

Dirassat & Abhath
The Arabic Journal of Human
and Social Sciences



مجلة دراسات وأبحاث
المجلة العربية في العلوم الإنسانية
والاجتماعية

EISSN: 2253-0363
ISSN : 1112-9751

The African popular myths in the Arabic novel (Reading examples)

الأساطير الشعبية الإفريقية في الرواية العربية (قراءة النماذج)

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تاريخ القبول : 10 - 03 - 2025

تاريخ الاستلام: 21 - 01 - 2025

Abstract:

This research paper aims to investigate the influence of African mythology within modern Arabic literature by identifying its representations in selected notable works. The novels under consideration include *Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh* by al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ, *Kāmārād: Rafīq al-Ḥayf wa-l-Ḍayā' by al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Ṣiddīq "al-Zīwānī," and *Tītānīkāt Ifrīqiyya* by the Eritrean author Abū Bakr Ḥāmid Kahāl. This analysis aims to uncover the methods, motivations, and effects of invoking mythology, as well as its diverse manifestations .

Keywords: novel, mythology, African mythology, manifestation.

الملخص باللغة العربية:

تطمح هذه الورقة البحثية إلى استقراء حضور الأسطورة الإفريقية في النتاج الروائي العربي الحديث، وذلك من خلال ملاحظة تجلياتها في عدد من الروايات العربية المتميزة وهي: رواية "ضو البيت/بندر شاه" للطبيب صالح ورواية "كاماراد: رفيق الحيف والضياء" للحاج أحمد الصديق "الزيواني"، ورواية "تيتانيكات إفريقية" للروائي الإرتيري أبوبكر حامد كهال"، كاشفين من خلال هذه القراءة كيفية ودواعي ونتائج هذا الاستدعاء الأسطوري ومظاهر تجليه.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الرواية، الأسطورة، الأسطورة الإفريقية، الاستدعاء، التجلي

1. INTRODUCTION

A careful examination of contemporary Arabic novels reveals a notable inclination among Arab authors to seek inspiration from cultural heritage, particularly mythology. This trend can be attributed to the rich symbolism, profound meanings, and the extensive array of humanistic and imaginative interpretations that mythology offers regarding cosmic events.

Furthermore, mythology, especially African mythology, reflects the individuality of the African people by imparting a spirit of exploration and invention on the one hand, and a unique and authentic essence on the other. With this research, we hope to track how African mythology is portrayed in a number of Arabic novels, such as **Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh** by al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ, **Kāmārād: Rafīq al-Ḥayf wa-l-Ḍayā'** by al-Zīwānī, and **Tītānīkāt Ifrīqiyya** by Abū Bakr Ḥāmid Kahāl. One of the main questions this reading aims to answer is: Why is African mythology included in Arabic literature, and what are the artistic aspects and manifestations of this inclusion? Our investigation is primarily guided by the following questions: What are the driving forces generating this employment? What are the dimensions of its aesthetics?

Through addressing these questions, we aim to:

- Highlight the interweaving between Arabic novels and African mythology.
- Demonstrate that employing mythology serves both artistic and cultural purposes.
- Reveal how Arabic novels bring attention to African culture and its neighboring influences.

Our analysis of the selected models adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, supplemented by elements of the mythological method.

1. The Novel's Concept:

Because it portrays society's conditions and culture, the novel is seen as a mirror of society. As a result, it is essential to cultures' cultural life as a reflector and influencer. Like other artistic expressions, the book was first created as an embryonic and uncertain art form in the Western world. Later, though a little later, it changed and made its way to the Arab world. In spite of this, Arabic novels have experienced substantial changes from their infancy to experimental phases.

Various ideas and viewpoints affected by narrative strategies and the structure of the novelistic discourse have molded the novel during this voyage. We shall employ terminology that shed light on this relationship for the sake of this study, which is about the relationship between the novel and mythology. A particular idea describes the novel as "a literary genre that shares with mythology and storytelling the narration of specific events that reflect reality, convey human attitudes, and depict the world through poetic language, utilizing prose to portray characters, time, place, and events."¹ This definition makes it clear how the book and mythology are related because they both use storytelling devices and narrative momentum.

Furthermore, the novel is characterized by its adaptability and ability to incorporate all human personality expressions and outputs, including the mythological as well as realistic and imaginative forms of human expression.

2-Mythology:

Mythology has attracted a lot of interest from popular culture scholars and is regarded as one of the fundamental components of oral tradition. It is crucial to define this phenomena both linguistically and traditionally given its significance to

this study and to make it easier to extract from the narrative texts:

In **Lisān al-‘Arab** authored by Ibn Manẓūr, mythology is characterized as a contrived narrative that illustrates a power far beyond human comprehension or belief. It is noted that “a person fabricates when they create tales that resemble falsehood, and it is said that they fabricate that which lacks a true origin.”² Furthermore, he remarks, “al-istār (the lines) signify falsehood; when one adorns and embellishes statements, they are considered to be fabricating.”³ Al-Zamakhsharī interpreted this as “myths and lies,”⁴ while the **Mu‘jam al-‘Ayn** indicates that “myths (al-asāṭīr) derive from the singular **ustūra**, which refers to narratives devoid of any systematic structure.”⁵ Across the various interpretations, there exists a shared understanding that mythology transcends both truth and order.

b. Conventionally, mythology is defined as “a sacred narrative imbued with significant meaning that unveils insights pertaining to the cosmos, existence, and the human experience.”⁶ This unveiling enables individuals to attain a spiritual comprehension of the universe, reality, and the intricate relationships underlying natural occurrences. “In the framework of primitive human reasoning, mythology serves to elucidate the natural phenomena of life, the cosmos, societal structures, and fundamental knowledge.”⁷ As a result mythology is primitive when it comes to the rise and it founded to explain cosmic phenomena.

3- Types of Mythology:

Mythologies differ according to the themes they explore. Some focus on origins, creation, and formation; others examine

existence, life, and death; while still others investigate supernatural forces and realms beyond the ordinary, among various other topics.

The thematic diversity present in mythology has prompted some scholars to categorize it into “four interrelated types: ritual myths, explanatory myths, symbolic myths, and historical myths.”⁸ However, alternative classifications also exist, one of the most notable being Dr. Nabīla Ibrāhīm's framework, which encompasses the following:

a. Creation Myth: This category focuses on the origins of the universe, the process of creation, and the designation of various phenomena, irrespective of their correspondence to reality.” A key feature of creation myths is the notion that naming an entity signifies its creation or existence.”⁹ And thus the naming of phenomenon is enabling whether it is real or imaginary .

b. Explanatory Myth: This type seeks to interpret phenomena through the perspective of early human imagination. “Early humans, upon observing the vastness of the cosmos, experienced a sense of wonder that prompted profound inquiries.”¹⁰ He expresses in the knowledge of existence and its explanation.

c. Ritual Myth: These narratives are associated with religious and seasonal observances.” They preserve the verbal traditions of cyclical rituals that are well-known within traditional societies.”¹¹ And this talk which is related to the songs and the prayers and supplication ...etc

d. Civilization Myth: This category illustrates humanity's endeavors to engage with natural forces in the quest for civilization, as seen in **Tītānīkāt Ifrīqiyya**

and the Liberian tale of MALUK e. Symbolic Myth: "The Greek

myth of Sisyphus serves as an example."¹² Such myths encompass symbolic interpretations that carry psychological, literary, and social significance.

f. Hero Myth: These narratives center on individuals possessing remarkable abilities, such as the myth of *Dūkkū* from *Kāmārād* and the myth of *Ḍaw' al-Bayt* from *Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh*. This type of myth represents one of humanity's ultimate efforts to make sense of cosmic phenomena.

4- African Folk Mythology:

African folk myths, transmitted through generations via oral traditions, are notable for their richness and diversity in both structure and substance. These narratives vary significantly from one tribe to another and across different regions of Africa.

These myths encapsulate the cultural legacy of African communities, encompassing their identity, history, customs, and traditions, while also mirroring African worldviews regarding nature, existence, mortality, origins, and creation. Myths, in general, and particularly African myths, are marked by "a departure from realism and a propensity for the imaginative. The Senegalese poet and former president Léopold Sédar Senghor emphasized the African ability to harness imagination, innovate, and interpret remarkable phenomena. He asserts that any myth devoid of a supernatural component fails to engage the African spirit, resulting in profound ennui."¹³ Consequently, mythology serves as a crucial element of the collective consciousness among African communities, influenced by four components that embody the African identity:

a. **Magic:** African myths are seldom found without the inclusion of magic. "They exhibit a distinctive feature characterized by magic, which is deeply embedded in African culture and intricately interwoven into the essence of life and death. The magic present in African mythology is a natural manifestation of the magical elements that are prevalent throughout Africa,"¹⁴ as demonstrated in *Tītānīkāt Ifrīqiyya*.

b-Veneration of Ancestors' Spirits:

"The African cultural landscape is deeply imbued with reverence for the spirits of ancestors, a profound respect that encompasses both the fear of their potential displeasure and the aspiration for their safeguarding. It is believed that ancestral spirits continue to exist within the spiritual domain, necessitating that each generation pays homage to them in order to sustain the tribe's legacy and identity."¹⁵ This concept is prominently illustrated in the myth of *Dūkkū* found in *Kāmārād* by al-Zīwānī.

c-Dance and Song:

An illustration of this cultural expression can be found in the song "Al-Farḥa," which accompanies the narrative of the first human who fashioned his companion, as detailed in *Tītānīkāt Ifrīqiyya*.

d-Connection to Animals:

The rich tapestry of African culture encompasses a multitude of animal myths featuring creatures such as snakes, lions, rabbits, and spiders. "These animals are often depicted as astute and resourceful, triumphing over adversaries that are larger and more powerful than themselves."¹⁶ African folk mythology embodies the uniqueness of the African person, characterized by a passion for singing and dancing, a reverence for religious

ceremonies, a belief in the supernatural, and a profound, enduring relationship with animals.

In his examination of African mythology and literature, Khālid Hāzim asserts that "African literature merits the observation, While Latin American literature introduced us to magical realism, African literature has gifted us with mythical magic—a form of enchantment steeped in the continent's rich tapestry of myths, resonating through centuries in narratives that draw inspiration from both literary traditions and the deeply ingrained folk myths that reside within the African spirit."¹⁷ Which always sought for the invisible forces to explain the phenomena which surrounded him.

5- Mythology and the Novel:

Mythology stands as one of the most significant aesthetic influences within the realm of the novel, playing an essential role in shaping the creative and intellectual landscape for novelists and serving as a source of narrative inspiration. The incorporation of mythology into the novel can be understood through three key elements identified by Pierre Brunel:¹⁸

a. Emergence: "This refers to the direct mention of a myth or a clear or implicit"¹⁹ allusion, exemplified by the appearance of the *Dūkkū* myth in *Kāmārād*.

b. Flexibility: "This aspect is demonstrated through the adaptations and alterations made by the author to the mythical component utilized, resulting in a loss of some of its original symbolism and a lack of complete consistency."²⁰ by the format and meaningful changes on the mythological symbols.

c. Irradiation: This concept pertains to the creative influence exerted by "mythological elements, characterized by "the shadows or semantic aura that the employed mythical element casts."²¹ each symbol is surrounded by a group of significances for merely mentioning it. And Hadjira laour adds "the theme of physical significance for flexibility and irradiation"²² which gives the motional dimension to the myth inside the novel .

Through these expressive forms, mythology and the novel have become intricately linked. Given the myth-rich tapestry of human history—particularly within the context of African history—it is unsurprising that the Arabic novel has drawn inspiration from these traditions. The novel, as a versatile genre that accommodates a wide range of human expression, particularly the mythological, facilitates the fusion of the known with the unknown and the tangible with the fantastical. Mythology "unlocks the potential for extraordinary narrative frameworks within a novel, transforming character attributes and steering clear of the predictable, realistic portrayals that readers may expect."²³ Mythology operates by "transposing real events into the realm of fantasy"²⁴ and serves as "a foundational component in literature, as literature itself is essentially a reinterpreted myth."²⁵ Consequently, mythology embodies an orally conveyed phenomenon that encompasses the entirety of literature, extending beyond the novel alone. Initially, myth emerged within poetry and subsequently infiltrated various genres, contributing its profound semantic and symbolic richness to enhance literary creations.

The historical relationship between myth and the novel within the Arabic creative context can be traced back "to the late 1940s, a time when the key characteristics of the Arabic novel as an artistic form were established."²⁶ Arab novelists have endeavoured "to utilize tradition, particularly mythology, as a strategy to attain cultural authenticity and distinctiveness. This approach serves a dual purpose: it allows them to liberate themselves from the aesthetic norms imposed by the imported novel form while simultaneously establishing narrative aesthetics that are specific to Arab culture"²⁷.and this is a try to enable the identity of the Arabic novel.

Additionally, this engagement with myth seeks to foster experimentation and innovation, "as the primary impetus behind this mythological trend among Arab writers is rooted in the phenomenon of experimentation within modern Arabic literature. In this context, mythology emerges as a symbol of literary modernity and an essential artistic element that enables a text to resonate with modernist ideals."²⁸and the inspiration of this traditional form is considered as jump on the rules and breaking for the format of imitation in the novels writing .

6- Primitive Mythology and Literary Mythology:

Literary mythology arises when the fundamental elements of primitive mythology are assimilated and reinterpreted by the creator, ultimately taking shape as symbolic representations that convey the author's convictions and personal experiences. "Myth transcends individual concerns, serving as a collective matter for a community; however, in the realm of literary creation, mythology becomes intertwined

with the dynamics between the writer, their historical context, and their audience. The author articulates personal beliefs or experiences through symbolic imagery that may resonate with established myths,"²⁹ as exemplified in the "Wise Stranger" myth found in *Daw al-Bayt* by al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ, which will be examined further.

7. Representations of African Myths in Selected Novels:

A. The Tale of the Wandering Sage:

The figure of the "Wandering Sage" embodies deep wisdom and vast knowledge, often enveloped in an aura of mystery, traversing from the unknown to the unknown. This character emerges unexpectedly to facilitate the transformation and enhancement of prevailing traditional social and economic conditions by imparting guidance, insights, and philosophical reflections on life and society.

The narrative of the Wandering Sage holds significant importance in African culture, "as it is abundant in references to this phenomenon within popular literature. Many narratives concerning African communities include references to a wise figure who emerges unexpectedly during crucial moments in their history. This individual quickly integrates into the community and plays a vital role in transforming and shaping the community's circumstances."³⁰ This motif is particularly pronounced within Muslim African culture, "where the tale of the Wandering Sage is notably prominent in societies influenced by Islamic traditions across different historical periods."³¹ The outsider, often portrayed as suffering or on the run, embodies Islamic culture through their connection to the Prophet's family and acts as a transformative force in reshaping the societal framework, especially in its spiritual aspects.

This transformation takes place when the community leader embraces, assists, and incorporates the outsider into their society, leading to a fusion of Islamic and African cultural heritages. A notable illustration of this can be seen in the arrival of the Khatmiyya* and Abbasiyya* in Sudan and Eritrea, where their founders identified themselves as Muslim outsiders, serving as missionaries and benefactors through their knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, and miraculous acts. The outsider is portrayed as "a former Arab Muslim who originated from beyond the borders, settled among the African populace, integrated with them, and guided them towards Islam."³² This figure is frequently attributed with numerous commendable qualities, including a passion for goodness, generosity, and blessings.

"Folklore studies have yielded extensive insights into the concept of the Wandering Sage, which includes the following observations:

- The individual is perceived to originate from an indeterminate location.
- This figure is frequently encountered in arid regions or other desolate and barren environments.
- The roots of this individual can be traced back to regions where Islamic culture thrived.
- The stranger exhibits characteristics that markedly contrast with those of the local populace, often embodying attributes such as wisdom, beauty, bravery, strength, and other commendable qualities.
- The stranger gains the confidence of the community leader through the transformative changes they introduce within the state and society.

- Subsequently, the community leader often opts to forge a familial bond with the stranger.

As a consequence of this familial connection, a child emerges who inherits the cherished qualities of the outsider and subsequently assumes a leadership position, which is then transmitted to their offspring.³³

When examining the presence of this myth within Arabic literature, particularly in light of the previously discussed impact of the African environment, especially within the Sudanese context, one cannot overlook the remarkable contributions of the Sudanese novelist Tayeb Salih. The figure of the Wandering Sage is vividly and significantly represented across various works of his fiction. Salih has skillfully utilized this character from his early writings to his later masterpieces, establishing it as a foundational element in his novels.³⁴ Numerous critics attribute the novelist's use of this theme to a reflection of his own sense of alienation. This analysis will concentrate on a prominent myth present in Tayeb Salih's significant literary contributions, particularly in his novel "Season of Migration to the North," which directly references the Wandering Sage. "The character of the Wandering Sage is introduced as a foreigner who arrives in "Wad Hamid," with no one aware of his origins. His initial depiction is that of a famished and isolated figure lamenting a profound injury to his body."³⁵ The Wandering Sage is discovered lying by the banks of the Nile, in search of healing and care, having lost both his memory and his name, as well as the path that led him there.

He exhibits no discernible markers of his heritage or faith, aside from his light complexion and azure eyes. The inhabitants

of the village regard this newcomer as a "Sanjak, Sardar or Hikimdar*." ³⁶Despite the peculiarities associated with his appearance, manner of speaking, and religious beliefs, the residents of "Wad Hamid" extend to him their utmost kindness and generous hospitality, aiding the "Wandering Sage" in his assimilation into the community. "In a short time, he becomes an integral part of their society, is given a name, and undergoes all necessary rites of passage in a single day, during which he embraces Islam and weds Fatima, the daughter of Jabr al-Dar."³⁷ Several of his remarks on this matter are as follows: "Dear friends, you have bestowed upon me a remarkable gift that I shall cherish for all my days (...). And now, by the grace of God, I feel as though I have been among you for an eternity (...) I yearn for connection and bonds in accordance with the teachings of God and His Messenger." (Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p128)

- "The Wandering Sage has become one of us, intertwined with our joys and sorrows within the community and among the ordinary people." ."(Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p130)

- "The Wandering Sage shed tears, proclaiming, 'I have faith in God.'" ."(Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p131)

- "The Wandering Sage reaffirmed his commitment to Islam and recited passages from Surah Ad-Duha." ."(Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p132)

The designation "Wandering Sage" is attributed to the leader "Mahgoub," who recognized inherent goodness and blessings within him. "In the Sudanese social context, the term "Wandering Sage" denotes an individual whose wisdom is sought after, particularly in times of need. This person is regarded as a source of support during periods of hardship, distress, vulnerability,

and poverty."³⁸ To reinforce this notion, "Wandering Sage" is said to have positively transformed life in the region of "Wad Hamid": "It was remarkable, as if the man had been reborn at that dawn in the mosque. Prior to that moment, he had no recollection, leaving us bewildered by his condition." ."(Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p122)

A name was bestowed upon him, and with that name in existence, perhaps the man arrived in our midst in a state of grace, bringing with him goodness and blessings. Consequently, the village's circumstances shifted from unfavorable to favorable; their resilience increased, and an ambiance of love, joy, and mutual understanding flourished. The "Wandering Sage" transformed from an enigmatic outsider devoid of faith into a cherished Muslim brother, engaging in labor, agriculture, and trade during the five years he resided among them, before ultimately vanishing back into the obscurity from which he had emerged, disappearing into the water as he had first appeared.

I heard Uncle Mahmoud's voice echoing, calling out, "Wandering Sage, Wandering Sage." This prompted a commotion among the people; some of us leaped into the water while others dashed along the shore, and the flickering of torches could be seen on both sides of the bank. The entire world seemed to cry out into the darkness, "Wandering Sage, Wandering Sage." We lingered day after day, caught between despair and hope. Yet, the Wandering Sage vanished without a trace, departing from his origin, moving from water to water and from darkness to darkness. ."(Ḍaw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p299)

The most notable elements of the myth surrounding the Wandering Sage are evident here—the individual who departed, leaving a wealth of blessings and gifts for the villagers, encompassing wisdom and

knowledge. Among his most important legacies was his son, Isa "Bander Shah," who would later play a significant role in the mythos. Abdel Khalek Wad Hamad characterized him as one upon whom "the good of this world flowed as if he commanded, 'Be!' and it was so. He cultivated winter crops during the summer and summer crops in the winter, laboring diligently each day. ."(Daw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p134)

Manifestations of the Myth of the Wandering Sage:

- Cultivating winter crops during the summer months and vice versa.
- Introducing palm trees to the community.
- Presenting new agricultural products such as TOMBAK*, which he referred to as "elixir. ."(Daw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p116)
- Engaging in trade and introducing items previously unfamiliar to "Wad Hamid," including clothing, perfumes, and a variety of foods and beverages. ."(Daw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p134)
- Utilizing jaloos* in construction instead of traditional straw. ."(Daw' al-Bayt / Bandarshāh p134)

In summary, the novel "Wandering Sage" encapsulates much of the information derived from folklore studies concerning the myth of the Wandering Sage. Notably, the stranger was not initially a Muslim; however, the village played a crucial role in his eventual conversion to Islam. The mythical elements illustrated in the novel can be succinctly outlined as follows:

1. Implementing transformation within society (strength, joy, progress, etc.).
- Emerging from obscurity and transitioning into the unknown (from water to water).

- Notable physical characteristics (fair skin and azure eyes).

- Discovering the injured outsider, subsequently providing care, shelter, and facilitating his integration into the community.

In this remarkable narrative crafted by the talented novelist, we witness the establishment of cultural exchange and civilizational dialogue, bridging the past with the present, and emphasizing the necessity for openness through engagement with the unfamiliar. This endeavor seeks to invigorate the stagnation present in Sudanese society.

The novelist advocates for the appreciation of local traditions while remaining receptive to external influences, exemplified by the "Wandering Sage" who embraced Islam through the guidance of the villagers. His assimilation into the indigenous culture played a significant role in his spiritual transformation.

Based on the preceding discussion, it is evident that this myth can be categorized as a hero myth, having been transformed from its original form to a literary one through the method of "compliance." The myth of the "Wandering Sage" was refined in Tayeb Salih's imagination, serving as a foundational reference for all his literary endeavors and as a new element in his narrative framework.

B. The Legend of Maluk and Other Myths:

In the novel "African Tenaniq," the author Abubakr Hamid Kahhal* draws upon a variety of mythical elements that enrich the narrative landscape of the story, particularly centering on the character of "Maluk." In this context, the novels employ phrases imbued with mythical significance and metaphors that enhance the overall poetic framework, thereby enriching the narrative and shaping both the characters

and the events that unfold around them. For instance, upon the arrival of the stranger, he is frequently portrayed as a "Maluk" and is characterized through the tales recounted about him as "an angel descended from the heavens."

The narrative encompasses a variety of interconnected stories that explore social, familial, and romantic dynamics. This storytelling does not conform to the norms of traditional novels; instead, it often embraces folkloric dialogue or poetic elements, thereby creating a vibrant portrayal of human, psychological, and social dimensions infused with a sense of the mythical.

This mythical representation is evident in various dimensions, including the following:

- Maluk's character is depicted as one who embodies strength, skill, intelligence, and an extraordinary capacity for achievement, establishing him as a unique hero.
- The interplay of beauty and strength is highlighted, with Maluk exhibiting a power that exceeds all others.

The myth serves as a basis for delving into themes of heroism, love, betrayal, and conflict within the narratives surrounding "Maluk." The most notable is the legend of "Maluk" from Liberia, which is referenced across three historical phases: beginning with Maluk the First (the ancestor), progressing to Maluk the Son, and culminating with Maluk, the companion of the protagonist in the Eritrean novel "Abdar," who embarks on a journey marked by loss.

The narrative traverses both its overt and subtle scenes to portray the character of "Maluk," a young African who remains deeply connected to his homeland, cherishes his traditions, and possesses a fervent love for singing and music. This connection is exemplified by his unwavering companionship with his guitar: "Can you

believe? This guitar was once taller than me. I was 14 years old when it was awarded to me as a prize in an artistic competition for my singing and playing skills at the level of the coastal governorate. I take it with me as a cherished memento wherever I travel."

³⁹Music and dance embody the essence of life for Africans as a whole, transcending the individual experience of "Maluk." only .The African expresses for his all rituals by dancing and singing "the African peoples were the first peoples in the world who knew dance and singing arts and this is what appeared in the saying of **Léopold Sédar Senghor** who said" Dance in Africa is the beginning for everything and the speech is merely following dances and then it transforms to melodies and songs and dances"⁴⁰

In the novel "African Titanics," there exists a legend that underscores the intrinsic connection of Africans to music from the dawn of humanity: "As we said, the song came from the lips of the first man who existed in life. The long African legend tells that the first human to exist was a man" (African Titanics, p. 15).

This legend narrates the story of a solitary man who, in his quest to find meaning in his existence, embarked on a journey of introspection. After a period of deep reflection, he was inspired by his imagination to create a form that represented what he yearned for: "He began to carve a tree trunk into the shape of what he imagined he was lacking" (African Titanics, p. 16).

Upon infusing his creativity into the palm trunk, he fashioned a sculpture resembling a woman, marking it as "the first production of humankind" (African Titanics, p. 16).

"He transported his sculpture, envisioned as a woman, and laid her beside him. Upon awakening the next morning, he

discovered her beside him, smiling yet devoid of sweetness" (African Titanics, p. 16). This narrative encapsulated both strangeness and joy. "From this moment, the song of joy emerged... from the gasp... from the murmur... from the astonishment... from life itself..." from the perfection realized through the imagination of our artistic ancestor, the grandfather of the whole humanity from the sight of creature who is sweet and kind ." (African Titanics, p. 16).

It was a legend of the song of joy which formed the first relations between the African and singing and expressing about the extent of happiness that happened through the breaking solitary with a shade that found the best partner for a man ."the people who has an interest in tradition this song which was similar to prayer as it is the oldest African tradition melodic narrative" (African Titanics, p. 16), and this song was classified with different characteristics "it is narrative song and there are some people think that it is predictive ...and others think it is from the murmur... from the astonishment... in life "⁴¹

Singing holds considerable influence within African culture, possessing the power to dispel enchantments, as illustrated in the epic tale of "Lulu Kagmkor and His Nephew Bora," recounted by "Maluk." This narrative draws parallels to the European legend of the sorcerer's bell. According to this legend, "a sorcerer suddenly appeared in a European city, ringing a bell as he roamed the streets... The tale suggests that the sound of the bell was the enchantment the sorcerer cast upon the city's children. Upon hearing the chimes, a child would lose all awareness and follow the sound like a somnambulist into a forest beyond the city... (African Titanics, p. 12).

Upon learning of the European legend, "Maluk" endeavored to draw parallels with an African epic where the bell of migration acted as the sorcerer, while "Lulu Kagmkor"

symbolized the mothers, and his nephew, Bora, represented the children of Europe. Bora became influenced by the "infection" of migration, embarking on journeys in search of tales about successful boats arriving in Europe, persistently urging his uncle to consider migration. "Kaji (Kagmkor) contemplated the situation and resolutely decided to prevent his nephew Bora from migrating, aiming to eliminate the notion of migration from his thoughts.

The conversation shifted away from the legends of song, nearly leading us to overlook the tale of "Maluk the First," the ancestral figure whose story is intrinsically tied to music in his honor. As noted, "I composed many songs and organized poems, all revolving around him (Maluk the ancestor) and around his great ship" (African Titanics, p. 61). "Maluk the First" was a fisherman whose wife was abducted by pirates. In his quest to rescue her, he constructed a grand vessel intended for oceanic voyages; however, he tragically passed away upon completing its construction, leaving him unable to embark on the journey to find her (African Titanics, p. 57).

The tale recounts that "Maluk's departure incited great fury in the sea, and the narrators proclaim: The sea extended its watery arms towards the resting place of his ship, cradling it gently as a father would his newborn... Maluk's voice resonated as he recited his verses, and intrepid fishermen and sailors continue to assert that they frequently glimpse Maluk's vessel in the ocean's depths" (African Titanics, p. 62).

By incorporating this legend, the narrator aimed to illustrate the intertwined destinies of Maluk the First and the Maluk depicted in the novel, emphasizing their shared fate of vanishing beneath the waves of the seas and oceans, never to resurface.

This legend illustrates a tragedy that Maluk anticipated as a consequence of linking his identity to that of his sixteenth ancestor: "My sixteenth grandfather bore it

before me; my father retrieved it from those ancient times and bestowed it upon me... He did this as a means of blessing" (African Titanics, p. 57). Regarding the tale of "Maluk the Son," it does not center on his individual character but rather on a "prophetic" narrative he initiated to rival "Ibanavi" (a legendary storyteller) in the art of myth narration.

The prophetic tale centers on a stone that once possessed the ability to speak but ultimately fell silent. In summary, "On a distant day, the heart of a stone was moved by the suffering of the people... and it voiced its sorrow and resistance, offering its steadfast form to aid the downtrodden. However, the people were discontented that a stone could empathize with their struggles... They swiftly approached it and hurled it into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep" (African Titanics, p. 90). This narrative is rich with symbolism, through which the storyteller seeks to challenge the notion of migration, encouraging individuals to embrace life in all its forms and to find satisfaction in their current circumstances.

As for the legend of "Maluk the Liberian," it revolves around his vision—after drowning and death—by sailors: "He was carrying a guitar on his back, standing atop two waves gently rocking his upright body. His clothes were not wet, nor did he show fear or anxiety" (African Titanics, p. 111).

Thus, "Maluk the Third" inherited from his sixteenth grandfather the unfulfilled dream and kingship: neither did the ancestor sail and find his wife, nor did the grandson reach his paradise.

Both figures manifest as spectral beings traversing the seas, vocalizing and asserting the origins of the Maluk lineage within the ocean and their eventual demise therein. A significant outcome of this mythical representation in the narrative is the reinforcement of African identity and its deep-rooted connection to music. This legend can be categorized as a form of

civilizational mythology, reflecting the tensions between the "Maluk" family and natural forces in their pursuit of freedom and civilization. The author employs a compliant narrative style in some sections, while in others, a more revealing approach is taken, particularly evident in the legends of the "joy" song and the "magical bell."

In this invocation, there is a transition of the myth from a primitive mold to a literary form through the novelist's creativity and his ability to transform the myth from collective ownership to individual ownership.

C - The Legend of (Doku), Pharaoh of the river

This legend appears in the novel "Kamarad: Companion of Injustice and Loss" by the Algerian novelist Sidik Haj, nicknamed Al-Ziywani, "who is an academic and director of the Desert Space Laboratory in Algerian Narratives at the University of Adrar."⁴² And he was appointed different positions and supervised different ceremonies .

The tale recounts the exploits of a remarkable individual who provided aid to fishermen along the Niger River. According to the narrative shared with me by my mother regarding Abu Burima, my grandfather Ganda emigrated from the villages of Dousou many years ago due to a drought and settled in Niamey alongside other migrants on the riverbank, where they engaged in fishing during those ancient times. However, a year of scarcity ensued, causing the river to nearly dry up and significantly diminishing the fish catch. The fishermen, in their desperation, appealed to Doku, the Pharaoh of the river, yet he offered no assistance. In response, they performed the 'Folo Hori' dance, a movement that rises in harmony with the rhythm of the drum...and it is from the old customs which was existed from early

times."⁴³ This illustrates another dimension of the relationship between legend and the performing arts, akin to what we noted in "African Titanics." The mother references this legend to explain her grandfather Ganda's occupation of selling "Guro" sticks, a profession that her son Mamadou, the novel's protagonist, has consistently looked down upon: "Your unfortunate grandfather faced two alternatives: to beg or to sell 'Guro' sticks... and he chose the latter..."⁴⁴ Through this discussion, the mother seeks to convey that even legendary individuals were unable to assist her grandfather.

Mamadou is advised to refrain from lamenting the inheritance of the profession of selling "Guro" sticks on the streets of Niamey." The intent of the legend is to elucidate, alongside its educational and ideological objectives"⁴⁵, how it inadvertently serves to connect the cultural divide between grandparents and their grandchildren. "Through legends and the oral traditions of the Black community, parents convey their experiences to their children in memorable and expressive formats, encompassing knowledge about the creation of the universe and the tales of legendary heroes."⁴⁶

The extensive narrative set in Niger, along with the intricate journey of loss, leads the novelist to focus solely on the Legend of Doku to enhance his storytelling. This legend holds profound meanings that depict the protagonist, Mamadou, as one who faces rejection and a lack of acceptance, motivating him to confront the metaphysical aspects of his perilous journey of "illegal migration" from the marshes of Niamey to the promised land of Europe, navigating through experiences of injustice, grief, and

death. Furthermore, the legend underscores the shared awareness among African communities, who hold a belief in the latent powers possessed by their ancestors' spirits and the enduring nature of their influence.

Conclusion

In this study, we aimed to explore the influence of African folk legends by analyzing a selection of unique Arabic literary works authored by novelists from various African backgrounds, including Algeria, Sudan, and Eritrea. Through a thorough critical and analytical examination of these legends, we reached the following conclusions:

1. The chosen examples reflect the changes occurring in both African reality and the artistic landscape of the novel.
2. The African legend serves as a deeply ingrained element within the collective consciousness of Africa.
3. Elements such as song, dance, and magic are integral components of the African folk legend.
4. The incorporation of legend enriched Arabic literature, adding distinctive characteristics.
5. The utilization of legend enhanced the imaginative and narrative dimensions of the works.
6. The legends presented in the chosen novels emphasize the legendary character, establishing it as the most significant form of legendary expression.
7. The narratives explored invoke African legends to expand imaginative horizons and enhance the richness of the narrative landscapes.
8. The relationship between the novel and legend is an artistic imperative shaped by contemporary experimental methodologies.
9. The "Legend of the Strange Sage" seeks to promote cultural dialogue, bridging the

past and the present while encouraging openness and communication.

10. The Legend of "Doku" embodies the African respect for the spirits of the ancestors.

11. The approaches taken in the two narratives to engage with legend differed significantly: some presented it in a straightforward manner (as seen with the "Doku" legend in "Kamarad"), while others incorporated it in a more selective way (such as the "Legend of the Strange Sage" in "Bander Shah" by the virtuous doctor), and still others utilized it in a symbolic context (like the "Malouk" legend in "African Titanics").

12. In "Tayeb Saleh," legend functions as a foundational framework for the narrative.

13. The legend is employed in "Bander Shah" and "African Titanics" not only to express aesthetic qualities but also to communicate political and ideological themes.

14. The use of legend in "Kamarad" and "African Titanics" is closely linked to the existing contradictions and conflicts of contemporary society.

15. The "Legend of the Strange Sage" featured in "Dwalbeit/Bander Shah" is categorized as a hero's legend and is presented in the novel with a sense of fluidity.

16. The "Malouk" legend found in "African Titanics" can be identified as a civilization legend, presented in the novel with a quality of radiance and manifestation.

17. The "Doku" legend within "Kamarad" is recognized as a symbolic legend, similarly presented in the novel with a focus on manifestation.

18. In the works of Tayeb Saleh and Abubakar Hamer, the legend evolved from a primitive form to a literary one, whereas in Ziywani's text, it retained its primitive characteristics.

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