

Marvel in the Algerian Folk Tale: 'The Tale of Djamila and the Ogre'

¹Sabrina BOUGOUFA* 

¹ Echahid Cheick Larbi Tbessi University – Tebessa- Algeria

Received: 25 / 04 / 2024

Accepted: 07 / 06 / 2024

Published: 15 / 07 / 2024

Abstract

The concept of Marvel has emerged as a significant term in contemporary discourse, leading to considerable debate due to its intersection with other related concepts. It is essential to highlight the close relationship between the term Marvel and folk literature, given the distinctive nature of folk literature characterized by its incorporation of Marvel in its characters, settings, and themes. This study aims to delve into the notion of the folk tale and subsequently identify instances of marvel in a tale drawn from Algerian heritage, through the analysis of a specific model entitled *The Tale of Djamila and the Ogre*.

Keywords: Folk tale, Marvel, *The Tale of Djamila and the Ogre*, place Ogre

ملخص

يعد مصطلح العجائبية من المصطلحات الهامة في الوقت الراهن والتي تثار حولها لغط كبير لتداخلها مع البعض من المصطلحات الأخرى والتي تحمل البعض أيضا من سماتها، ولابد من الإشارة هنا إلى صلة التواصل القوية بين المصطلح موضوع الدراسة والأدب الشعبي نظرا لطبيعة الأخير المعرفة في العجائبية شخصياته وأمكنته موضوعه، وتهدف الدراسة إلى الغوص في مفهوم الحكاية الخرافية ثم الكشف عن مواطن العجائبية في حكاية من التراث الجزائري الأصيل من خلال تحليل نموذج يحمل عنوان "حكاية جميلة والغول".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحكاية الخرافية، العجائبية، حكاية جميلة والغول، المكان، المسخ.

* **Author:** Sabrina BOUGOUFA, **email:** sabrina.bougoufa@univ-tebessa.dz

Introduction

Folk literature is traditionally considered the literary output generated by an individual that subsequently merges into the collective ethos of the community from which it originates. It serves as a pivotal representation of societal and cultural identities, encapsulating the hopes, tribulations, and aspirations of its people through a myriad of popular expressive forms. These encompass poetic genres such as epics and folk poetry, as well as prose narratives like folk legends, enigmas, folktales, and proverbial sayings. Among these, the folk tale emerges as a paramount form of folk expression, articulating the societal reality, aspirations, and emotional landscapes of its audience. Stemming from a universal human sensibility capable of empathy and introspection, the folk tale articulates the intricate nuances of human experience through a narrative prose that is richly imaginative, and infused with elements of enchantment and wonder at every turn. Grounded in this understanding, the research problem can be articulated as follows:

- What are the conceptual boundaries of the term Marvel?
- What are the conceptual boundaries of the term 'folk tale'?
- Where can the element of Marvel be located in "The Tale of Djamila and the Ogre"

in the case of this study?

The study seeks a set of objectives, which are as follows: Firstly, to distinguish clearly between the term 'marvel' and closely related terms such as 'strangeness' or 'the uncanny'. Secondly, to delve into our folk narrative heritage to identify instances of marvel across its events, characters, and settings. Through descriptive analysis, it is deemed the most suitable approach for this study.

Literature Review

Folk Tale

The folk tale is recognized as a paramount and extensively circulated form of popular expression among the masses. Researcher Nabilah Ibrahim encapsulates its essence by stating: "It constitutes the protagonist's journey into an enchanted realm, shrouded in mystery and supernatural elements, in pursuit of an elusive goal" (Ibrahim, n.d, p. 236).

From this perspective, the researcher underscores the narrative framework inherent in the folk tale, emphasizing its construction of a wondrous, supernatural world populated by characters that may include humans, animals, sorcerers, or creations of the folk narrator's imagination. These narratives have been transmitted orally through generations for millennia. The researcher emphasized the narrative structure of the folktale, as it consists of a fantastical world beyond the natural, with characters and heroes ranging from humans to animals to sorcerers. This narrative fabric, originating from the imagination of the folk narrator, has persisted through oral storytelling for thousands of years.

If we revert to the linguistic root of the term "folk tale" (Al-Kharafah), we find that it is derived from the trilateral verb "kharafa," which denotes mental corruption due to old age, as stated in Ibn Manzur's "Lisan al-Arab" dictionary. The researcher Mhanna defined it in his book "The Literature of Folk Tales" by saying: "It is the world of unusual and inexplicable phenomena, or it is the imaginary conceptions that contradict a set of laws governing the objective external world or govern a series of our self-conceptions" (Mhana, 1997, p. 13).

Folktale or Marvelous tale is the outlet to which humans resort to express the thoughts, opinions, and aspirations stirring within them. Therefore, it always contradicts the perceptions of the real world, which cannot fulfill or comprehend everything we wish for and understand.

Ibn al-Nadim (1997) employed the term "folk tale" in his writings, noting: "Mohammed ibn Ishaq was the pioneer in compiling these folk narratives, documenting them in written form, and safeguarding them in literary collections. Some even trace back to the oral traditions of the earliest Persian horse." (al-Nadim, 1997, p. 422).

Furthermore, it is an ancient literary art form that reflects the societal reality or is a specific fabric of the folk imagination. It has traversed generations through oral storytelling, serving as an expression of societal reality, including its political and social conditions. Thus, it is a product of the womb of the folk community, conveying to us, between its lines, a portrayal of its conditions and heritage, all within the framework of a creative fantastical narrative.

In addition to all this, it carries within its folds an infinite number of implicit references. The tale thus becomes a focal point from which many meanings and symbols emerge, rooted historically in primal humans who sang, danced, and grappled with the aspects of nature. They attempted to express their various sentiments, aspirations, fears, and opinions, translating the min into literary narratives through which we discern the diverse ideas and beliefs held by early humans and deem them as truths.

The historical roots of folktales or fantastic tales trace back to the beliefs and religions of early humans, as previously mentioned, such as Totemism. Totemism refers to the belief system where each tribe associates its line age with a particular animal or plant, considering it as their primal ancestor. Based on this belief, some tribes during the pre-Islamic era were named after animals, such as the Banu Asad (Sons of Lion), Banu Fahd (Sons of Leopard), Banu Tha'lab (Sons of Fox), Banu Hamama (Sons of Pigeon), Banu Kalib (Sons of Dog), Banu Yarbu' (Sons of Hyena), and other appellations that trace their origins to animals. Moreover, "Animism," also known as "Nature's Vitalism," holds the notion that everybody possesses a soul. When the body dies, its soul remains in the atmosphere, warding off evil spirits and villains who threaten its family, even after death. We often encounter traces of these beliefs in Algerian folk tales.

The fantastic tale in Algeria doesn't differ much from its counterparts in the Arab or Western worlds in its narrative structure or in the way it's told and circulated. Descendants gather around their grandmother or grandfather, listening intently and earnestly to the unfolding events of the tale. They follow the hero's journey through an unknown world filled with secrets. Moreover, the tale often includes narrative formulas that captivate the audience as the storytelling sessions begin, transporting the mind to the realm of imagination. Examples include:

قالك بكري

وباللهجة الشاوية "زيك... زيك... زيك" أي قديما، "الحكايت تخرف" و"الحكايت نوزيك".
يا سادة يا مادة ربي يدلنا ويدلكم الخير والشهادة.

After the audience immerses themselves in the world of the tale with the narrator, disconnecting from reality and empathizing with its characters and settings, the narrator then guides them back to reality through expressive narrative formulas, such as: "قصتنا دخلت الغابة" و"والعام الجاي تجينا صابة"

"Our story entered the forest, and next year, we'll receive fruits.

Researchers often confuse the terms "fantastic tale" and "myth," although each has a distinct form. Mythology is more closely associated with religious aspects and the multiplicity of gods, expressing human concerns related to life or phenomena that couldn't be explained, such as various natural occurrences. Therefore, its protagonists primarily consist of gods and

demigods. Over time, the advancement of knowledge and science, and the expansion of human minds to various sciences, software, and technology, mythology lost its religious function and transformed into folktales. These tales revolve between reality and fantasy, with protagonists being either humans or mythical creatures conjured by the imagination of the folk. They have taken on various forms and shapes to express the diverse issues of society.

Based on this, it can be said that the "fantastic tale" as a term focuses more on addressing various social, political, and even economic issues experienced by ordinary people. Its primary goal lies in admonition and guidance, as well as entertainment, amusement, and providing relief from everyday life.

On the other hand, mythology focuses more on the religious and metaphysical aspects, with no presence of reality within its events. Below, we will outline the most significant differences between these two popular literary forms:

Table 1. *Myth and Folk Tale*

Mythology	Folk Tale
Literary Form: Folk Tale	Literary Form: Folk Tale
Prose, occasionally interspersed with poetry	Structure: Prose, occasionally interspersed with colloquial expressions, folk songs, or poetry
Theme: Philosophical, metaphysical	Theme: Expression of society and its various issues
World: Fantastic, fantastical	World: Blends reality with fantasy

Some scholars have termed this narrative genre a "marvel," owing to its capacity to instil wonder in the reader or listener. This sense of wonder arises firstly from its structure, rich with marvels, and secondly from its fantastical universe. The narrative unfolds the protagonist's journey into a mesmerizing realm, brimming with magical elements and supernatural occurrences.

Consequently, this literary genre is a vibrant world teeming with wonder, setting its course towards limitless realms beyond the grasp of reason and logic. The actions of its characters and protagonists, whether they hail from the realm of jinn, animals, or spirits, are extraordinary, transcending ordinary human nature. Magic often stands as the predominant force shaping its narrative arc. In this context, researcher Mustafa Yali asserts that the term "marvel" was coined for this genre due to its foundational elements of wonder and astonishment. It is characterized by extraordinary heroism, supernatural events, elusive characters, enigmatic settings and illogical timelines, all of which captivate the imagination, rendering this genre inseparable from its enchanting wonderlands (Yali, 1999, p. 46).

Folk Tale's Characteristics

- Anonymous Authorship: The folk tale is often authored anonymously, transmitted through oral storytelling from one generation to the next. This lends its narrative structure a fluidity that aligns with the customs and traditions of the community from which it originates.

- Use of Common Vernacular: The folk tale relies on a shared vernacular that is common among members of the folk community.

- Length and Narrative Complexity: The folk tale is distinguished by its extensive form, typically presented in a prose format enriched with poetic devices. Additionally, the folk tale is characterized by its wondrous and fantastical world that transcends the boundaries of reason. Animals and elements within these tales often possess the ability to reason, speak, and assist the human protagonist in their quest to achieve their goals or rectify wrongs.

- Role of Women as Narrators: Women and grandmothers predominantly occupy the role of primary narrators within this genre of folk literature compared to men. This is because men were more preoccupied with seeking livelihood opportunities.

-Space and time: Folk narrators often do not place significant emphasis on spatial and temporal dimensions. "The protagonist, who begins the tale as an unborn child, quickly matures within its narrative, becoming a young man in its midst, then an elderly and dignified figure, or even a frail elder by its conclusion. This protagonist effortlessly transitions between the worldly and the metaphysical realms as if they were one. The narrator rarely alludes to this explicitly, nor does he pinpoint the names or precise geographical locations. Thus, one remains uncertain whether the events transpire in Arab lands, European territories, Egypt, Algeria, the Arabian Peninsula, or Tunisia" (Qarari, 2010, p. 95).

The fantastic tale doesn't give significant importance to time, which is often obscure in many parts of it. The hero quickly grows up and becomes a young man or a sultan by the end of the events. The crisis in the tale is unlimited, inexhaustible, and completely illogical. As for places, the tale doesn't attach much importance to their naming or any indication of where the events take place. Locations in the tale might be closed, such as a palace, a hut, or a village considered a residential space or a small community gathering. They might also be open, like a forest or a mountain, possessing a significant aura of sanctity. The tale lends its places a fantastic aspect, where the hero might drink enchanted water to metamorphose into an animal, or the heroine might enter the seventh palace door and be transformed as a punishment for committing a forbidden act. Additionally, there could be a city of copper or silver, where anyone entering it turns into metal. The tale also bestows its characters with a fantastical nature by stripping them of their humanity, such as in the tale of the silver horn and golden horn, or by giving them a magical touch through transformation into animals or by bearing their traits, as in the tale of the goat's legs or figs, or the tale of the enchanted dove, among others.

From the preceding discussion, we can infer that the fantastic tale is a world of infinite meanings and symbolic references. Delving into its contents leads us back to the historical roots of the earliest religions believed by early humans and considered as truths. It also points to various rituals, practices, customs, and traditions that humans engage in without necessarily considering or referring back to their original historical origins.

On these grounds, it can be said that the fantastic tale, with its events, ideas, and sequence of contents, represents a vast record carrying within its pages the history of early humans, their most significant ideas, beliefs, and earliest religions. It also serves as a focal point from which many meanings and symbolic references emerge

-Symbolic Aspect: "Decoding the folk tale involves an open reference to an infinite array of stimulants and meanings. These should not be perceived merely as preliminary stages of meaning. Therefore, the text possesses the capability to achieve a semiotic multiplicity that defies containment, reduction, or superficial interpretation. Instead, it seeks to burst forth and proliferate within the expansive domain of symbolic text (Hafez, 1986, p. 84).

The folk tale can be classified into several types, among the most notable of which are:

A- The Animal Tale

The animal is regarded as a companion to humans, providing them with comfort and companionship in their solitude and loneliness. Humans form bonds with animals, feeding on their flesh, and consuming their eggs, and their fur to make clothes, feathers, and skins.

Therefore, animals have always been present in human stories and thoughts, playing an active role in events. They were given heroic roles and allowed to speak and act like humans while retaining some of their animal characteristics.

Due to the special place animals should have in our storytelling heritage, the human imagination has continued to shape the relationship between humans and animals. An example of this is the tale of "Sabrah and the Lion." In this tale, Sabrah, a beautiful girl, marries a lion and stays with him in his den. One day, she wanted to visit her family's house, so the lion escorted her. Her mother asked her about her life in her new home with her lion husband, and she replied, "I'm fine except for the foul odor emanating from his mouth." The lion, who hadn't strayed far from the house, overheard her words. When he returned, he was filled with sadness. Upon her return home, Sabrah noticed a change in her husband's behavior towards her. When she asked him about it, he replied, "Wounds heal, but words of disgrace don't, Sabrah." He then attacked her and devoured her.

B- The Ogre Tale

The ogre is a significant and central character in our wondrous tales, representing a fantastical being that embodies the popular struggle against it. The term "ogre" is derived from the triliteral root "غ-ل-ل", which encompasses actions like "غال" (he overpowered), "واغتاله" (he assassinated him, killed him), and "أهلكه" (he destroyed him, took him unexpectedly). (Ibn Manzur, 1956, p. 72)

Consequently, the linguistic meaning of the term "ogre" has become associated with killing and death. Ancient Arabs believed it to be a kind of demon or creature that appears predominantly in desolate and deserted places at night. They transformed into various forms to deceive and destroy them. The ancient Arabs had several names for this character, including "العتريس" (Al-Atris), "السمرمة" (Al-Sammarma), and "خيتعور" (Khayt'ur), which refers to anything that does not remain in one form or state. (Mashhur, 1989, p. 61)

From our early years, we've internalized the ogre's character, envisioning it with various terrifying attributes: a colossal physique, thick hair, prominent fangs, and blunt eyes darkly black. In folklore, the ogre embodies malevolence, murder, and harm towards humans. Additionally, they possess a cunning ability to shape-shift into different forms to either prey on humans or form marital and friendly bonds with them.

The Ogre Tale

The ogre is a significant and central character in our wondrous tales, representing a fantastical being that embodies the popular struggle against it. The term "ogre" is derived from the triliteral root "غ-ل-ل", which encompasses actions like "غال" (he overpowered), "واغتاله" (he assassinated him, killed him), and "أهلكه" (he destroyed him, took him unexpectedly) (Ibn Manzur, 1956, p. 72).

Consequently, the linguistic meaning of the term "ogre" has become associated with killing and death. Ancient Arabs believed it to be a kind of demon or creature that appears predominantly in desolate and deserted places at night. They transformed into various forms to deceive and destroy them. The ancient Arabs had several names for this character, including "العتريس" (Al-Atris), "السمرمة" (Al-Sammarma), and "خيتعور" (Khayt'ur), which refers to anything that does not remain in one form or state (Mashhur, 1989, p. 61).

From our early years, we've internalized the ogre's character, envisioning it with various terrifying attributes: a colossal physique, thick hair, prominent fangs, and blunt eyes darkly black. In folklore, the ogre embodies malevolence, murder, and harm towards humans.

Additionally, they possess a cunning ability to shape-shift into different forms to either prey on humans or form marital and friendly bonds with them.

The Marvel in Folk Literature

While folk literature, at its most basic, is orally transmitted narratives handed down from one generation to the next through spoken word, using a simple colloquial language that deviates from the confines of classical Arabic grammar, its narratives, themes, characters, and realms maintain a unique essence. They don't merely mimic reality but often surpass it. Despite the differing laws that govern these worlds and the diverse characteristics they exhibit, there's no clash or conflict between them. Readers of these fantastical tales, such as those found in *One Thousand and One Nights*, find themselves coexisting with sorcerers, giants, and genies, finding solace in some and fearing others.

From the outset, the reader departs from their tangible world and mentally transitions to another realm momentarily setting aside their critical sense to immerse themselves in the artistic game. What aids this transition is the reader's enjoyment in revisiting childhood imaginings, which preceded the development of rational thought (Zaytouni, 2002, p. 202).

Hence, it can be said that folk literature, in its various forms, whether myth, fairy tale, biography, epic, or others, is inherently imbued with a wondrous structure. It primarily revolves around supernatural themes and characters endowed with the full capability to transform into different entities. This breach of time, whether for a moment, a second, or quite the opposite, facilitates their transition to other kingdoms or enables their journey in search of the lost or desired using means beyond ordinary or human nature. This might be a magical carpet, a winged horse, or a ring filled with talismans.

Consequently, magic stands as the driving and active force behind the narrative's progression, distancing itself from the realm of human nature. In the worlds of folk literature, wonders abound where "reason finds no place and logic holds no sway, The true sovereign in these realms is the winged imagination, soaring to the utmost limits but within an unbounded space" (Martad, 1989, p. 05).

Analysis

The Marvelous Dimensions in the Folk Tale *Djamilia*

كانت بكري طفلة اسمها جميلة عايشة بين سبعة خيوة ذكورة كل يوم تروح مع بنات جيرانهم ينحو من شجرة الكرموس، يرجعوا في لعشية وكانت لبنات الكل يغيروا من جميلة من كثرة الزين اللي عندها، واحد اليوم خدعوها وخلوها وحدها فوق راس الشجرة، جاها الغول في الليل باه يوكلها حاولاتو ما تاكلميش راني كان نا عند يمة وخبوتي قلها: نقزي إذا حبيتي على ظهري جات فوق ظهرها هزها الغول وأداها لدارهم أمها كي شافت من ثقبه الباب لقاتوا في الباب خافت وما حلتش، قطعت جميلة كتانة من قشها وربطاتوا في الباب، رجعت مع الغول، وفي الصباح شافت أمها الكتانة وعرفتھا راهي تاع بنتها بكت هي وخبوتها، وقالوا توا را كلاها، وكانت جميلة مخطوبة لواحد يحبها، قعد يحوس عليها وما استسلمش، فات عام، قالت الستوت لخطيب جميلة: أي ما زالت عايشة وحية تعيش في مغارة في راس الجبل، ولازم تكون قوي بش تقدر ترجعها، أدى معاه شكارا ملح باه كي يقرب للمغارة يرشوا بيه، وقدر يدخل ويهرب بجملة، لحقهم الغول وطلب من الأرض تتحول لشوك وهربوا ما قدرش يحكمهم، ودعا مرة أخرى الأرض تتحول لفضة وذهب، وتحولت وما تغروش، ولى دعا يتحول لجمال أخضر فتحول الغول، المهم جميلة رجعت لدارهم وفحوا بيها وداروا بعد أيامات العرس، وكان في الباب جمل أخضر شافاتو أمها فرحت وقالت لجميلة تركز عليه رفضت جميل، بصح عيلتها حتموا عليها حتى ركبت هرب بيها وتحول الغول كيما كان، واداها معاه وقصتنا دخلت الغابة والعام الي تجينا صابة.

The facets of the marvel are distinctly evident in our folkloric narrative heritage, the subject of this study. Initially, we will explore the marvel within characters, as they form the central axis of any literary work and serve as the primary driving force behind events.

The narrative oscillates between two types of characters. The first type is represented by human beings, depicting both friendly and hostile relationships. Specifically:

A. *Hostile Relationships*

The story illustrates an antagonistic relationship between the protagonist and her female counterparts, represented by the neighboring girls. They become the catalyst for the protagonist's predicament, leading her to transition to another world inhabited by mystical beings. This is evident in the narrative as expressed by the storyteller: " كل يوم تروح مع بنات " جيرانهم ينحو من شجرة الكرموس ويرجعوا في العشية، وكانت البنات الكل يغيرو من جميلة من كثرة الزين اللي عندها واحد " اليوم وخذعوها وخلوها وحدها فوق راس الشجرة

B. *Hostile Relationships Between Humans and Mystical Beings (Ghoul):*

The narrative portrays the constant struggle of Djamilia's human lover to rescue her from the clutches of the malevolent character, subjecting them to numerous dangers.

C. *Friendly Relationships*

The story also depicts a friendly relationship between the protagonist and her family and neighbors, who strive diligently to rescue her and restore her to her normal life. Another fascinating aspect of wonder in the narrative is associated with the character of the Ghoul and its immense ability to transform and metamorphose from one form to another. The term "metamorphosis" is defined in the book "Tahdhib al-Lughah" by al-Azharī as: "The transformation of creation into another form. God transformed him individually with a monstrosity." (ibn Ahmad al-Azharī, n.d, p. 240) Thus, the linguistic meaning of the term "metamorphosis" is linked fundamentally to the transformation from one shape to another, often more grotesque. For instance, a person characterized by deceit and cunning might transform into the form of a snake or a wolf. Therefore, the semantic connotation of the term "metamorphosis" is inherently associated with the effacement of original characteristics and their replacement with something more sinister.

The tale portrayed the ghoul's uncanny ability to shift from its familiar, fearsome appearance—characterized by its protruding teeth, dark, thick hair, long tail, massive physique, and prominent eyes. While traditionally a creation of folk imagination, it transcended conventional fantasy by morphing into a surprising form: a green camel. This transformation deepened the tale's mystique, pushing beyond the bounds of logic and reason. In this altered guise, the ghoul managed to ensnare the heroine, spiriting her away to its fantastical realm steeped in enchantment and wonder.

«وكان في الباب جمل أخضر شافاتوا أمها، وخرجت وقالت لجميلة تركب عليه، رفضت جميلة بصح عايتلتها حتموا عليها وقصتنا دخلت الغابة والعام الجاي تجينا صابة».

The setting: is typically understood as the geographical space where a human community resides. It is intricately connected to their customs, traditions, and practices. "The setting plays a central role in the narrative structure, as a story cannot exist without a defined place (Boumezou, 2010, p. 82). Events don't unfold outside of a specific setting; each event occurs within a particular place and time." As noted by researcher Samar Al-Faysal, "It represents the natural and real place, one that is consistent and enduring" (Al-Faysal, 1995, p. 252).

From this, we can discern that the researcher has transcended the conventional, imaginative framework of place in narrative construction. This repositions the tangible setting as a fertile ground for artistic exploration. The narrator delves into expansive realms of the unknown, crafting a canvas for a myriad of relationships and ideas that stretch beyond the

confines of reason. The role of place in the narrative is important; it stands as a foundational element. These stable yet evolving locations shape the paths of the characters. "The unfolding events craft a reality that imagines new depictions of places, be they broad or narrow (Bachelard, 1998, p. 25).

The story portrayed the theme of awareness of certain real places, both tangible and actual, which later captured the folk's imagination with their wonder. Initially, events oscillated between the village as the real place hosting a group of people sharing customs, traditions, and practices, and the forest, which represented a vast space open to various terrains and animals. It's that space filled with elements of fear, darkness, and blackness, as night falls. The events wove around this real place elements that made it vibrant and opened its sails to wondrous windows. At first, a tree embraced the heroine to protect her from predatory animals. However, as the sun set and the sounds of bats echoed in the pitch-black darkness, the sinister character of the ogre emerged. This character became the reason for the girl's transition from her real human world to another mysterious realm governed by power. The relationship between the two worlds can be represented as follows:

The village = Enclosed, Spread out, Populated, Real, Stability.

The forest = Open, Elevated, Empty, Real/marvelous, Unstable.

The tale subtly suggests that the heroine was forcibly taken to dwell with the ogre, that mythical figure from folklore, for an unspecified duration. Yet, it specifically places her living in a cave atop a mountain. Mountains, with their towering peaks and elevated stature, have always held a sacred aura. Our narrative often portrays this terrain as harboring numerous mysteries, serving as a dwelling for mystical entities or other creatures born from human imagination. The story encapsulates this notion in the narrator's voice: " قالت الستوت لخطيب جميلة " أي ما زالت عايشة وحية تعيش في مغارة في راس الجبل". While the story doesn't delve deep into the details of this existence, it hints at the protagonist spending a full year alongside the malevolent figure. This allows readers to wander imaginatively through captivating mystical realms, contemplating the novel way of life the heroine endured, which serves as the focal point of the study.

The tale also alluded to another place as a habitat for mystical beings, namely the cave. This enclosed space, shrouded in darkness with no light penetrating its depths, became a dwelling not only for supernatural entities but also for the human protagonist as the events unfolded. She began to share her life and embrace all its aspects within this space.

Conclusion

Folk literature is a result of the nation, reflecting its spirit, thought, and reality in diverse forms, using a simple colloquial language where imagination predominates in the series of events. The fairy tale or marvelous story is one of the most significant forms of folk literature, often presented in a prose format that may be interspersed with poetry. It is characterized by its astonishing world where rational boundaries are transcended, with animals and natural elements that think, speak, and support the human hero in their quest or in rectifying a wrong.

The origin of the fairy tale can be traced back to myth, which, after losing its religious function, transformed into a fairy tale reflecting reality. The characters in these tales vary, including humans, animals, plants, and inanimate objects, all of which play roles in either supporting or opposing the hero. These elements symbolize the evil that tries to thwart

goodness and contain countless implicit cues, acting as focal points from which many connotations and symbols emerge, reflecting social and political conditions.

The historical roots of the fairy tale extend to primitive religions such as totemism and fetishism, which were embraced by early humans who believed in their truth. These early humans worshipped nature (trees, animals, plants, the moon, the sun) out of fear or as a means of getting lost. Some researchers prefer to call the fairy tale "the marvelous" because its events and themes evoke wonder, deriving from its narrative structure. The characters, events, and worlds in these tales are illogical and defy reality, as this genre relies heavily on astonishing, fantastical worlds.

Algerian fairy tales share themes with many tales from the Arab world and even the West, as these stories undergo oral transmission and changes in their events, adapting to the customs and traditions of the society from which they emerge. The places in marvelous tales are varied, not confined to a single one or a specific time, and the narrator adds a fantastical element, ranging from open spaces (forest, mountain, etc.) to closed spaces (castle, hut, cave, village...). These places become mythical spaces that either support the hero on their journey or hinder them. They can speak and act like humans or possess extraordinary abilities to bring luck, break spells, and more.

Marvelous tales are diverse, including animal tales where animals are protagonists that speak and act like humans while retaining some of their animal characteristics. There are also tales involving jinn, who play a significant role in making the impossible possible. The third type, the object of the herein study, is ogre tales. Ogres are central characters in fairy tales, and despite being fictional, they occupy a significant space in our folk memory. We often imagine them as frightening figures, emanating fear and unease when they appear in stories.

About the Author

Dr Sabrina BOUGOUFA is a lecturer of Arabic Literature at the University of Tebessa, Algeria. Her research interests include the field of Folk Literature. She participated in many national and international conferences and published papers in journals of high quality. **0009-0006-8470-5404**

References

- ibn Ahmad al-Azharī, A. (n.d). *Tahdhib al-Lughah*. Cairo, Egypt: Egyptian House for Translation and Publishing.
- Al-Faysal, S. (1995). *The Structure of Syrian Arabic Novel*. Damascus, Syria: Arab Writers Union Publications.
- al-Nadim, I. (1997). *Al-Fihrist*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar El'Maarifa.
- Ammar, B. (2021, 02 22). (researcher, Interviewer)
- Bachelard, G. (1998). *The Aesthetics of Space, translated by Ghaleb Helsa*. Beirut, Lebanon: University Institutions for Studies.
- Boumezou, M. (2010). *Narrative Text Analysis: Techniques and Concepts*. Algeria: Al-Ikhtilaf Publications.
- Hafez, S. (1986). *Intertextuality and Literary References*. cario: Oyun Al-Maqalat Magazine .
- Ibn Manzur. (1956). *Lisan al-Arab* (Vol. 5). Beirut: Dar Sader.
- Ibrahim, N. (n.d). *Forms of Expression in Folk Literature*. Egypt: Dar Ghareeb Publishing.
- Mahna, G. H. (1997). *folk Tale Literature*. Beirut: Lubnan Nashiron.
- Martad, A. (1989). *Mythology Among the Arabs (A Study of a Collection of Ancient Arab Myths and Beliefs)*. Algeria: National Book Foundation.
- Mashhur, H. (1989). *The Ogre Between Prophetic Hadith and Folklore*. Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn Al-Qayyim.
- Qarari, A. (2010). *Popular Literature Approaches and Studies*. Algeria: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Hadith.
- Yali, M. (1999). *Folk Stories in Morocco: A Morphological Study*. Morocco: Al-Madaris Publishing Company.
- Zaytouni, L. (2002). *Dictionary of Novel Criticism Terms*. Lebanon: Dar Lebanon.

Cite as

Bougoufa, S. (2024). Marvel in the Algerian Folk Tale: 'The Tale of Djamila and the Ogre'. *ATRAS Journal*, 5(2), 90-100.