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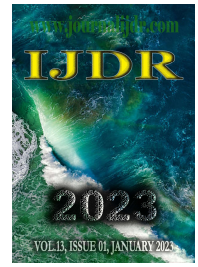
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MYTHOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION AND SIGNIFICANCES OF YORUBA FOLKTALES IN AMOS TUTUOLA'S SELECTED WORKS

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ABSTRACT

Folk tales, one of the most beautiful communicative techniques among human beings in the African oral tradition, have, throughout many decades, shown their importance in entertainment and people's education. Like almost all the ethnic groups of the African continent, Yoruba people have their own folk tales which displays a great number of their customs. To make their customs known to all the other civilizations of the world, some Yoruba authors, among whom the prolific Tutuola, include them in their literary works. Through his use of Yoruba folktales, he revealed some of their cultural aspects which includes; the importance of myths, the concept of the supernatural and their living ways in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and Yoruba Folktales*. This paper focuses not only on revealing some of the Yoruba customs aspects hidden in Amos Tutuola's selected works, but it also shows how the use of these cultural components in contemporary literature can give birth to an original artistic work. In achieving this goal, the qualitative research approach, which consists of exploring the existing documents that are in accordance with the current research topic, were used. Based on the theoretical framework, sociological mythological criticisms that are also deemed convenient were applied.

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INTRODUCTION

African civilization is one of the richest in the world. It is made up of songs, dances, folk tales, and others. Folk tales as well as its other components are of great importance due to the role they play in African societies. They have existed for aeons of ages and are transmitted via the magic of word of mouth, and this has existed from one generation to another. Among Yoruba people, folk tales have always been used. Yoruba people employ tales for several purposes which are used among others: to educate, to inform, and to raise awareness. Several empirical studies (e.g., Taiwo, 2019; Azeez, 2014; & Edward, 1986) have been conducted on the use of Yoruba folk tales in literary works. These studies were based on the means of integrating Yoruba tales into literary works. Although Yoruba tales have been studied in details, insufficient attention has been paid to its place in literary works. Most of them are about the importance of Yoruba folktales in the present world when taking into account the traditional aspect and the modern one. As far as the modern aspect of Yoruba folktales is concerned, one should know that this fabulous part of African oral tradition has already become an integral part of the universe of literature. Writers such as Amos Tutuola have made sure that it happens. In *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and Yoruba Folktales*, he reveals almost all the life-aspects of Yoruba people through tales he has reinvented on his own way.

The novel, which constitutes today as one of the richest legacies concerning Yoruba customs, deserves all the possible attention. In fact, there are a lot of non-revealed things about the Yoruba ethnic group. These are things that can give this ethnic group its entire splendor. The objective of this research paper is to reveal some Yoruba customary aspects hidden in Amos Tutuola's selected works and to show how the use of these cultural components in contemporary literature can give birth to an original artistic work. The analysis made in this paper has been done on the basis of sociological and mythological criticisms. In addition, semiotics associated with structuralism has helped to back up argumentation. Agyekum (2013) in his work *Introduction to Literature* presents the stand of the sociological critics as follows:

Sociological critics argue strongly that literary works and social contexts are inseparable. The social milieu is embedded in the works of artists. In effect, it is the social context that serves as the raw material for the production and understanding of literary works. The social set-ups and the institutions in the society at any point in time combine to exert some major influence in the works of the artists (Agyekum, 2013).

From the aforementioned excerpt, it clearly shows that no artistic production comes from vacuum and that Tutuola has explored his

milieu to construct his artistic fame. In the same regard, sociological criticism states that literary works and social context are indivisible. This is a way to say that one could not deal with a literary work without exploring its social context. In the context of our reflection, it is crucial to clarify the meaning of 'myth'. This reason leads to the choice of the mythological approach. According to Agyekum (2013), a myth is "a story that explains how things came into being and also explains the origin of natural phenomena." A critical reading of Tutuola's selected works reveals that the Nigerian writer has made a great deal of the use of myths. Mythological criticism, as far as it is concerned, deals with the link between human actions, religious beliefs, and cultural orientation. When applied together, semiotics and structuralism provide supply means of analyzing human communication, especially when it relates to their traditions. As this story is about to focus only on fictive narrations, the appropriate research approach is the qualitative one and that is the one adopted in this research. This research paper has three parts, namely: the introduction, the discussion, and the conclusion.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Allegorical Creation in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*

Deceptive Appearances: This book is full of beings whose behaviors have nothing to do with their appearance. There is nothing that better illustrates the quotation "appearance is often deceiving, but not all deception is necessarily apparent" (Wade). This is what happens in chapter 2 in which the complete gentlemen whose beauty overwhelms any person who meets him, including the narrator, turns out to be a "curious creature" having hired its clothes and even its skin. He indeed has a horrific skull. Some of the most powerful creatures of the novel appear as harmless beings like a child, a "half-bodied baby" (Tutuola, 1993), or the dead babies that beat the palm-wine 'drinkard' and his wife in chapter 24. In addition to that, some of them have the appearances of a tiny creature like the one which occurs in chapter 7.

One day, the king of the 'Wraith-Island' town chose all the people, spirits and terrible creatures of the Island to help him to clear his corn field which was about 2 miles square. Then one fine morning, we gathered together and went to the corn field, and cleared it away. After that, we returned to the king and told him that we had cleared his corn field. He thanked us, and gave us food and drinks. But as a matter of fact, none of the creatures is too small to choose for a help. We did not know that immediately we left the field, a tiny creature who was not chosen with us by the king went to the field and commanded all the weeds that we had cleared to grow up as if they were not cleared. He was saying thus: – "THE KING OF THE 'WRAITH-ISLAND' BEGGED ALL THE CREATURES OF THE 'WRAITH-ISLAND' AND LEFT HIM OUT, SO THAT, ALL THE CLEARED-WEEDS RISE UP; AND LET US GO AND DANCE TO A BAND AT THE 'WRAITH-ISLAND'; IF BAND COULD NOT SOUND, WE SHOULD DANCE WITH MELODIOUS MUSIC." But at the same time that the tiny creature commanded the weeds, all rose up as if the field was not cleared for two years. Then early in the morning of the second day that we had cleared it, the king went to the field to visit his corn, but to his surprise, he met the field uncleared, then he returned to the town and called the whole of us and asked why did we not clear his field? (Tutuola, 1993)

This passage clearly shows that the appearances of a creature or a being should never define its capacity. Having being set aside by the King, the smallest creature of the island has demonstrated its power by slacking the king's clearing project. Even before this situation, the narrator has to confront the monster that destroys his crops. He firstly describes it as "a terrible animal" (Tutuola, 1993) whose "fingernails were long to about two feet" (Tutuola, 1993) and whose "head was bigger than his body ten times" (Tutuola, 1993). However, when he finally understands what the "monster" expected from him, he praised its kindness because it later makes him wealthy. A good analysis of each of these scenes reveals the dramatic tension in which the

narrative is steeped. They also provide a demonstrative example of the way Amos combines magic with realism. As a matter of fact, the frequency of strange situations is in a direct relation with pure magic. However, the manner troubles always come is from unpredicted place that has everything to do with a true life story.

The Use of Magic and its Limits: One of the first things one would notice while reading Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is that the story took place in a world different from the one we know today. It is clearly a magical world in which everything is possible thanks to the magic which exists. *Oxford Learner's Advanced Dictionaries (2015)* defines the term "magic" as "the secret power of appearing to make impossible things happen by saying special words or doing special things". Another version is that magic is "a spurious system of natural law as well as fallacious guide of conduct, a false science as well an abortive art" (Jevon). That is to say that magic is a power inaccessible to everybody, and it provides to its user the capacity of doing fantastic things just with some special words or actions. It is argued by Emile Durkheim (1912) that its practice involves "the manipulation of sacred objects by the magician on behalf of individual clients; the socially cohesive significance of religious rites proper (by priests) was therefore largely lacking". In the present context, the narrator continually changes his shape to overcome certain situations. The way his juju operates is not described in the story. However, he just shows us the sacred objects used and the results he gets. For instance, he could transform himself into a bird to get information from the old man (Tutuola, 1993). All these transformations have been possible when he prepares his juju which is the sacred object mentioned by Durkheim. Another point of the theme is the fact that the way the writer uses magic in his book easily touches the reader, making him feel alienated. These magical events he describes seem to be natural and in line with each circumstance. However, his transformations are not so perfect as it seems. They have duration in time and cannot solve all problems. For instance, rather than turning himself into a canoe used by his wife to earn money (Tutuola, 1993), he could directly create money. He could also change himself into a giant creature which can beat the dead babies but he fled. These are some illustrations of situations where his nickname "Father of gods who could do anything in the world" (Tutuola, 1993) seems not to be very true. The author, thus, shows us by his novel that magic exists and is powerful, but it still has its limits.

The Living and the Dead: In his narrative, the author does not mention anywhere of a real explanation about the relation between the dead and the living. He even makes no mention of what the verb "to die" means. Here, the protagonist embarks on a heroic journey without being sure of the existence of the object of his quest. While Amos gives a mysterious aspect to death, Socrates declares that because of the immortality of the soul, death could not be evil. This is because the entire point of life was to free the soul by guiding it to eternal truth. According to Socrates, "when death does come, it is a liberation of the soul" (Claus, 2022). This is an affirmation which goes in the same direction with the rumor mentioned by the narrator. This is what the older people say about the dead: they did not go to the heaven directly but were living in one place somewhere in this world. The living, once they die, leave their bodies in their graves, whereas their souls go to "The Deads' Town" (Tutuola, 1993). It exists, but there are no proofs to assert this declaration. Nevertheless, the author of the book considers that to be the truth and in chapter 25, the palm-wine 'drinkard' and the lady eventually reach their destination known as the Deads' Town. The narrator describes this place as a normal town with houses and inhabitants which are all dead. They even have their culture as it is clearly stated here: "After a few minutes, my palm-wine tapster came, but immediately he saw us, he thought that I had died before coming there, so he gave the sign of deads to us, but we were unable to reply to him, because we never died..." (Tutuola, 1993). Even Baity, the palm-wine tapster, reveals to him that after his death, he has had two years to learn how to behave as a dead man. This "training" (Tutuola, 1993) makes him a "qualified" (Tutuola, 1993) dead. No further detail has been given about the kind of training it was, as this is an excellent manner to

prove how mysterious death is. This training, however, would contribute in helping him forget his former life. As far as the relationship between the living and the dead is concerned, the story clearly reveals that there is no link among them. It is not possible for the dead to kindly receive the living. The palm-wine tapster is the one in the Dead's Town who welcomes the couple as well as he can, whereas the others can be hostile to them. As a matter of fact, they are avoided and chased by the adult when the dead babies beat them without mercy. On their way back home, people were very rancorous compared to the people they have met at the beginning of the adventure despite the fact that they have done nothing to them. Why have things turned out like this then? We will never know! Life and death therefore remain two points as mysterious as the other.

The Essential on Yoruba Cultural Legacies in some of Amos Tutuola's Works: In his works, the Nigerian author, Amos Tutuola, usually employs some facets of Yoruba ethnic group. He does this as finely as possible to make his works very original.

Some Yoruba Social Aspects: In Yoruba ethnic group, the good understanding of social structure aspects needs to consider co-residence instead of genealogy. As a matter of fact, it cannot exist without the virtue of living together (Bender, 1972). This kind of situation helps you to really know people's habits in the society. During his journey, the palm-wine drinkard has lived in other people houses and most of them are unknown to him. However, this fact could not prevent them from welcoming him as if he were a member of their communities. This passage illustrates that very well:

I could spend two or three months before reaching a town or a village. Whenever I reached a town or a village, I would spend almost four months there, to find out my palm-wine tapster from the inhabitants of that town or village and if he did not reach there, then I would leave there and continue my journey to another town or village. (Tutuola, 1993)

Despite the fact that the narrator is a stranger, the people of these villages and towns offer him their hospitality so that he can spend many months with them. The author will describe this through the passage where the hero reaches the old man's house where he is fed and had a bed to sleep at night. This is not the only proof of Yoruba people hospitality in the novel. He also journeyed to his wife's town, the Wraith Island, the Faithful mother, the red people, and the people of the new town. Apart from their hospitality, there is also something any reader can notice while reading Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. This has to do with the fact that most of the people the narrator meets on his way usually ask for something in exchange for the information he seeks. This started from the old man he called a god who asks him an almost impossible thing before telling him what he is looking for. The head of the town, as for him, will ask him to deliver his daughter from the curious creature. Furthermore, the man with the bag will ask him to carry his mysterious bag before he leads him to the Deads' Town (Tutuola, 1993). Having spent much time with these unknown people, he will learn a lot from them because they are not at all the same. At the end of his journey, it is certain to say that he knows that it could be dangerous to carry a load without knowing what it contains, or to underestimate anybody, or to judge people based on their physical appearance.

Marriage in Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*: The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015) defines marriage as the legal relationship between two people who are married to each other. For the Yoruba man, marriage is "one of the oldest institutions among Yoruba, it marks the end and the beginning of a new era between two different individuals, who agreed to live together, and through their union creates everlasting friendship between homes and their birth" (Agbaje, 1926). That means that once married, the two partners are united and should continue their lives together. In *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, the narrator starts his journey alone but when he got married with the daughter of the head of the town, his loneliness came to an end. They started travelling together and never separated regardless of the trouble they encounter. Before taking her in

as his wife, the palm-wine 'drinkard' gave a dowry consisting of saving her from the skull. In most African ethnic groups, this rite exists. For some, the young boy should prove his capacity of taking care of the girl during a test or by offering gifts to the girl's family.

Tutuola's Mythological Manipulation of Yoruba Cultural Heritage

The Yoruba Perception of Myths Applied to the Drinkard's Story: Known as the first African novel published in English outside the African continent, Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard* is part of the numerous pre-colonial African literatures. During this period, most of them deal with folklores, proverbs, riddles, and songs. Amos Tutuola enters into the fray to the dance and use the English language to reflect his beliefs and ideas. He then writes *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* with his own poor mastery of the English language in order to portray his Yoruba beliefs despite the unfavorable judgment. Throughout the corpus, he joins his comprehension of Yoruba oral tradition to the conqueror language. By so doing, Tutuola follows the storyteller's traditions in recycling, revising, and renewing myths and folk tales to adapt them to the present. Myth has always been part of our reality and this has nothing to do with our nationality or continent. Most societies in the world have begun from myth and they still exist till date. However, what is myth? The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015) defines it as "a story from ancient times especially one that is told to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people" (992). It is also "something that many people believe but that does not exist or is false". According to Malinowski (1926), "myths explain certain natural phenomena that humans are unable to comprehend". That is to say that the need to explain natural phenomena (thunder, the existence of evil...) creates myths. By this way, they could give answer to questions they ask themselves about the origin of natural phenomena. This is how the most famous myths in the history of the world were born. Examples include Pandora's Box, the myth of the tower of Babel.

As regards the Yoruba tales, one should know that the most common is the *alostory*. For any Yoruba, an *alo* story is a pure fiction, which they usually define to be a lie. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* can be compared to an *alo* story and this is for several reasons. Firstly, the 'drinkard' is initially described as an absolute slothful person who does nothing other than drinking palm wine. Furthermore, the author describes him initially as a person with an antisocial behavior. He does not work, he does not honor the memory of his late father with sacrifice, and he has neither a wife nor a child (Tutuola, 1993). Through much of this picaresque novel, things will go badly for him. He will learn many lessons, become an authentic Yoruba man with a wife and capable of working and protecting his family. At the end of the story, he comes back to his native village which he saves from famine. It is the typical story of a man who initially is worthless but who, after going through some events, becomes an important person within his community. Apart from *alo* tale, the Yoruba tales used in the novel can also be likened to romances which, like other stories, are told in the evening but in contrast with them, romance deal with a serial of epic stories of a single character. Romance here has to do with a round character's adventure from the feet of the social mountain to his highest point. In this case, the hero is possessed by external forces to go through some situations in the bush, but at the end of the story, he returns to his community like a hero. He is not from this moment the former person everybody knows. In *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, he is at the beginning of the story a nonentity and a man with no objectives in the world rather than just drinking palm wine. During his journey, he married a wife, had a better financial condition, and also had an interest for other things than palm wine. The novel is in reality a kind of collection of short stories combined to create a brand-new story and more than that. However, it is just the first aspect it gives that interests us here. Many of the folktales Amos Tutuola uses in his novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* belong to Yoruba oral tradition. The passage of the complete gentleman who is in fact a curious creature is a story that "appears in at least seven different versions in Yoruba folktales" (Lindfors, 1992). For each of these versions, it is almost the same thing. There is always a young lady

who refuses to get married to a trivial man. She then finds the perfect candidate and as there is no perfect man, she eventually discovers that her perfect candidate is not what he pretends to be. He could be a big snake disguised or a skull as in the story of *The palm-wine drinkard*. In the middle of the story, there is always a hero who appears and saves the lady. As a sign of gratitude, the lady's father gives her in marriage to the young man who saved her. It is by this principle that the palm-wine drinkard has married his wife. In addition, the passage of the quarrel between heaven and earth is a typical Yoruba myth and it even exists in some ethnic groups' story. The episode in which the narrator helps the people reestablish harmony between Heaven and Earth is clearly a Yoruba myth retold by the author. It is indeed about the confrontation between the supreme deity of heaven, Olodumare, and Oduduwa the supreme deity of the earth.

In the myth, as in the novel, humans send the disputed animal as a sacrifice to Olodumare in acknowledgement of his superiority, thus settling the argument and ending the drought. Both the myth and *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* reflect the high value that the Yoruba place on maintaining a harmonious relationship between the domains of Aiye (earth) and Orun (heaven), with which the plot of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* has much to do. (BallandRoleke, 2019)

As mentioned above, the plot of Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is directly linked to the Yoruba oral tradition precisely in their myth and folk tales. The relationship between heaven and earth developed in the story has to do with life and death which is also present in the novel. The author wanting to show the way Yoruba people sees death, led the Drinkard in the quest of bringing his tapster from the Dead's Town. He eventually realizes that it is impossible to bring a dead person back to life. However, Baiy gave him an egg that will save his village later. This episode is a way of showing the reader what dead people embody for the Yoruba. They believe that "death is not the end of life but only a transitory process; funerals are regarded as a vital avenue to convey the dead person's spirit from earth to join their ancestors in the spirit world" (Adamolekun, 2001). In other words, the Yoruba people believe in death but for them, it is a way of joining their ancestors. What do ancestors represent for them?

According to Braswell (145), "the ancestors are like the divinities, they are intermediaries between the Supreme God and people. It is the ancestors who afford a connection between the past, the present, and the future". This means that for the Yorubas, dead people are indeed no longer in the living world but they however still help us from the deads' town. Awolalu (1978) declares that in "Yoruba belief, the family is made up of both the living members and ancestors. The ancestors constitute the closest link between the world of men and the spirit-world, and they also are believed to be keenly interested in the welfare of their living descendants. This statement is reinforced by Gbadegesin (1991) who says that "the protective relationship which exists between parents and their children here on earth is not terminated at death". For him, the ancestors continue to protect their offspring from all misfortunes. The other point of Yoruba mythology that stands out in the novel is the problem of improper reproduction. This has to do with Zurrjir, the narrator's son. Indeed, he is born from his wife's thumb. It is a supernatural baby who, an hour after his birth, became three feet tall and speaks like an adult. He is very barbarous and lives like an assailant in the town. Not only does he eat all the food and drinks all the palmwine, he also burns down houses. His father, the narrator, killed him without any compunction (Tutuola, 1993). Through the character of this child, the author illustrates *tohosu* phenomenon among the Yorubas. According to their religious belief, this kind of kid would be an evil spirit living in the bush and to whom nobody offers sacrifices to. Hungry and thirsty, he enters inside a woman who will give birth to him as a *tohosu*. As the writer earlier mentioned, *tohosu* kids are strange and very dangerous (Hogan, 2015). Herskovits (1958) qualifies them as being ancestors who wanted a cult status from themselves. This aspect of the *tohosu* children has been evoked by Tutuola in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. In fact, the palm-wine drinkard and his wife tried to kill their weird baby to put an end to its misdemeanors. Unfortunately,

being a spirit, he survives and keeps on making their lives a living hell till the day they meet "Drum, Song and Dance personally" (Tutuola, 1993). These creatures took over their trouble, and our hero and his wife were able to start "a fresh journey" (Tutuola, 1993). In another episode, the writer deals with the Yoruba sense of justice and sacrifice. It is the episode of the man with the bag which illustrates this. The story is illustrated as follows: the palm-wine drinkard meets a man carrying a heavy bag. He then asks him how to get to the Deads' Town. The man tells him he is going there and will lead him there if the palm-wine drinkard accepts to help him carry his heavy bag. As naive as he is, the protagonist accepts without knowing that the bag contains the corpse of a prince. Instead of bringing them into the Deads' town, the man with the bag leads the couple into the town of the prince he has assassinated. Over there, he blames the palm-wine drinkard for killing the prince. However, what he expects does not happen. The King does not kill the protagonist but parades him around the entire town as if honoring him. The man with the bag sees this and, thinking that he could get a reward for his crime, confesses that he is the real murderer of the prince. As the protagonist, he is paraded around the town and is eventually killed.

This folk tale presents a situation where a human sacrifice is operated to rectify an interruption in the reproduction cycle. The man with the bag is then a scapegoat in that process. The fact of being paraded is indeed a ritual performed before killing the scapegoat. A person chosen to be a scapegoat "was usually treated with the greatest respect and indulgence by all and given the best of everything. When the time for his death came, he was paraded through the streets where many people took the opportunity of laying their hands on him" (Talbot, 1969). There are many things in Yoruba folk tales that demonstrate how much the supernatural is anchored among Yoruba ethnic group.

The Supernatural in Amos Tutuola's Literary Universe: The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015) defines the word "Supernatural" as being "events, forces or powers that cannot be explained by the laws of science and that seems to involve gods or magic". They are also "mysterious occurrences and beings that habitually or occasionally impinge upon one's everyday experience" (Despland, 1987). When it comes to supernatural things, there are no scientific or logical explanations. According to Marret (1929), the sense of the supernatural is an existential and affective reality. It is a response to the extra-normal and the uncanny, and is thus not related to a reasoned theory of nature. And as this is a reality in African ethnic groups, Yoruba also use it. In *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, the supernatural seems to be something quite natural. As a matter of fact, Amos Tutuola mentions them easily as if the transformation of a man into a bird or as if a baby born from the thumb is normal. The narrator himself is an extraordinary being who names himself "the father of god who could do everything in this world". This is justified by the fact that he can easily break down the boundaries between the human and the supernatural. In every episode of the novel, there is always a passage showing this. For instance, in the thirteenth chapter, the narrator is confronted with a big river he could not cross without a canoe. Thanks to a juju, a "kind spirit" (Tutuola, 1993) has given him, he manages to change himself into a canoe which his wife used as a ferry to get money. It is even mentioned in the novel that the kind spirit he is talking to is one of his friends. It is very surprising how a human can be friends with a spirit that is a supernatural being. Another point that draws any reader's attention is the fact that almost all the supernatural beings mentioned in the novel behave as if they were humans. In the first chapter, Death can be seen living as a common human being as the following passage points out:

When I reached his (Death's) house, he was not at home by that time, he was in his yam garden which was very close to his house, and I met a small rolling drum in his verandah, then I beat it to Death as a sign of salutation. But when he (Death) heard the sound of the drum, he said thus: – "Is that man still alive or dead?" Then I replied "I am still alive and I am not a dead man." (Tutuola, 1993)

Clearly, it can be seen that the author gives Death human capacities. He lives in a house, makes agriculture, and surely eats food. He also has his culture as it is said here "...I met a small rolling drum in his verandah, then I beat it to Death as a sign of salutation" (Tutuola, 1993). He is clearly described as a human capable of speaking, breathing, walking etc. Even the deads of the Deads' Town behave as if they were not dead, walking, talking, eating, and drinking. After meeting his tapster, the palm wine drinkard obtains from this one an egg as a parting present. We can even say that they live another life after their first life in the world of the living. In chapter 17, after their departure from the Wraith Island, the narrator and his wife discover a land where palm-trees see, talk, and laugh. Moreover, in each of the new turn of the story, there is always someone who asks the narrator something in exchange for information about the Dead's Town. From the beginning to the end of his ten years' trip, the narrator has always encountered this situation. For instance, there is an old man who wants him to capture Death himself; the head of the town who asks him to deliver his daughter from the curious creature, or the prince killer who asks them to carry his bag. All this testifies how developed is the notion of the supernatural among the Yoruba people and for them, the supernatural is indeed natural. For the Yoruba people, questions related to cosmology are resolved in most cases around the belief in supernatural beings.

Significances of Yoruba Folktales in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*: *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola is a very interesting novel. He reveals Yoruba folklore in almost all its aspects. The Yoruba folktales used in it was of interest to us. A folktale, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015), is "a tale circulated by word of mouth among the common folk". To make it simple, "folktale is one of the lineaments of oral literature." In this light, "folktales serve at entertainment what is wrong. In fact, they are considered the most popular genre of oral literature which serves several purposes" (Nwaozuzu, 2007). However, entertainment is one of these purposes". Taiwo (2019) defines it as "a narration or storytelling targeted at children for moral rejuvenation and entertainment". She continues by saying, "it is a fictitious story narrated at night by elders to children to guide them towards desired habits and also to entertain. It is one of the major aspects of the oral tradition in Yoruba society. It is the telling of story by narrators to instruct the young and teach them to respect the dictates of customs". In addition to his capacity to entertain, folktales, for the Yoruba, are a way of teaching their children the major aspects of their customs. However, the "incursion of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the Nigerian cultural life has altered the relevance of Yoruba folktales in training children" (Adeyemi, 1997). Fortunately, Amos Tutuola and other writers of this period did not abandon African oral tradition. They still think that folktales are important educational tools for the children's training process in both traditional and modern setting. Following the same logic, Adeyemi (1997) states that;

Folktales can be used to inculcate in the children of pre-school age virtues such as humility, gratitude, respect for elders and constituted authority, perseverance, conformity to societal norms, co-operation, hospitality, truthfulness, honesty, willingness to take advice, patriotism, courage and love, loyalty to one's fatherland, hard work, and the fear of God. (Adeyemi, 1997)

From the passage, the tiny creature is not chosen by the king. As a matter of fact, the king while choosing people to clean his field forgot to choose the tiny creature that he certainly considers not to be very qualified for the work. Once frustrated, the tiny creature resolves to show them how powerful he is. It is true that this short story is quite funny, but it also hides a lesson of life that one should never underestimate others even if they seem to deserve it. Another illustration is the passage including the man with bag. In his search for information about the Deads' Town, the narrator does not have any hesitation about carrying the load of the man with bag. They will finally discover that the man has lied to them about his destination and has also betrayed them about the load composition and, as a result, this will get him arrested in place of the real killer. Through this tale, Yoruba people teach their children and even adults that not everybody

should be trusted. Furthermore, folktales also give explanations to certain phenomenon as myths do. Wabare (1992) states that tales explain the origin of man, his ancestors, his religion, his life, death, etc. He continues by saying that they give answers as to why and how certain things happen or come into being. In Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, in chapters 33 and 34, the narrator explains the famine mentioned in the latest passages. According to the author's belief, famine is the cause of the quarrel between Heaven and Earth.

CONCLUSION

Yoruba tradition is one of the richest in Africa and is composed of a large diversity of songs, poems, folk tales and others. Folk tales, as well as the other components of Yoruba tradition, make literary works unique. They are tales handed down by word of mouth among the common folk. Due to its relevance, Yoruba folk tales have been the subject of several studies and writings. Amos Tutuola, a Nigerian author, wrote a book titled *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* and another one, *Yoruba Folktales*, based on these tales which are indeed from his ethnic group. The present paper dealt with The Mythological Representation and Significances of Yoruba folk tales in Amos Tutuola's selected works. It aims at giving the importance of using folk tales in literature through the analysis of the tales hidden in the story. Divided into three parts, this paper shows how rich and interesting Yoruba folk tales can be. In addition to that, the paper has revealed that even the tales in Tutuola's novels that some readers could perceive as entertainments, are in reality much more than that. Not only do they teach moral lessons to the readers, they also show them life from the Yoruba people point of view. In addition, there are some natural phenomena that science cannot account to find an explanation there. This is highlighted by Achufusi who stated that "Folktales serve as a means of enforcing conformity with social norms; of validating social institutions and religious beliefs, and they help to provide psychological freedom from some society-imposed restrictions" (Achufusi, 1986).

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