

This thesis is a study of the meaning and aesthetics of the Maragoli folktale. It covers a sample of eight Maragoli folktales selected on the basis of their popularity and carefully analysed to demonstrate a number of aspects about the Maragoli folktales: firstly, the Maragoli folktale, like any other serious form of art, is properly structured and the structural patterns embody meaning both at the surface as well as the deeper level. It is further argued that the Maragoli folktale manifests what the Maragoli consider good or bad, beautiful or ugly, and that the tales express the worldview of the Maragoli.

The various modes through which the folktales appeal to the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience are examined. The manipulation of the invariant structure, the integration of songs, manipulation of voices, body movement, and gestures are all seen to contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the audience at the time of performance.

It is observed that the maragoli folktale has survived in spite of the modern changes because of its dynamic nature and because of its applicability to the lives of the people in different times in history.

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach. That is, it takes into consideration a number of theoretical approaches in analysis, namely: structural symbolic and socio-psychological approaches. It first unlocks the structural patterns of the eight tales before uncovering the wider implications beyond the linear clarity. The dominant structural patterns are examined to reveal their surface and deeper meaning as well as their role in systematizing presentation in the context of performance.