

Narrating Heritage and the Origins of Writing: A Study of the Use of Local Environmental Heritage in Abdelhamid Ben Hadouga's Novel "Al-Jazia and the Dervishes"

Abbassia BENSaid

University of Tlemcen, Algeria

Email: abbassia.bensaid@univ-tlemcen.dz

ORCID iD: 0009-0008-1562-1658

Ali KRIM

University of Setif 2 Algeria, Algeria

Email: a.krim@univ-setif2.dz

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-8273-5873

Submission date: 17 mar 2025 Approval date: 22 Jun 2025 Publication date: 25 Jan 2026

Abstract

This study deals with the topic of employing local environmental heritage in the Arab novel, with a focus on the novel “*Al-Jazia and the Dervishes*” Abdelhamid Ben Hadouga as an analytical model. The study aims to explore the methods by which Arab novelists draw inspiration from folklore, analyze the forms of this employment, and its impact on narrative structure and cultural values. The research problem arises from a question about the extent to which the Arab novelist can transform heritage into a fruitful artistic element, and what are the motives behind this use. The research also focuses on studying the interactive relationship between the writer and the heritage of his environment, and how this is reflected in the novel's characters and events. The research methodology is manifested in its reliance on the descriptive analytical approach, through a careful reading of the literary text and extracting manifestations of local heritage in narration, language, and spaces. The importance of the study lies in highlighting the role of heritage in rooting the cultural identity of the modern Arab novel.

Keywords: Heritage; local environment; Arabic novel; Abdul Hamid ben Hadouga; Cultural narrative.

1. Introduction

The relationship between cultural heritage and literary writing is a complex and rich issue that has received increasing attention in contemporary literary studies, especially in the Arab context, where modern narrative texts interact with local popular and environmental heritage, not only as a source of artistic inspiration, but also as a symbolic space that reconstructs cultural identity and reshapes the relationship between past and present. From this perspective, this study comes under the title: "Narrating Heritage and the Origins of Writing: A Study of the Employment of Local Environmental Heritage in Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga's Novel "Al-Jazia and the Dervishes", through which she addresses the topic of drawing inspiration from local heritage in the Arab novel, taking the novel by Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga as a central analytical model.

The study aims to explore the ways in which Arab novelists employ elements of local heritage in constructing narratives, shedding light on the artistic, cultural, and social motives that govern this employment, and how it influences the narrative structure and shapes cultural values and national identity within literary texts. The study also seeks to understand the interactive relationship between the writer and the heritage of his environment, and how this interaction is transformed into a narrative discourse that carries profound connotations that transcend narrative to express a societal reality and internal cultural conflict.

The research problem is manifested in posing central questions revolving around the extent to which the Arab novelist can invest in the local environmental heritage in constructing his narrative text, and how this employment relates to a broader creative and cultural context. Is this employment merely a linguistic and narrative embellishment, or does it contribute to the authenticity and cultural rooting of the Arab narrative discourse? The research also seeks to understand the nature of the interaction between the writer and his heritage, and how this interaction influences the basic elements of the novel - characters, events, and spaces - and the values presented by the narrative texts.

The importance of the research lies in its shedding light on one of the important aspects in the development of the modern Arabic novel, namely the reliance on local environmental heritage as a creative and cultural source, and its analysis as a narrative tool for expressing issues of identity, social change, and the conflict between authenticity and modernity. Through the analysis of the novel *"Al-Jazia and the Dervishes"*, it is possible to understand how elements of oral heritage, folk tales, and local cultural heritage are employed to construct a rich and expressive narrative world that reshapes the present through a vision derived from the past.

The study seeks to answer a set of pivotal research questions, including:

1. What are the motives that drive Arab novelists to employ the local environmental heritage in their works?
2. How is this employment manifested in the novel *"Al-Jazia and the Dervishes"* specifically?
3. What are the forms of this employment in terms of narrative structure, cultural content, and language used?
4. How did Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga deal with local heritage in building the world of his novel?
5. What impact did this heritage have on the cultural and social values presented by the novel?

To achieve the research objectives and answer these questions, the researcher relies on the descriptive-analytical approach, which allows the study of the literary text through multiple axes: narration, characters, language, and spaces, with a focus on heritage elements and their function in constructing the narrative discourse. A comparative reading will also be used to understand the nature of the relationship between heritage and modernity within the narrative fabric.

2. Literature Review

The Path of Authenticity in the Arabic Novel: From the Local Environment to the Narrative Heritage

The novelist can conclude that the rooting of the Arabic novel followed two main paths: the first represented the employment of the local environment's heritage, a path that emerged early on, while the second path represented inspiration from the narrative heritage, which began to become clearly evident since the 1970s. However, Mahmoud Al-Mas'adi's novel *"It Happened, Abu Huraira Said,"* parts of which he wrote in 1944, cannot be considered a direct

part of this trend. Rather, this novel represents a unique individual phenomenon and a distinct experimental adventure amidst the prevailing novelistic production of that period.

Following the Romantic period, the Arabic novel witnessed a shift toward realism, as novelists began to depict the social and political reality they experienced. Among the most prominent novelists who embodied this trend were Naguib Mahfouz, whose novels, such as "New Cairo" and "Khan El-Khalili," were characterized by their close connection to Egyptian reality and its social issues. Hanna Mina also successfully employed the marine environment in his novels, such as "The Blue Lamps" and "The Sail and the Storm." These novels found a rich source in local environments, enabling them to faithfully reflect the suffering and history of the societies they addressed.

Naguib Mahfouz and Hanna Mina were not the only ones to focus on the local environment in their works. This became a widespread phenomenon in the development of the Arabic novel. Many novelists emerged whose works were characterized by a close connection to their environments, most notably Tayeb Salih in his famous novel "The Wedding of Zein," which is a vivid example of this profound use of the local environment in the Arabic novel. (Mahfouz, 1990)

Tayeb Salih's novel "The Wedding of Zein" represents a vivid embodiment of the uniqueness of the local Sudanese environment, where every detail of the text is immersed in the scent of the Sudanese village, with its customs, traditions, and beliefs. The novelist skillfully transports the reader from one scene to another, starting with the wedding scene, which embodies the celebrations of the rural community, and ending with the scene of the saint and its spiritual and social connotations. Some critics see this novel as a journey "inside the African self," a journey that counters the external journey that Tayeb Salih's novel "Season of Migration to the North" also addresses. (Al-Tayeb and Fadl, 2004, p. 45), Through these two novels, Saleh provided an artistic answer to the question of the clash between an authentic, local civilization and a global, foreign one, presenting us with his vision of this cultural interaction, from both an internal and external perspective. (Ibrahim, 1993, p. 85).

It is clear that the Arabic novel with a local flavor has witnessed a remarkable development since the prominent works of Tayeb Salih. Many novelists drew inspiration from the details of their local communities, giving their works a character that reflects the spirit and traditions of the place. For example, Hani al-Raheb's novel "The Plague" profoundly embodies the crises facing society. (Al-Raheb and Aboud, 1994, p. 25) While Hanna Mina's novel,

"Images Remains," offers an intimate account of the lives of the poor and marginalized, reflecting the reality of the local environment. (Daraaj and Mina, 1997, p. 77) Hanan Al-Shaykh's novel "Musk Al-Ghazal" also reflects the concerns and challenges of women in a conservative society. (Ashour, 2001, p. 87) While Fadhel Al-Rubaie's novel, "The Funeral Dinner," highlights the role of tragedy in shaping collective consciousness. (Al-Fawaz, 2010, p. 33) As for Youssef Ahmed Al Mahmoud, in his novel "The Rain Junction," he presents a rich narrative that expresses the suffering of society in the face of transformations. (Mustafa, 2008, p. 310).

As for Ibrahim Al-Koni, his interest in the local heritage of the tribes of the Great Libyan Desert has distinguished all of his novels, as his profound use of the desert environment and its heritage constitutes a striking phenomenon. (Jawad and Al-Koni, 2009, p. 56) As for Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga, in his novel "Al-Jazia and the Dervishes," he distinguished himself by his observation of the conflict between the old and the new in Algerian rural society, along with his great interest in documenting local customs and traditions, which gave the novel a social and philosophical dimension at the same time.

Motives for Employing the Local Environment in the Arab Novel: between External Influence and Self-belonging

However, before delving into analyzing these literary works, it is necessary to explore the reasons and motivations that led the Arab novel to adopt local heritage as a primary reference in its narrative construction. This trend reflects a deep desire among novelists to evoke the reality of their societies and convey the daily experiences of these local environments. Furthermore, this step was an attempt to document the cultural and social transformations witnessed by Arab societies, which contributed to creating a connection between the past and the present and highlighting local identity more clearly. The influence of the colonial era and the subsequent political and social transformations on this process cannot be overlooked, as these circumstances contributed to increasing novelists' awareness of the importance of consolidating their cultural and local identity in the face of global influences and transnational cultural challenges.

A. External motivations: When we discuss the phenomenon of employing local environmental heritage in the Arab novel, we cannot ignore the influence of Latin American literature, which has clearly influenced this trend. Many Latin American novelists were preoccupied with depicting their local environments, presenting regions that were obscure or

unknown to the world, not only in terms of geography, but also in terms of delving into history, local cultures, and ancient myths. A prominent example of this is the Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias, who, in his famous novel *People of atom* He profoundly evoked the Mayan civilization and revived its myths and culture in an innovative narrative manner. This literary trend toward employing historical and spatial heritage in their works was not limited to reconstructing the past alone, but also served as a means of affirming local identity in the face of cultural globalization. This is strikingly similar to what has occurred in the Arab novel, which sought to document local environments and delve into the history and myths of local communities. (Brotherstone, 1984, pp. 60-61)

When talking about the Latin American novel, we cannot ignore the pivotal role played by the Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez, as his novels, especially *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a prominent model for embodying the local environment. This novel is distinguished by its close connection to place through its evocation of ancestral tales and legends. Marquez skillfully exploited these tales and legends to construct rich and complex narrative worlds, blending reality and fantasy with a magical, realistic style. This connection between folk tales and cultural heritage made the local environment not merely a backdrop for events, but an integral part of the novel's structure. This approach parallels what the Arab novel has sought to employ in employing its local heritage to highlight identity and cultural belonging.

Some critics tend to emphasize the influence of the Latin American novel, particularly the works of Gabriel García Márquez, on the development of the Arab novel, pointing to the role of this literature in guiding the Arab novel toward utilizing the local environment and returning to ancient heritage. However, it is important not to overestimate the magnitude of this influence, as this could diminish the uniqueness and depth of the Arab novelistic experience. In fact, the similarity between the two novels should not lead us to consider the Arab novel a mere echo of the Latin American novel, as Dr. Rashid Bou Shair pointed out in his thesis. (Boucheir, 1981). Which studied the influence of Gabriel García Márquez on the Arabic novel through a comparison between the novels "One Hundred Years of Solitude" and "A Thousand and One Years of Longing" by Rachid Boujedra, the novel "One Thousand and One Nights" by Naguib Mahfouz, the novel "The Last Angels" by Fadhel Al-Azzawi, and the novel "The Magicians" by Ibrahim Al-Koni.

The Arabic novel, despite being influenced by many international literary trends, maintains its uniqueness, which stems from its own environment and historical and social experiences, making it an authentic expression of the reality and challenges of Arab societies.

There is no doubt that many Arab novelists have read *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Other Works of Latin American literature were also translated, but reading alone does not necessarily mean a direct or substantial influence. For example, Naguib Mahfouz read the works of Gabriel García Márquez, as well as the tales of "One Thousand and One Nights," which represent a part of the Arab heritage, and their influence was clearly evident in his works. While Márquez influenced Mahfouz, his influence was limited to encouraging the exploration of local heritage and immersion in ancient myths and tales, without Mahfouz becoming an echo of Márquez's literature.

Even if we assume that some novels published after the translation of Latin American literature into Arabic were influenced by it in their orientation toward utilizing the local environment, this influence cannot be generalized to all Arabic novels. Novels such as the works of Tayeb Salih, which appeared before the translation of Latin American novels, had already drawn inspiration from their local environments, indicating that an independent local literary movement was taking shape and establishing a foundation for utilizing the local heritage and environment, far removed from any direct external influence.

B. Intrinsic motivation: The motives that led to the use of the local environment in the Arab novel are diverse, and can be summarized in several main points.: (Hamza, 2010)

1. **Dedication to the environment:** the novelist's devotion to his local environment is a fundamental motivation for addressing it in his works, as he seeks to depict its reality in all its details.
2. **The biography:** for many novelists, the novel is a way to introduce others to the environment in which they grew up, especially when the novel is inspired by their own autobiographies, making the local environment an intimate part of the narrative.
3. **Nostalgia and longing:** Nostalgia for the local environment often drives novelists, especially those who live far from it or have been forcibly removed, to return to it through writing. This nostalgia is evident in their attempts to evoke features of that environment through minute details.
4. **Environment as narrative material:** the local environment provides fertile material for stories, representing a landscape rich in detail, from which the writer can build his fictional worlds and shape his plots.

5. **Social criticism:** Some novelists use the local environment as a means of exposing its backwardness or corruption, reflecting their desire to shed light on social issues that require change.
6. **Identity presentation:** The most important motive behind utilizing the local environment remains the development of a unique literary and cultural identity, aiming to break away from foreign models and establish a distinct Arab novel in terms of form and content, one that speaks on behalf of Arab society and its issues.

These multiple motives reflect the depth of the relationship between the novelist and his environment, and highlight the local environment as an essential element in Arab narrative, as it is used not only to shape the novel's world, but also to affirm cultural identity and strengthen ties with local heritage.

3. Analytical Reading of the Novel

Employing Local Environmental Heritage in the Novel "*Al-Jazia and the Dervishes*" by Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga

The novel acquires *Al-Jazia and Al-Darwesh* Abdelhamid Ben haddouga holds special significance in Algerian literature, not only because he demonstrates the influence of local environmental heritage, as Tayeb Salih did, but also because he goes beyond that to offer a profound critique of this heritage and confront it with the challenges of modernization. Ben haddouga not only employed local heritage as a visual tool for the Algerian rural environment, but also examined this heritage in the face of the social transformations that followed Algeria's independence.

Reflect "**Al-Jazia and the Dervishes**" The tension between tradition and modernity, as the author presents the conflict between the traditional values rooted in rural society and the modernization attempts imposed by the Algerian revolution. Through the novel's characters and dialogue, the author demonstrates how these transformations were not merely a change in methods or values, but rather a comprehensive revolution aimed at reshaping Algerian society in all its aspects, including its cultural and social heritage.

The novel's themes of this conflict are revealed through the symbolism of characters such as the *Jazia* and the *Dervishes*, who represent heritage and the past, versus the new forces seeking to steer Algeria toward a modern future. In this way, Ben Haddouga highlights a central

issue in post-independence Algerian literature: How can local heritage and cultural identity be preserved in the face of modernization and change?

When analyzing Abdelhamid Ben haddouga's novel "Al-Jazia and the Dervishes," we find that the novelist does not depict rural Algerian reality directly or comprehensively, but rather selects specific elements from it that reflect the cultural and social heritage of post-independence Algeria. In the novel, the village of "Dchra" is not merely a geographical location but rather a symbol of rural Algeria, embodying the Algerian past with all its customs, traditions, and beliefs passed down through generations. By depicting "Dchra" in this way, the novelist paves the way for a deeper understanding of the conflict between past and modernity in rural Algeria.

The heritage symbolized by the "Dashra" is a mixture of popular and religious beliefs, where the mosque, the seven saints, and the zarda (religious ceremony) play a major role in the lives of the inhabitants. These religious symbols demonstrate the extent to which religious heritage permeates the daily life of the community and embody people's relationship with the past. The mosque in the novel is built in the northern part of the village and contains seven arches, indicating its connection to the sacred and to the time cycles that continue across generations. The inhabitants believe that whenever seven saints die, seven more succeed them, in an endless cycle of popular belief: "Seven Ygbao and seven Yanbao." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 53) Let us note here the number seven and its religious significance.

Through this image, Ben Hadouga reflects the resilience of local heritage in the face of the social and political transformations that Algeria witnessed after independence, where the past remains rooted in the present through popular beliefs and customs.

The zarda is a social and religious event as well. When "the zarda is held without a traditional reason calling for it, it constitutes an excellent social phenomenon, despite the myths and legends that taint it. Barriers are removed, the veil is lifted, and it is often an opportunity for the village boys and veiled girls to get to know each other." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 65), so the zarda in the novel represents a social and religious phenomenon with intertwined dimensions between tradition and superstition, between spirituality and social reality. It is not merely a religious occasion; rather, it intertwines with people's daily lives and becomes an opportunity for social interaction among members of society. The zarda brings people together from different backgrounds and removes the barriers that separate them in ordinary life, whether these barriers are social, cultural, or even gender-related.

What makes the zarda a unique phenomenon is that it expresses a desire to escape the constraints of normal social life, particularly the restrictions imposed by tradition on girls and boys. The zarda provides a space for acquaintance and interaction in a less restrictive space, where "barriers are removed" and "the veil is lifted," a sign that these occasions provided an outlet for young people in the face of strict traditions that impose gender segregation.

However, a significant contradiction emerges here that calls for criticism and analysis. Although the zarda provides this temporary freedom, it is not without superstitions and myths that may make it a means of promoting illogical practices or beliefs that do not belong in the real world. Here, the conflict between tradition and modernity becomes clear. The zarda reflects society's adherence to certain religious or ritualistic manifestations that are intertwined with superstitions, which are inconsistent with the modernization trends that the novelist sought to explore in rural Algeria after independence.

It can be said that Ben Hadouga presented the zarda in a context in which he attempts to maintain a balance between portraying it as a tradition with social and religious value, and at the same time as a phenomenon that embraces some of the negative aspects associated with superstition. The novelist's attempt to present the zarda as a model of traditions that should be subjected to analysis and critical thinking, where its social value must be preserved without allowing superstitions to dominate thought and practice, is clearly evident.

The Zarda represents an important paradox in traditional society: it is an occasion that brings people together and creates moments of social openness, but at the same time it carries within it some aspects that can hinder society's progress towards modernity and the elimination of illusions that may reinforce social stagnation.

In the novel, the Zarda is portrayed not only as a social event, but also as a complex religious ritual that includes a set of sacred rituals. The focus is on the minute details of preparing the place and preparing the ceremonies, reflecting the depth of local heritage and the community spirit that is evident on this occasion. These rituals include sacred elements, starting with the "House of Habous," where old women enter to clean the place in a clear symbol of religious purification, and ending with the ritual of slaughtering sacrificial animals and the circumambulation of bulls around the place seven times, a number with religious connotations in many cultures. (Ben Hadouga, 1983, pp. 179-180-181).

The religious aspect is evident in the use of water for purification and sprinkling, and the communal preparation of food, suggesting that the zarda is not merely an occasion for celebration, but rather carries within it purifying and devotional rituals. This religious aspect is reinforced by the presence of dervishes and a folklore troupe, as the celebration transforms into a kind of physical ritual in which raw entrails are eaten and hot sickles are swallowed, reflecting a Sufi connotation related to asceticism and transcendence of physical pain.

The zarda, as depicted in this clip, expresses the complex relationship between religion and popular tradition, where religious doctrine overlaps with certain ritual practices, making the zarda a space not only for expressing faith, but also for revealing symbolic and doctrinal forms that may seem bizarre. These rituals, such as the frenzied dancing of dervishes and the swallowing of red-hot sickles, carry within them a kind of challenge to natural physical boundaries, expressing an attempt to transcend pain and suffering as part of the journey to spiritual salvation.

These rituals can be viewed as a reflection of the intertwined relationship between religion and popular heritage in rural Algerian society. On the one hand, these rituals constitute a phenomenon that reflects the power of religion in society; on the other hand, they may suggest the presence of superstitions and myths that have permeated religious practices. Here, Ben Hadouga may seek to raise a question about this overlap between religious and popular rituals, and how rural society still clings to practices that may seem strange and irrational in a world seeking to modernize after independence.

Rituals such as the slaughtering of sacrificial animals and circumambulating them seven times may raise questions about the need for society to reconsider these traditional practices, especially in the context of modernization. These scenes suggest a challenge to cultural identity in the face of social change. Can these practices persist in the face of waves of modernity? Can they remain part of society's identity, or are they merely remnants of the past that must be overcome?

The village's heritage is highly valued by most residents, who attribute to the seven saints the ability to perform miracles and perform miracles. They believe that these sanctuaries possess supernatural powers that protect those who believe in them and serve them faithfully, while imposing severe punishment on anyone who dares to offend them. These beliefs have become deeply ingrained in the psyche of the village's inhabitants. "Good supplications at the shrines of the seven saints produce barren women and marry spinsters, and whoever comes to

the seven with bad intentions will not escape the wrath of their saints.” (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 65), These beliefs may highlight the role of folklore in building the social and religious identity of rural communities. These shrines contribute to shaping a social system that includes punishment and reward based on behaviors consistent with these beliefs. From an anthropological perspective, this heritage can be viewed as a means of providing psychological security for individuals, making them feel that a force beyond their awareness protects or holds them accountable, thus strengthening a sense of community and shared values.

These beliefs pose a challenge to social development, as they focus on metaphysical explanations for life's problems. Some may see these beliefs as entrenching a kind of intellectual and cultural backwardness, especially if they hinder society's progress or its response to modern challenges. The idea of divine punishment for bad intentions also creates an environment of fear and self-censorship, which can be oppressive and hinder openness and free thinking.

When the "red student" dared to dance with "Al-Jazia" During the Zarda, a celebration organized by the villagers to celebrate the students' arrival, unusual weather phenomena occurred. The dancing was accompanied by thunderstorms, heavy rains, and severe cold, the likes of which the region had not witnessed for a long time. These natural disasters destroyed the farmers' crops and caused floods to sweep away their homes. The farmers did not hesitate to blame the "Red Student," believing that his reckless behavior had offended the saints and dervishes who had honored him, thus leading to the disaster. They interpreted this as "insulting the saints, dervishes, and residents who honored and sheltered him." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 85).

This scene reflects a high degree of interconnectedness between popular beliefs and individual behavior, where social attitudes are determined by religious values and collective traditions. Society in "Al-Dashra" does not treat natural disasters as independent phenomena, but rather views them as the direct result of behavior that contradicts prevailing beliefs. This perspective contributes to strengthening social stability, as individuals feel they are under the surveillance of supernatural forces against which they cannot rebel with impunity.

However, it can be argued that this type of explanation represents an obstacle to societal progress, as it prevents consideration of the true causes of disasters, such as climate change or environmental unpreparedness. Instead of seeking realistic solutions to the problems facing farmers, blame is placed on a single individual and their actions. In this context, a type of

mythical thinking emerges that may hinder societal development and prevent a deeper understanding of reality.

With the advent of the revolution and the introduction of new ideas into post-independence Algeria, the heritage of the village, revered by most of the population, faced a difficult test. Ibn Hadouga was able to reflect this new situation by depicting the artistic conflict between a group clinging to the past and another looking to the future. The novel reveals the tension between those who seek to preserve ancient heritage and see its value, and those who consider it a myth and aspire to change. Ibn Hadouga uses a binary opposition to structure his novel, highlighting this social and cultural conflict in a moving artistic way. Its two sides:

A- Those who adhere to heritage: They are represented by the old generation, the generation of fathers who showed their adherence to the village, based on the principle that “man is like a tree, connected to the earth by roots, and if it is uprooted it dies.” (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 144) So they rejected the new project to build a new village and relocate its residents. Al-Akhdar bin Al-Jabaili says: "The village is our paradise, and it is our prison! No one can expel us from it." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 106).

B- Those who reject heritage: They are represented by the generation of sons and students who came from the city to visit the village and prepare a field study in order to implement the modernization project and transfer the village residents from the life of the past to the present and future. "Hajila" refused for her life to be an exact copy of her father and mother's life, and challenged the values, customs and traditions that the older generation in the village sanctifies, and looked to the future and the necessity of building a new village, saying to her brother: "I heard what my father told you, don't pay too much attention to his talk. He wants us to restore his life, and I to restore my mother's life! I am living my life even if it is dark." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 133).

The conservative trend in the novel appears as a unified movement, as it is linked to the past. In contrast, the opposing trends appear diverse, as the modernization project it seeks relates to the future and the new, which takes multiple forms. The author presents these forms, trends, and visions through diverse characters with great precision, as these characters appear more as ideas expressing different viewpoints than as vibrant personalities. This is what the red student expressed when he said: “The village cannot do anything against me. I am an idea.” (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 120).

The conflict between two main currents: the conservative current, which represents continuity and adherence to traditions, and the rejectionist current, which reflects the desire for change and renewal. It reflects a broader struggle in Arab societies, where some seek to preserve their cultural identity, while others seek to open up to the world and adapt to global changes.

We can observe the following modernization trends:

- **The Shambit:** They are represented by the feudal lords, a class seeking to preserve its former privileges during the occupation, to re-establish its influence, to transfer its visions and ideas to the present, to build the present in the image of the past, changing the form while preserving the essence. Al-Shambit aspired to build a new village in place of the hamlet, while preserving the hamlet's values, customs, and beliefs. Thus, when he decided to marry his son, who was studying in the United States, to a woman from Al-Jazia/Algeria, he stipulated that a wedding be held for this purpose, attended by him, his son, and Al-Jazia. In other words, Al-Shambit wanted modernization without destroying the past, the old, and the heritage. He wanted modernization that touched the surface, not the roots.

- **Al-Tayeb bin Al-Akhdar Al-Jubaili:** He belongs to the generation of his sons, but he is still attached to his father, that is, he is still attached to the past. He is an example of a person who has not yet decided his allegiance, so he agrees to Al-Jazia's engagement to fulfill his father's wish, not out of conviction. Al-Tayeb bin Al-Akhdar Al-Jubaili is a model of a person torn intellectually and psychologically between two opposing directions: the past and the present, the old and the new. He says about himself: "I did not believe in anything, and that was my misfortune! I was neither a person of the past nor a person of the future. I was the zero where times meet." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 123).

- **The red student:** He represents the new generation armed with knowledge and science. He is an engineer sent by the state, along with his colleagues, to the village to prepare a study on the new village. He was called "the Red" not only because his body is red, but also because his thoughts are "red." He believes in revolution and change, and so he criticized the village's customs and traditions and called for a revolution against them. The red student was distinguished by his impetuosity, enthusiasm, and boldness, so he participated in the Zarda that the villagers prepared for the students, and the Jazia dancer, and licking the red sickle like a dervish. He is the epitome of the reckless and adventurous revolutionary who wanted to change everything in a short time, so he failed to achieve his dream. He is-As Tayeb bin Al-Akhdar

describes him, "He thinks about the dream more than he thinks about the path to it." (Ben Hadouga, 1983, p. 115).

- **Ayed bin Al-Sayeh Bu Al-Mahain**: The Red Student, Al-Tayeb Bin Al-Akhdar, and Al-Shambit all failed to complete their projects and fulfill their hopes of marrying Al-Jazia. The first was found murdered, the second was accused of killing him and imprisoned, and the third fell from his mount while on his way to the village to attend the Zarda. As for "Ayed Bin Al-Sayeh Bu Al-Muhaid," who represents those who returned from abroad to their homeland, he was the only one who escaped failure, after realizing that Al-Jazia was nothing but a dream. He chose reality instead of a dream: "Al-Hijazia is a dream, and dreams do not come true for all people! And I, uncle, promised my father that I would return. And I have returned. And I promised my father that I would not sow my seeds in the wind, but in this good soil. On the first day I arrived in this village, fate willed that I would not meet Al-Jazia, but in Hiila. Will you accept me, uncle, as her husband?" (Ben Hadouga, 1983, pp. 196-197) Through the character of "Ayed," Ibn Hadouga wanted to say that change is coming, inevitably, but we must not dream of change, but rather make it happen.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reached a set of results, which we summarize as follows:

- The study revealed the existence of multiple motives behind the use of local environmental heritage in the Arab novel, including external motives such as the Latin novel, and internal motives such as sincerity, nostalgia, the desire to expose backwardness, and the desire to build an Arab identity.
- The analysis of the novel "Al-Jazia and the Dervishes" showed how Ben Hadouga was able to employ the heritage of the Algerian local environment in the narrative, by presenting its customs, traditions, and beliefs, and clarifying the conflict between the old and the new.
- Through his novel, Ben Hadouga was able to present a comprehensive picture of the cultural conflict between a generation clinging to the past, and another generation aspiring to modernization, through multiple characters belonging to these movements.
- The study demonstrated the influence of the local environmental heritage on the structure and values of the novel, by creating a certain atmosphere, presenting an image of the social and cultural reality of society, and framing the story within a specific cultural framework.

5. Important Suggested Recommendations

- The necessity of paying attention to studying the heritage of the local environment in various Arab novels, and determining the motives and methods of employing it, in order to understand its impact on the structure and values of the novel.
- The necessity of encouraging Arab novelists to draw inspiration from their local heritage in their literary creations, as a means of affirming the identity of the Arab novel and presenting an image of our culture.
- The need to focus on providing comparative studies between Arab novels that employ the local environment, to reveal the common characteristics and differences between them.

6. References

1. Al-Raheb , H. & Abboud, H. (1994). *Between Realism and Social Criticism*. Beirut: Dar Al Farabi.
2. Ashour, R. (2001). *Women in the Arabic Novel*. Cairo: Dar Al-Hilal.
3. Al-Fawaz, A. (2010). *The Contemporary Iraqi Novel: A Critical Study*. Baghdad: General Directorate of Cultural Affairs.
4. Ben Hadouga, A. (1983). *Al-Jazia and the Dervishes* (novel). Beirut: Dar Al-Adab.
5. Bike, F., & Mina, H. (1997). *A Novelistic Biography and Issues of Struggle*. Beirut: Dar Al-Adab.
6. Boushaer, A. (1981). *The Influence of Gabriel García Márquez on the Arabic Novel*. Damascus: Dar Al-Ahali.
7. Brotherston, G. (1984). *The Origins of the Novel in Latin America*. (S. Brik, Trans.) Damascus: Ministry of Culture.
8. Ibrahim, A. A. (1993). *A Reading into the World of Tayeb Salih the Novelist*. Beirut: Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing.
9. Jawad, S., & Al-Koni, I. (2009). *Philosophy and the Desert*. Beirut: Dar Al-Farabi.
10. Hamza, A. (2010). *The Environment in Arabic Literature: From Heritage to Modernity*. Baghdad: Dar Al-Farabi.

11. Mahfouz, N(1990). *Vision and Technology*, Mahmoud Amin Al-Alem. Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi.
12. Mustafa, Y. (2008). *The Rain Junction by the writer Youssef Al-Mahmoud: A reading of the text - narrative style, realism, humor, and literary position*. pp. 447–448 (37).
13. Tayeb, S., & Fadl, P. (2004). *The Genius of Narration and the Identity Dilemma*. Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouk.