

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

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.