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## **Artistic Space Description in Novelistic Fairy Tales**

### **Abstract**

*The article deals with the artistic space issues in Azerbaijani folk tales, especially in novellistic tales. It is noted that space is an element that forms the poetic system of fairy tales. The article searches the form and content of the novelistic tales based on the features of artistic space due to the types of fairy tales. As a rule, the space where the hero was born, grew up is presented as his native space in fairy tales, the space that opposes this space and threatens him with war is introduced as a foreign space. The analysis of artistic space shows that unlike magic and religious tales, novelistic tales are more accurate reflection of reality, as they are composed of elements of real space. It is led to an exaggeration of the concept of social justice, vital issues, loyalty and betrayal, topics related to personal relationships such as trust and friendship, social justice in the fairy tales. The analysis of space shows that the thinking that shapes magic and religious tales with novelistic tales differs from one another. As society develops, people's thinking and outlook on life have also changed and these changes impacts various groups of fairy tales differently. In novellistic tales, the depiction of artistic space is based on the promotion of intellect, the concept of social justice and personal relationships.*

**Keywords:** *tale, plot, space, household tales, novelistic tales, artistic space, religious tales, magic tales*



## Roman Niteliğindeki Masallarda Sanatsal Mekân Tasviri

### Öz

*Makalede Azerbaycan halk masallarında, özellikle de novellistik masallarda sanatsal mekân konuları ele alınmaktadır. Mekânın masalların şürsel sistemini oluşturan bir unsur olduğu belirtilmektedir. Makale, masal türlerine bağlı olarak sanatsal mekânın özelliklerine dayanarak romansı masalların biçim ve içeriğini araştırmaktadır. Kural olarak masalarda kahramanın doğduğu, büyüdüğü mekân onun yerli mekânı olarak sunulurken, bu mekâna karşı çıkan ve onu savaşla tehdit eden mekân yabancı mekân olarak tanıtılır. Sanatsal mekânın analizi, büyü ve dini masalların aksine, roman masallarının gerçek mekân unsurlarından oluştuğu için gerçeği daha doğru yansıttığını göstermektedir. Masalarda sosyal adalet kavramının, yaşamsal konuların, sadakat ve ihanetin, güven ve dostluk gibi kişisel ilişkilerle ilgili konuların, sosyal adaletin abartılmasına yol açmaktadır. Mekân analizi, büyü ve dini masallar ile romanesk masalları şekillendiren düşüncenin birbirinden farklılaştığını göstermektedir. Toplum geliştikçe, insanların düşünceleri ve hayata bakış açıları da değişmiştir ve bu değişiklikler çeşitli masal gruplarını farklı şekillerde etkilemektedir. Roman türündeki masalarda sanatsal mekânın tasviri, aklın, sosyal adalet kavramının ve kişisel ilişkilerin teşvik edilmesine dayanır.*

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** Masal, Olay Örgüsü, Mekân, Ev Masalları, Romansı Masallar, Sanatsal Mekân, Dini Masallar, Sihirli Masallar*

### Introduction

Azerbaijani fairy tales stand out with their unique depiction of artistic space, as a part of a rich culture and folklore traditions. In these tales, space is not just a physical setting where events occur; it is also a symbolic realm that reflects the spirit, emotions, and connections of the characters. Mountains, rivers, forests, and villages are the key elements that form the artistic space of these narratives. Each setting shapes the tale's atmosphere and takes the reader on a mystical journey. Focusing on the space within the tales helps us understand how it shapes the characters' fates and guides the course of events. For instance, a mysterious forest may represent a space where the hero faces challenges, while a beautiful river symbolizes love and hope for the reader. These spaces enhance the depth and richness of the fairy tale world, allowing the readers to grasp the artistic environment more fully. Exploring how artistic space is depicted in Azerbaijani fairy tales and its connection to the content of the tales is akin to a journey into the depths of folklore. Thus, artistic space helps to clarify the values, belief systems, and national identity embedded in the fairy tales. This article will focus on the role and significance of artistic space in Azerbaijani fairy tales, bringing readers closer to the enchanting world of these narratives. It is well known that novelistic fairy tales, commonly recognized in scholarly literature as realistic or household tales, form a widespread category. Realistic tales are

characterized by their inclusion of real human participants, while novelistic tales are distinguished by their resemblance to short story formats. Household tales, on the other hand, are known for their detailed depiction of scenes from daily life. To avoid terminological confusion, we will use the term “novelistic tales,” as it is accepted in European folklore studies. When examining the poetic features of fairy tales, we arrive at the conclusion that form and content are inseparable. Each element complements the other; the form arises in accordance with the tale’s content and intended message. For this reason, it is possible to distinguish between groups of tales based on their form and content characteristics. In this article, we will attempt to identify the features of novelistic tales based on these elements, presenting this context against the backdrop of the concept of space within novelistic tales. As you know, the choice of space is crucial, as it is a key element that defines the poetic characteristics of the tale, the system of characters, and the artistic means of expression. While in magic tales the space carries different meanings, in novelistic tales, such additional interpretations are absent; here the space is presented with realistic features and reflects the reality more accurately. The characteristics and principles of organization of this space allow for distinguishing novelistic tales from other groups, while also clarifying their plot composition.

Research on novelistic tales remains limited, and existing studies often repeat previously proposed ideas. Textbooks written for university students tend to focus more on detailed plot descriptions than on the poetic characteristics of these tales. For this reason, it is challenging to reach a precise conclusion based on current research. If this were not the case, E.M. Meletinsky would not have referred to the plot of “The Master and the Apprentice” (AT 950) as a novelistic tale, as these plots do not meet the requirements of this group (Meletinskiy, 1990). Additionally, the Aarne-Thompson (AT) system catalogs do not accurately determine the group to which fairy tale plots belong, leading to the repetition of similar mistakes. Since not all fairy tale groups have been studied equally, while it is easier to identify certain groups, such as the tales about animals, this poses challenges for religious, novelistic and religious tales. The poetic characteristics of these groups have yet to be fully explored, making it difficult to accurately identify plot composition. We hope this research will provide a clearer understanding of the organizational principles of novelistic tales and will fill the existing gap.

The tales we refer to as humorous are cataloged as “jokes” in the AT catalog and known as “satiric tales” fairy in Russian folklore studies. When preparing the plot indicators of Azerbaijani fairy tales, we included these tales in a separate group under the name “humorous tales.” In fact, there was no need to create a new term for these tales; it would have been more

appropriate to use the existing term "humorous" from folk tradition. Indeed, there is no consensus in Azerbaijani folklore regarding the term "humorous." Mukhtar Imanov calls texts based on lies humorous, while Tahir Orujov refers to those with unexpected endings as humorous. In popular culture, this term encompasses tales with humorous content. These tales are often told to lighten the audience's mood during breaks in epic performances, breaking the heavy atmosphere created by the epic. Therefore, we are also referring to humorous tales when we mention "humorous."

### **1.Main part**

Novelistic fairy tales are among the groups distinguished by their widespread distribution and rich plot composition. Notably, there are over 200 plots within this group. While many fairy tale groups have vanished over time, novelistic tales have retained their significance in the present day. Compared to tales collected in the past, their epic narrative breadth may have diminished today, yet they still maintain their relevance. From 2012 to 2014, 385 tales were recorded as part of a project by the Folklore Institute, of which 85 are novelistic tales. These tales are characterized by their accurate reflection of reality and grounding in real settings. Novelistic tales are considered to have one of the richest collections of national plots; half of the 302 plots unique to the Azerbaijani repertoire belong to this group. The precise classification of these plots is based on content characteristics, with three main thematic subgroups: the celebration of clever behavior, social issues, and personal relationships. Intelligent and skillful characters are highlighted, as their actions rely solely on wit and wisdom. These tales are rich in wise elders, quick-witted children, and clever girls.

The organization of space based on different principles has led to the emergence of various types of heroes in these tales. While the classification of hero types is a central issue in both literary and folkloric studies, the approaches differ. Y.Y. Yudin notes that in realistic literature, typological generality merges with realistic features, differing little from the types in folkloric genres. Unlike magic tales, in novelistic tales, hero types are more individualized; however, neither in fairy tales nor in folk tales do they carry character depth. Here, different artistic methods and dimensions are required (Yudin, 1979). As it can be seen, the lack of individual characteristics in fairy tale characters does not elevate them to a character level; these characters only differ in their methods of action. In magical tales, a hero achieves their goals through magic helpers and means, while in heroic tales, the hero's physical strength is idealized and plays a crucial role in achieving goals. In novelistic tales, this function is fulfilled by intellect and skill. This distinction in hero types is what sets novelistic tales apart from others.

Names given to novelistic tales, such as “ a quick-witted child,” “ a clever girl,” and “ a smart shepherd,” actually reflect the hero types unique to these tales.

In novelistic tales, the hero's main characteristics are quick-wittedness, cleverness, and actions driven by intellect. This can be observed in the traits of the same characters participating in various compositional tales. For instance, the character of the bald man appears in different groups of tales. Although these characters may share outward traits (being bald, belonging to a poor family), they differ in their methods of action. In magic tales, the bald character is passive, with helpers acting on their behalf after obtaining a magical object. In contrast, in novelistic tales, the bald character emerges as a clever and quick-witted figure, while in humorous tales, they take on a crafty role. This demonstrates that even the same characters adapt according to the poetic characteristics of each fairy tale group.

In magic tales, magical helpers are obtained through kind behavior and good conduct. For example, in the tale “Beautiful Fatma,” (Azərbaycan nağılları, 2005) while the old woman's head is full of lice, Fatma praises her hair, claiming it is better than that of her mother. For this kind behavior, the old woman rewards her, but punishes rude daughter. In another example, a hero changes the food set before animals, placing everyone else's food in front of them, and in return, the animals gift him one of their young. Or, in the tale “Hatəm,” Ibrahim removes a piece of wood stuck in a demon's foot, and as a reward for this kindness, the demon takes him to Gülüstani-Iram, and so on. In novelistic tales, although magical objects rarely appear, they are not acquired through kind behavior as in magic tales or through physical strength as in heroic tales, but rather through intellect and wisdom. A hero answers a demon's questions correctly, and in return, the demon gifts him pomegranates with precious seeds (Azərbaycan nağılları, 2005). Since novelistic tales celebrate intellect and wisdom, cities like Halab, Mashhad, and Karbala play significant roles in their organization. Historically, these cities have been recognized as major educational centers in the region, housing renowned madrasahs where people from not only within the country but also from different parts of the world come to study and acquire knowledge. In novelistic tales, these cities are depicted as centers of study and education, where heroes receive education and gain various skills. In the tale “Patience is the Key to Success,” the hero studies in Halab for 25 years before returning to his homeland. On the way, he encounters a shepherd who asks him about the first letter of wisdom, but the scholar does not know the answer. To learn this answer, he has to tend the shepherd's sheep for a year, and after a year, the shepherd tells him that the first letter of wisdom is patience. This advice later prevents unnecessary bloodshed (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012c). In

novelistic tales, characters possess extraordinary qualities, but unlike in magic tales, they do not receive these qualities externally; rather, they manifest as internal traits—innate talents and extraordinary abilities. For example, one of the dervishes who goes to steal from the king's treasure knows the language of dogs, another can open any lock, and a third one never forgets the face of a person he has seen once. Alternatively, brothers deduce the signs of a lost camel based on tracks on the road, determining its ingredients from the taste of food, and recognizing it as the cook's son by his behavior. Since these traits are portrayed as intrinsic qualities of the characters, there is no risk of their loss.

Novelistic fairy tales are dedicated to the celebration of intellect and wisdom, which increases the role of clever and quick-witted characters within the narrative structure. Insightfulness, quick-wittedness, and cleverness emerge as the main qualities of these characters. In female characters, their intellect and skill are emphasized over mere physical beauty, resulting in their significant roles in shaping the plots. While women in magic tales are often portrayed as victims of slander and falsehood, in novelistic tales, they are depicted as figures who assist their families with wise counsel, leading them to social prosperity. Thanks to the clever woman, the husband overcomes laziness and learns to work; with her intelligence, she saves her husband from prison and restores his lost wealth. A girl, through her cleverness, manages to get King Abbas to carry a bathing pot and persuades him to pour water on his hands, and so on. In the tale "Black jacket person and the Clever Girl," the bride advises that everyone must bring an item home when they return. The bride's husband brings a dead snake and throws it on the roof of their house. That day the eagle takes the princess's necklace with its claws and drops it on the roof of the house where the bride is, retrieving the snake's carcass. The bride promises the king to find the necklace in return for prohibiting the lighting of lamps in the city for three days. For three days, lights are turned off, with only the bride's house remaining lit. When the black jacketed man comes to the light, the bride persuades her to leave the house once more (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012c). As it's seen, greatness and seniority are measured not by age or gender, but by intellect and wisdom. In this tale, it is through the cleverness of the bride that the Black jacketed man, who had left the house, returns back. Bahlul Danende, known for his quick-wittedness, is one of the main characters in novelistic tales. He appears as both a hero and, in some plots, as a wise old man who sells wise sayings. The active presence of Bahlul's character, becoming one of the main figures, further illustrates that novelistic tales present quick-witted individuals as the central agents.

In magic tales, there is usually a correspondence between a character's actions and their physical attributes, leading to negative characters being depicted as ugly or deformed, while positive characters are often portrayed with radiant features and beautiful appearances. In other words, in magic tales, beauty and ugliness not only reflect external attributes but also signify the essence of the character and their role within the tale. If we recall the figures of the stepdaughter and the biological daughter, we see that the stepdaughter is always depicted as beautiful, while the biological daughter is portrayed as ugly and deformed. Similarly, wicked characters engaged in evil deeds are consistently represented with negative traits. In novelistic tales, such additional meanings are absent; thus, beauty and ugliness merely express the external appearance of the characters. Since external appearance is not significant in these tales, the fact that a hero has one side of their hair golden and the other side is silver, or that they make the Moon and Sun envious of their beauty, is of little importance. As value is placed on a person's intellect and wisdom, external beauty loses its significance. Therefore, although the herdsman's daughter has cross-eyed features, she wins the heart of King Abbas through her intellect and wisdom. A girl who grows up in a poor family captivates a merchant wishing to marry her son with her cleverness and wit. The emphasis on the contrast between beauty and ugliness in novelistic tales is a reflection of this perspective. A girl who marries a handsome young man feels unworthy due to her own ugliness and leaves the house. On the way, she encounters the Black jacketed man who appears before her in the guise of a beautiful girl and convinces her that she is the most beautiful in her husband's eyes. Following this, the girl returns to her family and lives a prosperous life with her husband (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2013b.) This cannot be stated for magical tales. In magical tales, external appearance plays a significant role, which is why the description of a person's outward appearance is more detailed.

In magic tales, old age signifies wisdom and experience, which is why wise and knowledgeable individuals are typically depicted as elderly. Similarly, in novelistic tales, wise characters are often portrayed as older and play the role of helpful figures. It is precisely due to the wise advice of the elderly vizier that King Abbas refrains from executing women, and thanks to his aged father, he answers the questions sent by the enemy king, saving the country from war. The villagers manage to rescue a person stranded on a mountain through the advice of an old man, while the hero, heeding his father's words, realizes the dangers of drinking and gambling and avoids these vices. In novelistic tales, the elderly man plays a crucial role to achieve personal happiness and social prosperity, resolving difficult issues, and prevent impending dangers through wise guidance. Thus, in the tale "A Blind Man's Story," a married

brother who neglects his blind father ends up in ruin, while his single brother who supports the blind father becomes prosperous, building a palace worthy of a king and becoming one of the notable figures in the city (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012c). Unlike magic tales, in novelistic tales, wisdom and intellect are not measured by age. While youth may sometimes be equated with inexperience in magic tales, in novelistic tales, children often stand out for their cleverness and quick-wittedness. For example, an ordinary girl finds the answers to the vizie's and king's challenging questions, or a child's words inspire the king and save his life.

Novelistic tales also serve as a stage for clever individuals. These characters can turn arising situations to their advantage. For instance, in the tale "As You Hold the World, So It Will Go So," the hero marries the city governor's daughter through his cleverness. When a young man sees King Abbas buying a two-manat watermelon, he seizes the opportunity to present himself as the king's son and ultimately achieves social prosperity.

Wisdom and intellect are not gained solely through education; they also pass down through generations as hereditary traits. The dispute between the teacher and the shepherd aims to determine the child's true parentage. The positive outcome presented by the girl reveals that she is actually the teacher's child, underscoring the importance of heredity. Novelistic tales reflect the worldview of the people of their time. They not only embody the products of that era but also indicate that people perceive reality with a more realistic approach. Intelligent individuals can achieve everything in life, yet novelistic tales show that intellect and wit alone are insufficient for happiness. Luck without wisdom is of no benefit, and likewise, an unlucky intellect holds no value. In the tale "The Dispute Between Wit and Luck," although luck claims it can make a person happy without intellect, by the end of the tale, it is realized that intellect is also necessary.

In magic tales, heroes usually come from high social classes, whereas in novelistic tales intelligent individuals emerge from simple, everyday backgrounds. Ideals shift; the answers to questions that baffle kings are found by shepherds and herdsman's daughters. Clever and quick-witted people are more valued, appointed to positions of authority, and become village leaders. The intelligent and wise heroes are key features that distinguish these tales from others.

In the story of the jeweler, the king distributes lambs to the people to find the missing jeweler. However, only the jeweler can accomplish this task because he cleverly keeps the animal at the same weight exactly. As it's seen, intellect is the jeweler's distinguishing trait, and it is this quality that makes it possible to identify his whereabouts. Intellect and wisdom are also criteria by which people are advanced in the society. The king appoints a shepherd as a



vizier due to his intellect, and places a gardener as the village chief based on his cleverness. He dismisses the old vizier and brings in the wise and quick-witted vizier Allahverdi Khan instead. When a merchant searches for a bride for his son, he looks not for beauty or nobility, but for intelligence and competence. In the tale “The Merchant’s Son,” a merchant, suffering from thirst, asks a girl for water. When she brings it, she notices he is sweating; knowing that drinking cold water could make him ill, she deliberately spills it. She does it twice, and only on the third attempt, when she sees his sweat has cooled, she gives him the water. The merchant learns the reason of the girl’s behavior and admires her intellect and competence, ultimately marrying her (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b). Similarly, when the merchant wants to marry a girl, he sends her eggs and instructs her to hatch them in one day, raise the chicks in one day and prepare them for cooking. In response, the girl sends him a bowl of wheat, asking him to plant it, harvest it, and send it back in one day. Impressed by the girl’s cleverness, the merchant marries her (Əliyev & Xəlilov, 1994). When choosing her future husband, a girl seeks intellect and competence rather than mere beauty. While magical tales often feature fantastical demands from suitors—like building a palace from gold and silver bricks or bringing garments sewn without a needle—novelistic tales show girls demanding practical skills from their suitors. These skills often prove crucial, saving the suitor’s life later. For example, in “The Princess and the Bald Man,” the princess gives her suitor three loads of gold and promises to marry him if he doubles the amount. The hero cleverly trades the gold for various goods, and when he returns, those he traded with cannot fulfill his requests, so they return the loads of gold (Azərbaycan folklor antologiyası, 1994). Intellect and competence are also key traits of rulers. In novelistic tales, we encounter two types of rulers: wise and foolish. The distinguishing characteristic of the wise rulers is their intellect. In the tale “King Abbas’s Trial,” the king visits a newly married couple, who hide their marriage from him, claiming to be siblings. To verify the king hides silverware under one of the beds. Unaware of this, the couple sleeps on another bed, allowing King Abbas to confirm their true relationships (Azərbaycan folklor antologiyası, 1994). According to novelistic tales, when a king is wise and competent, there will be order and social justice in the land. The tale states that the rule of a foolish person is like that of Pırgulu. A king, taking a vacation, appoints a hedonist in his place. During this time, the appointed man gives a woman a bag of gold from the state treasure, executes a butcher, and speaks to the ear of a dead man. When the king returns back, he learns of these secrets. It turns out the woman he gave gold to is his own wife, whom he provided for even after leaving the throne. The butcher was executed as revenge for previously refusing to give the man meat on credit (Qarabağ: folklor

da bir tarixdir, 2013a). In another tale, when the king goes on a journey, he gives the key to the treasury to Bahlul Danende. Bahlul gives two bags of gold to a passing woman and jingles the treasury key in the ear of the dead man while saying something. When the king returns, he learns of Bahlul's behavior and discovers that the woman he gave gold to is his wife, to whom he has been grateful. He gives her the extra bag of gold to ensure she continues to take care of him. To the dead man, he says, "Look at how the world has come to be that the key to the treasury is in the hands of a fool" (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2013b). The perception of wealth also differs from other tales. In religious tales, it is believed that since God is the provider, there is little point in human effort and struggle. This perspective is exemplified when a poor man dreams of three springs. The spring for the poor flows drop by drop, the one for village leaders flows more abundantly, and the one for nobles and khans flows profusely. The poor man, wishing to change his fate, attempts to widen the spring's eye with a stick, but the stick breaks, blocking the spring. Alternatively, the king places a bag of gold on the poor man's path, intending for him to take it when he crosses the bridge. When the poor man reaches the bridge, he closes his eyes, saying, "Let me see how a blind man crosses this bridge," and as a result, the gold goes to someone else. Or, when a wealthy man is advised by God to give his children dry dough and send them outside, he follows this advice but ties a bag around their necks to prevent the crumbs from falling. Due to his respect for the bread, God increases the wealthy man's fortune. Thus, in religious tales, wealth is linked to moral and religious values, and without divine provision, a person's efforts hold no significance.

In contrast, in novelistic tales, sustenance is tied to labor and effort. Where there is work and toil, there is also wealth and a prosperous life. In the tale "The Lazy Husband" (TR 986), the protagonist lives a poor life until he marries the king's daughter. Through her, he becomes accustomed to work and effort, leading to a change in his life as he returns from a journey with considerable wealth. In another example, two neighbors set out for better fortunes. One works hard and gathers a lot of money, while the other indulges in pleasures and fails to accumulate any wealth. Money is earned through hard work, and those who do not toil will never appreciate its value. In "The Three Wills," a character living off his father's earnings squanders the inheritance after his father dies, eventually reaching a point where he must beg relatives for help. When no one helps him, he realizes the importance of hard work and living independently (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2014b). Similarly, in the plot "Money Earned with Hard Work" (TR 988\*), a son misrepresents money received from his mother as his own earnings. He is unconcerned when his father throws this money into the fire or out the window. However, when

his father burns money earned through his own efforts, he cannot remain indifferent and desperately tries to retrieve it from the flames. Thus, in novelistic tales, the idea that sustenance is not provided by God but earned through one's own intellect, cleverness, and hard work is emphasized. In novelistic tales, the setting is such that one cannot achieve anything solely through brute strength. This is evident when a son arguing with his father, tries to use his strength to cross the river, seeking water, and ends up getting beaten each time. Eventually, he realizes his father's wisdom. In these tales, force and strength do not work; one must act with intelligence and cunning to achieve their goals. The characteristics of the setting in tales change according to the elements that comprise them. Magic tales feature fantastical elements, while novelistic tales consist of real elements. In magic tales, elements like mountains, caves, and seas have specific functions, and these functions transform them into fantastic elements. In contrast, because novelistic tales lack such additional functions, their setting elements are portrayed with realistic traits. While magic tales may have gardens as places where demonic beings can infiltrate, novelistic tales present gardens without such extraordinary functions; they serve as places where flowers and trees grow, providing shade and rest for people. Thus, in novelistic tales, the realities of life are depicted with greater realism, presenting settings that reflect the real world more authentically. For this reason, novelistic tales do not involve elements of imaginary time or the narrator's participation in the narrative, as such formulas contradict the nature of these tales. While novelistic tales may utilize elements from magic tales, they lose their fantastic characteristics. For instance, in "A Lazy Husband" (TR 986), the protagonist answers the question posed by a demon in a well, receiving pomegranates with precious stones as a gift. In magic tales, wells serve as connections between this world and the next, typically characterized by the chaotic elements and described as places inhabited by demonic beings. However, in the aforementioned tale, the well is presented to the reader as an ordinary water well. Thus, the loss of fantastic characteristics from the spatial elements borrowed from magic tales stems from the distinctive characteristics of the setting in novelistic tales. Since these tales consist of real elements, they do not contain fantastic features, instead replacing them with unique real elements consistent with the structure and characteristics of the tale. In novelistic tales, the setting is composed of real elements, which allows for the presentation of social values, the violation of these values, the rise of lawlessness, the indistinguishability between the rich and the poor, and the infringement of the rights of the poor as primary causes of disorder. Such plots typically conclude with the restoration of order and the establishment of justice. The emphasis on the sense of justice in novelistic tales has led to

the creation of characters such as the just king and the fair judge. The figure of King Abbas, who travels secretly changing his dresses to learn about the lives of his people and the judge who resolves the most contentious issues through fair rulings are rooted in these ideas.

In magic tales, the struggle against otherworldly beings is replaced in novelistic tales by a focus on the fight against social injustice. In this context, social justice is portrayed as the fundamental guarantee of order in the world. For example, when two friends travel to a foreign land and attempt to earn money through their labor, they find that rampant lawlessness prevents anyone from paying them. The friends stand at the cemetery gate demanding payment from the dead owners, which eventually reaches the king's ears. He restores order, ensuring the principles of social justice are upheld (Azərbaycan folklor antologiyası, 1994). Since social justice forms the basis of order in society, the theme of restoring social order often takes center stage in these tales. In "Neither Right nor Wrong," two neighbors go abroad to make a living. One works hard and accumulates wealth, while the other idling around, achieves nothing. Returning back, the industrious neighbor kills the other man and takes his earnings. The deceased neighbor bequeaths that his unborn child be named "Neither Right nor Wrong," a name that ultimately leads to the revelation of the crime and the punishment of the murderer. In novelistic tales, crimes do not go unpunished; even if time passes, the guilty are held accountable, and the tale concludes with the restoration of justice (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2014b). In religious tales, sustenance is provided by God, and blessings are associated with His name. In contrast, in novelistic tales, blessings are linked to justice; where there is justice, there are blessings. Conversely, in the absence of social justice, blessings are scarce. In one village, King Abbas is invited to taste pomegranate juice. He enjoys it greatly and considers imposing a tax. However, when the villager brings more juice, he realizes that from two pomegranates he could only extract one glass, while now he needs fifty pomegranates for just one glass. This shortage leads to consequences for King Abbas (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b). Since locations are assessed based on social values, we do not wish to remain in places where these values are violated; in such cases, leaving becomes the goal. For instance, when doctor sees that the rich and the poor are treated the same in a city, he wishes to leave, but his disciple disagrees. Ultimately, doctor's wisdom is proven rightly. The king wishes to execute a jeweler, but due to the jeweler's large neck and small head, the nose does not fit. While searching for someone else to hang, they consider doctor's disciple, who fits the requirements. Doctor saves his disciple from execution. In novelistic tales, the setting grounded in social values highlights the characters of the just judge and the fair ruler. Where social justice is

violated, there are people suffering injustices, and their only hope is the judge. This judge is not someone seeking to exploit the poor but is instead the guarantor of social order. Through his wise decisions and judgments, justice is restored, injustices are resolved, and thieves and those coveting others' rights are punished.

In "The Untrustworthy Brother," a poor brother sends money to his wealthy brother. The rich brother embezzles the money and hires false witnesses to hide his theft from the poor brother's family. Returning back, the poor brother discovers the truth and complains to the judge. The judge interrogates the false witnesses individually and uncovers the rich brother's lie through their inconsistent testimonies. Consequently, the money is returned to the poor brother, and the rich brother and the false witnesses are imprisoned (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2013b.). In another tale, a blind man claims ownership of a horse. When they arrive at a destination, both the horse and the king's wife are said to belong to him. They complain to the judge, who incarcerates them separately. The blind man thinks that he will either get the horse or the wife. The king's wife scolds the king, prompting the judge to expose the blind man's lie (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b). The complaints made to the judge clearly illustrate his role as a regulator of social justice. Some people turn to the judge due to issues like the loss of their children, injustices suffered, their cow being slaughtered, false accusations from the blind man, and the wealthy brother embezzling gold sent to them. The judge restores violated justice through his wise decisions and judgments, returning rights to the oppressed and punishing the guilty, thereby establishing order in society. Thus, in novelistic tales, the judge is a protector of social justice.

In the tale "The Unfortunate Man" (TR 1534), a man borrows money from a Jew. If he does not repay the debt on time, the Jew threatens to cut off a measure of his flesh. The man brings the money on time but cannot find the Jew at his shop, thus he is liable to punishment according to the terms. The man complains to the judge. On the way, the borrower tries to return a runaway horse, but a stone he throws blinds the horse, which then jumps from the minaret. It falls onto an elderly man praying below. Both the horse's owner and the elderly man also complain to the judge. In this tale, Bahlul Danende plays the role of the judge, preventing the unfair punishment of the borrower through his judgments (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2013b.). The figure of the judge is also present in the humorous tales, but here we encounter a different type of judge. He is not a guarantor of social order but rather someone who colludes with thieves and robbers, depriving the victim of their rights. The just ruler is also an important character in novelistic tales. The king is not just the head of the state; he is also a guardian of social order. He punishes the thieves who create the treasury, arrests the

robbers, and dresses as a dervish to travel the land, clarifying crimes committed long ago. The children's game "Khan-vizier," based on the judgment of thieves, reinforces the notion of the king as a figure who maintains social justice in popular thought. In the tale "The Council of the Goats," one of forty goats playing a game is elected king. This king resolves a dispute between two brothers and uncovers that the wealthy brother has stolen the feather sent to the poor brother's family. As the guarantor of social justice, the king takes care of the people's needs, striving not to make unjust decisions. For instance, upon learning that watermelons are sold for two dinars in the market, he complains about the high price but ultimately understands the difficulty of raising buffaloes and changes his mind. To pay for the salt received, he orders coins worth a quarter of a penny to be minted (Azərbaycan nağılları, 2005). The functions assigned to the figure of the ruler in novelistic tales have led to the emergence of intelligent advisor characters like vizier Allahverdi Khan, Yellow Khoca, and Mysterios Subhan. The specific names given to these characters emphasize their significance within the structure of the tale. Such characters aim to remind the king of the importance of social justice. They steer the king away from mistakes, assist him in making correct decisions, and play a role in resolving many complex issues (Bayat, 1996). In the tale "The Legend of King Abbas," it is noted that when King Abbas ordered someone's execution, his advisor Yellow Khoca suggested delaying the execution until morning. This reflects the king's tendency to make hasty and angry decisions. Indeed, when the king realized that the person he intended to execute was innocent, he changed his mind in the morning.

Unlike the qazi (judge), the king not only restores social order but is also its creator. In household tales, social justice starts at the top; if the king is just, justice prevails in the land, injustices are avoided, and people live prosperous lives. The words of King Abbas's qazi, "I am good myself so that the people in my province serve the community well," encapsulate the essence of these tales. The tale of the barber who, while shaving someone else's face, hesitated to proceed with the king, leading to his punishment, highlights the challenges of maintaining social order. The king's decision to refrain from imposing taxes after realizing the difficulties of raising water buffalo, along with his efforts to eliminate feudalism and restore order, all demonstrate his role as a creator of social order. As the creator and guarantor of social order, the king also becomes a refuge for the oppressed and a beacon of hope for the poor. This gave rise to tales about individuals seeking favors from the king, desiring wealth, and bringing him gifts. Conversely, when a ruler is tyrannical, feudalism and lawlessness thrive, society deteriorates, social welfare declines, and discontent rises. In the tale "The Conversation of the

Owls,” one owl desires a dilapidated place as a gift from the other. The response is: “As long as King Anushirvan is in power, he would give not fifty but one hundred and fifty dilapidated places.” Such tales conclude with the ruler recognizing his mistakes, renouncing tyranny, and governing with justice. In the above tale, after witnessing the conversation of the owls, King Anushirvan begins to rule justly and becomes a fair monarch.

Interestingly, many historical figures who played significant roles in Azerbaijani history, such as King Ismail, do not appear in these tales. However, the name of King Abbas runs through epic folklore like a red thread. His being referred to as “the one of paradise,” the common expression “may God have mercy on him” upon mentioning his name, and the idea of punishing those who tell tales about him underscore his prominent place in folklore. What is the reason for this? Why does the desire for a just ruler become embodied in King Abbas?

King Abbas’s contributions to the struggle against the Ottomans and the restoration of the territorial integrity of the Safavid state are significant, yet there are no references to this in the tales. We suspect that the epic nature of King Abbas’s name is more related to his social policies. Tales highlight his construction of bridges, mosques, and caravanserais, his wandering the land in a dervish’s attire, and his concern for the welfare of the populace. His being called “the one of paradise” is tied to his just decisions and actions for the people. This raises the question: Was King Abbas truly the just ruler depicted in these tales, or is this merely an expression of the people’s desires and hopes? Historical sources suggest that there is a realistic basis to the portrayals of King Abbas in the tales. The Safavid historian İskender Bey Munshi writes in “The History of Abbas, the Adorner of the World” that King Abbas treated his people in a unique way, almost as if he were their friend and brother. Abbasqulu Agha Bakikhanov also notes that in his “Gulistani-Iram” that King Abbas became famous for improving his homeland and ensuring the well-being of his subjects. He is known by the title “the Great” and remains recognized as a just figure among the people today. According to Bakikhanov, King Abbas’s activities in constructing public buildings and charitable institutions are unparalleled in Iran. He cultivated renowned scholars among the leaders of his time. All of this contributed to the epic nature of King Abbas’s name and the embodiment of the people’s desire for a just ruler.

### **Conclusion**

In novelistic tales, actions such as theft, gambling, and debauchery are portrayed as detrimental to society, leading people astray. For instance, in the tale “The Father’s Will,” a father on his deathbed advises his son to attend a drinking party with friends and play with a

notorious gambler. When the son witnesses the state of his friends after drinking and realizes the gambler is without clothes, he understands the harmfulness of such actions and chooses to abandon them.

In the tale “The Master and the Apprentice” (TR 950), a thief who creates the king’s treasury is discussed; however, in novelistic tales, the glorification of thieves and bandits is not present. Instead, these stories promote the struggle against such individuals, concluding with the punishment of those involved in crime and the triumph of those who combat them. The glorification of the thief in “The Master and the Apprentice” does not align with the ideological demands of novelistic tales, leading us to conclude that it is not a true novella (Rüstəmzadə, 2013). Additionally, this plot’s overlap with tales like “The Thief in the Guise of angel of death” (TR 1525 G) and “The Heroine in Disguise” (TR 1538) suggests that the protagonist’s cunning actions indicate its classification as a tale of trickery (Rüstəmzadə, 2013). In novelistic tales, the grounding of events in reality has led to a focus on personal relationships, bringing themes of loyalty and betrayal, friendship and trust to the forefront. In the plots “The Bet on a Woman’s Fidelity” (TR 882) and “The Carpenter Whittling on a Stone” (TR 882\*), the theme of fidelity in marital relationships is explored. Here, a husband, expressing his trust in his wife’s fidelity, enters a bet with a trickster. The trickster deceitfully enters the bride’s house, sees marks on her body, and accuses her of infidelity. The woman proves her innocence and punishes the trickster (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b). In “The Carpenter Whittling on a Stone,” the carpenter, confident in his family, devotes all his attention to his work, whittling on the stone, yet the axe never strikes the stone. After the king seduces the carpenter’s wife, she becomes distant from her husband, no longer welcoming him home, which distracts the carpenter (Azərbaycan folkloru antologiyası, 2006). The theme of betrayal also appears in the tales “King Abbas’s Desire to Punish His Wives” (TR 895) and “Ahmad without sorrow” (TR 895\*\*). When King Abbas discovers his wife’s betrayal, he intends to punish the women, but he is dissuaded by his elderly advisor. In “Ahmad without sorrow”, a cousin and his female cousin swear loyalty to each other. However, when the girl falls ill, the boy compromises his integrity to fulfill his oath; after the girl recovers, she learns the truth and does not wish to live with her cousin.

Trust emerges as a central factor in personal relationships. A treasurer, who is the husband of the king’s wife, sends her to the mountain. Before going, he compromises his integrity. In the mountains, the king’s wife wishes to join him, but when she cannot secure his agreement, she accuses him of wrongdoing. Following this incident, the king wishes to execute his brother-in-law. The treasurer reveals the truth, resulting in the rupture of their brotherhood (Bayat,



1996). Loyalty and betrayal manifest in the relationships between husband and wife, while trust is evident in the relationships between friends or colleagues. This forms the basis of the themes in “Do Not Share Secrets with Your Wife” (TR 911) and “The Treasurer” (TR 893\*\*\*). In “Do Not Share Secrets with Your Wife,” the vizier Allahverdi Khan tests the words of Bahlul Danende about “not sharing secrets with your wife” and “not trusting the king.” While hiding the king’s favorite ram, he falsely tells his wife that the king has killed it to test her. The wife informs the king of this secret. Despite working together for years, the king wants to execute the vizier. After the truth is revealed, although the king regrets his decision, the vizier does not wish to work with him again and leaves the city (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b). In another tale, King Abbas tests a vizier and a deputy who claim to be his greatest admirers. Disguised as a dervish, he approaches their door and swears by Shah Abbas's name that they must let him in. However, the vizier and the deputy curse Shah Abbas's name and drive him away. Trust plays a crucial role in the selection of a spouse as well. A girl dreams that a female gazelle’s foot has fallen into a trap, and the male gazelle does not help her. After this dream, she changes her mind about the boys and does not want to marry them, deeming them untrustworthy. The boy who is in love with her decorates the bathhouse walls with images reflecting her dream; ultimately, he depicts the male gazelle helping the female gazelle but being shot by hunters. This changes the girl’s mind, and she agrees to marry him (Azərbaycan nağılları, 2005). Since social justice is the key to governing a country, loyalty and trust also form the foundation of personal relationships. In families where loyalty exists, prosperity prevails; where trust is present, friendships like those in the tale “The Disloyal Friend” (TR 893\*A) are formed. However, happiness and friendship in this environment do not last long. In the end, the king’s disloyalty, who wishes for the vizier’s execution, and the wife’s deceit break the bond of brotherhood (Rüstəmzadə, 2013). According to V. Y. Propp, in folklore, the formation period of plots and characters is determined by comparing them with social institutions. Since novella-like tales have no common characteristics with primitive lifestyles, researchers believe they formed in later periods. Propp suggests that among peoples with totemic beliefs, including those in Asia influenced by shamanism, such tales are not found. This indicates that novellistic tales emerged during the transition from primitive agriculture to the era of slavery states (Propp, 2009). The recognition of the characteristics of space necessitates a reevaluation of the plot structure of religious tales. Many plots classified under the group of novella-like tales in the AT catalog do not meet the aforementioned criteria. The provided descriptions make it clear that novella-like tales are the realm of intelligent individuals, with a

strong sense of social justice playing a central role. Wise sayings, difficult questions, metaphorical expressions, and elder advice are crucial in organizing these tales because they highlight intellect and wisdom. Based on this, we find that the plots related to Fate (AT 930, 938) in the sub-group of the AT catalog, as well as the plot “Hatəm Gains Paradise” (TR 938), do not align with these descriptions. These tales discuss fate and the unsuccessful attempts to alter it, which is a characteristic feature of religious tales. Additionally, the plots concerning the doctor in the humor section of the AT catalog, as well as “The Unfortunate Man” (TR 1534), “The Brave Gardener” (TR 1667\*), “The Division of the Gazi (judge)” (TR 1533) from the group of religious tales, are considered novelistic tales based on the principles of spatial organization (Rüstəzadə, 2013). As a conclusion it is crucial to note that the exploration of the artistic space description of fairy tales gives the chance to study the specific peculiarities of various groups of fairy tales. Fairy tales are the memory of our ancestors about the past, their view about the world around them. Therefore they are essential in Azerbaijan folklore study and the artistic space features of the novelistic tales enables to explore them in details and accurately.

In conclusion, Artistic Space Description in Novelistic Fairy Tales highlights the essential role that vivid and imaginative settings play in the development of fairy tale narratives. Through the creative use of artistic space, authors are able to transport readers to enchanting, often otherworldly realms that not only serve as the backdrop for the story but also shape the characters' journeys and themes. These descriptions immerse readers in the fantastical elements of the tale, enhancing the emotional and symbolic depth of the narrative. Ultimately, the careful crafting of space in novelistic fairy tales is a key element that contributes to their enduring appeal and ability to captivate audiences across cultures and generations.

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