The Manifestations of Legendin Contemporary Arab Literary Text
The Story of 'The Water Trills' by Sanaa Shaalan (A Case Study)

Manifestations du mythe dans le texte littéraire arabe contemporain : étude de cas l'histoire des « trilles d'eau » de Sanaa Shaalan

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Abstract:

Legends hold a fundamental position in literary studies, encompassing two distinct yet intertwined human activities. A legend, with its rhetorical dimension, converges, while literature, with its imaginative positivity, diverges. Built upon this premise, numerous legends have seized the attention of literary scholars. A legend serves as raw material, harnessed by writers for its reservoir of vital energies and vibrant sign ificance that elevate literature to enriched levels of novelty and dynamism. Emerging from the core of legends, which essentially encapsulate a humane perience interwoven with imagination and creativity, the legendary presence has asserted itself across various literary genres, including poetry, theatre, novels, and short stories. Significantly, among these genres, short stories stand as a captivating conduit for the charm of legends.

Considering that legends inherently intrigue researchers for their intrinsic connection to human experiences, characterised by their all-encompassing and human-centred nature, a series of inquiries naturally arise. These inquiries hold significant importance:

– To what extent does the presence of a legend influence the composition of literary texts?

− What motivations underlie the use of legends? What multifaceted considerations do authors take into account when incorporating them?

To illustrate this investigation, we have chosen a contemporary short story authored by Sanaa Shaalan from Jordan, titled "The Water Trills." This narrative serves as an exemplary case study within a legendary critical framework, while adhering to the principles of the legendary approach.

Keywords: legend, literary text, water hymns, Sanaa Shaalan.

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Résumé

Les légendes occupent une place fondamentale dans les études littéraires, englobant deux activités humaines distinctes mais entrelacées. Une légende, avec sa dimension rhétorique, converge, tandis que la littérature, avec sa positivité imaginative, diverge. À partir de cette prémisse, de nombreuses légendes ont retenu l'attention des littéraires. Une légende sert de matière première, exploitée par les écrivains pour son réservoir d'énergies vitales et de significations vibrantes qui portent la littérature à des niveaux enrichis de nouveauté et de dynamisme. Émergeant du cœur des légendes, qui englobent essentiellement une expérience humaine entremêlée d'imagination et de créativité, la présence légendaire s'est affirmée dans divers genres littéraires, y compris la poésie, le théâtre, les romans et les nouvelles. De manière significative, parmi ces genres, les nouvelles constituent un canal captivant pour le charme des légendes.

Étant donné que les légendes intriguent intrinsèquement les chercheurs en raison de leur lien intrinsèque avec les expériences humaines, caractérisées par leur nature globale et centrée sur l'homme, une série de questions se posent naturellement. Ces questions revêtent une grande importance :

Dans quelle mesure la présence d'une légende influence-t-elle la composition des textes littéraires ?

Quelles motivations sous-tendent l'utilisation des légendes ? Quelles considérations multiformes les auteurs prennent-ils en compte lorsqu'ils les intègrent ?

Pour illustrer cette recherche, nous avons choisi une nouvelle contemporaine écrite par Sanaa Shaalan de Jordanie, intitulée " Hymnes de l'eau ". Ce récit sert d'étude de cas exemplaire dans un cadre critique légendaire, tout en adhérant aux principes de l'approche légendaire.

Mots-clés : La légende, le texte littéraire, l'hymnes à l'eau, Sanaa Shaalan.

Concept of Legend:

A. Linguistic Perspective:

Language: In "Lisan al-Arab" by Ibn Manzur, in the chapter under the letter "S" (sin), it is mentioned that the term "أسطورة" (legend) is derived from the root "سطر" which means, "to write". The word "سطر" refers to writing, line, or the act of planting a tree, like a palm tree. The plural forms are lines and legens "أَسْطَارٌ" "," أَسْطُرٌ ", "أَساطِيرٌ".

According to Al-Lihyani, it can also mean building or planting line of trees. "سطر" also denotes a written line, and it is derived from the root "ليث." It can refer to writing as well as an individual line of trees or similar things.

Regarding the verse from the Quran, "And they say, "Legends of the former peoples"[Quran 83:13],[1] it is an implicit beginning clause indicating narration. The phrase "أساطير الأولين" (legends of the former peoples) means the earlier generations have documented them, and "أساطير" is the plural of "أسطورة," which is "legend." Similar to how they use "أحدوثة" and "أحاديث" and "سطر" is the act of writing.[2]

B. Conceptual Framework:

In contemporary discourse, the term "legend" encompasses a comprehensive semantic domain imbued with specific connotations. It refers to a genre of narratives and stories characterised by uncertain origins, intricately interwoven with elements of heritage, religious dimensions, and historical events. These narratives assume the form of imaginative representations that chronicle the emergence of early societies and knowledge, conveyed through the medium of narrative discourse or oral tradition. A pivotal function of legends lies in their capacity to explicate cultural norms, belief systems, and natural phenomena.[3]

Legends manifest as distinct narratives, recounting tales of deities, exalted human figures, or extraordinary events from epochs long past. Simultaneously, they offer insights into the human experiences of contemporary times, transcending the constraints of feasibility or empirical substantiation. Consequently, legends function as a means of documenting events and incidents, often depicting the extraordinary while eluding empirical validation. Within this framework, the terms "legend,""story", or "tiles" or are frequently utilised interchangeably.[4]

In his seminal work "Mythologies", Barthes advances the perspective that a legend embodies an archaic form of language and communicative modality, representing an instinctual and communal means of expression within specific social groups. This inherent quality underscores the enigmatic nature of legends.

Spanning the breadth of global cultural diversity, legends serve as a shared narrative heritage. Although variations emerge in terms of narrative events, sequencing, embellishments, and inclusion of supernatural elements,

notable examples encompass legends from Hellenic, Indian, Chinese, and Egyptian traditions.[5]

Furthermore, within the realm of legends, Edith Hamilton, a recognised authority in Greek mythology, asserts that legends serve as a rational framework for explaining diverse natural phenomena, shedding light on the emergence of entities within the cosmos. This comprehensive scope encompasses not only humans, animals, and trees but also celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, stars, and tumultuous whirlwinds. In essence, legends encapsulate the entirety of existing entities and events within this expansive mythic domain. They serve as a repository of ancient wisdom, bearing witness to humanity's early efforts to interpret the full spectrum of observable realities.[6]

The term 'legend' is inherently tied to the origins of human civilization, where esoteric practises and religious rituals converged in an intellectual pursuit aimed at deciphering the intricacies of natural phenomena. Indeed, during that epoch, humanity's cognitive framework lacked a distinct autonomous sphere where such phenomena could be comprehended outside the self.[7]

One of the distinctive characteristics of legendary narratives resides in their documentation of sacred histories or pivotal events from ancient epochs, a realm of fantasy that delves into the very genesis of all entities and their narratives of existence. These narratives are intrinsically intertwined with reality. The personas woven into legends encompass exceptional beings marked by their remarkable feats during periods of grandeur; as a result, legends illuminate the exceptional ascendancy of these transcendental entities. These accounts offer us insights into the core essence of these entities, unveiling their innate potentialities. Fundamentally, a

legend serves as a narrative that recounts the exploits of a divine or semi-divine entity,[8] designed to decode the intricate interplay between humanity and the cosmic expanse, unravel a specific societal framework, or illuminate a distinct environment characterised by its unique attributes.[9]

Moreover, within the realm of legends, as the renowned authority on Greek mythology, Edith Hamilton, expounds, legends serve as interpretive narratives for a diverse range of natural phenomena, shedding light on the emergence of entities within the tapestry of the cosmos. This scope encompasses not only humans and animals but also trees, alongside celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, stars, and even tumultuous storms. Essentially, legends encapsulate the entirety of existing entities and events within this expansive mythic domain. Essentially, legends embody a repository of ancient erudition, bearing witness to humanity's initial endeavours to comprehend the totality of observable realities.

The term 'legend' is intricately intertwined with the dawn of human existence, when enigmatic rituals and religious practises converged in an intellectual pursuit aimed at unravelling the intricate complexities of natural phenomena. During that era, the cognitive framework of humanity lacked a distinct realm in which such phenomena could exist, separate from the self.

A fundamental characteristic of legendary narratives resides in their meticulous documentation of sacred histories or pivotal occurrences within primordial epochs, a fantastical realm that delves into the very origin of all entities and their narrative of existence. These narratives faithfully mirror reality. The personas intricately interwoven into legends encompass elevated beings, celebrated for their extraordinary feats during epochs of grandeur. In this manner, legends unveil

the creative ascendancy underlying these transcendental entities. These narratives offer us tantalising glimpses into the very essence of these entities, laying bare their innate potentialities. At its core, a legend constitutes a narrative recounting the exceptional exploits of a divine or semi-divine entity, painstakingly crafted to decipher the intricate interplay that binds humankind to the cosmic expanse, to unveil the enigma of a distinct societal order, or even to cast an illuminating radiance upon a unique environment distinguished by its own singular attributes.

Writing emerges as a means to safeguard legends from distortion over the passage of time. In antiquity, it encompassed a wide spectrum, encapsulating the very essence of existence, from life and creation to the underpinnings of religion, ethics, and societal necessities. In the contemporary context, we perceive writing as the ancient wisdom of our ancestors, transmitted across generations. The Sumerians are credited as the earliest architects of these myths within the framework of their worship practises.

From the aforementioned discussion, it becomes evident that myths have captivated the attention of scholars and researchers across diverse disciplines, spanning from ethnographers and sociologists to psychologists and anthropologists. Each approaches the concept from a unique perspective, stemming from their respective philosophical and intellectual foundations. According to Levi Strauss, "myths invariably reference events presumed to have taken place in the remote past. Their essence resides not in their origins, melodies, or structures, but rather in the narratives they convey. They represent a language activated at a heightened level, where meanings unfold in a manner that imparts a perpetual state of motion to the linguistic canvas".

From the aforementioned definitions of legend, which arise from the diversity and multitude of opinions and inclinations among thinkers, various distinct currents emerge. Among these, the following are worth mentioning:

1.   The   Historical   Current
2.   The   psychological   current
3. The Linguistic Current

Categories of Myths:

1. Ritual Myth

2. Creation Myth

3. Explanatory Myth

4. Symbolic Myth

5. Heroic Myth of the Deity

6. Scientific Myths

7. Myths of Heroes

8. Moralistic Myths

Characteristics of Legends:

In a broad sense, it can be affirmed that legends, as experienced by ancient societies, encompass the following characteristics:

In terms of form, they are narratives governed by the principles of storytelling, incorporating plot intricacies and character development.

- Narratives centredon actions undertaken by elevated beings.
- Constitute narratives grounded in factual reality, as they pertain to truths.
- Sacred narratives emanating from the work of revered, elevated entities.
- Permanently associated with the genesis of novel creations or specific modes of performing actions; this creative dimension serves as the exemplary paradigm for each endeavour.
- Unearth the origins of entities and subsequently assert authority and governance over them.
- In some manner, legends inherently encapsulate a religious experience, as discerned through the presented transcendental entities.
- Emerged during potent eras (the era of the sacred) or the era of wonders, wherein a novel and potent creation is fashioned.
- Reveal that the world, humanity, and life possess an extraordinary foundation beyond the natural.
- The authorship of legends remains elusive.[10]

Academic researchers specialising in the domain of mythology, akin to explorative scholars, have meticulously emphasised essential criteria that differentiate legends from other forms of folkloric narratives. Through meticulous analysis, they have unveiled significant insights:

- Myths are intricately intertwined with meteorological events and ceremonial occasions.
- Their authorship remains anonymous, being a collective product of imagination rather than an outcome of individual creativity.
- The thematic essence of legends is distinguished by its gravity and inclusiveness, encompassing profound subjects such as death, origins, and knowledge.
- While the events of legends occur within a sacred temporal context, their contents possess a deeper level of sincerity and authenticity. For believers, they hold historical significance.

- Legends serve to elucidate religious beliefs and play a role in propagating the tenets of their respective religious systems.
- Possessing an aura of sanctity, legends exert profound influence over the human psyche.[11]
- The consistency of mythic texts enables them to traverse the passage of time, perpetually handed down through successive generations.
- Mythic events are firmly rooted in historical occurrences, while their underlying messages transcend temporal boundaries.[12]
- Legends employ nuanced expressions, imbuing words with a dual nature. One facet is semantic, directly tied to explicit meanings, while the other facet is imbued with magical undertones, oscillating between obscurity and clarity.
- Profoundly evocative, legends convey indirect meanings, effectively harnessing a spectrum of emotions and desires.

The multifaceted functions of legends can be distinctly elucidated by their specific intended purposes, with elucidation, interpretation, and information dissemination standing as paramount objectives. Predominantly, legends serve to explicate natural, social, cultural, and environmental phenomena within primitive societies. This pivotal role within human heritage contributes to the comprehension of the fundamental underpinnings upon which legends are constructed. Furthermore, an additional function is attributed to validation and justification, where legends address inquiries linked to the nature of rituals practised by a society and prevalent customs within it.[13]

In the realm of comparative mythology, the pursuit of unravelling the intricate connections binding specific customs and deeply rooted traditions across diverse societies unveils compelling observations. Among these, agricultural communities, for instance, exhibit a shared penchant for practises such as the offering of sacrifices and tributes. These rituals hold a pivotal role in endorsing the cycles of life, time, existence, and the afterlife. An illustrative example of this concept is embodied in the symbolic analogy of a seed's demise, which gives rise to a bountiful harvest, mirroring the transition from one year to the next, emerging from the remnants of its predecessor.

Within the spectrum of scholarly perspectives, the discourse on the purpose of myths presents a tapestry of viewpoints. Certain scholars, akin to the stance of Bronisław Malinowski, emphasise the pronounced

cultural significance of myths. According to Malinowski, myths not only uphold societal traditions but also confer upon them a profound significance and elevated standing, anchoring them in a reality that transcends the mundane. This perspective positions myths as cornerstone elements of human civilization, instrumental in structuring and reinforcing beliefs, safeguarding ethical tenets, and endowing them with resilience. Myths become vessels, encapsulating the very essence of rituals and constituting operational principles to ensure human well-being.[14]

The multifaceted functions of myths can be distinctly categorised as follows:
- Intellectual Function.
- Aesthetic Function.

In light of these perspectives, the endeavour turns to the amalgamation of Bronisław Malinowski's insights concerning the essence and role of myths, perceiving them as vibrant narrative entities. Far from being mere explanatory tools designed to gratify scientific curiosity, myths embody narratives that reignite primordial truths and respond to profound religious yearnings, moral aspirations, responsibilities, and societal mandates. An essential role of myths lies in their capacity to interpret, emphasise, and codify beliefs, shielding ethical principles and presenting them in palpable forms. Additionally, they act as conduits to ensure the efficacy of natural celebrations.[15]

Consequently, myths emerge as potent constituents of human civilization, securing an eminent position. They transcend being hollow expressions, instead disclosing to humanity the intricate realm of meteorological celebrations while concurrently elucidating the underlying principles and ethical foundations. In doing so, myths unveil the profound matters that shape and occupy the human experience.

Legends and Their Integration into Literature:

At their inception, legends were imbued with a sacred reverence owing to their association with religious beliefs. However, as human society evolved, its sanctity underwent a transformation from the sacred to the secular. This shift prompted a nuanced engagement with legends within the realm of literature, wherein their fantastical, magical, and aesthetic qualities found expression in various forms, such as poetry,

novels, and short stories. Poets and novelists alike have drawn inspiration from legends to enrich their literary creations, creating a dynamic interplay between myth and modernity.

Within the realm of poets who adeptly harnessed the captivating allure of legends, luminaries such as Shukri al-Akkaad and Al-Mazini from the esteemed Al-Diwan school emerge, as do expatriate poets like Michel Naïma and Elya Abu Madi. Significantly noteworthy contributions within this artistic domain also emanate from poets affiliated with the poetry Apollo school, such as Mahmoud Taha, in addition to Abd Al-Wahaab Al-Bayati, Saleh Jawdat, and AbiShadi. These poets deftly interwoven the essence of legends into the intricate fabric of modern Arabic poetry, thereby establishing a dynamic interplay between ancient narratives and the modern artistic expression that ensued.[16]

However, it is important to note that for several of these poets, the incorporation of legends often manifested itself in the form of translation or adaptation. This approach underscores the intricate interrelationship between the reservoir of ancient tales and the contemporary milieu, where poets engage with these legendary narratives to shape their own unique poetic voices.

Likewise, within the realm of novelists, Sanaa Shaalan incorporated legends into her novel "The Fall into the Sun," Tawfiq al-Hakimfeatured them in his novel "The Return of the Spirit" (1933), and Mahmoud Al-Mas'adi employed them in his work "The Dam" (1955). Thus, novelists started drawing inspiration from legends in their narrative creations. The integration of legends in Arabic novels expanded, both in terms of translation and in terms of diversity, becoming a vital creative element present in the majority of Arabic novels and a cornerstone of narrative construction.[17]

Although the genre of the novel is relatively modern compared to longstanding literary genres like poetry and prose, the integration of legends is intricately intertwined with its creative fabric. The rich historical tapestry of the Arabian region is replete with enduring myths

and ancient folklore narratives, thus naturally facilitating their seamless assimilation into the narratives of contemporary Arabic novels. In the present epoch, we observe a resurgence of Arab novels drawing inspiration from legends, as these literary works engage in a profound exploration of the multifaceted challenges confronted by Arab individuals in the midst of periods marked by fragmentation and estrangement.[18]

Introduction to Author Sanaa Shaalan :

Sanaa Shaalan was born on May 20, 1977, in the Suweilehneighbourhood of Amman. She holds the distinction of being the eldest of her 12 siblings. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Arabic language and literature from Yarmouk University in 1998. Furthering her academic pursuits, she earned her Master's degree in modern literature from the University of Jordan in 2003, and subsequently achieved her Doctorate in Arabic language from the same institution in 2006, with exceptional distinction. Dr. Shaalan assumed a faculty position at the University of Jordan, where her scholarly contributions have flourished across various literary forms, including novels, short stories, theatre, screenplays, and children's literature. In recognition of her accomplishments, she was honoured as one of the top 60 successful Arab women of 2008. Beyond her literary endeavours, she is an accomplished media critic, journalist, and correspondent for diverse Arab magazines, actively engaging with topics encompassing human rights, women's issues, and childhood concerns. Her affiliation extends to esteemed literary circles, as she holds membership in the Jordanian Writers Association and the Arab Writers Union.

Manifestation Analysis :

Title : "The Journey of Mawlaana Al-Maa" (The Tale of Lord Water)

The chosen title for the story, "The Journey of Mawlaana Al-Maa," bears profound significance. Through this title, the author establishes a distinct link to the Water Myth, signifying a narrative deeply intertwined with the mythic theme of water. The term "Mawlaana Al-Maa" is evocative, hinting at the authoritative dominion of water. This linguistic choice elicits the notion of a potential connection to the Water Myth, a narrative archetype resonating across cultures. Notably,

"Mawlaana Al-Maa" intriguingly echoes the presence of "Poseidon",[19] the revered deity of the seas and water in Greek mythology. The deliberate use of this title signals a deliberate association with mythical connotations, laying the groundwork for an exploration into the mythic dimensions that may permeate the narrative.

Analysis of "The Memoirs of Mawlaana Al-Maa":

Artistic Construction :

The Artistic Composition: In her narrative entitled "Moulana Al-Maa," Sanaa Shu'lan expounds upon the biographical account of "Moulana Al-Maa." The narrative unveils the allegorical trajectory of Moulana Al-Maa's existence within the context of creation. The narrative's overarching purpose lies in the elucidation of the origin of Moulana Al-Maa, an entity emergent in isolation, bereft of filial lineage. Through the divine fiat "Be," Moulana Al-Maais summoned into existence, thereby signifying an act of divine benevolence. This is emblematically underscored by the establishment of the divine throne positioned above the aqueous expanse, suggesting the intimate conjunction of the celestial and aquatic realms.

This celestial protagonist finds habitation within the nebulous formations and aqueous configurations, a domain resonant with purity, innocence, and nobility, a realm that transcends the rigours of geographical elevations and the fervent incandescence of combustion. Moulana Al-Maa emerges as an archetype of fidelity and immaculate faith, remaining unswervingly attuned to the divine mandate, until terrestrial diversions obscure his pristine devotion, a phenomenon that assumes meteorological manifestations.

Subsequently, the narrative shifts to his yearning for experiential communion with human frailty. Manifesting an affinity for terrestrial femininity and its preoccupations, Moulana Al-Maa descends to the terrestrial plane. The divine response to his entreaty orchestrates his descent through the medium of precipitative occurrences, namely rain and hail. This catalytic act facilitates his intimate identification with humanity, thereby eliciting diverse receptions. While certain quarters extend warm reception and reverence, attributing to him the status of a celestial endowment emblematic of sanctity and purity, an opposing

faction perceives his moisture-laden nature as a provocation, branding him as an apostate.

The ensuing narrative phase delineates his estrangement from the celestial sphere, prompted by the celestial firmament's renunciation, thereby precipitating his terrestrial sojourn. Herein, he presides over the formation of aqueous bodies encompassing oceans, lakes, rivers, aquifers, and springs. Convergent aspirations, encompassing the parched ambitions of adherents and detractors, converge upon him. At this juncture, an impetus for retribution takes root. This ensuing clash emerges as a pivotal altercation among humanity, wherein sanguine currents amalgamate with aqueous torrents, with Moulana Al-Maa serving as the conduit of their convergence.

The narrative trajectory subsequently shifts to an alternative thematic facet, encapsulated within the segment titled "The Virus of Moulana Al-Maa." Within this segment, Moulana Al-Maabecomes habituated to the act of bloodshed as adherents heed his appeals, offering the blood of the non-adherents as tribute. However, with the gradual depletion of resources among the disfavoured (kafirun), a juncture materialises wherein paucity impels discord. In response, Moulana Al-Maa enjoins aquatic realms to engulf humanity, commencing with the fishermen. Concomitantly, the populace's response remains largely apathetic, with the exception of a raven-haired, barefoot exemplar who steps forward amidst the tempestuous mien of his wrathful visage.[20]

She tenders herself to him, relinquishing her body, soul, and vital fluids in exchange for his sparing her aged progenitor, the old fisherman. Moulana Al-Maa accedes to her supplication, engrossing her essence and quelling his ire. The tale of the dusky enchantress gains pronounced renown among the water nymphs, and it becomes an enduring generational legacy, to the extent that many elect to christen their daughters in homage to her. Moulana Al-Maa, receptive to their murmurs, experiences a rekindling of his sanguinary impulses through their discourses regarding the sorceress. Subsequently, he demands a human bride, accompanied by the ultimatum of submerging all should his demand be thwarted. Succumbing to his coercive will, a procession of human brides is presented to him on an annual basis.

At this juncture, a priest of Moulana Al-Maa interposes, deceiving the sacrificial and grieving women through the assertion that Moulana Al-Maa shall transmute them into resplendent water nymphs, endowed with perpetual felicity and youthful allure. Moulana Al-Maa responds derisively to the duplicity of the priest. In "The Oracle of the Water," Moulana Al-Maa grapples with solitude and yearns for a confidant with whom to engage. However, distinct from preceding instances, he resolutely refrains from engaging with women whose autonomy has been usurped—a significant deviation from his prior interaction with coerced women.

He resolves to terminate the deluge, consequently emancipating the captive women from their sacrificial servitude. As his aqueous abundance dwindles, the populace contends with privation in his absence as their crops wither and their harvests perish. Pleading for his intervention, they offer women as appeasement, yet his demeanour remains impervious to their entreaties until a decisive juncture materializes. Amid the desert expanse, he crosses paths with a priestess who discerns his purity embedded within the continuum of temporal progression.

Estranged from his physical visage, she ardently admires him, remaining chaste in anticipation of his advent. Visualizing his emergence amidst the aqueous currents, she approaches him upon his materialisation and embarks upon a coastal odyssey with him. She ascends to the position of his consort, presiding with impartiality as the "Lady of the Water." In synchrony with the transmutations of Moulana Al-Maa, her very essence undergoes mutable shifts with each permutation.

Moulana Al-Maa experiences an inherent yearning for insubordination and caprice, even when relegated to a supportive role. His cravings extend to inundations and sacrificial rituals, particularly those involving captivating women.[21] Within the memoirs chronicling "Moulana Al-Maa," with the exception of the recounting of bygone epochs, his visionary consort, the seer, assumes a pivotal role. Her contributions facilitate the retrieval of his recollections, bestowing upon him the faculties of inscription and perusal for the betterment of humanity. Concerning the chronicle of the deluge, Moulana Al-Maa resurfaces anew with a human bride of his personal selection.

Nonetheless, a rival aspirant vying for her affections catalyses his animosity. In response, he unleashes an unrelenting torrent of ire, consigning both land and inhabitants to pitiless immersion. In a paroxysm of irrationality, he transcends all confines. In the annals of the "Virtuous City," humanity's unearthing of the inaugural terrestrial landmass, emerging from the heart of the inundated sea, assumes pivotal significance. On this newfound terrestrial substrate, the first human metropolis is erected. Yet, the aquatic dominion remains extant.

Within the era denominated as "Moulana Al-Maa," the temporal cycles are documented and etched,immortalising the chronicle of Moulana Al-Maa over the course of time. Perceptible patterns of resemblance emerge across the annals of time, irrespective of being inscribed upon the aqueous medium.[22]

A discerning perusal of the narrative crafted by the writer, Sanaa Shu'lan, commencing with the very title, provides evidentiary support for the adept intermingling of her narrative with fragments of the "Poseidon" mythos deity of waters and seas albeit without overt avowal. This deduction is drawn from the textual architecture and the manifestation of certain shared characters between the foundational tale and the writer's interpretative rendition—chief among them being the aquatic nymphs and the fishermen. However, this intertextual congruence predominantly resides within the thematic domain.

Central to the narrative fabric is the principal protagonist, Moulana Al-Maa, a celestial entity embodying dominion over aqueous realms. His presence traverses the spectrum between placidity and abrupt convulsions of wrathful inundations. Characterised during his formative juncture by an effulgent innocence akin to a teardrop, a tenderness reminiscent of a word, and an embrace akin to a heartbeat, he emerges as a paragon of sanctity, innocence, nobility, and transcendence, an entity surpassing the rigours of his surroundings.[23]

In her narrative, Sanaa Shaalan seems to have woven her tale by incorporating elements from the myth of the sea deity. However, her approach is characterized by a nuanced use of allusion rather than overt exposition. This deliberate choice places the onus on the reader to uncover the mythological underpinnings through the intricate similarities

and correspondences that intertwine between the mythical account and the author's own narrative.

Intertextuality :

Intertextuality is employed by Sanaa Shaalan in her narrative, utilising allusion as a means of communication without explicit statements. This can be observed in instances such as the use of terms like "sacrifices," "water nymphs," and "the deluge," where the author indirectly references mythical concepts.

2. Accommodation:

A. Resemblance and Similitude:

Resemblance and similitude are evident in the roles of characters such as mermaids, the god of the sea, and his wife.

Regarding mermaids in the story: "The priest of Mawlat Al-Ma'a succeeded in convincing the women of the sacrifices that he had transformed us into exquisite and splendid mermaids".[24]

In the mythic text about mermaids:

"Beside him lives his wife, the captivating Amphitrite, the daughter of Nereus, the venerable ruler of the eternal sea, and Latia, whom Poseidon[25] abducted from the story of Sanaa Shaalan: 'He increasingly demands, becomes angry, thunders, increases, rages, and triumphs when deprived of the command of the seas and rivers to overflow and drown all humans".[26]

In the mythic story of Poseidon: "The Romans knew him as Neptune, the lord of the seas, oceans, springs, and rivers. He held the earth, so it would not tremble or shake. When he desired a drink from the people, he shook the earth, causing earthquakes and volcanoes".[27]

Regarding the wife in the story: "Until he met her in a secluded cell deep in the desert, she was a priestess in the sanctuary of her beloved's love… She then journeyed with him to the shores and the abyss, becoming the wife of our lord Mawlan Al-Ma'a, who governs with justice when her beloved, the water, slumbers".[28]

In the mythic story of Poseidon: "Beside him, his enchanting wife, Anne Fertrina, daughter of Nereus's, the venerable ruler of the eternal sea. Poseidon did not abduct her. And Poseidon abducted Nereus's daughter, our enchantress Anne Fertrina, and took her as his wife".[29]

B. Distortion and Alteration:

The element of distortion and alteration becomes apparent in the roles of certain characters in the story. Similarly, it affects the theme, where the author portrays Mawlan Al-Ma'a as an authoritative, angry, and savage being towards humans. His mood swings continually, driven by a persistent need for rebellion and a thirst for blood :"Mawlan Al-Ma'abegan his life alone and sad, finding himself without father or mother, and he was merely a word 'was,' so he was".[30]

Mawlan Al-Ma'a was accustomed to the elixir of blood, and he increasingly demanded it, becoming angrier and more thunderous. He foamed and raged, winning when deprived. He ignored the pleas of the disbelievers and atheists, while believers complied. They fulfilled his desires without establishing his innocence. At first, he consumed the bodies of criminals, deviants, and those estranged from their community. But once his supply of the condemned was depleted, he succumbed to impotence. Mawlan Al-Ma'a grew furious, commanding the seas and rivers to overflow and drown all of humanity."[31]

The seas and rivers responded to his command, and their fury poured out, starting with the unfortunate fishermen whose boats were overturned, and were submerged in the water. The contrast is also evident in the writer's story: he married a water nymph, a being that lives in the desert. Until he met her in a secluded hermitage in the heart of the desert, where she was a priestess in the shrine of her devotion. She was known as 'Anne Tirina with insight into the past and the ability to prophesy the future. Then she travelled with him to the coasts and the abyss, becoming the wife of Mawlan Al-Ma'a, ruling with justice."[32]

"In the original tale, he married 'Amfatarya,' the son of Nereus, a merman and deity of the sea. Beside him lived his enchanting wife, 'Anne Tirina,' the daughter of Nereus, the venerable elder of the eternal sea. She was not abducted by Poseidon... and Poseidon abducted the daughter of Nereus, and took her as his wife."[33]

From what has been mentioned above, it becomes clear that the creator succeeded in developing the mythic element through the techniques of similarity and change to create a new story that carries a different symbolic content, evoking in the reader's spirit the pleasure of exploration and discovery.

C. Radiance:

The author's utilisation of the myth appears to be more of an allusion than a direct statement. Shesuccessfullycreated new narratives by adapting these elements, relying on resemblances and alterations. Ultimately, she achieved a different kind of triumph.

In the original mythic text, both the structure and the roles of the characters deviate entirely, influenced by the author's intentions. This transformation and adaptation have given rise to several semantic dimensions:

A. Psychological Dimension:

The characters within the myth have adeptly harnessed their roles as conduits for expressing negative psychological facets. This is notably exemplified by Mawlan Al-Ma'a, who emerges as a domineering and robust figure, symbolizing traits of masculine courage and resilience. His display of power takes the form of cataclysmic events—earthquakes, inundations, and the shedding of blood—through which his wrath finds articulation. Similarly, the fishermen assume the guise of the vulnerable and acquiescent, while the sea nymphs encapsulate the embodiment of delicate, sacrificial, and compliant femininity. This dynamic underscores the interdependence of strength and fragility, illustrating how the existence of the weak cultivates the ascendancy of the strong. In the same vein, the male's role in creation engenders the female, establishing a complex interplay of companionship and rivalry.

D. Artistic and Aesthetic Dimensions:

The author skilfully weaves fragments of the sea god's myth into her narrative, adorning it with select details. This narrative undergoes an alchemical transformation, resulting in significant modifications and distortions that rupture the horizon of the reader's expectations. Thus, a

new narrative emerges, adorned with an elegant veneer. Beyond merely infusing mythological dimensions, the narrative acquires shades of religiosity. Implicit references to the deluge and its survivors, seamlessly woven into the story, evoke parallels with the tale of Noah's Ark and the cataclysmic flood. While unspoken, these references weave a tapestry of connections between this narrative and the aquatic fury, heralding both annihilation and renewal.

As further exemplified in the myth, the author eloquently conveys: "The devil struck mercilessly, drowning both lands and people. Those who resisted were swallowed by the madness of Mawlan Al-Ma'a, submerging the entire dry land. The humans fled in a ship of their own making, ridiculing Mawlan Al-Ma'a's power, defying his anger, enduring and persevering until exhaustion overcame them, and they slept."[34]

Moral Dimension :

Within her narrative, the author artfully engages with a spectrum of ethical considerations, encompassing themes such as rebellion, anger, control over others, surrender, submission, humility, justice, sacrifice, strength, revenge, and injustice. As a poignant illustration of self-sacrifice for collective survival, the author provides a vivid example:

"A dark-skinned, barefoot beauty, approaching the wrathfulMawlan Al-Ma'a(Master of Waters), offers her body, soul, and blood in exchange for sparing her elderly sixty-year-old fisherman father and preventing her siblings' ship from sinking on the dwarfed island where they sought refuge."[35]

In this instance, the girl emerges as the embodiment of sacrifice and redemption, manifesting an unwavering devotion to the welfare of others, eschewing personal considerations. Another facet of the narrative reveals the complexities of anger and loyalty:

"Humanity once again sought solace in the Mawlan Al-Ma'a, placing their faith and trust in him. However, the gusts of his anger proved to be the eruption of his fury. They endowed that enchantress with myriad appellations, invoking her as the primal cosmic nation. Her image graced their temples and places of devotion, her status elevated her to a symbol of sacrifice and vulnerability."

Here, the narrative showcases the intertwining dynamics of devotion and emotional intensity. Conversely, an instance of deceit and betrayal surfaces through the priest's successful manipulation of sacrificial women. Convinced that they would transform into exquisite water nymphs, frolicking joyously with water while being impervious to the deity's wrath, the women succumbed to the illusion of a promised paradise. Mawlan Al-Ma'aobserves this charade, humorously acknowledging the cunning of his high priest.

This sequence of events underscores how manipulation and falsehoods are leveraged to persuade women of an idyllic existence. Temptation and allure function as strategic mechanisms to realise the desired outcome.[36]

Shift from Power to Vulnerability: The narrative takes a compelling shift from scenes of dominance and authority to a poignant depiction of vulnerability and impotence. Amidst profound existential melancholy, the Master of Waters releases the women's souls and terminates the seasonal floods, causing water levels in basins to recede. Consequently, the populace faces adversity and famine, with their livelihoods and crops imperilled. Driven to desperation, they entreat him, pledging to offer sacrificial women in return for his intervention, yet he remains unmoved by their supplications and entreaties.[37]

In light of the aforementioned discourse, the realm of myths unveils a captivating world imbued with marvels and idiosyncrasies, an alluring sphere that has captivated countless writers and poets, propelling them to explore its depths and unveil its enigmas. Sanaa Shaalan adeptly traverses this realm, offering tales that epitomise magnificence. She adroitly employs myths as a foundational premise, which she then employs to delve into pivotal themes concerning individuality, others, and artistic endeavour.

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[35] Ibid.p.27

[36] Ibid.p.28

[37] Shaalan, S. (2010).op.cit.p.29