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**The Representation of The Female Protagonists in Selected European Fairy
Tales and Algerian Folktales**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Master's Degree in Anglophone Literatures and Civilizations**

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Declaration

We hereby affirm that this thesis is completely the result of our own research, and that owing reference or acknowledgement is made to the effort of other researchers and scholars.

July, 2023

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father who contributed in supporting me, my siblings Amina and Mehdi who morally helped me and finally my partner Salem Nour who helped me a lot and was of a great companion during this experience.

SEBHI Yasmina

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents for their emotional and financial support, also to my siblings for encouraging me to always do better. Not forgetting my friend Lina for the emotional support, and her help throughout the whole year. And of course, my partner Sebhi Yasmina for being a great example of teamwork and making sure we made it on time.

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Abstract

This paper examines the female characters' representation in some European and Algerian selected fairy tales in accordance to how socio-cultural conventions and religion shaped the writers' ideologies. Some European folk writers such as Perrault, Grimm Brothers, and Hans Christian Andersen tend to inflict some European cultural perspectives that order women to blindly follow the men and they have nothing say in it. In addition to the religious beliefs that oppress and make her an obedient servant to the male, with a hint of patriarchy within those viewpoints. She is represented as docile and idle, and she should accept anything that is told to her by the male lead character even if it is against her freedom. On the other hand, the Algerian folktales that are based on the Arab culture that values women; that is built on Islamic beliefs tend to showcase a beautiful respectful image of the female character, in a way that makes the readers interested in following up with her in her journey. This analyses is based on the theories of Jack Zipes, Vladimir Propp, and Kurt Lewin in providing the evidence of the effect of culture and religion in shaping the beliefs of some of the European and Algerian fairy tales tellers.

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General Introduction

Fairy tales are short stories that embrace magical and imaginary events and characters and “are intricately linked with folklore and myth, while for others they conjure up memories of literary tales read as a child” (Scott 1). Those children stories exist in all nations, all countries and cultures, some may look alike however, from generation to generation, they gathered and transmitted messages and morals related to the real world. Unfortunately, some twisted ideas and portrayals in the fairy tales are influencing young child, boys and girls into believing that those stories are the reality.

Apart from the fantasy plots, the magical characters, enchantments and happy endings, the female protagonists are often portrayed by the patriarchal mind. The most famous tales through all the world are mainly from the European continent such as “The Little Mermaid” (1837) from Denmark, “Sleeping Beauty” (1697) from France and “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves” (1812) from Germany. The messages that those European tales carry show how the society, the culture and religion are perceiving each gender thus influencing writers. However, such influence is not found in the Algerian children’s literature. The well-known stories that best represent the real image of a strong Algerian women are “Dellala” (1977) narrated by Oum El-Khir Bouzidi and “Loundja, The Monster’s Daughter” (1989) by Zoubida Abdou. While the stories end with marriage and both protagonists are rescued by a man, the journey of the girls and how they are portrayed is different than the European fairy tales. The socio-cultural setting of the Algerian stories demonstrates how the women is treated and valued.

Hence, this study aims to showcase how western European writers depict women in a patriarchal and intrusive way, going as far as making them look weak and dependent on men.

By contrast, Algerian storytelling empower women and make them stand for themselves without forcibly putting an end or dismissing the happily-ever-after ending.

The three pioneers of the European fairy tales are the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, the French Charles Perrault and the German Brothers Grimm. They gathered and collected the folk stories of their countries. Indeed, the Brothers Grimm learned about German folklore and collected stories that became part of *The Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Vanstone). One of their most popular stories is “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves” (1812). Another famous writer is Charles Perrault that collected the story of “Sleeping Beauty” (1697) in his book *Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye*. Unlike the two others, Hans Andersen imagined the story of “The Little Mermaid” (1837) and wrote it down in his book *Fairy Tales of Hans Andersen*.

Firstly, Charles Perrault published in 1697 in *Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye* the famous story of “Sleeping Beauty” based on “Sun, Moon and Talia”. Originally, the princess dropped dead after being stung her finger, her father placed her in a room then years passed and a king who was married saw her and fell for her. He raped her and left without knowing he got her pregnant. At the end of the story, after the queen who tried to kill the princess died, the king married the princess. Secondly, the Grimm’s Brothers published their story of “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves” in 1812, the protagonist Snow White must run away as the queen wanted her dead. She found a small house that belong to seven dwarves. In exchange for their hospitality, she became their housemaid. Finally, “The Little Mermaid” published in 1837 by Hans Andersen quickly became known. It is the story of a young mermaid that saved a prince from drowning. She instantly fell in love with him and could not bear his absence so she bargained with the sea-witch. In order to be with him, she had to give up her voice and bear a sharp pain when walking but for her to live, he had to swear his love to her and marry her. Unfortunately, he married another woman who looked like the mermaid. Her sisters gave

her a knife to kill the prince so she could come back to the sea, but the mermaid refused and died instead.

In the Algerian folklore, most stories were passed down from one generation to another orally. They were later collected and translated from local dialects to academic languages and published by authors or professors. One of these professors is Abd El-Hamid Bourayou, the author of *The Role of Women in The Algerian Folklore* (2019). In that book, he gathered two stories that the Algerians know well, “Dellala” (1977) narrated by Oum El-Khir Bouzidi and “Loundja, The Monster’s Daughter” (1989) by Zoubida Abdou.

The story of “Dellala” follows a young woman by the same name who was told that she will marry her older brother because he vowed to marry the girl with long beautiful hair, little did he know that she is his sister. Upon hearing the terrible news, she decides to run away. In her journey she stumbles through many life-threatening situations, but at the end she survives and marries the king and lives happily. The second story, “Loundja, Bent EL-Ghoula”, is also about a young woman who lived as the daughter of the infamous monster. She, one day, meets a young prince and runs away with him, against her mother’s approval. Loundja encounters many hardships, it started with facing the wrath of her mother and then her trying to break the spell that fell on the young prince and trying to find a solution for her situation.

The choice of the subject as the purpose of the research is of a tremendous significance and importance. This study is as well motivated by the conviction that the majority of the European fairy tales known today are directly influencing the girls into patriarchal ideas such as waiting for the man to be happy, sacrificing and enduring pain in order to please them and so on. While such concepts are not found in Algerian stories as women are being taught real values and the truth about how a young girl should be.

The European stories of “The Little Mermaid” (1837), “Sleeping Beauty” (1697) and “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves” (1812) as well as the Algerian ones of “Dellala” (1977) and “Loundja, The Monster’s Daughter” (1989) are important literary works. Perrault, Grimm and Andersen in their fairy tales illustrate women from their cultural perspective while Algerian narrators show the real image of a strong women. Many reviews and criticism have been conducted on the popular work of fantasy since their publication.

Umme Hanee Sharif in her thesis entitled “From Fairy Tales to Disney Movies: Gender Roles and Stereotypes Then and Now”, she claimed that “in most of the societies masculine roles are associated with strength, aggression, and dominance, whereas female roles are associated with passivity, nurturing, and subordination” (2). This ultimately represent the female and male characters in the stories of “The Little Mermaid”, “Sleeping Beauty”, and “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves”; the male character is described as strong whereas she is shown as the damsel in distress that needs constant help. The concerning thing about the story setting, is that it is forwarded to children that would absorb such way of thinking. Young girls would be influenced to follow the lead of the princes of the story, thinking it is the right thing to do and how they should be.

In “Happily Ever After (or What Fairy tales Teach Girls About Being Women)” Alice Neikirk explained that there is a “... notion that women will go to great lengths in order to undermine each other. This common theme sends a message to girls that they cannot trust one another” (39). They make girls believe that the number one enemy of a woman is another woman, where the man is the root cause of the problem.

Aishwarya Javalgekar explained in her essay “Representation of Women in Western Classic Fairy Tales; *Mirror Mirror on The Wall Who Is the Fairest of Them All?*” that

women are incapable of thinking on their own waiting for others to come and solve their problems (3). The main character deliberately accepts the fact that she just can't save herself or think of a solution without the help of a man, let alone refuse the injustices that she faces.

In "The Moral of The Story" by Alice Alber, it is illustrated how young girls are thinking and behaving as having no voice at all. "Also, she marries whoever rescues her or decides to marry her. There is no decision shown on her part. These tales imply strict gender roles, and depict a society wherein women are not supposed to voice their opinion but wait to be asked" (4). The protagonists simply cannot have their own thoughts or take any decisions as everything is somehow controlled by what others want.

However, the Algerian female character differs from the latter; though she is portrayed in a miserable situation, at the end she figures out the solution by herself, maybe sometimes with the help of the prince but she still does everything on her own. In "The Analysis of Women's Stories in the Algerian Literary Heritage in *The role of women in the Algerian popular heritage* of Abdelhamid Bourayou", Meribai explains how the Algerian woman is not content about the situation she is in and aims to change it; "In the stories, the woman appear unsatisfied with what is happening in her patriarchal society, and refusing completely what is being imposed on her, and not giving up easily to her current situation, and often triumph over the representatives of the social system" (11)¹. In the Algerian stories, the female characters are young women, not minors that have no one to guide them. The narrator of these stories, often women, secretly telling them how to react in such situations, if necessary, in case it happened when they are older.

وفي كل الحكايات تظهر المرأة كعنصر غير راض عما هو سائد في مجتمعها الذكوري، وغير قابلة لما هو مفروض عليها، ولا مستسلمة بسهولة¹ للأمر الواقع، وكثيرا ما تنتصر على ممثلي النظام الاجتماعي

In “*The Representation of Women Through the Novels of Kateb Yacine*”, Dr. Hassen Boussaha discuss the feminine figure in Maghrebian literature and the power women hold. He tackles how Algerian women are “...loved, symbols of countries love. She represents the power of feminine force...she attracts and rejects any suitors, colonizers and men that hold ideologic thoughts”² (267). The female protagonist is given the right to choose her future and can shape it however she wants.

In a thesis “The Representations of the Woman in Assia Djébar’s Novel *The Unscrupulous Woman*”, Karima Aberkan and Soumia Hadidi scrutinized how women were represented in Algerian literature in the 20th century. They claimed that the woman has a vigorous role within the social community, she is individualistic, with a more accurate sense, she is free and can break the social convention³ (17). It is a fact that generally, the Algerian women in real life as well as how she is portrayed in literature defies the patriarchal stereotyped society in which they live.

The above-mentioned studies and reviews on the European fairy tales and Algerian folklores shed different lights on the serious issue such as how women are illustrated in those stories. Depending on knowledge, the previous critics have not exposed the obvious differences of how female protagonists are represented in European stories in such a submissive manner compared to how Algerian portrays them by empowering them.

This study will rely on several Western theories, books and article to scrutinize the European and Algerian fairy tales. It employs Jack Zipes’s book *The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale*, where he analyses the development of western fairy tales and how they are used to understand a society while taking into consideration the social function behind them

² Elle représente le pouvoir d’une force féminine -figuration du pays colonisé- qui réunit et divise, attire et rejette les prétendants, les colonisateurs, les hommes qui se font des idées idéologiques.

³ La femme moderne est instruite, elle a un rôle actif au sein de sa société ; elle est indépendante d’un sens plus précis, elle est libre.

(Zipes 13). He shows that in order to clearly grasp the use of fairy tales, it is necessary to have knowledge about the entourage and influences the writers were under while writing their future worldwide known fairy tales.

This research will also depend on another book of Jack Zipes entitled *Fairy Tales and The Art of Subversion*, where its main argument is that fairy tales were used as a socialization process purpose when closely analysed from social, cultural and religious point of view. The most popular and favourite fairy tales actually exposes a gap between what is morally correct and wrong within the society (Zipes). He interpreted the life event of each famous writers such as Perrault, brother Grimm and Andersen, to fully comprehend their writings.

This study will also relay on Kurt Lewin's Dynamic theory of Personality, where Lewin gave his classic psychological formula in his work on *Field theory*, in which he has proposed his theory of Personality (Varmani). He demonstrates how people behave depending on their surroundings, this actively demonstrate that a person cannot act or react out of the nature he is surrounded by, and his actions are the result of him as an individual and his environment (Cherry). Varmani further illustrate when the person and environment come together, a dynamic field is created that causes the person to behave in a particular way. That is why, Lewin's theory is called the dynamic theory of personality. Field theory in general studies human behaviour in relation to their culture, and it contains a sub field entitled as field theory of personality in which it studies the individual's psyche, and at the same time how the field that is the environment they grew up in effects them to be such and such person acting in such and such way.

This study will also depend on Vladimir Propp's theory of *Morphology of Folk Tale*. Where in his book he analyses the Russian folklore and brings down the concepts and characteristics of the folkloric characters in folklore. Though it is Russian based, it can also be

applied on other cultures for it some parts of Propp`s morphology may be cross-culturally valid (qtd. in Propp XIV).

This research is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is entitled “The Historical Background”. It tackles in details the representation of women in both European and Algerian literature in the patriarchal society whether by masculine or feminine narratives.

The second chapter is an analytical part entitled “The Representation of the Female Protagonists in *Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* and *The Little Mermaid*”. It is divided into two sections. The first is “The European Fairy Tales’ Sequence of Events” which is dedicated to a brief explained summary of the selected European fairy tales. The second section is named “Women in Fairy Tales According to The Socio-Cultural and Religious Context” which is divided into two parts: the first part is entitled “How Society and Culture See Women”, it shows how the female protagonists in the selected fairy tales are stereotyped and shaped throughout the events as a subject to the man taking into account the cultural and social convention. The second part is “How Religion See Women” where the selected fairy tales will be analysed from a religious point of view, considering how Christianity treated and considered women. The two sections rely on the theory of Jack Zipes.

The third chapter is entitled “Unveiling the portrayal of the Female Characters in the Algerian folktales of *Dellala* and *Loundja, Bent El-Ghoula*”. Like the second chapter, it is constituted of two sections. The first section discusses the important role of women in the Algerian society while relating to the selected stories. The second section demonstrates how the female protagonists in the selected tales are free from the male dominance and decide for themselves the outcome of their endings. The two sections rely on Kurt Lewin and Vladimir Propp`s theory.

Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings of this paper. It displays the women illustration in European and Algerian fairy tales by both male and female narrators. It demystifies female characters and the different roles they were attributed in the stories.

Chapter One

Historical Background

According to Jan Harold Brunvand, folk literature refers to “the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples” (20). This showcases the amount of traditional heritage those stories hold, and how crucial maintaining them is.

The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the representation of women in European folk literature, especially portraying them in the patriarchal society. It will also deal with the representation of women in Arab literature, mainly how they are addressed as strong and vigilant in the Muslim and Arab society; a special remark is to be drawn to the important participation of women in the Algerian independence. It will also discuss the educational purpose of the Algerian folktales and the European unethical morals in fairy tales.

1. The Representation of Women in European Literature During the Medieval Era and Nineteenth Century

Since long ago, the portrayal of women in the patriarchal society throughout literary works has been a serious issue, contrary to popular belief. From ancient times, what could generally be found in European texts was the pressure men placed on women. Before feminist movements appeared, the female gender had to bear the neglected version of themselves in a fairly great number of novels and narrations. Like in Medieval era, for instance, the distinction between men and women has always been very distinct. As Anita Kay O’Pry-Reynolds stated, “The male hero is defined by who he is, his quests and his victories; as the damsel is defined by the roles ascribed to her by society” (37). Indeed, women had a precise role even in real life, like in any culture, women and men had their specific responsibilities to

manage, however, their role in literature has been metamorphosed in something despicable and considered inferior to men. In the 20th century, the majority of novels that were published and grew quite known had few heroines and women wanted to incorporate more female protagonists. However, writers started to create more female protagonists attributing them the stereotyped roles. In most of stories, novels, or any narration that occur in a male-dominated society, the female character happens to be assigned with the same roles over the centuries; mother-to-be, damsel in distress, weak, irrational, over sensitive, exaggerating in expressing emotions as well as dependent.

Amanda Rindu studied in her thesis entitled “Patriarchy, Women Suffering, and The Ideas of Feminism Reflected Through the Characters in Maria Irene Fornes’s *The Conduct of Life*”, how each gender is represented through narratives with the emotional state mentioned. As a matter of fact, female character’s freedom of expression has been controlled. Women are naturally emotionally stronger than men; but in the eyes of society, the concept of being emotional and showing feelings is synonymous to weakness (1). In many European literary pieces, they try to break the norms and biological facts that women are the caregivers. In the “National Library of Medicine”, it is explained that “all over the world, women are the predominant providers of informal care for family members with chronic medical conditions or disabilities, including the elderly and those with other mental illnesses”. Dr. Jordan Peterson explains this in an interview on how the nature of women is, which is why they are more likely to be interested in human beings and why most nurses are females, while men are interested in material, finding out that most engineers are men.

Any literary work is actually a reflection of society and culture. Men tend to treat women as properties. Societies that encourage and promote the male-dominated ideologies often reduce women into objects or take away their freedom. As Desty Woro Sedayu explained in her thesis “The Effects of Patriarchal Culture to Female Characters as Seen in

Without Mercy by Jana Wain” that “women’s histories through the century are involved with the patrimony. Man takes from woman, all her rights and all she has to be possessed and granted as property” (13). This practice is generally related to cultural belief and is often, as mentioned above, present in the literary works.

As literature can be divided into many branches and genres, it is not to be forgotten that literature also belongs to children. As the stereotyped representations are also present in their stories, children are more likely to adopt those ideas. Many have the idea that children’s tales carry beneficial messages and have good morals, but that applies perhaps only on certain stories with no romantic settings. Boys think that men are supposed to mostly be strong, emotionless and treat women according to what they learned, while girls will for all intents and purposes think that they should be really dependent of man, not having a voice or the freedom of expression, being weak, and mostly wait for others to solve their problems. The messages European literary works carry are polluted with patriarchal ideologies as well as false perceptions of life, spiritually, emotionally and physically. When thinking about children’s literature, what comes to mind are fairy tales and fables; fantastical stories that can make anyone dream. Indeed, the concept of fantasy, magical realm and dreamy storyline are actually delightful. Nevertheless, what comes to soil those fantasy stories is the way the characters are represented, especially when the fairy tales have, like most of all, a romantic plot.

2. European Fairy Tales

As mentioned above, literature has a great variety of genres and types, one of them being fairy tales. There are various definitions of the term ‘fairy tale’, one of them is that

Fairy tales are also referred to as wonder or magic tales having originated from a wide variety of tiny tales, perhaps thousands of years ago. They were related to beliefs, rites, values and experiences of pagan people. However, with the passage of time, the fairy tales have undergone great changes and have become diffused in their nature and spirit. (Silima 246)

In the European culture, the fantasy stories often carry messages and morals.

However, the fairy tales that have a romantic setting and the presence of male and female characters bear wrong messages. Chosen Rhymes said in the study entitled “The Construction of Female Characters in Selected Brothers Grimm’s Fairy Tales” that in a male dominant society, male establishes the ruling, whilst the female obeys and executes them, and “since most of the authors are men, they get the opportunity to suppress women through writing.” (6) And like further type of literature, such as Romantic Comedy for instance or works of fiction, “fairy tales uphold patriarchal values by undermining the strengths of women and present female characters as inferior to male ones” (6). The majority of fairy tales that are known internationally are from the European countries and most of them are written by male writers which automatically means that some stories have traces of patriarchal principles, may it be the characters’ thoughts and behaviour, especially female individuals, or the setting the characters live in.

Moreover, in the article “Analyse de Text Les Fées” or “Text Analyses the Fairies”, Sofiane Messadi states that “first of all, the term ‘poor’ characterises the female character. It is by the way, the only characteristic⁴” (2). This case can be found in most of Charles Perrault fairy tales. In fact, the first characteristic the female protagonist is attributed, before her beauty and other traits, is her financial situation, for instance her degree, or social class she

⁴ Tout d’abord, le terme « pauvre » caractérise le personnage de la femme. C’est d’ailleurs la seule caractérisation.

belongs to, which is most of the time the lower class.

The female protagonist can never solve her own problems, she always wishes, dreams and sacrifices in order to please the male character, while the latter plays the role of a charming hero that saves her and decides to marry her though she is from a zero background. The majority of fairy tales with romantic scenarios promote marriage based on a three days relationship and sometimes just over the first sight. What could be problematic in that diegesis is not the happy ending in each story or the final wedding as the outcome of their relationship, but the fact that no real conversation is made or any serious matter is taken into account, just like how in real life during a great period of time where marriages happened because a man decided so or because the woman was in age to have her own family, resulting in a sad and sometimes brutal conjugal life.

The first time that the term fairy tale came to existence was in 1697 by Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy in France. In the first stories collected, imagined and written, some aspects of real life as well as how the society worked could be found within them like aforementioned above for example, marriage. Dr. Silima Nanda published her founding entitled "The Portrayal of Women in The Fairy Tales" where she studied the background of fairy tales. After d'Aulnoy introduced the newly terms of 'fairy tales' during the second half of the 18th century, that world was "brought" into the English culture and soon became a genre of great importance and "has become more widespread and complex" (246). Soon enough, countries started to adopt that term and more fairy tales were published, giving access to each country its personal historical archives. Fairy tales were first oral stories that appeared long ago, which later on, were collected, remembered and written into literary forms.

In Europe, the most famous writers that had created the successful fairy tales are mainly from Germany, France and Denmark. Some stories were imagined, some were

collected through the country, and some were inspired by other narrations. Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm are known for being the pioneers of the fairy tales. They created the tales that the world knows, unfortunately, the selected stories which are “Sleeping Beauty” from France, “The Little Mermaid” from Denmark, and “Snow White and The Seven dwarves” from Germany are full of patriarchal ideologies.

2.1 Charles Perrault and His Stories

Charles Perrault was born in 1628 in Paris in a family of seven children. He was a French poet and story teller as well as a leading member of the Académie Française. He later on started to win a great literary reputation in 1660. He was part of the creation of the Academy of Science and the restoration of the Academy of Painting. In 1668, to honour the King’s painter Charles Le Brun, he wrote the story of “La Peinture” or “Painting”. Charles Perrault was an extremely authoritative “figure in the seventeenth century French literary scene” and was also the commander “of the ‘Modern faction’ during the ‘Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns.’” (Pook Press).

Perrault is remembered for his collection of fairy tales in *The Tales of Mother Goose* back in 1697 that he created to amuse his children. The new literary genre being the fairy tale, he derived his stories from early folk tale. In his book *The Tales of Mother Goose, Stories or Tales from Past Times*, the following stories are included; “Little Red Riding Hood”, “Cinderella”, “Puss in Boots”, “Bluebeard” and “Sleeping Beauty”. This last tale was inspired by the fairy tales “Sun, Moon and Talia” written by Giambattista Basile in his work the *Pentamerone* in 1634.

Apart from the story of “Sleeping Beauty” in which the story line is very patriarchal, it can be found in other of his writings similar misrepresentation toward the female character like for example “Cinderella” who supposedly fell in love in two nights and end up marrying

the prince who searched for her with one missing shoe-glass.

2.2 Hans Christian Andersen and His Stories

Hans Christian Andersen, born in 1805 in Odense in Denmark, was an author, a travelogue, novelist, poet and best known for his fairy tales. It was discovered in 2012 in Danish archives that his very first story is named *The Tallow Candle*. This quote “First, you undergo such a terrible amount of suffering, and then you become famous” taken from *The Fairy Tale of My Life* written in 1855 can be the sentence to resume his life. Born in a poor family, he grew up in a one-bed room house in the poorest area of Odense. He did not go to school properly and kept memorizing stories until the sudden death of his father, his mother decided that he had to learn correctly. At the age of fourteen, he lived three years of poverty, isolation and strife in which he wrote some stories, before meeting Jonas Collin who was the director of the Royal Danish Theatre. Collin went to King Frederik VI and achieved to convince the monarch to fully finance the teenager artist’s education.

Andersen’s fairy tales include 156 stories within nine volumes. The popular fairy tales that made him known are “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, “The Nightingale”, “The Red Shoes”, “Thumbelina”, “The Ugly Duckling” and “The Little Mermaid” with many others.

Another story which deals with a woman in some wrong aspects is the story of “Thumbelina” whom by the end she marries a flower-fairy prince and is changed both physically; a pair of wings were given to her, and personally as they gave her a new name, in order to accompany her new husband.

2.3 Brothers Grimm and Their Stories

The Brothers Grimm are the duo of Germany, Jacob Ludwig Karl Grimm born in 1785 and Wilhelm Carl Grimm in 1786 both in Hanau within the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel. When their father died in 1796, the Grimm circle of relatives underwent monetary issues.

Thanks to their aunt, they graduated from Friedrichs Gymnasium and attended the college of Marburg before getting expelled because of their social class. Jacob and Wilhelm were given inspiration through their professor Friedrich Von Savigny and a hobby in linguistics and medieval German literature wakened. In 1808, the Grimm Brothers have become librarians in Kassel and started out to look inside the Kassel documents for vintage folk-memories and additionally they invited storytellers so they could write down their stories.

It is in 1812 when they first published their collected stories in their first edition of *Children's and Household Tales*. Some were rewritten in German like "Cinderella", "Red Riding Hood" and "Rapunzel" and others were derived from the German culture such as "Hansel and Gretel", "Rumpelstiltskin" and the most popular "Snow White and The Seven Dwarves".

Not only the story of Snow White is morally wrong, but the plot line of "Rapunzel" is also wrong as the prince fell in love after hearing her voice, when they first meet, they fall in love and decide to marry but she will get pregnant before that. The sorceress will trap them resulting in Rapunzel being casted away and the prince becoming blind, but her voice guided him in finding her.

3. A glimpse of the representation of the female character in some of the Arab lit

In the past, Arabs had many literary works, such as poetry for instance. It went through many stages, though it was developed in the beginning of the third century according to the Muslim calendar; which helped a lot the historians as a way of preserving the information. Later on, the invention of paper provided a lot of help to the Arabs in journaling their writing to protect it from dissolving⁵. Abde-Illah Khelf Ahmed Salman further explains

مرت الكتابة التاريخية بمراحل متعددة لكنها ازدهرت وانتعشت في مطلع القرن الثالث الهجري وأمكن للمشتغلين بالتاريخ ان ينتفعوا بها في صناعتهم بالتاريخ، كذلك تطورت صناعة الورق فأصبح من الممكن تدوين الكتب وتداولها بدال من الاعتماد على الرواية.

that one of the reasons that made Arabs journaling is to register the great events that had happened, like the battle of Badr, the conquest of Mecca and many other political reasons (339). Writing was not only preserved for educational or scientific purposes; it was also for marking history in order to never forget, where folklore was written down as it is part of cultural identity, and entertainment.

As a matter of fact, Arab women before the arrival of Islam did not have much respect or acknowledgment, and were even killed when they were born. “In the pre-Islamic era, oppression and barbarism that led the Arabs to deny women their right to live, and Islam stopped this crime”⁶(Aljazeera) which is ironic due to the fact that a lot of people believe that the religion of Islam is the reason for such acts toward women, where in reality it is totally the opposite and history testifies to that (Elmokdad). Unquestionably, “in Islam a woman is a completely independent personality. She can make any contract or bequest in her own name. She is entitled to inherit in her position as mother, as wife, as sister and as daughter. She has perfect liberty to choose her husband.” (iium.edu).

Throughout time, the Arab history had addressed many topics such as war, bravery, religion, and family. It also addresses the role of women in society, where she is represented as strong, dependable, and smart. The woman had been honoured throughout history, starting from the pre-Islamic era passing through the Islamic era where she played a prominent and recognized role since the dawn of the history of the Arab nation⁷ (Nasr-Addine 221). We cannot speak about strong women without mentioning Khadija *may Allah be pleased with her* the wife of the prophet Mohammed ﷺ “she was a successful and esteemed business Arab and later reverted to become a Muslim woman” (Fair observer), she is the epitome and perfect

ساد في العصر الجاهلي قبل الإسلام من الظلم والهمجية ما وصل بالعرب إلى التحريم على المرأة حقها في الحياة، فقتلوا بطريفة بشعة وذلك⁶ بوأدها وهي لا تزال طفلة، فكانت تُدفن حية تحت التراب حتى الموت، وقد شنع الإسلام هذه الجريمة ان المرأة قد كرمت عبر مسيرة التاريخ بدءاً من العصر الجاهلي ومروراً بالعصر الإسلامي. حيث أدت المرأة دوراً مرموقاً ومشهوداً منذ⁷ بزوغ فجر تاريخ الأمة العربية.

live image of an Arab woman. This actively demonstrates that the characteristics of characters in those stories are brought from real people, and like sayyida Khadija, many characters' inspiration are from her.

Some Arab writers included women in their writings, where they portrayed how important her role in the Muslim and Arab society is. For instance, Mostafa Abid showcases in his research that in the opinion of Malek Bennabi, the Muslim woman is part of society, and he never viewed her separate from it, or as a servant to it. She is vigilant in performing her duties towards society in order to achieve righteousness in the Islamic community⁸ (159). In another narrative supporting this view, "Ibn Nabi believes that it is obligatory for the woman to be placed here and there, where she plays her role as a servant of civilization, and an inspiration to the taste of beauty and the spirit of morals, that role in which God sent her as a mother and wife to the man"⁹ (albayan). He believes that her role is pivotal in life, and the western world seeks to destroy this immaculate role of a wife and a mother. In a dissertation entitled as "Deconstructing the Institution of Marriage in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (1967) and Ahlam Mostaghanmi's *Chaos of the Senses* (2015)", they said that "while men are expected to work, women are supposed to do the menial jobs and take care of their children and other members of their family", they concluded that being a mother and taking care of family members is low and despicable, whereas it is the complete opposite. If women stopped serving this important role of motherhood, the humanity would be extinct in the next 100 years. This is what Ibn Nabi referred as the downfall of the western world, and it is crawling to the Arab conservative household to destroy it, because for them such role is not important as much as building a career.

المرأة المسلمة في فكر مالك بن نبي جزء من المجتمع، فلم ينظر اليها منفصلة ابدأ عن مجتمعا كفرده منه خادمة له، ساهرة في أداء واجباتها تجاهه⁸ بغية تحقيق الصلاح في المجتمع الإسلامي.
يرى ابن نبي أنه من الواجب أن توضع المرأة هنا وهناك حيث تؤدي دورها خادمة للحضارة، وملهمة لذوق الجمال وروح الأخلاق، ذلك الدور⁹ الذي بعثها الله فيه أمأ، وزوجة للرجل

There is also the writer Bakrada Djazia, in her research entitled “*The participation of the Algerian Woman in the War of Independence in the Fifth District Through Vivid Testimonies*”¹⁰, where she sheds light on the role of the Algerian women and the immense help and bravery that they had held during those dark days. Her study goes on when Algerian women joined the Algerian revolution in the fifth district since its inception, and participated as a civilian. She fed and protected the mujahidin. She also had other missions as collecting money and carrying weapons and medication from a region to another. Her great capacities in doing difficult works and the training they got later on made her do more important works that needed carefulness like collecting information about the French colonisation. (248).

4. Arab Folktales

The term “folklore” can have various definitions. According to Hasan El-Shamy, for instance, “Lore” is a category of culture; it is distinguishable from the rest of cultural phenomena by being traditional and formulistic” (2). Another perspective is that “Folklore, a solid branch of folk literature, is the hallmark of any nation or any society. Such as oral tradition; as proverbs or jokes, it also includes material culture as well as traditional folk beliefs, and various custom” (Mustain et, al 1). Vladimir Propp describes it as “the womb of literature; literature is born of folklore. Folklore is the prehistory of literature” (14).

The term folklore started to be used in research later on in the mid nineteenth century in Europe. However, the Arabs shed light on it before that. Hasan El-Shamy, in his article “Folklore in the Arab World” says the first folklorist in this sense was Basrite Al-Jâhiz (9th century AD), who treated actual folkloric occurrences and sought to confirm their veracity through fieldwork. This phase began in the 1950s when literature scholars learned that Western “folklore” was a field of study (1). He continues saying that; today, especially in the newly independent Arab Gulf States, ‘folklore’ is proudly regarded as a repository of national

¹⁰ مساهمة المرأة الجزائرية في الثورة التحريرية بالولاية الخامسة من خلال الشهادات الحية

memory, history, 'soul' and character. (1). And in that matter, "folklore has proven to be a prominent mechanism through which pleasurable and meaningful experiences are conveyed to different audiences" (Jarrar, Awobamise, Bukhari 1).

In the Arab folklore we would find characteristics (or characters) that don't appear in other folktales. Some of those characters were formed upon religious or cultural background. For instance, the creature "Jinn", or "Ghoul" is adapted from religion. And "according to the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ, ghouls are the demons or enchantresses of genies that hurt human beings by eating or spoiling their food or by frightening travellers when they are in the wilderness. In order to avoid their harm, one can recite a verse from the Holy Quran or call for prayer since they hate any reference to God" (Al-Rawi 47). For a non-Muslim or non-Arab, it would be a complete myth, but for a Muslim it is believable. Like as in the story of Dellala, we are given an example of "Jinn", when her hands were put into place by them" since you made this deaf Jinny (their son) laugh we will grant you anything you want"¹¹ then she replied, "I want you to put back my hands to how they were?!"¹² (Dellala 44). And so, they did and filled her hands with gold as a gift.

Arab folklore is rich with activities of a daily life of a simple Arab person; it shares pieces of their culture, traditions, and religious beliefs. "Arabic folktales are more relatable to everyday life as they are comprised of humour, food, morals, and manners of the Arabs and Muslims" (Al-zahabe 6). We could find such things in other folktales; however, other folktales of other cultures tend to "implement the use of mythical creatures, magical powers, and talking animals" (Al-zahabe 7) disregarding the events of the individual's daily life.

Another thing that can be detected in the Arab folklore is the theme of solidarity and giving a helping hand to the ones that need it. In the story of Dellala, when her mother called

¹¹ مادمت قد اضحكت هذا الجني الايكم، نحن مستعدّين لقضاء حاجتك

¹² أريد منكم ان تعيدوا يدي لمكانهما!؟

other young girls to help with spinning the yarn, “gather all the girls and gather for *Touiza*” (Dellala 40), they came to help for it is a common thing for Arabs to help each other for it is sunnah to aid another Muslim brother or sister. “Unity brings people together, creating love, harmony and generosity between them. As believers, we can use unity as a platform to spread kindness to others” (human appeal). As for the fact that folklore is affected by religion, we would find things such as kindness and generosity in the stories. Arabs are known to be generous, even towards a non-Arab or Muslim, because Islam teaches to be kind to others, “especially to the Bedouins, who take the most pride in their generosity with not only their kin and members of their tribe, but also with strangers” (Al-zahabe 8).

4.1 Abd El-Hamid Bourayou and His Stories

Abd El-Hamid Bourayou is a professor at the university; he wrote several books, one of which is *The Role of Women in Algerian Folklore*. He intended to address several women-themed Algerian folklore that were told by women at home for their kids. In this book, we find numerous stories where the main character is a woman who is smart enough to always find a way to rescue herself despite the hardships she faces. This current research will be dealing with the two stories of “Dellala” (1977) and “Loundja, The Monster’s Daughter” (1989). In this book he divided the female character in the Algerian folklore into three categories; Dellala and Loundja are in the hero-victim column where they suffer but at the end they survive and live happily ever after.

Bourayou has many books regarding folklore beside his book *The Role of Women in Algerian Folklore*. For instance, *The Folklore in the Region of Biskra*, also *The Epic Hero and the Victim Hero in Algerian Oral Literature*; where he includes other tales and characteristics of them. These two works do not necessarily deal with women, moreover; he invested in the need to preserve the values of folklore. In one of his interviews with the newspaper's reporter of El-massa, he was asked on why he so invested in this folkloric culture, and he answered

saying that it is part of who he is as an Algerian citizen that grew up listening to these stories which created a part of him, and it distinguishes him from people in the rest of the society because he is aware of the importance of this culture and literature.

In an interview, Abd El-Hamid Bourayou spoke about *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn* and how important his piece of literature is to him that he always goes back to read it. He describes it as a rich amount of human awareness of history and its rationalization¹³. To him, such a book is crucial to read and put to study for the important knowledge it possesses. In another interview with *Al-Arabi magazine*, Bourayou answered a lot of questions regarding his writing on the Algerian culture. He was asked on how important the role of orality was during the dark days of the French settlement from 1830 to 1962 in the absence of the materials and lack of education, and he said that Algerians found nothing but oral traditions such as news, stories and poems to carry in their memory and record through it the real painful events that they lived from their point of view (El-Arabi). This is one of the reasons that made him write and study his culture, for the aim to protect identity as an Algerian.

¹³ تمثل مقدمة ابن خلدون خزناً ثرياً للوعي البشري بالتاريخ وعقائته

Chapter Two

The Representation of the Female Protagonists in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow*

White and the Seven Dwarfs and The Little Mermaid

This chapter explores the way the female protagonists in Charles Perrault, Hans Andersen and the Brother Grimms' Stories are portrayed in a patriarchal society relying on the theories of Jack Zipes' *The Changing Functions of Fairy Tales* (1988) and *Fairy Tales and The Art of Subversion* (1983). It is divided into two main sections. The first section, "The European Fairy Tales' Sequence of Events", is a brief summary of the selected stories. The second section is entitled, "Women in Fairy Tales According to The Socio-Cultural and Religious Context", which is divided into two parts. The first part, "How Society and Culture Perceive Women", deals with the analysis of the female protagonists in line with how society and culture portrayed women according to the historical era in which it was written. The second part is "Religion in Fairy Tales", which delves into analysing the heroine's representation taking into account the religious aspect of the respected period of time. The second section relies on Jack Zipes' theories to prove how the female main characters' thoughts, motives and point of view have been wronged and turned into patriarchal ideologies.

1. The European Fairy Tales' Sequence of Events

1.1 Sleeping Beauty



Fig. 1. Viktor Vasnestov, *The Sleeping Queen*, between 1900-1926

Sleeping Beauty was written by Charles Perrault in the seventeenth century, more precisely in 1697. The story line was inspired by a previous story entitled “Sun, Moon, and Talia” by Giambattista Basile which is darker, instead of a prince who found the princess as Perrault wrote, in Basile’s version, a married king found the sleeping princess and raped her, leaving her pregnant with twins. When she gave birth to them, one of the babies got hungry and sucked her finger removing the flax that cursed her. Charles Perrault’s story is about a 15 years old princess who got cursed into a deep sleep of a hundred years. She was described as the most beautiful and perfect girl in the world. A prince heard her story and was brave enough to find her, soon after her wake, he fell for her elegant way of speaking, and decided to marry her in secret. She gave birth to twins, Aurore meaning dawn and Jour meaning day. When his father, the king, died; he publicly declared his wedding and she became the new queen. However, her kids got kidnapped to be eaten by her mother-in-law who was an ogress, by the end, the children were spared and the ogress was executed.

1.2 The Little Mermaid



Fig. 2. Christian Birmingham, *The Little Mermaid*, 2014

Christian Hans Andersen published in 1837 the story of *The Little Mermaid*. The story got so popular in Denmark, that they made a statue of a mermaid in Copenhagen, believing to be the place where it was written and published. The story line is about the seventh princess who just turned 15 years old. One day, she saved a drowning prince despite having the interdiction of meddling with human life and instantly fell in love with him. She took him to the beach, and before he opened his eyes, she hid within the waves. A young woman from the holy temple who passed by, saw the prince and he believed she was the one who saved him. As her feelings were getting deeper, she decided to trade her tail and voice to be with him, however, if he does not vow his love to her, she will die. Unfortunately, the prince was already in love with the woman he thought was his saviour. In the end, he married that woman, and the little mermaid was about to die as he did not vow his love to her, and she rejected her only solution which was to kill him in order to be mermaid again, and turned into sea foam, becoming a spirit called daughter of the air.

1.3 Snow White and The Seven dwarfs



Fig. 3. Scott Gustaffson, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, The Greenwich Workshop

Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs was published at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in 1812 by the Grimm Brothers as their 53rd story from *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. The story line is about a princess as white as snow, her lips as red as blood and her hair as black as ebony. She was considered the most beautiful girl in the world and her step-mother, the Evil

Queen was very envious and jealous of her and wanted to kill her. However, the huntsman charged of murdering her took pity of her and spared her, Snow White managed to run away and hid in the seven dwarfs house in exchange of maintaining the house clean and do the chores correctly. as the dwarfs suspected the evil queen to come after Sno White, they warned her to beware of anyone. In the end, the Queen succeeded in her third attempts to kill her. Believing she was dead, the dwarfs placed her in a glassed coffin instead of burying her as it was impossible to bury such beauty. Days passed and a prince came and saw, and claimed he could not stand living without seeing her, he begged to the dwarfs wanting her as his dearest possession and they accepted. In his way back, his men dropped the coffin making Snow White spite the poisonous bit of apple, she asked what happened and the prince declared his sincerest love and imposed to her to be his wife.

2. Women in Fairy Tales According to The Socio-Cultural and Religious Context

European writers like Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm Brothers reflected in their fairy tales what social conventions and cultural norms as well as religious ethics influenced their ideologies, especially their opinions on the feminine genre. Either intentionally or unintentionally, the female portrayals are, in all transparency, derived from a very patriarchal mind. Women's "identit[ies]" was transformed, by men representatives such as the French author Charles Perrault and the Grimm's Brothers, into a less important role (51), like it will be explained in the further analyses on how some the female characters started as protagonists and by the continuity of events, they turned casually as side characters, as the male hero became the protagonist.

2.1 How Society and Culture Perceive Women

The three selected fairy tales were all written by male writers and according to Carol Gilligan,

When the observer is a woman, the perspective may be of a different sort. Different judgments of the image of a man as giant imply different ideas about human development, different ways of imagining the human condition, different notions of what is of value in life. (5)

How women perceive aspects of life in general is different from that of men. When writing for instance, male authors describe female's thoughts, point of views and feelings in accordance to how they believe it is, which sometimes results in illustrating women as voiceless, objects or extremely submissive as it is the case for the respective European female protagonists: The sleeping princess, Snow White and the Little Mermaid. Studies show that within fairy tales, women tend to be separated into two type of categories one of them being the "victimized and submissive" while the other being the wicked character (Al-Barazenji 51).

It is known that any work of literature is a mirror of society. In accordance to Jack Zipes, "literature and art cannot be fully understood without considering the socio-cultural context in which they are produced" (ix). Indeed, fairy tales being part of literature must be studied, read and understood taking into consideration the era when it was written. Society and culture are believed to have a great influence on a person. A writer, for instance, has high chances of transmitting into his works some traces of social and cultural conventions. In fact, analysing the socio-cultural concept behind those fairy tales might provide a clear understanding on how gender was seen, notably the feminine genre.

Fairy tales always took part in playing a crucial role in the procedure of socialization (Zipes 181). Intentionally or not, male writers immersed the social conventions and cultural ideologies within the stories of wonder. However, creating female heroines, whom were supposed to be elevated are, on the contrary, portrayed as being submissive to men's law,

voiceless most of the time as well as being attributed physical and personality traits being part from the male fantasy.

Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, Gilligan noticed that adolescence is the fifth stage of the psychosocial development which is the stage when the rational sense of self is being established as well as the confirmation of the identity that will result in some abilities when adults (11), as the three heroines were aged between 14 and 15 years old, their growing processes were all halted; the little mermaid became human and kept suffering before dying, Sleeping Beauty fell into a deep sleep and Snow White fell into a sort of coma, making that crucial development stage abruptly stopped and undone.

A) The Submissive Sleeping Beauty

It is to be reminded that “Sleeping Beauty” is from the seventeenth century, therefore, many aspects differ largely from those of nowadays. What is to be noticed is how every heroine from fairy tales are all aged between 14 and 16 years old when getting married. Sleeping beauty, herself was 15, which was a common age for young girl to get married. Nonetheless, the main concern is how exactly the female protagonist is represented.

In the beginning, when the princess is born, the tradition wants the seven fairies to give her gifts and by so “the princess would have, by this means, all the imaginable perfections”¹⁴ (SB 59). Indeed, the princess was attributed some unrealistic traits and skills as being the most beautiful women in the world, having the temper of an angel, being graceful, having the voice of a nightingale, would dance perfectly and finally, knowing how to play every instruments. This description is a clear sign that indicates a patriarchal mind behind the writing. Men tend to portray women in the most ideal way, perfect yet unreal. Jack Zipes mentioned that “Perrault’s fairy tales which ‘elevate’ heroines reveal that he had a distinctly limited view of women” (40), which is accurate in view of her character. In the seventeenth

¹⁴ La princesse eût par ce moyen toutes les perfections imaginables.

century, women were considered dirty, stupid, unfaithful and dangerous, there could be some exceptions if she was from a higher social class but it did not exclude her from being extremely submissive (Etudier), and her only purpose in life was either to get married and be obedient to her husband or join the convent, those were the places of the women during the Renaissance. A woman endowed with such traits that will attract the desire of men and the jealousy of women, exists only in the fantasy of a male mind.

Despite possessing all those perfect traits, through the story, it is flagrant how inexistent she is and how the stereotyped role was given to her. Just after she fell asleep for one century, a random prince is directly portrayed as the main hero who will save the princess. When she woke up, a small dialogue occurred, where her way of speaking was so charming that he marries her. After the wedding, the story switch completely the protagonist, the prince was featured and the princess was mentioned twice afterward; when “he lived with the princess more than two whole years, and had two children”¹⁵ (SB 67) and when her children were kidnapped by the ogress “The young queen was twenty years past, without counting the hundred years that she had slept; her skin was a little hard, although beautiful and white”¹⁶ (SB 69). Charles Perrault’s ideal woman is supposed to be provided with tolerance and be reserved, until the right man arrives “to recognize her virtues”, she must be passive and live only for marriage and must not question her future, furthermore, stupidity was considered being of a great quality in a woman (Zipes 41)

Sleeping Beauty features such ideas, that a woman’s only purpose is to wait for the man and become a mother. Socially speaking, for a long period of time, women were to grow up keeping in mind that what she learns in order to be a proper lady was to please her husband, and the process of pregnancy would be a way to gain an important role in her

¹⁵ Il vécut avec la princesse plus de deux ans entiers, et en eut deux enfants

¹⁶ La jeune reine avait vingt ans passés, sans compter les cent ans qu'elle avait dormi; sa peau était un peu dure, quoique belle et blanche.

feminine “identity” (Bennette 93-108). The story of “Sleeping Beauty” actually demonstrates how, according to Perrault and the socio-cultural conventions, a woman must be totally submissive especially to her husband, should not be coquet since it is a sign of independence and be patient whatever may happen as by the end of the fairy tale, we wrote a hymn praising patience.

B) The Naive Little Mermaid

“The Little Mermaid”, also aged of 15 years old, is perhaps the most accurate example of a patriarchal mindset. The whole story is overly exaggerated in her way of behaving and her personality. The seventh sea-princess is undoubtedly portrayed as a naïve and ridiculous way.

The primary concern to notice is when she saved the drowning prince and immediately fell in love to the degree of “spend[ing] many evenings, and many nights, on the neighbouring water...gaz[ing] at the young prince” (TLM 278-279), and as she could not listen to the words of her grand-mother, she even forfeited her identity as a mermaid when she traded her tail with legs that will procure her a sharp pain every time she walks, for a chance of having him fall in love with her (TLM 286). In lights of Luma Ibrahim Al-Barazenji, “women’s identity” was modified and classified them as unimportant (51), female identification was moulded in order to fit the social convention for many purposes, such as to please the opposite sex, to avoid being casted as an abnormal girl or to avoid being judged. The fact that the little mermaid easily accepted to abandon her family to please her heart showcases Hans Andersen’s opinion of the rightful place and presumed duty she ought to do (Zipes 92).

Another point to consider is how she accepted her pitiful situation and suffered in silence after she had become human. Carol Gilligan assumed that “while women thus try to change the rules in order to preserve relationships, men, in abiding by these rules, depict

relationship as easily replaced” (44). Indeed, when the siren has a date with the prince, he does not hesitate to claim her as his “Dumb founding” and is being intimate with her just to insinuate that she is a replacement as she looked exactly like the woman he loves, he said to her “I saw her only twice. She would be the only one that I could love in this world; but your features are like hers, and you have almost driven her image out of my soul. She belongs to the holy temple; and, therefore, my good star has sent you to me — and we will never part” (TLM 293). This shows how easily the man can replace the so-called love of his life with any girl who looks like her, what more absurd is that the little mermaid only kept smiling at her pain because she could do nothing about it similarly to real life-women in some situations, where they had to accept their unjust fate, and within the painful description of the date, the writer mentioned how she fell even more deeply for him. This scene is out of reality and far from it. It actually demonstrates one of a male fantasy; a justified infidelity that will have no consequence and by which, the other feminine interest would be ignorant on that matter. The fantastical tale features a “respect” for “feudal patriarchy” (Zipes 97) as it includes such narratives with a straight banality. Taking into consideration that not only the fairy tale published during the nineteenth century had a socialization’s purpose, but also, they were educational and were firstly destined to children, such moralities were considered normal from a male perspective.

C) The Voiceless Snow White

It is believed that Snow White was 14 years old, an adolescent like the previous protagonists. Throughout the story, Snow White is portrayed as extremely beautiful, shy and innocent, nevertheless, the way she is represented in the two capital events of her life, which are when she took refuges in the dwarfs’ house and when the prince is taking her, is as a completely voiceless girl.

When the Evil Queen became so jealous of Snow White's beauty and ordered her assassinate, the young princess escaped and found hidden place in the seven dwarfs' house. When they learned her story "The dwarfs said, "If you will take care of our house, cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit, and if you will keep everything neat and clean, you can stay with us and you shall want for nothing", and when they are to come back home from work, dinner must be ready (SWATSD 241). It is undeniably the cliched stereotyped role attributed to women for a long period of time, for instance that she belongs to the kitchen, doing house chores and taking care of children, was also applied to Snow White. Studies prove that fairy tales, when first published, contributed to a socialization process, Grimm's tales were no exception,

Grimmes' tales, though ingenious and perhaps socially relevant in their own times, contained sexist and racist attitudes and served a socialization process that placed great emphasis on passivity, industry, and self-sacrifice for girls and on activity, competition, and accumulation of wealth for boys (Zipes 60).

Writers attributed personality traits, physical standards and other personal aspects according to how society and culture attributed them. Women were silenced, they could not and were not allowed to speak freely their thoughts especially publicly. It was uncommon, more likely unaccepted and speaking wisely or being clever was certainly flaws, only men could feel free to impose their opinion, have interesting conversation and have any freedom.

The case of marriage for instance, was not a matter to take lightly. Those classic fairy tales that actually reflect the socio-cultural environment the writers lived in, returned some truth of that time with some violent "moralities" (Tinker 2). When Snow White was poisoned, the prince fell for her when he saw her corps in the glassed coffin and demanded to have her as a gift, that she will be his dearest possession (SWATSD 243), and when she woke up after

his men dropped the coffin, he immediately declared “You are with me, ... I love you more than anything in the world; come with me to my father’s place, you shall be my wife” (SWATSD 243). The notion of owning a woman was greatly spread in the western world and it was a normal condition, women were educated and taught not to have much choice than to accept the proposal of a suited partner and what more was that it was the bride who had to pay the dowery to the groom. In addition to that, her money becomes his after the union, such tradition is in total opposition to Arab countries in general and Algerian culture for instance, where the man gives dowery to his wife and her money stays as it is; hers. It was the morality and the norms mostly for the bourgeois and high classes, wherever he was twice her age or unpleasant, if he was rich and possessed titles, it did not matter and the bride ought not to question the man’s decision, which is the case for Snow White, the moment she came back from her temporary coma, she is exposed to a complete stranger and must follow him.

The Brothers Grimm assigned this male dominance upon the princess with banality, their edition evokes a set of “patriarchal socialization” on the behalf of youthful ladies (Zipes 64), the freedom to choose, to think and to consider any decisions were linked to masculine characteristics and it is distinguishable from the way the protagonist is silenced as well as passive, what Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm considered the feminine rightful role to be.

2.2 Religion in Fairy Tales

The main function of fairy tales from their first publication until the nineteenth century were for educating with real life references socially and culturally speaking (Zipes 23), each country, civilization and society had this purpose, nevertheless, this education was based on religious practices and beliefs. Especially during the Middle Age, Renaissance and the early centuries until the nineteenth century, religion was the dominant leader, notably Christianity.

As fairy tales began to gain a certain instructive popularity starting from the medieval period, “priests began to incorporate them into their sermons in the vernacular as parables to illustrate a moral message” (Zipes 13). Those stories are believed to carry religious behaviour, morality and messages, namely Christianity which was a dominant religion in Europe. Religion was leading the people in every aspect of life and fairy tales was not an exception. However, Christianity held a special downgrading position for the women as the female protagonists were illustrated in accordance to writers’ beliefs. Introducing religious convenience into children fairy tale was to reinforce Christianity. For instance, the three female protagonists are, indeed, described as the bible ordered, which features patriarchal dominance.

A) The Silenced Mermaid

In Timothy chapter 2 verse 11 it is said “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission” and in verse 12 “I do not permit woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quite”. For those practicing correctly religion, it was not permitted for the woman to express her thoughts, to voice her opinion as it would be a defiance to religion, and as even for the non-practicing, a woman who was not quiet and submissive, socially speaking she was considered as uneducated and vulgar.

Taking the little mermaid as an example, the Brothers Grimm firstly wrote “Silent...as she had always been, she now grew still more” (TLM 276) and secondly, all the scenery when appeared the maiden that resembled the mermaid according to the prince also shows quietness. When the second female interest appeared near the prince who was laying on the sand “she fetched a number of persons” (TLM 275), she went to look for people instead of calling out for help, she also belonged to the holly temple “where she had acquired all manners of royal virtues” (TLM 298), all through the story, both the princess and, especially, the girl from the temple did not express their thoughts and envies through speaking. Hans

Andersen mixed the narrations of his story with Protestant Ethics and the result were considered important, appropriate and valuable for children to read and receive those ideologies (Zipes 81).

B) The Obedient Princess

Similarly, to the quietness of the mermaid, submission is also applied in “Sleeping Beauty” for the princess after she was married to the prince. For Charles Perrault, a woman had to obey and be in “total submission...to her husband”, for it was the correct ethics to have since it is stated in the bible “To the women he said, ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16), daughters were educated and learned to be existing in order to please their husbands and wives had no right to disobey or to contradict their husband or they could be punished. Of course, not all households were strictly applying the rule but as it was the norms as henceforth, rare were the women whom rebelled against the conventions. During Perrault writings, such “male-dominated Christian” ideologies had to be included within the fairy tales whether it pleased or not (Zipes 9-41).

After the couple got married “he lived with the princess for two years...but he could reveal his secret [to his mother]”¹⁷ (SB 67). The choice of having a secret married life with two children belonged to the new king, the new queen had to accept that fact, moreover, in the end, when the king came back from war and saw his mother who decided to kill herself as she was to be executed for trying to eat his wife and children, Perrault wrote “the king could not help being angry at this, for she was his mother; but he soon consoled himself with his beautiful wife and children”¹⁸ (SB 70). Again, all authority and attention are directed to the male protagonist even though it was the new queen who experienced traumatic events, she

¹⁷ Il vécut avec la princesse plus de deux ans...mais il n'osa jamais lui confier son secret.

¹⁸ Le roi ne put s'empêcher d'en être fâché, car elle était sa mère; mais il s'en consola bientôt avec sa belle femme et ses enfants.

must be patient over the kidnapping of her children and no mention of her probable relief were made by the end, the consolation was attributed to the king. Indeed, it was his mother who died and it is no easy matter but it was narrated many times that he feared her, even kept his marriage a secret and lied as she was an ogress, however, the princess who became the new queen, came to a new kingdom, knew no one, was hated by the previous queen and was almost killed, are meant to be ignored.

C) The Compliant Snow White

The case of Snow White is noticeably similar to Sleeping Beauty regarding her submission to her husband, though she is represented as innocent, shy and quiet, she is also applying full obedience to male authority. First, to the dwarfs, when they accepted for her to stay in order to clean, she answered “Yes, ...with all my heart” (SWATSD 241). The authors here, in this context, made her as if it was her duty to do so, be compliant to seven strange men that ordered her to clean their house. It is a way to show his ideology that woman should be obedient to the opposite gender regardless of her opinion, which in that case, she had none whatsoever. Snow White is shaped as a beautiful moving doll that serves those selflessly.

Secondly, when the prince ordered her to be his wife “she was willing, and went with him” (SWATSD 243), again, unquestionably obeying the male. In both cases, she accepted without questioning, negotiating or anything of the sort, she was always willing and obeyed like claimed the bible. This picture of an obedient woman is clearly confined only in their culture that is based on Christian teachings where the women are seen as a disgrace in her society. Clearly Jacob and Wilhelm, believed to be practicing Christian, valued a quiet woman as they wanted to include realistic and rightful manner based on the bible (Zipes 20). Since those fairy tales had mainly educational goals, including Christian sentiments was necessary in order to openly reflect the correct roles, ethics and behaviours men and women ought to

adopt: submissive, silent and obedient for women, and intelligent, dominant and superior for men.

Not only the character of Snow White was described as passive, after having bitten the apple, she literary became passive as she stopped acting in her story resulting giving the main role to the dwarfs as well as the prince. Hence, the men were attributed the primary role. In Corinthians chapter 11 verse 3, it is stated that, “But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”. According to the bible, women ought to be in the second place after men. Like it is remarkably the case for Snow White when, for example, she bite the apple and dropped dead, the dwarfs took the initiative and said, “We could not bury her in the dark ground,” and they had a transparent coffin of glass made, so that she could be seen from all sides” (SWATSD 243), and when she woke up by accident and the prince ordered her to be his wife, in those moments, the primary lead were given to the men in her life.

Eventually, at some points, it is noticeable that the stories of the three heroines were written by male writers who possessed patriarchal mind and strong Christian ethics as their portrayal and traits attributed to the female characters are in fact quite untrue, wronged and far from the reality in which women are much more than weak and devoid of intelligence. As religion was strongly imposing during those centuries, it shaped the social norms resulting in having no authority to question whether it was correct or at least fair. Women were believed to be the sinner according to Christianity, and their existence was for the only purpose of serving men.

Chapter Three

Unveiling the Portrayal of the Female Characters in the Algerian Folktales of *Dellala* and *Loundja Ben El-Ghoula*

This chapter focuses on the representation and portrayal of female characters in the selected Algerian folklore. It includes four main titles. The first would be a brief synopsis of the two chosen stories. The second title is about folklore in Algeria. The third title is to be conducted on the female representation in the Algerian folktales and their roles in society, with given examples on the stereotypical image of the Algerian women. The last title includes two sub titles on the analysis of the two main characters of *Dellala* and *Loundja* and how they are portrayed in the stories in relation to their culture. This analysis is conducted on the basis of Vladimir Propp's theory of Folklore and Kurt Lewin's Field Theory.

1. Synopsis of the Selected Algerian Folktales

The study will be established on two of the chosen Algerian folktales, *Dellala* and *Loundja, Bent El Ghoula*. The analysis will be on the characters and their role in the stories.

1.1 *Dellala*

Dellala is the name of the folktale that is based on the main character's name *Dellala*, the young and beautiful woman. She was the dearest daughter to her mother since her birth. She stayed most of her life at home because her mother feared that something might happen to her. Her life turned upside down on hearing that she was off to marry her older brother that swore to marry the girl with the long beautiful strand of hair. Though people of religion and his mother refused on what he swore to do, he was adamant to marry her. *Dellala* after hearing the terrible news, flees from her home, where she encounters many hardships in her journey. It started with a witch that her brother paid to capture her, to her hands getting cut. The son of the king marrying her after hearing her sad story, and his other two wives tried to

get rid of her, but luckily, she was saved. Dellala at the end lived happily ever after with her husband.

1.2. Loundja, Bent El-Ghoula:

Loundja Ben El Ghoula, is a story about Loundja the beautiful young lady that escapes with the prince to survive the clutches of her mother who keeps her at home and does not want to let her marry, despite her being in age and everyone asked for her hand. The story starts with an old lady that insisted on the prince to leave the castle and discover the outside world, and him insisting on his mother to compel to his wishes. The prince gets instructions from the old woman to find Loundja. He finds her, and attempts to take her with him. Loundja's mother discovers her daughter's absence and tries to make her go back, but failed and gets drowned in the river. The couple continue their journey to the castle, but find struggles when doing so. At the end, they solved the problems that they were facing, got married and lived happily ever after.

2. Folklore in Algeria

“Folklore is our cultural DNA. It includes the art, stories, knowledge, and practices of a people. While folklore can be bound up in memory and histories, folklore is also tied to vibrant living traditions and creative expression today” (whatisfolklore), which means that it shares the concept of orality and that it talks about a certain culture. However, the content is obviously different from one culture to another.

The Algerian folklore, as Nasri Kamal described it, is “a form of oral and written tales or stories” (1) where they are mostly told orally to kids for entertainments and take life lessons. and so many others. Dr. Sīrūs Shamīsā explains how important the educational literature is and whatever form it takes, short story, play or fictional, it is serving a moral and a purpose to the readers (270). It was formed as a result of observed daily situations by local old people to guide the young generation, and at the same time a form of enjoyment. This

actively demonstrates that for the great majority of “human history, 'literature,' both fiction and poetry”, has been told not inscribed, discerned and not perused. Consequently, fairy tales, folk tales and narrations from the verbal heritage, every single one of them is the most important interrelation one has with the resourcefulness of the accustomed male and female being of which the sweat of their brows inaugurated the globe” (Carter). Furthermore, another great clarification about Algeria’s lore was found in Folklore, Culture,

Algeria's folklore will give you much insight into the life, way of thinking and perceptions of the country's residents. Folklore in Algeria encompasses the music, traditional dance, stories and other aspects of life. A great many of Algeria's tales come from the Berbers of the Kabyle region and describe their view of creation and various other aspects of life (Algeria.com).

Algerian folklore is characterized by orality which “mean(s) that their cultural and literary forms of expression are often based on storytelling, verbal and oral traditions. Thus, knowledge is usually produced and passed on via word of mouth” (Ethnosproject), which makes it hard to track the teller of these tales. “The most common part of folklore is the sayings handed down by oral tradition from a more or less remote antiquity and usually told to express issues related to the common folk” (Altwaiji 162- 63). It was later on that these stories were documented in paper by so many Algerian writers from Daridja; the Algerian dialect, to academic Arabic and French; as Abd El-Hamid Bourayou did in his book *The Role of Women in Algerian Folklore*, Zoubeida Mameria’s *Contes du Terroir Algerien*, and Abderrahmane Bouzida’s book *Algerian Mythology Dictionary*, as well as so many others. They gathered these precious literary pieces from dissolving through time, which hold an important part of cultural identity. Angela Carter highlighted the importance of protecting these oral literary pieces, “and describes it as vital to understanding a given culture, places around the world have individual tunes and stories, that have a set of views, ideas they use as

a lens to interpret the world and themselves” (Sumlin 2). By these fictional stories, the reader can tell a lot about the given culture and its people.

“According to William R. Bascom, ‘folk literature serves to sanction and validate religious, social, political, and economic institutions, and to play an important role as an educative device in their transmission from one generation to another’ (Altwaiji 162)”. Nasri Kamal supports Bascom’s idea of the educational purpose in folklore, and describes in his paper, on the second chapter; “Algerian Mythical Narratives: Profiling Informants and Mapping Characters”, that “the Algerian myths are an amalgamation of fictional and true narratives with specific characteristics. They are used for the sake of attaining a social goal, such as educational purposes” (77).

Sometimes in Algerian folklore we would find characters that are similar to other cultures, which is totally typical for the fact that folklore travels around the world and takes from different cultures. In Algerian folktales, there is a character called El-Setout; and she is “a typical character who appears in Maghreb tales, characterized by intelligence, cunning, curiosity, and the ability to plan tricks¹⁹” (Bourayou 60). And this character is an equivalence to Baba Yaga in Russian stories. “The term is sometimes used to refer to a character type that is either a fearful crone or a wise old woman” (Sherman 47). They share the same traits of being either wise or cunning, however the names defer and the Algerian version usually is not described as horrible in shape as the Russian one. She “was a bony, seemingly ancient woman with iron teeth and an abnormally long nose” (Sherman 47).

The Algerian folklore is rich with presenting their culture in their stories. For instance, in the tale of Dellala, many cultural symbols and traditions are mentioned in the story. In a way, it gives an insight on the culture behind the story. A foreigner would learn a lot from

¹⁹ شخصية نموذجية تظهر في الحكايات المغاربية؛ تتصف بالدهاء والمكر و الفضول و القدرة على وضع الحيل

such tales about their culture and traditions. Such as *Touiza*, “an occasion in which a group of women or men is invited to cooperate in accomplishing a work that requires a voluntary collective effort, which is not estimate²⁰ (Bourayou 46). It shows how collective the Algerian community is and when someone needs help people would be there for the call. There is also the term *Djefna*, a big bowl used when making *Couscous* which is a traditional north Africa food. And so many other ones that reflect the Algerian culture in the story. “Algerian popular stories played a major role in the resistance along with popular poetry in the markets, and was able to preserve the identity and cultural characteristics that characterize our society” (Djazairress). It was important for those stories to keep being told among the Algerian society, in order to pass down heritage for the next generation.

Folklore, for certain, derives from reality, maybe not the whole story but at least some specs of the events that take place in it. “At present one hardly needs to offer special proof that every art, including folklore, is derived from reality and reflects it” (Propp 48). The teller will be influenced by their background, and by including some changes, the story will be ready to be told. It is inevitable for the teller or the writer to include something that they didn't experience, they'd use their imagination to create the plot and so on; however, some details would definitely be inspired by their surroundings and get affected by their culture. The writing is influenced by the writer's background mostly. For instance, if they were raised in a Russia, they will inflict that on their work. They would perhaps include traditions, for example; a character in a novel that brought his wife five flowers, a non-Russian would see it lovely but won't understand why exactly an odd number, but someone with a Russian background would know that it is a sign “that you are saying the three words to them 'I love you' “(learnrussianlanguage).

لا يقدر ، تطوعياً جماعياً جهداً يتطلب عمل إنجاز في للتعاون الرجال أو النساء من مجموعة دعوة فيها يتم مناسبة²⁰

3. Revealing the Stereotyped Representation of the Algerian Female by the West, Versus their Real Image in Algerian Tales

3.1 From a Cultural Perspective

Paintings are a piece of art that is considered relatively part of folk art that belongs to the category of folklore, “pictures, objects, etc. that express something about the lives and feelings of ordinary people in a particular group or country“ (Cambridge Dictionary). In this picture, that is supposed to describe and give a glimpse of the Algerian women inside their home, contradicts completely to the real life of the Algerian women back then.



Fig. 1. Eugène Delacroix, *Femmes D'Alger Dans Leur Appartement*, 1834.

This painting is an example of misrepresentation of the Algerian women that proves many narratives that are said about the Algerian society is not true. This famous painting of *Femmes D'Alger Dans Leur Appartement* (1834) by the French painter Eugène Delacroix where he drew Algerian women as he said in their house in Casbah, is completely absurd, because at that time no man can see women married or not without being covered, except her men that are blood related to her, let alone a foreigner that is not even family related. Kurt Lewin says that “the person and their environment are interdependent” (qtd. in Hall and

Lindzey 208), therefore, the cultural aspects and values of Algerians prohibit women from interacting with strange men, not to mention being painted without having their hair and body parts covered. Ibrahim El-Arisse, in his article “*Women of Algeria,*” *The Painting that Established an Integrated Oriental Artistic Stage*, further questions the credibility and truthfulness of the painting, and he said; “it is illogical, because how was it possible for a foreign painter to enter the apartment of an Algerian harem and convey those precise details of what he 'saw' in it, specifically about a women’s session that it is impossible for a Muslim to watch, even if he was close to those women?”²¹ “.

He gives an illustration of what might have happened and says that there is multiple “hypotheses foremost of which is that Delacroix employed his fertile imagination to imagine the scene and its heroines, and this is closest to logic, or that he painted Jewish women, and this was possible given the openness of the Jews to foreigners”²², and this might seem more reasonable than what he claimed. Laurell Ma, in her article “*The Real and Imaginary Harem: Assessing Delacroix’s Women of Algiers as an Imperialist Apparatus*” mentions Delacroix's opinion on north Africa compared with France, and she says; “Delacroix conceptualized North Africa as the opposite of what he despised in French society, a haven from the congestion of urban Parisian life” (26). This proves that maybe he imagined how the women that he wasn't allowed to see are like.

“The traditional North African Haik (veil) became a potent symbol to be targeted, leading Fanon to describe the veil as a resistance to French colonialism”. Another perspective was that, it was a way to break the conservative household of the Algerian society that the west was not used to, it is a form of colonizing not just the land but the society and its

وتحديداً فيها، "شاهده" عما الدقيقة التفاصيل تلك وينقل جزائري حريم شقة إلى يدخل أن أجنبي رسام إمكان في كان كيف إذ منطقي غير أمر لكنه²¹ النساء؟ لتينك قريباً كان ولو مسلم يشاهدها أن يستحيل حريرية جلسة عن نساء رسم أنه وإما المنطق، إلى الأقرب وهذا وبطلاته المشهد ليتخيل الخصب خياله شغل ديلاكروا أن مقدمها وفي الفرضيات تتكاثر هنا ومن²² الأجانب على اليهود لانفتاح نظراً ممكناً كان وهذا يهوديات

concepts. “The voyeuristic view in Orientalist painting spoke to the “masculine” European desire to trespass into the secret realm of the harem and conquer the women sexually and psychologically” (Ma 15).

On the other hand, in reality, the Algerian female character is portrayed as strong and willing to take the risk in order to survive in the Arab writings, especially Algerian ones. These narratives claiming that these women are oppressed is highly wrong, and it is just a stereotyped image. Kurt says that “our individual traits and the environment interact to cause behaviour”, and the Algerian environment raise these women to stand up for themselves, that results in raising strong, brave women. Which leads us the great example of the strong Algerian woman Lalla Fatma N ‘Soumer, the fierce Algerian woman that refused to bend to the colonizer and fought against it with a fist of iron. “From 1846 to July 1857, she helped lead a resistance against the French. Once captured by the French forces, she was imprisoned until her death six years later” (Algerian Embassy). One of many Algerian females that were not brought up to stand idle to the intruder, but to defend herself and her people.

Moreover, in an Algerian story of a woman called Aisha, where she rescues the people in her village from the enemy. Aicha found a solution where no one did. The enemy surrounded their village and blocked any food supply to enter, but Aicha was clever and fed a cow a fine amount of corn and purposely took it outside for the enemy to see it and seize it. And when the enemy cooked the animal, and found its belly filled with corn, they thought that the village was able to survive on till this time with no resources, so they left (Barchers 323 24). This is an example how the woman is portrayed in the Algerian folktales, as smart, dependable, and willing to take risks if that meant it was the right thing to do, for the fact that it is influenced by the culture values that the Algerian women were raised by.

3.2 From a Religious Perspective

As Folklore is influenced by culture, it is also influenced by religion, so we will find resemblance of it throughout the stories. The female characters in Algerian folk are not idle and are given their own voice and the ability to decide what to do because it is influenced by Islam, and it states to give women their rights. However, in the European tales especially the original ones, it is hard to find the female character independent and having her own voice, because it is influenced by Christianity that forces women to behave in a docile manner. “The massive influence of the Christian church and its various belief systems, the fairy tale was often cropped and altered in books for young readers to reinforce dominant religious and patriarchal attitudes about gender, mating, law, and order” (Zipes xi).

In the story of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by the Brothers Grimm, the character of the princess was made to be a living puppet that have no voice or mind of her own where she tries to change her fate or make a difference for her situation. All her decisions were made by the prince that was obsessed with the sleeping female, that considered her corps his possession and demanded to have her as a gift. Christianity in many versus disrespects and considers women lower than men, in the Bible “first Corinthians 14:34-35 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church' (verses 33-35)” (learn.gcs.edu). It is clear how they disrespect their women and consider them talking in public disgraceful, and she is never equal to them. This is one of many verses where women are shown as such, which concludes to the negative effect that church had on those who wrote the fairy tales. However, since Algerian folklore is influenced by Islam and it represents women in a good image, and high values the position of women in society since its beginning which made the folktales have better image of the female character in the stories.

4. The Analysis of Dellala and Loundja's characters

4.1 Dellala: The Determined Woman

The story timing is not clearly identified since it is an oral story, however Bourayou shared his time where he gathered it from Abdelkader Khelifi that heard it from an Algerian woman in *Dardja*, in a village near the Algerian and Moroccan borders and reformed it in formal Arabic in 1989.

The protagonist Dellala was described as a beautiful young lady, since she was born, she became a treasure like to her mother, “this girl is beautiful, glory be to Him who created her²³” (Dellala 39). Her mother always protected her from the outside world fearing that something might happen to her. In his book “The Role of Women in the Algerian Folklore “, Bourayou describes Dellala as the tragic hero of the story. However not like the Shakespearean's tragic hero that is usually the protagonist, who is destined for downfall, suffering, or defeat. Rather this character suffers throughout the story, but at the end they survive, get married, and live happily ever after. These two types of characters have in common, the need to make the audience feel petty and compassion for them, and both are the protagonists.

In the given short story of *Dellala*, we are not given much insight on the psyche of the character; it was rather kept concise to keep children focused and not lose interest. As a matter of fact, the reader, or in this case the listener, won't need to focus on the characters but rather the actions that take place.

We have to always bear in mind that the story of *Dellala* belongs to the type of fantasy, and in reality, such thing like a woman runs away from home in an Arab and Muslim household is extremely inappropriate. The story's purpose was mainly to make kids use their imagination in trying to live the moments with Dellala where the imagination takes place in

²³ هذه البنت زينة؛ سبحان من خلقها

the story. “In any event, the folktale, epic poetry, ritual poetry, charms, riddles as genres, etc., cannot be explained without enlisting ethnographic data. Likewise, many motifs (for example, those of the magic helper, marriage to an animal, and the faraway kingdom)” (Propp 10).

Therefore, the tale is filled with magical moments and wonders that won't possibly happen to someone, which makes it more attention-captivating for children. For sure the message that it is delivered is not going against the traditions and religion, it is just choosing the right thing.

This theme of leaving is meant more leaving the bad situation, not leaving for the sake of leaving or worthless. The teller at the end would explain this to children that are listening not to be reckless, and this is a fictional plot that is purely for fun. After all, in folklore, how Propp explained it in his book *Morphology of the Folktales*, “the image of a good hero may not always conform to society's moral code” (28). This is what makes it interesting, for the fact that real events when told sometimes won't be so interesting, and those fake events are part of the frolic feeling when listening to the tales. This concludes to the fact that these events take place just for the sake of the story, and definitely no man would want to marry their sister even after they vowed. If Dellala's brother, after he knew that the woman, he is looking for is his sister, he refused to marry her, there would be no plot and it ends there. As Vladimir Propp puts it: “One of the characteristics of the folktale is that events that did not occur and could never have occurred are recounted with certain intonations and gestures, as though they did actually take place, although neither the teller nor the listener believes the tale” (19-20). However, certain things that were mentioned were intended for the listener to uphold to and take into consideration. For instance, portraying Dellala as strong and not accepting what is thrown at her, in the contrary on how it is shown the female characters in the European fairy tales, accepting anything shoved down their throat.

Moreover, her religious background that sits boundaries in her life that saved her in such situations, but if it was for a non-believer that has no moral guidance, she might have

hesitated to marry her brother at the beginning, but then why not, what's stopping her from doing so. "Lewin argues, we have to know the laws which control psychological events ... and the specific nature of the particular situation the person is placed in" (Lindorfer 33), hence, her being in a "person-in-a-situation" (Lindorfer 33), and reacting in such way and leaving the house is the outcome of the situation she was put through. Besides, religion is like a vassal that contains the individual into the perfect humanistic shape a person can be in, and prevents them from following their desire that leads you to your demise. Lewin "believed that in order to analyse a person or a situation, the whole environment must be taken into account" (practicalpie), which means that culture and religion are a crucial part to take into account when analysing a character, and for Dellala, culture and religion are a great deal for her when taking a decision. Having these values in life enabled her to be aware of the world around her and make sound decisions.

The Algerian society makes you stand up for yourself and not fall in the trap of accepting anything, and it encourages the individuals to set morals that guide you in life because its values are built upon Islamic rules. Marioua, in her article in the magazine of Rawafid says that "values are one of the basic pillars of a society's culture, as there can be no society without an organized set of social values that guide the behaviour of its members, and that achieve unity of thought within society"²⁴ (200). Kurt Lewin "proposed that behaviour is the result of the individual and the environment" (Verywellmind), and for Dellala, her cultural, and religious background and upbringing that encourages the individual to have principles in life and to stick to it; allowed her to find a quick solution even if that meant leaving the house.

²⁴ القيم من منظمة مجموعة هناك يكون أن دون مجتمع هناك يكون أن يمكن لا إذ المجتمع، لتقافة الأساسية الأركان أحد جوهرها في القيم إنَّ 24 المجتمع داخل الفكر وحدة تحقق والتي أعضائه، لسلوك الموجهة الاجتماعية

“Behaviour in Lewin’s field-concept depends neither on the past nor on the future, but on the present field in the ‘here and now’” (Lindorfer 34). And here and now situation for Dellala did not seem welcoming, hence she left.

And for that decision, she fell into this situation, that is what Lewin calls, avoidance-avoidance conflict which results in the character to run from a negative situation to another one. It is as Pratami explains it when the person is trying to avoid or escape from two undesirable options. Negative aims are undesirable alternatives (112). She escaped from an unwanted situation of marrying her brother, to an unplanned escape where she isn't fully aware of what would happen to her. And despite that, she refused to go back and marry her brother, for the fact that it is wrong. Later we discover that it was the best decision she took, that made her meet a man and get married and having a family with him.

4.2 Loundja: The Strong Minded

For the fact that this is an oral story, the time would not be totally accurate; however, Bourayou shred his time where he gathered it from Abdou Kamel that heard it from an Algerian woman in Bejaïa in 1977 in Kabyle dialect, and then he reformed it in formal Arabic. The difference that would be found between the two tales, *Dellala* and *Loundja* is that *Dellala* is somehow a religious tale where the religion stands up and some motifs of it are shown, whereas in *Loundja* it has more of cultural background only with no religious beliefs attached to it.

The character *Loundja* is described as a beauty and an attractive young lady that left people amazed to her arresting figure. “Go through the seven mountains and when you reach the seventh stop and play *El-Ghaita*; then *Loundja* will come and dance for you”²⁵ (*Loundja Bent El-Ghoula* 55). Though the story started with life of the prince without giving much

²⁵ اذهب و اقطع سبعة جبال، توقف عند الجبل السابع واعزف بالغايطة ستأتي لونجة لترقص امامك

background information about Loundja, it is clear to tell she is the protagonist and the focus is on her. She is also, as Dellala, a tragic hero that survives at the end and gets married living happily ever after.

This fictional folktale gives more space to kids to imagine, the situations Loundja went through; for the fact that her mother is a Ghoul and her house works with magic where she said “oh things of my house surround me”²⁶ (Loundja Bent El-Ghoula 56). Such things make kids more interested to listen to the teller, for all the wonders enlisted in the story. “Folktales are oral stories, known among the people with the purpose of entertainment, containing events that are unusual in everyday sense” (Propp 16). In the past mothers and grandmothers kept their kids and grandkids occupied by telling them these stories and let their imagination run wild.

The teller of the story, described Loundja for us as not just a beauty to behold, but also smart and knows how to get herself out of danger and protective over others. When she took the prince to her house, and her mother smelt him in the house and wanted to kill him, Loundja protected him and acted as if no one was there except her and her mother (Loundja 56).

The women narrating the tales always made sure to portray both the male and female main characters as strong, caring about others and willing to survive against the harshness they faced, they made no discrimination between the two in order to create respect for those girls and boys that are listening. They illustrated those characters the same as in real life, where both the role of women and men is appreciated, Lewin explains that both the environment and the person relate to each other and “must be regarded as being mutually

²⁶ دُوزوا بي حُوايِجُ بِيْتِي

interdependent” (Lindorfer 33). This explains on how the environment where the Algerian women grew up affected them in a way where the character mirrors the real life.

For Loundja, she was also faced with the same situation of avoidance-avoidance conflict Dellala, where she left with the prince and didn't know exactly how things will turn on.

As a kid, Loundja wouldn't have left with the prince, but now as she grows up and wants a family of her own and her mother is against it, she started to contemplate the risks of not knowing what the future holds away from her home. Kurt Lewin, explained the stages of the child growth with time and how the older they get, the more independent they start to become;

As the child grows older, however, his life space is gradually extended. The environment becomes differentiated, and facts that formerly were unnoted acquire psychological existence. More and more, as the child becomes aware of things around him, he seeks to control them; at the same time, he learns that he is becoming increasingly dependent upon a growing circle of environmental events (60).

For Loundja, she craved the life she never had, seeing other people and the outside world, she had goals in life that needed to be achieved. “According to Lewin maps of a person’s environment may also include their goals and any barriers that prevent them from reaching their goals. These goals may include things that the individual wants to achieve positive valence' or goals that include things that the individual is trying to avoid 'negative ' valence)“ 'practical pie). Hence, her goal was to live a purposeful life and create a family of her own. However, the negative valence is trying to avoid an alone life deep in the mountains, and leaving with the prince might be deemed to be risky, however, for her it was a positive valence.

Conclusion:

To conclude with, this work shows how the female character is represented as strong and willing to take risks if that meant her freedom. This is built on the Algerian culture that looks highly on women, and believe that they are able to take care of themselves, where it is based on Islamic beliefs where the woman is considered as a free individual that no one should oppose their ideologies on her. This comes to a complete opposition to the idle European fairy tales' female characters. With the help of the theories of Kurt Lewin, and Vladimir Propp presented an academic explanation how culture and religion effected the female representation in the Algerian folklore, where it is respectful towards women, as it is shown in the analysis of the two quick-witted characters of Dellala and Loundja, that gave a great example of the true strong Algerian women.

General Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated the flagrant differences between the female protagonists' representation in European and Algerian fairy tales where patriarchy is strongly present in Charles Perrault "Sleeping Beauty", the Brother's Grimm's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" in contrast to Bourayou's "Dellala" and "Loundja, The Monster's Daughter" in which the heroines are completely independent and strongly represented.

Summing up the results, it can be concluded that the image portrayed on the female character by the European writers is degrading and insulting towards women, in complete opposition to the Algerian folklore writers, and all due to their cultural and religious beliefs. In order to better understand this equation of culture and religion having an effect on the individual's life, theories used to make it clear in better understanding the targeted point in this research are the Field Theory of Personality by Kurt Lewin in demonstrating such point and also the theory of Jack Zipes in which he explains that to fully grasp the context of fairy tales, we must know the society and culture that influenced the writers,

This research enumerated the major points in European tales that clearly featured patriarchal values and ideologies on the heroines, by silencing them and reducing them to a male-dependent character. When closely analyzed, it revealed that such was how culture, society and even religion considered them. Even though the tales are from different timeline, the role of women did not change over the two centuries that separates the narrations. They are indirectly characterized as inferior, brainless and incapable of voicing their own thoughts. Perhaps, at that time it was the norm but it carries a message that is morally wrong and gives false ideas to children.

This thesis includes a part of a demonstration of the empowering of the female character in the Algerian folk tales, where she is described as fierce and capable of picking her own choices in life without having the male character forcing himself on her decisions. We can also witness the fact that she survives most of life-threatening situations by herself than she meets the prince and gets married living happily ever after. In the story of *Dellala*, Dellala went herself almost the whole journey and the prince coming to her rescue was only at the end. Whereas the European tales, the prince is almost there from the beginning depicting on the female lead what she should do. Within the three stories of Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and the Little Mermaid, from a certain point in the narration, the attention is given to the male character, switching totally the role of protagonist which was given to the female at the beginning.

The contrast exposed in this research can be a starting point for further analyses as it contains important analyses on how culture, society as well as religion, can shape any individual and influence the moral values and opinion of anyone.

ملخص

هذه الأطروحة ستدرس تمثيل الشخصية الرئيسية للأنثى في بعض من قصص الفولكلور الاوروبي والجزائري من خلال التقاليد الاجتماعية والثقافية، والجوانب الدينية التي صقلت ايديولوجية بعض هؤلاء الكتاب.

توجه بعض كتاب القصص الخيالية الاوروبية كشارل بيروت، و هانز كريستيان اندرسن، والاخوة غريم الى اضافة بعض العناصر على شخصية المرأة في حكاياتهم التي اساسها الثقافة الاوروبية التي تامل الانثى باتباع اوامر الرجل بدون راي في ذلك، والدين المسيحي الذي يضطهدها جاعلا منها خادمة مطيعة الرجل مع اسباغ لمسة من الابوية الصارمة ضمن العناصر الاخرى المذكورة. عادة ما يتم وصف هذه الشخصية كخاضعة ومذعنة لأوامر شخصية الرجل في القصة جاعلة منه المتحكم والامر في قراراتها وحريرتها. في حين، شخصية الانثى في بعض من القصص الشعبي الجزائري التي جمعها الكاتب عبد الحميد بورايو في كتابه "دور المرأة في الحكاية الشعبية الجزائرية" التي تتميز برفع مكانة المرأة ووصفها بأبهى الاوصاف، ورسم شخصيتها على كونها قوية وشجاعة جاعلة من القارئ او المستمع مهتم اكثر بالقصة باعنا الرغبة لمشاركة البطلة في رحلتها، و التي هي مبنية على الثقافة العربية التي تحافظ على المرأة و التي اساسها الدين الاسلامي الذي رفع من شأنها.

يعتمد هذا البحث على نظريات ومقالات عدة تابعة لجاك زيبس، وفلاديمير بروب، وكيرت ليفين في تزويد ادلة وبراهين على تأثير الثقافة والدين في بناء وصقل معتقدات بعض من كتاب القصص الخيالية الاوروبية والجزائرية.

Résumé

Cette thèse étudie la représentation du protagoniste féminin dans certains récits folkloriques européens et algériens d'après les conventions socio-culturelles et religieuses qui ont raffiné les idéologies de ces auteurs.

Certains des auteurs de contes de fées européens, tels que Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen et les frères Grimm, avaient pour tendance à attribuer des perspectives religieuses et culturelles à leurs héroïnes avec une pointe patriarcale résultant une femme docile, inactif et se doit d'accepter tout ce qui lui est imposé par le protagoniste mâle même si cela va à l'encontre de sa liberté. Alors que le personnage féminin dans certaines des histoires folkloriques algériennes recueillies par l'écrivain Abdel Hamid Bourayou dans son livre « Le rôle d'une femme dans le conte populaire algérien », qui se caractérise par l'élévation du statut des femmes et leur est donné les meilleures descriptions et dessinant sa personnalité comme étant forte et courageuse, rendant les lecteurs ou les auditeurs intéressés par l'histoire et le désir de participer à son voyage. Ces caractéristiques sont basées sur la culture arabe qui préserve les femmes et dont la base est la religion Islamique, qui attire l'attention et l'appréciation pour elle.

Cette recherche s'appuie sur les théories et plusieurs articles de Jack Zipes, Vladimir Propp et Kurt Lewin pour fournir des preuves sur l'influence de la culture et de la religion dans la construction et l'affinement des croyances des dits auteurs de contes de fées européens et algériens.

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