

## Mythical Female in Edward Al-Kharrat's *The Gypsy and Yusuf Al-Makhzanji*: A Mytho-Analytical Review

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### Abstract

Myth has occupied major space in Edward Al-Kharrat's experience of writing novels. His novel *The Gypsy and Yusuf Al-Mukhzanji* recalls the myth of female in a distinguished way quantitatively and qualitatively. He almost gets a unique position in Arab and world fiction for recalling his modified female myths; his amazing literary works are aesthetically carved from the rocks of the caves of his enriched memories. Meantime, he derives his artistic mobility and thematic visions from his aesthetic techniques that brought his mythical motifs and modern novels out of their first stereotypical forms to multi-layered literary mytho-aesthetic forms. The supposition of this paper argues that recalling mythical female correlatives in this novel is likely to enrich the narrative reliability and dynamicity in terms of themes, style, and techniques. This paper advocates the creative evocation of such mythical objective allusions to insure the intertextual and accultural aspects of the novel, thereby sustaining the stylistic dynamicity of the mythicized female characters, casting human semantic reflections on the novel.

**Keywords:** Myth, Female, Al-Kharrat, Mytho-analysis, stylistic aesthetic.

### 1. Introduction:

Edward Al-Kharrat<sup>1</sup> offers a mythical structural mosaic in his novels as his epic novels operate on two levels: realistic and mythical. His success is measured by his ability to combine the two levels. C. G. Jung (2014: 320) insists that "the mythological figures are themselves products of creative fantasy and still have to be translated into conceptual language." Therefore, Al-Kharrat shows superior creative skills, a unique intellectual richness, an exciting mythical and miraculous flavor, and an admirable religious repertoire: Biblical, Islamic, and Christian. These unique and unmatched abilities enable Al-Kharrat to employ his mythical allusions or correlatives in his fiction to convey his themes and prophetic visions. In this sense, Joan Relke argues that these myths and their allusions "express the complex reality of the individual self, incorporating the unconscious mind

<sup>1</sup> An Egyptian elitist novelist and critic.

and the conscious ego, mediated by archetypal soul forces in the psyche, which try to unite them" (2007: 13)

Thus, Al-Kharrat resorts to the myth in constructing his narrative discourse, abridging the boundaries between reality and myth to address fresh textual visions that tend to be unique and indicative. Myths with their allusions and literature with its echoes and modes of expression are interwoven, in which "mythological motifs" are "structural elements of the psyche," and myths are "involuntary statements about unconscious soul events" (Jung 2014: 174–177). In addition, the novelistic discourse in *The Gypsy and Yusuf al-Makhzanji* transcends the limits of panoramic discourse to a formalistic one, which evokes some of the characteristics of the formalistic art to draw a narrative mural with mythical allusions and signs. This evocation of mythical allusions casts narrative aesthetic on the first human convoys that populated the earth successively and immortalized its life. Hence, mythical richness that emanates from the novel encourages readers to explore the mythicized female character, because Al-Kharrat creates his characters loaded with mythical connotations, bringing them out of their real, sensory world into a metaphysical world. Such a narrative act makes the narrative tone mythical in any experimental fiction, based the idea of rejection. This idea makes Jerome Bruner (1991) admit that "Narrative is a conventional form, transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual's level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues, and mentors... narrative constructions can only achieve verisimilitude" (4).

Moreover, the violation of political conditions and moral values, either by dreaming, fantasy entails evoking mythical allusions and codes to expose such violations and call for redemption. This is how the female myth, especially the central character in the novel, delivers a fantastical discourse that saves the narration from the drought of realism to touch another world that lies above the actual reality, and does not merge with it, and in line with it, without being it. In this prospect, Bruner (1991) also says, "cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems, mediate thought and place their stamp on our representations of reality" (3). This view is what motivates me to study this topic, from the perspective of mythical criticism, focusing on the gypsy, the pivotal signifier in the novel. Yet, this statement applies to every female in this novel, or rather every female contained by the gypsy community, which draws the attention of the hero, Yusuf Al-Makhzanji, with its mesmeric factor; the gypsy women, and Al-Makhzanji will intimately recognize them. In this sense, Relke (2007) points out that one gypsy is "the mother archetype [who] is far easier to understand,

and expresses itself culturally and personally in the roles of the real mother and various mother goddesses and spiritual figures" (1). Moreover, these gypsy people are from the oppressed low class; the quality that unites them with Al-Makhzanji, who says, "I do not see myself as one of the oppressed or rejected strangers" (Al-Kharrat<sup>2</sup>, 2004: 48). Thus, Al-Kharrat creatively integrates mythical, finite, and infinite realist elements in the narrative text. In addition, the gypsy, then, are a signifying image of the chaos that dominates human life, the in-organized behaviors, that characterize modern life, and the anarchy that prevails in human world, which is also a symbol of revolution or rebellion. Therefore, the novel is an artistic fantasy that tends to destroy the traditional forms of expression, by penetrating the rules of writing. Art cannot alone be a reflective image of modern world, rather "experimental aesthetics ... emphasize that the sensory, perceptual, and cognitive processes that underlie an aesthetic experience with art are driven by a complex interaction among characteristics of the art object, the viewer, and the physical, social, and historical contexts in which the experience takes place" (Locher, 2011: 697).

## 2. Aims and Scope

This paper addresses the semantic origins of Edward Al-Kharrat artistic mobility and thematic visions based on his aesthetic techniques that bring his mythical motifs and modern novels out of their stereotypical patterns to multi-layered literary mytho-aesthetic forms. Al-Kharrat offers a mythical structural mosaic in his novels as such epic texts operate on two levels: realistic and mythical. His success is measured by his ability to combine the two levels. The supposition of this article presupposes that recalling mythical female correlatives in Al-Kharrat's selected novel is likely to foster the narrative reliability and dynamicity of themes, style, and techniques. Thus, this paper critically advocates the creative evocation of the intended mythical objective allusions to insure the intertextual and accultural aspects of the said novel, thereby sustaining the stylistic dynamicity of the mythicized female characters, casting human semantic reflections on the novel.

## 3. Methods and Design

This article adopts the qualitative methodological critical approach that has focused on the analyses of mythical structural mosaic in Al-Kharrat's novels for his epic novels operate on two levels: realistic and mythical. His success is measured by his ability to combine the two levels which

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<sup>2</sup> All quotations from Al-Kharrat are my translation.

cognitively draw on creative fantasy and are translated into conceptual language. Therefore, the paper applies a mytho-analytical sketch that shows superior creative skills, unique intellectual richness, an exciting mythical and miraculous flavor, and a religious repertoire: Biblical, Islamic, and Christian. These unique and unmatched aspects enable Al-Kharrat to invoke his mythical allusions or correlatives in his fiction to convey his themes and prophetic visions.

#### 4. Mythical Criticism:

The assumptions of mythical criticism in the critical scene in early twentieth century focus on the interpretation of myth and its uses in literature as a whole. This critical approach acquired the theoretical and applied aspects in the contributions of new critics, such as Northrop Frye, the most influential, with whom this approach is associated, especially in his famous book *Anatomy of Criticism* in 1951. This mythical critical approach has enriched crowning the modern qualitative criticism, manifested in myth and criticism. In this context, the French critic Pierre Brunel (2016) states that this new approach traces the ancient myths and their transformations, adding, "Myth reveals existence, and it reveals god. It is because of this that it can be presented as a sacred story ... it constitutes a fruitful approach to the interpretation of texts" (xii). Accordingly, this critical approach relies on the extrapolation of mythical phenomena within the creative works, classifying them qualitatively and identifying the methods of mythical allusions in creative texts to determine their manifestations and characteristics. These mythical allusions reflect the way "the author perceives the afterlife, and these perceptions reflect the psychological feelings the author may have regarding his or her own death" (Craig L. W, 2008: 3). Based on Brunel's view (2016: 155), there are two qualitative features of this approach:

- 1- Myths' evocation in literary texts, with historical and objective distinction, gives them the ease of formation and transformation in order to become a structural part in literary works. This rendering of myths and the mythical allusions certainly and distinctively supports the intellectual, philosophical, and aesthetic visions of the writer.
- 2- The creative writers' artistic ability to evoke mythical allusions, whether a character, an accident or a motif, that is, to transform the myth into an aesthetic presence that fosters the writer's vision through the processes of transformations, alterations, and experimentation.

## 5. The Procedural Mechanisms of Mythical Evocation:

The mechanism of mythical evocation is a transcendental evocation of cognitive myths in any text that yields true manifestations of aesthetic and renovative experimentation, to "give little illumination and to establish a kind of literary analysis called mythological criticism" (Brunel, 2016: 96). Meanwhile, Pierre Brunel (2016: 805) identifies three mechanisms on which the mythical critical method relies: emergence, flexibility, and irradiation, reflected in the creative text as follows:

**5.1 Emergence:** it is the available mythical elements that create a complete creative experience in a text at the level of the surface structure of literary creativity, through certain mechanisms such as the title, quotations, mythical allusions, and rhetorical images. In this respect, the emergence of an aesthetic state out of rendering myths has an effect that "turns out to be an important stimulus for its cultural revival" (S. Kh. Jayyusi, 2005: 640).

**5.2 Flexibility:** it is a procedural step in extrapolating the representations or manifestations of the mythical allusions and their displacement. This mechanism involves certain stylistic techniques such as deletion, addition, and merging. The scholar Margaret A. Braswell (2009) argues that modern novelists as Al-Kharrat employs this technical flexibility in a quantitative way to create approximate phrases that are difficult to grasp (242). Flexibility is achieved through creative textual symmetry, similarity, distortion, ambiguity, and multiplicity of visions. Then, the flexibility of evoking myths represents the distance between the original mythical allusions and the mythical signs in their transformative significant aspects. As Brunel (2016) says, "I only use flexibility for an approximate word that is difficult to grasp, that the word suggests flexibility of adaptation, and at the same time resistance to the mythical allusion in the literary text" (990). Thus, flexibility is achieved in texts through mechanisms of assimilation, similes, ambiguity, and multiplicity of visions.

**5.3 Irradiation:** it represents signifying shadows, connotations, implications, and textual auras, which the mythical allusions add to the creative work, for the presence of the mythical allusions implies a great significance. In this sense, Braswell (2009) asserts, "the potential of the mythical element in literature lies in its ability to irradiate refers to myth's power to transcend a given time and place" (94). Moreover, textual analysis relies on mythical signs, explicit or implicit. These

mythical codes have irradiative power that deconstructs the text. In addition, the more the mythical allusions are manifested, the weaker the irradiation, and the more powerful the irradiation, the weaker the mythical allusions.

## 6. The Narration: (The Erotic Experience):

Al-Kharrat relates *The Gypsy and Yusuf Al-Makhzangi* to the experience of an intimate love between a gypsy, of an outrageous beauty and lust, Manoura, and an Egyptian young man from the labor social class, working in Alexandria stores and teaching at the university. He is seduced by the gypsy and gets fascinated by her erotic beauty, similar to what happens with Eros<sup>3</sup> who falls in love with Psyche (Serena) of a glamorous beauty. In this context, love constitutes a major theme, through which the problem of existence is raised, whether in terms of its relationship to sex or in terms of the concepts around which the novel's hero raises major questions about existence, homeland, and love. For S. Kh. Jayyusi (2005), love is mythicized and becomes "like a fire. It dies down when it is not fed" (179-180). The issue of love itself is experienced in its mythical image on the one hand, and in the sentimentality of mystical idealism on the other. Relevantly, the novel presents the traditions of the gypsy, their customs, and history through dramatic of events, poetic visions, and fertile connotations.

The events of the novel expose the depths of human visions and dreams; raising several questions about human reality, experiences, and fancy, fusing history, myths, and the unity of existence. However, Al-Kharrat offers a realistic novel; he says on the tongue of the narrator, "my writer friend, Tawfiq Abdul-Rahman, asked me: What is the news of the gypsy? I replied, Al-Makhzanji closed the storehouse to me, he does not want to open the storehouse, and may God open it for all of us (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 19). Then, if readers view this speech as a confession by the narrator that he is Al-Kharrat with the mask of the novelist and the hero together; this implies realistic events, even if they are fused with imagination, dreams, visions, or memories that make them magical. So, *The Gypsy and Yusuf al-Makhzanji* and Al-Kharrat expose the depths of human soul and existence. In this regard, K. G. Kofoworola (2013) says that "myths, mysticism, and madness provide the esoteric foreground for man's existence on earth because of the assumption that life is a mystery that only can be truly grasped when approached from the angle of that which is abstract" (41). Such

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<sup>3</sup> Eros, son of Aphrodite, is the personification of intense love desire and he is depicted throwing arrows to people in order to hit their heart and make them fall in love (Campbell, 2004: 144).

a view forms an artistic vision that consecrates a double reality: the sensual reality of life characterized by chaos and inhumanity, and the inner reality of Al-Kharrat, which consists of his memories, dreams, and visions, and rebellion against life and values, and of human alienation of spirit and thought. This equation makes the erotic experience ambiguous and the theme of love oscillated between irrationalism and mysticism.

## 7. The Mythical Female:

The narrative female implies the significant code through which Al-Kharrat invades the world of myths. The mythical narrative signifiers destabilize the structure of the narrative, and the gypsy becomes the central character as a semiotic sign par excellence. "It is ... very exciting to find so many powerful female hero figures and revised myths" in modern fiction (Segal, 2019: 1151). Obviously, Al-Kharrat creates his novel in an artistic style, in which he evokes myths to offer a loaded material for cognitive psycho-mythological criticism. Therefore, Al-Kharrat enriches his novel with connotative and suggestive thresholds, elements of attraction and familiarization. They create an stylistic design with enlightening centers that inspire curiosity and stir desire; so, *The Gypsy and Yusuf Al-Makhzanji* becomes a title that stores metaphors loaded with human, mythical, cultural, and historical signifiers. Such codified signifiers refer to the genesis and the enlightening moment that implies a mystical philosophical vision.

The Gypsy represents the narrative beginning and the end; she advances over Al-Makhzanji, creating an ambiguous, in which Eve emerges from Adam's left side, signifying a mythical and mystical image. This narrative process overrides the essence of narration, creating a gap between the Arab societal structure and its image in the novel. Obviously, Al-Kharrat grants the gypsy a primacy in the title, so that Al-Makhzanji seems subordinate, camouflaging the reality of the narrative. This stylistic image constitutes a mystical dialogue whose principle is dual in action and emotion. Al-Makhzanji says, "There is no room to talk about action or reaction in the world of the unity of existence among the reasons like information, action and reaction, passivity and positivity, truth and creation, and finally male and female, one eye separated between the two parts by transient causes that lead to extinction..." (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 19). Thus, the title works in favor of the reaction over the action. Meanwhile, Al-Kharrat confers the absolute myth to Al-Makhzanji, signifying condensed mystical image of seduction and temptation. So, the narrative dedicates the essence of the action, in which Al-Makhzanji dominates the narrative structure. This point highlights the origin

of the plot and its: "the gypsy tells him while he is sitting at his table in the store: You are the one who makes us, you alone lead us in paths that do not guide us, you only draw our destiny, we are the creation of your hands, so what do you intend to do with us?" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 97). This quote reflects the story of the anxious artist, always striving for completion and implies sufist implication.

Stylistically, Al-Kharrat masters his narrative techniques, aesthetics, realistic tone, and new sensitivity, based on dialogue, creative description, tempo-spatial space, psychological, and psycho-mythical, and narrator focalization (the omniscient narrator). In addition, Sufism "relinquishes the worldly pleasures, the cheap sensations, the materialism and the corruptions, but not in the least withdraws from the worldly living. He earns his own bread and is never a parasite or a menace to the society" (Bilqies, 2014: 55). Thus, Al-Kharrat evokes specific relevant myths based on several topics that serve the experienced in its Sufist tone.

Moreover, Al-Kharrat prefers using the adjective "gypsy" to embody seduction and the passion, Anima. Relke (2007) indicates that the anima often appears as "a part animal, part human creature ... signifying its mediation between the human and otherworldly dimensions. It appears in cultural mythologies and personal dreams and fantasies as a compelling force that unites the conscious ego with the unconscious forces of the wider Self" (1). In this sense, Carl G. Jung (2014) indicates that "the collective unconscious, however, as the ancestral heritage of possibilities of representation, is not individual but common to all men, and perhaps even to all animals, and is the true basis of the individual psyche" (38). Therefore, the woman residing within the man, in the collective subconscious, with her repressed and pressing desire that always looks for a break.

Meantime, the second party bears an explicit name, Yusuf, with a signifying adjective, Al-Makhzanji; the name Yusuf is a sign that denotes real, mythical, historical, and religious implications. Then, the adjective, Al-Makhzanji, refers to a specific destination as a place of holiness and loyalty. Accordingly, Yusuf Al-Makhzanji is a signifier of several meanings of faithfulness, dignity, loyalty, and power. Moreover, Al-Makhzanji's association with the gypsy is to deepen the myth motif of sedition. This name also connotatively implies the quality of masculinity in human thought over the female. For this reason, as the name gypsy evokes a number of feminine mythical allusions, Al-Makhznaji is no less significantly rich; he symbolizes the myth of the Pharaonic hero and represents the modern Yusuf of Al-Kharrat. Yusuf Al-Makhzanji implies successive connotations that parallel the connotations of the gypsy. Both characters' combination



creates the desired overall image of life, love, and existence and the completeness that each party forms with the other.

Artistically, Al-Kharrat creates a mandala that is the magic circle to symbolically represent the struggle for the total unity of the human self. For Jung (2014), mandalas often symbolize the self, and appear symbolically to "represent the striving for individuation, wholeness, and psychological integration through the reconciliation and unification of opposites" (196). Hence, Al-Kharrat masters the artistic techniques of narration that evokes myths to offer a material for cognitive psycho-mythological criticism. As mythicized figures, the Gypsy and Yusuf Al-Makhzanji refer to mandalas that Al-Kharrat uses to raise questions about frustrations, hopes, love, justice, freedom, and existence. Moreover, Al-Makhzanji is a philosopher, who believes in such values as great iconical bases of existence. He also believes in essences of man's existence, freedom, justice, beauty, ecstasy, and destiny. They are all exits to get out of human crises to the world of ancient myths. In this sense, Josef Campbell (2004) states, "myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation" (xxiii). Thus, Al-Kharrat uses myths to express political or social issues that dominate the Arab societies. He portrays some of the social issues that occur in Arab societies; the most important of which are the illegal social and familial relations.

## 7.1 The Gypsy (Isis):

Mythically, Isis is the goddess of sedition and fertility; she also represents the eagle bird. Relke (2007) says that Isis is "a wife, a mother ... who nurtures and protects her son, Horus. She suffers with all women, as they nurse and protect their children from snakes, scorpions, and life's vicissitudes" (9). Al-Kharrat evokes specific myths that serve human experiences, mainly absurdity and existence that constitute the narrative iconical values and the reliability of his narrative. In this regard, the gypsy becomes the symbolic iconical code that oscillates between the earth and the sky. This mythicized, saintly, mystical female is the center of life, and existence, and genesis. She is also the center of Al-Makhzanji's life for she decides on his fate. She is dynamic with aesthetic and semantic amplitude. In short, she is Egypt and its various ancient myths and symbols of human life and existence that Al-Kharrat, (Al-Makhzanji), aspires to evoke. She is his own myth that he ventures into the realms of the subconscious and the metaphysical; she is also his underestimated adventure to actualize female tragedy. She is his "feminine world: Reem, Manoura, Rama ... the

feminine essence and its manifestations and transcendental expressions of masculinity and purer love" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 59). Thus, Al-Kharrat's narrative myths are preserved from loss as they contribute to the cognitive aesthetics of his narrative structure.

Ostensibly, Al-Kharrat bestows upon the mythicized female mythical manifestations and motifs until this mythical female becomes a realistic mythical creature. This notion implies the duality of the gypsy and Al-Makhzanji; mythical allusions of fertility and gender become an aphoristic constituent of Al-Makhzanji character. Campbell (2004) argues that mythical females play "creative and redemptive roles of the female power, first on a cosmic scale as the Mother of the Universe, then again on the human plane as the Mother of the Hero" (36). Thus, Al-Kharrat's Al-Makhzanji evokes the myths of death, rebirth, and fertility to create his individual myth, represented in the gypsy and the immortal feminine beliefs of genesis, rebirth, fertility, renewal, and love. For instance, the famous Pharaonic myth of death and rebirth is evoked as a true natural myth, implying motifs of love, fertility, and rebirth. Jung (2014) argues that "the animus of a woman and the anima of a man, as two corresponding archetypes signify autonomy and unconsciousness that explain the stubbornness of their projections" (147). Such mythical signs signify the restoration of Al-Makhzanji's life and fertility, away from his inner world of the subconscious and the outer world of reality. Al-Kharrat uses many mythical motifs such as the thematic myth of death and rebirth.

In addition, the loving gypsy, Isis, tries to pull Al-Makhzanji, Osiris, to the essence of his existence, where she gives him oxygen to breathe by embracing him, granting him existence by letting him insert his penis into her vagina. According to this act, "the ultimate experience of love is a realization that beneath the illusion of two-ness dwells identity: each is both" (Campbell, 2004: 260). Thus, Al-Makhzanji gets his permanent desire fulfilled to return to the origin, essence, perfection, and love. The gypsy, having all the elements of fascination and the qualities of her seduction, is not the sole goal of Al-Makhzanji; rather, she aids Al-Makhzanji to achieve completeness. Originally, using the physical allurements, Al-Makhzanji seeks a mere sexual intercourse that is almost intrinsic and mechanical, with her techniques of aiding penetration, pushing, hugging, ejaculation and pulling, manifesting her plurality of feminism, associated with masculinity to purer love" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 59). Al-Kharrat's informative myths are part of human life civilization since the dawn; it is the law by which man organizes his life, where events are extraordinary.

Furthermore, Al-Makhzanji's love of the gypsy throws him into his desirable world of perfection and a new entity. Thus, the mythicized gypsy suffers the burdens of the Al-Makhznaji's dreams of having sensual experiences that signify the light of the first life of practicing Osiris' mysteries in the sacred room. Further, Al-Makhzanji ascends the throne of the absolute, "The gypsy, Reem, throws her body in the arms of Al-Makhzanji on the floor in the storeroom ... hanged up to the soaring ceiling" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 51). Al-Kharrat fuses the mythical with the real, the Greek and the Pharaonic; he adopts an internal, spiritual, and experimented narration in his novel. He is aware that the inferred meanings need two insights: the insight of awareness and insight of imagination; both contribute to the interactions of the cognitive, cultural and life aspects that manifest the writer's narrative view and style.

Moreover, the gypsy does not leave the world of the Osirian Al-Makhzanji, giving him an opportunity for his eternal return; the dream that haunts Al-Makhzanji, Osiris. Osiris is "the Lord of infinite affliction, in the Egyptian myth ... when he returned from the dead, his brother slew him, tore the body into fourteen pieces, and scattered these over the ground" (Campbell, 2004: 85). In this sense, Al-Makhzanji gets an opportunity to communicate with his outer world, where his desired other is present as a part of his entity. Al-Makhzanji says, "I want you to mutually make intercourse with me, I want to live after death, you and me need to be one together, connected and never separated" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 51). Thematically, Al-Kharrat presents his realistic life philosophy with visions, dreams, mysticism, and reality. Such a style gives daily events timeless narration, with poetic rhythms and techniques of artistic narrative structure.

Furthermore, Al-Kharrat evokes thematic myths of Egyptian theology, especially Osiris; Osiris is multi-chambered. Osiris performs his erotic rituals, to realize his existence. On her part, Isis does everything to revive him; she starts to collect his parts, namely his penis, the source of fertility or rebirth. Besides, Osiris "represents the male productive force in nature and is identified with the setting sun. Osiris is thus the ruler of the world of the dead in the mysterious human space" (Kofoworola, 2013: 120). Moreover, this action applies to the gypsy and Iza, the Pharaonic goddess of magic and household; both of them integrate into one entity, with which Al-Makhzanji seeks to unite. Over the fertile valley, Isis searches for Osiris and finds his fourteenth organ, penis: the organ of life. Al-Kharrat's narrative skills in modern novels derive on stylistic modernity and sensibility. In addition, the overlapping image of the gypsy Isis reflects on the two intertwined worlds of Al-Makhzanji: the inner world of the unconscious, visions, and the subconscious, and the external

world of reality. For Al-Makhznaji, the gypsy yields the divine and the earthly; the divine yields Isis - the Goddess of love and beauty- and the lost Paradise. Meantime, the earthly is divided into the mother, the beloved- the sources of love, warmth, and tenderness and the other half, the earthly. Here, Braswell (2009) argues, "Evocations of language and myth affiliated with this subversive dynamic encourage the investigation of their significance in the framework of binary structures that privilege the negative and the nocturnal (2).

Seemingly, Al-Makhznaji tries to uncover his subconscious with deep introspection, in which he might dispel his darkness and destroy the wall of death that prevents him from his beloved. In this sense, Al-Makhznaji's superego responds to Al-Makhznaji, the reckless rushy other, "come down and behave wiser! Are these subconscious creatures not under the force of actions? ... They should have bodies with shapes and forms that they choose for themselves outside the logic of the familiar world" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 14). This situation explains the semantic charges, which the heroine gypsy carries in this novel; she starts as Isis and ends as Eurydice. Then, the gypsy wears realistic and mythical masks; masks of seduction and sensual temptation. She also wears the mask of the Sufi temptation, the Sufi lover, with whom Al-Makhzanji seeks to reunite to enjoy his completeness or perfection. "The erotic violence is the same as the erotic affection, fused with ascending and mystical sublimation, as a result of lofty wandering in the heavens of eroticism" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 24). Thus, with the ascent of the gypsy on the throne of the mystical essence, Al-Makhzanji ascends to knowledge of the desired love, truth, and existence. However, the prestige that the gypsy bestows on the Al-Makhzanji quickly disappears, and the light of knowledge, love, and presence turns into darkness again. This transformation actualizes the mystical end of gypsy that realizes the absence open to life of entity and existence.

## 7.2 The Gypsy (The Terrestrial Eurydice):

In the novel, the gypsy becomes Eurydice, who is the wife of Orpheus and the reason for his descent into the Underworld. Meantime, Al-Makhzanji transforms into Orpheus, exchanging their roles, where female connotations deviate, because Al-Makhzanji does not achieve reciprocity with Uraeus, except through the motif of death, while this exchange entirely appears between the gypsy and Eurydice, both die with lots of sadness, and passions. Then, Al-Makhzanji gets immensely worried and miserable to know the perpetrator, who extracted joy and life from his delightful world, "They know that sleeping with a gypsy is associated with death" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 74). Here, Al-

Kharrat collects the mythical female masks in the character of the young gypsy, leaving the reader to search for the origins of the myth and link them to the thematic and stylistic levels of the text. Moreover, the young gypsy is like phoenix that dies in the fire, and from its ashes a new creature emerges. On her part, the gypsy, Reem, with a luminous face, meets her inevitable fate, as she is killed, as is Eurydice. This accident returns Al-Makhzanji, Orpheus<sup>4</sup>, to his bleak, dark, and incomplete world, he cannot realize that his actual being is temporal and his existence is destined for mortality. Al-Makhzanji says, "Why did I meet this fate? Then, how cruelest is this separation!" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 54).

Obviously, the gypsy has a beauty characterized with anxiety and uncertainty; she is the signifier of Al-Makhzanji's fate, referring to the inevitable detachment or death. This context implies a mythical significance, where the gypsy is a mythicized realistic character. Thus, Al-Makhzanji faces unjustifiable cruelty, pain, and imperfection. In addition, Al-Kharrat uses erotic practices and bodily sensualities to pose his cosmic questions and human existential desires, which are currently unfathomable universal secrets, despite the endless human efforts to uncover them. Accordingly, Al-Makhznaji views at the lustful bodily practices as unique cosmic movements upon which life and existence depends. Thus, the gypsy as a signifier receives a set of semantic connotations that bring us closer to the novelist's ambiguous vision. Therefore, the gypsy transforms from the mythical Eurydice<sup>5</sup> into a mystical sacrifice, which the Sufis offer to win the lover and achieve the desired entity as in the case of Al-Makhzanji. Thus, the gypsy establishes a philosophical concept that represents the lost lover, whom Al-Kharrat celebrates and addresses to his readers; this lover is, metaphorically, the homeland, Egypt. Al-Makhzanji says, "What happened to the poor defeated Reem? You, Uncle, have been strayed to a world of abstracts and has nothing to grasp, concrete, tangible" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 55).

### 7.3 The Gypsy (The Body Female):

Al-Kharrat grants the gypsy's body pioneering professionalism in the universal practices of emotional eroticism and practical existentialism. Once he distances the body from sensations and

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<sup>4</sup> Orpheus myth is about his love to Eurydice. When Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, was killed he went to the underworld to bring her back. Fascinated by the beauty of his music the god of the underworld allowed Eurydice to return to the world of the living (Campbell, 2004: 382).

<sup>5</sup> Eurydice was a nymph in Greek mythology, one of the daughters of the god Apollo. She was married to Orpheus, a legendary musician and poet. She stepped on a snake; she was bitten and died (Brunel, 2016: 934).

seduction, he transcends the body to upper illumination or Sufi enlightenment, wearing the mask of his sacrificed sheikh, the Islamic Sufi. The latter is the main religious consultant to Al-Makhzanji, the hero, who believes that God created the woman and "He did not leave her place empty ... He was taught to find birth and reproduction in the earthly world. So, matrimony was the greatest connection between the original and its branch" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 100). It seems that Al-Makhzanji preserves the words of his contemporaries, and his body transcends its sensory identity and distances itself to the mythical mystical image. Also, this distancing makes Al-Makhzanji express bewilderment and admiration for this body; he says, "All this romance is in the bodies of gypsy women, the bitches, in a way or another. Nonetheless, such bodies inhabit his body, occupying all the corners of his consciousness, he no longer realizes human norms and customs, except for these female bodies in which every female has the totality of femininity of the whole world" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 59). Here, Al-Kharrat deals with the female body, the gypsy, as a special design, with non-sensory features and qualities that transcend those that entrenched Arab thought that is emptied of spiritual essence. The Arabs, with their patriarchal tendency, have adapted specific concepts of beauty, the beauty that is for the sake of the body and the body that is for pleasure that constitutes a narrative aesthetic value in the novel.

Thematically, love and sex are congenial, and body is the chemical reactor, in which love and sex interact. Meantime, beauty is the igniter of that interaction and helps achieve the balance of the equation; the result is sexual pleasure and sometimes having children. This result makes the matter of love ambiguous, for souls "resort to absolute inclination to sex. It is also a solution to souls' isolation and inability, and they flee from the tough reality to fall into the illusion of love or sex; a thing that generates human inner feelings of isolation and loneliness, things that arouse sensual pleasure" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 59). Obviously, the novelist, through Al-Makhzanji, the hero, tries to raise both sides of the equation, love, and sex, to a superhuman level. This is the reason that makes Al-Makhzanji hesitate for a moment before the conceptual word of love that is a matter of more than having sex and that implies purity in eroticism that overrides concepts of love, sexual practices, and the mechanisms of intercourse.

It seems that Al-Makhzanji's certainty of love of the mythical gypsy prompts him to see the features of the female body from a memorial, sacred perspective, through which the image of the mythical, mystic lover transcends over the limitations of human beings. This female body is the refuge of Al-Makhzanji, where he resorts on his overwhelming days, the refuge that resembles an adventure to

practice his rituals and worships. It is also the essence that he returns to, the existence, and the earth; it is Egypt, with its entire cultural heritage, its borders, and geography. Therefore, the struggle of Al-Makhzanji to reach it, the body, and identify with or to take shelter in is a form of the Osiris case in its resurrection. This is a dream that Al-Makhzanji's unconsciousness never leaves. Thus, the body of the gypsy bears the burdens of Makhzanji's conscious and subconscious, similar to what the gypsy herself carries out. He says, "I know you under the name of Sekhmet<sup>6</sup> as the body of a meek woman tied to the ground with the head of a fierce lioness with blazing eyes ... I know you when you carries your baby on bright lunar nights, wandering through the narrow sand paths ... bearing the burdens of the world ... I know you under the name of Hathor<sup>7</sup>" (Al-Kharrat, 2004: 47). This depiction shows the way the female body transforms into a mythical entity, in which the sensuality is fused with the sacred, as shown in the following scheme:

The gypsy's body composed of:

- 1) The world body, which contains
  - a) the body of the sky,
  - b) the body of Sekhmet,
  - c) the body of Hathor (the sacred cow).
- 2) Egypt body, which contains
  - a) Delta body
  - b) Upper Egypt

This is the way the female acquires a metaphysical identity that Al-Kharrat weaves from the springs of his irrational dreams and endless wanderings. Al-Kharrat is keen to invoke the signifiers of the body that enact love and provoke lust, such as dancing, which evokes the Sirens<sup>8</sup>, and Bacchuses<sup>9</sup>; symbols of ecstasy with their movements accompanying the rituals of birth, death, fertility, and infertility. Al-Kharrat's narrator says, "... the dance of truth, the exodus of woman with all her names from a truncate rib, and her longing for Adam, Adam's nostalgia for her, God's nostalgia for the

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<sup>6</sup> The altered ego of the Egyptian birth goddess, Hathor, is the destructive side of the mother archetype (Relke, 2007: 3).

<sup>7</sup> Hathor, identified with the cow, is the gentle mother, the lover of Horus, and protector of women in childbirth (Relke, 2007: 3).

<sup>8</sup> "The Sirens belong to the underworld of hell, the heavenly world of music and also to the marine world of sailors" (Brunel, 2016: 1040).

<sup>9</sup> The god who is "ploutodotes - the giver of riches ... known as the god of agriculture and wine, but is also associated with fertility, drama, and revelry" (Brunel, 2016: 310).

worship of lovers" (Al-Khrrat, 2004: 78). Thus, the dance invokes the myth of creation, which is manifested in its significations and extends its radiance through the narrative units, where Adam and Eve are semantically the two poles of earthly life and the two poles of the novel with its mythical or sacred reflections. Furthermore, Al-Makhzanji's connection to the gypsy is a mythicized image of Adam's connection to Eve, with whom he communicates to achieve his lost entity because of separation. It signifies an embodiment of the Sufi's descension that implies perfection. The victimized gypsy returns into existence with her superego with which Al-Makhzanji, the mystic, has long sought to unite. He resumes feelings of sadness, pain, passions, and regret ... and asks whether the painful chase between him and those who pursue him for revenge or mere oppression ends up!

Moreover, the death of the gypsy and the absence of the superego reveal the essence of Al-Makhzanji, the mystic, the stabbed, the besieged, and the alienated. He is almost caught by the missing voice of "the other Al-Makhzanji ... and the subconscious." This action implies a mythical and mystical sanctity, because the Sufi's feeling that his existence relies on original violence and forced persecution makes his whole life painful and devastating. This painful feeling is not reflected in the Sufi's private life and existential awareness, but in his relationships with others, they [others] are unaware and do not understand the depth of the mystical narrative, that is, the depth of the love experience. In this regard, Bilqies (2014) argues, "mysticism is love of the Absolute, the One Reality, also called Truth, Love, or God" (55). Consequently, the truth is that the gypsy is nothing but a mask that Al-Makhzanji uses to add to his bleak world a luminous enlightenment. Moreover, his love becomes eternal in the land of injustice, oppression, and iniquity, the land of timeless destination. This situation explains Al-Makhzanji's awareness of the ideas of the modernist thoughts and visions. He describes his era as "contemporary, friendly, and compassionate" (Al-Khrrat, 2004: 117). Al-Makhzanji simply sees love as the path of perfection; therefore, there is no perfection except with a female, and there is no perfection for her without the male. Thus, the female myth is aesthetically and cognitively manifested in the image of a goddess, the mystic lover, who overrides all descriptions. This mythical female appears in various mythical goddesses; they represent the dreams and visions of Al-Makhzanji (the persona of Al-Khrrat), as well as his eternal love for Egypt, the homeland, the first and eternal beloved so that he can resume the balance in the world in general and in his character in particular.



## 8. Conclusion

It is aesthetically clear that Al-Kharrat makes his own myth from the folds of the first human being, the wreckage of his forgotten memories, his reasonable, or unreasonable, dreams. Therefore, his female exercises her dominance in his novel, after offering her a mythical identity, manifesting his artistic cognitive achievement, following the example of the first human creature, on whom he bestows authority and leadership, because of her physiological capabilities and mental and spiritual experiences. His female has miraculous tempting body, which seems linked to the divine power, with the transparency of her soul that enables her to mediate between the world of humans and the world of the gods. Thus, she is the first priestess, the first witch, or soothsayer, with non-lethal weapons, among which sex is the weakest. So, Al-Kharrat predicts the throne of the human beings religiously, politically, and socially, the throne that is dominated by the mothers – females. In this respect, the gypsy occupies the throne of al-Makhzanji, who seems anxious, deteriorating, and shaky, searching for solid grounds to rest on so that he can transform to a man with steadfastness, completion, and immortality. Al-Kharrat's mother-female is the mythical female, who constitutes the last choice that Al-Makhzanji desires to reach and realize, but he fails; he continues having the nostalgia and the unbridled desire to attain what he desires. The gypsy remains resilient and unattainable, she has always been and still is a little secret linked to a greater secret that lies behind all the changes in nature and universes, behind which there is a great universal female, who is the origin of all things that return to her womb.

Al-Kharrat is aware of the absolute power of the female and puts her in high leadership in the threshold of the title, seemingly, as an opportunist measure that justifies the surrender of Al-Makhzanji to the deteriorating imposed reality. Therefore, he runs to take refuge behind the mythical gypsy in order to free himself from the shackles of helplessness and fear. This mechanism signifies a bias comparable to the bias to "... descriptive myth of women at the expense of men, because feminine myths often arise after the defeat of men in historical battles in front of the superior armies and treacherous enemies. Thus, the undefeated women, heroines, rise to restore their glory and eternal sense of prestige and superiority. This action proves that such women are myths of their time, myths on which Al-Kharrat puts his endless dreams, absurdities, and great questions, in order to restore balance to the world in general, and to his self in particular.

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