

***ANALYSING TALES AND LEGENDS FROM THE AFRICAN, BRAZILIAN AND
PORTUGUESE ORAL TRADITION***

***Análise de contos e lendas da tradição oral africana, brasileira e
portuguesa***

BALDÉ, Assana¹, SILVA, Wirley², & COSTA, Guilhermina³

Abstract

With this work the authors, native of Guinea, Angola and Brazil (respectively) and living in Portugal, intend to make an analysis of the tales and legends that they collected from the populations of their countries. Hermeneutic and experimental methods were used. The Guinean tales were told in the Fulani language and translated into Portuguese by Assana Baldé. The collections made integrate the genres tale and legend. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the ethnic character of the literature of oral tradition in these Lusophone communities. The Greimas character analysis schemes will be used and for the narrative analysis the method of Cristina Macário Lopes will be used, because it is understood that this is the best suited for the study of these texts, while still making the comparison with the Courtès scheme. We will conclude by demonstrating that literature of oral tradition is transversal to all peoples and is a vehicle for the transmission of their pasts, their fears, feelings and traditions, that is, the culture of the people. Through these literary genres, due to their anonymous authorship and spontaneous creation, we get to know the history of the people that was not given relevance to integrate the canons of history.

Resumo

Com este trabalho pretendem os autores, naturais da Guiné, Angola e Brasil (respetivamente) e a viverem em Portugal, fazerem uma análise dos contos e lendas que recolheram junto das populações dos indicados países. Foram utilizados os métodos hermenêutico e experimental. Os contos guineenses foram contados na língua fula e traduzidos para português por Assana Baldé. As recolhas feitas integram os géneros conto e lenda. O objetivo deste estudo é demonstrar o caráter étnico da literatura de tradição oral nestas comunidades lusófonas. Serão utilizados os esquemas de análise das personagens Greimas e para a análise da narrativa o método de Cristina Macário Lopes, por se entender que este é o que melhor serve para o estudo destes textos, não deixando, contudo, de fazer a comparação com o esquema de Courtès. Concluir-se-á demonstrando que a literatura de tradição oral é transversal a todos os povos sendo um veículo de transmissão dos seus passados, dos seus medos, sentimentos e tradições, isto é, da cultura dos povos. Através destes géneros literários pela sua autoria anónima e criação espontânea permitir-nos-á conhecer a vivência dos povos a que não foi dada relevância para integrar os cânones da história.

Keywords: *Tale; Legend; Literature of oral tradition; Lusophony.*

Palabras clave: *Conto; Lenda; Literatura de tradição oral; Lusofonia.*

Submission date: June 2023 | **Publication date:** December 2023.

¹ ASSANA BALDÉ – Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. PORTUGAL. Email: assana.balde.gb@gmail.com

² WIRLEY SILVA - Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. PORTUGAL. Email: wirley1@hotmail.com

³ GUILHERMINA COSTA - Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. PORTUGAL. Email: 19guilherminacosta@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

"Despite the fact that oral tradition literature no longer fulfils its primary purpose - to preserve the customs, culture and tradition of a given community - it is true that it is part of our collective memory as a symbolic recreation of a space-time, which should be read and known, and which is valued socially and culturally." (Pereira, 2016)

Before the 18th century, values, customs, and culture were transmitted through oral literature. These texts were potentially receptive to children, but not adapted to children because at that time there was no concept of childhood and children were treated like adults. The oldest tales are violent, establishing fear of being abandoned, locked up or eaten. Traditional tales (in the sense of a set of literary genres that are transmitted orally) have a pedagogical, playful and aesthetic function at the same time (Soares, 2013).

These narratives are in a simple language that simple people can understand and carry traces of the life of the community in which they are told. Ethnotexts are a vehicle for transmitting culture.

Examples of oral tradition texts are the short story, the fairy tale, the nursery rhyme, the legend, the fable, the riddle, the nursery rhyme and the tongue twisters.

In this work we will analyse two genres: the short story and the legend.

The short story is characterised by being a fictional text, short and generally with a happy ending. It has few characters without psychological density, representing status, class or groups of people. The action is linear, centred on the main character, and time and space are indeterminate.

The legend is a genre close to the short story, and therefore easily confused with it, the main difference is that the plot of the legend starts from a known person, group or a real place where fabulous events take place. These are stories that recall the past and summarise people's concerns. A legend has an authentic background, a probability, and a location.

II - The Bangão Alligator (Annex I)

The Bangão Alligator is a legend of the aetiological typology. The events take place in the village of Bangão, near the city of Caxito, Bengo province, where the river Dande passes through, inhabited by alligators. It takes place during the period of colonialism, with incursion of the supernatural, placing the alligator as the protector of the people who were mistreated by the tax collector, who, afraid of the alligator, changed his behaviour towards the people.

The internal structure can be divided into three logical parts: introduction, development and conclusion.

The introduction shows the place of the events and introduces the characters The tax collector, the people and the alligator; the development shows the alligator's indignation at the suffering of the people caused by the tax collector and his decision to stop it; the conclusion shows the tax collector no longer mistreating the people for fear of the alligator.

As for the characteristics of the legend, we can see that there is an authentic background in the village of Bangão, the river Dande and the existence of alligators in this river; the probability that in the period of colonialism there were tax collectors, evil and greedy whites, in that region; the location of the Bangão kimbo; the time during the period of colonialism in Angola; the marvellous and fantastic with the anthropomorphisation of the alligator; the authenticity of the first four characteristics.

The main character is the alligator who symbolises the people of the kimbo. This legend portrays the asymmetrical relations between the Portuguese and Angolans, leaving in the imagination of the Angolan people the injustices of Portuguese colonialism, facts transfigured here by the popular imagination.

III - The legend of Kianda (Annex II)

We are now going to analyse a legend whose typology fits in with the legends of mythical entities. Kianda is a version or variant of the mythological figure of the mermaid, who personifies aspects of the sea or the dangers it represents for fishermen. In this representation of the woman who bewitches men until she drowns them, the lesson is learnt that unbridled ambition is punished.

The Angolan variant is structured internally. It introduces Kinda and the fisherman, tells us where they live; develops the action with the offer of the treasure and the fisherman's selfish behaviour; concludes with the punishment of the man who is left without the treasure and remains a prisoner at the bottom of the sea.

This narrative, with the exception of the time, fulfils the characteristics of the legend. It has an authentic background in Praia do Bispo in Luanda; the probability of a creature living in the sea appearing to a fisherman; location in Luanda; time not defined; marvellous appearance of a hybrid creature that lives in the sea and on land and can make treasures appear and disappear; authenticity verified in the first three circumstances.

IV - The disobedient children (Annex III)

This narrative is an aetiological legend. Its internal structure is complete: in the introduction it presents the characters, who are the mother and the children, and characterises the children as disobedient so that we understand the purpose of the story it is telling them; it develops the plot into a story with the intervention of the pagan wonder and concludes with the moral or teaching that the children must fulfil their chores on time.

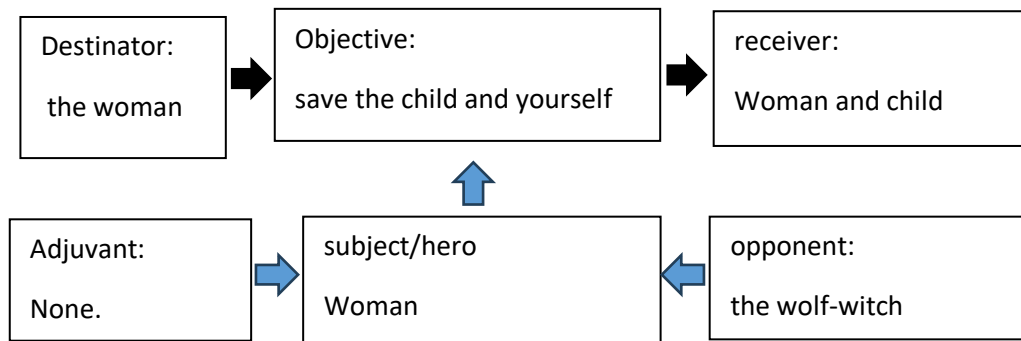
We also see the typical characteristics of a legend. It has an authentic background; it takes place in the village of São Francisco do Conde, in the state of Baía, in Brazil; it probes life in a village in the Brazilian bush where food is prepared in the street and the children take part in their parents' chores; it is set in the village of São Francisco do Conde, in Baía; no era is identified; there is an intervention of pagan wonder with the appearance of ghosts; its authenticity is proven by the first three circumstances.

This legend is marked by its hybrid character, from a genological point of view, starting with the real: the children disobey their mother, who frightens them with a ghost story in order to achieve her goal - to educate the children to fulfil their duties.

V - The Witch-Wolf (Appendix IV)

In our opinion, this is a trickster tale, as we will demonstrate in the course of our analysis.

We begin by presenting the character scheme according to Greimas:



As for the dynamics of the narrative, we follow Cristina Macário Lopes' scheme, according to which we divide the dynamics into five parts:

The initial state - is one of equilibrium. The woman moves with the child on her back, as is customary in África;

Disturbance - when the witch disguised as a wolf appears and wants to eat the woman for dinner and the child for breakfast;

Transformation - the woman decides to tell the witch that the child eats wolf liver and that his father is heading that way;

Resolution - this is the moment when the Witch-Wolf decides to leave without eating the woman and the child.

Final state - is one of equilibrium. It's not on the discursive level, but we know that the woman continued her way without being eaten.

Courtès schematises the dynamics of the action in three parts that coincide with Cristina Lopes' schema. The qualifying evidence corresponds to the facts in the initial state and disturbance, the decisive evidence corresponds to the ones in the transformation and resolution, and the glorifying evidence corresponds to the final state.

Examining in detail,

In terms of the logical structure of the narrative, there is confirmation of the initial state, which was one of equilibrium and ended in equilibrium.

There is linearity between the discourse and the story, which follows the chronology of the story without prolepses or analepses. All the dialogues are advances in the action, they are necessary for us to understand the story. There is isochrome in the lines. However, the rest of the text is anisochrome. The speech summarises the story.

The narrator is omniscient and non-participatory because he does not give any opinion and is not the reader's accomplice because he does not advance the events.

The characters are the woman (the main character and hero) and the witch-wolf. They are unnamed. The woman represents mothers and the witch the dangers of life. They have no psychological density and are therefore flat. There is actantial syncretism (the woman fulfils several roles).

This tale follows the canonical scheme because from the hero's point of view it ends with the glorifying ordeal. Through deception and lies, the woman manages to save her life and that of her baby from being eaten by the Witch-Wolf.

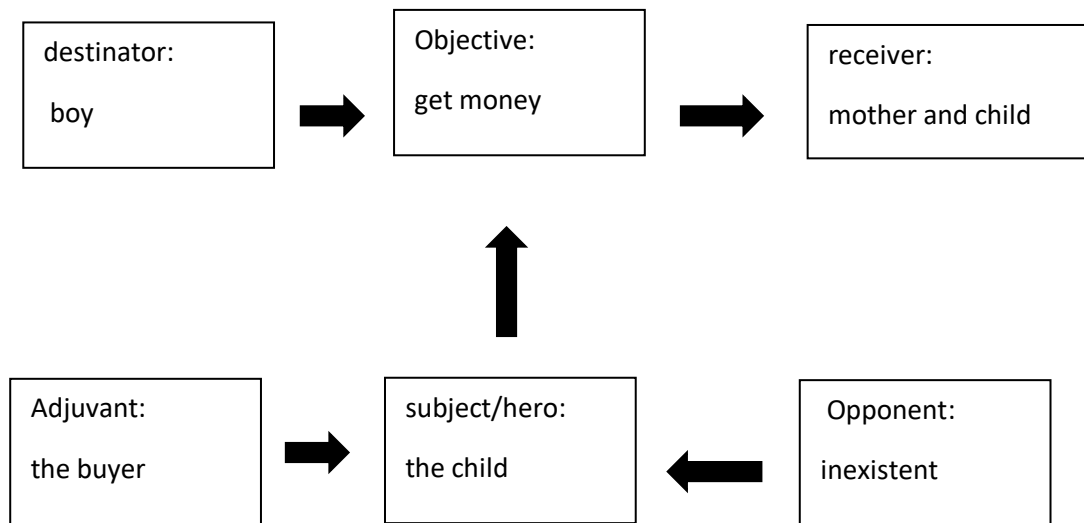
This is a trickster tale because the woman has cunningly lied and managed to deceive the witch. Ethically, lying and deception are reprehensible, but in this case they are excusable because a greater good - life - is at stake. Here the intervention of the fantastic, the marvellous, happens with the presence of the witch who transforms into a wolf.

We understand that in this tale there is a medium intertextuality with the tale of the werewolf, we are witnessing the transformation of a person into a wolf.

VI - The Donkey (Annex V)

The Donkey is a simple short story with an implicit moral, which portrays life in the northern interior of Portugal.

We begin by presenting the character scheme according to Greimas:



Cristina Macário Lopes schematises the dynamics of the narrative in five parts:

Initial state - scarceness. He has no money to buy medicine for his mum;

Disturbance - when he thinks about selling the donkey;

Transformation - he decides to sell the coal and does so;

Resolution - sells the donkey and the coal

Final state - equilibrium. He gets money to buy medicine.

Courtès schematises the dynamics of the action in three parts that coincide with Cristina Lopes' scheme. The qualifying evidence corresponds to the facts in the initial state and disturbance, the decisive evidence corresponds to the facts in the transformation and resolution and the glorifying evidence corresponds to the final state.

Analysing thoroughly,

In terms of the logical structure of the narrative, there is an inversion of the initial state, which was one of scarceness and ended in equilibrium.

There is linearity between the speech and the story; the speech follows the chronology of the story without prolepses or analepses. All the dialogues are advances in the action, they are necessary for us to understand the story. There is isochrome in the lines. However, the rest of the text is anisochrome. The speech summarises the story.

The narrator is omniscient and non-participatory because he does not give any opinion and is not the reader's accomplice because he does not advance the events.

The characters are the boy, the main character and the hero, the mother and the buyer. They are unnamed and functional: the boy and his mother represent the poor and the buyer represents ordinary men. They lack psychological density and are therefore flat. There is actantial syncretism (the boy fulfils several roles).

This tale follows the canonical scheme because from the hero's point of view it ends with a glorifying ordeal: the boy has found money to buy medicine.

VII - The horse that gave birth to a camel

This tale of Guinean origin portrays the life of a shepherd in a village and the people's relationship with the chief and the wise man or healer.

In analysing the characters, according to Greimas' scheme, we present the following:

Cristina Macário Lopes schematises the dynamics of the narrative in five parts:

Initial state - is one of equilibrium. The shepherd has his she-camel pregnant and takes care of his animals;

Disturbance - when the master saw the camel, he became envious and said it was the horse's son;

Transformation - when the master and shepherd decided to go to the chief and the wise man for help;

Resolution - faced with incongruity (a man with a period), the master lets the shepherd take the camel.

Final state - equilibrium, everything ends as it began.

Courtès schematises the dynamics of the action in three parts that coincide with Cristina Lopes' scheme. The qualifying evidence corresponds to the facts in the initial state and disturbance points, the decisive evidence corresponds to the facts in the transformation and resolution and the glorifying evidence corresponds to the final state.

Analysing in more detail,

In terms of the logical structure of the narrative, there is confirmation of the initial state, which was one of equilibrium and ended in equilibrium.

There is linearity between the discourse and the story, which follows the chronology of the story without prolepses or analepses. All the dialogues are advances in the action, they are necessary for us to understand the story. There is isochrome in the lines. However, the rest of the text is anisochrome. The speech summarises the story.

The narrator is omniscient and non-participatory because he doesn't give any opinion, nor is he the reader's accomplice because he doesn't tell us about the events.

The characters are the shepherd, the main character and the hero, the boss, the chief and the wise man. They are unnamed and functional. They lack psychological density and are therefore flat. There is actantial syncretism (the shepherd fulfils several roles).

This tale follows the canonical scheme because from the hero's point of view it ends with a glorifying ordeal: the shepherd has managed to get the camel back

CONCLUSION

The narratives we have collected from Portuguese-speaking countries convey cultural aspects of each of the peoples where they are disseminated.

The legend of Kianda is interdiscursive with the legend of the Mermaid. Both narratives describe a mythical being who lives on land and in the sea, who enchants or bewitches men by taking them to the bottom of the sea. In the case of the legend of Kianda, the moral teaching is that pettiness and greed do not repay. In the legend of the Mermaid, the teaching is not to covet other people's wives.

REFERENCES

Courtes, J. (1797). *Introdução à semiótica narrativa e discursiva*. Almedina.

Lopes, A. C. (21 de julho de 2009). *Analyse sémiotique de contes traditionnels portugais*. Obtido de books.google, Universidade de Indiana. Disponível em: https://books.google.pt/books?id=f-fZAAAAMAAJ&q=analyse+s%C3%A9miotique+de+contes+traditionnels+portugais&dq=analyse+s%C3%A9miotique+de+contes+traditionnels+portugais&hl=pt-PT&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&sa=X&redir_esc=y

Pereira, S. (3 de março de 2016). *Revista online de literatura infantil e juvenil*. Obtido de Fábulas: <https://revistafabulas.com/2016/03/03/a-literatura-de-tradicao-oral/>

Soares, M. L. (2013). *Considerações Gerais sobre a Literatura Tradicional de Transmissão Oral: uma proposta de análise à versão portuguesa de "A Gata Borracheira" (Consiglieri Pedroso)*. Vila Real: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro.

ANEXO I

JACARÉ BANGÃO

Reza a lenda que no Kimbo⁴ Bangão, nas margens do rio Dande perto da cidade do Caxito, capital da província do Bengo, os colonos cobravam impostos que o povo não podia pagar.

O Jacaré Bangão, habitante do rio Dande, via e ouvia o sofrimento do povo causado pelo chefe do posto, um homem branco mau e ganancioso.

Um certo dia, o jacaré decidiu ir pagar imposto, com intenção de correr com o colono mau e libertar o povo.

Ao ver o grande jacaré a sair das águas do rio Dande a fim de cumprir a sua missão, logo o cobrador de impostos ficou aterrorizado e abandonou os maus modos como tratava os moradores de Bangão.

Conto Angolano contado por Flávio Cecílio Pinheiro Quintas através de internet via whatsapp.

⁴ aldeia em kimbundo (uma das línguas de Angola).

ANEXO II

LENDA DA KIANDA

Kianda vivia no mar perto da praia do Bispo, em Luanda. Um dia, viu um homem pobre e triste que andava sozinho à beira mar.

Num ato de bondade, ofereceu-lhe acesso a um tesouro escondido no fundo do mar que só ela conhecia.

O homem enriqueceu logo e ao mesmo tempo que enriquecia tornou-se egoísta e ganancioso, só usava o dinheiro para o seu próprio interesse.

A Kianda, que observava o comportamento do homem, ficou decepcionada com o que viu e decidiu dar-lhe uma lição, fazendo desaparecer o tesouro e deixando pescador sem nada de um dia para outro.

Por vezes, também dizem que a Kianda enfeitiçou o homem, mantendo-o prisioneiro no fundo do mar para sempre.

Lenda Angolana contado por Flávio Cecílio Pinheiro Quintas através de internet via whatsapp

ANEXO III

OS FILHOS DESOBEDIENTES

Vivia uma mulher na aldeia de São Francisco do Conde com os seus filhos. Os meninos eram tão inquietos que não davam ouvidos ao que a mãe lhes dizia.

O que os meninos mais gostavam de fazer era brincar e pouco ajudavam nas tarefas de casa: e quando faziam alguma tarefa era já noite adentro.

Um dia, a mãe que estava farta da desobediência dos filhos, resolveu contar-lhes uma história com a intenção de lhes mudar o comportamento.

Ao serão, chama os seus filhos e conta a história.

“Um menino vivia com a avó. Acontece que aquele menino não aceitava cumprir com os seus deveres a tempo. Certo dia, quando o menino foi lavar a louça à noite, viu um amontoado de ossos e o menino com medo saiu correndo para dentro para contar à avó do que viu. Logo a avó diz para o menino que à noite os espíritos saem à procura de meninos que não cumprem as tarefas para os comer e jogam os ossos fora. O menino desde então nunca voltou a deixar os seus afazeres para mais tarde”

Os meninos ouvindo a história contada pela mãe ficaram com medo e desde então nunca mais deixaram de ajudar a mãe e de cumprir com as suas tarefas durante o dia.

Conto Brasileiro, São Francisco do Conde interior de Bahia, contado por Vinícius Malique da Silva

ANEXO IV

A BRUXA- LOBA.

Era uma vez, uma mulher que ia para uma aldeia vizinha e levava o bebe às costas, antes de chegar o destino, caiu a noite no meio da floresta, a criança começou a chorar, chorava tanto que deixou a mãe com medo.

De repente aparece uma bruxa transformada numa loba com a intenção de comer a mãe e o seu bebé.

A bruxa toda feliz porque ia comer os dois, pergunta de forma irónica:

-Jantar o que chora ao pequeno-almoço?

A mãe responde:

- A criança está a chorar porque o pai habituou-a dar-lhe todas as noites o fígado de loba. Está a chorar por ainda não ter comido fígado de hoje.

A bruxa transformada em loba ficou com medo com a resposta da mulher.

A mulher continuou com o discurso...

- O seu pai foi buscar fígado para ela há já muito tempo, se não conseguiu vai conseguir quando chegar aqui.

-Ah! Deixa a Cabra ir embora. Respondeu a bruxa transformada em loba.

A mãe consegue se salvar com o seu bebé graças a sua resposta que fez a loba mudar de nome e fugir.

Conto tradicional guineense contado por Iaia através de internet via WhatsApp

ANEXO V

O BURRO

Era uma vez o Joãozinho que vivia sozinho com a sua mãe. A mãe tinha um burro e vendia carvão e o Joãozinho ajudava-a, enchia os sacos e carregava o burro para a mãe ir vender o carvão. Um dia a mãe adoeceu e o menino tinha que comprar remédios, mas não tinha dinheiro. Então pensou vender o burro, mas depois pensou que não tinha como ir vender o carvão. Um dia levantou-se muito cedo, tratou da mãe, carregou o burro para ir vender o carvão, e lá foi. De repente, no caminho, apareceu alguém que lhe disse:

- Queres-me vender o burro?

- Não porque preciso dele para ir vender o carvão.

- Mas eu também te compro o carvão, disse-lhe o outro homem.

O Joãozinho pensou um bocadinho e como precisava tanto do dinheiro, aceitou sem pensar.

Quando chegou a casa, levava aquele dinheiro, mas a mãe já estava melhor e ficou muito zangada com o que ele tinha feito, agora não tinham burro para carregar o carvão. O Joãozinho disse-lhe porque o tinha feito e ela ficou muito feliz por ter um filho tão bom.

Contado por Ondina Astorga, 76 anos, Faiões, Chaves

Anexo VI

O CAVALO QUE PARIU CAMELO

Numa tabanca⁵ vivia um homem que tinha muitos animais a ponto de acha que tinha tudo. Porque tinha cabras, cavalos, burros, elefantes, búfalos, zebra, macacos, chimpanzés, tartarugas, galinhas, vacas, carneiros, etc.

O homem vangloriava com tudo que tinha, entretanto, ele tinha um pastor que viviam numa tabanca próxima à dele. O pastor passava uma semana na casa do seu patrão cuidando dos animais.

Só ia uma vez por semana para a sua tabanca para ver a família e aproveitava para cuidar da sua camela.

Um certo dia, disse a seu patrão que tinha uma camela, a notícia não caiu bem ao patrão porque ele tinha todo tipo de animal menos camelos.

Logo pede para o pastor trazer o seu camelo para juntar com os seus animais, assim facilitava-o e podia cuidar dela.

O pastor aceitou a proposta e foi buscar a camela, acontece que a camela estava grávida.

O pasto amarrava a sua camela sempre junta aos cavalos. Depois de um tempo a camela deu à luz.

O pastor acorda de manha e vê que a camela dera luz, logo ele vai junto do animal para cuidar dele. No momento o patrão levanta-se e vê o seu pasto a cuidar do animal e diz:

- Ah! O meu cavalo pariu.

-Não, foi a minha camela que pariu. Responde o pastor.

-Não, foi o meu Cavalo. Não estás a ver? És cego? - Diz o patrão.

Os dois ficaram a discutir sobre que animal tinha dado à luz.

O pastor inconformado com o que sucedera, vai queixar na mão de Djarga⁶, mas em nada resultou.

⁵ Aldeia

⁶ Chefe da aldeia na língua fula

O patrão como tinha grandes riquezas, subornou o chefe e ele ao fazer justiça favoreceu o patrão.

O chefe de tabanca disse ao pastor:

- Tu não sabes que todo animal de quatro pés pode parir um outro animal da espécie diferente de quatro pés? Vão descansar foi o cavalo que pariu.

O pastor que não gostou da justiça feita, voltou a ir fazer queixa, desta vez, foi ao sábio.

O sábio mandou chama os dois e eles explicaram o sucedido. O sábio ficou intrigado e sem encontrar a resposta que podia dar. Ficou um tempo calado sem dizer nada.

Até que os dois questionaram o seu silencio.

O sábio diz aos dois que voltem para casa porque não está a sentir-se bem, está com a menstruação.

- Mas como pode um homem estar com menstruação? -Questionava o patrão-

Logo o Sábio responde:

-É possível desde que o cavalo pôde parir um camelo.

E assim a situação ficou resolvida, o pastor levou os seus camelos de volta para a sua tabanca.

Conto tradicional guineense contado por Mohamado Cabiro através de internet via whatsapp