

Semiotic Analysis of Characters in the Story of “Malik Omar al-Nu’man”

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Characters and characterization are one of the most important elements and components of any story; therefore, selecting the names of characters in accordance with their roles and the overall chain of events is considered as a successful platform for writers in creating their stories. According to this view, not only the creator of a story would not name the characters accidentally, for no reason, they would select their names thoughtfully, with precision, so as to form a meaningful connection across the structure, textures, implications, and concepts of the story.

2. Theoretical Framework

Given the important role of characters' names in the design and theme of the story, an investigation of this issue in light of semiotics could contribute greatly to story criticism and assessment, opening a new window to the concepts inside the story for readers. According to semiotics, characters' names are regarded as signs guiding readers through the process of reading and assessing the story. During this process, readers find out about the writer's purposes through contemplating on characters' name as well as discovering the relation between these names and their roles in the story, the overall chain of events, and the theme. In this regard, it is attempted to perform a semiotic analysis on the characters' names of one of the tales in 'One Thousand and One Night' collection entitled 'Malik Omar al-Nu'man and His Children, Shirkan and Zou al-Makan', which is particularly prominent in this area.

There have been many studies on 'One Thousand and One Night' collection along with diverse research conducted on the semiotic analysis of characters in various stories and tales. For instance, in studies on the art of narration in 'One thousand and One Night tales', Al-Shuwaili (2000) has examined the narration techniques and technical structure of these tales. In addition, Ali Abd al-Rahman Fattah (2012) has examined the physical, mental, social, and rational features and dimensions of the characters in this novel; however, he has not investigated the implications of characters' names from semiotic perspectives. In addition, BouGharoumah (2016) has examined the implications of characters' names in this novel. Bin Aisha and Lāmyah (2015) have also examined the characters of this tale from semiotic perspectives. Following a brief introduction of

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semiotics Arjaa (2004) has analyzed the characters' names in this novel using the same approach.

The new aspect of the present study as compared to the aforementioned background works is that these studies have examined the novels to a higher extent, neglecting an investigation of the anecdotes related to the Islamic civilization heritage. Moreover, the results and findings of the present inquiry are different from the results of studies listed above.

3. Method

The purpose of the present study is to explore the implications of characters' names in the tale '*Malik Omar al-Nu'man and His Children, Shirkan and Zou al-Makan*' through semiotic perspectives using the descriptive-analytical method. Furthermore, it is attempted to examine the appropriateness and the relation between their implications and the overall chain of events as well as their roles in light of the semiotic theory. Using semiotics, in which language and everything existing in the world are regarded as a set of signs, the analysis of characters' names in a story clarifies certain thoughts presented in the story for readers. Consequently, to analyze the aforementioned tale, first the intended characters were selected according to their significance and role in the story. Then, their names were examined according to the theme of the story through the related resources revolving around the tale as well as semiotics. Finally, it was attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

What are the etymologies of characters in the tale '*Malik Omar al-Nu'man and His Children, Shirkan and Zou al-Makan*'?

What is the congruency between the characters' names and their roles as well as the overall chain of events in this tale?

4. Findings

The '*Malik Omar al-Nu'man and His Children, Shirkan and Zou al-Makan*' tale is one of the most important anecdotes in "*One Thousand and One Night*" collection in which the characters' names and their implications have a significant relationship with the overall chain of events as well as the theme of the story. This tale contains symbolic implications related to various aspects of Islamic/Arabic history and culture. Such a view has been manifested in the majority of elements in the story, particularly the characters' names and their roles.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the names of characters in the aforementioned tale was assessed and analyzed in light of semiotics. The obtained results show that this tale symbolically reflects many historical, cultural, and civilization-related subjects in the Islamic world in general, and the Arab world in particular. Additionally, the names of characters in this story involve special implications in accordance with the overall chain of events as well as their roles. For instance, '*Malik Omar al-Nu'man*' in this tale is the symbol of different eras of Arabic reigns along with their vast, flourishing civilizations in previous ages. Moreover, '*Vazir Dandan*' is the symbol of wisdom, prudence, and knowledge, while

'Qaza Fakan' and 'Kaan Ma Kaan' are the symbols for submission to the God's fate and providence, and surrendering to destiny. Ultimately, it is recommended to explore 'One Thousand and One Night' story collection through various Islamic historical, cultural, and civilization-related dimensions so as to offer parts of the education and heritage of the Islamic world culture and civilizations denoted within the tales in this collection to the world.

Keywords: semiotics, The Arabian nights, the story of "Malik Omar No'man and his son's, character.

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