

The Sea and Legendary Propensities in Jamila Zenir's Short-Story Collection *the Sea Nymph*

البحر و التزوع الأسطوري في المجموعة القصصية "جنيت البحر" لجميلة زنير

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Abstract:

Legend has long served writers as an inexhaustible source and a precise instrument for articulating the self, its affects, and lived experience with its prevailing values. Accordingly, critics have examined how legend shapes narrative poetics. In her short-story collection *The Sea Nymph* (Jinniyat al-Bahr), Jamila Zenir mobilizes this technique and fuses it with a second dominant motif, the sea. The seascape operates as a sustained preoccupation and as a mirror that reflects the tragedies of lived human experience. In her short stories, she synthesizes reality with realms of imagination and illusion, and departs from the conventions of classical short-story poetics through the adoption of innovative experimental modes and techniques aligned with the transformations of the contemporary era. In doing so, Jamila Zanir has made a significant contribution to shaping the poetics of the contemporary Algerian short story and to its development in both form and content.

key words: sea; legend; *The Sea Nymph*; Jamila Zenir; short story.

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تعدّ الأسطورة منبعاً لا ينضب لجميع الكتاب و وسيلة فعالة للتعبير عن النفس و خلجاتها وعن تجارب الحياة والواقع و قيمه السائدة، لذلك اهتم النقاد و الدارسون بظاهرة توظيف الأسطورة في النصوص السردية؛ لما لها من أثر واضح في تشكيل جماليات الخطاب، ولقد استثمرت الكاتبة "جميلة زنير" في إبداعها القصصي (جنية البحر) هذه التقنية و أضافت إليها تيمة أخرى (البحر)؛ هذا الفضاء الذي شكّل

هاجسا من هواجس الكتابة عندها و مرآة عاكسة لتراجيديا الواقع الإنساني المعيش. حيث جمعت في قصصها بين الواقع وبين عوالم التخيل والأوهام، وتمردت على الأعراف النمطية للكتابة القصصية الكلاسيكية؛ باعتمادها على أساليب وتقنيات تجريبية جديدة تواكب تطورات العصر الراهن، وبذلك تكون جميلة زنيير قد أسهمت في تشكيل معمارية القصة الجزائرية المعاصرة وتطورها شكلا و مضمونا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البحر- الأسطورة – جنية البحر- جميلة زنيير- القصة.

1.Introduction:

From antiquity onward, the sea and literature have been entwined. Classical epics such as the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, and later *The Thousand and One Nights* with Sinbad's marvellous voyages and the paired tales of Abdallah of the Land and Abdallah of the Sea, stage adventure, risk, and a drive to test the unknown—leaving a lasting mark on world culture.

Across centuries the sea preoccupied writers and artists. It inspired poetry and prose alike and occupies generous space in the literatures of many peoples from antiquity to the present.

Imagination then pictured worlds beyond the shoreline and spun myths, legends, and practices tied to the sea. Relations with natural forces changed over time. Some literatures treat the sea as sacred and inspiring; others voice fear and dread; still others render it as fierce, even punitive. By contrast, numerous texts depict tranquil coasts and safe harbours as sources of livelihood and sustenance. The literary record thus presents the sea in its full range.

Jamila Zanir, a writer from the Jijel province, has spent her entire life by the sea, which has served as a vital source of inspiration, creativity, refuge, and even fear. Consequently, the sea occupies a central role in her works, including *City Walls*, *Anis al-Ruh*, *The City of Jijel*, and *The Circle of Dreams and Storms*. Zanir is among the writers profoundly shaped by the sea and influenced by its qualities—lightness, flexibility, mystery, calm, and turbulence and other symbolic elements that suggest the personification of the sea and its vocabulary. Accordingly, this paper aims to extract the characteristics of the short story and the principal new techniques associated with the myths of the sea in Jamila Zanir's narratives. It will focus in particular on one of her most remarkable texts, the short story *The Sea Nymph*, thereby examining the distinctive literary experience of this Algerian storyteller.

2. The Sea and Narrative:

Arabic letters, like other literatures, include extensive writing on the maritime sphere. In pre-Islamic poetry it surfaces in Ṭarafa ibn al-ʿAbd and Imruʿ al-Qays, and later in travel narratives. Al-Masudi's *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems* discusses types of seas and both factual and fabulous accounts. Ibn Battuta describes the Mediterranean in *A Gift to the Observers on the Oddities of Cities and the Marvels of Travels*, noting coastal and island customs en route to China. In modern prose, the sea becomes a focal site of invention within maritime fiction.

Certain names remain central. Naguib Mahfouz handles the sea theme in *The Quail and the Autumn* and *Miramar*. Hanna Mina accords the sea pride of place, notably in *The Sail and the Tempest*, a novel that registers human suffering and the social and political struggles pursued for justice and freedom. The Palestinian novelist Jabra Ibrahim Jabra develops a distinct maritime corpus—*A Sailor's Tale*, *al-Yatir*, *The Ship*—that stays close to seafaring life and uses it to render contemporary human tragedy.

Undoubtedly, the preoccupation persists among contemporary novelists such as ʿAbdelrahman Munif, Merzak Bagtache, Laila al-Othman, and Jamila Zenir. In their works, the sea operates as a central theme, organizing worlds and characters that mirror human suffering in concrete geographies and in relation to current social and political conditions. It also provides a fit space for charting the struggle within the self and the friction with surrounding orders, a contest that endures as long as life does.

In *The Sea Nymph*, Zenir draws on lived maritime culture and on the sea's imaginative worlds. She converts them into narrative matter that is inventive and pleasurable, a stage for events, and a seascape dense with signs and symbols of life, death, and loss. The reader follows a passage into the self—its hopes and social ties—as if witnessing dramatic scenes transposed from experience.

3. The Sea and Legend in the Short-Story Collection *The Sea Nymph*

The sea asserts a powerful presence in *The Sea Nymph*, and—beginning with the title—its lineaments are bound more to the mythic than to the strictly real. It governs events and characters, taking on shifting valences that embody human dreams, ambitions, anxieties, and defeats. The seascape thus becomes a fertile ground for the wondrous and the legendary. "which manifests through supernatural phenomena, such as the speech of animals, the prolonged sleep of the people of the cave, flying in the sky, or walking on water" (Chaïb Halifi, 2007, *The Poetics of the Fantastic Novel*, p. 61).

The reading that follows proceeds from the first paratextual threshold (the title), then traces the appearance of legendary figures within the stories in order to recover the signification latent in this aesthetic construction.

3.1. Legend and the Poetics of Titling in the Collection

The title is the text's first key and its public-facing placard. It is the initial nucleus around which the work coheres. Through it we enter the text's depths and symbolic space, and it can open boundless horizons—especially in a narrative marked by the marvellous. The encounter with the title is therefore charged, for it has the capacity to place the reader in a state of astonishment, to usher them into the orbit of the strange and the wondrous, and to mobilize a reserve of ambiguity and competing construals. Marvellous narrative consequently calls for a trained reader who can interrogate it from the very first paratext (the title): “the title is no longer merely a denotative label or a gate of entry; it has become an evocative symbol, a telling metaphor, or an imagined image, (Harishi Mohammed, (s.d.). On the novel, the short story, p. 139)” a tool for discovering the text's procedures and mechanisms and, in turn, for reaching its larger semantic structure.

The title occupies a privileged position and possesses its own textuality while remaining tethered to the work through multiple functions (designative, persuasive, descriptive, connotative, and more). It is, in effect, a message exchanged between sender and addressee: “the title constitutes a shared body between author and reader through which meanings pass; it is therefore not understood apart from the text.” (Al-Qadi Abdel Moneim Zakaria , 2009, The narrative structure in the novel, p. 174) There is, in short, a dialectical relation between title and text. To understand the one, we must apprehend the other, and conversely.

The collection's title, *The Sea Nymph*, operates as a lure. It draws the reader in and prompts attention, signalling a narrative dense with mythic resonances—especially those involving mermaids and sea nymphs. As a paratext it brims with the marvellous, as does the body of the text, and it constructs a horizon of expectation that merits careful, patient analysis in light of mythic and semiotic approaches.

The author opts for lexical economy by composing the title from two nominal elements—“nymph” and “sea.” This coupling of a spatial domain (the sea) with an unseen world (the jinn) produces oscillation and ambiguity, framing a passage into the marvellous and announcing an opening onto its world.

The spatial structure is conspicuous in the title—a feature of much contemporary Algerian narrative. The sea functions as a distinctive open

space, a spatial landmark from which protagonists set out and through which events unfold in a chain of myth-tinged occurrences bound to the nymph's world. The nymph fully commands the place—the sea—so that the title affirms the seascape as the spatial nucleus that proliferates throughout the text and forecasts the stage on which the forthcoming story will play out.

One also notes a renewal in the deployment of legend, evident at the level of the title itself, which produces a jolt. *Sea nymph (Jinniyya)* unsettles the familiar image in the collective imaginary (“mermaid”). The world of the jinn is among humanity's mythic imaginaries and has long served as a vehicle for expressing early humans' inability to account for natural and other phenomena.

Linguistically, *jinn* designates a species; its singular is *jinnī/jinniyya*, with the core sense of the hidden, the concealed, the unseen. The jinn appear in diverse forms—or as the human mind imagines them. They belong to the unseen: they see humans while humans do not see them, and humans do not behold them in their original created form but rather in assumed guises. Scriptural language describes the jinn as created from fire, and classical lexicography (e.g., *Lisān al-ʿArab*) glosses the root as “to cover, to conceal; whatever is veiled from you has become hidden from you.” (Ibn Manzur, 1997, *Lisan al-Arab*, p. 742) The term thus ushers us into invisible domains; it is precisely these hidden worlds that connect the discussion to myth and imagination.

Notably, *nymph* appears in the indefinite. Which nymph does the author have in view? The genitive relation to place—*sea*—specifies her type. The nymph takes command of the setting, and the narration narrows to the nymph and the fisherman. They are the author's focus and the receiver's centre of attention. Coupling the nymph with the sea immediately evokes a familiar image in the collective imagination of ancient myths: the mermaid, the sea-maid, the “daughter of the water,” as when the story notes, “She carried him off to crystalline islands and virginal coves inhabited by none but mermaids. (Zenir, 2008, *Jinniyat al-Baḥr [The Sea Nymph]* , p. 215)

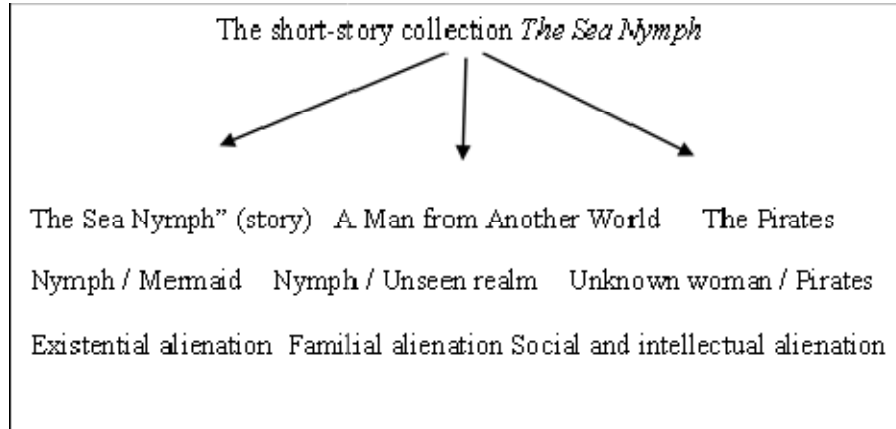
The writer also draws on the mythic reservoir of *The Thousand and One Nights*, the voyages of Sinbad, and the magic lamp. The mermaid motif is further traceable to the Japanese tale of Urashima, which recounts a young fisherman's marriage to a sea-maiden and his life with her in a palace beneath the waves; when homesickness overcomes him, she gives him a box on the condition that he never open it to return to her. He opens it, a white smoke rises, and he ages in an instant before collapsing lifeless (Harb, Talal, 1999, *Dictionary of myth and folklore figures in ancient beliefs*, pp.64–65).

The author does not simply retell these plots; she adapts and retools them to the lived present, investing them with luminous signs and symbols throughout her new narrative fabric, "it is a narrative experience that retains depth and has been described as anti-realistic, based on a reality that is distant and imaginary" (shuaib Halifi, 2007, *The Poetics of the Fantastic Novel*, p. 62).

There is, finally, a productive tension built into the title's two lexemes. The presence of jinn—creatures of fire—in the sea produces surprise and shock. How do fire and water, elemental contraries, meet. This overturns the routine expectation that a sea-maiden must be a hybrid—half fish, half human. The nymph, by contrast, is broader as a category than the mermaid. She possesses extraordinary powers, can assume any form, inhabit any place, and belongs to the unseen. Her beauty is such that she withdraws from view and appears only to whom she wills: "They long to ask him where she is... she whose shadow rises wherever he sets foot... people whisper that each sunset she comes to him as a collared dove, beckons, and he follows; that she spreads a homeland of greenery before him... and that she forbids him to delve her secrets." (Zenir, 2008, *Jinniyat al-Baḥr [The Sea Nymph]* pp. 214-215)

It is unsurprising that the title *The Sea Nymph* serves as the focal nucleus of the collection: it binds the stories with a common fabric situated in the field of the marvellous—mythic. The nymph motif explicitly leads three stories—"The Sea Nymph," "A Man from Another World," and "The Pirates"—which share two constants: a mythic female figure (the nymphs) and the seascape. Set against the mythic order, the human characters remain persistently marginal. Coercion, injustice, and loneliness mark their days, and some are orphans. Their alienation spans existence, kinship, society, and culture, thus; the expatriate individual "completely departs from the prevailing social norms, but goes further by opposing these laws rather than merely abandoning them, attempting to overthrow them. This is subject to two perspectives, one negative and the other secondary positive, with the aim of changing the social law" (Yahya Al-Abdallah, 2005, *Alienation*, p. 23), in accordance with their worldview. Consequently, most characters continue to picture attainable worlds more hospitable than their own. These commonalities may be rendered schematically as a single pattern:

Figure.1: The relationship between the mythic figures and the protagonists.



In light of the foregoing, the pairing of character/place—nymph/sea—directs the reader toward transparent, unseen domains. These are unknown, open-ended spaces that suggest ambiguity; each term also fears the other's sudden transformations, even as they coexist peacefully because each bears extraordinary powers. The shared denominator is the human subject. Once the nymph enters, the sea turns into a mythic space, and the title's allure and opacity intensify. This experimental coupling is a deliberate strategy: it proposes a different discourse that embraces wonder at first encounter and addresses the reader directly.

What emerges, then, is a sea that, in Zenir's stories, appears dreamlike, gentle, and peaceable—a vehicle for protagonists to flee previous lives and to seek change. The sea, as if moved by pity, offers its nymphs and mermaids, its crystalline cities, and the exhilaration of freedom with no price exacted. In its depths resides a tender mythic spirit beneath the show of force and ferocity. In the end the author sides with the sea and its nymphs, even if this triumph remains distant from lived reality.

Zenir's choice of a mythic title is therefore apt. It best expresses, on one hand, the givens of her lived context and, on the other, the specific demands of her short-story poetics. Myth proves the most suitable vehicle for presenting her vision of the world. The compositional aim signalled by the title is clear: a search for what is missing in the world of men in order to restore balance—woman as wife, mother, beloved, and homeland.

Overall, the seascape functions as a salient marker in the collection's title, a notable tendency in contemporary Algerian narrative at the very moment many Algerian women writers chose to contest outworn values. The short story, with its newer techniques, becomes a breathing space—an arena for speech and an exit from a long-imposed silence over women's

lives. In this vein, Jamila Zenir stakes, with *The Sea Nymph*, a distinctive literary wager within her own trajectory and, arguably, within Algerian women's narrative more broadly.

3.2 .Evocation of Legendary Personae and Their Significations in the Short-Story Collection:

The nymph legend, as it circulates in popular imagination, belongs to a primordial stratum of speculative thought grounded in ritual practices. In earlier periods it functioned as a vehicle for explaining cosmic phenomena and human predicaments, compensating for the early human's limited ability to engage a complex social and natural reality. In this sense, legend voices the human struggle with the cosmos and works as a substitute for material loss.

The author draws the collection's subjects from maritime myths because the seascape is closest to her lived geography. She seeks to stage the nymph myth as a counter-figure for truth, one that enables the unveiling of social, psychological, and human concerns. The result is an engaging style and a forceful idiom in which mythologization takes multiple forms, dimensions, and symbols from story to story.

a. *The Sea Nymph* / Existential Alienation

The first story, "The Sea Nymph," sketches a fisherman's life haunted by a nymph. He withdraws from his family and lives in a dark cellar near the shore so that he may remain close to his sea nymph. He keeps chasing her apparition between sea and land until other fishermen eventually find him dead, alone, with a female dog at his side. People suppose the nymph had taken that form and died beside him from hunger and grief.

For the fisherman, the sea is livelihood and daily bread: "He set the basket on the ground, and from it rose the scents of sea grasses, shells, and rare fish. (Zenir, 2008, Jinniyat al-Baḥr [The Sea Nymph]p. 200)" So bound is he to the sea that he seems scented with its iodine; even fish become flowers and basil: "He fell into silence, perfumed with the sea's iodine... he held his basket gently, as if carrying a flower. (Zenir, 2008, Jinniyat al-Baḥr [The Sea Nymph] p. 200)" The fisherman wages a hard struggle with the world and with himself. Hence the crashing swells, the sea's roar, the blue water and white foam become shelter and dwelling for his pain. The Sea Nymph appears and draws him into an unfamiliar domain: a gentle, dreamlike world where dimensions fracture, forms distort, and the sea shows a different face in one of its states of calm, far from its habitual image.

The nymph becomes his alternative world and the dream to which he clings. He finds ease in his closed space—the sea cellar—away from people and the noise of life. There he folds himself around his wound, bleeding in

silence as anxiety gnaws at his chest. He must therefore remain inside, to secure withdrawal, singularity, and the preservation of his strange private world. She is his companion in solitude, housing him in crystalline palaces and violet gardens: "When the nymph overtakes him with the rustle of her breath, his spirit blends with the shadows of her rosy cloud that wraps his thin body in the silk of her hair, numbness spreads through him, and she lifts him to her breast... then dives with him into the water toward her crystalline kingdom roofed with a mosaic of grass, pearls, and shells." (Zenir, 2008, *Jinniyat al-Bahr* [The Sea Nymph] p. 199).

Existential alienation deepens his revulsion at the world and hardens his resolve to belong to the nymph's domain. She possesses his life and governs his movements and affects under the law of the seas. He becomes her captive, relinquishing individuality and existence, until she proliferates through his days and being, inhabiting all his journeys and stillnesses. His life becomes wishes and dreams with her: "They say that since the Sea Nymph took up residence in him, he vowed his years to her. A woman out of legends nursed him on forgetting, traced a tattoo of allegiance on his forearm, and said: Go where you will, O seafarer; your anchorage is upon my breast. For you, the soul's first breath; for me, the conquests that begin with the first lightning." (Zenir, 2008, *Jinniyat al-Bahr* [The Sea Nymph] pp. 199-200).

The unreal worlds to which the protagonist escapes provide refuge and relief from the hardships of their reality. It is considered a form of escapism: "the mental illusion relies on a fundamental premise that complicates worlds and multiplies universes, each of which can intervene in the other; there is no truth as such, but rather as an entryway to a possible truth" (Bouchoucha Ben Jomaa, 1999, *Trends in the Novel in the Arab Maghreb*, pp. 436-437). Consequently, The more tightly he binds himself to the nymph's world—which grants him love and a semblance of stability—the farther he moves from the dark realism of his former life. He becomes estranged from his original self and acquires a new self out of the world of nymphs and seas. The imaginary expands as the real recedes. Illusion operates as a means of escape and as a bid for change.

The ending is left open; the reader becomes a partner in the game of interpretation. Did the fisherman die, or take his own life. Did the Sea Nymph assume the shape of a dog. Here the nymph's mythic agency is at work: she can leave the sea and take on any form suited to events. Despite the tragic close, the narrative renders, in credible sequential scenes, the struggle between inner and outer life, between an existentially alienated individual and a recalcitrant reality, and the inevitability of an ultimate fate.

This is where the principal function of myth resides—and it is one of the experimental resources of contemporary short fiction.

b. *A Man from Another World* / Familial Alienation:

The events of this story rest on strangeness and on myths that interpret psychic crises and social realities. Its hero, motherless, suffers under a stepmother's treatment. He rebels, flees the house, and shelters in the hollow of a tree. There a *jinniyya* takes him in, a figure whose names multiply across the tale: mermaid, night nymph, phantom of the nights. With her great wings he mistakes her for the Angel of Death come to take him, and he feels relief, believing she will free him from the stepmother's torment. The narrative then tilts toward the blaze of ancient myth, granting him a woman of light beneath whose wings he finds protection.

The plot develops. The hero follows his beautiful "angel" into her world and marries her, tasting happiness and perpetual youth. From that moment he grows abstracted and silent. People judge him mad, possessed by jinn, yet the verdict does not trouble him so long as he is spared the stepmother's cruelty. His meeting with the imagined beloved becomes the only escape from a dark reality. In the alternative, possible world he recovers what he lacked—tenderness, affection, protection, repose. It is an escapist space saturated with endless rosy dreams: "He sheltered beneath the silken tresses of her hair. She cast her wings across the sky and set off with him, astride the back of the wind, cleaving a river of light. He felt happy, enclosed in the warmth of a woman steeped in fragrance, and wished this journey at the threshold of paradise would never end." (Zenir, 2008, *Jinniyat al-Bahr* [The Sea Nymph] p. 200).

His bond to the unseen world tightens. The *jinniyya* who inhabits it prevents his return to ordinary life. Between them stands a solemn covenant, marriage, and since he was given to her, she has not granted him a pass to cross beyond the circle that shields him from the reversals of reality.

The character's inner world serves as a discourse of confession and self-revelation, highlighting the extent to which the individual is closed off to themselves and how society remains blind to the manifestations of its suffering—corruption, decay, and the narrowing of horizons. In response to this condition, the character actively seeks to chart a horizon of exploratory and anticipatory adventures, firmly grounded in the realities of their world.

The boy thus revolts against his condition and against the dominant woman in his life, and he is remade into someone extraordinary. Through this imagined woman he acquires powers that exceed the human, a stance of command, and a suspended sense of time, and he is led beyond fear and doubt. The arc runs from weakness to strength, from marginal to central. Here the marvellous action becomes explicit. The author enlists forces

beyond the human, drawn from the jinn, and through them allows the hero to overcome a bitter world by fastening himself to a woman from another realm who offers many seductive illusions. In truth the victory is temporary. He must slip free of that life, return to what is real, and confront it in order to affirm his self and his belonging before others. Otherwise the end will be painful.

In this story myth functions as an idiom for a tragic social condition: the individual who loses a mother, and with her the sense of safety and stability. It is a pattern familiar in many Arab and Algerian families and widely echoed in world and Arab lore, from Cinderella to "The Orphans' Cow." The mythic symbol here voices interior life and concealed desires. The orphan longs for a better world beside a woman—any woman—who can hold him, his pain, and his dreams. The author's deployment of myth to render the family sphere is therefore apt. The mythic text has the capacity to absorb human anxiety and shock.

On this basis, one may say that most of Jamila Zenir's stories are knotted to the sea and to maritime myths about jinniyyāt, mermaids, their extraordinary powers, and fishermen. Placating beings that carry both good and evil, stilling the sea's opaque forces, and securing an abundant catch as livelihood form part of this horizon. Myth here is an expression of struggle with the cosmos and a compensation for material loss. It also acts as an objective correlative for the truth the author seeks to uncover through social, human, and psychological questions.

The protagonists' intense attachment to the jinniyya mirrors an attachment to dream and to the unseen world where moral and affective enticements abound. That world reflects their griefs and inner pains. All these figures lack the woman—the essential element of life—whether beloved, wife, or mother. The jinniyya or the mermaid becomes the search for what is missing and a substitute for the real woman. Maritime myths operate as a mirror of the self, as water mirrors the face. The author brings these reflections to the surface with narrative tools under the canopy of myth, giving form to the constant struggle between person and self and between person and world, a struggle that, like the sea, is a perpetual ebb and flow. Hence her borrowing from the sea's myths to render human ache and human joy.

In sum, through short narratives the author addresses diverse questions in Arab and Algerian society alike. She mobilizes myth with new meanings to embody her vision in line with her creative practice. The collection *The Sea Nymph* treats alienation in its social, psychological, and affective forms, the journey of loss, the search for self, and the erosion of identity. It evokes unseen mythic personae and binds them to tragic realistic

figures whose social and psychological needs they answer and whose deprivations they compensate, so that the given is surpassed and a possible world is built. In doing so, the author puts her hand on the wound and tries to dress it, allowing her characters to recover the centrality denied them in life.

4. Conclusion:

Deploying myth in short fiction is not merely an exercise in aesthetic or formal pleasure; it is a means to represent the present and to expose reality in its multiple strata. In this collection, myth also bears a forward-looking impulse aimed at social and psychological consonance. The recourse to sea myths, in particular, signals extension and a drive toward liberation—an attempt to break from misery and incapacity.

* Jamila Zenir's choice to work through myth charges the text with a dense network of symbols and meanings. *The Sea Nymph* figures the tension between the material and the immaterial and stages a rupture between characters and their social milieu, projecting an alternative world within a horizon of the possible. The referent is not a single individual; it is a community marked by spiritual and affective vacancy.

*There is little doubt that the author imparts a marvellous inflection to the collection through her selection of jinn and ifrits and through carefully composed scenes where contemporary sensibility meets ancient lore. The gesture indicates deliberate artistic awareness: reviving heritage by intersecting the text with *The Thousand and One Nights* and the voyages of Sinbad. In consequence, Zenir's short fiction opens new expressive and semantic horizons by returning to cultural-human reserves, mobilizing their tools, and mapping them onto the modern subject's cares and aspirations.

In conclusion, the Algerian short fiction has adopted new narrative techniques that allow it to move beyond the conventions and stereotypes that long dominated classical short-story writing. By drawing on mythic and fantastic elements as means of change and departure, it presents a form of literature situated between the possible and the impossible, where reality blends with the unreal. It also seeks to reflect a wide range of human emotions, to explore the close relationship between the individual's inner world and external reality, and to address contemporary issues while raising important current questions. Within this context, Algerian women's short fiction engages broadly in experimentation, opening new horizons for examining its forms, techniques, and emerging themes—such as irony, satire, symbolism, and transgression—rooted in lived reality.

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