**Fantasy Structure in Munis Al-Razzaz's Novels: *The Labyrinth of Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers*, *When Dreams Wakes Up* and *Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa Al-Yamamah***

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the fantasy structure of three novels authored by Jordanian novelist Munis Al-Razzaz, namely *The Labyrinth of Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers* (1986), *When Dreams Wake Up* (1997), and *Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa Al-Yamamah* (1997). The study seeks to show how Al-Razzaz uses fantasy to mirror and criticize the society in which he lives. The study adopted the analytical research design. It engaged closed reading and textual analysis to collect and present data. Theoretically, the paper is grounded on works that draw a distinction between the meanings of the strange and the miraculous in relation to fantastic writings. This enabled the researchers to examine the fantasy structure in terms of form, narratives that emerge, characters and characterization, vision formation and symbolism. The findings showed that fantasy in these novels helps to create events and people in alternative worlds. The aim of this creation is to provide poetic distance to the author, give him the space to engage in a sociological criticism of his society, to inspire social action among his readers upon realizing the need to act, and to help his readers find escape or cope with what they cannot change. This study serves to underline the importance of Al-Razzaz writings in creating a social and political consciousness to inspire better living conditions in the Arab world.

**Keywords:** structure, fantasy structure, novel, Al-Razzaz

**Introduction**

isachelor of rtsdegree *L* (Al-Mashaikh, 1992; The Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2014)

Give an overview of his writing, any awards he has won (if any)…justify why you chose his work in this paper/study

Summarize the novels under study (year of publication, brief synopsis, how popular are the novels)

*The Labyrinth of Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers* (1986) is Al-Razzaz #st…nd…rd novel. It revolves around the …. The main story happens in [setting]. The novel was received well/poorly…won award in…

*When Dreams Wake Up* (1997) …..

*Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa Al-Yamamah* (1997)… The story is set in… It examines the life of… The term ‘Sultan of Sleep’ in Arab culture indicates that sleep controls and overcomes all emotions, meaning that it dominates them. The hegemony of sleepiness is the direct translation of that Arabic expression.

**Literature Review**

Review some literature on:

1. Fantasy structure
2. MunisAl-Razzaz’s writing pertaining fantasy structure

Are there any recent (10 years old or less) literature on the subject matter of this paper

**The Strange and Miraculous Fantastical Structure**

Fantasy in literature is usually associated with elements such as magic or the strange and miraculous, adventure or quest for discovery and knowledge, and the struggle to comprehend or unravel the mystery of oneself and the world (Laetz & Johnston, 2008). The robe of fantasy consists of two components that embody all forms of imagination, namely strange fantasy and fantastical fantasy. This view is based on the idea that the strange and the miraculous are part of the fantasy structure, as many critics put it, although others hold that fantasy goes beyond that to all other imaginative activities (Qassem, 2006). The latter argue that fantasy structure, through the medium of literature, aims to make the strange and miraculous familiar to humans, both in time and space (Halifi, 1997). Fantasy structure, in its strange and miraculous dimensions, exploits the human anxiety that allows the author and the reader to relate with the imagined races and places (Apter, 1989). The aim of fantasy structure is to amplify feeling, whether this feeling is positive, such as the feeling of pleasure, or negative, like that of fear (Todorov, 1994). Fantasia also benefits from “repercussions akin to moody ones, whose strangeness may at first appear inconsistent, so either it is rigid in terms of suggestion or it sends out fickle and limitless threads of it” (Halifi, 1997, p. 46).

The architecture of fantasy building tends to “fall within the borders of imagination and fantasies that are sometimes embodied in the fabric of reality” (Kharrat, 1999, p. 29). It works based on the idea that there is no wide gap between truth and fiction in literature, so that the imagined or fantastic reality consists of fragments and breaks the real world (Fadl, 1996). Fantasia does not contradict reality, but it confers on it symbolic and semantic values. It can be said that fantasy can paint worlds that allow the recipient to contemplate them rationally (Ibrahim, 1992). Further, it is in an attempt that stems from “a deep despair about the essence of reality and knowledge of the sad psychological transformations that man is experiencing” (Jumaa, 2003, p. 48). On the other hand, fantasy can reveal the interests of the characters it presents (Apter, 1989) as well as an opportunity to escape from the constraints and harshness of reality. However, “the goal and purpose of escape ranges between the fulfilment of a wish, excitement, and mere enjoyment” (Apter, 1989, p. 12). It is a means “to get rid of the usual perceptions and concepts, but the purpose behind this escape is to show the distress, the repression, and the horror that characterize our human world” (Apter, 1989, p. 20).

Fantasia is able to penetrate all structures and discourses that dominate social consciousness, (Tamer, 1993). Meanwhile, it maintains a safe distance from these structures without confronting them directly because of the danger to the novelist himself, as he evokes the worlds of what he quickly passes through and means another world (Al-Faouri, 1998). This study sought to examine how Al-Razzaz creates his own fantasy structures in his three novels, achieving the consistent goal of a creator looking for the new away from the prevailing repetitive patterns. According to Klito (1983), the true creator hates imitating those who preceded him and works persistently to create his own creative model. He liberates himself from the shackles of imitation, which gives him a special, desired pleasure (Freud, 1998). There is often a confusion between the two components of fantasy, that is, the strange and the miraculous. This confusion occurs because the two are closely related. Nevertheless, the strange is different from the fantastic, although both may create wonder; it is the reader who decides whether the wonder arises from the strange or the fantastic. New laws may be devised to differentiate them, for the miraculous “is the hesitation felt by a being who knows nothing but the laws of nature while facing an apparently unnatural event” (Todorov, 1994, p. 49). However, “The strange is that if the reader decides that the laws of nature's reality remain intact and allow the explanation of the phenomena described” (Todorov, 1994, p. 49). Meanwhile, the hesitation between “a natural explanation and another supernatural explanation in explaining a strange phenomenon is what creates the miraculous act” (Todorov, 1994, p. 87).

In a short, “the entire miracle is a break or rupture of the recognized order and an intrusion of the unacceptable into the heart of the daily unchanging legality” (Todorov, 1994, p. 45) and “hesitation is what prolongs the life of the miraculous” (Todorov, 1994, p. 48). Drawing insight from Todorov’s views, the reader may hesitate or pause and reflect before accepting the strange or miraculous events a story. However, in the end the reader must decide whether the matter is related to deception of the senses or is the result of imagination, so that the laws of the world remain the same (the miraculous), or “whether this reality is governed by unknown laws made by us (the strange)” (Todorov, 1994, p. 44), and the fantastic world “does not resemble the world of reality, but rather is adjacent to it without collision or conflict, despite the different laws that govern the two worlds and their different characteristics” (Zitouni, 2002).

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**Statement of the Problem**

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**Methodology**

The study adopted the analytical research design. It engaged closed reading and textual analysis to collect and present data. Theoretically, the paper is grounded on works that draw a distinction between the meanings of the strange and the miraculous in relation to fantastic writings. This enabled the researchers to examine the fantasy structure in terms of form, narratives that emerge, characters and characterization, vision formation and symbolism.

**Results and Dsiscussion**

**Fantasy Structure in *The Labyrinth of the Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers***

In *The Labyrinth of the Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers* (1986), Al-Razzaz begins his fantasy right from the novel’s title. The title gives the text a distinct and strange dimension from the onset, which ushers the reader into the author’s world of imagination (Abu Dalhoum, 1990). The title makes reference to a mirage, which is unreal, and merges this fantasy to the Bedouins, who are real people. According to al-Kubaisi (1998), “the Bedouins are beings with a tangible existence while the mirage is illusion and intangible.” It is precisely at this point that the hesitation that leads us to fantasy happens. When we read the title, we hesitate or pause so that the sensible (the Bedouin) can get lost in the intangible (the mirage).

In the next sections of the story, Al-Razzaz explains the controversy through the unfolding story. As one reads further into the novel, the boundaries of the worlds of truth and imagination overlap. The fantastic slowly becomes tangible reality, so that the narration gradually transforms into “a fantastic paradox” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 15). It is this paradox that makes the reader laugh outwardly as much as he cries inwardly, as he comes to terms with the shocking experiences that the characters undergo. This paradox is sustained through a narration that embodies “the contradiction between appearance and the reality of the situation” (Lulu’a, 2013, p. 2) within a mixture of satire, irony, absurdity and the strange (Nabila, 1987). This laughter, emanating from the heart of irony, does not confront but rather affirms the shocking terror that exists in the world. The one who feels terrified and laughs at it is in truth amused by his own helplessness in the face of shock (Abdel Hamid, 2003). The paradox begins with Hassanein, the hero of the novel. In some Arabic names, the name Hassanein can be combined or repeated to become, in the form of Muthanna (dual), Hassan, and Hassan conversely becomes Hassanien. The intellectual duplicity that divides Hassanein and distorts his equilibrium is reflective of the paradox that the reader experiences. As a firm believer in scientific thinking, he lectures on the subject of technology-electronics. Meanwhile, he believes in superstitions, sorcery and invisible forces. The duality of his character is revealed from the beginning of the novel.

It is interesting that the novel traces the duality in Hassanein’s life from birth. His grandfather predicts that the pregnant mother will give birth to blessed twins, but the newborn turns out to be one son. Disappointed, the grandfather says: “Name him Hassanein; he is twins in one boy, not twins in two bodies as I have foretold before” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 12). The life of the hero, Hassanein, in this novel is a mixture of possible reality and strange fantasy. He grows up in a tribe fascinated by the idea of a clan, which is “connected by big dreams, neither by blood nor lineage” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 13).

Soon after the caring grandfather dies, Hassanein finds himself alone with his mother, who is unable to give him the strength of a father after the collapse of the clan. The events proceed to this extent that at a realistic level, life for the hero is monotonous, sad and frustrating. Hassanein is then forced to find escape in the fantasy world. Hassanein, who was sleeping peacefully in his bed, wakes up to find himself in a mental hospital bed. He begins to recall events through the retrieval technique. What the reader finds strange is that, as the hero reminds us that – without introductions – he found himself carried in a coffin, and buried alive, then suddenly found himself returning to his large room without furniture, to find that he was completely naked.

Hassanein watches the world outside the sanatorium he is imprisoned in without remembering when this happened or why. He finds everything as it is, except that when he tries to get out to the people, they tremble from fear and run away from him. They think he is a ghost because he was supposed to be dead and is naked. They expect he should be in the grave and not wandering the streets. Everyone refuses to deal with the walking-dead Hassanein except his neighbour, Umm Suleiman. Suleiman believes that Hassanein is another spirit similar to her dead husband’s which she conjures often. So she says to Hassanein, “You surprised me, dear wanderer. I did not conjure you today. I did not prepare a séance, but welcome anyway. What is the news of late? Why didn't his ghost come with you?” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 37).

Hassanein sits next to his neighbour, shocked that he has become like a frightening ghost summoned by the living. His neighbour, promising to connect him with his widowed wife following his death, says, “I did not summon you today. If you are troubled, go back to your previous characteristics. I will summon you tomorrow, and I will inform your wife and invite her to attend. It appears to be a spirit. I am worried that you miss your wife” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 39). Nevertheless, Hassanein is not so much concerned about his wife, his family, or even the strange words of his neighbour, Umm Suleiman. His is mainly disoriented by the way people think he is actually dead and that he is merely a ghost. Therefore, he chooses to commit suicide to escape the horrific reality in which he finds himself imprisoned.

Just when Hassanein is entertaining thoughts about suicide, a giant cloud suddenly envelops the place and a legendary being, “replete with the smell of deep, remote, and damp burrows and dens” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 41) says to him: “I am Hassan the Second. I was going into my great occultation. Consider me as Scheherazade. I will tell you a story every night about my life to prevent you from killing yourself. I want you to postpone your suicide until all my stories are over” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 40). The desperate Hassanein, the ghost, agrees to this impossible fantasy show. He chooses to share his body with another soul that possesses him, the spirit of the legendary being, the storyteller, who regales him with tales. Hassanein and his new soul friend then begin to tells each other stories and experiences of life. They share about the ghostly life, thoughts and desires in their long conversations. Hassanein soon feels tired, exhausted and sore from this forced participation. He changes his mind and suddenly wants to get rid of the mythical being that has inhabited his body. So he visits his friend, Shalan, to find help on the matter. Shalan suggests to Hassanein that he “change his name and features, and offered him plastic surgery in order to have a new face that no one knew” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 6). Hassanein suffers in his emergency phantom life. In his area of residence, he explains that “everyone considered me a ghost that must be reconciled with, as an evil that must be reconciled with” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 65).

Hassanein predicament with his family, friends, neighbours, relatives and acquaintances takes the reader through a journey of “the inheritance of the past in the present through the behaviour of individuals separated and combined.” As individuals, the likes of Fazza, Shalan, Umm Suleiman, Balqis, Alexander and Aladdin recognize the good in him and treat him as an ordinary person. However, in the presence of others, they ignore him for fear of being accused of seeing ghosts. It is clear that these characters themselves suffer from an inability to rely on their senses to separate fact from fiction (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 66).

Meanwhile, Hassanein is oppressed by the state as it imposes a quarantine on him. He does not understand why he is isolated in a poor and painful prison having committed no crime. The state also deprives him of his natural and material rights, such as marriage, as he desires to marry his beloved Balqis. On her part, Balqis is willing to marry him even if he is a ghost. She goes ahead to have sexual relations with him. However, she soon suffers severe psychological crisis when she discovers that she is pregnant; so she sets herself on fire and dies tragically.

Balqis, who commits suicide, is no different from the people and the government. Just as the people deny that they see Hassanein for fear of being accused of insanity, the government rejects Hassanein's marriage, arguing that he is a ghost. Meanwhile, it recognizes his ghostly existence and imposes house arrest on him in a psychiatric hospital. Likewise, Balqis does not mind marrying or having sex with Hassanein, as she sees in him a consolidation of her freedom and choices. However, she cannot stand the idea of being pregnant by a ghost; so she burns herself to death. Therefore, the author uses Hassanein's ghostly fantasy to expose the falsehoods, lies and contradictions in the people and society. This unfortunate situation renews Hassanein's desire to commit suicide after everyone rejected him. The group to which he belongs has rejected him. His wife, whom he has betrayed with his suicide lover, has disappeared. He cannot find work. Even the ghost needs money to live, and everyone accuses him of causing the suicide of his beloved Balqis.

In the end, the ghost insistently decides to die, and writes a draft of the alternative world that he compose and invented. Before he commits suicide, the postman rescues him and advices him to go to the Arab Foundation building. There, the doctor in charge begins to interrogate Hassanein about the “alternative world” he proposed in the draft he prepared before his botched suicide. The ensuing conversation reveals some facts about the alternative world that Hassanein created. It is a strange world in which the possible overlaps with the impossible, and skipping over time becomes its law. This world is abuzz with conflicts and wars between the Bedouins, and “the starting point in the labyrinth of the novel is from the moment of loss, displacement, provision, and distortion of the face of Adam Al-Hassanin, who has lived in the region since time immemorial” (Hawamdeh, 1992, p. 21).

Hassanein lives at the Arab Foundation, which allows him to get to know this strange place. The building has many floors and offices that are identical to what we know today. As for the other floors, each of them represents a different period in time. Every night, a woman comes to visit him, filling his emptiness and entertaining him with stories. However, during the day, the investigation into the draft of the alternate world resumes. Outside the institution, Hassanein’s so-called friends invent stories about him, fake his life, and live luxuriously after they buy the palaces with their principles. As for Hassanein, he is still “one being who ask questions” (Al-Razzaz, 1986, p. 408).

Despite their strangeness, mysteries and interferences, Hassanein's fantasy worlds and fantasy events lead the reader to what Al-Razzaz seeks to unravel in his novel. He lays bare the crisis of the Arab individual living in false, hypocritical, cowardly and disappointing societies in the face of tyrannical, unjust governments ruled by double standards and misconceptions. Al-Razzaz presents his ideas in a fantasy structure that combines strange events with the fantasy worlds and characters. At the same time, the story enters into intelligent neighbourhoods with different narrative levels, as it exploits the religious, mythical and linguistic heritage and juxtaposes with it “the realism and the truth” (Hawamdeh, 1992). The loose plot of the novel wraps events in mystery and ambiguity, thanks to the multiple transitions between different times. This increases fragmentation, ambiguity and dispersion in the novel, which is perhaps something that Al-Razzaz intended to equate to the loss and anxiety experienced by the contemporary Arab individual in his difficult and bitter reality and which drives him to madness or to live a life akin to that of a tormented ghost.

**Fantasy Structure in *When Dreams Wake Up***

Al-Razzaz *When Dreams Wake Up* (1997) is a fantasy novel from beginning to end. In the last paragraph of his novel, Al-Razzaz writes about its fantasy worlds and events: “This is how all the novels, regardless of their sources, ended, and the dreams that woke up did not end, for novels are fleeting, and daydreams are eternal and infinite” (Butor, 1971, p. 8). The dreams Al-Razzaz refers to are the fantasies and events he invented in the novel to create a desired and hoped-for world different from the present world marked by misery. A fictional fantasy form that “has great comprehension power with a tripartite role in our understanding of reality, including its clarification, exploration, and application” (Butor, 1971, p. 8).

The characters in *When Dreams Wake Up* transcend reality and its laws, possess supernatural abilities, and do things that transgress the laws of nature. Mukhtar is a strange character; he possesses “a few supernatural abilities and some unfamiliar habits” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 12). He is able to read the thoughts of the people he meets; he is able to know their concerns, in addition to being able to predict the future with every skill.

He tries a lot to hide his supernatural faculties, following the advice of his mother who told him “His father was killed, because he had seen and heard what he should not have seen or heard, and that he had revealed the secret” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 12). Mukhtar takes his mother's advice so seriously that he lives with her in isolation behind closed doors away from people. He chooses a lifestyle of isolation, where he reads books and occasionally enjoys reading people's thoughts, spying on their obsessions and fears. He spends moments exploring the thoughts and struggles in the depths of others, and when he gets tired of it all, he meets some members of his group, which he calls the “Shellah”. They are: the novelist (Mim), the novelist (Haa), the storyteller (Sin) and the journalist (H).

The calm and peaceful monotonous lifestyle that Mukhtar chose for himself suddenly turns upside down when the lawyer (Faa) hands him a box in his custody from his late father. Mukhtar opens the box to find an anonymous cap of invisibility in it. He suddenly intimates that the cap must have had something to do with his father's death. The cap of invisibility is a mythical and fantasy asset. It often appears as the only means to achieve the impossible in myths, legends and popular tales, including the middle-eastern collection of folktales, *A Thousand and One Nights*. It captures the human dream to possess a power of disappearance, to transcend the conditions of space and time, and to move easily, as well as not to bear the dependence of any behaviour.

The cap of invisibility represents a childish, mythical and intellectual human belief in, fear of and attempt to resemble invisible beings. Many myths and fantasy tales claim that their heroes and some of their characters possess these energies, with which many have achieved good or evil ends, and *A Thousand and One Nights* is full of such stories. Ancient Greek mythology also tells of Hades/Pluto, the god of the kingdom of death, who had a cap of invisibility, which he kept on his person at all times. He obtained it from the Cyclops, with whom he managed to kidnap Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the goddess of plants, and make her queen on the throne of his dark kingdom (Gerber, 1976). Finally, this energy comes into the possession of Mukhtar. Soon after, his actions and behaviour begin to change completely. He steps out from his isolation and begins to act with reckless abandon; he spends time in bars and wine, and buys a gun with the help of his friend (Ibrahim). At some point, he goes to the house of Heba's husband, his old neighbour whose voice he has long loved and wishes to confess his love, but he is unable to do so. He enters her house easily with the cap of invisibility. He manages to convince her that she is dreaming and he enjoys listening to her voice.

Later, Mukhtar gets addicted to the habit of invisibility. He keeps entering Heba's house and curiously observing her married life. He watches keenly her husband's actions in the hope to find reasons to end his marriage to Heba. One time, he catches the husband in his car engaged in suspicious situation with a beautiful girl. He rushes to deliver the news to Heba, thereby pushing their marriage to collapse. After that, Mukhtar excels at exploiting his supernatural faculties so much so that he successfully traces the events of the past and learns the identity of his father's killer. He learns “the name of his father's killer in his mother's memory, and he knew that the court issued a death sentence against him that was commuted to life imprisonment. After ten years, he was released in a general amnesty” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 71).

Mukhtar is shocked by these details he reads in his mother's memory. He decides to exact revenge on his father's killer. So, begins searching for the killer in his supernatural fantasy ways until he locates him. He enters the killer’s house and is surprised to learn that the latter has escaped from the world of the living to the world of sleep to evade Mukhtar. Upon entering the Sultanate of Sleep, the killer negotiate with the Sultan of Sleep over projects and dreams in exchange for security. However, the Sultan of Sleep rejects all his projects and dreams and tells him, “He does not understand trade, and he prefers tales to selling lands” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 74). In response, the killer replies, “Sir, we extort the rich with nightmares” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 74). The Sultan of Sleep refuses this offer and insists “He loves tales” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 74).

The murderer is forced to return to the waking world after failing to reach an agreement with the Sultan of Sleep. Upon his return, he finds Mukhtar waiting for him with his gun pointed at him, intent on killing him. The killer does not show fear and instead engages in an enthusiastic conversation with Mukhtar but about his business. He says he trades in faces these days, a trade that yields gold. Many people want to change their faces, he adds, and he even proposes opening a “scrap market” (Al-Razzaz, 1997, p. 78). The killer says he is preparing to trade in heads “because trading with faces has become an old fashion. Everyone works with it, but Americans are working on the trade of heads in the field of genetic engineering” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 79).

Mukhtar is not by the killer’s projects. He fires a bullet into the head of the killer. The shot head shatters into dozens of shrapnel and thousands of pictures, sounds and mirrors scatter about. After that, Mukhtar moves on to contemplate more fantasy acts he can do thanks to his supernatural faculties, of which we are not told the reason, formula or source. He decides to enter the Sultanate of Sleep to meet the Sultan of Sleep, whom he had met with an exultant captivity where the trees of sadness were the strangest of all: “Their fruits are tears, and their leaves are bloody red wounds, and their branches are cracked” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 88).

During this exciting fantasy tour, the agents of the Sultan of Sleep find Ahlam Heba, Mukhtar's lover. She kept falling into deep sleep leaving Mukhtar burning with longing for her love. He does not find an opportunity to meet her except in the Kingdom of Sleep. However, the power of sleep takes her to “the supernatural that does not make her want to be awake” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 90) and sends her to a world of adventures. In the Sultanate of Sleep, the two lovers (Mukhtar and Heba) find everything strange; so they dive in the hollows of fish to the depths of the oceans, visit the most seductive dream gardens, soar above the clouds, climb to the moon, drink from the hot juice of love, and eavesdrop on other people's dreams.

The secret love encounters between Mukhtar and Heba continue in the Sultanate of Sleep without the knowledge of Heba husband. Their love becomes so passionate that they take sleeping pills during the day in order to sneak away to the Sultanate of Sleep, where they get to enjoy their love and adventure. One day, the husband catches Heba flirting with Mukhtar in her sleep. He throws sleeping pills into the toilet thus preventing her from enjoying the pleasure of entering the Sultanate of Sleep. The evasive husband toys with the nerves of the wife, deluding her that he has toxic smoke disease, which they call the symptoms of the Gulf War disease, and the illusion that he accepts the idea of ghosts and jinn in order to talk to him about the presence of a Mukhtar in her life. “He loves ghosts and elves; most of them are good and in the service of humans” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 148).

As for Heba, who is no less cunning than her husband, she deludes into thinking his memory has weakened, and that what he knows about a possible relationship between her and Mukhtar is nothing more than an illusion nesting in his head, and has nothing to do with the truth. Mukhtar is disturbed by the situation in which his beloved Heba finds herself. He goes to the Sultanate of Sleep, which he considers his safe haven. He finds “everyone is asleep, the Sultan of Sleep is asleep, strange trees are snoring, trees of amazement, trees of sadness, trees of amazement, trees of meeting, trees of parting, and trees of lust” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 114). The bizzare life of Mukhtar shows a man corrupted by excess pursuit of pleasure. In his character, Al-Razzaz seems to be criticizing his society for excess hedonism and materialism. Additionally, the state of sleepiness depicts the zombification of modern society caused by overeliance on technology and other stimulants such as drugs.

The Sultan of Sleep feels drowsy because he is being pushed to sleep by his intense sense of technology’s oppression of his world. Mukhtar says, “I wish for a quiet meeting with the husband, I mean Heba's husband, a civilized meeting, in which he ensures that he does not go out of his mind” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 157). Mukhtar's wish comes true as soon as he finishes saying it; he meets Hiba's husband in a strange fantasy area on the edge of dream and reality. He finds him calmly discussing Mukhtar's relationship with Heba. The husband offers to allow Mukhtar to hear Heba's voice in exchange for helping him convince the Sultan of Sleep to invest in his world. The husband wants to turn his world into a recreational city similar to the famous Disneyland. Mukhtar is shocked by this strange deal, which indicates the husband does not really care about what happens to Heba. Nevertheless, Mukhtar presents him before the Sultan of Sleep in the hope of hearing Heba's voice any time he needed, with the permanent approval of her cuckold husband. The irrational nature of the interaction between Heba’s husband and Mukhtar underlines the delusory nature of dreams and fantasy. The two men discuss Heba as if she is just another property over which to negotiate. However, it is also a ridicule of the psychologically hazy state in which individuals find themselves amidst a morally deteriorating society.

However, the Sultan of Sleep “refuses to let his state give up its identity, culture, and efficacy that has distinguished it throughout history” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 177). He decides firmly to divorce Hiba from her husband and approves the continuation of the relationship between her and Mukhtar. He secures for them an independent wing in his palace in which they live his Sultanate fantasy. The Sultan of Sleep gives the cuckold husband two choices: “either return to the world of wakefulness and prevent him from entering the Sultanate of Sleep forever, or that he be sentenced to permanent house arrest in the Valley of Nightmares, located within the borders of the Sultanate of Sleep” (Al-Razzaz, 1997a, p. 178). The Sultan of Sleep seems to act in favour of preserving the love between Mukhtar and Heba as well as restoring the dignity of Heba.

The perplexing fantasy events in *When Dreams Wake Up* upset our beliefs in natural laws. Everything seems unreal and illogical, such as when Mukhtar and Heba buy a cloud as a gift for Mukhtar's mother. Yet, all of these and other fantasy actions and events are acceptable and plausible in a fantasy world. This plausibility helps us to see that Al-Razzaz is in fact criticizing the lack of logic and morality in our real society. Heba's husband's men try to kill her and Mukhtar, but they fall into constant slumber every time they try. The afflicted husband remains stuck between the worlds of wakefulness and sleep, hoping that he can catch his traitorous wife and her lover who has extraordinary abilities. Mukhtar represents individuals who use their position of power and influence to pursue selfish gain, even at the expense of many others. In this strange fantasy situation, *When Dreams Wake Up*, which presents a convincing, satisfactory, and hopeful alternative to the reality of lived life, including its deprivations, setbacks, weaknesses and disappointments, ends. In this way, the dreams fulfilled in this novel become an objective alternative to what is lost in reality. The world built by Al-Razzaz in this novel becomes the desired place that accepts every strange act, is covered with the veils of fantasy, employs dreams and superstitions, and adopts the wonders of tales.

**Fantasy Structure in *Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa Al-Yamamah***

Al-Razzaz's fantasy constitutes the world of the novel *Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa al-Yamamah* (1997). The fantasy world in this novel can be summed up as a “tourism in the world of sleep” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 94). This fantastic world is ruled by the power of sleep, “a world in which there are no borders, no barriers, and no barricades, but in which night overlaps with day, and dream with reality, and memory in the mind” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, pp. 7-8). The city of Al-Dhad is at the heart of this strange world.

In this novel, the narrator describes the city of Al-Dahd, the fantasy city in which the events are set, in a way that makes the reader feel its wonders. All its inhabitants are extraordinary, as it is the “world of supernatural people” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 21). It is not located on a map like the world of jinn and demons, or the world of music. The most famous character in the city of Al-Dhad is Aladdin, an allusion to a character with a similar name in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Aladdin has supernatural abilities. He has two eyes that women often fall in love with, and that attract the admiration and trust of men. He owns these eyes because of a wish made by his mother, who said, on her deathbed: “I wished for a son with black eyes, men, trees, and stone crouching down for their blackness, and I was answered” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 15).

When the electricity in Aladdin's house goes off, he rushes to the magic lamp that his mother left for him before her death, and tries to light the place, thinking that it is an ordinary lamp. However, he hardly touches it when a giant Genie emerges from it, saying his famous sentence in the world of *A Thousand and One Nights*: “I am your servant, ask only one wish, and I will fulfil it for you!” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 18). Then Aladdin asks to be rid of the magic in his eyes. “If you are a true magician, turn me into an ordinary man, and seize the magic of my black eyes” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 18). The magic lamp Genie responds to Aladdin's wish. He wakes up the next day to find himself an ordinary human being with no ability to attract temptation and admiration. He has become an ordinary human among supernatural men. Therefore, everyone rejects him and he later finds himself imprisoned in his room number 9 in Al-Dhad City Hospital.

Another character, Romeo, also lives in the city of Al-Dahd, “where he meets a supernatural man who has the power to tame the storm of the winds” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 25). He is about to go on a date with his famous traditional sweetheart (Juliet), who is late. The names of the two characters are clearly an allusion to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet.* This is an indication of Al-Razzaz’s literary exposure. Just as he weaves alternative and more desirable worlds through fantasy, he brings together different cultures to make sense of his changing middle-eastern society. While Romeo waits, he sees a tribe of dust, whose sand knights pass in front of him like a flash. He gets angry, decides to commit suicide, and shoots himself in the head. However, the gunshot only disables his sense of hearing on the right ear. His magical abilities protected him from death, but they could not protect him from deafness. Likewise, the women in the city of Al-Dahd have supernatural abilities. “Hasna, the owner of the cap of invisibility, lives with her lover, Well of Secrets (Bir al-Asrar), sleeping next to him, kissing him, and watching all his movements and dwellings” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 32). Hasnaa Al-Shatira, with the help of the cap of visibility, tries to free Aladdin from his confinement in the hospital. Indeed, “she was about to succeed in that, but the hospital employee discovered her, because the cap of invisibility did not have the miraculous power hoped for” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 36).

When Romeo meets Juliet again, he claims, “he will move the Mississippi River to flow into the desert to create a beach on its edges, but instead he will transport the Dead Sea” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 41). After that, we get to know the character M, “perhaps the abbreviation of the name Munis” (Khalil, 2003). M is acquainted with another character, Bir al-Asrar, who also has a supernatural abilities. Everyone who looks at Bir is compelled to reveal their secrets to him. Like Aladdin, he also hates this ability since it disturbs and exhausts him: “I do not seek to hear their secrets, nor do I want to listen to their scandals, but they look for me in the streets” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 52).

“Although the existence of supernatural beings is a constant in fantasy literature” (Todorov, 1994, pp. 44-45), Al-Razzaz exaggerates in his depiction of these supernatural beings. He depitcs plants that awaken from their slumber when a woman passes by. There is another plant called the Blind Lover that is a century old and a third flowering plant that attacks the sense of smell when it is sniffed. Dr Nur al-Din calls it an odour repellent. There is also a fourth plant that, if a person listens to it carefully, repeats the word “Ansoni” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 90). The fantastic plant world is exposed to a storm coming from the desert that aims to terrify the population. Dr Nur al-Din tries to save his wondrous plants, but the storm, in a sudden nightmarish motion, turns against him in a struggle over “the spoil of air in the room” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 90). The storm, supposedly, raises its vegetal arms, waves its fists, and strikes Nur ad-Din’s head (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 90).

The character of Zarqa al-Yamamah, from Arab legends, is shaped by Al-Razzaz to be a fantastic model capable of knowing people's secrets and predicting what they think, in addition to her usual ability to see things no matter how far away. Zarqa al-Yamamah takes us on a journey into the inner worlds of a person of Jewish origin with blue eyes and an American woman who keeps her husband's cremated ashes in a small bottle. Here, the narrator stops recounting the incidents. He paints a spectacle with such cinematic precision about an unreal battle waged by the city of the paranormal against the stormy dust that the narrator monitors.

As a clear indication of the desert storm that led to the destruction of the city and its civilization after half a century of construction, Al-Razzaz connects the dreamy reality and the real world in this novel. He manages this by retaining the names of real places such as Beirut, Amman and Baghdad, as well as the Osama Library and the Abu Ali booth, while maintaining the privacy of his unreal world. In this world, we find the personality of Sirhan. Sirhan spies on Zarqa al-Yamamah, who understands and reveals the secrets of Bir al-Asrar. Soon, the police surround Bir al-Asrar, who tries but fails to escape. Bir al-Asrar bursts forth. She reveals secrets and scandals fast like a river that overflows with relentless force and violence. Moments later, those who had appealed to Bir al-Asrar to listen to their secrets in the past are chasing him away, some of them collecting pictures, papers, and recording tapes, and some of them brandishing their weapons (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 100).

Zarqa al-Yamamah becomes the new target of the owners of revealed secrets. So, the Sultan of Sleep intervenes and tries to persuade her to accompany him to his upper kingdom to protect her from the threats. He begs her: “Because I love you, I will take you to my kingdom to secure your protection” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 154). The Sultan of Sleep believes in his promise and devotion to Zarqa al-Yamamah. He makes a constant and continuous effort in that direction, believing that he has succeeded in making her forget her previous world, the city of Al Dhad. When he grants her a wish, he is surprised when she requests that he return her to her hometown (the city of Dhad). “I like to pick a flower for you every morning and give it to you, and I grant you one wish every day. So what is your wish?” She said, “To go back to my hometown” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 114). Zarqa Al-Yamamah leaves the Sultan of Sleep sad at her separation. She returns to her hometown, the city of Al-Dahd, “to find that everything has become engulfed in chaos, and that theft has reached heads and faces” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 116). The people have lost their ability to be amazed. “Everything became normal: escape, theft, and corruption” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 117). We can say that these images of corruption that Zarqa al-Yamamah sees in her city, are the ones that paved the way for the enemy (invasion of other cultures and immorality) (the desert dust storm, Ajaj al-Sahra), to wreak havoc in the city of Al-Dhad. This corrupted city “symbolizes the Arab world, as evidenced by his mention of the borders more than once, and his use of common words like the Rising Gulf and the Thundering Ocean, and its focus on the desert and desertification” (Khalil, 2003, p. 19).

In the midst of the chaos that pervade the city of Al-Dhad, the character of Suleiman al-Tawhidi appears. He has an explanation for the theft of faces. Zarqa al-Yamamah takes him as a sanctuary, but she quickly feels his betrayal of her. So, she escapes from him with the intention of returning to the Sultanate of Sleep, when he says to her: “Do you remember the Genie trapped in the bottle for a thousand years, and how he was eager to be freed from his bottle? The bottle has become a haven” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 121). Suleiman al-Tawhidi is a fantastic mixture of the famous writer Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, who burned all his manuscripts, and Mahyar al-Dimashqi, who killed his beloved because he was so jealous of her. Zarqa al-Yamamah reaches the Sultanate of Sleep, which can only be entered through sleep. There, she faces punishment from the Sultan of Sleep, who spies on her dreams, then prevents her for a whole year from sleeping. He also gives her nightmares, and after a long struggle, she discovers that the power of sleep did not take her out of the bottle – the bottle of the demon – “except to cram it into the last expanse of the roaring ocean to the rattle of the raging Gulf” (Al-Razzaz, 1997b, p. 129). Finally, Zarqa al-Yamamah surrenders to the Sultan of Sleep, who is stronger than she is and who torments her by not sleeping.

Sultan of Sleep, Suleiman Al-Tawhidi and Bir al-Asrar go to Zarqa Al-Yamamah, who finally marries the Sultan of Sleep after losing the war options with him. “Through this marriage, the tragedy becomes apparent that Zarqa al-Yamamah, a symbol of patriotism and intelligence, is subject to the Sultan of Sleep, a symbol of indifference and submissiveness” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 95). It can be said that with Zarqa al-Yamamah’s marriage to the Sultan of Sleep, life in the city of al-Dahd: “I want humans to fulfil the dreams, wishes, and desires that the waking world deprives them of achieving.” Even if in a dream, it means, “I want their dreams to turn into reality, to become realistic that is neither strange nor unreasonable” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 154). Suddenly, “everyone feels trapped by their nightmares and accuses the Sultanate of polluting dreams” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 161). [comment: is the quotation from the novel, i.e. Al-Razzaz, 1997b, or another source, i.e. al-Kubaisi, 1998?]

Finally, the people decide to go on a sleep strike, confirming the failure of the Sultan's wife, Zarqa al-Yamamah, to reform the laws of her husband. The Sultan interferes saying: “The long sleep strike drives people crazy” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 163). Zarqa Al-Yamamah is forced to adjust her condition and confiscate dreams, not sleep. However, the situation gets worse, as people's lives become without taste, colour or smell. So, conferences are held to study this phenomenon: the phenomenon of sleep without dreams. The end is catastrophe, as people are now bringing their repressed desires and cravings into the open. Moreover, instead of sleeping, they are ensuring the fulfilment of these whims and desires through dreams. Freaks floated on the surface, and became a pre-occupation of vigilance, “and the city of Al Dahd was engulfed in fierce wars, chaos, and killing, and “blood flowed up to the knees” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 167). This tragic situation in the city of Al-Dahd drives Zarqa Al-Yamamah into a state of extreme despair. With time, she turns into a paralyzed old woman unable to do anything. She resorts to her neighbour, Sheikh Abdul Rahim, who in the past had supported her when she had warned her people of these disasters that befell them. “This Sheikh was one of the greatest people in the eyes of Zarqa Al-Yamamah, and what made him great in her eyes was the smallness of the world in his eyes, and she noticed that he preferred speaking in the eyes language over the language of the tongue” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 194).

The paralysis of Zarqa al-Yamamah is indicative of the fact that true patriotism is paralyzed in the city of Al Dahd. Like Zarqa al-Yamamah, the city is unable even to defend itself against the arrogance of neglect, injustice and alienation caused by the Sultan of Sleep. As the city diminishes, his strength is grows day by day, and he passes power on to his unjust son, to continue the cycle of injustice, alienation and enslavement of the citizens. “He died, and his son became the new Sultan of Sleep” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 196). Living in desperate times, the masses have become disillusioned, resigned and cynical. They do not heed Zarqa al-Yamamah’s warning of the imminent disasters. Therefore, the concept of sleep that pervades the city may be equated to the people’s confusion, or lack of awareness or consciousness on the events that have ruined their lives. Zarqa al-Yamamah’s paralysis is equated to their condition of helplessness in the face of tyranny and injustice.

In *Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa al-Yamamah,* Al-Razzaz presents a fantasy structure that serves to critique the society in which he lives. However, the excessive use of fantasy with the combination of the complex Arab historical and cultural symbols has perhaps hampered the reception of the book globally (Khalil, 2003). Besdes, the story leaves the reader in suspense on the fate of certain characters and events. For instance, we do not know the fate of Nur al-Din and his fantastical botanical world. The stories of the fate of Hasna al-Shatira, Bir al-Asrar, M, the narrator, Sarhan Sarhan, Ibrahim al-Manafiq (the Hypocrite), among others, are also lost in the fantastic narration.

**Conclusion**

The fantasy structure in *The Labyrinth of the Bedouins in the Mirage Skyscrapers* allows the reader to be acquainted with the predicament Arab individual in a state of dissociated reality. The novel also uses fantasy structure to capture the setbacks and resignation or disillusionments that lead a person into a state of insanity (Abu Dalhoum, 1990). Moreover, this novel, which is itself a labyrinth, is “a model of the world inhabited by ghostly or semi-real animals that escape from the past and are lost in the present, a world in which reality and imagination are mixed” (al-Kubaisi, 1998, p. 15). The author depicts the Arab world and its history as a great labyrinth. It is “the labyrinth of political and social contradictions, the labyrinth in which not only the victims but the butchers are lost as well: generals, officers, and informants, as well as intellectuals, militants, and thinkers” (Wazen, 2003).

In this labyrinth, the Arabian is likened to a passive Bedouin who chases after a mirage and is skilled in escaping and jumping. The urgent question, to which the novel does not overtly state its answer, is: how can the Arabian individual get out of this terrifying labyrinth? The novel nonetheless alludes to the answer by drafting an alternative, albeit fantastic, world. The characters in Al-Razzaz’s novels may be asleep at times, but they often dream of a different and better society. They long to escape the forces of alienation, injustice and oppression that have characterised their society for too long. Even when their efforts are thwarted by oppressive systems, they find escape in an alternative world; a fantastic world that helps them cope with their sad realities.

In *When Dreams Wake Up*, Al-Razzaz criticizes his contemporary Arab world. He unravels the contradictions, horrors and fears that destroy and rob the people of their existence, and plunge them into a state of wandering and confusion. He also helps to unmask the façade of wealth, luxury and prosperity in the Arab world to show the underlying crime and bloodshed. Nevertheless, Al-Razzaz’s novel also makes the reader ponder over some questions: why was the protagonist’s father killed? Where did the cap of invisibility come from? What is the reason for the mother's fear of the miraculous abilities of her son, Mukhtar? Lastly, what happened to Ibrahim the hypocrite?

There are also critical questions the reader may need to ponder in order to fully comprehend Al-Razzaz’s fantastic characters and places in relation of the real world. Who is the Sultan of Sleep that plunges into slumber in his world of ancient civilization? Who is Heba's corrupt husband, who carries technology and wants to turn the peaceful, joyful Sultanate of Sleep into a recreational city (Disneyland)? And who are Mukhtar and Heba, the weak ones who escape from their bitter reality and enjoy the world of dreams? Answering these questions and arranging them in relation to reality should show how the fantasy world of the novel casts a mirror image of the real world.

In *The Sultan of Sleep and Zarqa Al-Yamamah*, fantasy defines the entire plot structure so much so that one can hardly understand the story. Unless we understand the symbols of this fantasy and dive with it to the depths, we may never discover that the fantasy in this novel actually serves one function, namely to unravel the political mask. Its sole objective is to denounce the people’s inaction before the forces of power and plunder. This inaction has heralded the ruin, chaos and corruption that befall the city of Al-Dahd. Patriotism and its symbols have fallen and become barren. Meanwhile, the power of unjust authority continues to grow and is transmitted to down the generations of dynastic rulers.

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