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The next morning, the Sultan's son summoned his soldiers, gave them the golden shoe and asked them to search all over the country until they had found its owner. So they took the shoe and began going into the houses of everyone in the city, one by one. But they didn't come across the shoe's owner, until at last there was only one house left - the house of the fisherman. So they went and knocked on his door, and were greeted by Noura's stepmother. The soldiers asked her to try the shoe on all the young women who lived in the house, by order of the Sultan's son. She informed them that she and her husband had only one daughter. Then she went and hid Noura in the oven. She put the lid on it and spread grain over the top of it, then took her own daughter and presented her to the soldiers. They tried the shoe on her, but it didn't fit, since she had quite a big foot.

So the soldiers picked up the shoe and began to leave the house. But they were followed by a beautiful rooster, who started crowing and saying to them,

(Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo!
My lady Noura sits in the oven instead,
with grain scattered over her head!)

The soldiers were amazed by what the rooster was saying, but Noura's stepmother scolded the rooster and implored the soldiers to pay no attention to it. But the rooster began crowing again, saying,

(Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo!
My lady Noura sits in the oven instead,
With grain scattered over her head!)

So the soldiers went back into the house and took the lid off the oven. When they did so, they found lovely Noura sitting inside covered with ashes. So they took her out and tried the shoe on her, and it fit. Then Noura went and fetched the other golden shoe, and the soldiers were delighted to have found its owner. So they rushed away to bring the happy tidings to the sultan's son. When they returned back to the palace, they told him about how they had found the owner of the golden shoes, and he compensated them royally.

Then the Sultan's son went out to visit the fisherman and asked him for the hand of his daughter Noura in marriage. The fisherman was overjoyed, and announced his acceptance of the prince's proposal. Then the Sultan's son asked the fisherman what he would like for his daughter

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to receive as a bride price. But his wife butted in and asked the Sultan's son to send them a box of dates, a palm-leaf basket full of dried fish, and a bunch of radishes as Noura's bride price. So the Sultan's son sent them what they had requested.

On their wedding night, Noura's stepmother told her to eat the whole box of dates, the whole basketful of dried fish, and the entire bunch of radishes that the Sultan's son had sent as her bride price. She did this because she wanted Noura to reek so horribly that the Sultan's son would want to stay away from her. Noura had no choice but to eat what her stepmother had served her, and afterwards she had a horrendous stomachache. So she rushed out to the seashore and called on Smimcha.

When Smimcha appeared, Noura told her about what her stepmother had done to her on her wedding night. So with magic words, Smimcha cleaned out Noura's stomach, and filled it instead with perfumes, pearls, precious stones and gold. She also adorned her with the most beautiful clothes and jewels. She filled Noura's room with a trousseau fit for a princess, and perfumed it with incense and rose water. In it she placed a huge bed covered with silk sheets and rose petals. Then she lit up the room with candles, laid a carpet and filled the room with various kinds of furniture and pillows.

When the Sultan's son arrived at the fisherman's house and went into Noura's room, he found it redolent with the most delicate perfumes, and was amazed at the luxurious furniture that filled the room. He was delighted with his beautiful bride and with his new status in life. Meanwhile, Noura's stepmother was waiting for the Sultan's son to come fleeing out of the room in disgust once he had found how offensive Noura smelled. Instead, a whole week went by, after which the Sultan's son took his bride to live with him in his father's palace.

When Noura's stepsister was engaged to be married, her mother served her the same things she had served to Noura on her wedding night - dates, dried fish and radishes. After all, she wanted her daughter to have the same good fortune as Noura, out of whose stomach there had come pearls and sweet-smelling perfumes. But when her new husband went into her room and discovered how odious his wife smelled, he came fleeing out of their house and never came back!

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the great big fish, it wiggled and squirmed and began speaking to her. (Let me go), (it said to her), (and I'll make you rich!).

Then the fish began begging Noura to throw her back into the water where her babies were. Noura's heart went out to her, so she picked up the mother fish and threw her back into the sea. When Noura did this, the fish started swimming and jumping around happily. Then she came back to Noura and thanked her profusely. -May God bless you, my daughter, she said, (from now on, you can consider me your second mother. If you ever need anything, just come to the seashore and call, 'Oh mother Smimcha!' and you'll always find me at your service).

Then the Fish dove down into the depths of the sea and brought Noura another big fish that looked just like her. This way, Noura's stepmother wouldn't be angry with her for losing the big fish her father had caught.

Then Noura went back home, prepared the fish for lunch, and served it to her father, his wife and her wife's daughter. They ate till they were stuffed, and didn't leave Noura anything but a few leftovers that wouldn't put any meat on her bones, or even satisfy her hunger, for that matter. Noura picked up the dishes and pots and pans and went to wash them in the sea. And since she wanted to see whether the fish had been telling her the truth, she stood on the shore and started calling, (Oh mother Smimcha! Oh mother Smimcha!)

In the twinkling of an eye, the fish came out of the depths of the sea and asked Noura what she needed. Noura told the fish that she was about to die of hunger. When the fish heard this, she said some magic words, after which there appeared on the seashore a huge table filled with all sorts of delicious things to eat and drink, Then Noura ate until she was satisfied and drank until her thirst was quenched. Smimcha also used some magic words to wash the dishes for Noura. And thus it was that Noura began eating and taking her rest every day on the seashore, and she started to grow bigger and taller and more and more beautiful.

Then one day, the Sultan sent his soldiers to invite all the inhabitants of the city to a grand celebration which he was going to host in his palace. When people heard about the Sultan's party, they all started getting ready for the happy occasion. On the night of the celebration, Noura's stepmother mixed lentils and rice together on a tray, then told Noura to separate the lentils from the rice, and to make sure she finished the job before she and her daughter returned from the party. Then she and her

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daughter put on their fanciest clothes and jewelery, and off they went to the Sultan's palace. After they had left, Noura went out to the seashore and called on Smimcha. When Smimcha appeared, Noura informed her that everyone in the whole city had gone to the Sultan's celebration. As for her, she was the only one who couldn't attend, because she didn't have a suitable dress, besides the fact that her stepmother had given her some chores to do at home. Still, she really would have loved to be able to go to the Sultan's celebration.

With nice and comforting words the fish set Noura's mind at rest. Then she spoke some magic words, and there appeared on Noura a beautiful dress, glittering jewels, and a pair of lustrous golden shoes. Then she told Noura that she could go to the party, but that she should come home before midnight, and before her stepmother returned. Smimcha also told Noura that she would separate the lentils from the rice for her while she was gone. At this, Noura thanked Smimcha profusely and went off happily to the celebration.

When Noura arrived at the palace, she won everyone's admiration with her beauty, the elegance of her dress, her jewels and her lustrous golden shoes. She passed right in front of her stepmother and stepsister, and they didn't even recognize her. Her beauty and people's fascination with her caught the attention of the Sultan's son, and because she had been enjoying herself so much at the party, Noura forgot all about the instructions Smimcha had given her. When she finally remembered, she threw a bone at her stepmother and stepsister. As a result, they both started screaming, which caused people to gather all around them. While this was going on, Noura rushed out of the palace without anyone noticing her. As she was running, one of her golden shoes fell off, but she didn't stop to pick it up. Instead, it was picked up by the Sultan's son, who tried to catch up with her, but without success.

When Noura got back home, she took off her beautiful dress and hid her golden shoe, then put her old clothes on again. She found that Smimcha had done all the chores that her stepmother had assigned her. When her stepmother and stepsister returned back, they began describing to Noura how marvellous the party had been, and the warm welcome they had received from the Sultan. They also told her about the princess who had left the party all of a sudden, about how the Sultan's son had gone running after her, and about the lustrous golden shoe that he had found on the ground after the princess ran away.

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“ Smimcha ”

(A Kuwaiti version of Cinderella)

Retold and translated by Ali A. Al-Jafar

In a little house on the seashore there once lived a goodhearted fisherman with his wife and their only daughter, Noura. The three of them lived a pleasant, comfortable life - that is, until the day when Noura's mother became very, very sick. She was so ill, in fact, that at last she passed away to be with God. When she died, the fisherman and his daughter grieved terribly over her, and cried bitter tears.

After this, the fisherman lived alone with his daughter Noura, who now took care of her father, prepared his food, washed his clothes and kept the house neat and tidy. But it made him feel very sad to see her working and tiring herself out all day long with so many responsibilities as she was still a little girl. So, he decided to marry again and start a new family. For his new wife, he chose a neighbor woman of theirs who had lost her husband some years earlier. She also had a little girl who was in need of loving care and affection. Besides this, the neighbor woman had often shown Noura the utmost love and compassion - especially when Noura's father was nearby. And thus it was that the fisherman married the neighbor lady and brought her to live with them in their house.

After this, the fisherman began going out to work again with his mind at rest, thinking that his little girl Noura was in safe hands. He could never have imagined how much she was suffering in his absence from the tyranny and cruelty of his wife and her daughter. They would put Noura through terrible torment and made her do all their work for them as if she were their servant. All day long she had to be at their beck and call, meeting their every demand. They also forced her to prepare various kinds of foods, clean the house, wash the dishes and do the laundry. Her father's wife was no longer kind to Noura even when her father was at home. Instead, she would accuse her of being lazy and of not helping her with the housework, so that her father would scold her and threaten her with dire punishment.

And thus the years passed by, until one day God blessed Noura's father with a huge catch of fish. And among the other fish there was one which was especially big. Noura's stepmother shoved a basket of fish at her and told her to go clean it and get it ready for lunch. So Noura took the fish down to the seashore to clean it there. But when she took hold of

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asks her father to marry another woman so she will have someone to take care of her and her father. But the helper-stepmother brings dissonance to the family. Today, even though the hired help might bring comfort to the household, no one is taking responsibility for the child. The heroine of the story, as the child of the present, will continue to suffer until somebody gets the message that the elderly woman is communicating.

Conclusion:

Tale type 510 (Cinderella) continues to be narrated in the Arabian Gulf area today even though the context of the story has changed. If one examines the connection between the context of the past and the present, one discovers that the underlying plot is the same. The problem addressed by past and present narrators is the threat to the stability of the family. Today this problem is magnified because the mother participates along with the father in bringing another woman or women into their home. In the past, the diad consisted of a father and the stepmother who replaces the mother. Today, it is a triad consisting of the father, the mother, and the maid (s). The child in both cases is a victim who seeks magical power to make him or her the focus of the family.

The message that the elderly woman/narrator wishes to pass-on is that the unity of the family is being undermined. The voice of wisdom of the elderly woman calls upon the society to take an action in order to safeguard the future of the family, especially younger generations: the children.

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End Notes:

- 1- Two texts from Kuwait (Al-Batni 1988; Kamal, 1984; see the index for a complete text), seven are from Qatar (Al-Duwaik, 1991, El-Shamy, 1999), one is from Iraq (Bushnaq, 1987), and one is from Oman (El-Shamy, 1999). These texts were collected by the cited scholars.
- 2- One of the most celebrated books in the Middle-Eastern culture is Thousand and One Nights in which the main narrator is played by a female (Shehrazad) who tries to humanize the man (Shehrazad-the king) and stop revenging women by using the art of storytelling. The stories which Shehrazad created hundreds of years ago have been up to the present a vehicle to empower women in a patriarchal society.
- 3- From the information available, narrators' ages range between 60-105 years (Al-Duwaik, 1984), and 40-50 (El-Shamy, 1999).
- 4- See, for instance, El-Shamy's Tales, Arab Women Tell, (1999) and the index of Bazzah Al-Batni's book (p. 169) where she indicates that all the narrators are women. In the Qatari versions being examined for this paper, five out of six are narrated by women (see Al-Duwaik, 1984, volume 2, page 133-144) and El-Shamy, 1999.
- 5- The omani version of (The Fisherman's Daughter) (El-Shamy, 1999) is unique from the other versions of the same story because the girl is helped by (Four Women) instead the fish such as in the story of (Smimcha) (see the index) and Fsajrah (Al-Duwaik, 1984; El-Shamy, 1999), which the heroine is helped by (one) female fish which asks her to call her (the fish) (Mother) (Al-Batni, 1987, p. 16; Al-Duwaik, 1984, volume 2, page 133-144). Such is also in the case in the stories (The little fish and the clog of gold) (Bushnaq 1987, p. 182; Sierra, 1992, p. 105).
- 6- Interestingly enough, according to the distinguished folklorist Henry Glassie, in Ireland similar socio-economic patterns appear in that women stay in the farm while men go to cut wood for extended periods of time (information obtained from a conversation on September 29, 1995).
- 7- According to Islam, the man can marry more than one, if he can be fair with all of them. However, the Qur-an (the holy book for the Moslems) states that (Ye are never able to do justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire) (The Holy Qur-an, 4, 129). Thus, one can conclude from this symbolic death that this is a woman's interpretations of this passage of the Qur-an.
- 8- For instance, Hansel and Grethel are united with their father after the stepmother dies.
- 9- Perhaps the most beautiful, poetic depiction of these two worlds (the world of the man at sea and that of the woman on land) has been presented by the Kuwaiti poet Muhammad Al-Fayiz in his marvellous book of poetry entitled Mdhakkirat Bahhar (Memoirs of a Sailor), 1966.
- 10- In the version which appears in Safwat Kamal's book, we find that when the heroine asks the magic fish for food, she (the fish) takes the girl to a palace where there are servants who attend to her, feed her, and do her work (see Safwat Kamal, 1984, p. 118-9). Helping the girl with her work is a way of criticizing the unjust treatment of the stepmother toward her step-daughter.
- 11- From the information available, the narrator's age ranges between 60-105 (El-Shamy, 1999; Al-Duwaik, 1984).

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most cases, the name depicts a cherished quality or an urgent need. For instance, we find names such as Matar (Rain), Sakhr (Boulder) and Dhib (from Dhi'b, Wolf) to be favorites among the Bedouins due to their respective meanings: life in the face of drought; survival and endurance in the face of the sweeping winds; and strength in the face of weakness.

Names such as Nura, Aisha and Fsaijrah in some tale types 510 (Cinderella) stories, and omission of names in some other stories, have an important connotation. The name Nura (Al-Batni, 1987), for instance, is derived from the Arabic word (nur)' meaning (light); the name Aisha (Kamal, 1984) is derived from the word for (living) (aysh); while Fsaijrah (Al-Duwaik, 1984; El-Shamy, 1999) is taken from the name of the (Faskara) fish, including the association of the fish with the great creature, the sea. Even the absence of a name is meaningful, in some accounts it points to a name in a tacit manner the heroine as the mother or the narrator refers to our Mother Nature. She may also refer to Eve (Hawwa), who comprises all the meanings of (inclusion) (ihtiya) implied by this word in Arabic, just as light (nur) with its rays covers everything in order to give us life and enables us to live (naish) amidst the earth's bounty.

This line of analysis gives rise to an insistent question: if what has been said is true regarding the dominance of the feminine element, then how do we explain the marriage of the heroine to the Sultan's son or to the Shaykh or the son of some wealthy man at the end of the story? To address this question it is necessary to shift the focus from the position of women to the position of men in the Gulf societies.

In the past, the sea was the provider for the people. The people got their food and pearls which they needed from it. The majority of men worked at sea. The dream of every sailor on his long journey was to find the (dana), the huge pearl which, once sold, would spare its possessor of ever having to go out pearl-diving again. In fact, he who sells the (dana) would be able to live forever on the money that it would bring him⁽⁹⁾. On the other hand, the male characters in these stories do not work at sea but rather are Sultan's son, Shaykhs, and merchant's sons. They are distinguished by certain elements of stability. They do not have to suffer the misery and weariness of the long journeys that a typical male character had to undergo in order to earn his living.

It is here that the economic element bears powerfully on the structure of the story. The unjustly treated young woman in these stories in

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general, and in Smimcha and Fsaijrah (the Arabic name of Cinderella story in the Gulf) in particular, suffers from a lack of food. The first thing which Nura, the heroine of the story asks of Smimcha (the fish in the form of which her mother has come back to life) is for food. This is also the case in the story about Fsaijrah⁽¹⁰⁾. The availability of food contributes to stability, cohesion of the family.

Another economic element present in the stories is the cultivation of beauty, be it the beauty that results from the food itself and which causes someone to look healthy and robust, or the outward beauty which might take the form of a lovely dress, jewels and emeralds. Beauty is a major element for stability, a fact which is affirmed by the events of the story in all its variations. Those present at the (hafla) are dazzled by the young woman's beauty, and the Sultan's son is also captivated by her.

In contrast to women, men play a weak role in the structure of the (stories). The role, weak as it is, highlights the important social role played by men, particularly in the context of marriage. As an important factor in unifying the family, the role of the man becomes crucial in the story. Marriage, for those who meet the condition of psychological and financial stability, concludes the story. It is also the ultimate hope of the woman in Arab societies, since it fulfills a fundamental part of her womanhood. But is marriage really fulfilling?

Since oil began flowing profusely in the Gulf countries, it is no longer necessary for men to go on extended trips in search of his daily living. Today in most families both men and women work and have the economic means to hire a helper to take care of the children. But has the abundance of money provided this cherished stability for him or for the women? To answer this question, one has first to inquire why tale Type 510 (Cinderella) story is still widespread in the region?

As previously mentioned, these stories are narrated by elderly women⁽¹¹⁾. It is significant that elderly women narrate these stories because they have a message to pass to their beloved ones (Glassie, 1982). Although men in contemporary society might not seek another woman as a stepmother for their children who could destroy the harmony in the home, other women now enter the house as a hired help. Wealthy parents often become indolent and thus the responsibilities of the home often shift to an outsider. In some of the versions mentioned above (Kamal, 1986; Al-Duwaik, 1984; El-Shamy, 1999), it is the heroine who

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man, whether he is a close relative (father, brother, husband) or an outsider. Unlike men's discourse, however, her discourse is not designed to separate but to connect. Like Shehrezad of the Arabian Nights, the mother of all contemporary narrators, the modern storyteller narrates magic tales to her audience members, who are mostly children. It is important that these messages are internalized by the younger generation in order to make a New World possible.

The gender of the narrator give us insight into the world view of countries that generate fairy tales. The gender of the narrator differs from culture to culture. While in some African cultures women do not tell stories (Finnegan, 1967), in other cultures the gender of the narrator varies. For instance, Glassie (1982) observes that in Ireland, the majority of the narrators for the fairy tales are men. Holbek (1987) finds that in Denmark, fairy tales are narrated by both men and women. However, Degh (1969) demonstrates that in Hungary, the narration of fairy tales is a woman's specialty. One could conclude from this information that as one moves toward the East, there is a greater possibility of finding women narrating this genre (see Degh, 1995 for more details about women as storytellers).

IV. The Female voice in the Cinderella stories in the Arabian Peninsula

The first noticeable element which draws the readers' attention and prompts them to ask questions about fairy tales in this culture area is the gender of the narrator. It is axiomatic that in the Middle East in general, and in the Cinderella story in particular, the narrator is always a woman⁽⁴⁾. Moreover, the protagonists in fairy tales most often are women, and those who come to help the vanquished heroine are, either women, or characters with feminine attributes⁽⁵⁾.

In an attempt to understand the role of women in tale Type 510 (Cinderella), it is necessary to draw connections between the woman's position in Arab societies in the Gulf on the one hand, and the structure of tale Type 510 on the other hand. If one examines the woman's position in the Gulf, particularly before the discovery of oil, we notice that the position occupied by the woman is dictated partly by her living conditions. Men traditionally went on long trips, either to dive for pearls in the depth of the gulf, or to trade⁽⁶⁾. Such trips would take anywhere between six and nine months during which the woman would take on nearly all domestic

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duties, from caring for her children to managing the finances which have been left by her husband for the purpose of maintaining the household. Under this mode of life, the woman's primary pastime and consolation was the creation of a world of her own: her own magical female world, a world which was distinguished by being a predominant woman's world of fantasy in which the man (father, husband, brother) played no role. The extended period of time that a woman is alone is expressed (metaphorically) through the creation of fairy tales. The absence of the husband is demonstrated by his insignificant role in the story.

The structure of the Cinderella story commences with a happy beginning, followed by a struggle, and then terminates with a happy ending. It begins happily because the family is united and stable. The struggle begins when the mother dies, however, her death might not be a literal death but rather a symbolic death because her husband married another woman ⁽⁷⁾. The mother appears in another form such as a fish, a cow, or as (Four Women) further illustrating her inferior position in the marriage. Nevertheless, the mother plays a role, such as attending to her daughter in preparation for the (hafla), and her marriage. When the stepmother is revenged, happiness returns to the family. Revenging the stepmother, whether by punishment or death is not unique to Cinderella but is rather found in other magic tales ⁽⁸⁾.

The typical Cinderella versions in the Gulf area begin as follows: (Once there was a fisherman who lived happily with his wife and daughter) then suddenly the mother falls ill (or accidentally drowns in the river in the Iraqi version), then dies, leaving behind her daughter and husband. The mother symbolically returns to life in the form of a fish and asks the girl to think of her as her mother as in the case of the Kuwaiti, the Qatari, and the Iraqi texts. The (Four Women) in the Omani version also ask the heroine to consider them as her mother.

The mother here does not die, but instead continuously transmits the feminine identity from her dominant role as a mother to a subordinate role. The narrator, who is most often a woman, transmits the story from previous ages to the present. She is the element which most effectively maintains this continuity.

In addition, names are significant to the structure of the stories. As is widely recognized, names in Arab cultures are loaded with cultural significance in so far as they mean something specific to their bearers. In

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1991, p. 54).

Scholars such as Belenky and her coauthors (1986) suggest that more women in their discourse tip toward (connected knowing) than men, who bend toward (separate knowing). Indeed, Arab feminist writers like Yumna Al-Aeed (cited in Binmasoud, 1994) and Khalda Said (1991) argue that the act of writing in feminist scholarship is an act of liberation that takes the female beyond the confines of her gender. It is also seen as a social act that connects both men and women in their struggle for better understanding within their own culture.

The previous examples (Ong, 1982; Belenky et al. 1986; Binmasoud, 1994; and Said, 1991) shed light on the importance of verbal art, especially when that art is used by a woman, and they show how a woman in writing can go beyond her gender to reconcile the individual with the communal.

The other issue that Lurie raises in her article is the relationship between orality and the literary person. Some scholars observe that the book replaces the storyteller in contemporary societies as a medium of entertaining and communicating ideas (Chambers, 1970). However, the politics that underlie this replacement have a more complex role, mainly that of social control. Jack Zipes in (Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion) (1983) states that (educated writers) [of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries] purposely appropriated the oral folktale and converted it to a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children would become civilized according to the social order of that time. (p. 3). The tales had previously undergone transformations, states Zipes (1983), many having originally carried (the stamp of matriarchal mythology), but having endured consecutive stages of (patriarchalization) during the course of these transformations, active heroines were turned into active heroes; and matrilineal family ties and relationships became matrilineal. Thus, by the time the tales were transformed into literary tales for children, their (configurations and symbols were already marked by a sociopolitical perception) (p. 7).

Zipes (1983) maintains that the foremost characters and concerns in folktales are those (of a monarchistic, patriarchal, and feudal society and the focus is on class struggle and competition for power among the aristocrats and between the peasantry and aristocracy; (p. 8). He concludes that the main theme of the folktale of this (feudal and early

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capitalistic period) is (might makes right) (p. 8).

However, upper class females do use fairy tales as a mask for their voice. According to Zipes (c1989), 1992), aristocratic women started to look at this genre seriously when they found that it served an important social function; namely that of (freedom of choice in marriage, fidelity, and justice) (p. 3). Through the fairy tale women began to criticize their social conditions.

As mentioned above, European women use the fairy tale to represent their views on issues, such as freedom of choice in marriage. Similarly, the female in the Arab world uses this genre, albeit in a different way. In the Arab world, the structure of a story differs according to the narrator's gender. If the narrator is male, the story often has a circular structure. It starts with a harmonious life, and then something happens that disturbs this harmony. The hero sets out from his family home to solve problems, and returns home after having solved these problems.

Stories narrated by female narrators follow a somewhat similar path in that the heroine sets out to solve problems. However, unlike the hero who often returns home, the heroine usually settles in a new place. Thus, stories narrated by female narrators often have a linear structure. Circular structures tend to reflect the ethos of a patriarchal society in which power is passed on from father to son. Conversely, structural linearity is discernible in stories narrated by female narrators, and thus by and large reflects the exclusion of women from power in a patriarchal society. More importantly, such linearity represents the female's attempt to subvert the patriarchal social order and to empower the female, who in the course of the story acquires freedom of choice.

Fairy tales in Arab societies are narrated largely by elderly women ⁽³⁾. It is significant that elderly women narrate these stories because they have a message to pass on to their beloved ones (Glassie, 1982). One of the messages that the elderly women / narrators wish to pass on is that the unity of the family is being undermined. The voice of wisdom of the elderly woman calls upon society to take action in order to safeguard the future of the family, especially that of the children.

Unlike the official rhetoric, which may unwittingly divide the people and represent the female character in an inappropriate way, the female storyteller may be seen as using the art of storytelling in metaphorical ways so as to encode her own messages. She particularly addresses a

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kinship relationships are also significant in this cultural area. Indeed, the rulers of Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are cousins because they all come from the same tribe.

III. The female voice and fairy tales

In her study of the female image in children's stories and its educational consequences, al-Manea (1993) analyzes the contents of a random collection of stories from different Arab countries (including Kuwait), and finds that the female image is illustrated in inappropriate ways compared to that of the male. In these stories, women are often portrayed as liars; they cannot think; are easy to deceive; and thus cannot take care of themselves. This contrasts sharply with male images in the folktale (Lurie, 1970; 1971; Luthi; 1982; Thompson, 1977).

Some feminist scholars see fairy tales as a genre that represents the male point of view on the world (Waelti-Walters, 1982). They claim that the common female characters in this genre are (1) polite (Zipes, 1983), (2) powerless prisoners, (3) material for marriage (Waelti-Walters, 1982; Zipes, 1983). (4) pictures in a frame, (5) decoratively unobtrusive, (6) repressed, (7) passive victims (Waelti-Walters, 1982; Christensen, 1991; & Zipes, 1983), (8) relegated to the kitchen, (9) shut in a tower, (10) exiled, and (11) killed (Waelti-Walters, 1982). On the other hand, the men in these tales are: (1) strong (Christensen, 1991), (2) always together, and (3) rewarded (Waelti-Walters, 1982).

However, feminism is not monolithic. Like any other approach, it includes different voices within the same discipline (Helle, 1991). Alison Lurie, a feminist, wrote two articles in the New York Review of books (Dec. 17, 1970; & Dec. 2, 1971). In the first article, she recognized that the folktale was one of the few types of children's books that a radical feminist would accept. She finds in the traditional folktales one way to prepare young children for women's liberation. However, she recognizes that some of the well known fairy tale collections do represent female characters as passive. Nevertheless, she points out that this is only true in the case of the tales of Hans Christian Anderson.

In a second article, however, Lurie went on to clarify her original assertion:

Some women's liberationists have attacked fairy tales as a male chauvinist form of literature: they feel that giving children stories like (Cinderella) and (Snow White) is a sort of brainwashing, intended to

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convince them that all little girls must be gentle, obedient, passive, and domestic while they wait for their prince to come. It is true that some of the tales we know best, those that have been popularized by Disney, have this sort of heroine. But they are a very unrepresentative selection. They reflect the taste of the refined literary men who edited the first popular collections of fairy tales for children during the Victorian era. Andrew Lang, for instance, chose the tales in the Blue Fairy Book. From among literally thousands known to him as a folklorist; and he chose them partly for their moral lesson. In other more recent collections of tales-as well as in Lang's later collections-there are more active heroines in effect, liberated women, who have courage, intelligence, endurance, and kind hearts (p. 6).

Lurie's articles demonstrate that when we look at fairy tales, we need to know the whos, whens, wheres, and whys surrounding the illustrations of women contained in these stories.

Lurie's articles raise two important issues that continue to influence research on fairy tales. The first is the relationship between oral literature and the media; and the second is the relationship between orality and literary personalities.

Concerning the first issue, Lurie notes that when transmitted through print or electronic media, fairy tales lose one of their important elements: the immediate interaction between the teller and the audience. Through this interaction, the audience can decode the meaning of the story using the narrator as a medium (Livo & Rietz, 1986). In addition, the social act between the teller and the audience loses a crucial function because, while the sounds bring the people together, the images separate them. Walter Ong (1982) gives the following example:

When a speaker is addressing an audience, the members of the audience normally become a unity, with themselves and with the speaker. If the speaker asks the audience to read a handout provided for them, as each reader enters into his or her own private reading world, the unity of the audience is shattered, to be re-established only when oral speech begins again (p. 74).

Furthermore, the notion of connected knowing carries with it the love that assumes a sharing of the self and the other. The voice of connected knowing is intended to create continuity between the so-called private language of self-reflection and the formal designs of public speech (Helle,

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Introduction:

I. Cinderella around the world

In folk literature there are many versions of the same tale. For example, the story of Cinderella is well known and popular throughout the world. In 1891, Cox (1893) estimated that there were three hundred and forty five variations of this tale in the world. Huck and her colleagues (1993) hypothesized that 500 variants of this tale appear in Europe alone. What that number may be today is hard to tell. In spite of their universality, folktales are culture specific when they are read in their own environment. Studying the similarities and differences between fairy tales or even versions of the same tale can provide us with promising ground for a better understanding of the specificity of cultures themselves. For instance, one can find that in the French version (Griffith & Frey, 1992), and the Arabic version (El-Shamy, 1999), Cinderella's world is limited mostly to the kitchen - a world of gloominess and hard work and misery. Symbolically, the name Cinderella juxtaposes the kitchen, and specifically the fire and its cinders. This symbolic relationship is represented in the very name of the protagonist in these three versions. In Perrault's story, part of her name means (Cinder), (Cinderella). In Grimm's, her name reminds us of the word ash (Aschenputtel); and in the Arabic version, we find that the girl sleeps next to a cooking area (El-Shamy, 1999). These juxtapositions allude to the position of the woman.

The differences, however, are more telling than the similarities, because they reflect the specificity of the European and Arabic cultures. In the European story, the occasion of celebration is a ball. In the Arabic version, where the idea of a ball is unknown, there are different occasions such as circumcisions (El-Shamy, 1999) - a tradition that celebrates the newborn, initiating him into the religious heritage; and the (haflaa) (Al-Batni, 1988; Al-Duwaik, 1984) - a happy celebration such as the one after the fasting month of Ramadan.

Another equally important difference can be pointed out in the significance of the number three. In the European version, there are two stepsisters. In the Arabic version, however, there is only one stepsister. According to Islam, in the context of heritage and witnessing, the share and the right of a man equals that of two women. Thus, in the Arabic version we have the Sultan's son and two girls (the fisherman's daughter and her stepsister), while in the European version we have Cinderella

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and her two stepsisters. Both patriarchal power and fraternal rivalry, are much more prominent in the (Fisherman's Daughter) than in Perrault's version. Indeed, even the different settings - ball versus circumcision - reflects this greater attention given to male characters; Perrault's version focuses more narrowly on Cinderella's predicament as a girl deprived of love and support, whereas (The Fisherman's Daughter) devotes more attention to the social significance of marriage as a structure that unites families.

The versions also differ importantly in their ending. In Perrault's Cinderella, Cinderella forgives the stepmother and her stepdaughters; the Arabic version, however, continues after the Sultan's son has chosen his bride, with the stepmother still playing her evil tricks.

II. The purpose

In this paper I will examine elements of a collection of texts belonging to the international tale type 510 (Cinderella and Cap O'Rushes), (Aarne & Thompson 1981) in the Arabian Peninsula. I will do a contextual analysis of ten texts in an attempt to reveal the social features which find expression in these texts ⁽¹⁾. I chose these text because they are in a written format and also because they are representative of different countries in the Arabian Gulf. The elements to be examined are the role of the female narrator in the social context; how the role of the narrator manifests the social and economic condition of the specific societies portrayed; and how the structure of the story projects the desires of the narrator who ultimately becomes the voice of women in the regions where the stories were collected ⁽²⁾.

It will be seen that the texts affirm the uniqueness of these tales to the countries which produced them, on the one hand, and on the other hand, that the social and economic roles coincide in a balanced manner such that together they reveal the world or the woman as an individual, capable of giving concrete expression to her own special vision of the world around her. The narrative structures of the texts point to the existence of another broader perspective of the storyteller.

For the purpose of this paper, I am referring to the area from which the texts were collected as the Arabian Gulf area. This cultural area shares the same religion, language, traditions and stories. In his encyclopedic book, El-Shamy, (1995, especially the index) estimates that sixty two versions of the Cinderella story are found only in this region. Additionally,

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Abstract

This study examines elements of a collection of texts belonging to the international tale type 510 „Cinderella and Cap O'Rushes» in the Arabian Gulf.

I will do a contextual analysis of ten texts in an attempt to reveal the social themes which find expression in these texts.

It will be seen, that the texts affirm the uniqueness of these tales to the countries which produced them, and that the social and economic roles coincide in such a balanced manner, that together they reveal the world of the women as an individual, capable of giving concrete expression to her own special vision of the world around her.

The narrative structure of the texts point to the existence of another broader perspective of the storyteller.

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المرأة في بحثها عن الاستقرار: دراسة حالة لعكاية سنديلا في الخليج العربي

د. علي الجعفر *

الملخص

هذه الدراسة عبارة عن قراءة نصية لعشرة نصوص من حكاية سنديلا العالمية (طراز ٥١٠ حسب التصنيف العالمي للحكايات الشعبية) في دول الخليج العربية؛ وذلك للتعرف على أهم العلامات التي تنطوي عليها هذه النصوص سواء الاجتماعية منها أو الاقتصادية. ويلاحظ القارئ لهذه النصوص خصوصيتها بالنسبة للدول التي أنتجتها من ناحية، ولصوت المرأة الأنثوي العربي الذي ينطوي على علامات مهمة في نقد المجتمع الذكوري في الماضي، والمجتمع بأطرافه (لاسيما الأب والأم) في العصر الراهن.

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