

THE ASSESMENT OF GENDER AND POWER RELATIONS IN MYTHOLOGY A STUDY OF ALGERIAN MYTHOLOGIES IN TERMS OF POWER, LANGUAGE AND GENDER ASPECTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the assessment and the investigation of Algerian mythologies in terms of gender and monster affiliations. It is also the part where various theories in relation to mythical studies and intersecting with gender issues are tested and scrutinised in multiple contexts. In this part, we move from a general space “World Mythologies” into a more specific setting “Algerian Mythologies”. Since mythologies are manifested in two forms “Aetiology” and “Charter”. This endeavour is the synthesis of an acute scrutiny of narratives using approaches such as the “Mythodological¹ approach”. This latter is related to the functional approach of mythology and aims at unveiling and studying the charter² aspects of narratives in addition to individuals’ status in society. Moreover, it attempts to classify Algerian mythologies in terms of power, and gender using models of different scholars, such as Charter model for Malinowski, and deals with Monster affiliation for both women and men as they empower or weaken individuals.

KEYWORDS: Mythology, Gender, Empowerment, Monsters, Mythodology, Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The conceptualisation on mythology is a long going process that is not restricted to a sole time or place. Yet, scrutinising myths in general is determined by the accessibility to the culture and time in which these myths are occurring. This endeavour is a cumbersome theme that may coincide with different analogies and hardships, in addition to the unavailability of the human and material resources or records. These narratives are the extrapolations of ancient oral chanting and recitations of what is considered by some people as an obsolete heritage which lies in oblivion and

¹ Mythodology is the collection or the melting point of both “Mythocritique” and “Mythanalyse” this theory gives a whole understanding of how myths should be looked at since it presents a chasm between text and context. Both scholars Frédéric Monneyron and Joël Thomas stress the importance of Mythodology which was also coined by Gilbert : “*a theory of a whole which gathers Mythocritique and Mythanalyse*” (2002:85), Mythodology creates hermeneutic balance since the first explores, while the second seeks enlargement(2002:84); a literary study cannot do without exploring other interdisciplinary fields and Vice versa ,(2002:91) .

² One of the theories that are used in mythological studies is the one of Bronislaw Malinowski’s ‘myth as social charter’ a functionalist theory (1926). This theory indicates that myths are not just hackneyed stories and events. Yet, away from history myths are part of the social structure and the social developments of individuals as it defines their statues and shape their context, if ever, Myths are seldom verbatim histories, even though they reinterpret and participate in explaining individual life cycles. In this sense, this theory tries to measure if myth as a charter is limited to primitive societies alone since myth is not just a synchronic historical event, for it is a collection of Diachronic events and infinite linear phenomena.

categorised as “apocryphal”.

Moreover, the completion of this work was faced with the unavailability of Griots and storytellers who might recall old records that are linked to mythologies and legends. As well as, a shortage at the level of references and resources to provide us with evidences to trace back the origin of these myths.

These references entail concrete written records, instead of shallow apocryphal narratives residing in the “*collective memory*”³. Yet, the absence of agreed references may cause the absence of originality and change mythical narratives in terms language and meanings. In addition to that, it provides us with different variations of a sole mythology taking into considerations the different regions and dialects existing within the same country such as Algeria.

Algerian myths are on one hand, an extension of worldly myths. Yet, they do not always refer to struggle between gods and goddesses, or between heroes/ heroines and monsters, or even between good and bad. These binaries are restricted within the function of ‘*Entertainment*’, and go beyond that into various dimensions and interplays. On the other hand, they are either religious or artificial narratives with specific characteristics which are used for the sake of attaining a social goal, either “Divine or Educational” purposes that could be described as “function”. Yet, most of these functions are only completed through repetition through narration and the invoking of these narratives in relation to the context in use. It means that one narrative can have multiple functions that are determined by the either explicit or implicit intentions of the invoker. As any world’s mythology, Algerian myths are not only restricted to the present, they stretch out to the period before the arrival of Christianity as it is known by historians, ancient Algeria, they are a continuum of social and rituals and events within society.

The purpose of this paper is not limited to etiological narration of mythological pieces alone, but extends to the interpretation of functions and roles, and assessing the perception of these narratives by both laypeople and literates. We will attempt to link the narrative framework with the social one, and classify them in accordance to charter and etiological mechanisms. The aim is to measure the panoptical level of myths and categorising them by using the model of Joseph Campbell.

Algerian myths are very similar in form to the other worldly mythologies, they both narrate stories of supernatural creatures, that are either a threat to humans, or divine spirits which look after people. We may distinguish various discrepancies in terms of functions and purposes. Since, they are used for the sake of strengthening or disempowering a situation or an agent. These agents are made in form of oppositional binaries such as man/woman they are used to attain a social purpose that cannot be realised through normal methods, and here we summon the abnormality to reach a certain reality.

However, Algerian rural regions share similar myths, but express them differently. This difference can be either

³ Collective memory: is defined by the online oxford dictionary as, the memory of a group of people, passed from one generation to the next. Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) defines the collective memory as more than just an aggregate of individuals' personal memories, and such inevitably personal relief maps cannot possibly capture what an entire nation. For example, *collectively* considers historically eventful or uneventful. To observe the social 'marking' of the past, we therefore need to examine the *social time lines* constructed by entire mnemonic communities. For that we must turn to unmistakably social sites of memory." Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Univ. of Chicago, 2003), 28.

linguistic or ritualised, it means that you would never find the exact myth in two different places, just between Mascara and Sidi Bel Abbes city; some myths are never narrated in the same way.

These discrepancies amongst mythologies at the level of symbols are not something negative; as long as they express the way people create them to project and accomplish a social phenomenon. Yet, the difference at the level of the narration of one myth in two different places sharing the same culture, such as the Kabylia region vis-à-vis other regions is a problem which goes back to the unavailability of a written records.

The most known ritual of presenting a myth in the past was musical chanting, elders and storytellers travelling the land telling about the great deeds of great man who overcame dire ordeals triumphing against the odds. The famous epic of the old literature ‘Beowulf’ of the Geats and his long odyssey accomplishing colossal tasks projects a different type of mythology through poetry.

This epic is considered as one of the oldest poems in literature along with ‘Riddles’. These famous poems stand as the core of fables that were presented in a form of myths which are related to monsters and demons. These characters are still considered as the descendants of Cain, Son of Adam. Interestingly, this biblical gave some of these poems religious characteristics and a considerable proportion of truth.

Oral poetry was the tool that helped spread this kind of myths, especially with the help of Griots, just like Algerian myths that were transmitted through musical poems narrating great deeds of heroes and heroines. They were also a mean for entertaining audiences in parties, weddings and fantasias. Not to forget that Algerian mythical narratives were and still used for other purposes and functions rather than just entertainments, such as restraining kids, making rituals, and worship.

Algerian mythologies were and still put in an apocryphal form, and even if they are written they do not have the same plot, for that it changes according to the region. Yet these days, narratives and folktales are perishing from our society, due to the absence of storytellers and poets who would preserve this mythological heritage inside our collective memory. The absence of elders is also the disappearance of our collective memory, and the library that would keep our literature alive.

Gender Bias in the Algerian Mythology

Inside any mythological narrative men and women were given many roles, existing in two different realms, either mortal worlds or in an axiomatic space of powerful deities that clashed to gain power and ensure sovereign. Interestingly enough, Imagination gave authors and griots⁴ the power to reconstruct and draw of these narratives a fallible setting of perfection. Yet, a parallel dimension for man and woman to both compete and coexist. This dimension depicted all aspects of life, and could not sidestep drawing an image of struggle and clash between the two genders. These characters performed what they could not do the real life as they were granted supernatural powers and eternal life.

However, when people invoke these old narratives to the present, they invoke along them hidden messages and a certain purpose. However, this purpose is relative to the author or the invoker’ agenda or background. He/she would vilify and exaggerate in picturing his/her opposite gender by all means. These tools are represented in the clichés, stereotypes and

⁴ Griot: noun a West African travelling poet, musician, and storyteller. Origin: French, earlier guiriot, perhaps from Portuguese criado. (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

malign tropes⁵ and antagonism roles, along with biases that are ubiquitous within different texts.

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 andocentric 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 context man also has weaknesses and desires, 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.

In this sense, mythologies describe men's desires both in an implicit and an explicit way. Thus, 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 "Immatashtar", corresponded to "maiden girls".

⁵ Tropes: noun a figurative or metaphorical use of a word or expression. Origin: via Latin from Greek tropos 'turn, way, trope', from trepein 'to turn'. (Concise Oxford dictionary)

⁶ Ishtar (English pronunciation /'ɪʃtɑːr/; Transliteration: ^DISHTAR; Akkadian: 𒌷𒌆 ; Sumerian𒊩𒌆) 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/>

Men were called “*Kalbin*” 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 and more particularly Mascarian ones 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 narratives were told by griots, parents who specifically used these local tales to monitor and discipline their children.

For example, the myth of *Tergu*, who is a tall woman who would strangle every child walking in the street during */lmg>/* (the napping time), particularly in summer days. 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. *Tergu* 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.

Myths with female monsters are invoked for the sake of adjusting behaviour, and rarely come to talk about bliss or to describe divine rituals, except in some cases. While males’ monsters names express sociological phenomena, and rarely invoked to frighten kids or to adjust behaviour. This is clear evidence that females are feared more than man, even in the abstract realm, and thus they have deep impact on individuals psyche, more particularly kids.

Myths are equipped with various sub-narratives that are somehow considered and seen as axiomatic beliefs that cannot be realized. Thus, they become corporeal when man presents them to achieve a certain aim or objective that has benefit for him. As a result, shift from an axiomatic existence into a concrete reality. Example: invoking the roles of patriots during the war of liberation.

In addition to that, woman could not have the upper hand when it comes to these social actions that are male centred, this is what feminists are trying to achieve through redefining women roles in the past hoping it could change their present and shape their future, by considering them as no less or different than what men. However, everything that it cannot be realized for women inside textual discourses is doable for man. Yet, undoable for women who are mostly considered as those who cross the manly canons

The difference between objects and subjects, is that objects are living individuals with no free will, and no decision, their freedom is limited, whilst, subjects are two kinds, a free subject that is empowered by the narrator’s protagonism and enthusiasm. They are also considered as subjects to the law. Yet, women are not free subjects but rather

tamed, for them the pressure is doubled. Their actions and their deeds degree of correctness are related to man's thoughts of what is wrong and what is right.

Women in various periods were vilified and portrayed in different forms; therefore they were given plenty of stereotypic qualities and peripheral roles, both in real life and the fictional one. These descriptions were the construct of the pioneers of prose and literature in general, where they wrote without valid concrete evidence, their reasons and motives were veiled with their imagination that was driven by power.

In real life women were not similar to the rest of men, to do what they say or embody their thoughts into reality, was almost impossible. To think that man could be so selfish through making women helpless is raising a serious debate. These acts are indirect messages entailing that an author could strip women from having place for their thoughts in a concrete space, which is unfair if we look at it as discriminating and deliberate hegemony over women.

Since, these works were done mostly by men and any human's works no matter what their genders are, always relative to their thoughts, which make them fallible. Yet, what peculiar image would be designed of men if woman could have the chance to write some chronicles, and how man would be represented.

The ability to exercise power over what is abstract entails man's desire of understanding women and knowing the hidden secrets that haunt their thoughts, which could either help him get positive chance in establishing a strong relationship, or taming and keeping women's thoughts under panoptic⁷ surveillance. This panoptes⁸ idea suggests control and permanent surveillance for thoughts. It suggests the insecurity of man and his attempt to dominate the opposite gender in both sides, whether concrete or abstract, and change the equilibrium of power, by having full control of life.

EVALUATION METHOD

The methodology of this work is based on personal innovations, which contributed in unfolding the corpus and thus extrapolating it in different angles. These narratives dealt with succinctly and thoroughly from various standpoints.

The corpus of the second chapter contributed in shaping and designing Table questionnaires. These questionnaires were delivered to 30 informants regardless of their gender, what helped extrapolating and reflecting thoroughly on the way individuals from different social classes invoke and perceive gender.

Transliterating Narratives

The collected data was transliterated according to the following table of transliteration. This procedure was used to codify and simplify the reading of the Arabic words to English

⁷ The Panopticon is a type of institutional building designed by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. The concept of the design is to allow a single watchman to observe (-*opticon*) all (*pan-*) inmates of an institution without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched. Although it is physically impossible for the single watchman to observe all cells at once, the fact that the inmates cannot know when they are being watched means that all inmates must act as though they are watched at all times, effectively controlling their own behaviour constantly.

⁸ **Panoptes** (Ancient Greek: Πανόπτης; English translation: "the all-seeing") was an epithet for both Helios and Argus. Argus Panoptes was a giant with a hundred eyes. He was also the nymph Io's brother. He was thus a very effective watchman, as only a few of the eyes would sleep at a time; there were always eyes still awake. Argus was Hera's servant. His great service to the Olympic pantheon was to slay the chthonic serpent-legged monster Echidna as she slept in her cave.

Table 1

ء	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي	م	د	ـ	ـ	ـ
'	b	T	t	j	h	k	D	ḍ	r	Z	s	š	s	ḍ	t	ḍ	ā	g	f	q	K	l	m	n	h	w	y	>	i	u	a	

Table Questionnaires Method

This table was delivered in a form of questionnaire for 30 informants, there are two categories to classify these informants, the first group represented the category of 15 person representing literates, males and females, students and researchers at the university of Sidi Bel abbes. Yet, the second group consisted of 15 laypeople both males and females, these informants were asked to tick the box in which they see it more reasonable and serving. However, language barrier recommended the usage of the same model of questionnaires in the informants’ mother tongue. Yet, laypeople informants couldn’t all read which required the usage of a different tool that is direct interview, accompanied with quick notes taking.

Table n°02 and 04 consist of the finding of 30 person’s perception of myths and how they function, by including the function of gender in the last column. Informants were required to tick next to the function they find suitable. The numbers inside the boxes refers to the number of “Yes” received from the informants. While “No” or “Empty” box was not taken into account.

The reception of gender aspects by informants was stressed in this questionnaire, and the focus was on function aspects, and how laypeople and literates would perceive it in relation to their gender.

GENDER EPOWEREMENT FOR LAYPEOPLE

This table is an extract of the general table. It focuses only on gender empowerment for both man and woman in relation to the usage of mythical narratives and how they empower characters.

The numerical proportions represent the number of “Yes” of each informant, and depicting their opinions. Thus, agreeing with the narrative as an empowering devise.

Table 2: Gender Empowerment table for Laypeople

Gender Empowerment Myths/Narratives	Empowering Femaleness		Empowering Maleness	
	Narrative of <i>Tergu</i>	5	33%	1
Narrative of / ārus e’sm/ ‘Mirror’s haunter’	5	33%	5	33%
ḥmar li>le/ḍba>b Night/fog’s donkey	5	33%	5	33%
/ ārus ‘Imatar/ Tislit ‘Bride of rain’	5	33%	1	6%
Narrative of /ḡu>nja/ Bride of rain	4	26%	1	6%
Narrative of /’ljetma/ “ Old Hag Syndrome”	1	6%	1	6%
Narrative <i>ḵda>wadj ‘lāmia ḵda>wadj the blind</i>	2	13%	5	33%
‘l āmrya Female Gypsy	5	33%	6	40%
Narrative of ‘Imaḥasi>b Local distribution of seasons	1	6%	1	6%

Empowering Femaleness

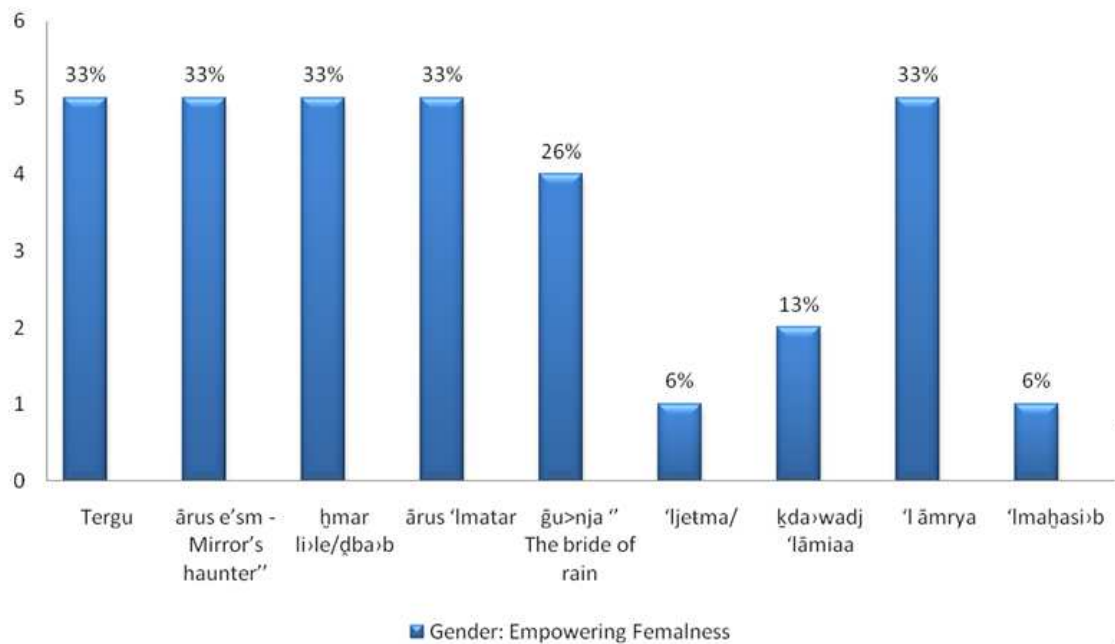


Figure 1: Empowering Femaleness for Laypeople

Interpretation

This figure represents the degree of empowerment as represented in form of bars, the bigger the bar the stronger the empowerment. Yet, this empowerment is only related to the perspectives of laypeople as it stands for empowering femaleness.

We may denote that cosmological narratives such as /ḡu>nja/, /ārus 'Imatar / and /ārus e'sm/ are empowering femaleness taking the percentage of 33%. They link female gender to creation and fertility. The same thing is noticed in the historical and educational narratives such as /'lāmrya / taking the percentage of 33%.

The mystical narrative of /Tergu/ and /ḥmar li>le/ḍba>b/ empowers femaleness, because /Tergu/ stand for beautiful woman who deceit man and devour them. While, /ḥmar li>le/ḍba>b/ stands for a male monster, it minimizes and restricts man to his animalistic nature. These two narratives took the percentage of 33%.

Narrative of /ḡu>nja/ took the percentage of 26%, while /ḵda>wadj 'lāmia took the percentage of 13%. It explains that this narrative is not very empowering femaleness. In the end, both /'Imaḥasi>b/ and /ljetma/ or the 'Old Hag Syndrome' depicted a low degree of empowerment taking only 6% of the whole vote.

We can also observe that laypeople lack any distinction in terms of function between what is mystical, cosmological or historical. Interestingly enough, a strong female spirit whether evil or good, would always strengthen females and sustain their status. This empowerment is related to our cultural collective background through evil and divine characteristics, and the belief that those female spirits are real entities.

Empowering Maleness

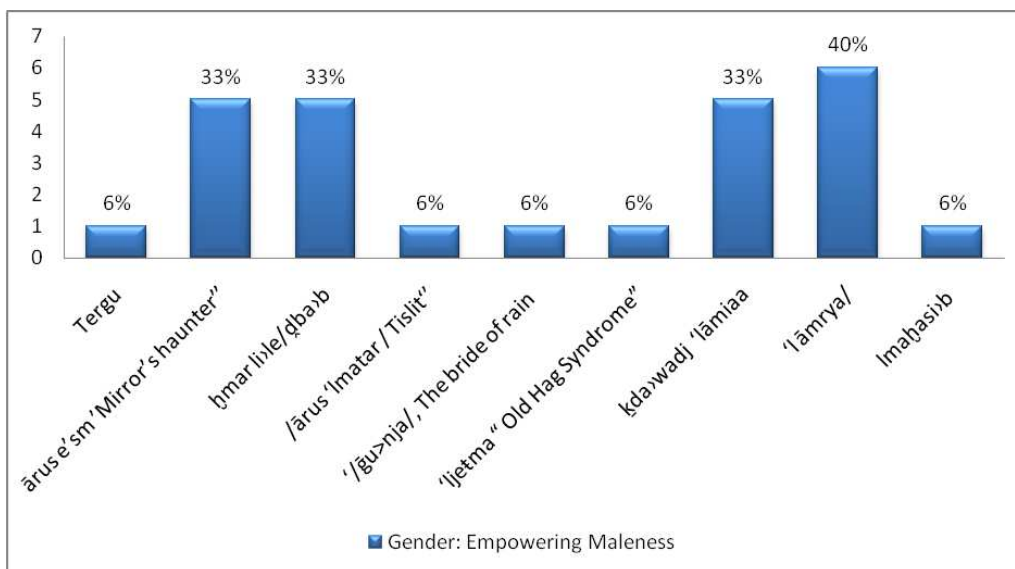


Figure 2: Empowering Maleness for Laypeople

Interpretation

This figure represents the degree of empowerment as represented in form of bars, the bigger the bar the stronger the empowerment. But, this empowerment is only related to the perspectives of laypeople as it stands for empowering maleness.

We may denote that cosmological narratives such as / ġu>nja /, / ārus 'lmatar/ and / ārus e'sm>/ seem to empower femaleness in the previous figure. Moreover, the evil restraining nature of narratives such as /ārus e'sm>/ hmar li le/dba>b and /kda>wadj 'lāmiaa/ project mystical sustainment for women place through ominous portrayal. Thus, empowering maleness by 33 % and reducing female bliss. Yet, /'l āmrya/ or the female gypsy empowers maleness by 40% mitigating the female character into a hideous monster, used for frightening kids and restraining their behaviour and promoting male protagonism.

However, /ārus e'sm>/ that took 33% is not that potent, since it is far from good divinity, and considered as a weakness, since it represents a type of malign 'divinity'. Therefore, it weakens femaleness and strengthens maleness. It is also depicted as a monster that dwells or haunts mirrors and cause paralysis, strokes and harm kids who keep watching mirrors. Therefore, it empowers male status instead of empowering females.

Cosmological narratives such as /'ljetma/, /ġu>nja/ and / ārus 'lmatar/ has nothing to do with male features, and link femaleness to divinity, fertility and creation, showing no male empowerment 6%. Still, /lmaḥasi>b/ narrative also takes the percentage of 6%. Hereby, this narrative has nothing to do with female narratives since it is used in agriculture and mainly by men. Still, it doesn't include any male or female tendencies, and explains the unawareness of informants of their empowering or disempowering roles.

The definition of negative and positive roles, is a double way process, and what is positive in some cases, can be negative some other times. It is related to the context and the agents of any narration. Thus, it is both empowering and disempowering in relation to the context and individuals' gender and the purpose of the invoker.

The mystical narrative of /*ħmar Li>le/* and / *ħmar đba>b/* in contrast to Figure no 1 by a percentage of 33%, is empowering maleness and disempowering femaleness considering male shaped spirits as monsters. But, when supplanting the idea of a monster, and tagging it with ‘*male gender*’ instead of ‘*female*’ we depict a strong monster and give maleness a place amongst mystical narrations.

Accordingly, we build a strong status for man, as an omnipotent being who stands for good even when considered as a hideous monster, and this is relative to the androcentric society this narrative dwells. Thus, /*ħda>wadj ‘lāmiaa/* is a mystical narrative that also empowers maleness in the sense that a woman is disabled and subdued through visual impairment taking 33%. However, /*l āmrya/* empowers maleness by reducing woman to a frightening creature instead of mentioning the neglected historical contributions that are depicted through the sociological function.

The role she played during the period of the French colonialism in Algeria is totally ignored by new generations, as they are unaware of the historical contribution of such a character, especially in the struggle during the period of colonisation of the Algerian country.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT FOR LITERATES

This table is an extract of the general table; it focuses only on gender empowerment for both man and woman in relation to the usage of narratives and how they empower characters. The numerical proportions represent the number of “Yes” of each informant. Thus, agreeing with the narrative as an empowering device.

Next to each number or ‘Yes’ we find a parallel percentage. This percentage is an extract from the general table ‘*Table one*’, representing the answers of 15 informants.

Table 4: Gender Empowerment Table for Literates and Autodidacts

Gender Empowerment Myths/Narratives	Gender Empowering Femaleness		Gender Empowering maleness	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Narrative of <i>Tergu</i>	1	6%	5	33%
Narrative of / <i>ārus e’sm>/</i> ‘Mirror’s haunter’	14	93%	1	6%
<i>ħmar li>le/đba>b</i> Night/fog’s donkey	7	46%	1	6%
/ <i>ārus ‘lmatar/ Tislit</i> ‘Bride of rain’	14	93%	1	6%
Narrative of / <i>ġu>nja/</i> Bride of rain	14	93%	1	6%
Narrative of / <i>ljetma/</i> “ Old Hag Syndrome”	1	6%	1	6%
Narrative <i>ħda>wadj ‘lāmia</i> <i>ħda>wadj the blind</i>	1	6%	3	20%
<i>l āmrya</i> Female Gypsy	14	93%	1	6%
Narrative of ‘ <i>lmaħasi>b</i> Local distribution of seasons	1	6%	14	93%

Empowering Femaleness

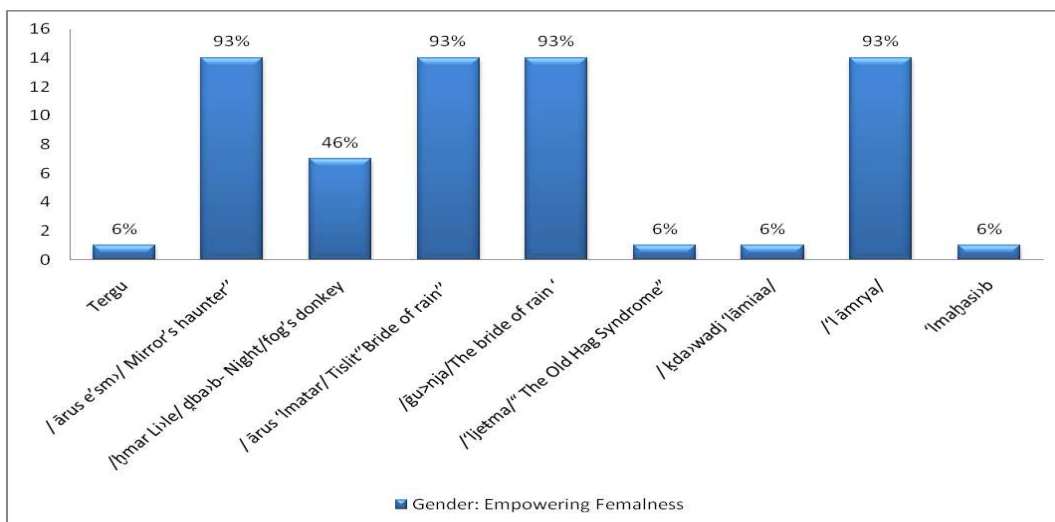


Figure 3: Empowering Femaleness for Literates

Interpretation

This figure represents the degree of empowerment as represented in form of bars, the bigger the bar the stronger the empowerment. However, this empowerment is only related to the perspectives of literates and students. It stands for empowering femaleness through mythical narratives.

We may denote that cosmological narratives such as /ārus 'imatar/and /ḡu>nja/ are considered by university wit as empowering since they ascend with femininity to the status of divinity by taking the percentage of 93%. On the one hand, mystical and historical narratives also empowers femaleness since informants are aware of the historical role of /'lāmrya/ by taking the percentage of 93%. Per contra, cosmological narratives can only empower the narrative's gender without disempowering the opposite gender.

This latter depicts the female gypsy who provided our ancestors with the secrets of tattooing art, to tattoo their faces and preventing the French colonisers from enslaving them. But, the literates' awareness of this aspect allowed them to give it a good proportion 93%. Still, /ḥmar Li'le/-ḍba>b/ narratives, taking the proportion of 46% depict maleness using monstrous tropes, as they monstrificate maleness and link man to their primitive nature vis-à-vis empowering femaleness and giving them the upper hand.

The same attribute goes for mystical narratives such as /Tergu, /'ljetma/ and /kda>wadj 'lāmīaa/ as monstrified narratives taking only 6% of the general percentage. The first two narratives are related to monstrous mythical creatures with malign characteristics. Thereby, they supplant divinity and reduce femininity, depicting women as hideous monsters. However, /kda>wadj 'lāmīaa's narrative stands for visual impairment, and depicts the image of a helpless female, or the female in the Attic⁹.

In the end, /'Imaḥasi>b/ don't actually affect femininity or masculinity in anyway, literates informants link them to geographical localization and weather prediction, without distorting individuals relations in society, they took the

⁹ Female in the Attic: a literary device used to describe the place women dwell to express their grief and find security when impaired, or having their freedom taken in society.

percentage of 6%

Empowering Maleness

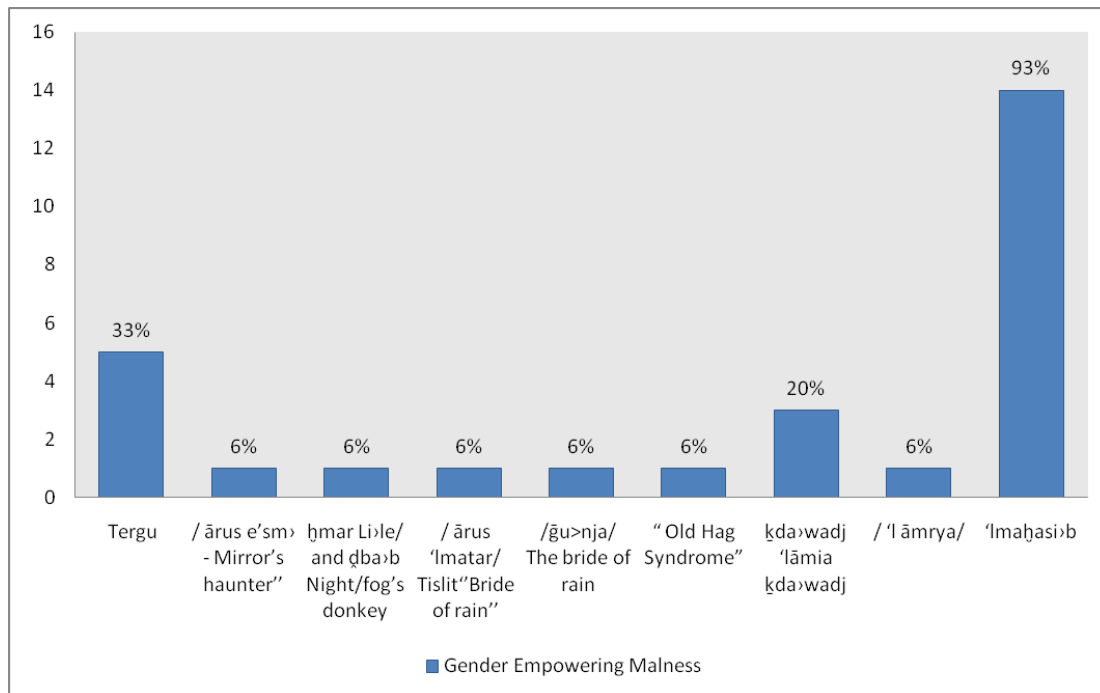


Figure 4: Empowering Maleness for Literates

Interpretation

This bar graph represents the degree of empowerment as represented in form of pies, the bigger the pie the stronger the empowerment. But, this empowerment is only related to the perspectives of literates as it stands for empowering maleness.

In this case, we may denote that all narratives are considered to be male disempowering taking the percentage of 6%. They build a strong link between femininity and divinity through mystical and cosmological functions. The only narrative which could empower maleness is the one of /'Imaħasi>b/ taking 93%. It is considered as male property, more particularly farmers. Moreover, it represents the link between man and nature, through the organisation of life and welfare.

/Tergu/ taking the percentage of 33%, and / kda>wadj 'lāmia/ 20%, do not show any empowerment for femaleness. Yet, it strengthens males' status through the malign roles they depict. They project women as either monsters or disabled creatures.

The narratives of / ħmar Li>l and đba>b / with the percentage of 6% project a mystical function. Yet, they draw a picture of imperfection. To sum up, we couldn't find a relationship between maleness and divinity except in an old Berber narrative. A divine spirit by the name /AnZ>ar/ was the one responsible of empowering /Tislit/ helping her ascend to the status of divinity through cosmological worship.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender and mythology are a very important binary. In this sense, the engine of this binary is the individuals who are responsible of either creating myths or invoking them to shape realities. Thus, there an important call exemplified in

creating myths which could construct strong harmonic societal bonds instead of dismantling them and supplanting them with futile conflict through unbalanced new myths.

Through the previous scrutiny of the various mythical narratives, it could be acceptable to suggest that Joseph Campbell's model would not be enough describe the different functions of Algerian mythologies. There are other functions related to the Algerian narratives, these functions unfold to constitute two categories Explicit such as: Entertaining and restraining behaviour "monitoring" or predicting time and spreading cultural heritage 'cultivating'.

Interestingly enough, implicit functions are exemplified in Gender empowerment and disempowerment, vilifying 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.

Gender and mythology are a very important binary. In this sense, the engine of this binary is the individuals who are responsible of either creating myths or invoking them to shape realities. Thus, there is an urgent call exemplified in creating myths which could construct strong harmonic societal bonds instead of dismantling them and supplanting them with futile conflict through unbalanced new myths.

Individuals' status in society is very much affected by these narratives; they are embedded in our society to convey hidden and overt intentions. In the past worship of supernatural beings, gave these changes overt explicit form, as it decided the acquired proportion of power. It granted individuals the power of their worshiped deity, and determined their societal status. Yet, Nowadays, a different form of perpetuating conflict exist within these narratives that are mostly used for entrainment. But, programming individuals to obtain biases and invoke it with each narrative.

Nowadays, these pagan worships disappeared by the enlightenments of science to be supplanted by a different type of narratives. These narratives come in mystical form that is hidden from laypeople' minds and generally depict different plots of monstrification for different legends, apocryphal and even national figures.

Most of these narratives depict stories of creatures going beyond the normal functions into behavioural restraining; they are exemplified in monsters for both males and females, constructed to attain a sociological objective.

Some of these narratives come in form of an apocrypha 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 know as gypsies.

Moreover, if this narrative was transformed from a real character to a fictional one, it could confirm the possibility that other narratives went through the same process. Thus, demythologising the real, or mythologizing the unreal, like the narratives of /*ḡu>nja*/ and /*ārus 'lmatar* /. In addition to that, these cosmological narratives are taking place in reality, in different areas especially through ritual and belief in the power of providing rain. Interestingly enough, /*ḡu>nja*/ is taking the form of a doll dressed and celebrated through feasts and chanting, hoping for rain and good fortune while /*tisilit*/ refers to newly wedded brides.

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