

**FOR THE FIRST TIME WRITING IS A  
FORM OF FREEDOM, FOR THE FIRST  
TIME WRITING IS A PLEASURE**

This interview clearly demonstrates Wannous's conviction that the world is witnessing the systematic marginalization of culture in general and of theater specifically. Wannous admits that after recent political transformations in the world he is no longer certain that theater will be able to play an effective role in society.

Despite his realization that theater has receded in importance while other means of communication have become widespread, and despite the changes that have occurred in our social and cultural lives that have shunted us toward solitude and private spectacles that preclude dialogue, he still writes, as he says, for the theater.

From another perspective, the texts that Wannous has written during this period (which began with *The Rape* and include *Historical Miniatures* and *Rituals of Signs and Transformations*), which can be considered the third phase of his life as a playwright, are problematic texts. After two clear phases, the phase of beginnings (most of its texts are short) and the second phase (characterized by dramatic commitment and immediate political engagement in the dramatic work), it is now obvious that his new dramatic works constitute a break on many levels with what we have come to expect in his works.

It is clear that the process of going from one phase to another has been

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An interview conducted by Mary Ilyas with Sa'dallah Wannous about his "new writing" in the last phase of his life, published in Arabic as "li-Awwal Marra Ash'ur bi-al-Kitaba ka-Hurriyya, li-Awwal Marra Ash'ur Anna al-Kitaba Mut'a," *al-Tariq*, no. 1, January-February 1996. This is one of several interviews with Wannous conducted by Mary Ilyas and published in *al-Tariq*.