ORBIS
Revista Científica Electrónica de Ciencias Humanas / Scientific e-journal of Human Sciences /
PPX200502ZU1935 / ISSN 1856-1594 / By Fundación Unamuno /
Nezad Soleimani Soheila, Dr.Ashrafzadeh Reza, Dr. Majid Taghavi Behbahan (2019)
ENSEÑANZA ÉTICA Y DIDÁCTICA EN "LAS MIL Y UNA NOCHES"
www.revistaorbis.org.ve / núm Especial Internacional (año 15) 101-112

ETHICAL AND DIDACTIC TEACHING IN "ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS"

ENSEÑANZA ÉTICA Y DIDÁCTICA EN "LAS MIL Y UNA NOCHES"

		
Nezad Soleimani Soheila[1]	Dr.Ashrafzadeh Reza[2]	Dr. Majid Taghavi Behbahani[3]

RESUMEN
El objetivo de la investigación es determinar las enseñanzas ético-didácticas en los cuentos alegóricos (fábulas) de "las mil y una noches". Esta es una investigación cualitativa realizada por el método de análisis de contenido y los datos obtenidos por el método de análisis deductivo. Este estudio se realizó para investigar aquellas historias en las cuales sus personajes principales son animales. De acuerdo con las definiciones antes mencionadas, podemos encontrar 12 fábulas en este trabajo que se abordan en un estilo narrativo y tienen origen hindi.
Palabras clave: enseñanzas didácticas, enseñanzas éticas, cuentos alegóricos.

ABSTRACT
The objective of the investigation is to determine the ethical-didactic teachings in the allegorical tales (fables) of "one thousand and one nights". This is a qualitative research conducted by content analysis method and data obtained by deductive analysis method. This study was conducted to investigate those stories that their main characters are animals. According to the aforementioned definitions, we can find 12 fables in this work that are addressed in a narrative style and have Hindi origin.
Keywords: didactic teachings, ethical teachings, allegorical tales.

Fecha de recepción: junio 2019
Fecha de aprobación: octubre 2019

DOI:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8115301

[1] PhD student in Persian language and literature (lyrical literature) - Islamic Azad University-Mashhad branch (corresponding author), Email:soheila.Nezad2@gmail.com Tel:(+98)9155144159. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3280-9184.
[2] Professor of Persian Language and Literature in Islamic Azad University-Mashhad branch Email: ft.adab83@yahoo.com Tel: (+98)9153163351. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5392-9273.
[3] Assistant Professor of Persian Language and Literature in Islamic Azad University-Mashhad branch, Mashhad Iran Smtb33@yahoo.com. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5589-8012

INTRODUCTION

Fable has the Latin root of Fabula that means recitation emphasizing on narrating. Fable is the most popular type of animal allegory. Literal phrases suggest allegorical tale instead of using fable. Fable is a short story about animals with human character that convey an ethical message to the reader. Ismael Pour defines fable as:

> Anecdotes about animals or natural elements that have character and ending with a clear and ethical message. The prominent feature of fable is telling an informative story to teach ethical and social behavior to human. In contrary, myths do not have such didactic aspect while consist of holly narratives that are not linked with daily life of human (Ismael Pour, 2016, p. 40).

Animals in allegorical tales and fables show some aspects and images of the nature and human instinct and are symbols of human identification. Each animal is related to a part of human existence that indeed shows an image of animal instincts of human nature. The dangerous animals in these fables are allegories of the rebellious nature of human existence that are uninhibited and are not under the control of "me"; kind, helpful with good nature animals are symbols of "beyond me" that create the real personality and act as inhibitory force against deep, tame or wild tendencies of human instincts.

Mohammadi and Qayini (2016) have categorized animals in Iranian tales quoted from Ellul Sean who has collected Iranian stories and tales. This classification is as follows:

•Ethical tales in which, animals behave like humans and are symbols of ethical characteristics.

•Those tales in which, human and animals play their roles and animals have human specifications like speaking.

•Romantic stories and events in which, humans are main actors. In this kind of stories, animals play an inconspicuous role as a friend or enemy and have an amazing magical ability.

•Those tales in which, animals are imaginary can be seen in verbal literature compared to written literature (Mohammadi and Qayini, 2016).

Fables that encompass animal characters are effective in literature scope and numerous works such as poetry and prose in Persian language are categorized as

stories with animal characters. This feature can be seen in "Kalila and Demna" at first and then in "Marzubannama" that includes various subjects ending with different ethical and didactic consequences based on the story. These works have entered into the children literature field in recent years so that even popular film producing companies have chosen their cartoon characters from animals.

In fact, story of birds in "One Thousand and One Nights" is the animal epic that its characters are animals with human behaviors and norms. These animal characters humiliate incorrect traditions of the life and are metaphors of social classes of society. This paper examines the structure, features, ethical and didactic bases of such allegorical fables in different sections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Storytelling in a story is a method used in fables with animal characters in "One Thousand and One Nights"; this kind of storytelling style was imported to Iran from India then entered to the west and western books. These fables have Indian origin and are allegorical stories with animal characters and convey ethical or didactic messages and/or are anecdotes that not only tell other stories but also are entertaining (Azar, 2018).

Another specification of these stories is the conversation between human and other animals, plants, and objects. In these stories, sometimes humans play the role of animals or plants or vice versa so that a close relationship is made between them meeting their fate in such reincarnation cycle. It is sometimes seen in such stories that human benefits from friendship with animals taking advantage of their help and learning from their actions and behaviors (Fudge, 2016; Nayebpour, 2017; Mirza, 2018).

Many of these stories have didactic, ethical and advisable aspects and are used as guidelines in life events. In such allegorical fables and tales, animals are like animals but speak, think, and create philosophy as humans so that animal types look like human characters According to the abovementioned definitions, 12 fables with Indian origin can be mentioned in "One Thousand and One Nights", which are written with allegorical or fable technique.

Samini (2019) does not find high quantity or quality of allegorical fables in whole of "One Thousand and One Nights" collection. In his opinion, writers and collectors of stories could write stories that are more interesting about animals while it seems that that did not want to do so; hence, it shows important emphasis on the presence of human characters in "One Thousand and One Nights" because this book prefers to mention human being and his/her business and searches without considering stories with animal characters.

However, these few stories emphasize on the character and actions of animals so that their type depends on their role in the story. According to Zargar Amini (2017):

> in first volume, characters are animals or are highly similar to animals and play their role so that types are created simply. Fox as the sly type; camel as headstrong and rancor types, etc. that this method is used to accelerate the fable. In such tales, human wonders when sees snake, tree and stone that speak like humans and accept his friendship as if they are alike with same instinct. When reader or listener is enough interested in stories then animal types are replaced with human characters (Zargar Amini, 2017, p. 36-37).

Animals appear in two forms in stories: dangerous or destructive (like wolf and dragon, or snake and mouse and dog that are secret manifestations, allegories or carnality in Sufia's opinion) or tame, helper or advisor of humans and rescue the hero from dangerous situations. These two kinds of animals show animal nature and instinctive tendencies of us. Dangerous ones are symbols of wild and uncontrolled instinct of human that is rebellious and does not obey "ego" and "superego". Good animals are symbols of inner power of human nature that can serve the best interests and needs of existence and character. The other animals and birds are symbols of superego or moral conscience (Sattari, 2015, p.244).

Accordingly, animals in allegorical tales or fables of "One Thousand and One Nights" achieve different consequences based on their role type and performance. Sometimes, fate of all of characters in the story does not have a happy ending while their destiny is tragic in some stories.

Animal characters in allegorical tales and fables of "One Thousand and One Nights" have ending forms as follows:

First group: In animal tales, the story sometimes begins with a wickedness and ends with punishment of wicked character such as the fable of "mouse and cat" and "crow and fox". Sometimes in these fables, the wicked character is human such as "monkey and thief".

Second group : In other tales, the character or story sometimes faces poverty and needs help of others and story is ended with a good conclusion due to effort, goodness and leadership of another animal. There is no sign of wickedness and conspiracy in these fables such as "crow and cat" fable.

Third group: Malevolence and wickedness are not seen in some fables and character of story does do anything bad so it does not deserve any punishment or death; but natural disasters or fate cause a wickedness leading to death of hero such as "Sparrow and Peacock" fable.

Fourth group: Sometimes, the evil remains alive due to a prior behavior such as courage and politics and cunning so that his/her enemy will die because of foolishness and ignorance. Such tales have dramatic and tragic endings such as "lion and duck" and "mouse and marten" tales. The evil sometimes is punished due to his/her bad behavior such as "goshawk and partridge" tale.

In general, the definitions of fable and allegorical tales show that it is not possible to find many tales with fable content in "One Thousand and One Nights".

Although ethical stories with the purpose of giving advice can be seen in other tales, only 12 tales with allegorical and animal form can be found in "One Thousand and One Nights" in which, animals have human character and convey a didactic and ethical message to the reader.

However, these few tales can be interesting and informative for use to achieve the research goal. This study only reviews those tales under the title of animal tales with allegorical theme in "One Thousand and One Nights (Tasooji, 2015, p. 523).

This was the first human request of Sharyar from Scheherazade during the past year and a half. In this story, Scheherazade answers Shahryar's request and narrates 12 allegorical tales for him for 7 nights starting from 146th night to 152nd night. Allegorical tales of the book includes 8 main tales with didactic and ethical theme that have 4 other allegorical tales in them. All of allegorical tales of "One Thousand and One Nights" are ended with a short paragraph about didactic and ethical message.

Therefore, telling story about animals is the story about returning to childish world and its sweet stories. Although animal tales are allegorical concepts for us and the listener of Scheherazade' stories (Shahryar) knows this point, he is still interested in such stories. He needs to hear such stories so asks Scheherazade to tell animal stories for the first time. The request derives from the need and the first victim of need is the pride. He should across over the childish bridge in order to change animal temper to human characteristics and he should break his pride (Hosseini & Ghodrati, 2017, p. 29).

According to Mohandespour (2015, p. 293):

> the importance of these informative stories about animals is about human behaviors in communicational environment of stories despite the non-human characters of stories and events occurring among animals and creatures so that this can be a metaphor of current relationship between Shahryar and Scheherazade.

Therefore, telling stories about animals allows Scheherazade to talk with Shahryar out of the story speaking about her demands and tendencies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the first step, the main question and variables of the study were identified. After selecting the research question and variables, a set of documents or messages from the book were collected and personalized to answer these questions. These documents and messages were then categorized into categories, with a code and a code for each of these categories. Finally, the word, phrase, theme, sentence and content were selected as the unit of analysis and final analysis was conducted.

RESULTS

ANIMALS TALE

This tale was told at 146th night for Shahryar by Scheherazade:

This is a popular and old anecdote with these details: in this tale, the duck tells the peacock how he had persuaded a lion cub to kill a human because of fearing of trick and deception of human. In this story, the lion cub that becomes aware of the cruelty against duck and other animals such as donkey, horse, camel etc. decided to take revenge on the human beings. The inexperienced lion cub is simply deceived and falls into the trap when sees an old and wise carpenter. The carpenter imprisons the lion in a wooden box and punishes him by putting the box on the fire.

The story theme of the duck and the peacock is scary and horrible. The peacock lives with his couple in an island full of trees from the fear of wild animals and goes to the top of a tree at nights looking for a safe place for life. They become familiar with the duck in an island full of grass and water. The duck that seems frightened tells us that he is afraid of a dream in which, he saw the face of human and since then, somebody is trying to keep him away from the human being.

Then, the lion cub, the donkey and the camel that have escaped to the jungle see the duck and talk about their fear of the human that have not seen him/her and do not know how to deal with human. Therefore, fear may prevent them from thinking. In this case, the lion cub is persuaded by the duck to encounter with the human without any precaution. After some days, an old man moves to that place and as an old man is wise and skillful, imprisons the lion in the cage to protect himself.

The duck that is afraid of human beings by hearing this story does not accept the words of the peacock and the dear (his new friend) who try to make him relax. At the end of story, humans came and trapped the duck.

In this anecdote, the duck, the lion cub, the donkey, the horse and the camel are coward characters while the old man is a wise and thoughtful character who tries to avoid the risk and danger.

The peacock believes in the fate so that there is no way out of it. Meanwhile, the peacock who believes in God praise considers neglect of the God praise as the reason for imprisonment of the duck and the lion cub's death by the human.

This story conveys this ethical message that animals should pray to God; otherwise, they will be trapped. The most prominent ethical message of this story is that use of wisdom power leads to the victory and salvation.

Scheherazade tells this story to remind the Shahryar that fear, and indiscretion destroys the wisdom and leads to unreasonable and unconscious behaviors and actions.

" DUCK AND TURTLE" AND "FOX AND WOLF" TALES

"Duck and turtle" and "fox and wolf" tales were described at 148th night and continued to 149th night.

After 148 nights, Shahryar told Scheherazade, "you made me devotee and regretful about killing girls and women and now I am sorry so tell me a story about birds if you know something" (Tasooji, 2015, pp. 534-535). Scheherazade then narrated the "duck and turtle" tale.

Theme of "duck and turtle" tale is similar to the content of "duck and peacock" story with the same ethical outcome.

This story is about a duck that leaves his land since he is afraid of vultures flying over a dead body, then he befriends with a turtle in the new place.

The turtle seems a kind and helpful creature that keeps the duck away from anxiety. The duck decided to come back to his territory but hunted by a falcon.

In this story, the duck is a coward bird that fear, and anxiety have eroded his mind so he cannot decide; and finally dies due to unawareness of the God praise.

After the end of this story, Shahryar asked Scheherazade to tell a story about wild animals, so she recounted the "fox and wolf" tale.

"Fox and wolf" tale shows the same image of sly and cunning fox in tale of Kalila and Demna.

In this tale, the wolf is cruel to the fox and the fox take revenge on the wolf by deceiving the wolf and pushing him into a well.

This anecdote is a short story with proverbs and poems recited by story characters that have made it an attractive story.

" GOSHAWK AND PARTRIDGE" TALE

"Goshawk and Partridge" tale is recounted at 149th night; this story is included in the story of "fox and wolf" in which, fox recites it as an evidence for his claim for the wolf.

In this anecdote, the fox recites a story for the wolf about a partridge that rescues herself from the trap of a goshawk and escapes to a hole. The goshawk deceives the partridge and hunts the bird. At the end of story, the goshawk is death due to the curse of the partridge.

TALES OF "MOUSE AND MARTEN", "CROW AND CAT", "FOX AND CROW", AND "MOUSE AND PARTRIDGE"

- At night 150th the recounted stories are three anecdotes in which the "mouse and partridge" tale is recited in story of "fox and crow", which is described for the crow by the fox.

- "Mouse and marten" tale is a story about the marten that is cunning and robs sesames of a poor family and when finds that the landlady tends to punish the thief of the sesames, deceives the mouse and sends him to pick up sesames so the mouse falls into the trap and the marten is saved from the woman's trap.

This story ends with this ethical message that the evil can remain alive if uses wisdom while the deceived person will be the victim of credulity and ignorance.

- "Crow and cat" tale is a short story recited by Scheherazade for Shahryar who asks her to narrate a story about keeping the friendship covenant. Shahryar asks, "If you know a good story about friendship covenant, tell me" (Tasooji, 2015, p. 550).

This story is about the friendship between a crow and cat; crow saves the cat from the leopard's attack due to their close friendship.

"In folk stories, crow is the advisor and helper of the hero making the hero aware of secrets and when the hero is in trouble helps him" (Parishani & Shirbache, 2016, p.148).

In this story, the crow shows his close friendship with the cat as trephining and saves him from trouble with a fast reaction.

Scheherazade says at the end of this story, "Oh, Malek (Shahryar), I told this story to make you aware that friendship of brothers and fellows can save the person from troubles" (Tasooji, 2015, p.550).

- "Fox and crow" tale is about the destructive effects or friendship with bad people. This story is about a sly fox that tends to deceive a crow by flattering to make friendship with the crow but the crow is aware of imparity between her and the crow so the crow is not deceived; hence, the fox recites the "mouse and partridge" tale to show his friendship and goodwill.

In the "mouse and partridge" tale recounted by the fox to persuade the crow; the fox recounts a story about the friendship between a partridge with a distinct specie (mouse) who helps him. The crow also recites 4 stories for the fox to justify her claim and finally the story ends with this ethical conclusion that it is not correct to make friendship with a person who is not of your class or type.

Then, the crow expresses "eagle and birds" tale in which, the friendship of "sparrow and eagle" is recited; in this story, the sparrow loses her life when tries to imitate the lifestyle of the eagle.

Mohandespour finds some similarities between characters of "fox and crow" tale and Shahryar and Scheherazade and states:

> if we tend to find similarities between characters, the fox is similar to nature of Shahryar and crow shows the nature of Scheherazade since A) the crow in this story recites four stories to avoid fox's tricks and B) the crow is a bird, which is a metaphor for the angle and femininity (Mohandespour, 2015, p. 333).

REST OF THE "FOX AND CROW" TALE AND BEGINNING OF "EAGLE AND BIRDS" TALE

Scheherazade recites the rest of "fox and crow" tale at 151th night then tells the story of eagle and birds expressing that "crow said: there was a cruel eagle" (Tasooji, 2015, p. 554) then stopped and promised to recite the story at tomorrow night.

"And when the story arrived here, it was morning and Scheherazade stopped telling the tale" (Tasooji, 2015, p. 554).

"EAGLE AND BIRDS", "SPARROW AND EAGLE", "HEDGEHOG AND LAUGHING DOVE", "MONKEY AND THIEF", AND "SPARROW AND PEACOCK"

At 152nd night, Scheherazade recites the "eagle and birds" tale quoted from the crow. The story begins with cruelty of an eagle that birds were afraid of him and no one could avoid his cruelty. After some years, the eagle gets weaker and goes among the birds to hunt weaker birds with no ability to fly.

One day, the eagle told a fox who wanted to make friendship with the eagle that I know you want to be my friend, as you are highly sly but I will not deceived and will not make friendship with you because if you tend to imitate the behavior of one person who are more powerful than you, you will lose your life.

Like other stories, this tale also emphasizes on the destruction and death caused by friendship with people who are different with us.

- "Sparrow and eagle" also is recited after the story of "eagle and birds" for the fox by the crow; this tale tries to warn about friendship with those who are stronger than the main role of story such as sparrow that gets in trouble when imitates the behavior of stronger bird.

- "Hedgehog and laughing dove" tale also is recited at this night.

In this story, a hedgehog deceives doves and encourages them to pick fruits and store them under the trees in order to have food for hereafter life; then, the hedgehog steals the collected fruits and eats them but finally the truth is revealed that the hedgehog tends to kill them; then doves recount a story about thieves who were poisoned and died after stealing the property of the merchant. In this story, bad consequences of theft and guile are expressed.

- The last story at 152nd night is "sparrow and peacock" tale with destiny theme.

In this story, peacock is the king of birds and chooses a sparrow as his minister. One day, the sparrow sees some birds around his home that are trapped so he feels scared and decides to leave his home. Peacock says him, "Do not leave your home that you cannot escape from your destiny" (Tasooji, 2015, p. 559).

In the last story of "sparrow and peacock", the situation of Scheherazade can be compared with stories of birds in the anecdotes in following forms:

- Peacock that is the king of birds employs the sparrow as his minister. [Scheherazade is employed as the confabulator and companion of Shahryar].

- Sparrow makes the peacock aware of daily news. [Scheherazade tells story under the permission of Shahryar].

- Sparrow is scared of the fate of trapped birds. [Scheherazade is afraid for the destiny of girls who have been brought in the palace].

- The sparrow takes risk to help other sparrows. [Scheherazade also makes her life at risk to help other girls].

- The sparrow is surrendered to the destiny. [Scheherazade also is surrendered to her fate against Shahryar].

CONCLUSION

"One Thousand and One Nights" is one of ancient and precious literal books full of informative allegorical anecdotes, which are recited by animals. In these fables, animals act based on their nature except for ability to speak that makes them as humans. The basic issue in these fables in the story-telling method in which, stories are recounted in other stories; this attribute has Indian origin that has entered to Iran.

Didactic aspect is the main basis of these allegorical stories that contain ethical teachings, particularly social ethics. Hence, these anecdotes can be considered as fables.

In relation with the results obtained from the abovementioned tales, it was found that the concepts about precaution, wisdom, thoughtfulness, and expediency are the most frequent expressions used in ethical and didactic messages of these tales; these concepts are highly related to daily life of people and can solve many of their life problems. In this case, recitation of such tales by Scheherazade creates a communicational relationship between Shahryar and Scheherazade. The clear sign of such empathy and companionship is the tendency and interest of Malek in listening to Scheherazade's stories so that he tells Scheherazade at the end of animals tales, "Oh Scheherazade, tell me more anecdotes" and Scheherazade answers, "Oh, Malek if you allow me to live then I tell you another story tomorrow night" (Tasooji, 2015, p. 561).

Psychoanalytical study of allegorical stories of this book can be interesting and informative since this book is a treasury of human thoughts and dreams during the history and can affect the subconscious mind of humans.

REFERENCES

Azar, M. I. (2018). **Iranian Literature in world literature**, second edition, Tehran, Sokhan Pub.

Fudge, B. (2016). **More Translators of The Thousand and One Nights**. Journal of American Oriental Society, 136(1), 135-146.

Hosseini, M., & Ghodrati, H. (2017). **The storytelling method of Scheherazade in the sequence of "Thousand and One Nights" stories,** Phrasebook of Persian Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences University of Isfahan, New period (fourth year) 1. Height: Pp. 15-38.

Ismaeelpour, A. (2016). **Symbolic expression myth**, Tehran Soroush.

Mirza, I. (2018). **One Thousand and One Nights: New Stories of Courage and Passion from the Middle East**. Archives of pathology & laboratory medicine, 142(9), 1021-1022.

Mohammadi, M. & H., Qayini, Z. (2016). **The history of children's literature**, first edition, Tehran, Chista.

Mohandespour, F. (2015). **Femininity and narrative in "Thousand and One Nights",** First Edition. Tehran, Ney.

Nayebpour, K. (2017). **Narrativity in The Thousand and One Nights**. Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 8(4), 85-90.

Parishani, Z., & Shibache, M. (2016). **The elements and themes of Persian angel tales,** First Edition, Najafabad, Islamic Azad University Press.

Samini, N. (2019). **Love and magician (Research in One Thousand and One Nights),** Tehran, Center.

Sattari, J. (2015). **Magic of Scheherazade (Research in Thousands of Myths),** First Edition, Tehran, Toos.

Tasooji, A. (2015). **Thousand and One Nights,** Fourth edition, Tehran, Hermes.

Zargar Amini, Gh. (2017). **Attraction and magic of "Thousand and One Nights",** Rudaki, Second half of May, Pp. 34-40.