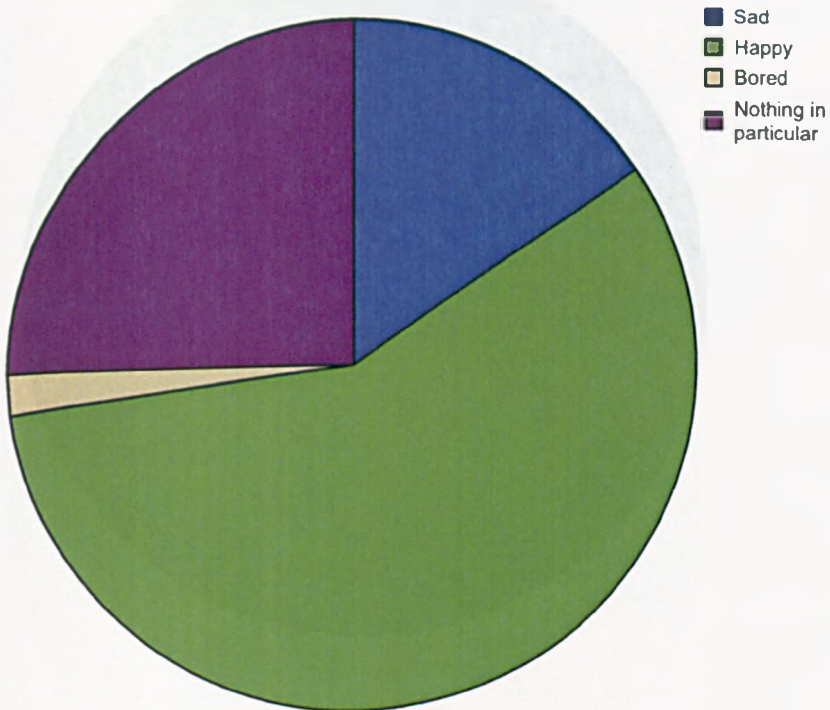


Figure 21

Involvement in a Certain Scene

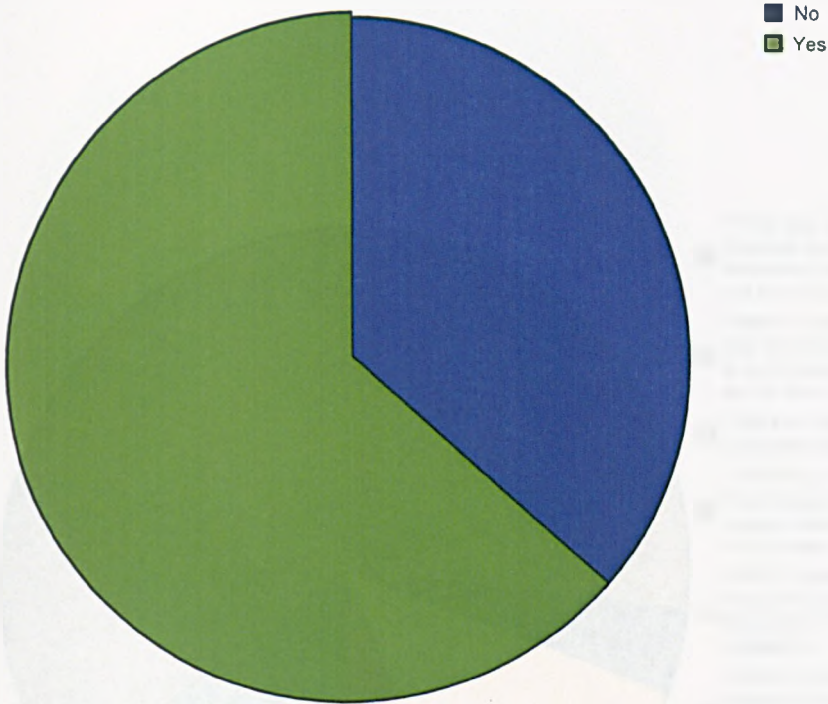


Figure 22

The Occasion on which the Spectator Felt Totally Involved

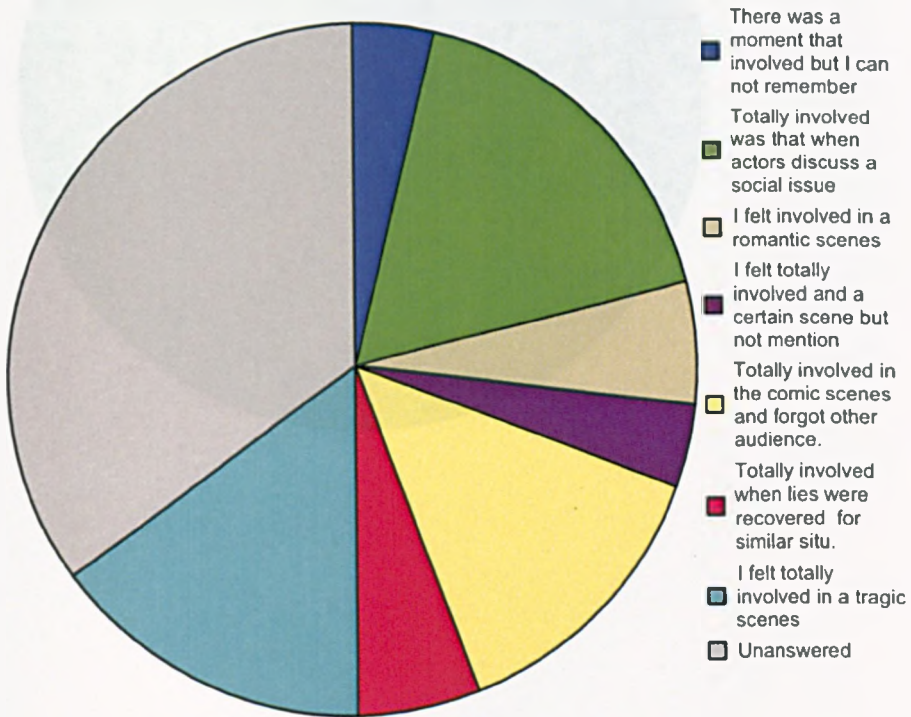


Figure 23

A certain Scene which Awakened a Certain Memory

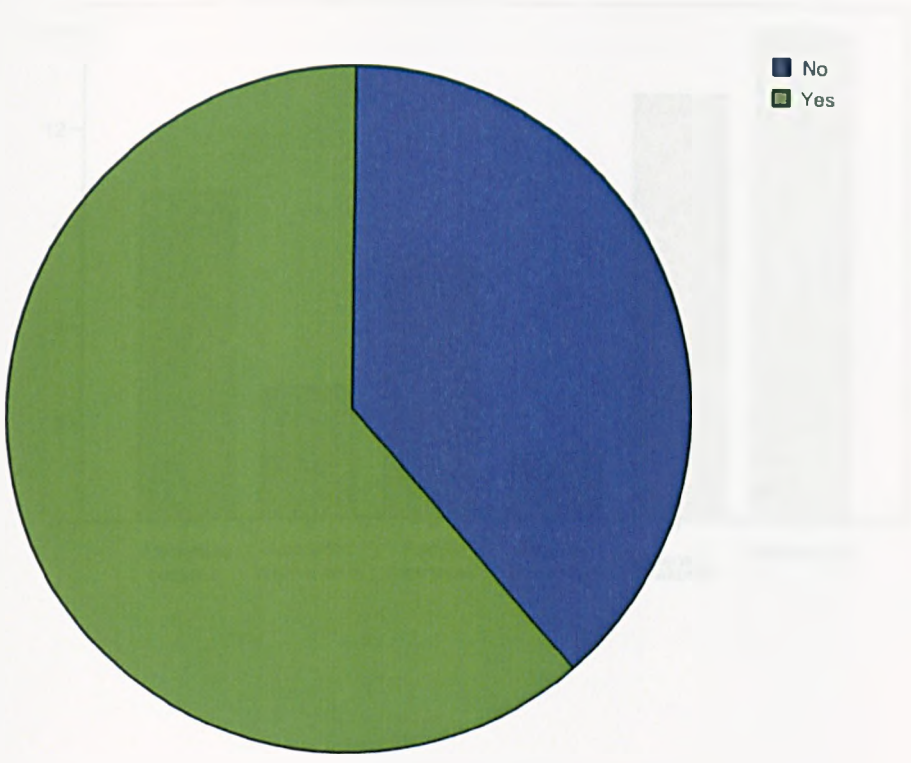


Figure 24

Specification of the Memory

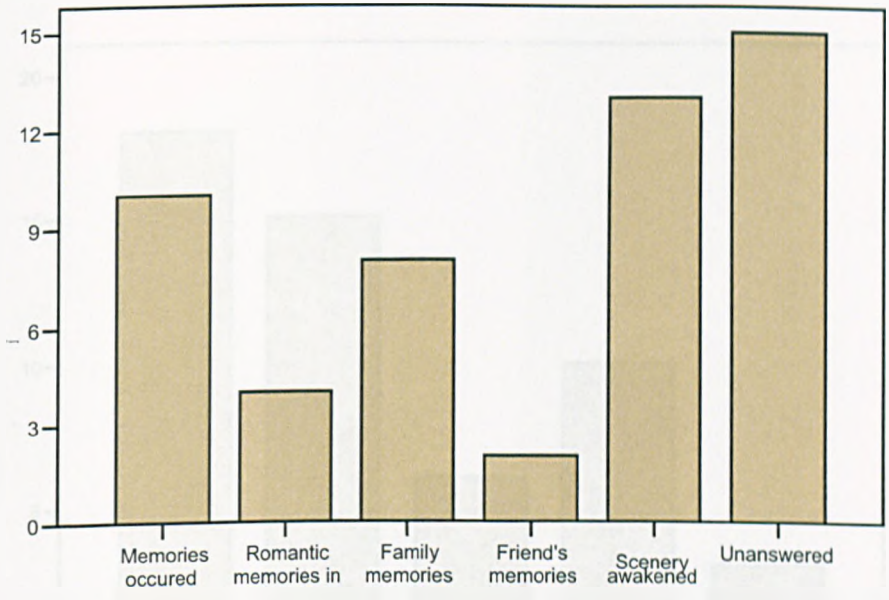


Figure 25

The Images that Lingered in the Spectators Mind Even after the Performance

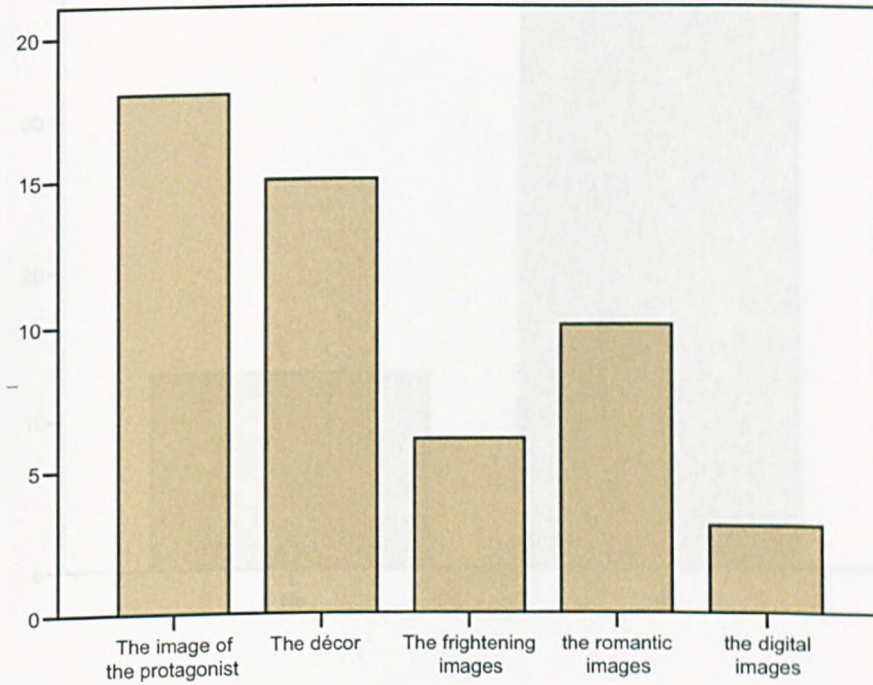


Figure 26

A Scene that took on Further Meaning after the Performance

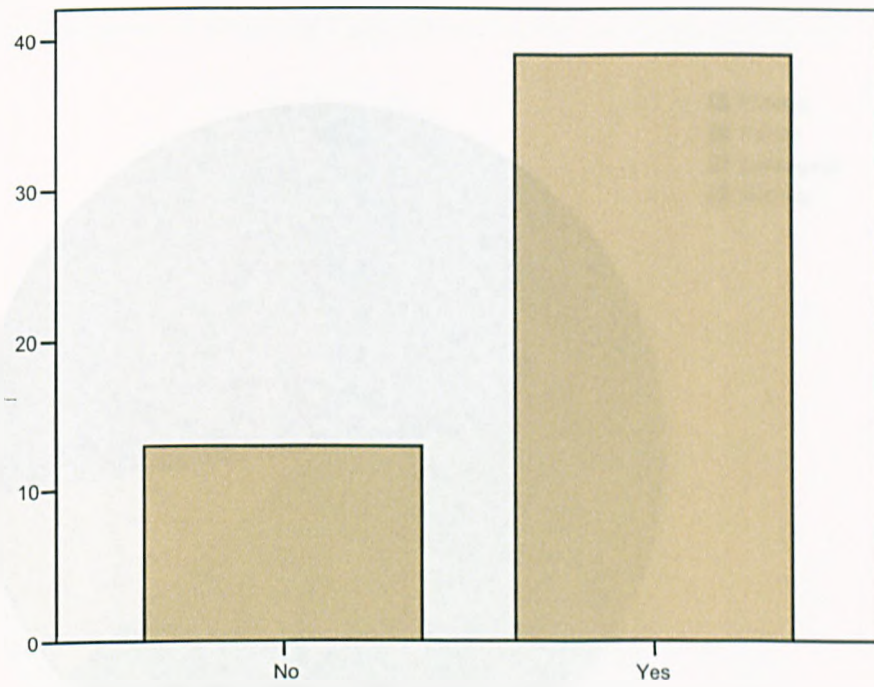


Figure 27

These Accompanying the Spectator

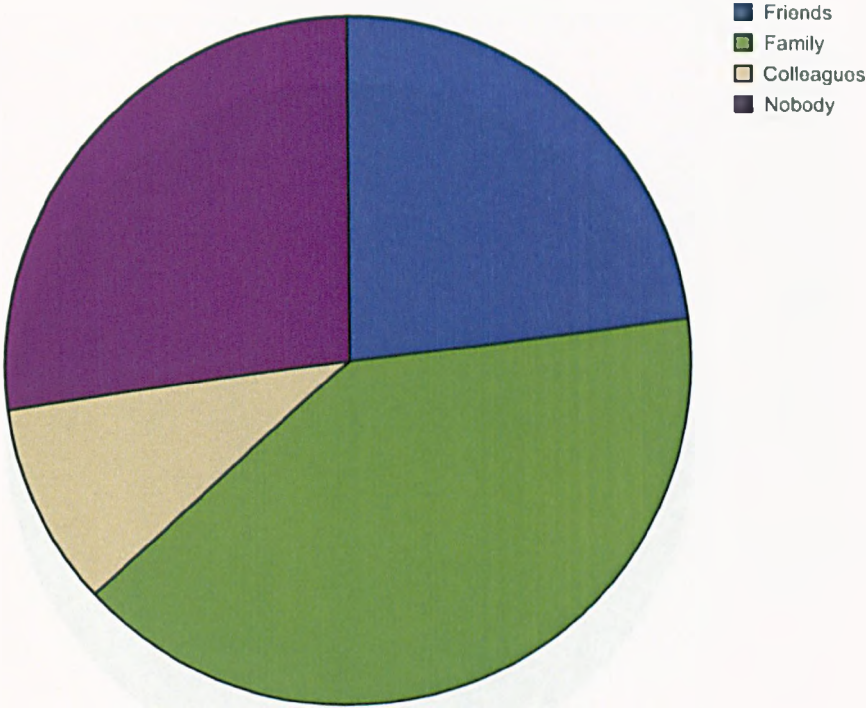


Figure 28

The Influence of Different Companions on the Aesthetic Experience

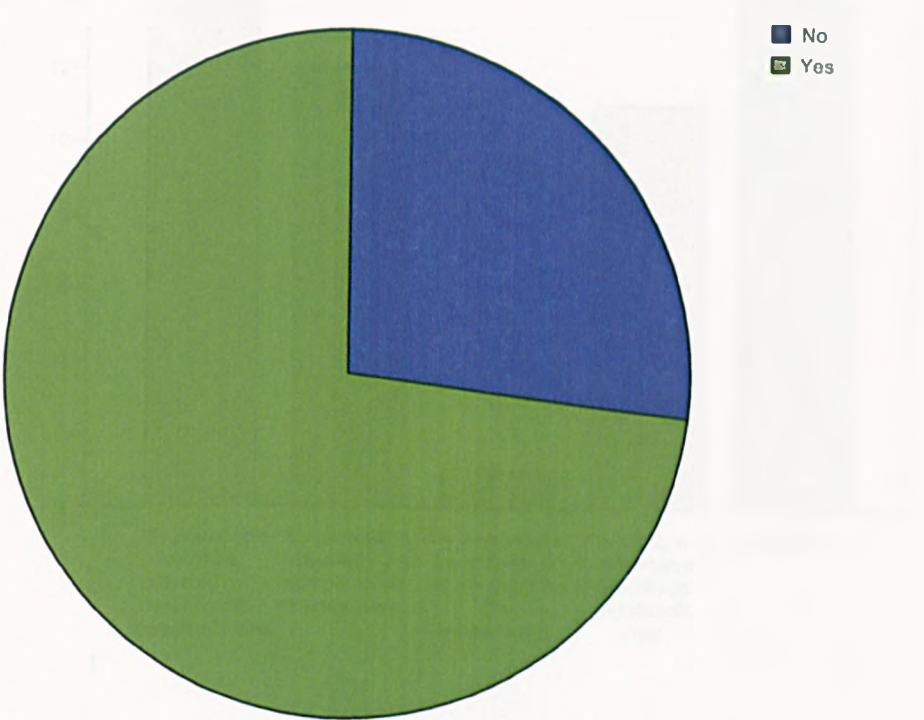


Figure 29

Reasons the Spectator might be Affected by the Views of Companions

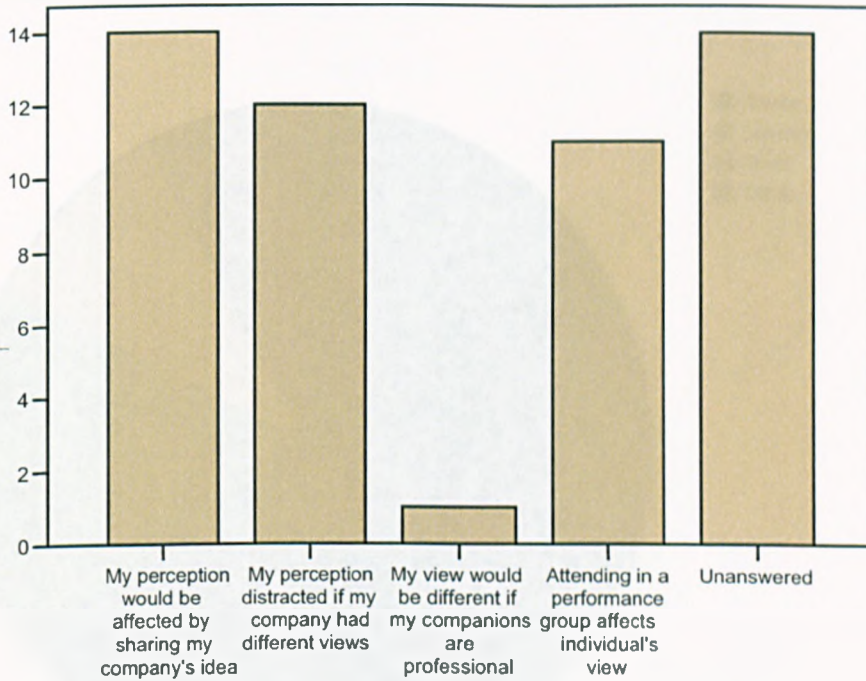


Figure 30

How the respondent first Heard about the Performance

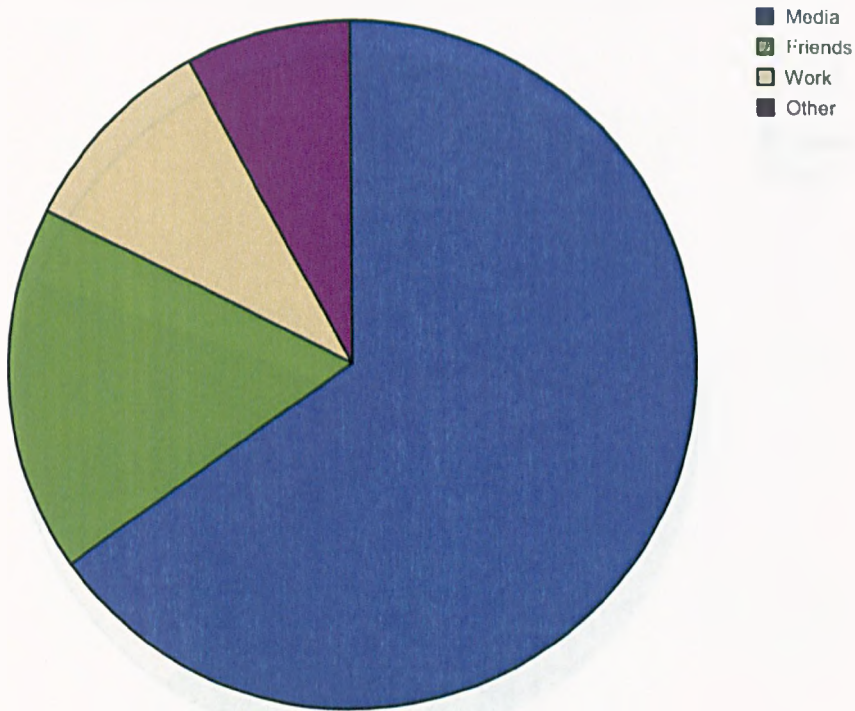


Figure 31

The Most Important Element of the Performance

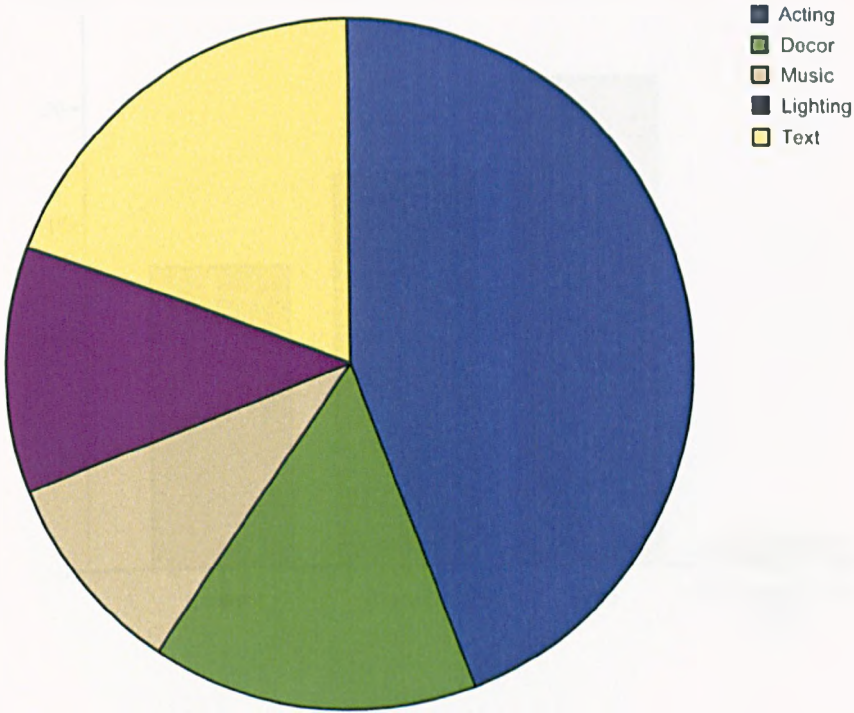


Figure 32

The Relationship between the Theatrical Elements

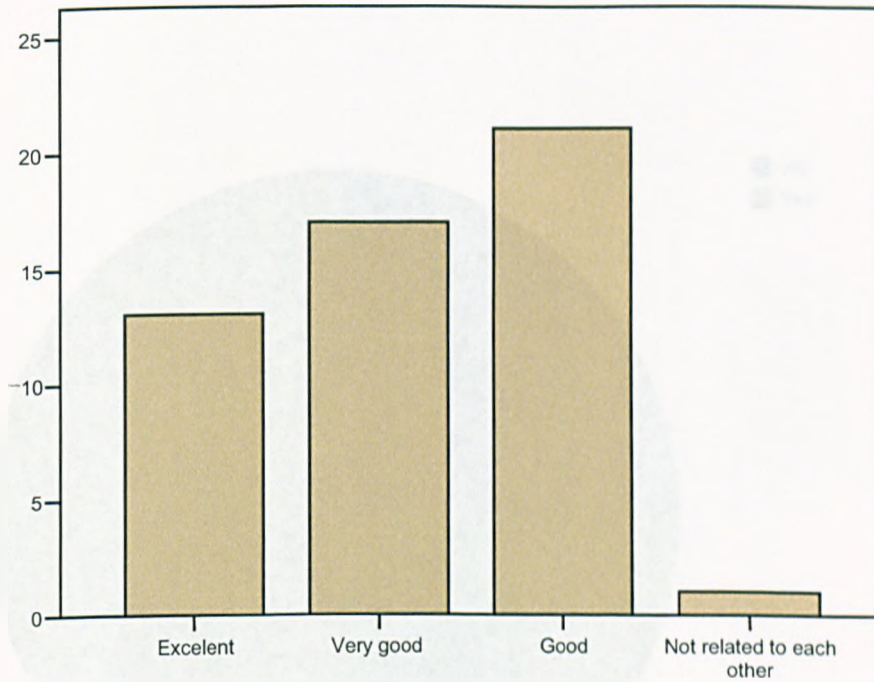


Figure 33

The Relationship between the Audience, the Performance, and the Text

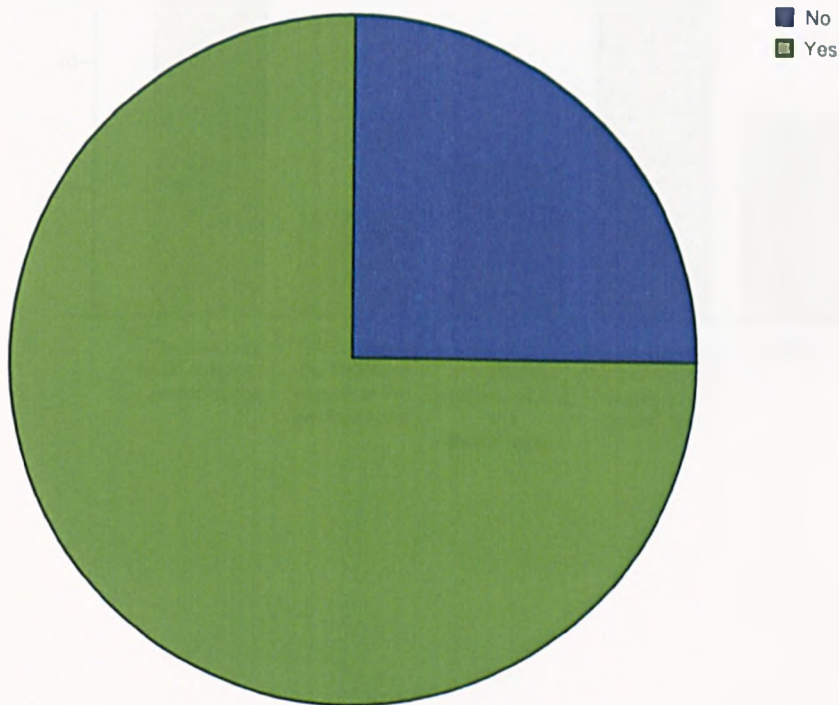


Figure 34

Reasons for the Relationship between the Audience, the Performance, and the Text

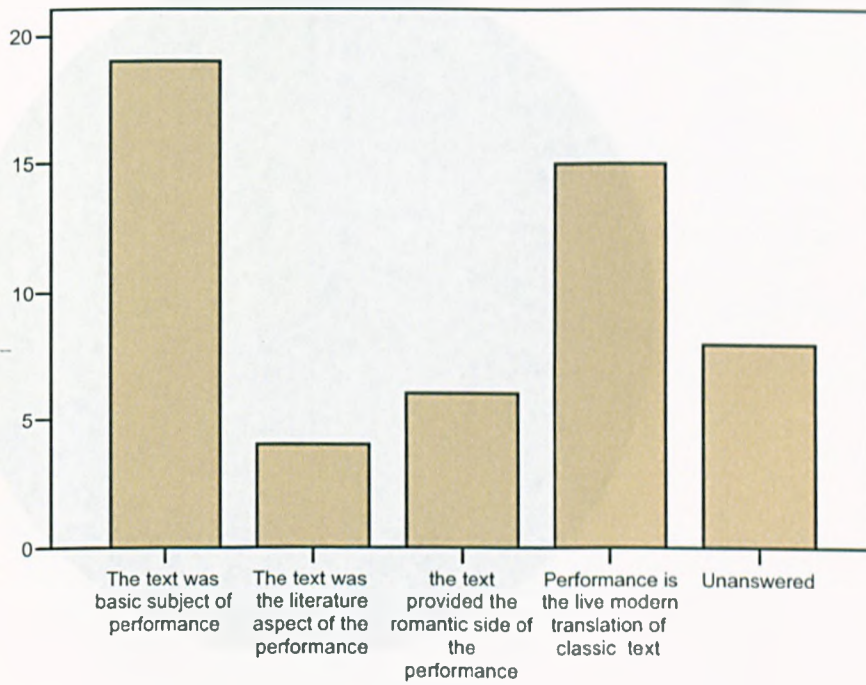


Figure 35

The Pace of the Performance

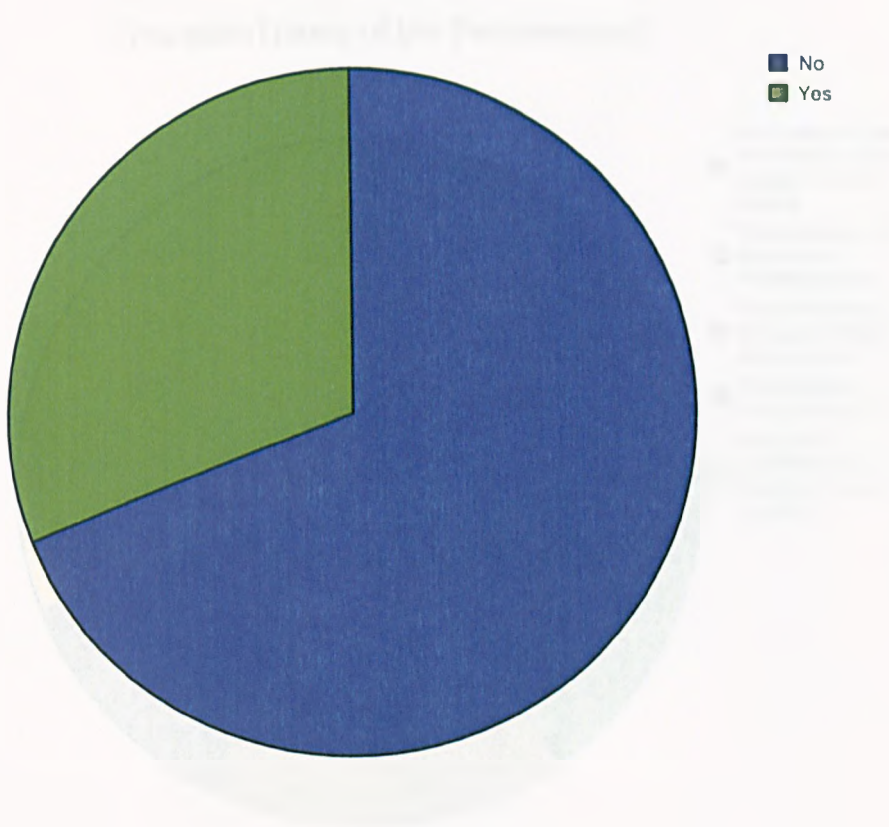


Figure 36

The Main Theme of the Performance?

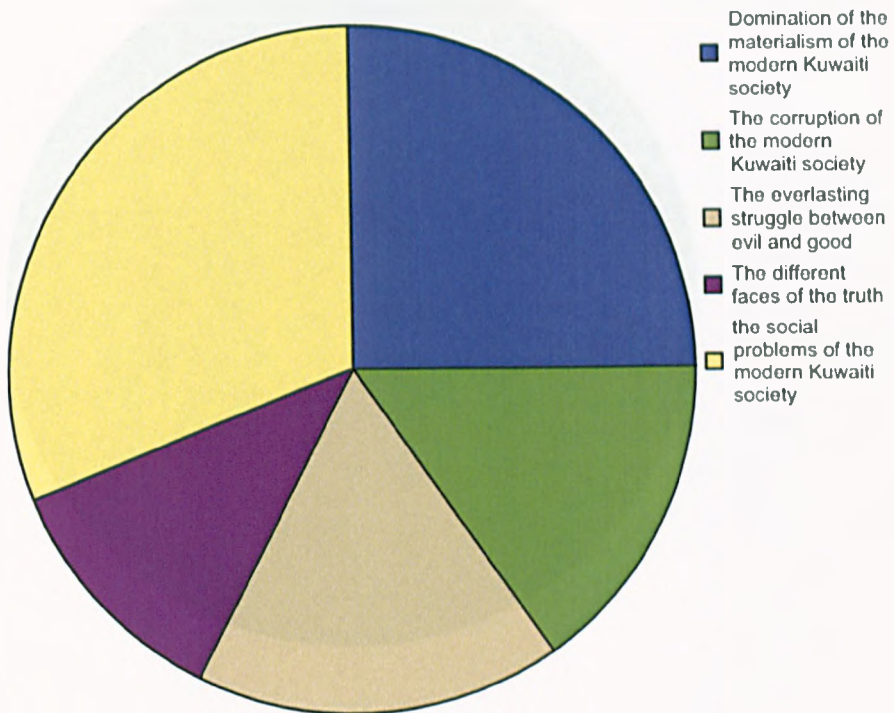


Figure 37

The Innovations of the Production

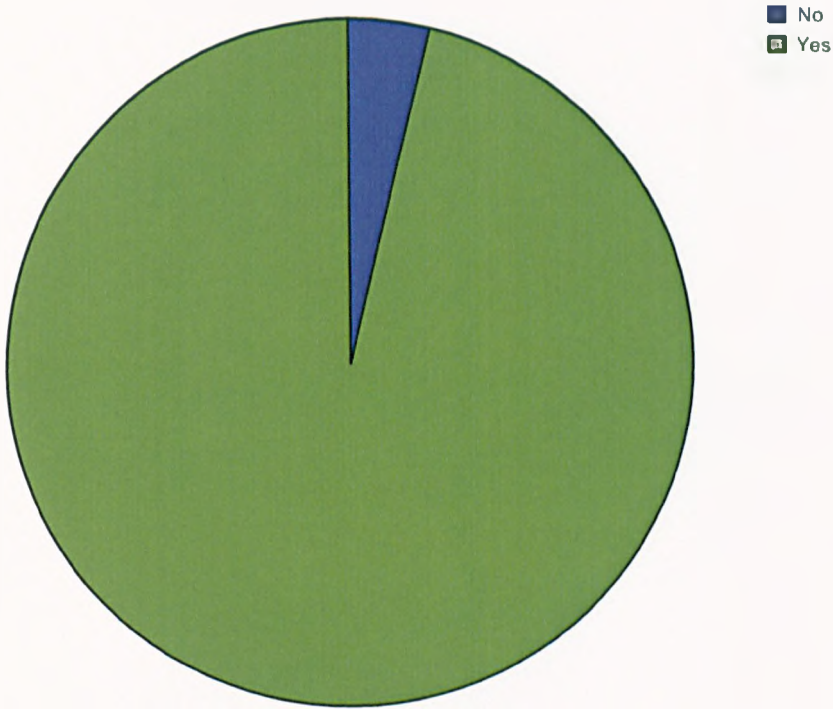


Figure 38

The Degree of Reality of the Events on the Stage

