From Title to Text
The Semiotics of Paratexts in the Novel Al-Kannās by Salim Abbādou.

من العنوان إلى المتن:
سيمياء العتبات النصية في رواية «الكناس» لسليم عبادو

Mellahi houda *

Received: 13/04/2026 *Accepted: 08/05/2026* *Published: 10/06/2026*

Abstract:

This study addresses the issue of paratexts as hermeneutic approaches that contribute to guiding the reading of the narrative text, through an analysis of the novel Al-Kannās by Salim Abbado. It is based on the hypothesis that the title and other paratextual elements (such as the cover, dedication, and preface) are not marginal components; rather, they constitute a parallel semantic structure that interacts with the text . The study aims to analyze the title as a condensed semiotic sign that contains symbolic and evocative dimensions reflecting the horizon of reception. It also examines the interaction between paratexts and the narrative text,

Keywords: Title, Semiotics, Para text, Al-Kannās.

ملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث إشكالية العتبات النصية بوصفها مداخل تأويلية تسهم في توجيه قراءة النص الروائي، من خلال دراسة رواية الكنّاس لسليم عبادو. وينطلق من فرضية أن العنوان وباقي العتبات (الغلاف، الإهداء، التصدير...) ليست عناصر هامشية، بل تشكل

* *h.mellahi@univ-blida2.dz*

بنية دلالية موازية للنص. يسعى البحث إلى تحليل العنوان بوصفه علامة سيميائية مكثفة تختزن أبعادًا رمزية وإيحائية تعكس أفق التلقي. كما يدرس تفاعل العتبات مع المتن السردي، مبرزًا كيف تُسهم في إنتاج المعنى وتوجيه القارئ نحو تأويلات محددة. ويعتمد المنهج السيميائي لتحليل العلامات والعلاقات الدلالية داخل هذه العتبات.

كلمات مفتاحية: العنوان، السيمياء، العتبة النصية، رواية الكناس.

*** *** ***

responding author: *mellahi houda, h.mellahi@univ-blida2.dz*

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary critical studies have witnessed a marked shift in the ways literary texts are read. The text is no longer viewed as a closed linguistic structure confined to its internal components; rather, it is now read within a broad network of signs and semantic systems that surround it and influence the ways in which it is received and interpreted. Consequently, we have begun to speak of a new concept of the text—what Roland Barthes termed The Pleasure of the Text: “The pleasure of the text is not a method through which the text is written, nor is it a set of fixed rules and ideas, nor writing on a specific subject. The pleasure of the text is the value transferred to the value of the obtantatious signifier.” (Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text, trans. Monzer Ayyashi, Aleppo:center of civilization development, 1st ed., 1988, p. 15.)n this context, paratextuals have come to the fore as one of the fundamental approaches to understanding the literary text, given the guiding and structuring functions in the reading process.

Accordingly, critical interest in paratexual element has

been closely linked to the development of semiotic studies, which have focused on analyzing signs and semantic systems both within and beyond literary discourse. Among the most prominent critics who contributed to the formulation of this concept is the French critic Gérard Genette, who introduced the notion of the "paratext" as the set of elements that surround the text and participate in presenting it to the reader while guiding its reception. From this perspective, textual thresholds constitute an intermediate space between the text and the external world, thereby fulfilling a fundamental function in organizing the relationship between the author, the text, and the reader (Gérard Genette, Paratext Thresholds ,paratext, translation of Abdelhaq Belaabed, lebanon: Arab Scientific house, 2008, pp. 9–15).

Against this backdrop, paratexts can be viewed as a semiotic devise that precedes and accompanies the text, contributing to the construction of the horizon of reception and guiding the process of interpretation. Elements such as the title, the cover, the dedication, the preface, and other accompanying components do not provide external information about the literary work; rather, they carry symbolic signs and implicit meanings that assist the reader in exploring the diegetic world of the text. The study of paratext in the contemporary novel acquires particular significance, since the novel, as an open-ended literary genre, invests in a variety of linguistic and visual signs that contribute to the meaning-making. Among the narrative texts that can be approached from this perspective is the novel Al-Kannās by Salim Abbādū, whose paratext offer multiple semantic possibilities through which the nature of the narrative world constructed by the novel may be explored.

On that basis, the present study seeks to examine the semiotics of paratext in the novel Al-Kannās by Salim Abbādū, through an analysis of the semantic and aesthetic functions that these paratext element perform in guiding reading and constructing the horizon of interpretation.

The study stems from the following research problem:

How do paratext in the novel Al-Kannās contribute to guiding reading and constructing narrative meaning?

In order to address this research problem, the study adopts an analytical semiotic approach, focusing on the most prominent paratext in the

nove l and examining their semantic functions.

paratext (Pre-narrative Spaces)

paratexts are among the most significant modern critical concepts, given their role in shaping and directing the reading process even before entering the narrative text itself. The new generation of critics has contributed to highlighting the function of paratext not merely as supplementary pages, but as semantic frameworks that shape the reader's expectations and frame their subjective engagement with the text (Gérard Genette, Paratexts: paratext,translation p. 9–15.)

Gérard Genette defines paratexts as "paratexts that surround the narrative text and function as guiding frameworks for reading prior to entering the core of the text." (Gérard Genette, Paratexts: paratext, translation p11)They are of two types: "internal and external interacting with the text both directly and indirectly, such as the cover, the title, the dedication, the introduction, the typography, the generic marker, the publisher's

logo, the publisher's note, the author's biography, drafts, and what is written on or around the text. The relationship between these elements and the text is dialectical, based on clarification and assistance in illuminating the internal text, with the aim of understanding, interpreting, and approach it from all perspectives (Abu al-Maʻāti Khayri al-Ramadi, Department of Arabic Language and Literature (King Saud University), "paratext and Their Significations in the Contemporary Arabic Novel" Under the Sky of Copenhagen "as a Model, Maqālīd Journal, Issue 7, December 2014, p., 8)

In this context, the novel Al-Kannās by Salim Abbādū occupies a fertile position for analysis, as its title evokes images and semantic layers that align with semiotic concepts which consider the t as an entry point for interpreting the text as a whole. "The novelist writes the multiple and contradictory human being in order to delve into his civilizational problematics and to construct for us imagined worlds in which characters merge with multiple spaces." (Qaʿr al-Mathrad Naʿīm, "Interactions of Human and Space in the Novel Al-Kannās by the Novelist Salim Abbādū," Journal of Social Studies and Research, Issue 4, 2025, p. 275) Accordingly, this article seeks to explore the meanings of the title as a primary paratext, from which other paratexts elements (the cover, the dedication, the introductory preface) extend to construct a semantic unity that leads to an in-depth reading of the narrative text.

From paratext to Text

Paratext did not attract critical attention "before the expansion of the concept of the text. This concept only expanded after an increasing awareness and progress in identifying its

various components and details. This led to the crystallization of the concept of textual interaction and to grasping the totality of relationships through which texts intersect, which have come to occupy an important place in contemporary critical thought." (Gérard Genette: From Text to Paratext), Abdelhaq Belaabed, introduction by Said Yaqtin (previous reference), p. 14.)

The concept of paratexts (seuils) emerged within the context of the development of structuralist and semiotic studies, which sought to broaden the scope of literary analysis to include the elements surrounding the text. Gérard Genette was among the most prominent critics to address this aspect, devoting his well-known book "Paratexts" to the study of the parallel texts that accompany the literary work, "making it a discourse parallel to the original discourse (the text), animated by the act of interpretation and activated by the act of reading, explaining and interpreting its form." (Gérard Genette: From Text to Paratext p19)

Genette argues that paratexts constitute a set of elements that surround the text and perform a mediating function between the text and the reader. They represent a transitional zone that enables the reader to enter the world of the text through a set of guiding signs that assist in understanding the nature of the literary work.

In this sense, paratexs form a pragmatic device that connects the text to its cultural and communicative context, as they provide information and signals that help the reader determine how to read and interpret the text.

From a semiotic perspective, paratexts can be viewed as a system of signs carrying multiple meanings. According to semiotic theory, the sign consists of a signifier and a signified, thus

representing a relationship between a material form and a semantic meaning. When this conception is applied to paratexts, they appear as primary signs that precede the text and contribute to the production of meaning. The title, for exemple, does not perform the function of naming the text; rather, it carries symbolic meanings that open up a specific horizon of understanding for the reader.

Similarly, the cover, images, and typographical elements all constitute visual signs that contribute to the construction of meaning, as they provide initial indications about the nature of the text and its literary genre.

First: The Title

The Title as a Primary paratexts element in "Al-Kannās"

The title is one of the most important paratexts element in a literary work, as it represents the first sign encountered by the reader when dealing with the text. For this reason, modern criticism regards it as a semantic element that contributes to guiding the reading process. Through the title, the reader receive the novel with a prior awareness oriented toward the idea of probing a social or mental margin. This corresponds to what Hamid Lahmīdānī refers to as the "horizon of reception," whereby paratexts generate a knowledge system that determines possible paths of reading.

Accordingly, the title becomes a kind of "reading instruction" before being merely a narrative designation. This aligns with Genette's conception of the title as preparing the ground for the general textual signification and establishing preliminary limits for interpretation (Said Yaqtin, Analysis of the

Narrative Discourse, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, 1997, pp. 72–80.)

It is "a set of linguistic signs that can be placed at the head of the text to define it, indicate its general content, and attract the intended audience." Leo Hock, La marque du titre (dispositifs sémiotiques d'une pratique textuelle), Mouton Edition, New York, 1981, p. 17.

Thus, it constitutes "a semiotic sign with both semantic and symbolic dimensions that entices the researcher to trace its meanings and attempt to decode its symbolic structures." (Bassam Qatous, Semiotics of the Title, Ministry of Culture, Amman, Jordan, 1st ed., 2001, p. 33) Moreover, it "is considered the first paratext element that confronts the implied reader and captures their attention, as it functions as a fundamental key to the text; it is the axis that determines the identity of the text, around which meanings revolve and with which they are interconnected, much like the head in relation to the body." (Raman Selden, Contemporary Literary Theory, trans. Jaber Asfour, Dar Quba for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st ed., 1988, p. 101.)

The title of the novel Al-Kannās carries a clear linguistic meaning, referring at the lexical level to a person who cleans the streets. However, this realistic meaning opens, within the narrative context, onto deeper symbolic dimensions. The title is intrinsically linked to the nature of its relationship with the text; thus, it cannot be considered a mere arbitrary or empty presence devoid of significance. In Al-Kannās, the title "represents the deep structure of the text itself, which cannot be grasped without a dual movement ascending and descending from the title to the text and from the text back to the title." (Rashid Yahyaoui, Modern Arabic

Poetry (A Study in Textual Achievement), Africa East, Casablanca, 1998, p. 110.)

The semantic choice of the word Al-Kannās suggests from the begining a social world connected to marginal or marginalized classes within society. Consequently, the title functions as a semiotic sign that evokes a network of meanings associated with social marginality and manual labor.

Furthermore, the title is characterized by brevity and concentration, which grants it strong suggestive power. The single word here becomes a symbolic sign capable of condensing meaning and provoking questions in the reader's mind about the nature of the character or the world it refers to. Through this suggestive function, the title contributes to shaping the reader's horizon of expectations, as it directs attention toward the nature of the subject matter that the novel will address.

The title Al-Kannās constitutes an initial point of signification, as the word, in its linguistic and social structure, carries multiple indications: it refers to the margin, to the rejected, and to the one who gathers what society discards. This multiplicity suggests that the title is not merely a lexical layer, but rather a network of signs that point to the interwoven levels of the text.

From this perspective, I seek here to approach the title through a semiotic perspective, considering it a semiotic system with semantic and symbolic dimensions, which allows the researcher to trace its semantic load, attempt to decode its suggestive codes, and uncover the meanings it contains

The title thus does not merely fulfill a naming function; rather, it becomes an interpretive horizon that guides reading from

the very first moment of reception.

It is important to note that in this novel is the choice of a title composed of a single word, “Al-Kannās”, an intensive form derived from the verb “to sweep,” which semantically refers to one who practices sweeping as a profession. However, this choice is not limited to its lexical dimension; it extends beyond that to a pragmatic and aesthetic level. The author deliberately employs the title as an seductive element, aiming to attract and stimulate the reader. It appears as a printed block on the title page accompanied by other elements such as the author’s name or the publishing house.” (Gérard Genette, Paratexts (From Text to Paratext , p. 67.)This is clearly manifested in its bold Persian-style script and its dark red color.

The color red, in the collective memory, carries a dual significance: it often refers to love and the pulse of life, yet in this context it acquires a funerary connotation, symbolizing the ambiguity of existence and the struggles of human beings with their grim reality, along with the hardship and severity.

This is particularly notable given the rarity of this color in novel titles, which enhances its striking and suggestive nature. The dark red is complemented by the black aura surrounding the title, evoking darkness, gloom, mourning, and suffering, while scattered color points blend with the dominant color, adding a visual dimension that deepens the sense of ambiguity and semantic tension. The placement of the title at the top of the cover is also symbolically significant, suggesting elevation and aspiration, and prompting the reader to enter the world of the text in search of decoding this ambiguity and uncovering the extent to which the title aligns with the narrative content of the novel.

Accordingly, the title becomes a fundamental paratext element for entering the text and exploring its depths, as it enables the reader to relate it to the events of the novel and the trajectory of the central character around whom the narrative revolves namely, the character of the sweeper and to follow its fate from the beginning of the narrative to its end. Thus, it becomes evident that the relationship between the title and the text is one of organic complementarity, making it difficult to fully understand or interpret the text in the absence of the title, which functions as a guiding semantic key for interpretation. In this regard, Ja'far al-'Allāq defines it as follows: it is "that which precedes the text and opened the course of its development, or merely a name that denotes the literary work, determining its identity and affirming its affiliation. Yet it has become far more than that; its relationship with the text has grown highly complex. It is an entrance to the architecture of the text, a brilliant and enigmatic illumination of its splendor and its intricate pathways… The title has begun to rebel against its long neglect, rising again from the ashes that obscured its effectiveness and relegated it to oblivion; only recently has attention been paid to its function (Ali Ja'far al-'Allāq, "The Poetics of the Novel," Criticism signs magazine, vol. 6, no. 23, 1997, p. 100)

Second: The Cover and Visual Structure

The cover constitutes one of the most important visual paratext element accompanying the narrative text. It brings together linguistic and visual signs in the production of meaning, as image, colors, and typography interact to shape the reader's first impression. It is "the first element we encounter, the thing that draws our attention; it is the initial paratext element of the

text, whose signals lead us to discover the relationships between the text and other texts." (Hussein Mohamed Hammad, Intertextuality in the Arabic Novel, Arab Studies, General Egyptian Book Organization Press, Cairo, no edition, p. 148.)

From a semiotic perspective, the cover image represents a visual sign that carries symbolic meanings, as it provides the reader with preliminary indications about the nature of the text. A number of critics have pointed out that the cover has become, in the contemporary novel, an important semantic element that participates in the construction of meaning. Hamid Lahmīdānī distinguishes between two patterns in the formation of the external cover of the text: "a direct realistic composition… which does not require the reader to make great effort in relating the text to itself…, and an abstract composition that requires a high and developed artistic competence on the part of the reciever in order to grasp some of its meanings and relate it to the text." (Hussein Mohamed Hammad, Intertextuality in the Arabic Novel, p59/60)

In the case of the novel Al-Kannās, the cover can be read as a sign pointing to the social space to which the characters belong. Visual symbols associated with the street or manual labor refer to the everyday world of the popular classes.

1/ The Front Cover and the Significance of the Image

At the level of the front cover, it is noticeable that the selected image is given from one of the regions of Oued Souf, depicting a general scene of the "Ghout al-Sardouk" market during the 1960s, currently known as Dubai market. It is a commercial space dedicated to the sale of fruits and vegetables, located near al-Nakhla Mosque and the minaret of Sidi Salem. This visual reference functions as a semantic device that evokes

the historical and spatial dimension of the text, thereby endowing it with documentary and cultural depth.

Chromatically, the cover is dominated by two principal specters: white and gray in both their light and dark shades, occupying the largest portion of the visual space. In this context, colors perform an important suggestive function, as they influence the receiver and stimulate psychological responses, in addition to reflecting aspects of social and cultural reality. Gray, as an intermediate color, conveys meanings of ambiguity and obscurity; it may also suggest sadness or fatigue, and can symbolize the antiquity and authenticity of the image.

At the typographical level, the author's name "Salim Abbādū" appears in bold black font, reinforcing its visual presence, while the title of the novel is displayed in a larger size and a darker color, positioned at the top of the cover, which grants it semantic centrality. The word "novel" appears directly beneath the title in a finer and smaller font, fulfilling a generic function that identifies the literary classification of the work.

The image also refers to the cultural specificity of the city of Oued Souf, known as the "City of a Thousand Domes," where aspects of daily life are reflected through the presence of individuals in traditional attire (gandoura), their movement either on camelback or on foot, and the widespread presence of palm trees, which emphasize the agricultural character of the region as one of the most important areas of date production in Algeria.

It is also noticeable that a white space appears at the top of the image representing the sky; however, the absence of the natural blue color is due to the use of gray gradation, which

reinforces the archival and documentary character of the image. This whiteness suggests that the scene was captured during the daytime, interspersed with gray cracks that point to the nature of the local architectural structure based on clay, where such cracks appear as a result of dryness, reflecting the traditional building style of the region.

Finally, at the bottom right of the cover, near the edge, the name of the publishing house and its logo appear in a thinner and smaller font, maintaining visual harmony and preserving the hierarchical arrangement of elements within the cover space.

2/ Back Cover

The back cover holds an importance no less than that of the front cover, as it performs a complementary function that contributes to enriching the overall meaning of the text, while also supporting the promotional and marketing role of the front cover. As the boundary that closes the physical space of the book, the back cover represents a semantic and visual extension that continues the construction of meaning beyond the narrative text.

In terms of visual composition, this side is characterized by simplicity and abstraction, as it is devoid of illustrations, drawings, or color variations, with white dominating the entire space. This choice can be interpreted as a tendency toward visual economy, focusing primarily on the informative and descriptive dimension.

At the level of paratext, the back cover includes a restatement of the author's name, accompanied by the specification of his creative identity and nationality, through the formulation: "Salim Abbādū: Algerian short story writer and

novelist," thus fulfilling a definitional function that situates the work within its cultural and literary context.

This side is not isolated from the other paratext accompanying the work, such as the title, the author's name, the publisher's logos, and other elements that collectively form an integrated semantic system contributing to shaping the reader's horizon of expectation and constructing an initial representation of the text. These elements are of great importance, as their selection and citation serve the thesis of the text; the publisher's words on the back cover illuminate the work through concise testimonials and purposeful excerpts. These may consist of sentences or even complete texts, which can take the form of creative writing, commentary, introduction, or criticism (Jamil Hamdaoui, The Poetics of the Paratext (paratext of the Literary Text), 1st ed., Alukah Network, 2014, p. 128.)

Accordingly, the back cover includes a statement by Professor, critic, and poet Ali Mellāḥī: "The novel Al-Kannās is not merely an ordinary tale; what the novelist Salim Abbādū creates in terms of paradoxes, scenes, and temporal and spatial complexities is woven through his own tools into a narrative fabric imbued with adventure and wandering… marked by an extraordinary mode of storytelling." (Salim Abbādū, Al-Kannās, Dar al-Khayal for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, February 2023, p. 227) Another statement, by the short story writer and translator Boudaoud 'Ammīr, notes that the novelist Salim Abbādū does not merely recount the details of the lives of ordinary people within a severe structure and an unforgiving world, but does so on the basis of his extensive knowledge and familiarity with place, people, and surrounding realities. (Salim Abbādū, Al-

Kannās, back cover (previous source).)

Thus, the cover complements the title in the production of meaning, as together they form a visual and linguistic gateway into the narrative world of the novel. When the cover is accompanied by a specific image or color, it plays an additional role in guiding the reading process. Visual elements establish an initial impression that reinforces the indications announced by the title. Here, the semiotic analysis of language intersects with the visual analysis of aesthetic representation.

Third: Dedication, Preface, and Epigraph

The dedication paratext element is one of the textual elements that reveals the emotional or symbolic dimension of the author's relationship with his text. The dedication thus constitutes a discourse addressed to a specific person or entity, thereby opening up multiple interpretive possibilities for the reader.

As for the epigraph (or prefatory citation), it is a quoted text or introductory statement that precedes the literary work and often carries intellectual or philosophical implications related to the novel's theme. Genette defines the epigraph as a quotation that is generally placed at the head of the book, at the beginning of chapters or sections, or within the work itself. However, this form of epigraph has evolved historically. Another form may appear at the end of the book. "What was commonly practiced in the past was placing the epigraph on the title page, and this practice still exists today, though less frequently than before. Another possible location for the epigraph resembles the dedication, whereby it appears at the end of the book, that is, in the final line of the text, separated by white space." Gérard Genette: From Text to Paratext), trans Abdelhaq Belaabed, introduction by Said Yaqtin,

Arab Scientific Publishers / al-Ikhtilāf, publication,1st ed., 2008, p. 108.

This is what is known as the "signature," which appears at the end of the book and is intended to be authentic and verifiable.

Through our study of the novel Al-Kannās, we find the second type of epigraph: the terminal epigraph placed at the final page of the book, which constitutes the last written element. It includes the date and place of completion of the novel: "Ouargla—Southern Algeria, 03/05/2022." (Salim Abbādū, Al-Kannās (previous source), p. 227)

These two paratext element function as interpretive indicators that assist the reader in understanding certain intellectual dimensions of the text.

Fourth: Internal Titles

Internal titles are considered among the paratext element accompanying the main text. They include chapter titles, sections, and parts, and they perform both an organizational and semantic role within the structure of the work. Although they share with the main title its referential function, they remain less prominent in terms of readability and visual presence. The writer deliberately employs these titles for aesthetic and artistic purposes, in addition to their explanatory function in dividing the text and guiding the reader, thereby facilitating the reception process and gradually constructing an understanding of the work's content. In The Cleaner, Slim Abadou has structured the narrative into twelve internal titles:

1/ Algiers (pp. 7–23)

This section depicts the life of Uncle Chicha, who works as a street cleaner in Algiers after fleeing his hometown in Oued Souf due to Severe circumstances"...I put on my blue work uniform over my clothes... then pulled my garbage cart through the streets of Bab Ezzouar district, " (Salim Abadou, ,p. 16)

2/ Oued Souf (pp. 27–94)

The uncle remembers his childhood in Oued Souf, describing the way of life at the time, up until his escape to the capital, explaining his motivations.

3/ Algiers Again (pp. 97–117)

Chicha narrates his arrival in Algiers to live there after migrating from Oued Souf, describing the contrast between life in coastal cities and desert regions. He also recounts how he found work as a street cleaner and met the sorceress "Buka,

4/ The Predicament of Milika's Family (pp. 120–140)

This title addresses the problem of Milika's family, consisting of seven orphaned girls living in difficult social conditions.

5/ The Trap: The Family of kadirou (pp. 142–155)

This section discusses the departure of kadirou and Jaziya with their children from Oued Souf to Algiers due to a family problem caused by Jaziya's behavioral changes.

"...We must leave and settle in Algiers" (Salim Abadou, p161).

6/ The Mud: The Family of Azzouz (pp. 158–176)

Azzouz, an administrative director in Ouargla, meets Abdelwahab, who deceives him, causing him to lose his position and be imprisoned after legal complications, leading to the disintegration of his family. After his release, he attempts to reunite his family with the help of Chicha, who retrieves twenty gold pieces.

7/ Cruelty: The Family of Aziza and Bakkar (pp. 178–187)

Aziza, a mute girl and the wife of Bakkar the gendarme, is forced into marriage against her will and suffers imprisonment, deprivation, and physical violence. Chicha attempts to help her by initiating a divorce case against Bakkar, but the family ultimately disintegrates, and Chicha loses the gold pieces again .

8/ Grudge: The Family of Krimo (pp. 190–198)

Krimo harbors resentment toward his father, who was responsible for his mother's suicide and his placement in a juvenile delinquency center. Chicha tries to help him but fails .

9/ Loss: Chicha's Family (pp. 200–204)

Chicha exploits his remaining magical abilities, reading his sons' thoughts and realizing they are suffering from psychological and emotional loss caused by him.

10/ Illumination (pp. 206–212)

From his previous experiences with the other families, Chicha draws several insights.

11/ Oued Souf Once Again (pp. 215–222)

Chicha and his family return to their hometown Oued Souf,

where their living and financial conditions improve significantly compared to.

12/ Rescue (pp. 224–227)

Chicha narrates his life story to the disabled young man Ayyoub in an attempt to convince him not to commit suicide, but he fails, as Ayyoub remains determined to end his life.

Conclusion

From title to text, the paratext in the novel "The kannas "intertwine to form a cohesive semantic unit that prepares the reader for entry into the depth of the narrative. These paratexts appear as informational layers that enrich the reading experience, beginning with the title itself, which functions as a primary key to understanding the text.

Understanding the function of paratexts does not only enable a deeper reading of the novel, but also reveals the underlying structure that is not usually visible within the text, yet significantly shapes meaning and directs interpretation.

This study shows that paratextual elements constitute a fundamental component of the semantic architecture of the novelistic work, as they guide reading and construct interpretive horizons. Paratexts are not merely formal elements surrounding the text; rather, they form a semantic device actively participating in the production of meaning.

The semiotic reading of paratexts in Slim Abadou's The Cleaner demonstrates that the title, cover, and other accompanying elements contribute to presenting the work to the reader and directing its reception process.

Thus, it can be said that the analysis of paratextual elements opens new horizons for literary criticism in understanding narrative texts, as it reveals the latent semantic dimensions of the elements that precede and surround the text.

Bibliography List

Raman Selden, Contemporary Literary Theory, trans. Jaber Asfour, Dar Quba for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st ed. 1988.

Hussein Mohamed Hammad, Intertextuality in the Arabic Novel, arabic studies, book general comitee printer, cairo, no ed.

Abu al-Maʻāti Khayri al-Ramadi, Department of Arabic Language and Literature (King Saud University), "paratext and Their Significations in the Contemporary Arabic Novel" Under the Sky of Copenhagen "as a Model, Maqālīd Journal, Issue 7, December 2014.

Ali Jaʻfar al-ʻAllāq, "The Poetics of the Novel," Criticism signs magazine, vol. 6, no. 23, 1997. (no .ed.).

Bassam Qatous, Semiotics of the Title, Ministry of Culture, Amman, Jordan, 1st ed., 2001,(no .ed.).

Gérard Genette, Paratext, paratext, trans of Abdelhaq Belaabed, lebanon: Arab Scientific house, 2008, (no.ed.).

Hussein Mohamed Hammad, Intertextuality in the Arabic Novel, Arab Studies, General Egyptian Book Organization Press, Cairo, (no. ed).

Jamil Hamdaoui, The Poetics of the Paratext (paratext of the Literary Text), 1st ed., Alukah Network, 2014 (no.ed.).

Qaʿr al-Mathrad Naʿīm, "Interactions of Human and Space in the Novel Al-Kannās by the Novelist Salim Abbādū," Journal of Social Studies and Research, Issue 4, 2025.

Rashid Yahyaoui, Modern Arabic Poetry (A Study in Textual Achievement), Africa East, Casablanca, 1998.

Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text, trans. Monzer Ayyashi, Aleppo:center of civilization development, 1st ed., 1988.

Said Yaqtin, Analysis of the Narrative Discourse, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, 1997(no.ed).

Salim Abbādū, Al-Kannās, Dar al-Khayal for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, February 2023. (no. ed).