

The Story of Yusuf's False Killing in the Holy Quran: A Text-World Theory Approach^(*)

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Abstract

This article attempts to extend the applicability of Text World Theory to Arabic narrative and religious discourse. I particularly examine the first eighteen verses of Surah Yusuf which is a short narrative of Yusuf's experiences as a child including his brothers' false story of him being killed by a wolf. Based on my analysis, I show how the text-worlds constructed throughout these verses help readers to better comprehend the false narrative invented by Yusuf's brothers in order to convince their father that Yusuf's death was out of their control and will. Besides, I demonstrate the need for introducing the notion of a miraculous text-world to Text World Theory when approaching the Holy Quran as a sacred transcript. Furthermore, the analysis validates Z. A. Z. Mahmoud's ideas of confirmed unrealized text-worlds throughout the concept of Quranic dreams, as well as his consideration of the discourse-world of the Holy Quran as that of spoken discourses.

Keywords: Text World Theory; Arabic Narrative; Religious Discourse; the Holy Quran; Surah Yusuf

^(*) **Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Volume 84, Issue 8, October 2024**

قصة القتل الزائفة لسيدنا يُوسُف عليه السلام في القرآن الكريم: تحليل بواسطة
نظرية عالم النص

تحاول هذه الورقة البحثية توسيع نطاق تطبيق نظرية "عالم النص" على الرواية العربية والخطاب الديني. أدرس على وجه الخصوص الآيات الثمانية عشر الأولى من سورة يُوسُف، وهي سرد قصير لتجارب يُوسُف في طفولته بما في تلك قصة إخوته الكاذبة أن ذنباً قد أُلْتهم به. واستناداً إلى تحليلي، أُبين كيف أن عوالم النص المبنية في هذه الآيات تساعد القراء على فهم أفضل للرواية الكاذبة التي اخترعها إخوة يُوسُف من أجل إقناع والدهم بأن موت يُوسُف كان خارجاً عن إرادتهم وسيطرتهم. إلى جانب ذلك، أبرهن على ضرورة إدخال مفهوم "عالم النص المعجز" في نظرية "عالم النص" عند تحليل القرآن الكريم كنص مقدس. إضافةً إلى ذلك، يؤيد التحليل صحة أفكار ز. أ. ز. محمود عن "عوالم النص المؤكدة غير المتحققة بعد" بفضل مفهوم الأحلام القرآنية، وكذلك اعتباره عالم الخطاب في القرآن الكريم مثل عالم الخطاب المنطوق وليس المقروء فحسب.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

نظرية عالم النص؛ الرواية العربية؛ الخطاب الديني؛ القرآن الكريم؛ سورة يُوسُف

1. Introduction

This article tests the boundaries of Text World Theory to a neglected area of research, namely, the Arabic language represented by the Holy Quran. Text World Theory helps readers of the Holy Quran to conceptualize the murder story of Yusuf at the hands of his brothers. This reading is innovative in two ways: firstly, it extends the applicability of Text World Theory to a new language, which is Arabic. Studies that employ Text World Theory focus largely on texts in English and Spanish (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007; Lugea 2016). Lugea (2016) claims that even though Werth argues that the text-world model can be applicable to any kind of discourse, "he makes no mention of how it can be used to analyze a language other than English. Although it was designed in and for English, there is nothing to suggest that Text-World Theory should be solely a monolingual framework: it is founded on properties which are manifest in all languages" (Lugea, 2016, p. 9). Text-World Theory was introduced by Werth in the late 1980s and 1990s as a cognitive framework capable of explaining the cognitive processes behind the creation and reception of all types of language. This novel toolkit describes the way in which language works, including context, the unique cognitive processes of the producer and recipient and the constantly negotiated "online" nature of language. Since Werth's applications of the theory had been devoted to English literary texts only, scholars were interested in testing the theoretical limits of Werth's approach to other languages (Lugea, 2016). My proposal, thus, is an attempt to adapt the model for the analysis of Arabic and hence extending the applicability of the framework to a completely new language (see also Lugea, 2016; and Mahmoud, 2018).

Secondly, the paper reveals how the rich, and highly literary language used in Surah Yusuf helps readers across the globe to construct diverse mental representations to clearly conceptualize and understand Yusuf's story, and to identify with its universal message and emotions including emotions of envy, lying, conspiracy, hate, human control, justice, forgiveness and many other ideas and emotions. Surah Yusuf is special and unique to be studied from a

text-world perspective since it was referred to as the best of narratives in the Holy Quran. It is the twelfth Surah and tells the story of prophet Yusuf (Joseph) and his relationship with his brothers and father and how the brothers' jealousy towards Yusuf leads them to plan to get rid of him. The significance of this Surah emerges from the fact that it is the only Quranic Surah that narrates a complete story from the beginning to the end (Mirlohi, 2020). The Surah begins with the reflection on the love relationship between Yusuf and his father that results in the jealousy of Yusuf's brothers, leading them to plan to get rid of him by throwing him in the well, claiming that the wolf ate him while they were playing. Surah Yusuf narrates further how God rescued Yusuf and how he later became the emperor of Egypt after some difficulties and his final reunion with his father and brothers. This dramatic narration of Yusuf's life makes Surah Yusuf a significant example of Arabic intertwined narrative and religious discourse.

Except for Mahmoud (2018), no research to date has approached any kind of religious discourse from a text-world perspective. Most studies have focused on literary discourse such as English novels (e.g. Gavins 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2013 among others); drama (e.g. Cruickshank and Lahey, 2010); poetry (Gavins, 2007, Lahey 2006, Gavins and Stockwell 2012 and Giovanelli, 2013) and on non-literary discourse such as advertising discourse (e.g. Hidalgo-Downing 2003 and Gavins, 2007) and political discourse (e.g. Chilton, 2004 and Gavins, 2007). Therefore, this study not only extends Text-World Theory to a completely new language (i.e., the Arabic Language) but to religious discourse as well.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Text World Theory

This paper argues that Text World Theory is an ideal theory to analyze the multidimensional and unlimited meanings, and interpretations of Quranic verses. It chooses the Text World Theory for several reasons. Firstly, Quranic verses deliver their message through language that defies static understandings related to their

time, and place of delivery, and appeals to humans in all spaces and places. Quranic language is very complex and contains challenging symbols. According to Evans and Green (2006), language is a complex set of symbols that serves as a starting point for the creation of the conceptualizations that result from a particular kind of discourse. Besides, understanding the discourse context which includes the setting, the aim of the interaction as well as the information and background knowledge that the participants share or have will affect the conceptualizations that will be constructed. Language-based communication involves mental activity that is inextricably linked to the larger discourse context. Based on Evans and Green's ideas of linguistic symbols, and their communicative mental activity, Joanna Gavins defines the Text World Theory as a cognitive model of language processing. It explains how human beings construct meaning from language. Gavins (2007) illustrates that readers constitute pictures or representations in their minds throughout the language introduced in a particular discourse. She refers to these mental representations as text-worlds and argues that they "enable us to conceptualize and understand every piece of language we encounter" (p. 2). Text World Theory focuses on how these text-worlds are created, how they are conceptualized and how people use them. In 2018, Gibbons and Whiteley develop the definition of Text World Theory as "a cognitive linguistic framework which seeks to examine conceptualization as it occurs in discourse" (2018, p. 221). For Gibbons and Whiteley, discourses have linguistic, time, and place dimensions that all impact readers' interpretations and understandings. Text World Theory is concerned with both the linguistic markers that guide conceptualizations and their wider communicative environment, and it is frequently referred to as a "holistic framework" (Gibbons and Whiteley, 2018). Applying Gavins' Text World Theory to Quranic verses helps in organizing text-worlds that relate their past and present presentations and understandings, creating insightful comparisons that further renew, modernize and expand the messages of Quran according to communications between readers or receivers and the texts.

Secondly, when analyzing the cognitive-communicative representations in a specific text, Text World Theory establishes different text-worlds. The conceptualization of the context of an interaction or the real environment in which the discourse occurs is known as the discourse-world. According to Gavins, Text world Theory is a multilayered model of discourse analysis consisting of three layers: 1. the discourse-world (which may be split in the case of written communications as authors and readers are separated in space and time. In case of face-to-face conversations, it is not split because the participants share the spatio-temporal setting), 2. text-worlds, and 3. sub-worlds (world-switches and modal-worlds). Discourse-worlds always include two or more human interlocutors or "participants" as Gavins (2007) calls them, and consider the participants' space and time, and the objects and people around them. Discourse-worlds include also the pertinent personal and cultural information readers bring to the conversation (Gibbons and Whiteley, 2018; Gavins, 2007). Text-worlds employ and examine the perceptions and understandings of language by studying and connecting two categories of linguistic markers or cues, namely, world-building elements and function-advancing propositions. World-builders are deictic elements illustrating time, space, objects, entities and relationships demonstrated within a text-world. Function-advancers expand and enrich interpretations and understandings of the text by describing activities or representing them (Gibbons and Whiteley, 2018; Gavins, 2007). Gavins (2007) classifies modal-worlds into three categories or kinds, namely, boulomaic, deontic and epistemic. Boulomaic modal-worlds are created by expressions of desire in a discourse, deontic modal-worlds by expressions of obligation and epistemic modal-worlds by expressions reflecting degrees of personal knowledge or belief in addition to hypothetical constructions (Gavins, 2007; Gibbons and Whiteley, 2018). The paper uses the boulomaic, deontic and epistemic text-worlds to reveal the multilayer meanings and potential messages inherent within Quranic verses. For example, Surah Yusuf produces many boulomaic, deontic and epistemic text worlds that relate, identify and explain each other. One epistemic text

world is the predictability that Yusuf will be hurt by his brothers, whose deontic text world shows their obliged submission to their envy and jealousy that spoil their humanity, and morals. Readers produce a relevant boulomaic text world that God will save Yusuf.

The third reason for the selection of the Text World Theory is the concept of split discourse-world. Although Text World Theory applies to face-to-face conversations, and all kinds of spoken and written discourses, Gavins (2007) argues specifically that the discourse-worlds of written communications are split discourse-worlds because the authors and readers are usually separated in time and space. Thus, the discourse-world for readers of a literary text or a written discourse in general is constituted from the personal and cultural knowledge frames that they use to understand the discourse. All readers have enormous personal and cultural heritage of beliefs and knowledge, but only the pertinent parts of them are incremented to the discourse-world to help readers understand and participate in the discourse. The areas of knowledge and experience which will be activated in readers' minds depend on the text and hence they are text-driven (Gavins, 2007). Furthermore, Gavins (2007) introduces the notions of world-switches and modal-worlds as the third layer of Text World Theory after discourse-world and text-worlds. Gavins (2007) argues that communication is not a static procedure and discourse may change its subjects, settings, switch topics, etc. Because of this, the text-worlds which are constructed during discourse are also changing. They are dynamic representations that change contents continually to reflect the evolution of the discourses they stand for. The spatial, temporal boundaries, objects and enactors, or generally, the world-building elements which originate the text-world, may change numerous times throughout the course of the entire discourse. For this reason, Gavins's notion of a world-switch is important. A world-switch occurs whenever there is a shift in time, space, enactors etc. within the text-world.

The concept of split discourse-world is perfectly related to any interpretation of the Quran verses. The Quran is a universal, eternal,

egalitarian, and encoded text sent to all humans at any place, and time. Its main message is justice. A full or a completed understanding of Quranic verses is not an attainable job. This fact makes the split discourse-world of the Quran an interesting, adventurous and knowledgeable journey into human past and present experiences, stories and potential results. Moreover, Quranic verses are full of time switches. The past, present and future exist together to make things clear, or to relate historical events or to explain facts. For instance, in Surah Yusuf, past, present and future tenses are used. God tells a past story, while Yacoub speaks in past and present with his sons and with Yusuf. Then, God tells Yusuf that his brothers' crime will be discovered. The paper regards, then, the Text World Theory as the ideal, holistic theory to analyse part of Surah Yusuf.

2.2. The Holy Quran and Surah Yusuf

The Holy Quran is the Word of God. It is the most genuine and unparalleled divine Book for Muslims around the world. It is sent down to God's messenger, Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. It spreads God's message to the entire human race and is not limited by space (Rashid and Lodhi, 2019). It is transmitted in the language of the Arabs, who were famous for their linguistic talent (Al-Ali, El-Sharif and Alzyoud, 2016). The Quranic text is seen as "a linguistic miracle and was intended to challenge Arabs who were fluent in classical Arabic and poetry at the time it was revealed" (Al-Ali, et al., 2016, p. 165). In what follows, the paper will discuss the studies that deal with the Holy Quran from a linguistic perspective, with a special focus on Surah Yusuf.

Surah Yusuf represents one of the most famous literary stories in the Quran. It tells the story of prophet Yusuf and his family. Favoured by his father, Yacoub, Yusuf's brothers are envious and decide to get rid of him. They make a clever, intricate plan to throw Yusuf in a deep well, and to tell their father that a wolf ate him. Their plan partially succeeds as Yusuf is saved by God and becomes a powerful man to reunite with his family again. Surah Yusuf delivers many messages concerning family relations, parenting, discrimination

among children, envy, hate, justice, and many other ideas. For its important content that relates to all families all over the world, and its universal feelings, Surah Yusuf was analyzed in many ways. Some studies focus on the sociological and pragmatic aspects of Surah Yusuf. For example, Jewad, Ghabanchi and Ghazanfari (2020) study Surah Yusuf and Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave) from a socio-pragmatic perspective. They apply Leech's (1983) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies and maxims to both Surahs. From their qualitative analysis, they find out that politeness strategies exist in the Surahs, but in a different way. In Surah Yusuf, the negative politeness strategies exceed the positive ones, while in The Cave Surah, the positive politeness strategies are the predominant. Sallal and Hussein (2021) and Khader and Ahmad (2022) approach Surah Yusuf from a pragmatic perspective as well. Sallal and Hussein analyze implicit meaning in the Surah using Larson's (1984) and Verschueren's (1999) frameworks. Their study concludes that implicit meaning is not a static concept; it may be shaped and reshaped through linguistic interaction, and as a result, its function varies depending on the context. Additionally, implicit meaning tends to serve the purposes of emphasizing fresh information, minimizing repetition and redundancy, demanding politeness suspense and motivation, employing irony and metaphor, avoiding discomfort and providing further clarification to warn or evoke intimacy. Khader and Ahmad (2022), on the other hand, examine the imperatives and prohibitive verbs in Surah Yusuf using Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory. Austin and Searle's speech act theory is used to define the types of speech acts present in Surah Yusuf to figure out how linguistic contexts and structure relate to the meaning of the imperative and prohibitive verbs.

Few studies focus on semantic or linguistic aspects of Surah Yusuf. Elieba (2020) employs a cognitive semantic approach to examine motion events in Surah Yusuf and sheds light on the significance of cognitive processes such as figure-ground relationship, motion and path events and image schemas. The findings indicate that Motion Events play a significant part in providing the semantic structure of verbs of motion, which can serve to expose some

fascinating elements of the Holy Quranic process of meaning construction. The semantic network around these verbs extends beyond the act of delivery to include perceptual and conceptual delivery, as this study also demonstrates. As a result, verbs of motion fundamentally convey information about the way in which a movement's path is defined in Surah Yusuf. Fadhoilul (2020) provides a discourse analysis of Surah Yusuf by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model to compare two significant translations of Surah Yusuf by Ali Yusuf and Dr. Mostafa Khattab.

Although the above-mentioned studies examine different aspects of Surah Yusuf, they lack two elements that this paper attempts to cover. The first element is that these studies neglect stylistic aspects of Surah Yusuf. To date, there are no holistic cognitive stylistic studies of Surah Yusuf. Rashid and Lodhi (2019) confirm that "the stylistic approach in the field of the Quranic research is relatively an ignored area" (p. 87). The second element is that the above-mentioned studies lack the holistic approach to Surah Yusuf. They separate the content and the form when approaching Surah Yusuf. This paper covers these two elements arguing that providing a stylistic, cognitive study of Surah Yusuf produces novel knowledge on Quranic narrative shifts, its multilayered meanings and text-worlds, and its encoded linguistic and content messages based on persuasion, logical thinking, and moral reproduction of idea of justice in Surah Yusuf.

3. Data Selection

The database of this study is selected from the Twelfth Chapter of the Holy Quran, namely, Surah Yusuf. The first eighteen verses are chosen for analysis from a text-world perspective since they can be considered as a short narrative of Yusuf's childhood. They tell us about Yusuf's dream or vision of prophethood, the jealousy of Yusuf's brothers towards him and their evil scheme to abandon Yusuf. These lines dramatize Yusuf's story setting the scene, rising of events and conflicts, climax and equilibrium with the brothers throwing Yusuf in the well. The study depends on the Quran translation and exegesis introduced by Ibn Kathir (2003b) to Surah Yusuf.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Discourse-world

As a written text delivered more than 1400 years ago, the discourse-world of Surah Yusuf, according to Gavins, is a split discourse-world because authors and readers are separated in space and time. However, this paper agrees with Mahmoud (2018) that the discourse-world of the Holy Quran could also be treated as that of face-to-face interactions since God is ubiquitous and exists with the reader at the same spatio-temporal environment. The direction of the communication is thus two-way since it is known that God speaks to individuals who recite His Book. So, if some readers or analysts or researchers read the Quran as a human text, denying its holiness or suspecting that it is sent by God, they understand and interpret its messages and meanings objectively and appreciate or identify with its messages devoid of any religious or ethnic stereotypes, for example in cases of Islamophobia. At the same time, Muslims and believers around the world believe that God speaks directly to them, and that when reading the Quran, they appeal to God and hence He can deliver them a direct message through, for instance, an instant feeling, or event in their lives. This could be a feeling to stop an evil action or a motivation to embrace another good one. Saying that, the paper affirms the diversity of the discourse-world of Quran that it can be face-to-face or split depending on the readers, their religious affiliation, their culture and their intention. All readers of Surah Yusuf, however, will get the message of justice, revenge, envy, discrimination, and forgiveness.

4.2. Text-worlds

This analysis examines the beginning of Surah Yusuf. It identifies three interdependent worlds which are: 1) the world of Yacoub as a father, 2) the world of Yusuf, and 3) the world of the sons. It traces the shifts, conflicts and interactions among these worlds. Another potential fourth world is the mysterious opening of Surah Yusuf that opens with three separate Arabic letters الّر "Alif-Lam-Ra" which seems to be meaningless. This world sets the

suspicious atmosphere of the story as it alters the readers that think about the meaning of the three letters in relation to the story. In parallel lines, the analysis focuses on two levels of narration and three levels of addressee at the text-world level. The narrator enactors are: 1) God, the main narrator, and 2) the prophet who narrates and interprets the story delivered by God. The addressee enactors are: 1) the prophet at one level, and 2) the Muslims whom he conveys the message to as the second level, and 3) readers at large (of any time and place) at third level. These three levels of different addressees can be interpreted as standing for different levels of awareness of the narrator, God, and his telling of the past story, Yusuf's story, and its moral message on the one side, and the different recipients of the story, the prophet and his immediate followers, and readers across different times and places. This awareness shapes diverse recipients' responsibility, mental interpretation and emotional interaction that reflect their realities, aims and commitments.

This Surah opens with three separate Arabic letters **الر** "Alif-Lam-Ra" which seems to be meaningless. However, Ibn Kathir (2003a) shows that the separate letters which open some Surahs in the Holy Quran are among the knowledge that God has retained for Himself. It was claimed that those letters constitute the names of some Surahs. It was also argued that they are the beginnings that God chose to initiate the Surahs of the Holy Quran with. From a linguistic point of view, some scholars have demonstrated that they represent the letters of the alphabet and that God did not quote the complete 28 letters of the Arabic language.

Besides, some scholars show that "There is no doubt that Allah did not reveal these letters for jest and play" (cited in Ibn Kathir, 2003a, p. 102). Some unaware individuals claim that some of the Quranic verses do not have meaning such as those individual letters which open some Surahs, in spite of the fact that those letters have a particular significance. Although there is no agreement among scholars on one single opinion or exegesis concerning these separate letters, I agree with Ar-Razi's tafsir (explanation) of this issue: "The wisdom behind mentioning these letters in the beginnings of the

Surahs, regardless the exact meanings of these letters, is that they testify to the miracle of the Quran. Indeed, the servants are unable to produce something like the Quran, although it is comprised of the same letters with which they speak to each other" (cited in Ibn Kathir, 2003a, p. 103). Therefore, the reader envisions a miraculous text-world from the outset of the Surah. At a symbolic, literary level, the meaningless letters *الر* "Alif-Lam-Ra" set the mysterious, suspicious atmosphere of Yusuf's story. Readers are intrigued to think about potential meanings of the three letters and of their relevance to the upcoming verses. Readers are also intrigued to revisit these three letters after finishing reading the Surah so that they may find an acceptable interpretation of these three letters in relevance to Yusuf's story. Moreover, Prophet Mohammed who is the first addressee and, and also the narrator does not provide explanation of these three letters. Thus, the Prophet is, like normal Muslims and readers at large, reading, thinking and learning from the Yusuf's story. Quranic verses are universal and valid for reinterpretations and new understandings.

God then said *تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ* "These are the verses of the Book that is clear", referring to the Holy Quran that is apparent and has a satisfactory explanation of everything. Notice here that the adjective *الْمُبِينِ* "clear" creates an epistemic modal-world with a great degree of physical tangibility (Gavins, 2007) embedded in the initial text-world. Gavins (2007) identifies perception modality as epistemic modal-world builders. This kind of modalisation combines any reflection to epistemic commitment associated with individuals' perceptual system. Gavins (2007) argues that "our use of perception modality often provides evidence that human beings understand the abstract concepts of knowledge and certainty in terms of their physical bodily experience" (p. 115). The use of the perception adjective *الْمُبِينِ* "clear" thus establishes a high degree of trust and certainty in God's words from the outset of the Surah. Another important meaning of *الْمُبِينِ* is "explanatory" which creates a parallel epistemic world-modal of alertness to the upcoming message. Things will be explained and made clear. This shows Quranic verses as convincing and appealing to human logic, and emotions as well.

The next two verses are written in the first-person plural *إِنَّا* and *نَحْنُ* "we" that refer to God in His Majesty. They include also a second person reference *كَ* "you" in *لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ* "in order that you may understand" which makes readers' or Muslims' inclusion in the text-world explicit. An enactor of our prophet Mohammed is also involved in this world through the second person pronoun *كَ* "you" in *نَحْنُ نُفَصِّلُكَ* , *عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ* , individuating the Prophet as the specific addressee, marking the first level of the text world analysis in which the prophet is seen not only as a participant at the discourse-world level but also as an enactor at the text-world level. The Prophet is the first addressee and second narrator, after God, of the Quran as a text. "We relate unto you the best of stories through our revelations unto you". In spite of this, the location of this text-world is not explicitly stated. Now the reader of this Surah is prepared to listen to the best of narratives in the Holy Quran (Yusuf's story with his father and brothers) with great certainty and faith.

The temporal boundaries of the initial text-world shift and a world-switch is created by the past-tense verb *قَالَ* "said" in *إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ* "when Yusuf said to his father", making the discourse participants build a new text-world with a distinct time-zone. This verse introduces two types of world: 1) the world of Yacoub as a father, and 2) the world of Yusuf. Yusuf is an enactor of a narrator who tells a dream to his father whom he trusts and seeks his help. In this world, the focus switches to Yusuf and his father when Yusuf begins to tell his dream. The text-world remains in its past-time coordinates and Yusuf narrates his dream to his father *إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ* "I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon – I saw them prostrating themselves to me". Ibn bin Abbas argues that prophets' dreams are revelations from God. Besides, specialists in interpreting the Holy Quran claim that the eleven stars stand for Yusuf's brothers and the sun and the moon stand for his parents (Ibn Kathir, 2003b). Therefore, the eleven stars, the sun and the moon all are enactors in the current text-world. Despite the fact that they are all objects in the dream world, they represent living human beings in the real world. Yusuf seems to be a special person who receives a

specific, important message through the dream. Given the sun's and the moon's mysterious, sacred presence in almost all cultures, Yusuf's dream combines the worlds of humans and nonhumans in one worship. The epistemic meaning inherent within the dream is the possibility of Yusuf's prophecy. Yacoub acts as an attendant recipient, and a caring father in this verse. He also incites boulomaic expectation and desires that Yusuf is a special person.

Giovanelli (2013) differentiates between two types of dreams, namely, the literary dream which occurs for a literary purpose and the ordinary dream which occurs for people during sleeping. Porter (1993) argues that the literary dream is always foregrounded as completely different from the natural sleeping dream in its structural frame and significance. However, Giovanelli (2013) deals with the literary dream and its associated conditions "as part of a deliberate decision on the part of the author to reproduce and emulate a certain kind of cognitive experience and consequently place unique demands on the reader in terms of textual management" (p. 4). Therefore, Yusuf's dream, in Giovanelli's terms, is a literary dream since it has a purpose. It refers to God's all-encompassing knowledge. As I have illustrated before, prophets' dreams are revelations from God. Therefore, they must come true in the real world in order to achieve their aims. Although it is not certain that a literary dream of a character in a literary narrative will be realized or not, it is sure that prophets' dreams will be fulfilled since they are revealed from God. Thus, we should make a distinction between a literary dream and a prophetic dream. Although both create epistemic modal-worlds which are not realized at the moment of their creation, the prophetic dream forms a confirmed-unrealized mental representation (see Mahmoud, 2018) in the reader's here and now. Indeed, Yusuf's dream came true after forty or eighty years when Yusuf raised his father and mother to the throne and his brothers were before him (Ibn Kathir, 2003).

God narrates the reply of Yusuf's father to his son concerning the dream. The vision reveals that Yusuf's brothers would be under his authority or control one day. They would be under Yusuf's power to

the extent that they would kneel before him in reverence, esteem and appreciation. Yacoub was afraid that if Yusuf narrated his vision to his brothers, they would be jealous and arrange wicked conspiracies against him: قَالَ يٰٓيُوسُفُ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا "He (the father) said: "O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers lest they might arrange a plot against you causing your demise". The world of Yacoub is very complex and conflictual. The father's warning is shocking and unexpected as readers expect that brothers love and support each other. However, as a father, Yacoub knows the real feelings, and evilness of his sons. He experiences internal conflict as he loves his sons but fears their wickedness towards their brother. This verse marks the beginning of the rising of events in Yusuf's story. Readers can foresee upcoming conflicts. In this way, readers construct an epistemic modal-world with negative shading in which Yacoub's fear and anxiety about Yusuf are conceptualized and foregrounded. Yusuf is honest, obedient and careful. He listens to his father's advice and does not tell his brothers about his dream. It seems that Yusuf is not shocked by his father's warning and feels that his brothers do not like him. However, Yusuf is occupied with his own spiritual world and his dreams and does not focus much on the world of his brothers. Yusuf lives in a conservative society, and he respects his father and follows his orders. Yacoub is obliged as a father to warn his son of any potential danger. Desire, hope and permission inform each other in this verse. Yacoub and Yusuf are hopeful that the dream comes true and Yusuf becomes a distinguished person and a prophet, but the father does not permit his son to reveal his dream to his brothers.

The next few verses move to the world of the sons and tell us about their own explanations why they hate Yusuf. Yusuf's brothers said: "يٰٓيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنْنَا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ" Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we, while we are Usbah (group). Really, our father is in a plain error". Obviously, the sons are angry with their father whom they see as unfair as he favours Yusuf over them. Instead of confronting the father with their negative feelings, they avenge him through targeting Yusuf. The sons make

their own judgment that their father is to be punished as he is deluded. God narrates the story of Yusuf with his brothers to our Prophet Mohammed. These verses therefore constitute an extended world-switch embedded in it a number of other text-worlds. God shows that there were multiple considerations and wisdom we can perceive from Yusuf's narrative with his brothers. Actually, their narrative is unusual and deserves to be told. Why would a father know that he discriminates among his sons, and does not act to stop their growing hate towards their brother? Is it really the father's love to Yusuf that motivates the brothers' hate to Yusuf or do they envision that their father can deprive them of his wealth and give it to Yusuf? Is money a credible motivation behind their plot against Yusuf? The brothers organized a wicked plot to get rid of Yusuf: *أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ* "Kill Yusuf or cast him out to some (other) land, so that the favor of your father maybe given to you alone". The lexical verbs *أَقْتُلُوا* "kill" and *اطْرَحُوهُ* "cast him out" constitute an epistemic modal-world in which the evil plot against Yusuf becomes crystal clear. Yusuf's brothers wanted to take him away from his father's face as he is the most loved one by his father so that the father's love goes only to his brothers (Ibn Kathir, 2003b).

However one of Yusuf's brothers, most probably the oldest, offers another suggestion. This suggestion marks a shift in the plot arranged against Yusuf. He said: *لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ* "Kill not Yusuf". The negative particle *لَا* "not" creates a negative text-world. From a cognitive perspective, Gibbons and Whiteley (2018) argue that "a negative assertion triggers at least two mental spaces, one in which the positive counterpart is realized and one in which the positive assertion is negated". In Text World Theory ..., the positive counterpart is imagined by readers in a negative text-world" (p. 239). Thus, the negative assertion *لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ* "kill not Yusuf" prompts readers to first imagine the corresponding affirmative *اِقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ* "Kill Yusuf" in a negative text-world before they conceptualize its negated counterpart. This part thus evokes horror and fright in the mind of readers and arouses pity and empathy towards Yusuf. It also reflects the oldest

brother's strong internal conflict. He is not a criminal and still has positive feelings towards his brother. The fact that other brothers follow his suggestion shows that there is a hierarchy of power within the family. Younger brothers respect their oldest brother. It can also reveal that they all have a similar internal conflict that they do not want to stain their hand with their brother's blood. Given the fact that Quranic verses reveal God's hegemonic power, the change of the plot against Yusuf can be seen as God's just interference as God instigates the brothers to change their early plans. The brothers are deluded by their brouhaha desire to end their distressful relationship with their father through a deontic permission to get rid of Yusuf is just a false prediction. Hate limits their vision. Although Yusuf's brothers are different individuals, they act as a group. They lack individualism and conscience.

In the rest of the verse, the narrator gives the alternative plan of getting rid of Yusuf: *أَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيِّبَتِ الْوَيْبِ يَلْقَاهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ* "but if you must do something throw him down to the bottom of a well; he will be picked up by some caravan of travellers". In doing so, he represents a number of scenarios that are hypothetical and are still unrealized at the text-world level. The hypothetical *إِنْ* "if" creates an epistemic modal-world and the command verb *أَلْقُوهُ* "throw him down" establishes the alternative scenario of casting Yusuf. The brothers are determined to execute their mission. A future epistemic modal-world is cued by *يَلْقَاهُ* "he will be picked up" which shows the more wise vision of the oldest brother of getting rid of Yusuf. Although the verb *يَلْقَاهُ* is in its present tense form, it could be interpreted to pragmatically refer to the future. As the father discriminates between Yusuf and his brothers, they develop internal conflicts of hatred, blame and revenge towards their father. They avenge what they see as his unjust attitude through depriving him of Yusuf. Also, the brothers did not express their internal feelings of hatred and injustice to their father. Rather, they kept the conflict internal to exercise external conflict later when they beat and torture Yusuf before throwing him in the deep well. They avenge physically from young, weak Yusuf and psychologically from the strong father.

When Yusuf's brothers decide to cast him in the well, they go to their father and said: *مَالِكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَى يُوسُفَ* "Why do you not trust us with Yusuf". This introductory announcement constitutes a negative epistemic modal-world in which Yusuf's brothers begin to implement their wicked plan against Yusuf as they indeed intended to harm Yusuf out of envy towards him for being loved by his father (Ibn Kathir, 2003). Gavins (2007) states that "while all modal-worlds contain situations which are in one way or another remote from their originating world, epistemic modal-worlds often have an added layer of uncertainty attached to them" (p. 112). This world thus reflects the father's doubt that Yusuf's brothers will take care of him. Also, the negation here has a foregrounding effect (Gavins, 2007). It reveals the certainty of Yusuf's brothers that their father does not trust them. In addition, a boulomaic modal-world is created by *أَرْسَلُهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَع وَيَلْعَبُ* "send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play" in which Yusuf's brothers reveal their desire to take Yusuf with them to play and have fun. Their assertion *وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَفِظُونَ* "and verily, we will take care of him" cues a deontic modal-world in which Yusuf's brothers demonstrate their obligation to look after and protect Yusuf. These verses signify the interplay between the world of Yacoub and the world of the sons. They appeal to their father's emotions and use approachable and convincing language. They blame the father for his distrust and mention the positive experience Yusuf gets if he accompanies them. Then, they affirm that they will protect Yusuf. The sons are cunning and solid. Yacoub and his sons create different modal-worlds through their dialogue. A boulomaic modal-world is expressed by the sons who hope to execute their plan and to persuade the father to allow them to take Yusuf with them, when the father wishes that his sons are honest in their proposal. The father and his sons create an epistemic modal-world through which they as well as the readers open a possibility of either a momentous confrontation that resolves their accumulated hate and internal conflicts, or an insightful.

Yacoub's response to his sons' request shows his sentimentalism, and naivety. Yacoub says *إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ* "Truly, it saddens me that you should take him away". This utterance

constitutes an epistemic modal-world which reflects Yacoub's grief that he will be separated from Yusuf during the interval of the departure with his brothers. This reveals "the deep love that Yacoub had for his son, because he saw in Yusuf great goodness and exalted qualities with regards to conduct and physical attractiveness associated with the rank of prophethood" (Ibn Kathir, 2003b, p. 143). Yacoub then said وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُونَ "I fear lest a wolf devours him, while you are careless of him". The verb أَخَافُ "I fear" cues another epistemic modal-world expressing Yacoub's fright that a wolf eats Yusuf while his brothers are tending the cattle and hunting. Yacoub's reply is intimidating. It seems to provide his sons with ideas of how to get rid of Yusuf, and thus, incites the plan in the hearts of his son, rather than inhibiting it. Yacoub knows that his sons are envious of Yusuf and can harm him but uses emotional language that shows his strong love to Yusuf. Put this way, Yacoub acts naively and infuriates his sons by assuring them his preference of Yusuf over them. Inspired by their father's responses and concerns, the sons decide to throw Yusuf down at the bottom of the well and claim that a wolf devoured him. In order to reassure their father, they pretend لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّخٰسِرُونَ "If a wolf devours him, while we are 'Usba', i.e., a group, then surely, we are the losers". The conditional construction لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ "if a wolf devours him" creates an epistemic modal-world with negative shading. It reflects the deceit of Yusuf's brothers to their father. Besides, in these two verses, the abundance of the negatively oriented lexis (see Stewart-Shaw, 2019) such as لَيَحْزَنُنِي "it saddens me"; أَخَافُ "I fear"; أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ "a wolf devours him"; غٰفِلُونَ "careless"; and خٰسِرُونَ "losers" all add to the dark ambience of the scene. The father's response produces a significant deontic model-world that permits the sons to move on with their evil plans. There is a strong epistemic modal-world that, later, Yacoub regrets this decision or permission.

The dialogue between the father and his sons is revealing. It shows how they are living in their separate worlds. Yacoub does not take his responsibility as a father seriously enough. He neither works

to relieve his sons' resentment and anger, nor acts cautiously towards their proposal to take Yusuf with them. As for the sons, they have enough time to rethink their hate and to change their plans. They could have revealed their true feelings to their father and ask for his equal love, and attention. Intrigued by the story and the flow of the dialogue between the father, Yusuf, and the sons, the three levels of addressee, the Prophet, the Muslims and the readers at large can identify with the events, the conflicts and the relations in Surah Yusuf. Envy, discrimination against family members, anger and revenge are human traits and practices that exceed boundaries of place and time. The question is, then, in what ways do the addressees receive the message?

When Yusuf's brothers took him with them, they all agreed to cast him out to the bottom of the well: **وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيِّتٍ آجِبٍ**: "they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well". The verb **أَجْمَعُوا** "they all agreed" cues a deontic modal-world which expresses their permission and obligation to get rid of Yusuf in this way. This text-world amplifies the brothers' crime as all of them concur to throw him down to the bottom of the well (Ibn Kathir, 2003b). This was their real intention. However, the father allowed them to take Yusuf because they revealed otherwise. As-Suddi states that "the time spent between pretending to be well-wishers and harming Yusuf was no longer than their straying far from their father's eyes" (Ibn Kathir, 2003b, pp. 144-145).

After taking Yusuf with them, the brothers begin to abuse and beat him. The story reaches its climax when the brothers fasten Yusuf with a rope and throw him in a well. Yusuf went down into the water and disappeared. However, he was able to climb a stone in the well and stood on it (Ibn Kathir, 2003b). At the midst of Yusuf's distress, God says: **وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ** "and We revealed to him: Indeed, you shall (one day) inform them of this their affair, when they know (you) not". The personal pronoun **نا** "We" in **أَوْحَيْنَا** "We revealed" refers to God in His Majesty. This part of the verse thus constitutes a focalized epistemic modal-world showing God's mercy, compassion and compensation He sends in times of distress. Besides,

لَنُنَبِّئَهُمْ "you shall (one day) inform them" creates a future text-world which has not yet been actualized in Yusuf's here and now. To reassure Yusuf in this painful situation, God says to Yusuf: "Do not be saddened by what you have suffered. Surely, you will have a way out of this distress and a good end, for Allah will aid you against them, elevate your rank and raise your grade. Later on, you will remind them of what they did to you" (Ibn Kathir, 2003b, p. 145) وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ "when they know not". This creates a negative epistemic modal-world in which Yusuf will remind his brothers of their wicked plan against him, while they are ignorant of his identity and are not able to recognize him. This was what had happened exactly after about forty or eighty years when Yusuf became the minister of finance in Egypt. Through this future insight, God relieves readers' distress and horror at the cruelty of the brothers who get rid of their young brother in a cold blood. God assures also that Yusuf will be saved and will meet his family again, including his distraught father. Justice will be served in the end. After the climax that comes with a despised crime of getting rid of Yusuf, readers are intrigued to know how Yusuf will survive and how he meets his brothers. Suspense continues, however, as readers are eager to know Yusuf's reaction when he meets his brothers in the future. God's future knowledge shows his almightiness and complete control over humans whenever they think they are too powerful to be punished for their crimes. The brothers will be publically ashamed of their wrongdoing and will be an example to be avoided. This specific revelation reminds believers of the Judgment Day when God confronts them with their acts, and wrongdoings. These two verses produce epistemic, deontic and boulomaic modal-worlds. God obliges Yusuf to carry his message, and endowed him with power, and thus opening for him the possibility to avenge his brothers. Yusuf, and the readers create a boulomaic modal-world full of hopes and desires that range from revenge, reunion with family, forgiveness, confrontation, conflict, and a wealth of different choices. These different choices appeal to different readers from different parts of the world and with different moral and cultural stances.

The first part of Yusuf's story ends with another significant interplay between the world of Yacoub and the world of his sons. God tells us about the deception that Yusuf's brothers had to do to convince their father that Yusuf's death was out of their control. After submerging Yusuf in the well, they went to their father with the fall of night weeping and demonstrating sadness and melancholy for losing Yusuf: *إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِهِ فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ* "we went racing with one another and left Yusuf with our belongings and a wolf devoured him". In this verse, they begin to give excuses to their father to justify the alleged murder of Yusuf. Then, they attempt to weaken the influence of this tragic news by saying: *وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ* "but you will never believe us even when we speak the truth" which cues another negative epistemic modal-world in which Yacoub is not sure or certain of the news given to him by his sons. In addition, to make their lie looks true, they stained Yusuf's shirt with false blood. They slew a sheep and colored Yusuf's shirt with its blood, claiming that Yusuf was wearing this shirt when the wolf ate him. However, they forgot to rupture the shirt, and this is why their father did not believe them (Ibn Kathir, 2003b). Therefore, he replies: *قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمُ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ* "Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale. So (for me) patience is the most fitting. And it is Allah (Alone) Whose help can be sought against which you describe". Thus, a negative epistemic modal-world is formed in which Yusuf is still alive in his father's here and now. The sons' boulomaic modal-world that Yusuf is dead is deemed false. Their boulomaic desire to control their father and gain his full attention is destroyed.

This final confrontation between the sons and their father is significant. The confrontation shows the father as a patient believer who trusts God's sentence and justice. Quranic verses require Muslims and believers to face distress, injustice, challenges and difficulties with patience. The sentimental father controls his reactions. He feels guilty for trusting his wicked sons, but seeks God's help, and guidance. As for the sons, they are merciless and remorseless. They do not pity their father's loss and misery, and do not feel guilty for getting rid of Yusuf. The prospective meeting

between the brothers, and Yusuf, however, raises doubts that they may change in the future. Through Yusuf's story, God, the narrator, creates an atmosphere of mixed feelings of fear, suspense, power and helplessness. The brothers are powerful through their unity against their young brother and old father. Yet, the father is powerful with his belief in God's justice, and Yusuf is empowered by God's permission of prophecy. Readers are afraid of God's revenge and human weakness, but they are intrigued by human evilness and cunningness as well. God's tone is sympathy with Yusuf, and anger with his brothers. The readers are left to think what will happen when Yusuf and his brothers are united again.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to provide a text-worlds approach to Surah Yusuf and to demonstrate how Text World Theory can be extended to the Arabic language and religious discourse. Until now text-world practical investigations of Arabic and religious texts have been limited, with most applications of the framework to English and Spanish discourses. In this article, I have examined the beginning of Surah Yusuf, and the story of the wicked plan arranged by Yusuf's brothers to get rid of him from a text-world perspective.

On the discourse-world level, this analysis agrees with Mahmoud's (2018) idea that the discourse-world of the Holy Quran can be tackled as that of face-to-face communications with direct interactions between God and readers. On the text-world level, my analysis has demonstrated the importance of incorporating a new type of world, namely, a miraculous text-world to the text-world model in order to account for the seemingly ambiguous letters which initiate Surah Yusuf and some other Surahs of the Holy Quran. The analysis shows the usefulness of Text World Theory in helping readers to clearly conceptualize and understand the narrative of Yusuf's false killing by his brothers and the envy and jealousy which forced them to do this awful act through the text-worlds constructed in the verses under analysis. This analysis examines three interdependent worlds:

Yacoub as a father, of Yusuf, and of the sons or brothers. It shows how Quranic verses relate the three worlds, stirring different, yet interdependent epistemic, deontic and boulomaic modal-worlds among different addressees including the prophet, Muslims and readers at large. Readers identify with Yusuf and contemplate the behaviour of his brothers and his father. God destines the brothers will be ashamed and embarrassed for their actions. Readers receive these messages, gain knowledge about complex human traits and feelings and produce different moral and logical judgments. The prophet acts also as a second narrator after God. God is Almighty who knows and controls everything, the prophet reveals his message to the public. The prophet's knowledge is limited as he does not provide an explanation for the three meaningless letters at the beginning of Surah Yusuf. This shows that God is the only Almighty and that human knowledge and actions are under his absolute control.

In addition, the analysis elucidates that literary dreams differ from prophetic dreams in the sense that literary dreams construct text-worlds which may or may not be realized, whereas prophetic dreams, since they are revelations from God, build confirmed unrealized mental representations (see Mahmoud, 2018) in readers' minds. Therefore, this study hopes to incite further applications and developments of the Text World Theory as offering holistic, and innovative studies of Arabic narratives and religious texts such as the Quran.

6. References

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