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# The Functions Of The Fantastic In Al-Tijani's Journey

**Dr. Bouchaib Asma Aldjia**, Algiers -02- University Abu El-Qasem Saadallah, Algeria,  
[aldjiaasma73@gmail.com](mailto:aldjiaasma73@gmail.com)

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## **Abstract:**

Travel has occupied an important place in Arab culture since ancient times, so its reasons and scientific purposes have varied. One can find among travelers those who were interested in describing regions and countries and the wonders they contained, others visiting holy places and pilgrimage shrines, and others traveling for the purpose of tourism and trade. Hence, they encounter the wonders and curiosities of different peoples and describe them. An example of this is travel literature of Al-Tijani. From here, we can raise the following question: How does the fantastic work within a narrative structure that conveys a realistic and personal experience? In this study, we rely on the mechanisms of description and analysis.

**Keywords:**(Journey, travel literature, the functions of the fantastic, travel literature of Al-Tijani)

## **Introduction**

Travel literature constitute an enjoyable artistic prose within a specific temporal, spatial, cultural and tasteful framework, and it contains rich material full of information; as travelers employed all forms of narration in their journeys and took various elements from literature until travel literature has become an artistic form full of diverse literary and non-literary elements. Travel literature is a literary genre characterized by realism and is not subject to the writer's imagination, as it is a personal record of the stages of the traveler's transition between different places and times. The author records what he sees realistically and clearly without altering the facts. As the traveler wanders, he notices different aspects of life. There is no doubt that travelers differ in the degree of their awareness. That is, their honesty, trustworthiness, and the diversity of their understanding of things according to the changing circumstances to which they are subject. No matter how great this change is, travel literature has two important values: scientific and literary.

On this basis, travel occupied an important place in Arab culture, and Arabs were interested in it since ancient times. Therefore, its reasons and scientific purposes varied. We find among travelers those who were interested in describing regions and countries and the wonders they contained, and some of them visit the holy places to perform the rituals of Umrah and Hajj, while others travel for the purpose of tourism and trade, so they collide with the wonders and curiosities of different peoples and describe them.

One of the characteristics of travel narrative is that it has multiple and diverse aspects and horizons. One of its features as a literary genre is its uniqueness in the characteristic of the fantastic and the wonderful, due to the nature of travel and movement and what the writer sees with his own eyes and the image he attempts to draw for the reader. The main issue of this study is to identify the aesthetics of the employment of the fantastic and its manifestations in

travel literature and its impact on it. From this standpoint, our interest is centered on the methods of the fantastic in constructing the travel narrative text. We have selected Al-Tijani's journey, in which the fantastic interacts with the narrative structure. In particular, studies related to the fantastic are mostly in the novel, despite its early presence in ancient heritage literary texts full of myths and legends capable of creating it. Research into such a topic raises certain interrogations; What is the concept of travel literature? What is the nature of the fantastic? And how does the fantastic work within a narrative structure that conveys a realistic and personal experience?

In this study, we followed the historical approach to understand the historical, political, social and cultural context in which Al-Tijani's journey arose, and the mechanisms of description and analysis to analyze the various elements present in the travel text, such as characters and events characterized by a fantastic nature.

### **1. Travel Literature:**

Travel literature is broad and includes several works, each with its own method of narration and purpose. It also includes popular fictional stories, literary stories, and major poetic and literary epics in the history of humanity. The fields of knowledge overlap in travel literature, including: geography, history, civilization, economics, ethnography, sociology, literature, anthropology, art, and literature.

The traveler narrates his journey as it happens on the ground, and generally relies on what he sees, not on what he imagines and assumes. In this regard, Dominic Combe says that travel literature "is every text that does not belong to imagination, poetry, or theatrical literature (..) It is the genre that brings together all the genres that the major genres have rejected, and it is thus the least clear of the genres.. However, it is distinguished by a constant feature, which is its preference for rational thought and ideas, and rhetorical thought, rather than imagination." (Hatami, March 2007).

As for travel literature, Ignatius Kratchkovsky, "classifies travel literature within descriptive geography. He sees that travel literature has a scientific geographical character with a literary form (stories). Therefore, he used the term geographical literature, which provided great mental enjoyment; as one meets in it wonderful artistic models, sometimes formulated in rhyme, and objective works for the masses of readers, in which the presentation ranges between dryness and strictness on the one hand, and enjoyment and liveliness on the other hand. Here, the Arabs' superior ability and skill in the art of stories appears." (Kratchkovsky, 1987, p. 28).

Since the travel text is sometimes literature and sometimes history or geography and other sciences, its classification has become one of the most complex issues, and the problem of its literary nature has been raised. Talking about travel literature "is based on a central criterion that constitutes a central component of the travel text, and it – the criterion – at the same time becomes critical for classification between the types of travel writing, and this criterion is that of travel, and the travel literature as a literary genre is based on the narrative of travel, and its types and varieties employ this narrative in different forms and diverse styles." (Moden, *Travel literature in Moroccan Literature*, 2006). Hence, travel literature is a genre branching off from literature, while researcher Abdul Nabi Dhaker tends to consider travel literature as "a hybrid literary form characterized by its multiple aspects and manifestations, to the extent that it can be said: it is an integrated genre that breaks the law of purity of the genre, by incorporating diverse rhetorical patterns in terms of forms and contents, which gives the impression that it is a fluid and flexible form to a large extent, in addition to its extreme complexity and its potential for writing patterns, styles and contents that distance it from apparent simplicity, to make it a complex, comprehensive and general genre." (Zakir, *The Thresholds of Writing: An Approach to the Charter of the Arab Travel Narrative*, 1996, p. 36). In the same line of thought and context,

researcher Al-Duwaihi tends to classify travel discourse as a type of hybrid and vague literary expression (Al-Duwaihi, April/May 1983, page 59). Thus, travel literature was distinguished by its multiple cognitive directions subject to the interest of the researcher. Thus, the historian views travel literature as a historical text, and the geographer considers it a geographical source, and so on.

This is what researcher Abdel Rahim Modan, who considers travel literature to be “an ambiguous writing, whether at the level of generic identity or at the level of its dialogue in the context of literary theory for literary and non-literary genres (Moden, *The Moroccan Journey in the Nineteenth Century, Levels of Narrative*, 2006). He considers travel discourse a “literary genre with clear boundaries.” (Zakir, *Reality and Imagination in the European Journey to Morocco*, 1997). The content of travel literature or travel discourse includes diverse and multiple knowledge, including historical, geographical, religious, and literary, and in terms of form we notice narration, description, news, letters, and poems, “as it provides material that is not exhausted by the historian or geographer alone; but also by sociologists, economists, historians of literature, science, religion, linguists, and natural scientists.” (Krachkovsky, 1987, p. 19). Accordingly, travel literature is a literary phenomenon in which several literary and non-literary elements intermingle; it is an open text resulting from the blending and intermingling of cultural, social and political components.

In the same context, Boutros Angel tends to say that travel literature “is what can be described as realistic travel literature, which is the realistic journey, which is travel literature that the traveler undertakes to a country in the world and writes down a description of it, in which he records his observations and impressions with a degree of accuracy, honesty, beauty of style, and ability to express.” (Peter, July 1985) Instead of objectivity in narrating facts and events and recording them in a scientific manner, “the traveler writes with the imagination of a storyteller who supports reality with fantasy and truth with myth.” (Dayf, 1980).

Travel literature is a broad field that includes several works, each with its own method of narration and performance that it seeks to achieve. This literature also records the events of travelers’ journeys, their popular fictional stories, their literary stories, and their great literary poetic epics in the history of humanity. Therefore, “travel literature benefits, like other texts, from generic transformations on the one hand, and from the developments of the genre itself on the other hand [...] It achieves its literary quality by approaching literature and distancing itself from it at the same time.” (Moden, *Literary Journey or Literary Journey?*, 1997); That is, it is distinguished by the characteristics of its unique and distinctive text without severing its threads from the prevailing literary field. Therefore, it can be considered “a literary genre with its own form that distinguishes it from other genres, or (...) a discourse with its own logic.” (Wadghiri, 2013).

The nature of travel writing has made researchers and scholars head in different directions according to their own interests. The historian sees it as a historical text, and the geographer sees it as a source of geographical information. “No one denies what intellectuals have benefited from travel literature since ancient times. The diversity of its topics has made it a destination for providing historical, poetic, Sufi, and ethnological information.” (Zakir, *The Thresholds of Writing: An Approach to the Charter of the Arab Travel Narrative*, 1996, p. 14). Therefore, one may find many appellations such as: travel, travel literature, geographical literature, descriptive geography.

What raises the status of this material and shows its truth and the legitimacy of interest in it is that it is unanimously agreed upon by historians, geographers and economists about its value, which prompts researchers and scholars to trust it and rely on the scientific, literary, historical and geographical news and information it contains. This statement “is true above all of historical and geographical literature, which scholars have long recognized as the primary and reliable source in studying the past of the Islamic world. Indeed, it provides first-hand

information about all the countries that the Arabs have reached.” (Kratchkovsky, 1987, p. 16) all over the world.

Based on the principle that a journey can produce diverse and varied sciences and knowledge, it is, for scholars, “a text with unclear boundaries, into which anything can be poured: scientific expansions, museum indexes, and love stories. It can be a book full of science, or a psychological study, or quite simply a love narrative, or a combination of all.” (Al-Duwaihi, April/May 1983, page 58).

## **2. Types of travel:**

**2.1\_The scientific travel:** In this type of journey, the student travels to seek knowledge, and “transcends regional borders, and is welcomed wherever he settles as a knowledge seeker.”(Qina, 1994). Traveling to pursue knowledge is a custom in Muslim countries. “The seeker of knowledge is often one of the great scholars who travels to obtain a license or to hear from someone more knowledgeable. Students and scholars used to travel, especially to narrate hadith or to hear from the great imams of jurists and hadith scholars.” (Al-Arabi, 1994)

**2.2\_The Hijazi Journey:** It is the journey to the holy places for Hajj. Many scholars and writers have visited the holy places and performed their duty. Many pilgrims excelled in describing their departure, their stay, their routes, and the way they performed their duties. They chronicled all of that in records that they collected in a book called “The Hijazi Journey.”(Awis, 1988)

**2.3\_ Touristic [exploratory] Travel:** This type of travel is motivated by a spirit of adventure, curiosity, and the desire to study and learn about peoples’ conditions.(Nassar, 1991).

**2,4\_The [official] Embassy Travel:** The sultans would send their close associates to travel to foreign countries as representatives. These travelers would prepare a detailed report narrating what had happened to them, and they would also record what they had seen in the countries they had gone to. Or else, it would be a journey in which the author would limit himself to mentioning the men he had met, the sheikhs he had attended, and the books he had studied. (Ansaad, 2006/2007, p. 20).

## **3. The Fantastic in Modern Literary and Intellectual Studies:**

Researchers and scholars have tried to define and establish the concept of “fantastic” due to the lack of a definition for it in books and studies prior to the modern era. This has led to their disagreement over an accurate concept for this term. The book “The Fantastic and the Marvelous in Islam in the Middle Ages” explained, while presenting a concept for the term, that it is difficult for researchers to define its meaning accurately.

The book is the result of the interventions of the Paris Forum of 1974, where Andre Miquel, a French historian specializing in Arabic language and literature, acknowledged that “researchers have studied the concept of the fantastic without coming to a precise definition of the concept of this word.”(jA, 1978, p. 149)In the same vein, Maxime Rodinson, the French Marxist historian, admits that “things seem complicated.”(jA, 1978, p. 199)The conference ends without reaching a clear concept of the term “fantastic.” Rather, researchers and scholars differed and did not agree on a clear idea about the term.

Most likely, the reason for this difference is due to the modernity of the study on this subject, because they previously considered the fantastic event to be due to popular beliefs that were nourished by myths and legends, and based on this, “the fantastic formed a discourse that stands in opposition to general culture and rational discourse, which explains to us its association with popular literature that those cultures continued to consider naive and a kind of farce and absurdity, because its discourse does not deal with the same view towards the

world at its various levels, and does not enshrine ideological and rational sayings.””(Arkun, 1987, p. 187)

This is the reason that kept researchers away from researching it, because they consider the fantastic to be evidence of the naivety of thought, cultural degradation, and the absence of reason. Muhammad Arkoun says: “In fact, in our current modernity, we use imprecise terms that were crystallized and accomplished in the positivist climate of the nineteenth century in Europe, in order to study religions, especially that thing called “popular religion”; that is, the study of the fantastic, the magical, the supernatural, the sacred, the worldly and the secular, the miracle and myths and ancient remains, etc. All of this conceptual apparatus is linked to a negative imagination that was considered by the positivists in the nineteenth century to be the opposite of tangible positive rationality.””(Arkun, 1987, p. 176/177)

Scholars have looked down on the fantastic because it is a form of human expression resulting from the imaginary because it is “formed from fairy tales, imaginary images, folk tales, mythical beliefs, etc., while in their view the mind is the only one capable of producing correct knowledge.”(Arkun, 1987, p. 177)Therefore, we note that the Arab Renaissance project has in turn excluded the “fantastic” aspect because it conflicts in its understanding with the rational project aiming to bring the nation out of the ages of decadence.”(War, 1985)Although scholars and researchers differ in defining the concept of the wondrous, they have always sought to establish it and research the wondrous text or the wondrous in the text. These attempts resulted in definitions that differed in most cases and were close in rare cases, because the wondrous is a term open to different interpretations. This is what can be observed in Aristotle in his book “Poetics,” as he was the first theorist of the wondrous, so he used the word “Thaumaston, which means “amazing” and “wonderful”, has been translated as mirabile (in Latin), then meraviglioso (in Italian) and merveilleux (in French). Aristotle's idea is that the wondrous has the power to astonish and surprise the listeners. (Gomidar, 1985)

From the above, it becomes clear that the difficulty of determining a founding definition of the fantastic in modern criticism is due to the existence of several concepts corresponding to it. Andre Miquel counted about fourteen terms that are semantically connected to the fantastic and do not go beyond its scope, and they are as follows: satanic-demonic, strange, unusual, abnormal, fantastic, supernatural marvelous, bizarre, prodigious, extraordinary, weird, extraordinary, aberrant, irrational, admirable.

He also believes that these terms come together under a concept established by Maxime Rodinson, which is “the concept of the disturbing and the idea of confusion.” (J. A., 1978, p. 224). Rather, “the wondrous is difficult to define, because it disappears the closer we get to it, because its boundaries are mobile.””(J. A., 1978, p. 221)

Therefore, researchers and scholars were required to rely on some terms that revolve around the concept of the fantastic; as the author of “The Authority of Tales” tends to say: “As for the word ‘fantastic’”The concepts that we encounter most often as elements of definition or synonyms are the inexplicable, the prodige, the marvel, the admirable. The marvelous is what happens, and we cannot explain it naturally, and hence the semantic expansion towards the supernatural.”(Jean, 1990)The French writer, literary critic, novelist and historian Marcel Brion says: “The fantastic means the strange.”« étrange », « surprising », « insolite », « moving »(Brion, 1961)., therefore, there is no clear concept of the term “fantastic” except through the terms that surround it that indicate it. As for Vladimir Propp and the Russian formalists, they tend toward the fantastic and link it to the story and narrative forms; where it can be observed in the text of the story whose hero is “a character who possesses supernatural and unusual powers.” (Gomidar, 1985, p. 1225). Accordingly, one can conclude that strangeness and rarity play a role in shaping and depicting the fantastic; as the strange exercises its magic on the recipient through the sudden and unexpected appearance of everything that is familiar and natural; where Todorov focused on this characteristic saying: “The fantastic corresponds to an

unknown phenomenon that has not been seen before.” (Todorov, 1993). When the fantastic exerts its effect, it creates astonishment and confusion that the character within the narrative text shares with the character of the reader, so the fantastic is acceptable “because we accept from the beginning the existence of laws contrary to nature, it is a substance with its elements and characters that is added to reality without harming it or destroying its system.” (Caillois, 1985). The character cloaked in the personality of the fantastic creates a kind of challenge with reality and the prevailing, because the narrative structure in which the fantastic resides always requires the presence of conflicting parties in the narrative, because it is mostly “a conflict between the forces of good and evil, but it is a conflict that leads to order, and therefore the endings of its events are mostly happy.” (Manai, 1995/1996)The world that is formed by the discourse of the fantastic accepts all its paradoxes, as it astonishes, confuses, worries and pushes him to ask questions. In the end, what happens in this world (the world of the fantastic) does not shock the reader or the listener, as he knows, from the beginning, that the events of the story are a product of the imagination and that they are subject to a logic other than his own.(Manai, 1995/1996, p. 68)Therefore, the fantastic discourse is keen to achieve a psychological and intellectual balance between the recipient and the imaginary character within the narrative text.

Torodov sees that the pure wondrous, the pure marvelous has no clear boundaries. For him, the marvelous “is characterized by the existence of supernatural events alone, without assuming the reaction they cause in the characters.” (Todorov, p. 52/59). He calls for not taking the fantastic in the narrow sense, as it leads to unfamiliar worlds beyond reality that reject the authentic and the familiar.

What distinguishes the fantastic is the possible position to take towards the narrated events. The works that were classified in the category of the fantastic depended on certain recurring themes, and this is what prompted Todorov to say: “The genre of the fantastic is generally linked to the genre of the tale of the jinn, but the tale of the jinn is in fact nothing more than one of the varieties of the fantastic.” (Todorov, p. 59)

While tracing the concept of the wondrous through the dictionary of French and foreign literature, it became clear to us that the wondrous is born from the supernatural outside the framework of belief, and thus the wondrous is transformed from being described as supernatural to being “an absolute given for observation, at the same time that it enters a displacement within the represented worlds.” (Dictionary of French literature and *étrangères*, 1994, p. 1004)So, the literary dictionary discussed the concept of the fantastic based on the fact that it is supernatural and depends on the recipient’s understanding and the degree of his comprehension and acceptance, while Mohammed Arkoun believes that “the fantastic may refer to natural events.. and that the fantastic is not necessarily supernatural.”(jA, 1978, p. 150)

Through this opinion, Arkoun tries to expand the circle of the fantastic to include everything that is based on the familiar, the realistic, and the ordinary. In the same context, Andre Miquel tends to believe that the fantastic is based on nature, being “an ascending or descending formation of natural data and the addition of one or more organs to a being, at a time when we were expecting the number of organs to be normal.” (gomidar, 1985, p. 82) This means that the fantastic may arise on the basis of breaching the horizon of the other’s expectations and “making him accept what cannot be thought of.”(J. A., 1978, p. 150)

Arkoun's opinion is understood to be that he is trying to direct attention to the imaginary as something broader than the concept of the wondrous and a form of imagination within culture. The wondrous is everything you imagine but that goes beyond the laws of nature. Rather, "the wondrous is an imagination that has a typical or demonstrative value."(Dictionary of French and Foreign Literature, 1994, p. 1004); That is, it is imaginary and cannot be explained based on rational foundations and natural laws. Hence, Arkoun distinguishes between three types of the Fantastic: “the amazing wonder of scientific origin, the religious wonder associated with

mythological thought, and the literary wonder.” (Arkoun, 1987, p. 178). He acknowledges the difficulty of extracting the fantastic in literature, but it can be determined through the occurrence of emotion and amazement as a result of the mind’s inability to perceive the phenomena of the tangible world; Arkoun says in this regard: “We notice that the matter is related to the urgency of the mind that acknowledges its current inability to grasp the chain of causes and effects, because the more the mind thinks about the world and its tangible phenomena, the more it realizes the extent of its inability and deficiency, and this leads to the occurrence of religious emotion or amazement in the religious milieu and metaphysical emotion in the philosophical milieu and pushes the search for new hypotheses in order to understand phenomena with regard to the man of science.” (Arkoun, 1987, p. 179)

In Arkoun’s view, the fantastic performs a cognitive function and has an aesthetic dimension whose purpose is to entertain the recipient. Pierre Mabilie says that the fantastic is the most complete exploration of universal truth. (Mabilie, 1997)

In another place, we notice that Arkoun, during his study of the wondrous, focuses on the wondrous and astonishing Qur’anic; where he sees “the necessity of modifying the concept of the wondrous and astonishing by introducing the concept of amazement before the miracle of creation, and everything that this creation wants to establish in consciousness.” (Arkoun, 1987, p. 223/224) Then he goes on to say that “there is something amazing and captivating in the Qur’an, provided that we focus our attention on the result of this amazing and captivating thing, which is wonder and amazement.” (the most amazing) in front of the wonders of creation (Arkoun, 1987, p. 239) On the same subject, there are those who consider that “the verb ‘*ajab*’ in the Qur’an means astonishment at an extraordinary, fantastic, and unreasonable event, and that the three adjectives ‘*ajab-ajib*, *ajab*’ mean at the same time something astonishing, extraordinary, wonderful, dazzling, and something surprising.” (Arkoun, 1987, p. 22)

The fantastic is a state of anxiety and tension that the recipient experiences while facing events far from reality and the usual.

From what was previously mentioned, it becomes clear to us that “the fantastic is a way of representing the world, presenting a vision of the existents, creatures, and sensory perceptions, and aspiration to the unseen within an imaginary artistic framework that uses (the narrative text) and (the narrative form) as the most successful means of manifestation.” (Al-Safi, 2006)

The previously mentioned definitions of the fantastic link it to the supernatural, and it can be built on the natural and the real. Talking about something that actually exists in reality gives it standards that do not exist in reality, and thus takes it out of the natural; as Andre Miquel sees “that the fantastic is the formation of a creature that becomes mythical or legendary with natural elements, but they do not usually come together in the natural situation.” (jA, 1978, p. 82) So, the fantastic appears through what is natural to become supernatural, because the supernatural crystallizes into something related to spirituality, such as jinn, supernatural beings, and paranormal phenomena.

So the conflict between the imaginary, the fantastic, and the real appeared through those who founded what is called “the realistic fantastic.” “The marvelous reality, and here it must be noted that their presentation of the concept does not touch the intended aspect, as they have observed realistic writing that introduces the marvelous into its text and achieves harmony between them, and it seems that they are presenting this concept because it represents a trend in the realistic novel or as an aesthetic dimension on which realistic novels depend, and in this context Alexis sees that combining the two concepts is possible for writers who bear responsibility for the common destiny of their people and remain loyal to the social reality of their countries, and introduce it into the marvelous stories that are the garment; where some peoples hide their wisdom and life knowledge” (Alexis, 1997).

As Larouche sees it: “The real is not contradictory to the wondrous, and the wondrous exists only as a garment for the real.” (Larouche, 1987).

Hence, we can acknowledge the existence of a “realistic wonder” as it “harmoniously links the two logics together, making them neither discordant nor contradictory.”(chiampi, 1980)In addition, the fantastic discourse transformed the real into the fantastic, and one of its examples is when a character behaves in an unexpected and unjustified manner. This is a form of the fantastic.

All the previously mentioned definitions within modern studies agree on placing the fantastic within the semantic field that includes the supernatural and everything that is paranormal. Some consider it an aesthetic dimension, and others see it as a narrative technique. Some scholars see it as a mere way of working within the text, but most opinions link it to the supernatural and everything that arouses astonishment, anxiety, surprise and admiration, and does not accept interpretation in a natural way, as it is determined in the literary work through supernatural means and beings, and in the story especially through the appearance of characters with supernatural and unusual powers, and there are those who see that the fantastic arises from what is natural, familiar, realistic and ordinary, and thus the fantastic is not in all cases the result of what is supernatural, and no matter how many opinions there are, the fantastic is what deviates from the normal course of things, and from here Arkoun sees that the concepts of "the natural, the supernatural, the rational, the imaginary or the fictional, the fantastic, the amazing, need to be re-crystallized and defined anew."(Arkoun, 1987, p. 215). He suggests directing attention to the imaginary, since the wondrous is a form of the imagination within culture. Arkoun admits at the end of the symposium organized to define the concept of the fantastic, saying: “The field of the fantastic, as we said before and we all repeat, we have not really addressed it, because it escapes us. We feel that we must speak, and we must describe it, but we do not reach that point.” (J.A., 1978, p. 205). In his opinion, every definition of the fantastic remains “open to discussion because its definition is not final, and therefore all the definitions given to it can be reviewed again and another definition adopted.”(J. A., 1978, p. 207)

All participants in the forum agreed that it is not possible to define the concept of the fantastic precisely because it has a complex meaning and is difficult to comprehend, considering that its interpretations are broad and varied. This is due to the vastness of the subject and its loose nature, so that we can say that the fantastic is a galaxy whose center is everywhere and whose periphery has no place."(Vax, 1987)

The Forum's research did not provide a specific definition of the fantastic, but it pointed to the various visions that could contribute to drawing the nature of the fantastic and considering it an "imaginary genre."(Todorov, 1993, p. 4) and a form of discourse, it is verbal and structural, has a narrative character and a method in the internal construction of the text. Based on the above, the fantastic can be considered an imaginary discourse that contributes to drawing and depicting amazing worlds that arouse wonder, astonishment and questioning.

#### **4. Definition of travel literature and the traveler:**

Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ahmed Al-Tijani, the author of Al-Tijani’s Journey, was born between (670-675 AH/1272-1276 AD), and lived until the year (712 AH/1308 AD). (Mahfouz, 1994). He grew up in a house of knowledge and learning in the city of Tunis, the capital of the Hafsids. (Ahmed, 2007).

Al-Tijani would visit the Tunisian coast with its ancient and modern buildings, passing through Sfax and then to the south towards Gabes and the island of Djerba, introducing them and touching on their customs, traditions and beliefs. Then he enters the southern oases with their eastern parts (Matmata and Nefzawa) and also the western (Bilad al-Jirid), crossing the Takamert sabkha. He entered the Tripolitanian soil, visiting its coastal areas and villages such as Zuwara, Zawaga and Zanzur, describing them as they deserve. He stays in Tripoli for a period of time and contacts its scholars and hadith scholars and attends their gatherings. In his



journey, Al-Tijani took special care to talk about the scholars and jurists he met. The scientific environment in which he grew up had a clear impact on him, so he did not just attend their gatherings; rather, he translated their lives and was keen to mention their works.

##### **5. The Functions of the Fantastic in the Travel Literature of Al-Tijani:**

The fantastic in the text of Al-Tijani's Journey performed several functions, some of which relate to the outside of the text, i.e. society, and others relate to the text itself. In the social function, the fantastic is viewed on the basis of describing everything that cannot be described in reality, and the social function relates to texts of answered prayers, for example, which can be considered a type of miracles that open the way to observing everything that is socially rejected. The texts in the travel text provide a wide space of safety between them and the recipient, which makes it difficult for him to reject them or doubt their truth, but the texts that express the customs and traditions of the belief of the society mentioned in the travel cannot be ignored because the strength of customs sometimes does not provide a sufficient safe distance that can be imposed on the recipient, and this enhances the social function of the fantastic, and it seems that this function is not always achieved because the customs and traditions of society may be stronger than the fantastic, and therefore the social function is not necessarily one of its requirements.

Among the functions performed by the fantastic in Al-Tijani's journey is the cognitive function. The large amount of knowledge disseminated throughout the journey provides the recipient with a wealth of knowledge in various fields while he is perusing it. He also sees the fantastic events, incidents, and characters as a means of presenting knowledge, and "the its primary goal is to reach this knowledge." (Khalil, 2007, p. 97). The cognitive function is knowing the possibility of accepting give and take, and in its essence it is interpretive knowledge, it does not present new facts as much as explains the obscure matters, then the traveler continues to narrate the story of the journey to suddenly stop before facts that he describes to the recipient, so he hesitates and is surprised by them, and this style of narration confuses the recipient to determine the nature of the knowledge and its location; It occurs during the narration process, as if the traveler wanted to convey specific knowledge that benefits the recipient in the fantastic texts, such as the story of Al-Khidr mentioned in travel literature to appear as absolute truths that do not go beyond the framework of travel literature. It seems that this style of narration is specific to travel literature alone and not to other texts, but one of the important functions assigned to the fantastic is what critics have indicated about its ability to destroy the stability of truth, considering that it is a focus in which the real is mixed with the unrealistic as contradictions that clash in the duality of positive and negative. Of course, this definition is relative and differs from one recipient to another, and it is not necessary to determine who wins as much as to diagnose this conflict and depict its secretions for all things that penetrate the stability of truth. In this context, Louay Ali Khalil mentions that this function makes the recipient see the fantastic and "assume the solidity of the world of truth in order to destroy it; rather, it reaches the point of considering the fantastic a break in cosmic harmony." (Khalil, 2007, p. 104). Travel literature always seems to be the reality of the real, the reality of the familiar, so most of the talk revolves around the system of familiarity and habit as presented by reality, and as they are tangible in nature, and therefore when the fantastic insists on the intervention of the real in an unfamiliar event, he thereby destabilizes and stabilizes what is believed to be the reality or what is assumed to be the reality, and this is, of course, the secret of hesitation and its being and the tension that affects the text on the one hand and the recipient on the other.

In order for the fantastic to succeed in performing its functions, it is not necessary to link literary facts with life facts, because if the recipient has prior knowledge that the text before him is a literary text, this text will not have the ability to explain the relationship between the

recipient and the reality he lives in to determine the fantastic, because the literary text, no matter how realistic it is, remains a creative text created by the imagination, not by reality. Therefore, the recipient who faces the text as a literary text is not able to unify literary facts with life facts, because the reality of literary events is only within the text and their existence is dependent only within the text.

The travel text represented by Al-Tijani's journey achieved the functions of the fantastic, as having a high ability to convince the recipient of the reality of its events, considering that travel literature is a real act. The travel text has a direct impact on the recipient, especially towards the laws of reality outside the text. This impact is a feature enjoyed by the travel text, and this impact is more effective and serves the fantastic, as it is characterized by a special relationship with the recipient and the laws of reality, which are the focus of his interest. This impact pushes the fantastic to usurp the stability of truth in the travel text.

The fantastic in the texts of travel literature is a basic and different goal. On the one hand, it presents a complete picture of the cosmic truth with its various aspects, both apparent and hidden, by pointing to the other hidden aspect of the truth on the basis that the tangible reality is the first aspect indicated by the knowledge present in travel literature and related to confirming the existence of another world different from the world of tangible reality and represented in the world of the unseen. This may explain the abundance of cognitive facts within the travel text.

On the other hand, one of the goals of the fantastic is to complete the truth in its absolute sense; that is, to confirm the existence of a real journey based on a real narrative action capable of violating laws and systems in the view of the recipient and his feeling of anxiety towards the events related within the travel narrative.

In order for the recipient to understand the functions of the fantastic in travel literature, the system of reality and nature must not be viewed as an absolute, inviolable authority. Rather, it must always be remembered that the laws of reality are temporary laws that do not have the quality of eternity, and they exist for a specific purpose that ends with its end. What was familiar a hundred years ago may seem unfamiliar today, and based on this, travel literature becomes capable of violating any law within reality in the reader's time. This means that the fantastic in the travel texts does not question the system of familiarity or question its truth, but rather tries to put the laws of familiarity in their natural place, considering that they represent only one aspect of truth, which is the temporary, incidental aspect, with the necessity of recognizing the application of other laws that control it and violate reality. Thus, the fantastic becomes an affirmation and confirmation of universal harmony and not a break in this harmony. Accordingly, it can be said that talking about the functions of the fantastic in general is based on the juxtaposition of the familiar and the unfamiliar, and arousing this juxtaposition to astonish the recipient and opens the door wide to talk about the relationship between the travel text and the concept of the fantastic, because one of the important features of the fantastic is the juxtaposition of the familiar and the unfamiliar, a juxtaposition that raises concern of the recipient and pushes him to hesitate in interpreting the facts of the text.

One of the basic elements of the fantastic is the principle of hesitation, which only lasts during the time of hesitation. When the reader decides to judge what he encounters with the interpretations he finds, he leaves the fantastic and enters the adjacent genres of the fantastic or the wondrous. The truth is that hesitation and confusion are strongly present in travel texts, because the recipient falls between two possibilities, both of which are possible. The text can be geographical or historical, and the facts are then a kind of truth. Likewise, the text accepts that its facts are not true.

The recipient standing at the station of thinking necessarily leads him to make a decision that may cancel the fantastic in favor of the fantastic or the wondrous, because hesitation is a decision in itself, and for Todorov, the basis of hesitation was the recipient standing confused

between interpreting the text according to the laws of the fantastic genre that are subject to reality, and interpreting it according to the laws of the wondrous genre that are not subject to reality, so the fantastic is exposed to the threat of disappearance.

Thus, the presence of the fantastic makes the facts of the text ambiguous between the real and the unreal existence, and between the permissible and the forbidden. The origin of the fantastic is that it allows the penetration of the forbidden logically, socially and religiously, such as the penetration of the righteous saints into the heavens and the answering of prayers for them. The forbidden in travel literature has degrees, some of which accept transgression and the fantastic is justified for it, and some of which do not accept transgression and are subject to the fantastic without searching for explanations for it.

The other function is the literary function, which is inherent to the fantastic in any text, regardless of its type; as the fantastic creates a special effect on the reader, "fear or terror, or mere curiosity. The combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar, or the real and the unreal, and the reliance on hesitation or the probabilistic principle to accept events, all of this is likely to provoke and arouse the stillness of his natural system of intuitions, which prompts him to read the text again and again. With the multiplicity of readings, visions and interpretations may multiply, increasing the recipient's relationship with the text, and giving the text greater opportunities to continue by looking at it as an open text that accepts more than one reading." (Khalil, 2007, p. 88) Based on this, the saying that travel literature is a kind of truth is similar to what we know of the facts of our familiar world, which may shock the recipient and push him to read the text again to make sure that the text presents travel literature as an indisputable truth. At this point, the recipient oscillates between doubt and acceptance, between the possible and the imaginary. If the recipient reaches a solution between accepting or rejecting the events, this does not, of course, end the conflict referred to between the two neighboring worlds.

The literary function arises from the juxtaposition of opposing worlds from the recipient's participation in the text, through his standing before the fantastic. The aspect of the literary function is specific to the recipient because the fantastic affects him, meaning that it arouses his panic, fear, or curiosity for him. The presence of unfamiliar facts within the travel text that represents the truth confuses and shocks the recipient, but the important thing is that it arouses his cognitive curiosity to take a specific point of view towards what is happening. Because the recipient is unable to consider the nature of the travel text, he will be forced to reread it; Any mental re-retrieval of the text, when the recipient encounters the presentation of the text as a truth, he has no choice but to re-read the text in the hope of finding another explanation for this familiar departure and habit, and when he does not find what helps him lean towards one interpretation over another, the decision has become his alone, either to accept the truth of the unfamiliar or to reject it, and because the position of travel literature in the cognitive system to which it belongs imposes a special treatment of it, the result of which is the equivalence of all possibilities, and the adoption of the principle of postponement in deciding on it, all of this is likely to make the relationship between the text and the recipient a close relationship.

Texts that are distinguished by their purely literary touch that force the recipient to read them carefully in order to decide on the interpretation of their events, but the travel text imposes a special kind of caution on the recipient, because the latter allows the fantastic to live within its folds, as is the case with other genres.

The travel text, in a way, gives the fantastic the opportunity to live within it, considering travel literature a text that separates the past, present, and future.

"The third aspect of the literary function is the ability of the fantastic to serve the narrative and maintain tension. The service that the fantastic performs for the narrative is based on the fact that every narrative is a movement between two similar balances. The narrative begins with an initial balance that soon breaks, or let us say that it must break, because the narrative does not

go smoothly with the continuation of the balance. A stable law and an established rule are what strain the narrative process. So what will justify the continuation of the narrative if the balance is stable and permanent? In order for the narrative to continue, the balance must be broken.” (Khalil, 2007, p. 89)

Todorov assumes that the text begins with the familiar, which expresses an independent balance, then the fantastic intervenes and disrupts the balance during the narration process, which leads to the construction of a new balance based on the familiar as well. Thus, the text allows the fantastic to intervene and gives the narrative the opportunity to exist for the fantastic.

If we ignore the truth in the texts, we can notice the absence of balance in favor of the text, and the other side of the literary function is the ability of the fantastic to break the monotony of tension, and this ability is represented by the story within the story, and this is what we observed in Al-Tijani’s journey, in the text the traveler begins to narrate something, then comes a story within it, and the appearance of the story within the story leads to two things within the text, the first is opening new horizons for the narrated; as it allows the text to diversify and removes from it the monotony that may achieve a degree of tension, and this is related to the aesthetic value of the text, as maintaining tension and breaking the horizon of the recipient’s expectations by luring him into a story outside the circle of travel literature is likely to increase its artistry as a result of the pleasure of discovery that the recipient feels, and diversity has the ability to consolidate the relationship with the text and present it on the basis of a compositional structure that has different dimensions.

Another aspect of the literary function is an artistic aesthetic aspect that arose through the juxtaposition of the familiar and unfamiliar worlds, and pleasure is obtained from satisfying artistic and cognitive curiosity. As soon as the unfamiliar event appears in the text, the recipient is drawn to it to know its interpretation. The text used the unfamiliar event to hold the recipient’s mind and confuse it. Many travel texts help unfamiliar events to hold the recipient through different narrative mechanisms. The final aspect of this function is serving the narrative and igniting tension and the foundation on which it is based.

The other function is the aesthetic function of the fantastic, in what it arouses in the recipient of this surprise that is hidden from the meeting of two worlds that were not believed to meet; that is, the world of the familiar with the world of the impossible, or the real with the unreal. The juxtaposition of these two worlds creates something new that the recipient is not familiar with, which arouses his artistic curiosity and makes him led to the text without will, and he lives in a state of amazement. The aesthetic artistry in the travel text arouses in the recipient a state of familiarity, towards familiar events, the most that can be said about them is that they take place within the atmosphere of a real and actual travel. However, when the text is transferred to the recipient at a time other than the time of recording travel literature, then the recipient may live in a state of alert towards an event that has cut the rope of familiarity, and presented itself as part of the truth, so the recipient has no choice but to follow the text in search of what solves the questions that aroused in him the desire to satisfy his artistic and cognitive curiosity as well.

As for the qualitative function: it requires the existence of a supernatural event that violates the usual system, which allowed the text to belong to travel literature (Alawi, 2005/2006). Whatever the function of the fantastic, it is usually based on hesitation characterized by a temporary nature that must have an end that may transfer the text to the genre of the fantastic or the wonderful, which makes the fantastic a vanishing genre. As for hesitation in the travel text, it has a fixed nature as long as the world exists, due to the recipient taking his position to decide on the nature of the texts. On this basis, it can be said that the qualitative function means that the fantastic has the ability to help the text in which it is found to establish its position within the genre to which it belongs, so travel texts belong to travel literature.

In addition to these functions, other functions can be touched as one of terror: Al-Tijani describes in his journey the Gabes epidemic and the victims it left behind, especially since he witnessed its occurrence and its effects to the point that he was unable to count the number of deaths from the epidemic, and this indicates the severity of its danger, as this situation was not familiar with this degree of strength and excess and he was not accustomed to it, so he said: "He went too far in this chapter and went beyond his usual and killed many people." (Al-Tijani, 1981) He added that most of those affected by it are strangers and not residents of Gabes. Al-Tajani described the epidemic in a terrifying way that indicates its horrific effects in taking the lives of many people and its victims are primarily strangers. The recipient feels fear towards what Al-Tajani mentioned, because the effect of this epidemic on strangers seems mysterious in its causes, and the recipient is unable to find logical laws to explain the ambiguity of the world in general and the ambiguity of the effect of this epidemic on strangers in Gabes.

Fear in this case is a natural feeling for the recipient because he does not know what he fears; that is, he does not know the reason for the epidemic's effect on strangers only. Accordingly, the recipient's expression of his fear and terror is one of the most prominent functions of the fantastic that leaves an impact on the recipient, and this emotion is employed within the fantastic text; where the traveler Al-Tijani succeeded in creating the fantastic in a logical and systematic way to express his feelings of anxiety and terror at what he saw of the results of this epidemic. Thus, the fantastic is achieved by generating terror and arousing his sense of pain. Of course, the recipient's way of interacting with these phenomena differs according to the era in which he lives. What may terrify him today may not terrify him tomorrow because his intellectual and cultural awareness changes with the passage of time.

The function of alienation also appears in travel literature: Arab culture enjoys folk tales full of strange incidents and characters, such as metamorphosis, dreams and nightmares, and their daily lives generally take place in an atmosphere covered with anxiety and fear, because he feels forces manipulating the fate of all things around him and he does not know their nature, so he feels alienated. In this regard, Al-Tijani mentioned in his journey myths and falsehoods about the planet Suhail, which causes the death of camels. He mentions that this matter is common and widespread among the people of Hisn Al-Jam, and no objection was recorded from any of them; rather, they acknowledge its truthfulness "that the rising of the planet Suhail causes the death of camels and the occurrence of calamity in them, for this reason they hate it and turn away from it." (Al-Tijani, 1981, p. 62) It is strange that the rising of the planet Suhail harms camels and causes them calamity. Al-Tijani continued the story, searching for the truth of the relationship between the planet Suhail and the death of camels. Here, Al-Tijani conveys the common and popular belief among camel breeders: "That the hour of its rising separates the young camels from their mothers. He said that this is the reason for the camels' hatred of the star Suhail." (Al-Tijani, 1981, p. 63) Because it reveals the fake camels, and based on that, it can be said that superstitions and imaginary beliefs play a role in the recipient's feeling of alienation.

The relationship between the fantastic and travel texts is a close relationship due to its location on the edge between what is literary, historical, geographical, religious and social, which led to another assumption, namely its ability to enrich the general theoretical structure of the concept of the fantastic, and based on this, the results came in a multi-faceted manner, one direction towards

The internal structure of travel literature in its relation to the fantastic, and the other side towards the general theoretical structure of the concept of the fantastic and the ability of travel texts to contain it.

The fantastic made the reality of the travel text have a transcendent nature that goes beyond the walls of the text to reality, considering travel literature a source for receiving knowledge,

and that knowledge is stories that embodied Islamic civilization, and it also works to frame events in a realistic mold; so that the supernatural event appears to be part of the realistic truth.

It can be said that dealing with the “idea of the fantastic without discrimination, because the issue of terminology is still unstable; there is no strong and decisive limit that can be relied upon in dealing with this issue, which is widely disparate globally, and which differs according to human and religious cultures.”(Al-Anzi, 2011)The fantastic begins with the reader confronting the supernatural event, and through the presence of this element in a world subject to reason as a reality and not a fantasy, it can establish a strong relationship between the recipient and everything that is fantastic that carries within it mystery and unfamiliarity.

Travel literature, as an ancient Arab narrative, carried within it that fantastic dimension, and because the term “the fantastic” was not common and popular in Arab criticism until the last decade, an Arab critical marginalization of the fantastic present in literary works in general resulted, and it only received a few articles and some simple studies, compared to what is available in studies in Arab criticism.

The fantastic is a trend that has been dealt with in many ways and has been used in studying heritage and developing its relationship with Arab heritage and dealing with it, especially in folk and oral tales and travel news.

Because the fantastic does not seek closure, it was touched upon in travel literature, and travel literature proved the presence of the fantastic soul, even if this presence was not dense; as glimpses of the fantastic were mixed with realism, and thus it can be said that the discourse of the travel text resorted to the fantastic within a text derived from reality, and this indicates that the fantastic is open to political, geographical, and historical discourse, all of which are reference frameworks with which the traveler built his text.

### **Conclusion:**

- Travel literature contains a collection of stories and events that contribute to conveying historical images to readers, describing the nature and stages of travel literature at the same time.
- Travel literature has two dimensions. The first dimension is the actual movement of travel and an intentional experience with prior goals and planning. The second dimension is the recording of this movement in a linguistic discourse. The literary nature of travel literature is achieved through its linguistic discourse, in addition to the overlap of several expressive forms.
- Al-Tijani’s journey included aspects related to myths and oddities, and was more related to the chapter on miracles and virtues, and also when he mentioned ascetics, Sufis, and the righteous.
- The popular beliefs included in Al-Tijani’s journey played an effective role in the emergence of the fantastic narrative in it, and the reader standing before it in amazement and astonishment.
- Al-Tijani tended to mention the strange things that caught his attention during his journey, which prompted him to describe them, whether in terms of architecture, nature, people’s conditions, customs, or beliefs. Al-Tijani did not remain a prisoner of the astonishment he was exposed to; rather, he tried to provide an analysis of everything he saw and witnessed in order to find logical explanations for the strangeness and wonder of what he described. The strange things he mentioned and described did not arouse his emotion; rather, he remained calm when describing the most important places that aroused wonder and astonishment in him.
- The fantastic was employed in travel literature in several forms that changed the familiarity of the place, events, customs, and characters in their behavior and actions, but to varying degrees.

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