

THE SEMIOTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE ALGERIAN MYTHICAL NARRATIVES

Kamal Nasri^{*1},

¹ University of Dr MoulayTahar-Saida(Algeria), Kamel.nasri@gmail.com,

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BSTRACT:

Mythology conceptualization is an ongoing process that is not limited to a single time or region. However, the ability to examine myths from a semiotic point of view was conducted and present in the works of Roland Barthes who considers it as a study of the implicit signs present in the mental elements of society and nature. The scrutiny of such Barthes narratives is a difficult task that is hindered by the lack of original records. The collected corpus of this work is compiled using the profiling informant's method. It is also used to describe numerous mythical characters and create a map of monstrous characters and study their interactions and roles inside each scenario. The outcome of this study is the interpretation of every narrative and its role in society, as well as examining how laypeople and academics perceive these narratives. In this sense, we will attempt to connect the narrative and social frameworks to classify as a result. More importantly, to study the relationship between tropes, labels and language and investigate the various dimensions within these narratives. In the end, this paper also opts to evaluate Algerian myths using Campbell's model of dimension.

Keywords: Mythology; semiotics; Charter; Language; Deconstruction

1. Introduction:

The scrutiny of mythical narratives is a difficult task that can be hindered by the lack of human and material resources or records. Some Algerian mythology, like any other world's mythology, dates back before the arrival of Christianity, a period labelled as Ancient Barbaria. These narratives are the extrapolations of ancient oral chants and recitations of what some regard as an obsolete heritage that has fallen into obscurity and is classified as "apocryphal" i.e.; non written records

Furthermore, the completion of this study was hampered by the lack of Griots and storytellers who could recollect historical records related to mythology and stories. There is also a scarcity of references and resources to provide us with evidence to trace the origins of these stories. These references could also include concrete written documents, rather than shallow apocryphal accounts stored in our "collective memory." When scrutinizing Algerian mythical narratives, we manage to see the symbolic and semiotic nature embedded in the different concepts and terminologies and fulfilled by the narrative occurrences itself.

Scholars in European countries study myths and give them their fair share of scholarship in different universities due to their symbolism and link to reality. Therefore, Algerian narratives are an extension of global mythology by taking

into account their different plots of conflict between divine beings, or between protagonists and monsters, or even between good and evil. These binaries are still limited to the dimension of "Entertainment" but they expand into many other symbolic dimensions and interplays. In addition to that, to be considered as religious or artificial narratives with certain qualities that are employed to achieve a societal aim; either "Divine or Educational" aspects that may be classified as "Dimensions". However, It indicates that a single narrative can serve various roles, which are decided by the invoker's explicit or implicit goals.

The aforementioned problematics and conceptualisation lead to the formulation of the following Hypotheses:

- 1- Algerian mythical narrative upholds different semiotic dimensions driven by the linguistic and symbolic nature of their Barthian codes.
- 2- JosephCampbell model of dimensions and functions may strongly apply on Algerian narratives, giving them a symbolic universal feature.
- 3- Algerian myths are an extension of world's mythologies and reflects a linguistic dimension that is apparent to Academics unlike laypeople.
- 4- The perception of these dimensions and functions differs from Academics to laypeople
- 5- Algerian mythological functions go beyond the 'Cosmological, Mystical, Pedagogical, and Social' dimension in Campbell's paradigm to include restraining, cultural and behavioural components.

2. Methodology

The process and scrutiny of Algerian narratives was hindered by the lack of an agreed-upon resources. This latter pushed the researcher to conduct a field work where two different methods were used 'Profiling Informants' and 'Transliterating narratives' i.e.; translating narratives from their mother tongue into English to facilitate the grasp and publication of those narratives.

At the end, we managed to separate this narrative perception, by taking into account the views of both laypeople and academics.

2.1 Research Tools

The research tools employed in this research were exemplified in a mixture of Profiling informants, and interviews. These three tools were necessary to assure the preservation of research Triangulation and help us achieve a critical analysis of the corpus we are going to collect. The corpus was later transliterated through a famous table of transliteration.

2.1.1 Profiling Informants

Profiling informants alongside interviews is a crucial step in conducting such

research as we need to locate and gather all the different narrative available in the region of Saida, Telagh, Marhoum and Dhaya towns. In this sense, we are going to deal with different informants' profiles and answers, as they describe or introduce narratives and their various characteristics in terms of type, function, dimension. While we use the same corpus to construct a map of characters, and try to differentiate their interplays and roles within each context. See Table 1 in the appendix.

2.1.2 Transliteration

The process of transliteration is the stage of codifying and giving these narratives a readable template and opening access to its codes and terminologies. The corpus is transcribed according to table of transliteration. This procedure was used to encode and facilitate the reading of the Arabic words to English. See table 3 in the appendix.

2.1.3 Target Population

Interviews are used to collect the corpus were conducted with 30 informants. They were classified into two categories, the first group represent the category of Academics 15 males and females, students and researchers at the university of Dr MoulayTaharSaida. Accordingly, the second group consists of 15 illiterates, both males and females. However, language barrier required the usage of the same language spoken by the interviews i.e., the informants' mother tongue. That is we used a translated table. See table 2 in appendices

3. Literature review

By linking to various theoretical frameworks, this paper considers and discusses myths dimensions inside all Algerian narratives. These frameworks are based on Campbell's "Mystical, Cosmological, Sociological, and Pedagogical" functions model. Additionally, it highlights the various well-known Algerian regional mythology from the western region and contrasts them with those from other nearby locales with fewer cultural differences. The 'profiling informants' method will be used to classify the material that has been gathered, while both written and oral narratives are being recorded. Surprisingly, instead of employing realistic methods and other behaviours to stop an action, people prefer to rely on myths because of their effectiveness and rapidity. As a result, myths arise in order to achieve social goals that may result in changes in various contexts such as behaviours and events. They also use language to explain pictures and symbols that exist in society. To emphasize this idea, use Joseph Campbell's definition: *“Myth is not a lie. mythology is an organization of symbolic images and narratives, metaphorical of the*

possibilities of our experiences and the achievement of any culture at any time.”
(1985:1)

By considering mythical narratives as a metaphoric combination of both language and signs, in her paper Feyrouzbouzida¹ stresses the importance of Roland Barthes approaches in dealing and scrutinising *semiotics* ‘According to Barthes, the visual sign is related to the aesthetic and ideological factors that are related to subjective interpretations at the second level of signification in order to explain how meaning is created through complex semiological interactions. Thus, semiology uses a wide variety of signs including: images, adverts, and films to provide the recipients with knowledge they need to have the ability to analyse and reproduce meanings’

In addition to this, Campbell (1968) explains how mythical narratives describe various functions. The first and second functions of mythology are a very much related ‘*cosmological and Mystical*’ which explain narrative’s purposes through worship, rituals and omens that could be used to avoid jinx and provide bliss. The third function of myth is ‘*Sociological*’ or conveying social change and happenings in a given society. The fourth function is described as ‘*Educational*’ such as providing enlightenment and knowledge through the different religious, historical and philosophical narrations invokers provide. These narratives also express linguistic devices used either to empower a social reality or reshape it. From a linguistic standpoint, Cassirer (1946) dealt with language in mythology describing the latter as a Meta-linguistic phenomenon.

According to Cassirer, both language and myth date back to antiquity, as they are prehistoric phenomena with unknown exact date. However, there are many reasons for regarding them as twin tools. The intuition about nature and man reflected in the oldest verbal roots, and the processes by which language probably grew up are the same elementary intuitions and the same processes which are expressed in the development of myths”. Cassirer elucidates explains that myth is something conditioned and negotiated by the agency of language. Therefore, language cannot be studied without considering mythology. If ever that happens, the learning process won’t be complete, and learners would fail in grasping the whole meaning of language. Accordingly, Ernst stresses on the fact that the absence would result in the production an inherent weakness of language. Since, all linguistic denotation, attributions, tropes and concepts are essentially ambiguous and in this ambiguity is what we call ‘paronymia’² of words that construct the source of all myth. Levi Strauss (1955:431) views myth, as linguistics subject. He explains some of its peculiarities including the meaning of mythological concepts. In this sense, he argues that if there is a meaning to be found in mythology, this cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined”. Moreover, Levi Strauss (ibid) views myth as part of language,

something semantically structured. He explains mythical concepts as having timely characteristics that are empowered due to the mythical complexity. Accordingly, he puts myth in the same category of language and asserts that “Although myth belongs to the same category as language... language in myth unveils specific properties”. Those properties are only to be found above the ordinary linguistic level. i.e., they exhibit more complex features beside those which are to be found in any kind of linguistic expression.

4. Algerian Mythical Characters

The myths listed below are the product of a field study that used two main methods: profiling informants and interviews. As a result, multiple Algerian myths in the region of Saida were compiled. However, certain tales from other places were added in order to examine the comparison in terms of origin and charter, as well as to be tested using different models, such as Joseph Campbell's. In this regard, the assertions in this section are taken from the preceding Informant's profile, and each statement is expanded and detailed to describe the many legendary typology of characters.

4.1. *The narratives of /ārus ‘lmatar/ and /āruse’sm/*

There are various Algerian tales that we may not be able to collect or recall since they are time and place limited; some of these myths date back before Christianity. They can be found in a variety of locations, ranging from the Kabylia region to the borders with Morocco, where they share a common culture. As an example, this story was utilized to frighten children and even adolescents in order to control them. 'An insider explains:' */āruse’sm/ is a representation of a woman that resides in the sky, a goddess-like, or a woman notorious for her vicious super powers that could come to strike the one who keeps on watching the mirror at night, or watching him/her-self in the mirror repeatedly*” In contrast to the Myth of /Tisilit/ or /arus 'lmatar/, also known as the bride of rain, is very well-known telling in berber regions, and not that famous in west of Algeria. /Tisilit/ takes the shape of a parallel tale termed /Gu>nja /.However, this narrative dates back to antiquity, a beautiful woman who chose to be chaste, she stayed in isolation in the mountains playing in the moors pouring water and singing, and this is what helped her achieve divine status, attracting the god of wind, who was worshiped in the past under the name /AnZar/. He proposed to the mortal /Thisilit/, but she revoked his request manytimes. She eventually changed her mind after she seized rain from the kabellia region, causing them to live in a draught, pushing her to marry him. This myth tells how /Thisilit/ later evolved into a rainbow, the colours of which signify her most generous characteristics and characteristics. People who idealize this belief throw and spread water in front of newlywed women as they leave their parents' homes for their

spouses, as a sign of fertility and preparation for conception. Others, however, continue to hold this pagan belief, worshiping and praising the god /AnZar/ for providing them with wealth and the necessary rain for cultivation.

4.2 The Narrative of /*kda>wadj 'lāmiaa/*

Even Though this story is no longer found inside the borders of Algeria's western area, it remains a part of the communal memory, since people recall such stories for entertainment purposes. / *kda>wadj 'lāmiaa* / Is a young lady, a princess, and the daughter of a Sultan named /Hassan KaZnadji/; they lived in a ghetto-like area in Algerian culture, yet they resided in a gorgeous palace.

This Sultan gave his daughter a mirror as a present, and her beauty was attractive to everybody who saw her, even herself. This caused her to suffer from narcissism; her love for herself drove her to spend time looking in that awful mirror, changing clothes, and repairing every detail that ruined her beauty. It caused her to lose her sight, and people began to refer to her as / *kda>wadj 'lāmiaa* / Eventually, her father gave her the castle, and she lived there with her niece and nephew; the location was later named after her as / *kda>wadj 'lāmiaa* / Castle. According to one source: “ *This myth is not very much used nowadays, people prefer to frighten their children using the myth of /ārise'sm/ or the bride of the heavens, for that it sounds so much gloomy and spooky. Most Kids would not believe they will become blind due to watching mirrors, but would somehow believe that a mirror is haunted by some kind of a spirit that could strike at any second*”

4.3 The narrative of /Targu/

One well-known story that is not linked to beauty but is nonetheless used to monitor and regulate the behaviour of children is the myth of /Targu/, a terrifying powerful woman who roams the streets during midday and napping time / 'lmgil/ and strangles any child she encounters. According to the elderly lady: “*the myth of /targu/ is not always mythical, for that we sometimes disguise in old outfit to frighten our kids and prevent them from leaving home. /Targu/ is known by her speed and faceless expression, she would catch any kid outside during noon time and strangle him*” She adds: “*Targu*” comes to kids during summer” to prevent a sun-stroke.

The reason for perpetuating this myth is due to its necessity and affectivity, as no other method has been proven to control children and keep them at home instead of playing outside in the scorching sunrays that can injure them. This lends support to the view that myths endure when their purpose is still alive, when man requires them to conquer a conflict that cannot be solved by sensible thinking, and this invocation gives it a position at the present time.

4.4 The narrative of and /*hmarḍba>b/* and /*hmarLi>le/*

There are additional well-known superstitions in rural areas that are related to monitoring people's behaviour and, while not widely known, are nonetheless used in ironic settings. For instance, the myth of /hmarLi and dbab / the first relates to the Night Donkey, the second to the Fog Donkey. Both donkeys are connected with the potential of wandering aimlessly and losing one's path while traveling or strolling at night or in foggy conditions. The elderly lady stated *“/hmarLi / is an evil spirit that comes to you as you walk and mislead you, as he takes you to different ways, it is also the feeling we get, a feeling of sudden surprise of not recognising the place we are. So, when you get that feeling you should know that / hmarLi>le/>darbak// or that Night Donkey stroke you, thus mislead you from the right path or took you somewhere else”*. The idea of receiving a stroke is also linked to the religious beliefs that /Jinn/ may strike you and caused you to appear in a place different from the one you were within, which make this idea of /hmarLi>le/ is not just an ordinary donkey case. But, another kind of supernatural mythical creature that could cause you change place and lose track of situation. Moreover, /hmar>dba>b/ or Fog Donkey, is just like the one of night, but instead of getting lost due to darkness, one may get lost because of fog. The old man said *“/ hmar>dba>b/ is not just an animal with flesh and blood, it is a supernatural creature that is born of Fog, it is the fog himself, as it simply pull you to different places without your awareness, change your track, the silence of fog and its beauty will emerge with your mind and cause you unawareness of the situation and the place you are walking through”*

4.5 The narrative /hmarat ‘lmgil/

/hmarat‘lmgil/ refers to a hideous creature that roams the streets during the summer and catches any child who is not taking a nap. Still, people use myths to monitor behaviors and educate through imagination, as well as through the subordination of mythological events and characters that could not happen, and yet these myths are part of our reality since they mold it.

4.6 The narrative of /ḡunja /

Religion and science brought enlightenments and set comprehensible explanations for various phenomena that are impossible to decipher. Yet, some people still think and believe in their mythological rituals of pagan natures. Their ability to bring them what they want, just like /ārus‘lmatar/ or the myth of /ḡu>nja / or /bu>ḡanju/ a mythical ritual people perform during hot dry seasons, for the sake of receiving water; More particularly, in rural regions or small villages, people take a puppet made of rags and strings, walk with it and chant together the following lines. Said the informant lady *“/ḡu>njabēčetra>shayarabičemaḡra>sha/, or /buḡanju de>r ‘el āta>č ya> rabi> qawi ‘elrače>č, weljelbanaāetče>nawesqihaya> mula>na, welfu>l newer wesfa>rwesqi>h yebu ‘enwa>r/ ‘’^β*. Villagers and peasants ask God to give

them water to quench earth's thirst. This chanting is a ritual performed by people as they ask God to give them water. But this narrative is different from the one of /ārus'lmatar// that was the source of rain for people, her chaste spirit and her divinity that she gained through her meditation brought well-being to her country and her valley. The myth of /ḡu>nja/ is very famous, it is believed that due to this ritual; plants will be quenched and earth will be watered, still there is a link between the two myths in relation to the prosperity of agriculture. A female informant said **'in the Region between Sidibel abbes, and Saida, and exactly in Marhoum, a small village, /ḡu>nja/ was not just a doll we make, we used to dress up the big spoon and give it a form of a doll, afterward, we go as little girls and collect /'Smi>d/ or semolina, as we knock on every neighbouring house, prepare it later into the famous dish /Ku>sku>s/ and feed the poor, so that God accept our offering and give us rain'** Yet, the relationship between /ḡu>nja/ and the offering for God is still a mystery that we can only explain as a local ritual that is only believed and understood by its practitioners, this ritual is the same as the one of /ārus'lmatar/.

4.7 The narrative of /'lāmrya/

As kids we were always warned by our parents of a woman who comes in red clothes or in a kind of traditional /ḡayek⁴/, knocks on the doors and asks for kids. She would ask if they are behaving or being mischievous, if not well mannered, she would take them with her, and punish them. This narrative is not about a monster or a monstrous supernatural creature, but linked to those /ḡajar/ or gypsies, in academic Arabic they are called /ḡajar⁵/ while, /ʒamr/ in the Algerian dialect, /'lāmrya/ is the female gypsy, and /'lāmri/ is the male one.

This myth is partly factual and represents a woman who did exist in the past but not with the same function the invoker is using. Yet, it is similar to the narrative of /Targu/ that chases any kid found outside playing, and going against the instructions of his/her parents. The only difference is that /'lāmrya/ would knock on the door and ask for mischievous kids, whereas, /Targu/ will only stalk those who are outside at /'lmgī>l/ or napping time.

4.8 The narrative of /'ljetma/

Away from religious interpretations of this phenomenon, psychologists explain this seizure which occurs mostly at night when we are asleep, which is accompanied with the incapability to move, after a sudden awakening with a complete state of paralysis as "The Old Hag Syndrome". The latter is also called Sleep Paralysis, which is the scientific interpretation of /'ljetma/.

However, in the orient and especially in Algeria this myth is partly factual, as it stands for the fact of having a /Jinn/ bashing and pushing on the chest of the sleeper,

sits on him, strangles him with his right hand and pulls his tongue out using his left hand, which may prevent him/her from moving. Interestingly, the only way to move is to recite Quranic verses, which could fire the */Jinn/* away. Yet, it is also said that *“/ljetma/ only occurs to those who sleep on their backs or take so much food. One informant said: “this psychological reaction could also be explained by religious man as the result of sleeping without saying their prayers, which are related to delivering the soul to its creator, therefore when someone sleeps without saying prayers his soul will struggle as it can’t leave the body, and this will cause the person to feel this fit.”*

4.9 The narrative of */kewa>net ‘erje>l/*

This myth is about an ugly woman that roams the streets at night, hiding her reality, appearing in the form of a beautiful maiden. In fact, it is a mutilated ugly monster that would abduct any man walking in the streets at night. She would seduce men with her beauty and take them somewhere to kill them, and only reveal her true form when away from sight. This myth is famous in the region of Saida. These myths are the creation of our society, and a reflection of our way of life. However, there are many other narratives summoned by people and peasants to interpret events or to attain an objective in life. Some of these myths are modified, changed, adapted to situations. Yet, there are other myths recorded thanks to our collective memory, these myths stand for ancient deities, who were worshiped and idealized by people under paganism before the coming of Christianity.

5. Narratives’ Dimensions and Analysis

The results of the following figures represent an extract from the profiling informant’s corpus. They focus only on narratives’ dimensions for both Academics and laypeople in relation to the usage of narratives as charter tools. The numerical proportions represent the number of “Yes” of each informant. Thus, agreeing with the narrative’s functions.

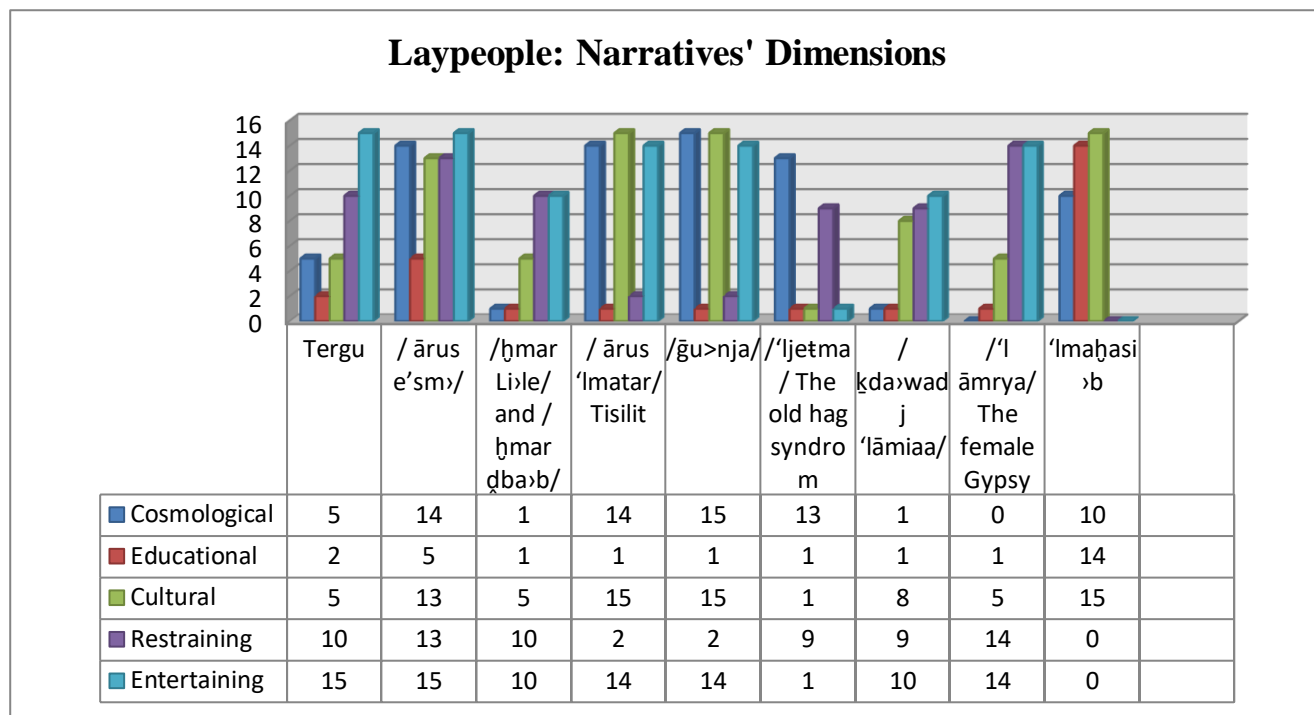


Figure 1: Narratives' dimensions and their perception by "illiterate"

In addition to Joseph Campbell's dimensions model which consists of various myths' implementations "Educational, Cosmological, Mystical and Pedagogical. It is noticeable through the afore investigations that this model does not sum up the whole construction of functions for the Algerian narratives.

Accordingly, it is due to the omnifarious usages and purposes that are in relation to each summon for the mythical narrative. Except for the mystical dimension which is present with any mythical narratives and this is why it was not pondered critically, as the focus was on the other functions mentioned in the model.

More importantly, through investigating and questioning laypeople about the element of function we find agreement when we relate to the axis of behavioural restraining. However, most myths of educational nature are summoned for the purpose of restraining individuals' behaviour in society.

This function is exemplified in individuals' attempt to use the abnormal to supplant normal tools that wouldn't function as restraining or monitoring tools. Particularly, when trying to adjust the behaviour of kids through deviant ways different from the normative behaviours which can either harm them or be considered as ethically bad.

Still, laypeople were not that aware of the educational function. The Educational dimension of mythology is exemplified in the different linguistic usages present with each narrative. These codes and signs could not be sensed by laypeople due to their low linguistic repertoire.

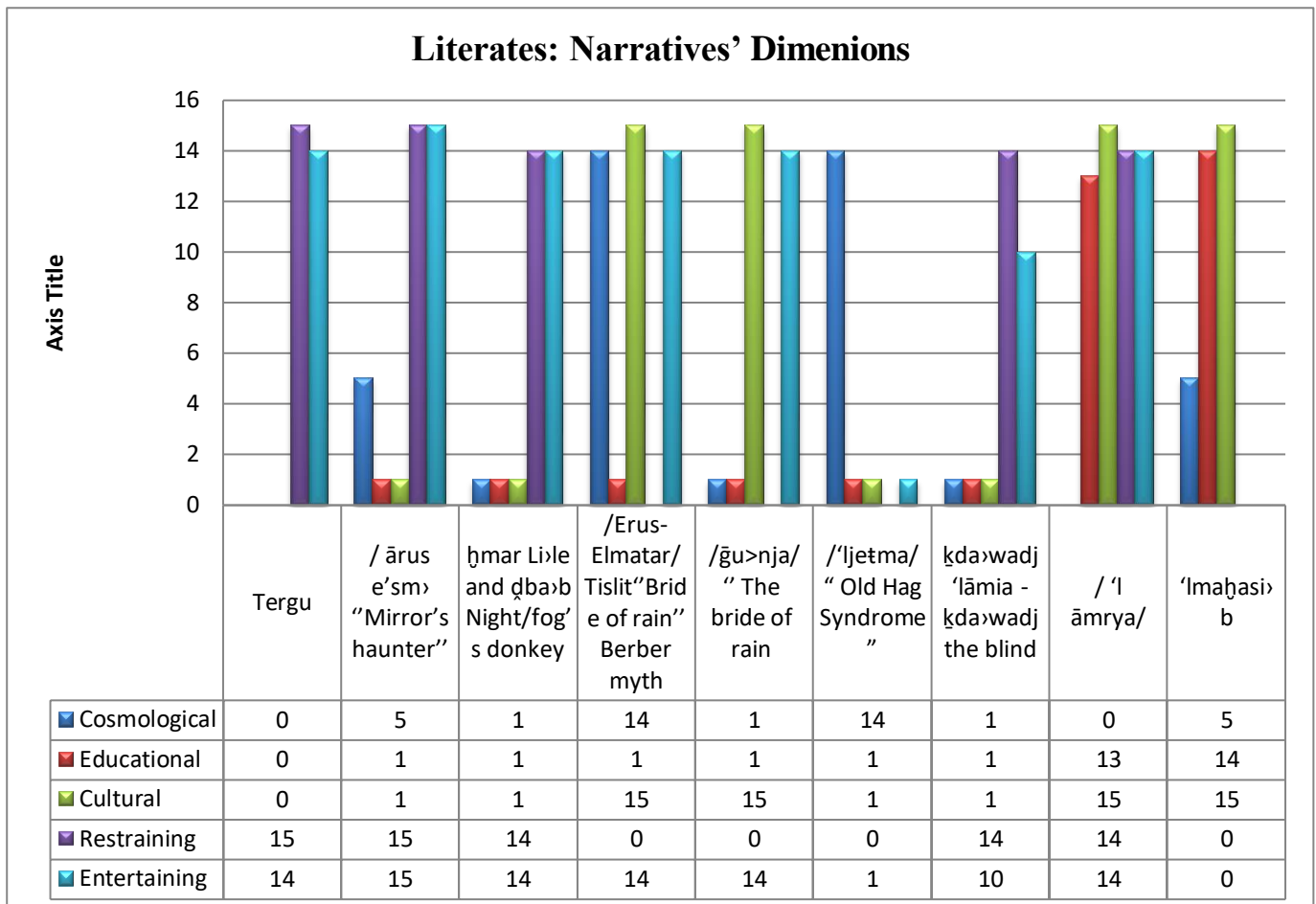


Figure 2: Narratives' dimensions for and their perception by Academics

Joseph Campbell's dimensions model is divided into Educational, Cosmological, Mystical, and Pedagogical categories. In this regard, the previous results have revealed that these axes do not encompass the entire construction of dimensions for Algerian narratives. This is due to the various dimensions relative to the narration of these Algerian mythical narratives. Through investigation and questioning of academics, it is clear that the main narratives' dimension is shared by all informants, as exemplified by the "didactic function."

Most educational myths are invoked to restrain individuals' behaviour in society, in an attempt to replace normal tools with the abnormal. Particularly when attempting to alter the behaviour of children who are acting in deviant ways that are distinct from normative behaviours and do not conform to social reality. Narratives such as /'lāmrya, Tergu, ḡda>wadj, and /ārus e'sm>/, are invoked to adjust and monitor behaviour. Thus, the only educational narrative is the one of / and /'lāmrya /, the first for its sociological nature, while the second depict historical heritage. Most of these narratives project the function of entertainment, since they reflect happenings or tales to amuse people in special occasions. Yet, the only narratives with cosmological functions are the ones related to worship such as /Tislit and ḡu>nja /.

THE SEMIOTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE ALGERIAN MYTHICAL NARRATIVES

In addition to the traditional model of Joseph Campbell, we may denote other Dimensions related to the Algerian narratives. These dimensions fall under two categories, in one hand they could be explicit such as: Entertaining Family, restraining or adjusting behaviour “monitoring”, in addition to spreading cultural heritage ‘cultivating’. Interestingly, there is an implicit category of functions, exemplified in vilifying and monstrifying individuals by tagging males or females with malign monstrous tropes. The linguistic dimension is very much linked to the educational dimension where academics managed to see the relevance and the importance of these narratives in regard of etymological and educational purposes.

Narratives	Symbolic dimensions	Monstrification Dimension
Narrative of Tergu	Restraining	Female monster
Narrative of /āruṣe'smṭ	Restraining/ Mystical	Female angry spirit
ḥmarLiṽle/ and / ḥmarḍbaṽb/	Mystical/ Restraining	Male angry hideous monster
/ ārus 'lmatar/ “Tislit'Bride of rain”	Cosmological/ Cultural/ mystical	Female divine spirit or deity-like ascend by the help of Anzar
/ḡu>nja/ ' The bride of rain	Mystical /Cultural/	Female divine puppet
/ljetma/ The old hag syndrome	Mystical/ Restraining	Female/Male evil spirit
kḍaṽwadj 'lāmia	Mystical Restraining /	Female helpless woman
/l āmrya/	Cultural/ Restraining	Female gypsy woman

Table 1 Myths' Dimensions, and Monstrification Aspects

5.1 Table analysis

While answering, informants faced different motifs such as dimensions, and monster affiliation. First of all, when dealing with dimensions and their relation to the narratives, informants had the chance to explore the different possible dimensions, in an attempt to link them to the narrative in hand, in addition to the model of dimension suggested by Joseph Campbell.

Accordingly, Algerian narratives convey other functions far from the original ones, these functions, could be exemplified in restraining behaviour function, cultural functions, or even prediction function. Second, the empowerment function is relative to individuals' tendencies and gender socialisation either gynocentric or androcentric views. Therefore, if a narrative is related to female spirits with divine status, gynocentric sees it as an empowering narrative. In this sense, androcentric opinions may clash with it, since it is female empowering and male weakening. In contrast to this, gynocentric points of views see narratives as disempowering even when they are linked to evil angry spirits. Thus, the degree of empowerment is somehow related to the degree of 'evilness, or goodness within a narrative in a given context.

Thirdly, it is very important to focus on gender affiliation, where narratives are classified in form of binaries androcentric/gynocentric, misogyny/misandry, or philogyny. At last, and not very different from the empowering aspects of a narrative, monster affiliation is focuses on whether these narrative stand for male or female monsters, yet it is not the only available categorisation, as we find female and male spirits that could be divine or hideous.

6. Gender Dimension in the Algerian Mythology

Women have always occupied a subservient position in society, due to man's power in different domains, it is also due to the pioneering works man wrote and sustained through times. These works are represented in the literary chronicles that include mythological tales, and mythical records which are totally biased and filled with misogynistic tropes and roles especially against women. They also deprive man and prove them to be reckless and primarily sexual creatures that are only pulled by their phallus. Admittedly, the word androcentric shows that language pioneering by man was followed by his phallus, and man's creation is limited to his libido alone.

Mythology has part of reality, and the common ground between them is portrayed through the attitudes and the beliefs that are extracted and observed when reflecting critically on humans' behaviours and interactions either in society or in written works. If we ponder Algerian mythical narratives critically, we may denote multiple covert and hidden representations, which cannot be always observed by the reader who is distracted by the sublime nature and the adventures within the literary piece

and only clear and explicit when reflecting on it critically. However, In the Algerian culture man has desires and principles, which are exemplified in a discourse which is idealized in the Myth of *Chastity*. It is explained in how characters inside wedlock or any normal relationship act as they undergo affairs while hoping that their partners remain chaste.

Mythologies talk about the type of men, who are allowed to commit mistakes and go through adventures, and interestingly they perpetuate their preserved infallible solid reputation given to them by the author, while women are judged at the first mistake and obliged to be chaste and faithful. Yet, their honour will always be questionable and put under doubt and scepticism.

In the Algerian culture, men are seen as those innocent sinners with a tacit immunity, and a protected reputation, while sin is also related to women, it is very normal for a man to experience a relationship or an affair inside the bond of wedlock. But not for a woman, for her it is a punishable sin, a wrong deed that it can't be forgiven, once doing it she is condemned to hide it, lie about it, otherwise she won't be able to marry a man, simply because society classifies her as unworthy of him.

Ancient Algerian mythologies, are the narratives of deities that were worshiped and idealized, one of these goddesses we have the goddess Ishtar⁶, it was also called Ishtar to the Phoenicians and the Babylonians and Venus to the Arabs. For the latter, Venus was a beautiful woman who seduced kings, and especially the Angels Harout and Marout, who taught magic to humanity.

The worship of Ishtar diminished in the fifth century BC, it is also known that the ritual of the sacred prostitution was practiced in the Ancient Maghreb to satisfy and honour Ishtar, the goddess of pleasure. This ritual carried on during the Roman period, the worshipers and particularly women who practiced the sacred ritual of prostitution were called "Ulammat", which stands for "Ishtar's servants", whereas "Immatasttart", corresponded to "maiden girls".

Men were called "Kalbim" which means dogs' or "Garim", the small cat, and later on, "Abdastart", which means Ishtar's servants. The title men obtained is biased, unlike women who were honoured by the worship of Ishtar, since they are the most important individuals in the ritual, the case would reverse when talking about male deities. This is an example of how men were referred to when linked to an old goddess in ancient Algeria. But what is more noticeable is that when gods are involved with worship, they give status and empower individuals in accordance to gender.

Algerian myths are a mixture of both real and unreal stories of supernatural characters that serve mostly as a way to interpret a certain number of events. These stories were narrated by griots, who employed these tales to restrain and frighten kids. E.g., the narrative of /targu/, a tall creature who strangles kids walking the street

during /'lmgɪ>l/, particularly in noon times. Thus, children are obliged to stay at home and nap. This myth is told for the sake of protecting children from sun rays which are harmful. But, how can we explain the fact that this monster is a female. /Targu/ is known by her quick movement; she runs quickly so that no child would escape.

Another local myth is the Myth of /'ljetma/. It is believed that /'ljetma/ is a /Jinn/ who sits on a person's chest, suffocate him by strangling him with his right hand and pulls his tongue out using his left hand. The person would shout loudly, but none would hear him. The *Jinn* won't disappear unless the person starts reading some verses from the Quran. Frequently, this happens when sleeping. ***“Doctors say that this is not a Jinn, but it is just a nightmare that happens when a person over consumes heavy, spicy or fatty food before sleeping. For this reason, they advise people not to eat a lot in dinner. (Mayo: 2011).*** These myths stand for hideous female monsters, or supernatural creatures with mystical powers, parents use their names to frighten kids, they are also stories kids narrate for entertainment. However, these myths have a biased nature against women, while myths with masculine nature exist to describe other functions.

6.1. The Linguistic Dimension in Mythology

Using mythology in class would not only help learn and acquire language. However, learners would travel in time and bridge the contemporary meaning of the word they acquired with what was seen before. Let us mention an example of words and meanings, when dealing with language, gender and power in an EFL classroom. I was confronted with the word '*Panoptic*'. If we define the prefix '*Pan*' we would understand that '*Pan*' is a Greek root and it stands for '*All*', just like '*Omni*', which is also the Latin root for '*All*'. Optics is derived from the Greek root *Optikos* i.e. '*Vision*' or '*seen*'. If we combine both words, we would have the word *Panoptic*, which would mean '*All-seeing*'. Surprisingly, the usage of such word was not clear, as the meaning lacked the etymological sense. It only made sense, after further studies and research. When linked to *Panoptes Argus*, the Greek mythical monster, who guards Hera's gardens. Thus, teaching mythology in an EFL Classroom is inevitable. Moreover, there is always a mythical side embedded under various terms and vocabularies. It also exists in form of Metaphor, as stated by ZiadiAbdelaaziz⁷ in his article 'the notion of metaphor in western rhetoric has come to mean a human conceptual system and a cognitive tool rather than a matter of language or a figure of speech at the level of linguistics. However, Arabic metaphor is typically restricted to

a linguistic phenomenon that does not go beyond the form, structure, and the aesthetic functional aspect of metaphor and belongs exclusively to the realm of poetry and rhetoric. That is to say, the classical Arabic theories of metaphors have not been developed or even added any new insights into metaphor. Hence, further research into Arabic metaphors is, therefore, required. On the otherside myths exists in form of, covert "*grammar*" of experience that is away from mere random concepts and only understood in their historical and suitable synchronic context. Hereby, these implicit thoughts would only surface if teachers use the historical and the mythical figures that contributed in shaping them. This use is necessary in order to explain it and make it more logical to be related to a personal repertoire or the '*learning context*', and summoned from the public repertoire or the historical collective memory. In this sense, this peculiarity and semantic characteristics we find in mythology could be exploited in an EFL classroom in a time learners reach the apex of understanding for ordinary concepts. Thus, using concepts that have mythical and historical attributions would only increase learners' understanding terms allowing them to manipulate and use terms they see fit. Interestingly, Levi Strauss classifies constituent units in both myth and language and explains the differences between them. Therefore, myth like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units, these constituent units presuppose the constituent units present in language when analysed on other levels, namely, phonemes, morphemes, and semantemes. Nevertheless, they are called '*gross units*' and differ in the same way as they themselves differ from morphemes and phonemes. They are manipulated with time and belong to a higher order, a more complex one. For this reason, we will call them gross constituent units, or the original units that from words also known as roots. Moreover, Cassirer explains the words of Muller who states that language in mythology uncovers specific purposes and exposes various characteristics. These characteristics cannot be explained by simple linguistics form as they go beyond any precedent linguistic level by including a prehistoric semantic. Thus, instead of having just constituent units, it possesses '*Gross Constituent units*' related to time and shaped tagged with roots and shaped with original meaning. In the field of linguistics, while dealing with the

dichotomy of langue and parole, '*Langue*' changes, while '*Parole*' stays the same. However, in myth, both langue and parole are kept, preserved to convey a social purpose when a myth is invoked, added to that myth goes beyond having a normal linguistic level into possessing a more sophisticated system of signs and words.

7. CONCLUSION

The scrutiny of the various collected mythical narratives in the corpus could be delineating enough to suggest that Campbell's model would not be intricate and detailed to describe the different functions of Algerian myths. There are multiple dimensions related to the Algerian narratives, these functions unfold to constitute two categories, the first category of functions is an explicit one. This category is understood and perceived by all categories of society adults and youngsters. The functions within this category are exemplified in, '*Entertaining functions*', '*restraining behaviour functions*' or '*predicting time*', in addition to other cultural functions such as spreading cultural heritage '*cultivating*'. However, there is an implicit category of functions, only visible and fathomed by critical scrutiny. These functions constitute all what is biased and manipulated in text and society. They are exemplified in Gender empowerment and disempowerment, vilification and downgrading individuals through monstrification techniques. Hence, Monstrification is explained as the action of making ugly or monstrous; or the portrayal of something or someone as monstrous, by tagging males or females with malign monstrous tropes, either empowering or weakening their statues. As a matter of fact, this work is only an endeavour to probe the Algerian mythological aspects and their relation with human statuses, interactions, in addition to gender relations and negotiations.

Some of these narratives come in form of Apocrypha and oral tales. They are stored at the level of the collective memory, while other narratives refer to historical figures. They were demythologised to take the form of unreal character for instance, the narrative of /*lāmrya*/, which stands for a real character that was monstrified later through unknown motifs. Thus, transforming the real unto unreal, and adding the

mystical function into the educational function. This educational function depicts the historical figures of /*āmr*/, which is parallel to what people label or call gypsies.

This conceptualisation confirms the hypotheses such as considering the Algerian mythical narrative to uphold different semiotic dimensions driven by the linguistic and symbolic nature of their Barthian code, it also asserts that Algerian myths are an extension of world's mythologies. In addition to this, the study in hand asserted that the perception of myths dimensions and functions differs from Academics to laypeople. This study asserts that Algerian mythological dimensions go beyond the 'Cosmological, Mystical, Pedagogical, and Social' dimension in Campbell's paradigm to include restraining, cultural and behavioural components. These results disconfirmed that hypothesis mentioned above and suggesting that Joseph Campbell's model of dimensions and functions can strongly apply on Algerian narratives, giving them a symbolic universal feature, but going beyond his original model.

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9. Articles

FeyrouzBouzida, Communication in Semiotic According to Roland Barthes Approach.مجلة سيميائيات.تجليات النص والسياق في الدراسات النقدية المعاصرة ،مقاربة تأويلية. Volume 11, Numéro 1, Pages 04-09 2015-09-29.

Link:<https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/29325>

ZiadiAbdelaaziz, A Contrastive Study Of English And ArabicMetaphor In Emily Dickinson's And SulimaneDjuadi'sPoems,مجلة سيميائيات, Volume 17, Numéro 2, Pages 1030-1042 2022-03-28.Link :<https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/183544>

10. Appendices

Table 1 profiling informant's table

Data collection using Profiling Informants method

Informant Profile N°01

For Academics / Layepoeple

Gender:

Physical:

Age:

Context:

Description of place

Time:

Story Content

If audio recording

If video-taped

If note takien

Author

Apocrypha

Tale

Legend

Report:

Function of the narrative

Gender affiliation:

Table 2 for non-English speakers

استبيان فيما يخص ماهية الخرافة الجزائرية و مدى تأثيرها في الوسط الجزائري

THE SEMIOTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE ALGERIAN MYTHICAL NARRATIVES

مقدمة : الخرافات الجزائرية ، البعض يرونها من أجل التأثير في الصغار وجعلهم أكثر تحكما مما يروضهم و يجعلهم يخافون عند تذكر اسماء لوحوش او اشباح او ارواح تسكن شيئا ما والبعض الاخر يستعملها لأهداف أخرى ، كل خرافة او قصة لها وظيفة معينة تستوفيها حسب شرح عالم الميثولوجيا المشهور جوزف كامبل

من بين الخرافات الآتية حاول تحديد أكثرها انتشارا في الوسط الجزائري الفولكلوري بالإجابة بنعم او لا

الوظيفة الخرافات	ضبط السلوك الاطفال	وظيفة سماوية يعتقد بها البعض	وظيفة تعليمية	نشر التراث و ثقافة الاسلاف
خرافة ترقو				
خرافة العمرية				
خرافة عروس ألسماء" التي تسكن المرأة"				
خرافة خداج العمية				
خرافة حمار الليل/الضباب				
خرافة امازيغية "تيسليت" او عروس المطر				
خرافة الغنجة او الغونجة خرافة عربية لعروس المطر				
خرافة الجذمة ع يعتبرونها مجرد حالة نفسية لكن ما رأيك انت				

هل يمكنك ان تصف في بعض الاسطر اللغة التي استعملت لبناء الخرافات بالمثل و كيف تفسر ذلك و هل لها بعد تاريخي او فولكلوري :

.....

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Table 3: Transliteration table

ـ	َ	ُ	ِ	ا	ي	و	ه	ن	م	ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	ء
				م	د																											
				>	y	w	h	n	m	l	k	q	f	g	ā	ḍ	ṭ	ḍ	ṣ	č	s	Z	R	ḍ	D	ḳ	ḥ	j	ṭ	T	b	‘

¹ FeyrouzBouzida. 2015. Communication In Semiotic According To Roland Barthes Approach تجليات النص والسياق في الدراسات النقدية

²paronym 'parənim noun Linguistics a word which is a derivative of another and has a related meaning 'wisdom' is a paronym of 'wise' ■ a word formed by adaptation of a foreign word. Contrasted with **heteronym** (New oxford dictionary of English).

³It is translated as follows: "Buganjaj house of clothes, Oh god let it rain strongly, and lathyrus is thirsty, quench it oh lord, and broad-beans is blossoming and yellowish, make it quench, oh father of light. (MOT)

⁴/ ḥayek/: A whilepiece of clothes, wore by Algerian women. It represents their heritage that was worn during the colonisation period, wearing this kind of clothes reduced recently, but remains part of the Algerian legacy

⁵/ḡajar /stands for /gypsy/, these terms are used interchangeably, but Algerian gypsies are different from the worldly concept of people who roam the land and settle in different places. Gypsy (also Gipsy) noun (plural Gypsies) a member of a travelling people speaking a language (Romany) related to Hindi. They traditionally live by itinerant trade. ORIGIN C16: originally gipcyan, short for Egyptian (because Gypsies were believed to have come from Egypt). (Oxford concise dictionary eleventh edition).

⁶ Ishtar (English pronunciation /'ɪʃtɑːr/; Transliteration: ^DIS^TAR; Akkadian: 𒌷𒍪 ; Sumerian 𒊩𒌆) is the East Semitic Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of fertility, love, war, and sex. She is the counterpart to the Sumerian Inanna, and is the cognate for the Northwest Semitic Aramean goddess Astarte.

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

⁷مجلة سيميائيات Volume 17, Numéro 2, Pages 1041