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# Myth as Symbolic Discourse in Contemporary Arabic Poetry: A Semiotic and Discourse-Analytical Study

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## Abstract

Myth has emerged as one of the major resources in modern Arabic poetry through which poets express their cultural identity, historical awareness, and personal experiences through complex systems of signification. The present research will explore the role and functions of myth in selected works of modern Arab poets by analyzing how the allusions to mythology are used to construct poetic meanings rather than just being used as decorative elements in the poem. Although there have been ample studies conducted about the use of myth in Arabic literature, the use of myth as a coherent system of signification and discourse has not been studied extensively.

In order to examine how myth functions as part of a larger discourse in contemporary Arabic poems, a qualitative research methodology is adopted using a combination of approaches including Critical Discourse Analysis, semiotic analysis, and stylistic analysis. A selection of contemporary poems written in Arabic language is chosen for the analysis in order to identify the ways in which the mythical symbols, intertextual references, and language combine in order to produce various forms of meanings. It is clear from the results that the power of myth is determined by the extent of its involvement in the semantic and structural organization of the poem. In case myth is used as an organic part of the poetic text, it serves as enrichment of symbolism, increases the number of interpretation options, establishes intertextual communication, and recreates collective cultural memory. In turn, superficial mentions of myths do not play any significant role in the development of semantics and structure of the poem. Moreover, the analysis reveals that myths act as the dynamic tool of discourse allowing poets to express their concerns related to modern life and to make links between cultural narrative



and reality. The research will make an important contribution to contemporary Arabic literary studies by suggesting a comprehensive analytical approach to the analysis of myth in poetic discourse based on the methods of discourse analysis, semiotics, and stylistics.

**Key words:** contemporary Arabic poetry; myth; poetic discourse; semiotics; Critical Discourse Analysis; stylistics; intertextuality; symbolism.

## 1. Introduction

Recently, more and more researchers have paid their attention to the problem of myth in relation to poetry. While there has been much research done in the area of myth in Arabic literary criticism, only very few studies have attempted to explore this concept as a discursive and semiotic entity. This research attempts to interpret myth in such a way as to view it as the symbolic means through which poets create meanings, construct their identities, and reflect social and political realities.

The current research is positioned within the scope of Applied Linguistics by utilizing theories and approaches from Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and semiotics. All these theories approach the literary text as discourse socially and culturally embedded in language, ideology, and symbolic representation. According to this approach, contemporary Arabic poetry can be seen as the discursive space in which myth works as a semiotic system and creates poetic meaning.

Another issue that plays an important role in the current research is the use of myth as a means of discourse. In cases where the direct articulation might be hindered because of censorship, politics, and other social concerns, poets resort to using mythical characters and legends in order to make the message more covert. This symbolic representation is very much similar to the basic concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis and illustrates how the use of myth helps poets embed socio-cultural and socio-political messages into poetic discourse without making any direct statements.

Intertextuality provides additional communicative value to myths as it connects the text in question to cultural, historical, and literary traditions. The allusions to mythological characters like Tammuz, Ishtar, Adonis, Phoenix, etc. make the readers apply their cultural knowledge and read the poem from different symbolic perspectives. Therefore, mythology forms the intertextual dialogue and adds semantic layers to contemporary Arabic poetry.

Despite the extensive research done on the role of myth in the history of Arabic poetry, most of the existing studies have been largely descriptive, concentrating mainly on the identification of mythological elements without analyzing their functions within the poetic discourse. This research aims at bridging the existing knowledge gap through the analysis of the role of mythology in the process of formation of symbolic discourse which helps to create multiple layers of meaning and ideologies.

In order to meet the above-mentioned goals, the following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. How do the contemporary Arab poets use myth in their poetic discourse?
2. What symbolic meaning and ideologies are created through mythological references in contemporary Arabic poetry?
3. How does myth work as a semiotic and intertextual device in the process of creating poetic meaning?
4. How do the poets use mythological discourse for the indirect communication of socio-

political and cultural messages?

Thus, the aim of this study is to study myth, not as a topic within literature but as a discourse and semiotics within contemporary Arabic poetry. It becomes clear from the results of the study that myth is a living symbolic tool used by poets to create meaning, convey ideologies, and create intertextuality with cultural memory. Thus, contemporary Arab poets do not treat myth as mere literary tradition; rather, they use it as a tool of discourse to interpret reality and history and deal with issues like exile, oppression, resistance, death, and renewal.

### Literature review

The association between myth and literature is well-researched in literary criticism, comparative literature, and cultural studies. In the initial theoretical treatments of myth, attention was paid mostly to its narrative nature, psychology, and cultural role. One of the most remarkable theoretical contributions to myth is the archetypal criticism developed by Northrop Frye in 1957. Archetypal criticism sees myth as an underlying structural element in literature. According to Frye, myth plays a pivotal role in literary works since most literary texts are based on myth. Myths provide literature with certain narrative patterns of death and resurrection, the quest, sacrifice, and regeneration. Despite being literary in its essence, Frye's theory is of great importance in comprehending the structural association between myths and poems (Al-Saif, 2009; Sarhan, 1451/2010).

The next important contribution made in the field of myth is the theory by Roland Barthes (1972). In his analysis of myth as a phenomenon, Barthes views it semiotically and sees it as a type of discourse and communication system. According to Barthes, the myth is not determined by its content but its mode of signification and therefore acts as a second-order semiological system. The significance of this approach for the current study consists in the opportunity to consider myth as an ideological discourse rather than an old story (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, p. 34).

Finally, one cannot forget about the important contribution to the relation of myth to modern poetry made by the modernist poet T.S. Eliot (1922). In particular, in his famous poem *The Waste Land*, he develops the so-called "mythical method" showing the use of myth as a structure and symbolic means of organization of contemporary experience. His influence was not confined to English literature but had a deep effect on the Arab poets like Badr Shukr Al-Sayyab, AbdulWahab Al-Bayati, and Salah Abdel Sabour who utilized the mythical elements in their poetry to convey such concepts as death, revival, exile, and crisis of culture (Daoud, 1975, p. 41; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 13).

With regard to literary criticism in Arabic, there are several critical studies that have analyzed the role of myths in modern Arabic poems. Some critics argue that modern poets used mythology to signify their anxiety and despair through symbols. For instance, the Tammuz myth is used to indicate renewal and resurrection, and the Phoenix is used as a symbol of revival from ruin. The critics have proved that mythology has become an indispensable element in modern Arabic poetry as far as poets used mythology as a tool for articulating their anxieties, defeats, and hope (May, 2011, p. 80; Al-Bouamrani, 2006, p. 35).

According to discourse studies, some researchers including Norman Fairclough (1995) and Teun A. van Dijk (1998) have argued that discourse is not only a mirror image of reality, but

also a social practice which creates reality via language. CDA investigates the connection between language, power, and ideology through encoding texts with ideological meanings and social relations. CDA can be used in various fields like political discourse, media discourse, and educational discourse. The employment of CDA in studying poetic discourse, especially the discourse of myth is rarely investigated (Makhlaf, 2012, p. 71).

In addition, the notion of intertextuality offered by Julia Kristeva (1980) is considered another approach to study the role of myth in poetry. According to the theory of intertextuality, every text can be associated with another text, as meaning is created by such relations. Mythological elements can be seen as one example of intertextuality, as myth makes allusion to other earlier narratives and texts and thus creates relations between past and present (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, p. 36).

Scholars who study myth in Arabic poetry consider it from the sociopolitical and aesthetic aspects. Indeed, the role of myths in modern Arabic poetry can be described in terms of cultural oppositions, expressions of identity, and poetic reminiscences. Mythical characters act not merely as symbolic devices but as means of making cultural and political statements. Likewise, Salah Abdel Sabour demonstrates the potential of myth for linking poetry back to human experiences and interdisciplinary human sciences (Abdel Sabour, 1977, p. 180; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 144).

On this basis, one can conclude that the majority of scholarly research in the area of myths in poetry concentrates on the functions of myth as a thematic device, a narratological device, and a semiotic symbol. Meanwhile, the functions of myth as a discursive practice and as a semiotic system in poetic language have not been studied extensively. To be more precise, prior scholarly works were interested in the meaning of myth in poems rather than the mechanism of production of such meanings (Wimsatt & Brooks, 1976, p. 209).

This deficiency will be addressed by the current study, which attempts to investigate the phenomenon of myth from the perspective of applied linguistics, discourse analysis, and semiotics. Myth helps poets ideologically encode their works in terms of meanings, cultural identities, and social and political realities. Here, the analysis of literature is blended with applied linguistics by focusing on myth's importance as a discursive and semiotic strategy used in the current poetics (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, p. 39; Al-Madi, 2015, p. 149).

To sum up, while existing research has successfully shown how myth serves as a symbolic and stylistic device in poetic works, this research pays more attention to the linguistic function and discourse analysis of myths in poems. The combination of literary, stylistic, semiotic and discursive analyses proves that myths serve as a powerful literary tool for constructing ideologies and expressing cultural identity in contemporary poetics (Al-Saif, 2009; Al-Bouamrani, 2006; Makhlaf, 2012).

## 2. Methodology

This study uses an interpretative methodology to examine the semantic, and discursive aspect of myth in contemporary Arabic poetry. This study will employ an interdisciplinary

methodology, using approaches related to literary analysis, applied linguistics, semiotics, and discourse analysis, to examine myth as not only narrative but also linguistic, artistic, and ideological in modern Arabic poetry (Al-Sawah, 2009; Sarhan, 2010).

## Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative and text-based approach involving the analysis of a selected group of poems that have been produced by well-known Arabic poets who employ myth in their work, such as Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati (Daoud, 1975, p. 41; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 13), and Nizar Qabbani. Text-based analysis provides the opportunity for a holistic and comprehensive evaluation of myths through an examination of their semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, discursive, intertextual, and semiotic characteristics.

A further aspect of the methodology involves differentiating between integrated myths, which create additional semantic and pragmatic depth in poems, enhance their structure, and help to develop ideological unity, and superficial or weak myths, which only serve as decorations. With the help of textual and discourse analysis combined with semiotics, the role of myth as a meaning-creative and as a mode of poetic consciousness, reflect the poet's negotiation of identity, culture, and lived experience.

### a. Data Selection

Poems selected for this research contain mythological references in particular. The criteria of selecting the poems are as follows:

1. The presence of allusions and references to myths and mythological characters.
2. Different modes of using myth in poetry (artistic vs. faint/superficial).
3. The influence of history, culture, or politics on the use of myth.
4. Recognised by literary scholars as an example of Arabic poetry of the contemporary period (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, pp. 34–36; May, 2011, p. 80).

### b. Analytical Approach

The suggested methods are outlined below:

1. **Literary analysis** (narrative, imagery, symbolic analyses) that will enable identifying the way myth functions within poetic texts. This method is concerned with discovering archetypal characters, recurring themes, and connections between texts of contemporary poets and those belonging to the ancient/classical tradition (Frye, 1957; Al-Rawi, 2005).
2. **Discourse analysis**, which uses CDA theories (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998) in order to analyze mythological allusions. By employing the discourse analysis approach, we will be able to perceive myths as rhetorical discourses mediating socio-political power relations and cultural practices (Makhlaif, 2012, p. 71).
3. **Semiotic Analysis**: Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, myths are viewed as a system of signs. Semiotic analysis emphasizes the denotative and connotative meaning

produced by symbols, motifs, and mythological references within poetic contexts (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, pp. 34–36).

### c. Methods of Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involved four steps:

**1. Text Reading and Annotation:** Multiple readings of poems were conducted, and all mythical elements were noted. The notes focused on the role, frequency, and usage of myths in each particular poem (Al-Madi, 2015, p. 149).

**2. Classification of Myth Usage:** Based on the classification presented in the lecture, myth was classified into two categories: aesthetic (fully incorporated into poems) and faint (superficial or disconnected) (Abdel Sabour, 1977, p. 180; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 144).

At the same time, it should be noted that this classification also takes into account the role of myth as an experiential structure and involves distinguishing between myth that helps to form the consciousness of a poet and myth that stays external to the experiential context of the poet.

**3. Discourse and Semiotics:** All identified myths underwent discourse and semiotic analysis to understand their functions. These functions could relate to ideology, culture, symbolism, etc. (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, pp. 35–36).

**4. Comparative Analysis among Poets:** It was necessary to compare usage of myth by different poets. Modernist movements like the use of mythic techniques by T. S. Eliot have been considered in their influence on Arab poets (Daoud, 1975, p. 41; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 13).

### d. Validity and Reliability

The reliability of the research is ensured by using reliable data collection methods and maintaining systematic processes. Validity is guaranteed by using primary sources of information, namely original poetry, and supporting the analysis with interpretations that have already been analyzed in the literature (Al-Rawi, 2005; Abdel Sabour, 1978). Peer-reviewed articles and classical texts on literature (Frye, 1957; Barthes, 1972; Fairclough, 1995) were considered to validate interpretations based on the findings from the literature review.

### e. Ethical Issues

This is a textual analysis; therefore, there is no need for informed consent, but there is a necessity for accurate citation and attribution of the source. All sources of poems and literary criticism are properly cited (Al-Bouamrani, 2006; Makhlaf, 2012).

## 3. Analysis and Findings

Analysis of modern Arabic poetry shows that there is much complexity and multiplicity when it comes to the utilization of myth, both in terms of its aesthetical and discursive dimensions. This

part focuses on the utilization of myths in the chosen poems by Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati, Youssef Al-Khal, Nizar Qabbani using the classification developed in class: aesthetical, faint use of myths, symbolization, and different roles of myths (Al-Sawah, 2009; Daoud, 1975, p. 41).

#### a. Aesthetical Utilization of Myths

This section examines the aesthetic use of myth in poetry when mythology becomes fully incorporated into the structure and semantic structure of the poem. In other words, this is the situation when myths are not mere decoration but rather the essential element of thematic substance and aesthetic construction of the poem. Myth as semiotic structure involves the usage of mythological characters, motifs and stories as multi-layered semiotically encoded material. Myths used in this way help poets establish intertextual links between poetry and literary tradition, historical and collective cultural memory, and construct a poem which has many meanings and layers of understanding.

Myths that become fully integrated into the poem contribute to its structural and aesthetic unity, thus becoming an essential part of the poem's overall semantic and aesthetic value. This aspect makes aesthetic myths good examples of the organic relationship between myth and poetry, following the approach developed in modern literary criticism, which emphasizes structure over allusions (Wimsatt & Brooks, 1976).

#### Example 1: Nizar Qabbani

##### Arabic:

أرفضكم جميعكم وأختم الحوار  
لم يبق عندي لغة أضربت في معاجمي  
وفي ثيابي النار

**Transliteration:** Arfaḍukum jamī'ukum wa akhtim al-ḥiwār. Lam yabqa 'indī lughah. Aḍramtu fī ma'ājimī wa fī thiyābī al-nār.

##### Translation:

I reject all of you  
And wrap up the dialogue  
I have no language left  
I set fire to my dictionaries  
And to my clothes of fire

##### Analysis:

Here, myth is not merely an element mentioned but something that becomes an integral part of Qabbani's poetic self. Resurrecting gods or setting fire to dictionaries gives the poet's mythology new power, helping the poet to explore some important themes.

#### Example 2: Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati

##### Arabic:

يحلم في بعث رماد طائرا الخرافه

يروى جذور هذه الصفصافه

بدمه لعلها تولد أو تموت

**Transliteration:** Yaḥlam fī ba'th ramād ṭā'ir al-khurāfah. Yarwī judhūr hādhihi al-ṣafṣāfah bi-damihi la'allahā tawlad aw tamūt.

##### Translation:

Dreaming of resurrecting the ashes of two mythical birds

It irrigates the roots of this willow

With his blood, perhaps she will be born or die

##### Analysis:

The appeal to mythical birds made by Al-Bayati reflects the extent to which myth is embedded aesthetically in the poem. In other words, myth in this poem works as a generator of poetry that combines imagination of the poet with cultural heritage of the community.

#### Example 3: Youssef Al-Khal

##### Arabic:

وقبل ما نهم بالرحيل ونذبح الحزاف واحد لعشثروت واحد لأدونيس

واحد لبعل ثم نرفع المراسي ونبدأ السفر

**Transliteration:** Wa qabla ma nahim bil-raḥīl wa nadhbah al-ḥazāf. Wāḥid li-'Ishtart, wāḥid li-Adūnīs.

Wāḥid li-Ba'l thumma narfa' al-marāsī wa nabda' al-safar.

##### Translation:

Before they leave and we slaughter the party

One for Astarte, one for Adonis

One for Baal, and then we lift the anchors

and start traveling

### Analysis:

Al-Khal exemplifies aesthetic deployment of myth in his poem because there is a fully formed interaction between the multiple mythical characters used in the poem. The multiple mythic characters play an important role in shaping the theme and rhythm of the poem.

### b. Faint or Superficial Employment of Myth

On the contrary, the faint usage of myth means that a poet makes use of certain mythical elements in his poem but the myths do not have much relevance to the structure and theme of the poem. As a result, the application of myth remains decorative in nature.

From a semiotic point of view, faint myths constitute isolated signifiers with restricted polysemic capacity. In this way, they are unable to establish intertextual resonance nor carry deeper cultural or ideological meaning. Therefore, the myth does not become an active element contributing to the formation of the discourse of the poem nor to its ideological value.

It is important to distinguish between aesthetic and faint usage of myth since the former significantly enriches the poem's aesthetic and semantic composition while the latter remains merely ornamental. It serves as a cultural memory of sorts without integrating into the poetic discourse.

### Example 1: Youssef Al-Khal

#### Arabic:

وقبل ما نهم بالرحيل ونذبح الحزاف واحد لعشثروت واحد لأدونيس

واحد ليعل ثم نرفع المراسي ونبدأ السفر

**Transliteration:** Wa qabla ma nahim bil-raḥīl wa nadhbaḥ al-ḥazāf. Wāḥid li-'Ishtart, wāḥid li-Adūnīs.

Wāḥid li-Ba'l thumma narfa' al-marāsī wa nabda' al-safar.

#### Translation:

Before they leave and we slaughter the party

One for Astarte, one for Adonis

One for Baal, and then we lift the anchors

and start traveling

#### Analysis:

In this case, the myth is included in the poem faintly, which means that it doesn't integrate with the poem's deep aesthetics and themes. The mentioning of many gods here feels like a purely cultural element; it does not fuse with the poetic self or enhance the poem's structural cohesion.

#### Example 2: Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati

##### Arabic:

يحلم في بعث رماد طائرا الخرافه  
يروى جذور هذه الصفصافه

بدمه لعلها تولد أو تموت

##### Transliteration:

Yaḥlam fī ba'th ramād ṭā'ir al-khurāfah. Yarwī judhūr hādhihi al-ṣafṣāfah

B-damihi la'allahā tawlud aw tamūt

##### Translation:

Dreaming of resurrecting the ashes of two mythical birds

It irrigates the roots of this willow

With his blood, perhaps she will be born or die

#### Analysis:

Here, the utilization of mythological birds seems to be superficial. They are brought in just to add some imagery to the poem, and yet there seems to be no deep connection between the mythological symbols and the poem itself. The aesthetic function, in other words, remains weak as the aesthetic effect of this reading has nothing to do with mythology per se.

#### Example 3: Nizar Qabbani

##### Arabic:

أرفضكم جميعكم

وأختم الحوار لم يبق عندي لغة

أضرمّت في معاجمي وفي ثيابي النار

**Transliteration:**

Arfaḍukum jamī'ukum wa akhtim al-ḥiwār. Lam yabqa 'indī lughah. Aḍramtu fī ma'ājimī wa fī thiyābī al-nār.

**Translation:**

I reject all of you

And wrap up the dialogue

I have no language left

I set fire to my dictionaries

And to my clothes of fire

**Analysis:**

Here, the author makes an allusion to the myth, but the utilization of the mythological dimension in this case should be considered rather as faint. The mythic dimension is not incorporated in the process of the poem's aesthetic construction. It is merely symbolic without merging with the thematic and formal structure of the poem.

**a. Discursive and Ideological Functions**

Besides being an aesthetic feature, myth functions as a discursive strategy in modern Arabic poetry. Utilizing concepts offered by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1998), we see how the use of myths allows poets to encode resistance and criticism and perform social commentaries when they face censorship (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998; Makhlaf, 2012, p. 71). In Al-Bayati's poems, such use of myths becomes a strategy for criticizing oppression without the risk for the poet himself.

For instance, the recurring use of mythological figures in the context of exilic and repressive circumstances indicates that, in addition to being an aesthetic expression, the myth is also practical, facilitating the connection between the poet and socio-political facts (Al-Bouamrani, 2006, pp. 34–36; Al-Madi, 2015, p. 149). As a result of the application of mythology within the symbolization system of the poem, poets have managed to preserve both poetic depth and subtle ideological meaning.

**b. Intertextuality and Culture**

Kristeva (1980) has emphasized the importance of intertextuality in the analysis of the use of myth. Contemporary Arab poets resort to ancient myths and epics, as well as their predecessors' poems, to create layers of meaning. Through intertextuality, poets are able to refer to culture, history, and heritage. For example, references to the Mesopotamian, Phoenician, and Greek myths do not constitute mere historic references but rather the continuity of symbolic experiences, linking poetic discourse of today with the ancient traditions of yesteryear (Kristeva, 1980; Barthes, 1972; Al-Rawi, 2005).

### c. Link with the Modernist Approach in Literature

The inclusion of myths within Arabic poetry may be seen as an approach that has been used by modernist poets, including T. S. Eliot (1922). The mythical approach helps Arab poets convey intricate stories, unite cultures, and convey existential experiences. This approach is evident in poems by Abdel Sabour and Al-Bayati who incorporate the myth within their poetic language without simply adding it at the surface level (Eliot, 1922; Abdel Sabour, 1978; Al-Toumi, 2013, p. 13).

### d. Comparative Observations

From the corpus, it can be observed that:

1. Aesthetic incorporation is more likely to produce semantic coherence and symbolic resonance.
2. Faint utilization carries a risk of alienation from the readership and weakening the myth's cultural and poetic impact.
3. The myth acts as a semiotic and discursive device, allowing poets to convey ideological and identity messages.
4. Intertextuality enhances the understanding of culture in relation to the history and modernity of modern poetry.
5. Modernism contributes to the process of integrating myth into poems (Frye, 1957; Eliot, 1922; Fairclough, 1995).

This paper proves that myth in modern poetry in Arabic is not only culturally and aesthetically valuable but also serves as a means of communication of ideology and identity messages in the semiotic sense. It can be concluded that distinguishing between aesthetic and faint use of myth helps in analyzing the poems (Al-Bouamrani, 2006; Makhlaf, 2012; Al-Madi, 2015).

## 4. Discussion

From the above analysis of contemporary Arabic poetry, the role of myth has gone past being a narrative feature in the poem to becoming a linguistic and symbolic one for developing poetic meaning. Myth gives poets the ability to symbolically represent their own experiences, collective memory, and socio-political realities. This implies that the study of myths requires an integrative approach involving literary criticism, discourse analysis, and semiotics (Barthes, 1972; Fairclough, 1995).

According to previous studies on the concept of myth, Firas Al-Sawah claims that the basic purpose of myth is tied to humanity's effort to make sense of life and the universe around them. Therefore, mythic language should have the characteristic of being symbolic and philosophical rather than fictional storytelling (Al-Sawah, 1995). Similarly, Omar bin Abdulaziz Al-Saif notes that the patterns of myths existed even before Islam in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in the form of the symbolic motif of journey depicting loss turning into success (Al-Saif, 2009).

According to modern literary criticism, myth can be considered a symbolic and structural literary phenomenon. According to Samir Sarhan, myth must be considered symbolically and not literally, as the role of myth in literature is to create more meanings than those implied literally. This theoretical framework is similar to that developed by Northrop Frye (1957), who reveals the theory of archetypes, which shows how literary pieces use mythological motifs such as death and rebirth, exiles and returns, sacrifice and renewals.

The contribution of William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks stresses the importance of organic analysis of literary texts based on interrelationship of symbols, images, and themes rather than on historical context. In this regard, myth must be analyzed in terms of its structural organization in the poem. Thus, this theoretical framework proves the distinction suggested in the present research paper between organically embedded myths and mythological elements mentioned just for the sake of mentioning them.

The investigation of modern Arabic poetry is yet another confirmation of the above conclusions. In his study of the presence of myths in modern Arabic poetry, Anas Daoud proves that Arab poets use myth not in imitating the ancient myths but rather in a symbolic way as a means of representing realities such as exile, political commitment and identity crises (Daoud, 1975). Similarly, Manjiya Al-Toumi argues that Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati uses myth as a symbolic strategy for voicing political opposition indirectly (Al-Toumi, 2013). The above conclusions confirm the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis because they prove how language works as a means of encoding ideological meanings (van Dijk, 1998).

In addition, the research work by Mohammed Saleh Al-Bouamrani about the poetry of Adonis reveals the crucial role of myths in developing poetic language. According to Al-Bouamrani, myths add semantic values to poetic language by means of symbolic representation and intertextuality (Al-Bouamrani, 2006). The above conclusions can be viewed as an evidence supporting the theory of myth formulated by Barthes (1972) as a semiotic system of a secondary order.

It is not only in the writings of such renowned Arab poets as Adonis and Al-Bayati that the element of myth exists. Amal May's (2011) research proves that the same applies to contemporary poetry in Algeria, meaning that the element of myth represents a universal characteristic of modern Arabic poetic discourse and not only an individual writing style.

Similarly, in the poetry of Nizar Qabbani, mythological characters appear in poetic discourse as a symbol of some political, social, and cultural concerns. As argued by Makhlaf (2012) and Al-Madi (2015), Scheherazade acts as a symbolic figure that conveys broader ideological

meanings; in other words, myth in Nizar's poetry acts as an indirect language of political and cultural expression.

In this respect, the results of the current study suggest that the element of myth plays several roles in modern Arabic poetry. First, myth acts as an aesthetical element that helps to enrich poetic imagery and symbolism. Second, myth acts as a political element through which the poets draw attention to various social and political issues. Third, myth acts as an intertextual tool that connects the current poetic discourse to broader literature and culture. Fourth, myth helps to construct and preserve cultural identity.

However, the proposed distinction between organically integrated myths and superfluous mythological references proves the efficiency of myth to function properly only if myth becomes an integral element of the structure of the poem. Integration into the structure of the poetic text enables myth to create new symbolic meanings, increase the coherence of the poem, and add to its unity. Superfluous mythological references become a mere decoration for the poem and do not add any semiotic depth to the poem.

Lastly, the findings prove the dynamic nature of myth as a symbolical and discursive system in which poets reshape reality and convey the themes of alienation, resistance, identity, and cultural memory. Myth creates connections between the individual perception of reality and the collective perception of the society. Myth connects the narratives about history with the narratives about the present. As a result, myth not only serves as a semiotic sign but also as a discursive device that creates different levels of meaning.

## 5. Conclusion

For the purpose of exploring the significance of myth in contemporary Arabic poetry, the current study utilized an interdisciplinary approach that incorporated literary criticism, discourse analysis, CDA, and semiotics. According to the results of this research, myth is much more than just a narrative, being a symbolic and discursive system used by poets to create meaning, convey their ideological messages, and identify their cultural affiliations.

The results of the analysis show that myths have several functions in contemporary Arabic poetry. First of all, they can serve aesthetic, symbolic, discursive, intertextual, and cultural purposes. By referring to mythology, poets discuss the issues of identity, memory, exile, resistance, death, and revival, at the same time connecting their historical stories to present reality. In general, myth's efficiency greatly depends on the level of its integration into the structural and semantic composition of the poem. Inorganic mythology adds very little to the poem's semantics, being more decorative.

In addition to that, the research illustrates how the myth is used as a very effective tool by which the poets reshape the inherited stories within the cultural traditions, keep the collective memory alive, and take ideological stands. In light of all that, the interpretation of myths should

be approached using an approach that integrates literary criticism, discourse analysis, semiotics, and intertextuality.

### 5.1. Theoretical Contribution

This study is useful for the disciplines of applied linguistics, literary criticism and discourse studies by showing how the analysis of myths can be not just the literary topic but the symbolic and discursive system too. The interdisciplinary approach used in this research allows showing how contemporary Arabic poetry uses myths in order to create multi-layered meanings, preserve cultural memory, present ideological positions and enhance symbolical meaning through language.

### 5.2. Implications and Recommendations

Future researches may develop the results of the present study and explore such topics as:

1. Use of myths in contemporary Arabic poetry of different Arab countries, among them Algeria and the whole Middle East.
2. Linguistic, stylistic and semiotic features of mythological presentation in Arabic poetry discourse.
3. Comparison of use of myths in Arabic and Western poetry, especially taking into account symbolic, discursive and intertextual features.
4. Connection of myth, ideology and cultural identity in contemporary Arabic literary discourse.

To conclude, contemporary Arabic poetry uses myths as live symbolic system which connects past and present, personal experience and collective memory, literature and culture. With the help of discourses and semiotics poets create multi-layered meanings, preserve cultural memory, take up ideological positions and enhance expressive power of modern Arabic poetic language.

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