
Falaj Water and Trans-corporeality in Zahran Al Qasimi's Taghribat



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This paper addresses the re-inscription of the threatened Indigenous ecological knowledge of the irrigation system of aflaj in Taghribat Al Qafer (The Exile of the Water Diviner) (2022), an underexamined water narrative set in a primitive Omani village. The study argues that Zahran Al Qasimi re-imagines an Omani agricultural and environmental reality shaped by the scarcity/excess dialectic of water through the aflaj knowledge system, which combines a “splitting into parts” method with a balancing structure. In the novel, the falaj-split water trope is transformed into a condition of precarity that merges binary synergies and shapes the narratives centered around aflaj. The paper contends that the falaj water-based narration imparts a localized signification of water as a mobilizer of trans-corporeality that accounts for porous bodies. Existing reviews on the signification of water in the novel highlight its innovative representation of water and examine how the availability or scarcity of water shapes the lives of people in the rural world while floods threaten destruction. Expanding on these readings, this paper demonstrates how falaj water produces a state of trans-corporeality through which the human body becomes a porous system. Drawing on Stacy Alaimo’s theorization of trans-corporeality as a “new materialist and posthumanist sense of the human as substantially and perpetually interconnected with the flows of substances and the agencies of environments,” the paper argues that Taghribat Al-Qafer inscribes a form of embodied existence in which falaj split water becomes intrinsic and inevitable.

Biography:

Dr. Majda Atieh is a Fulbright scholar, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literatures, and Assistant Head of the Department of English and Translation at Sultan Qaboos University. She received her MA and PhD from Howard University. Her research interests include digital humanities, sustainability studies, museology, and architecture in literature. Dr. Atieh serves as an area chair and convenor of the Collecting and Collectibles panels for the annual national conferences of the Popular Culture Association. She has published extensively in refereed journals and edited collections and has presented at numerous national and international conferences, including those organized by the Modern Language Association, MELUS, NeMLA, SAMLA, and several other academic associations.