

**Oral Traditional Tales
and the
Thousand Nights and a Night:
The Demographic Factor***

By
Hasan El-Shamy
Bloomington, IN.

*Published in: *The Telling of Stories: Approaches to a Traditional Craft*. Morton Nøjgaard, J. de Mylius, I. Piø, and Bengt Holbeck, Eds. Odense University Press, Odense, Denmark, 1990, pp. 63-117.

*Paper presented at The Centre of Vernacular Literature of the Middle Ages at Odense University. Thirteenth International Symposium: "The Telling of Stories: Approach to a traditional Craft". Odense University, Nov. 21-22, 1988

TABLE of CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	63
Cognitive Behaviorism... ..	63
THE CONTEXT FOR NARRATING.....	65
God's Language and Man's Parlance: The Arabic Language and the Stratification of Narrative Traditions.....	65
The Philosophy of Romanticism and the East	67
II. THE PERCEPTION OF FOLKTALES AS LITERATURE:	71
Issues of Logic, Dramatic Strength, Being Satisfying	71
The Writer-Redactor-Collector as Narrator	72
Contents, Syntax and Matters of "Value"	73
III. THE FOLK NARRATIVE REPERTOIRE	83
The Gender Difference	83
The Worlds of Words: the Written and the Spoken.....	84
Two Cases.....	85
1. "Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr" or "'El-'asîl we-l-khasîs"?	85
Abu-Qîr wa Abu-Sîr	85
<i>El-'asîl we-l-khasîs</i>	88
2. "¿Ali Bâbâ," or "The Brother"?	92
A Radio-Play.....	94
The <i>Sa¿luw</i> 's Treasure.....	98
IV. CONCLUSION	101
EDITORIAL NOTES.....	101
Textual Presentations	101
Diacritic Marks	101
Sources and Bibliographic Notes	102

Oral Traditional Tales and the *Thousand Nights and a Night*: The Demographic Factor^[*]

By HASAN EL-SHAMY, *Indiana University, Bloomington*

I. INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Cognitive Behaviorism

The "telling of tales" is fundamentally a process, rather than an event. It involves the individual teller, and is therefore psychological; it also takes place within the confines of certain social and cultural conditions and is, consequently, a socio-cultural process as well. As demonstrated by the rapid extinction of certain "classical" folklore genres and the birth of others (e.g., the "urban legend"), the processes of learning, retention, remembering and forgetting, and recall seem to be pivotal to an understanding of "the telling" of a tale.

'Folklore' [... may] be defined as a class of learned, traditional responses forming a distinct type [a category] of behavior. The individual must undergo the psychological process of learning in order to acquire the responses of folkloric behavior [...] this learning process occurs under conditions determined by social and cultural factors. The fundamental factors involved in learning are: drive [motivation], cue [context, intervening stimuli], response, and reward [effect, feedback, etc.]. Secondary factors such as repetition, recency, and ego-involvement can contribute, but their presence is not required in the process of learning.

[...] Thus, folklorists should initially concern themselves with folkloric responses (*narrating, believing, singing, applying a proverb, or dancing*) and relevant social and cultural factors before proceeding to the study of the folklore items themselves (*narratives, beliefs, songs, proverbs, or dances*).¹

The present inquiry is concerned with two categories of traditional tales: oral ^{<64>} and printed; each being dependent on a distinct set of human activities responsible for its continued existence in a community. The perceptual and psychological

*Published in: *The Telling of Stories: Approaches to a Traditional Craft*. Morton Nøjgaard, J. de Mylius, I. Piø, and Bengt Holbeck, Eds. Odense University Press, Odense, Denmark, 1990, pp. 63-117.

*[Note: Endnotes in the original are given here as footnotes. Original pagination is indicated within angular brackets: <>. (e.g., "<64>" = p. 64 in the original). See also "EDITORIAL NOTES," pp. 101-102, below].

¹ "Folkloric Behavior: a Theory for the Study of the Dynamics of Traditional Culture." [A case study of the stability and change in the lore of the Egyptian community in Brooklyn, N.Y.] Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University (Bloomington, 1967); See "Introduction." Also see Hasan M. El-Shamy, "Behaviorism and the Text" in *Folklore Today. A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, L. Dégh, H. Glassie, F.J. Oinas, Editors (Bloomington, Indiana, 1976) pp. 146-160.

processes involved in these sets of activities are not identical. The starting point, therefore, is the process of communicating an existing text to an audience by telling it from memory to an audience (oral communication-aural perception), or by reading it off a sheet of paper (visual message-visual perception). In the *learning* of the orally communicated tale, it is perceived primarily *aurally*, and secondarily *visually* and affectively² via accompanying non-verbal gestures, facial expressions and other perceivable occurrences (events). Meanwhile in the *leaning* of a printed text by its reader, the text is perceived *visually*. In cases where a text is being read to listeners, it, also, is perceived by the audience primarily aurally and by accompanying intonation and other extra-textual commentaries by the reader-teller. The first type of activity (verbal-aural) is the typical manner in which folktales are traditionally told in Arab communities; the second (visual-visual) is atypical, yet, recurrent.

In the case of presenting a tale to an audience, the narrator of the oral text--whether literate or not--must generate (elicit) the narrative learned *a priori* through the processes of "recall," "remembering," and other concomitant mental and affective activities; the narrator may end-up with various degrees of success or failure in performing³ the task of formulating the tale being told. As for the reading of a story to an audience, an individual who had acquired the skill of reading must begin with an artifact (i.e., the printed text), and need not to have learned the text of the tale *a priori*; thus, the processes of "recall" and "remembering" are not involved in a primary capacity in the act of reading out loud. Furthermore, the context (cues, intervening variables, secondary stimuli) for reading includes willingness to do so and the availability of the "book" (requiring financial investment), sufficient lighting (a further financial burden), and reading skill (a scarce commodity in communities with high illiteracy rates, and particularly so with reference to all 'folk-books' in the Arabic language, where diacritic marks are absent). The culture realities of Arab traditional communities, as represented by hundreds of informants interviewed as to the sources from which they had learned their tales, is that only a few raconteurs claimed to have acquired them via a printed medium.⁴

During the first third of this century, folklorists (e.g., Antti Aarne, Walter

² For a discussion on "affect," "sentiment," and "emotion" in tales, see H. El-Shamy, "Emotionskomponente," *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 3, nos. 4-5 (Berlin, 1981) pp. 1391-1395.

³ The term "performance" is used here to indicate two collateral aspects of behavior: the first is what a person does when faced with a "task;" the second is "the property of a phenomenon by virtue of which it can be counted or measured," or "that aspect of a phenomenon which can be described in terms of the numerical system." See Horace B. English and Ava English, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* (David McCoy: New York, 1966), pp. 379, 434.

⁴ A Nubian bilingual raconteur, for example tended to state that he either authored or "read in books" his "serious" tales; but he subsequently explained: "What I mean is that *they deserve to be in books* [emphasis added]." See Hasan El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, <103> (Chicago, 1980), p. 108. Compare 'Alf laylah's formulaic ending: "Harûn ordered "'an tu'arrakha hâdhihi al-*likâyah wa-tujâla sîrah bayna al-nâs* (that this story be recorded as history and be made current [an example for] people)". See, for example, p. 64.

Anderson, Albert Wesselski)⁵ began examining the "learning" of tales but independently of the psychological theories of learning. Unfortunately, their studies in this regard were side-tracked and eventually abandoned before reaching their full potential. Current "contextual" and "performance-centered" ⁶⁵ approaches to the study of lore only partly address segments of the cognitive behavioristic system. Behavioral factors typically labeled "cues," ("secondary stimuli," "intervening variables," "feedback," etc.) are addressed as "the context" in which an item of lore is performed; meanwhile, the process of eliciting a response (i.e., responding by narrating, singing, carving, cooking, etc.) is treated as "performance."⁶

THE CONTEXT FOR NARRATING

Whatever the motivation for narrating, such as a child asking its mother for a tale, or a litigant citing a historical precedent in a court of law to lend credence to an argument, a multitude of factors perceived by the would-be narrator--whether from memory or by reading--are activated. These secondary stimuli (i.e., context, cues, intervening variables, feedback, etc.) act as forces which influence the narrating process. These may be on a micro-level, such as the mood of the narrator at the time, or a macro-level, such as the perceived stand of religion on the narrating of "frivolous tales" or "lies". One such motivating force with profound consequences is the stand Islam has taken vis-à-vis "narrating" stories.

God's Language and Man's Parlance:

Arabic Language and the Stratification of Narrative Traditions

Arabic is a Semitic language which occupies a unique position, perhaps unparalleled, in the value systems of Arab and Muslim peoples. It is the language of the Holy *Qur'ân* (Koran)--one of the miracles with which God equipped His prophets in accordance to the needs of the era and civilization whose peoples they addressed. It is also held to be the language of creation (Genesis); it is God's words and one of the means of revealing His will to man.⁷ Due to this singular status, a host of issues arise in Moslem communities when Arabic is used as a medium of communication. One of these of particular relevance to the present inquiry is the station of "the narrating of tales."

Formal Islam assumed a negative stance vis-à-vis arts in general and the verbal ones in particular. Koran branded poets as liars and assumed the responsibility for "narrating the best [truthful] stories".⁸ Moslem theologians specified that narrating must be confined to "truthful" accounts of events and that

⁵ See notes no. 109-110, below.

⁶ See note. no. 3, above.

⁷ See J.R.T.M. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, (Leiden, 1976), and Anwar G. Chejne, *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, (Minneapolis, Minn, 1969). Also see Ahmad Mûsa Sâlim, *Qasas al-Qur'ân fî muwâjahat 'adab al-ruwâyah wa al-masrah* (Koran's Narrative in confronting the Literature of Novel and Drama). Beirut, 1977.

⁸ See Koran, 12:3, 18:13.

a *qissah* (story) must be used for didactic--religious or ethical-- purposes.⁹ Thus, while poetry thrived (for reasons which lie beyond the scope of the present study), the telling of "fantasy tales" and related categories of folk narratives survived mainly outside--and, perhaps, in spite of--the formal <66> religious guidelines.¹⁰ Typically, adult male narrators prefer to tell the religious, philosophical, or otherwise serious *qissah*, and refrain from narrating the *haddûtah* (i.e., 'uhdûthah, fantasy tales, *Zaubermärchen*, novelle, and formula tales). With the possible exception of humorous anecdotes, the immense literary legacy of Arab and Muslim writers is virtually free of the fantasy tale. Although a limited number of narratives with typological contents currently recognized as those of "ordinary tales" do appear in that legacy, they invariably assume the function of, and occur in the context of, "truthful" legends or other categories of the "serious" narrative (e.g., tale-types AaTh 655-655A,¹¹ 706¹²). Significantly, of the eighty-two narratives which René Basset extracted from predominantly printed literary sources and generically designated as Arab "contes merveilleux," only *one* actually belongs to that folktale genre.¹³ Still, this very text was extracted from a contemporary anthology of oral north African folktales; thus, the absence of the "contes merveilleux" is total in this anthology of 984 narratives classified in five broad generic categories.¹⁴

Scholarly interest in Arab and related Middle Eastern narratives dates back to Arab and Moslem writers of the 8th and 9th Centuries A.D. This early concern was centered on literary expressions in al-*arabiyyah al-fushû* (classical Arabic) and was characterized by the dominance of religious and linguistic lines of thought. Language sciences (grammar, prosody, etc.) were devised to serve religious inquires. Muslim bibliographers only allude to predominantly entertaining narrative works such as the Persian *hazâr 'afsâneh* (A Thousand `myths'), and the Arabic '*Alf laylah wa laylah* (A Thousand Nights and a Night), without citing examples of their contents.¹⁵ These and similar anthologies contained narratives

⁹ See El-Shamy, *Folktales*, pp. xlvi-xlvii (as in note no. 4 above).

¹⁰ See El-Shamy, *Folktales* pp. xlvi-xlvii.

¹¹ [655, *The Wise Brothers* - 655A, *The Strayed Camel and the Clever Deductions*]. See El-Shamy, *Folktales*, pp. 109, and 266-7.

¹² An example is the use by Tha_;labî of AaTh 554B*, *The Boy in the Eagle's Nest*. [Infant raised by Bird]; See Hasan El-Shamy, "Vom Fisch Geboren (AaTh 705 [+ 706, *The Maiden Without Hands*)," *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (Göttingen). vol. 4 (1984), nos. 4-5, pp. 1211-1218; and "Contract with Azrael," (AaTh 332, *Godfather Death*.) in El-Shamy, *Folktales*, no. 17, esp. pp. 267-268; and "When Azrael Laughed, Cried, and Felt Fear," tale no. 18, esp. p. 268.

¹³ *Mille et un contes, récites & légendes arabes*, vol. 1, pt.1, no. 16, pp. 80-4. This tale belongs to tale-types AaTh 327B and 328.

¹⁴ 4 vols., (Paris, 1924). Basset's five categories are: "contes merveilleux" (82 items); "contes plaisants" (229 items); "cotes sur la femme et l'amoure" (93 items); "contes divers" (200 items); "légendes religieuses" (380 items).

¹⁵ al-Mas_;ûdî, *Prairies d'or*, Barbier Meynard, Ed., (Paris, 1914), vol. 4, pp. 89-90; M. Ibn Ishâq al-Nadîm, *kitâb al-fihrist* (Cairo, 1348 A.H.), pp. 422-3; al-Maqrîzî, *kitâb al-khitat*, (Cairo, 1270

typically labelled *khurâfât*--a term which denotes the fantastic and unbelievable--and, in this respect, is akin to the Greek term *mythos* after Christianity had been embraced.¹⁶ The recording or telling of *khurâfât* was deemed inadvisable, if not outright sinful. ʔUmar Ibn al-Khattâb, the second Caliph, is reported to have evicted *al-qussâs* (narrators) out of mosques, with the exception of al-Hasan al-Basrî whose stories were "truthful".¹⁷ Ironically, al-Hasan al-Basrî has been named as the hero of one of the *khurâfât* (*Zauber märchen*) which he so meticulously avoided (AaTh 400, *The Man on a Quest for his Lost Wife*)¹⁸

On levels of culture other than that of the formal religious, the narrating of folktales survived in spite of the interdiction, but almost exclusively outside the main stream of the "official culture." Thus, three categories of narrative traditions may be designated in Arab-Islamic cultures: 1) formal religious- historical <67> stories; 2) semi-literary narratives of folk extraction re-worked by literate editors and redactors,¹⁹ and 3) folk-oral tales, which remained unrecorded.

The contents of each of these repertoires constitute a cognitive sub-system; the narrator of each is typically cast in a specialized *role*--which specifies a set of behavioral expectations-- with a corresponding status.²⁰ The majority of adult males refuse to jeopardize their communal status by telling "non-serious" tales belonging to the folk-oral repertoire (category three).²¹ However a dynamic relationship of exchange exists among these repertoires; some folk legends have been "institutionalized" into formal religious literature;²² while a few literary stories may have been adopted by oral tale-tellers.²³ In this respect each narrative category constitutes a repertoire of *latent traditions* for the others, awaiting adoption. Yet, each remains distinct, independent and autonomous in its own right.

A.H.), vol. 1, p. 485.

¹⁶ See C. Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks* (New York, 1960), p. 4; L. Bødker, *International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore* vol. II, *Folk literature (Germanic)*, Copenhagen, 1965, p. 205.

¹⁷ In this respect, see the statement by Imam al Ghazzâli (A.D. 1058-1111) , quoted in El-Shamy, *Folktales* p. xlvii.

¹⁸ Cf. Chauvin, vol. 6, p. 48, no.212.

¹⁹ The Aarne-Thompson *Type Index* refers to such works as "literary treatment."

²⁰ For the behavioral aspects of the "role" in tale-telling, see El-Shamy "Folkloric Behavior" pp. 64-6.

²¹ As shown in the reactions of the narrators of tales nos. 10 (p. 75), 12 (p. 86), 51 (p. 201) in El-Shamy, *Folktales*.

²² Compare, for example, Thaʔlabî's use of a folktale in a religious account, see note no. 12 above.

²³ For examples, see Sâʔi, *lâdhiqiyyah* (M.A., Cairo University, 1970), p. 56, p. 58, and p. 71. These literary texts and others were taken out in the printed edition (Damascus, 1974).

The Philosophy of Romanticism and the East

During the Eighteenth Century, a romantic philosophical curiosity about the "orient" kindled major interest in semi-literary works such as *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, which A. Galland translated into French in 1704 and the following years. The enthusiasm²⁴ with which Galland's translation was received among the general *European* public signaled the adoption of this "Eastern" narrative anthology in the West.²⁵ That literary-romantic interest was transferred to academic circles in the "East" and still lingers among Arab students of literature and related disciplines. On that "élite" literate cultural level, published Arabic tales offered to the general readership (typically viewed as, the children) were, until recently, re-created extracts from anthologies such as '*Alf laylah, Kalîlah wa dimnah* (the Arabic version of the *Panchatantra*),²⁶ and similar semi-literary narrative collections. These works are considered part, though peripheral, of the Arab-Islamic heritage, especially since the language in which they were originally composed or written down is-- more or less -- *çarabîyyah fushâ* (classical Arabic). For the most part, they also assume moralistic, didactic, and philosophical functions. Modern writers re-work and re-present narratives from these sources mainly for didactic objectives.²⁷

Hypotheses about the origins of '*Alf laylah* abound. Whatever assumption may seem plausible, there can be little doubt that the foundations for this collection of loosely knit stories, framed within one, were oral traditional. '*Alf laylah* acquired a distinct literary character at the hands of its early scribes <68> and editors, who remain anonymous. At present, with the exception of oral folktales which *European* editors added to the various editions of '*Alf laylah*, the oral folktale, especially the *Zaubermärchen*, remained largely outside this adult-male-bound semi-literary tradition.²⁸

Serious and sustained interest in the *orally* communicated folktale may be attributed to the impact of Western scholarship. During the 19th Century, European linguists²⁹ studying Arabic dialects collected and published oral tales as examples of representative dialectical "utterances." Only a few of these authentic, unimproved folkloric texts found their way into European folklore studies and folktale-indexes.³⁰ This "foreign" emphasis on the study of vernacular Arabic had

²⁴ For a concise description of these early collections see Basset, *Mille*, vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

²⁵ See Victor Chauvin, *Bibliographie des oeuvres arabes*, 12 vols. (Liège, 1892-1922), vol. 4, pp. 25 ff, where scores of European anthologies derived from *The Arabian Nights* are cited.

²⁶ See Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, pp. 1-78.

²⁷ As in the narratives edited by Kâmil al-Kilânî, and those by Amîn Ahmad El-çAttâr *et al.* (Dâr al-Maçârîf, Cairo), 1962 ff.

²⁸ For examples of folktales added to the *European Arabian Nights*, see note no. 106, below.

²⁹ E.g., Adolph Wahrmund, Alfred Jahn, David H. Müller, Nikolaus Rhodokanakis, J. Seldon Willmore, Wilhelm Spitta, etc.

³⁰ See H. El-Shamy, "A [Demographically-Oriented] Index for Tales of the Arab World," *Fabula*, vol. 29, pt. 1/2, (1988) pp. 150-163, esp. p. 153, pp. 156-8 n. 5-11. [Published under the title: *Types of the Folktale in the Arab World: A Demographically Oriented Tale-Type Index.*

virtually no appreciable impact on indigenous Arab and Moslem scholars; their concern with Arabic dialects and dialectical narrative lore remained dormant until the middle of the twentieth century.³¹ The stage was set for the discovery of the oral folktale.

Meanwhile, on a folk level (or rather, a level other than that of the élite/educated) "sixteen-pager" pamphlets³² appear as part of a commercial enterprise peddled at market places and other spots of congregation. Each of these "sixteen-pagers" is confined to one narrative (or topic); and offered a variety of materials ranging from folk ballads (typically perceived as "true events," i.e., legends) to extracts from semi-literary works--such as *'Alf laylah*. With few exceptions,³³ these "broadside-like" publications contained no true oral folktales.

Since the 1950's an explosion of attention paid to indigenous, orally transmitted folk narratives has taken place. This new interest is generated by a number of factors. First, the recent emergence of the modern nationalistic ideologies stressing political entities referred to as the "state," under the previous forms of ideal "Islamic government," namely the Caliphate, the independence of such entities was not tolerated and they were referred to only as *'aqṭâr* (regions) or *'amsâr* (territories), or even *shuṭûb* (national or ethnic populations; singular: *shab*, i.e., a "Volk" of a specific nationality). Second, a companion force of nationalism and the emergence of the modern "populist state" is the reliance on the *jamâhîr* ("masses") and local communities and their cultures (i.e., regional cultures, or culture areas). Such social groups were previously referred to as *ṣâmmah* (i.e., commoners, or *al-ghawghâ'* or *al-sûqah*, i.e., the vulgar classes). A third force has been the introduction into the academic realm of modern scholarly theories, which justified the study in Arab universities of "folk literature" in vernacular Arabic.³⁴

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004)].

³¹ E.g., *ṣ*Abd-al-*ṣ*Azîz Matr, and Murâd Kâmil, etc. Only in French North Africa there were some exceptions; e.g., S al-Mudarris, *kitâb al-tarîq al-mustaqîm li-taṣlîm lughat al-ṣâmmah* (The Straight-Path Book in Teaching the Commoners' Language). Alger, 1907.

³² Printed on standard newspaper-size sheet, then folded thrice to constitute a sixteen-pager booklet, with the top end un-cut. The choice of printing font (size) was determined by the volume of the text; occasionally, the initial printing font was relatively large, then--upon realizing that the remaining space would not hold the rest of the text--a smaller font was introduced. This outlet was the principal medium for disseminating in print the Egyptian folk ballad. The price in the 1950's was about ten milliems (10 cents)--a fraction of the cost of the complete *'Alf laylah wa laylah*.

³³ Among these we may find narratives belonging to tale-types AaTh: 465, 449-1511, 706, etc. For a partial list of narratives derived from such pamphlets, see Enno Littmann, *Arabische Märchen und Schwänke aus Ägypten*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Klasse der Literatur, no. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1955).

³⁴ In his *qamûs*, Aḥmad Amîn, a distinguished historian, reported that upon his appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, a delegation of professors asked him to abandon his work of folk materials, since such an undertaking was incongruent with the dignity of the office. See Aḥmad Amîn, *qamûs al-ṣâdât wa al-taqâlid wa al-taṣâbir al-misriyyah*. (Dictionary of Egyptian Customs, Traditions and Expressions) Cairo, 1953.

Consequently, folklore centers were established in virtually every Arab country during the past thirty years. Academic institutions <69> and other government-sponsored establishments (e.g., folklore centers, "mass-culture" divisions in ministries of culture) were created in order to address the need to collect, study, preserve and process folklore materials for use on a national level.

However, this current strong interest in folk and regional cultures in the Arab World is countervailed by the viewpoint held by many Arab nationalists and formal religious authorities that paying attention to folk *dialectical* literatures erodes the primacy of classical Arabic and encourages the institutionalization of regional differences and developing identities separate from that of a "unified Arab Nation." Thus, it is feared that bestowing academic legitimacy on Arabic dialects would ultimately lead to the eroding of the primacy of *al-fushâ* classical Arabic--the language of the Koran, contribute to the emergence of new "languages" out of these dialects (as in the case of Italian and French, for example, springing out of Latin), and would further fragment Arab unity.³⁵ In this respect and with reference to pan-Arab nationalism, the study of verbal folklore is seen as promoting "regionalism" and is, therefore, anti-nationalistic and --in some circles--anti religious.³⁶ Additionally, the label: "*turâth shaġbî*" (i.e., folk tradition), which folklorists have been using to refer to the subject-matter of their field of inquiry generates apprehension, especially among fundamentalist Muslims. Folklore conferences and symposia--which are held under the title "*turâth shaġbî*" generate feelings of ill-will. The main source for concern is the use of the word *turâth* (legacy, traditions, etc.). Considering the fact that for the past fourteen centuries this word has designated theological and related writings other than the *Koran* and *hadîth* ("traditions," i.e., sayings and descriptions of deeds attributed to Prophet Muhammad).³⁷

Arab Folklorists have attempted to assuage these fears. In recently held symposia, resolutions were adopted calling for "translating folk literature [which is invariably] expressed in *lahajât* (dialects) or *al-ġarabiyyah al-dâriyah* (vernacular Arabic) into *fushâ* (classical Arabic);" the neutral term "*ma'thûrât*" (legacy, traditions, etc.) has been adopted as a substitute for the religion-bound term "*turâth*."³⁸

The first academic thesis approved (in 1950's) to treat a folklore genre as literature was written by ġAbd-ul-Hamîd Yûnus, a pioneer of oral literature scholarship. It dealt with <105> the poetic narrative genre of *sîrah*-- typically perceived as a romance with epic-like qualities. See ġAbd-ul-Hamîd Yûnus *al-hilâliyyah fî al-târîkh wa al-'adab al-shaġbî* (*The Hilâlî-sîrah in History and Folk Literature*). Cairo 1956.

Notably, the first "vernacular literature" offering approved, in the 1960's as part of an Arab university's pedagogical curriculum was limited to this a *poetic narrative genre*.

³⁵ Lewis ġAwad, "al-folklore wa-al-'istiġmâr" (folklore and colonialism).

³⁶ See ġAbd-ul-Hamîd Yûnus, *Difâġ ġan al-folklore ([In] Defence of Folklore)* Cairo, 1971.

³⁷ As expressed during the 1988 Janâdiriyah Folk Festival, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

³⁸ See "Concluding Statement: Recommendations" of the Baghdad Symposium (1978) on "Folklore and The Arab Identity" ("translate colloquial into classical).

A recent event which occurred in Egypt placed additional pressure on the study of folklore in general, and the collecting and publishing of folk narratives in particular. A vehement reaction by "fundamentalist" Moslems to the "immorality" expressed in the story of "The Porter and the Three women of Baghdad"³⁹ (in which erotic words and descriptions of acts are graphically presented) led to the banning--though temporary-- of '*Alf laylah* <70> *wa laylah* (Thousand Nights and a Night) from public circulation. With the élite and other literate/learned groups, this anthology is perceived as *the model* for the folktale (see below).

fa nazara al-hammâl [...]
fa-wagadaha sabiyyatan rashîqata-l-qad
qâçidata an-nahd
dhâta husnin wa-gamâl
wa-qaddin wa-'iç tidâl
wa gabînin ka-ghurrati-l-hilâl
wa çuyûnin ka-çuyûni-l-ghizlân
wa hawâgibin ka-hilâli Ramadân
wa-khudûdin mithla shaqâ'iq-in-nuçmân
wa-famin ka-khâtami Sulymân
wa-waghin ka-l-badri fi-l-'ishrâq
wa nahdayni ka-rummânatayni b-ittifâq
wa-batnin matwiyyin talât-a-th-thiyâb
ka-tayyi-s-sigilli li-l-kitâb.
fa lammâ nazara 'ilayhâ, salabat çaqilah
[....]

The porter looked [...]
and found a slender maiden [woman]
firm breasted
with prettiness and beauty,
figure and body-straightness,
and forehead like the fore-part of the crescent'
and eyes like gazelles'
and eyebrows like the crescent of the month of Ramadan
cheeks like `red anemones'
and mouth like Solomon's ring
and face like a radiant full-moon
and two breasts like two symmetrical pomegranates
a tummy folded under clothes

³⁹ For a brief description of the event, see "The Tale of the Stern Judge", in *Time: The Weekly Newsmagazine* (New York), June 3, 1985, p. 35.

This tale is a frame-story comparable to AaTh 471; it is likely to be a literary rendition of a variant (subtype) current in oral traditions and lacks the erotic component; see note no. 97, below.

Chauvin characterized this episode [(Type: 1425B§)] as "obscène plaisanteries." See Chauvin, vol. 5, p. 251, no. 148. For narratives within the frame story see Chauvin no. 33, 115, 116, 117, 158, and 443. Also see note no. 87, below.

in the manner a file holds a letter.^[40]
When he looked at her, she robbed him of his mind
[...]

<71>

The "girls" (i.e., women) invite the porter to join them in drinking and dallying. When drunk, the girl who was the door-keeper disrobed, plunged naked into a pool, blew water with her mouth at the porter, and

washed her limbs and in between her thighs, then got out of the water and threw herself onto the porter's lap and asked: 'Sweetheart, what is this'-- as she pointed at her 'vulva'?^[41] He answered: 'This is your womb.' She said 'U-u-u-u-u-u! 'U-u-u-u-u-u! Have you no shame?!' Then she grabbed him by the nap of the neck and kept on slapping it. He said 'Your organ.' She replied: 'Not that.' He said 'Your vulva.' She replied, 'Not that.' He said [...]."

An array of names are tried until the woman, finally, enlightens him by citing a personal euphemism as the correct one. The scene is repeated with the other women in a lengthy redundant manner, but no actual intercourse is mentioned. A daring (by local standards) drawing depicts the porter amidst three scantily attired, visibly fleshy female companions, enjoying food, drinks and physical contact.⁴²

With the élite and other groups of the "educated," this anthology of tales has been perceived as *the model* for the folktale. As will be demonstrated, the recent surge of interest in the folktale has come mainly from these and other literature-bound circles,⁴³ which viewed oral folktales as rudimentary artistic cultural

⁴⁰ This passage is recurrent in girls' and women's *folksong*; it is often sung publicly in the first person (i.e., my forehead, my mouth, etc.) and functions as public self-flattering expression with far reaching effects on the singer's "self-concept" and "mental health." See Hasan M. El-Shamy "Mental Health in Traditional Culture: A Study of Preventive and Therapeutic Folk Practices." In *Psychiatry and the State*, Mark C. Kennedy Ed., a special issue of *Catalyst*, (Fall, 1972, Trent University Press, Petersborough, Ontario), pp. 13-28.

Among Arabs, a female's beauty is often linked to being "plump," or "fleshy." Note that this "simile" (i.e., "[a female's tummy has layers like a] sheet of paper in a file or folder, etc.) is purely literary and is not found in current *folk* renditions of the song which normally likens such a tummy to "*ʔagîn khamrân* (fermented dough);" thus, the image seems to be derived from, and is indicative of a male scribe/writer's worldview. Similarly the simile: "*red anemones*," is purely literary, and has never been encountered in folk expressions.

⁴¹ As given in '*Alf laylah wa laylah*, 4 volumes. (Cairo, Muhammad Subaih, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 34. The word used here to indicate "vulva" is the classical Arabic: *farj*, used only in literary writings. Note the lyric poems (in classical Arabic) inserted within the texts of '*Alf laylah*.

⁴² '*Alf laylah wa laylah*, (Cairo), vol. 4, p. 32.

⁴³ The study of "folklore" in Arab universities is largely restricted to "folk literature" in departments of Arabic Language and Literature. During the 1970's "folklore" was introduced into the Department of sociology, Cairo University, but only as "manners customs, and beliefs." Also see note no. 34, above.

expressions to be elevated to the level of literary works through re-fashioning into the formal and stylistic mold provided by the '*Alf laylah wa laylah*'.

II. THE PERCEPTION OF FOLKTALES AS LITERATURE

Issues of Logic, Dramatic Strength, and Being Satisfying

Currently, two main trends in *the study* of verbal folklore may be identified. The first and older of these is: "folklore as part of the humanities." Its disciples view lore as literature or art and, therefore, as part of the study of literary creativity and aesthetics. For that school, lore is a source for "raw" materials to be re-created into artistic literary works. Consequently, issues of accuracy, precision, context, etc., are of no significant immediate import. The second, and substantially more recent trend, is: "folklore as part of the social and cultural <72> sciences." Within this theoretical context, lore is utilized as means towards understanding culture and society, as well as the various forces and processes which contribute to its formation, stability and continuity, or its change and/or extinction. As such, this school insists (at least from an ideal theoretical viewpoint) on accuracy, precision, and other aspects of authenticity of the folklore data in context.

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive; both have contributed towards the enhancement of knowledge of the field and the enrichment of the human experience. However, these two schools (trends), each with its own independent objectives and characteristic methods and techniques of handling data, must remain independent and distinguishable from each other.

The Writer-Redactor-Collector as Narrator

A major problem in the study of lore, especially as a sociocultural science, is the scarcity of authentic, accurate and readily available texts--along with 'contextual' data. Since folklore had been until recently viewed as "the creation," or "the property" of the "folk," citing specific data about informants seemed irrelevant to most "collectors." Thus, the overwhelming majority of tale anthologies give no information about their original narrators. Even recent "anthropological" studies employing tales collected in the field for analyzing "social and culture institutions" tended to ignore tale-tellers and perceive the repertoire of traditional narratives found in a certain community as emanating from a relatively undifferentiated social mass to be designated under the generic rubric: "informants," without specifying who those informants happened to be.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the long-standing viewpoint of attributing the creation of lore to a specific "nation," to be perceived in terms of its geographic location (homeland, country, etc.), has led to emphasizing the "geographic" home of a given tale rather than the "*demographic*"⁴⁵ characteristics of a given rendition of a tale and its bearer. One of the most recently published collections of Arabic orally-transmitted folktales "classifies" the ninety-seven

⁴⁴ Such is the case in studies based on tale collections by Daisy H. Dwyer, *Images and Self-Images, Male and Female in Morocco* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1978), and by Ahmad al-Shahi, and F.C.T. Moore. *Wisdom from the Nile* (Oxford, 1978).

⁴⁵ See El-Shamy, "Emotionskomponente", (as in note no. 2 above).

narratives in the collection into six chapters, each argued to be for a district of the city of Damascus, Syria. Although the overwhelming majority of the texts belong to international tale-types, the "collector" offers the peculiar argument that tales told in one city quarter are *not* known elsewhere.⁴⁶

Collectors, writers-editors, authors, and publishers typically impose on field data a variety of "remedial," creative or editorial changes. Thus, a large number of published tale-collections were altered in a manner which strips them of accuracy and representativeness of the specific cultures or subcultures (regional, ethnic, religious, gender, etc.) from which they were obtained. Lately, however, a number of accurately collected and carefully edited collections were published, along with pertinent data on informants,⁴⁷ but the trend to seriously alter the original field texts still dominates. Some recent multiple-volume publications which were started in a fairly accurate manner reverted to less accuracy and to reliance on altering and re-phrasing the original texts, and discontinued providing data on informants.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Al-'Aswad, Nizâr. *al-Likâyah al-sha'biyyah al-shâmiyyah (The Syrian Folktales)* Damascus, 1985. The classification is as follows: Maydân district: nos. 001-030; neighboring areas or extensions of Maydân district: nos. 31-39; Ghawtah of Damascus: nos. 40-47; Mi'dhant al-Shahm: nos. 48-62; Sâlihiyyah: nos. 63-75; tales found in several locations: nos. 76-97.

⁴⁷ Some notable examples, with varying degrees of textual accuracy, are: Daum, Werner. *Märchen aus dem Jemen* (Köln, 1983); Al-Duwaik, Muhammad Tâlib, *Al-qasas al-sha'bi fi Qatar (Folk Narratives in Qatar)* 2 vols. (Doha, 1984) Doctoral Dissertation, Cairo University. Faraj, F.A. *Al-Qasas al-sha'bi fi al-Daqahliyya (Folk Narratives in Daqahliyya [province, Egypt])*. Cairo, 1977; Galley, Micheline, *Badr az-Zên et six contes algeriens*. Paris, 1971; al-Hasan, Ghassân Hasan Ahmad, "al-hikâyah al-khurâfiyyah fi al-'adab al-sha'bi al-'urdunî (The Fairy-tale in Jordanian Folk Literature)," 2 vols. M.A. thesis, Cairo University, 1973; Hurreiz, Sayyid H., "Ja'aliyyîn Folktales: an Interplay of African, Arabian and Islamic Elements." Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1972 (and 1977, see note no. 150, below); Kronenberg, Andreas, and Waltrud, *Nubische Märchen* (Dühsseldorf, 1978); Mursî, Ahmad çAli, al-ma'thûrât "al-sha'biyyah al-shafahiyyah: dirâsah maydâniyyah fi muhâfazat al-Fayyûm" (Folk Oral Traditions: Field-Study in Fayyûm Governorate) Doctoral dissertation, Cairo University, 1969; Shaçlân, Ibrahim Ahmad, "al-nawâdir fi al-'adab al-sha'bi (Anecdotes in Folk Literature [in Egypt])." Doctoral Dissertation, Cairo University, 1974; Al-Sârîs, çUmar [Yûsuf?]. "Al-hikâyah al-sha'biyyah fi al-mujtamaç al-filistîni, (The Folktale in Palestinian Society)" 2 vols. M.A. thesis, Cairo University, 1972; Vol. 2 (Texts) published with some alterations (Amman, 1984); El-Shamy, Hasan M. "An Annotated Collection of Egyptian Folktales Collected from an Egyptian Sailor in Brooklyn, New York." M.A. thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1964; and *Folktales of Egypt* (Chicago, 1980).

⁴⁸ Compare volume 1 of Yusri Shâkir's *likâyah min al-folklore al-maghribî (Tales from Maghribian Folklore)* (Dâr al-nashr al-maghribiyyah, [1978]) with vol. 2, (1985) of his collection; the latter is heavily edited, stylistically altered, and no informants' data given. A similar trend characterizes çAbd-ul-Karîm Al-Juhaymân's *min 'asâtîrinâ al-sha'biyyah (From Our Folk Legends)*, and *'asâtîr sh'biyyah min qalb jazîrat al-çarab (Folk Legends From the Heart of the Arabian Peninsula)*, 5 vols. (Beirut and Riyadh, 1967-1984). Vol. 4 (*Folk Legends from the heart of the Arabian Peninsula*) (Riyadh, 1980), vol. 5, *'asâtîr min qalb jazîrat al-çarab* (Riyadh, 1984); changes and additions include contrived tale-telling situations involving grand parents or other relatives and friends as the narrators, imposing stylized beginnings and endings on the text, as well as altering the style of language of narration and the syntax of events.

Contents, Syntax and Matters of "Value"

There is no explicit statement which specifies the type and extent of editorial changes which may be imposed on field-texts. None the less, the "research" attitudes of the majority of Arab literary scholars who treat verbal lore in general and the folk narrative in particular may be ferreted out as they are applied to data or expressed indirectly. In her review of a collection of *Folktales of Egypt*, a notable figure in the study of Arab "literary" narrative lore, points out what she beholds as shortcomings in that work; she expressed the viewpoint that the collection does not present "the best" of the available variants of a tale, and that certain narratives should not have been included due to the fact that they have illogical sequence of episodes.⁴⁹ Thus, it may be concluded that for members of this "literature-bound school" a published tale-text need be one of "the best" and "logically" constructed; naturally these value-laden judgments reflect the viewpoint of the editor-redactor rather than that of the narrator. Academic theses written under these guidelines do reflect the effects of this approach.⁵⁰

Consequently, it should be argued that academic studies on aspects of a nation's or a social group's tales is in reality a study on the artistry of a certain writer as exercised on *re-created texts*.⁵¹ The degree to which a published text has been changed in the process of re-presenting (re-telling) it to the reading public, and the scope of the alterations, do vary from one writer to another and from one collecting-situation to the next.

Published renditions, especially those in which the 'author' is a native of the subculture to which the text belongs, and is also acting as an informant [...], often provide explanatory statements and comments normally not found in the oral texts of the folk renditions. The purpose of such additions is often to clarify affective (sentiment) states and cultural values to the intended readers. These explanations are usually not needed in the regular context of oral narration, for knowledge of such <74> sentiments and values is shared by all members of the community and is implicitly understood by the narrator and the audience.⁵²

The technique described above and utilized in the writing process by professional redactors (author-collector-writer who re-narrates tales) may be called "visual narrative amplification." It was well described by al-Juhaymân --a Saudi collector-writer--in his first published collection as follows:

⁴⁹ See Nabîla Sâlim [Ibrâhîm], *Fabula*, vol. 22, nos. 3-4, pp. 330-2.

⁵⁰ For example, theses by Sâ'î (1970), and Yûsuf [al-Sârîs] (1972) give no informant data (as in note no. 23, and 47 above).

⁵¹ As in the case of Ayten Fadel's "Beiträge zur Kenntnis des arabischen Märchen und seiner Sonderart," Doctoral Dissertation (Bonn, 1979). See note no. 67, below.

⁵² See "Comments on the Variants" in El-Shamy, *Brother and Sister, Type 872*: A Cognitive Behavioristic Analysis of a Middle Eastern Oikotype* (Folklore Monograph Series Number 8) Bloomington, 1979, pp. 31-2.

Some readers may remark that I [...] prolonged [my] talk [i.e., writing] in analyzing some situations in these narratives. To this remark I may reply that I introduced nothing new, but brought out [only] what is understood behind these lines.⁵³

Rarely, the nature of the change and/or the reasons for the deviation from the original text are specified. For example, in her tale collection from Iraq, Ethel S. Stevens reported in a footnote that she had substituted the word "leprosy" for the word "elephantiasis" which her informant had used, because "leprosy" sounded better.⁵⁴ It may be assumed that Stevens considered being stricken only with "elephantiasis" insufficient punishment for a villainous wife who had slandered her husband's sister and caused her horrible sufferings; consequently, the change.⁵⁵ Similarly, involuntary alterations (errors) in re-presenting field texts may be detected when a newly generated text is compared with the original. Such is the case in a text of the story of "Bâbâ ʿAbdalla," where the collector, Wilhelm Spitta, translated the vernacular Arabic truism "*ya wakhdu kullu, ya tarku kullu*" (an esoteric Sufi-mystical cliché meaning: You who owns all, are you who loses all) as "I *either* take it all, *or* leave it all."⁵⁶ Clearly, Spitta's French translation of this component of the tale is, unintentionally, at variance with the original.

Nonetheless, when such notations are not given, and in the absence of the original texts on the basis of which published works have been re-told (re-written), it is virtually impossible to ascertain the nature, scope and impact of the changes on the new creation. For example, the editor-author of an Iraqi tale collection derived from materials gathered (collected in writing) by school pupils, explains how these original, written down, texts were treated; he states:

I have discarded naive tales which indicated no taste [... Then] I would read the [chosen text] and alter its illogical plot [...], add or delete other parts so that I may present to the reader an artistic piece in lucid parlance.⁵⁷

⁵³ al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, vol. 1, p. 13. Also compare data given under note no. 63 below.

⁵⁴ Ethel S. Stevens, *Folk-Tales of Iraq* (Oxford, 1931), no. 31, pp. 142-144.

⁵⁵ Hasan M. El-Shamy, "Emotionskomponente," as in note 2, above; "Sentiment, Genre, and Tale Typology: Meaning in Middle Eastern and African Tales," in *Papers III*. The 8th Congress for the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, R. Kvideland and T. Selberg, eds., pp. 255-283 (Bergen, Norway, 1985). Also (revised and expanded) in *al-Ma'thûrât al-Shaʿbiyyah*, vol.1 (Doha, 1986), no. 3, pp. 41-51; also see "Affective Elements in Tales," in *Folktales of Egypt*, pp. li-liii (as in note no. 47, above).

⁵⁶ Wilhelm Spitta, *Grammatik*, no. 3, pp. 444-448, esp. p. 444. Also compare note no. 100, below.

⁵⁷ Qasîr, Amîn Y. *al-likâyah wa al-'insân* (*The Tale and Man [i.e., the Human Being]*) Baghdad, 1970, p. 4. The same re-creative process is applied to Qasîr's, *likâyât wa falsafah* (*Tales and Philosophy*), Baghdad, 1976.

<75>

Similarly, the editor-writer of a Syrian collection⁵⁸ states that he had collected his tales from "the mouths of sheiks and the elderly in Aleppo, [Syria]." He, however, adds that he has "*fassaha lughatahâ wa nassaqa hawâdithahâ* (rendered its language into classical [Arabic] and [re-]ordered its events)." Another author-collector states that he has altered the tale texts from Egypt⁵⁹ in the amount allowed," without specifying the nature or extent of that allowance.⁵⁹

Another more prolific writer-collector of tales from Saudi Arabia,⁶⁰ in addition to re-presenting (re-telling) the tales in a literary-like manner with considerable editorial additions,⁶¹ includes texts which do not belong to Arab culture at all. One such text is titled: "The Dancing Princesses and *al-jundî al-majhûl* (the Unknown Soldier)."⁶² Clearly, the title is a part of a modern political jargon and has never been encountered in oral traditions. The story belongs to tale-type AaTh 306, *The Danced-out Shoes*, which has not been reported from any part of the Arab World, including the Arabian Peninsula throughout a period of one hundred-and-fifty years of collecting verbal lore. This non-representative text is likely to have been derived from an European, or other non-Arab anthology of tales and mailed in to the author (al-Juhaymân) in response to his calls for texts of certain qualities, and his promise of rewards for publishable tales.⁶³

Some collections are actually totally "narrated" by the "collector" himself and are styled after the collector's perception of the narrative traditions of a certain group. One such anthology is offered to students of vernacular Egyptian Arabic;⁶⁴ it contains twenty-one (21) seemingly authentic texts which the author re-constructed in the style of an imaginary female informant. The author-informant

⁵⁸ Samîr Tabhân, *al-hakawâti al-halabî; hikâyât sha'biyyah li-l-'atfâl* (*The Aleppo-tale-teller: Folktales for Children*). Madrid, [Spain], 1977. pp. 69. And *al-qassâs al-halabî* (*The Aleppo-narrator*). Aleppo, Syria, 1982. pp. 71.

⁵⁹ Ahmad Shawqî ʿAbd-ul-Hakîm, *al-hikâyah al-sha'biyyah al-ʿarabiyyah* (*The Arab Folktale*), Beirut, 1980. p. 183, n. 1.

⁶⁰ al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, etc. See note no 48 above.

⁶¹ al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, see note 48 above.

⁶² al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, vol. 4, pp. 110-122. The phrase, "al-jundî al-majhûl (The Unknown Soldier)" is a verbal formula (cliché) current only in modern military-nationalistic jargon and is most unlikely to have been used in an actual telling of a folktale.

⁶³ al-Juhaymân, vol. 4, p. 414. Also compare data cited under note no. 48 above.

For a discussion on "the problems which rewards given to informants" may generate, see "Motivation and Folkloric Behavior": "The Informant's Motivation," and "The Operant's Motivation," in El-Shamy, "Folkloric Behavior." pp. 54-59. See note no. 188, below.

⁶⁴ Motie I. Hassan, *In-Nâs Wil-Malik* (*The People and the King*), (Copenhagen, 1971).

To the present writer, the feministic style of the parlance used in some narratives seemed excessive. This atypical quality led to a more careful re-reading of the collection's <108> introduction, where the author ("Hassan") describes the supposed female informant (Intro., p. xx).

described that presumed narrator as: adult, female, Moslem, and of Cairo's lower middle class.⁶⁵

Precise translations into other languages and annotations of published tale-anthologies are bound by the texts available in Arabic. This is the case in Samja A. Jahn's painstaking work: *Arabische Volksmärchen*,⁶⁶ Ayten Fadel's study on Arab tales,⁶⁷ and The Assafs' "collection" from Lebanon.⁶⁸ Additionally, some re-created folktales aggravate the problem by radically deviating from the main course of action of the traditional tale. In her English anthology of *Arab Folktales* selected and translated from published collections, Inea Bushnaq described *some* of the alterations she introduced into her own re-created work:

In many cases there were several texts for a story, and if the imagery for the hero's courage and beauty in one version was forceful while his <76> adventures were lamely told, I combined two texts to produce a satisfying story.⁶⁹

Yet, there is evidence to indicate that the changes went beyond the stated scope, broad as it is. For example, the tale of "The Girl Who Spoke Jasmines and Lilies," from Iraq⁷⁰ is almost certainly Khidr al-Amîr's text: "*âlâm al-fatâh Yasmîn* (The Pains [or, Suffering] of the Maiden Yasmîn)."⁷¹ It belongs to tale-type AaTh 403, *The Black and the White Bride*, (even though color is of no consequence to Arab renditions of *this* tale-type). The tale tells of a cruel *khâlah* (mother's sister, i.e., maternal aunt) who maims and blinds her "sister's daughter." The mutilated heroine receives supernatural help and powers of producing flowers and wealth and is about to be wed to a prince; but the maternal aunt disposes of her (the heroine) and places her own daughter as the bride in lieu of her niece. In Bushnaq's text, the maternal aunt plucks out the eyes of *her own daughter*. This narrative element is to be found neither in the most likely original text (al-Amîr's, cited above), nor in any known Arab variant of this tale type (AaTh 403).⁷² Clearly,

⁶⁵ Hassan, *In-Nâs Wil-Malik*, p. xx.

⁶⁶ (Berlin, 1970).

⁶⁷ Ayten Fadel, "Beiträge." Fadel's texts come from al-Juhaymân, vol. 1, (9 texts); al-Juhaymân II, (14 texts); al-Juhaymân III, (15 texts); al-Juhaymân IV, (17 texts), for a total of 55 texts. Meanwhile (13 texts) come from another re-written anthology: ʔAbbâs Khidr's *Hawadîṯ ʔarabiyyah* (*Arab Tales*), 2 vols. (Cairo, 1960-64). Three additional collections from Palestine, Sudan, and Iraq provided (2 texts) each. All these collections contain re-constructed texts.

⁶⁸ Ursula and Yussuf Assaf's *Märchen aus dem Libanon* (Düsseldorf, 1978), where 21 of its 34 texts are taken from Karam al-Bustânî's *Hikâyyât lubnâniyyah* (*Lebanese Tales*) Beirut, 1961.

⁶⁹ *Arab Folktales*, translated and edited by Inea Bushnaq (New York, Pantheon Books, 1986), p. 382.

⁷⁰ Bushnaq, *Arab Folktales*, pp.75-9.

⁷¹ *al-Turâth al-Shaʔbî* (Baghdad) vol., 3, no. 10, (1972) pp. 165-70.

⁷² Tale-type AaTh 403, *The Black and the White Bride*.

in her quest for less "lame" type of action, Bushnaq injected into the text new components, thus drastically altering its affective (psychological) nature. The absence in this collection of the standard procedure of citing the sources of a given text (or the accompanying theoretical arguments)⁷³ renders virtually impossible a scholar's task of determining which of the limbs in Bushnaq's "satisfying" final re-created text is of her very own invention and which is authentic and, by inference, considered by Bushnaq "less satisfying."

The danger of considering idiosyncratic expressions indicative of traditional cultural or social trends is even greater in cases where a presumed 'collector' fabricates texts and passes them as authentic materials.⁷⁴ This seems to be the case in a "collection of tales" reported to belong to "Egyptian peasants."⁷⁵ Another extreme case-- where an entire "collection" has clearly been falsified by an "informant" --is a linguistic "study" on the dialect of "Lower Egypt."⁷⁶ Here it may be concluded with certainty that the collector's insufficient knowledge of folklore data (the narratives themselves) and scholarship, has led to a grave situation in which his sole "informant" deceived him by falsifying data. The extent to which the materials contained in this publication is non-folkloristic is surprisingly high; the "collection" is almost totally individualistic and lacks even the mere occurrence of the commonplace motifs.⁷⁷

<77>

The Language and other Stylistic Features

Stylized rhymed and poetic diction often appears in Arabic folktales, especially those narrated with the *intent* of being non-serious. One salient form of such a style is *sajʿ* (rhymed-prose) which does not typically appear in the oral narration of prose folktales. This stylistic feature, however, dominates in such prominent works of literary nature as '*Alf laylah, Kalilah wa dimnah* (the Arabic *Panchatantra*), and *Fâkihat al-khulafâ' wa-mufâkahat al-zurafâ'*⁷⁸ written by the Damascene

⁷³ Also compare Bushnaq's concept of resocialization which she presents (p. 65) with El-Shamy's "resocialization," in *Folktales of Egypt*, p. lii, p. 75, and in *Brother and Sister, Type 872**, especially pp. 52-53.

⁷⁴ This phenomenon, labeled '*intilhâl*', has concerned early scholars of Arabic literature, especially during the stages of its conversion from oral to written media of dissemination. Modern folklorists refer to the products of such fabrication as "fakelore;" see R.M. Dorson *Folklore and Fakelore*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1976).

⁷⁵ Saad Jahia, *Der Omda und Schiech Soliman, Märchen und Volkserzählungen der Fellachen* (Berlin, Alfred Holz, 1967). See, for examples, tales no. 5, pp. 36-7; no. 6, pp. 48-54; no. 10, pp. 84-93; no. 15, pp. 105-10; no. 18, pp. 124-33; no. 19, pp. 134-41.

⁷⁶ Aki'o Nakano, *Folktales of Lower Egypt (1): Texts in Egyptian Arabic [1]*, *Studia Culturae Islamicae* No 18. Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa. (Tokyo, 1982).

⁷⁷ It should also be noted that numerous passages in Nakano's work lack linguistic accuracy, e.g., "himâr" (p. 6), "xubz [khubz]" (p. 9), "fi-h sâyir... etc." (p. 13). These are not representative of typical dialectical utterance.

⁷⁸ In some instances, *sajʿ* proved too excessive for "modern" taste. In their revision of *Fâkihat*

Ibn-*al*-Arab-shâh (d. 1450 A.D.). These 'classical' works with oral traditional affiliations seem to serve as models for the modern collector-editor of folktales. The appeal of *saj*, though uncharacteristic of the original field texts, seems to be too great to resist; the style of many of these re-formulated anthologies duplicates that of '*Alf laylah*, and other semi-literary works. Narratives in an Iraqi collection typically begin in the following manner (presented here in stanza-like form to draw visual attention to the end-rhyme):

*kâna mâ kân,
fi qadîm az-zamân,
'akhawân
faqadâ al-'ahla wa-l-'ashâb
wa salaba-l-mawtu az-zu'âm
minhumâ jamî'a al-'alhbâb*

('What was, was,
in older times'
there were
two brethren,
who had lost [all] family and friends,
and 'lethal death had robbed'
the two of them of all the beloved-ones).⁷⁹

Another narrative in the same collection begins as follows:

*kâna mâ kân,
wa-Allâhu yansur as-sultân,
kâna li 'ihda-l-bildân
malikun azîmu sh-shân,
yadînu lahu ath-thiqalân
wa-ta'înu 'amâma haybatihî ash-shuj'ân*

<78>

('What was was [has been],
and may the Lord make the Sultan victorious.'
A country had a king, of exalted status,
the 'two-with-responsibilities'^[80] pay homage to him

al-Khulâfa', the modern editors state: "We sought to re-produce this book with our own pens in order to liberate it from its style shackled by contrived *saj* [...]" ; see Hasan Muhammad Jawhar, Muhammad A. Barâniq, and Amin A. El-*Attâr*, *al-muqtabas min fâkihat al-khulafâ' wa-mufâkahat al-zurafâ' li-'Ibn-*al*-Arab Shâh (An Anthology from Ibn-*al*-Arab Shâh's fâkihat...)*, Cairo, Lagnat al-Bayân al-*al*-Arabî, n.d. (p. 4).

⁷⁹ Qasîr, *al-'insân*, p. 51 (as in note no. 57, above).

⁸⁰ "ath-thiqalân" (i, e., al-thiqalân, literally: the two with burdens) is a Koranic (55: 31) euphemism for creatures which are burdened with the obligation observing religious precepts and who will be resurrected and tried at "the Day of Judgment;" these are "human beings" and the jinn. No folk narrator, so far, has been shown to use this "literary" verbal formula in the

and before whose awe the heads of the valiants are lowered).⁸¹

Similarly, a Syrian writer re-presents a scene in which a woman reprimands a do-nothing judge in the following manner:

*ya sayyidî al-qâdî,
la 'ahada çan hukmika râdî*

*fâ-'idha kânat hakadha likmatuk
fa-hâramun çalayka shaçru lihÿatik^[82]
[...]*

*wa makanuka ya hadrat al-qâdî al-jâhil
ya 'ayyuha-l-qâdî, ya ghayr-al-çâdil*

*ya hadrat al-hâkim az-zalim
ya 'ayyuha l-hâlîm ghayr al-çâlim*

*makânuka çala çatabati al-bâb
wa-laysa çala al-mihrâb*

(My master, the judge
No one about your judgment is content

If such was your wisdom
Then, sinful to you would be your beard's whiskers

[...]

And your position, O your honor, ignorant judge
You who are cruel and unjust

Your honor, who is an unfair ruler
You who are a dreamer, who are not a savant

Your position is [to be] at the door step
And not at the pulpit.)⁸³

<79>

A comparison between the style in which this Syrian tale is re-presented and those

typical telling of oral tales. See note no. 81, below.

⁸¹ Qasîr, *al-'insân*, p. 160. The word *haybah* denotes: awe[-inspiring appearance]. With reference to the word *thiqalân*, see note no. 80, above.

⁸² In vernacular utterance, this word would typically be pronounced, ungrammatically: *lihÿatuk*, thus, the end rhyme is fuller.

⁸³ *Tahhân*, *al-hakawâti*, p. 9 (as in note no. 58, above).

of all the available oral renditions of this very tale⁸⁴ reveals that *none* of the narrators of the oral texts adopts that style. Thus, although, *sajî* is a basic and dominant stylistic feature of the *Thousand Nights* and similar works of literary-treated tales, its prevalence in an oral traditional tale is atypical. Indeed, folk narrators who present their prose tales in *sajî* are hardly ever encountered;⁸⁵ and are likely to be adult males.

The style of these literary treatments of tales also includes the frequent use the various intricate verbal embellishments of *badîî* (tropes), such as paronomasia. A narrative in which a once-needy merchant extended his hand to borrow money. He was hounded by his creditor who constantly reminded him of the fact that he, the borrower, had received a loan from him. The merchant cut off his own hand which had accepted the loan. The story is concluded in the following manner:

"The ...merchant was right."

"*li-'anna al-mawta al-manûna wa-l-maniyyah,*
khayrun min al-çayshi bi-l-qawli al-mamnûni w-al-minniyyah ..."

(Because 'lethal death' and the end-of-living [i.e, death],
is better than life under declarations of indebtedness and being [in the grip
of being] reproached for receiving).⁸⁶

No oral folktale is phrased in such a manner. Observation of hundreds of actual tale-telling sessions, and examination of the "untreated" data in archival holdings reveal that orally communicated folktales are narrated in the typical language of daily living. Verbal embellishments such *sajî* and "tropes," paronomasia, short verses, and rhyme are not perceived by narrators as a necessary facet of tale-telling; they do occur but sparingly and mainly in an un-contrived manner as the narrative situation requires such use. The frequency of their appearance in a given text may vary according to the personal style of the tale-teller, but hardly ever in the broad scope utilized in the *Thousand Nights*. In this respect, the *Thousand Nights* seems to have influenced the learned-élite writer, but not the folk tale-teller.

Similarly, glaring erotic scenes--à la the introductory episode in the story of "The Porter and the Three Women of Baghdad"⁸⁷ in '*Alf laylah*--do not occur (except for the erotic *joke, and jest*).⁸⁸ Yet, references to sexual <80> encounters,⁸⁹ to

⁸⁴ For variants of this tale, see El-Shamy, *Folktales*, no. 52, pp. 203-204, 296-297.

⁸⁵ One of the rare instances in which a narrator of oral tales uses *sajî* is reported by Faraj in his *Daqahliyyah*, p. 11. Faraj reports that Barhûm Niçnâç (male, 53-54 years old, wandering tinker, married with four children, wife is blind, tends to be a jester) is well liked for his *sajî*-style; yet, none of the other narrators in his community seems to have adopted that device (as in note 47, above).

⁸⁶ *Tahhân, al-qassas*, p. 2.

⁸⁷ See note no. 39 above.

⁸⁸ Examples of such recurrent erotic ("obscene") jests and anecdotes are represented by tale-types AaTh: 1361, *The Flood*; 1425, *Putting the Devil into Hell*; 1424, *Friar Adds Missing Nose*;

incest,⁹⁰ to overt and latent homosexuality and potential anal intercourse,⁹¹ phallic organs⁹² do occur; their appearance is, however, infrequent, mostly by inference or allusion, and as required by the narrative course of action and context. In the overwhelming majority of these folk expressions, the "obscene" word is merely *the* instrument for referring to an object or an act as it occurs in the normal course of living.

For example, in a tale titled "Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows" (tale-type 923C§, *Girl Wins Against Boy (usually, her Eldest Paternal Cousin) in a Contest of Worth*), there are two brothers-- one is the father of seven boys and is addressed as "Father-of-Seven-Joys," and the other is the father of girls and is twitted as "Father-of-Seven-Sorrows." Upon the suggestion of the youngest daughter, they agree to have the eldest son and the youngest daughter compete. The girl (heroine) disguises herself as a man, travels to a distant land, and presents herself as a merchant to the "king's son." He invites 'the merchant to be his guest' and she accepts. He fell in love with the guest, and told his mother that he suspects the guest to be a woman. The mother proposes a number of tests to reveal the actual gender of the guest,⁹³ but the heroine learns of them in advance and spoils the plot every time. One of these tests required visual examination. This risqué situation was presented by the female narrator⁹⁴ as follows:

1353C§, *Contest between Devil and Old Woman: "Close that Crack!"*; 1664§, *Dividing Load Between Two Pockets of the Saddlebags for Balance*. (See post, note no. 91).

⁸⁹ Examples are tale-types: AaTh: 315, *The Faithless Sister*, (The sister has an affair with a worthless lover); 590, *The Prince and the Arm Band*, (The mother has an affair with a worthless lover; 650A, *Strong John* (The mother or sister is impregnated by an animal-- a donkey or monkey); 934F§, *The Predestined Fornication*. Cf. AaTh 860A*, *Finding the Hidden Princess*—[Finder is to marry her], and 554B* [See note no. 12 above].

⁹⁰ AaTh 705, (mother-son incest). See El-Shamy "Vom Fisch [...]," as in note no. 12; 870B§/[932§], *Sister Makes Love to Unsuspecting Brother*. Rhodokanakis, Nikolaus. *Der vulgärrarabische Dialekt im Dofâr (Zfâr) Südarabische Expedition*, vol. 8. (Wien, 1908), no. 2, p. 5, and no. 15, pp. 50-2.

In her "Beiträge," Nowak gives a resumé of this "legendary account" (NK no. 105 / 161), but makes no reference to the incestuous (erotic) act. The presence of this component constitutes the affective (psychological) foundation for the narrative.

⁹¹ As for example in tale-types AaTh: 570A, *The Princess and the Magic Fish-Skin*; 884E§, *The Boy Disguised as Girl is Wooed by another Girl*; 1664§, *Dividing Load Between Two Pockets of the Saddlebags for Balance*, where a trickster demonstrates this practice <110> to irate queen to justify having suggested to her husband (the king) that when she denies him intercourse due to menstruation, another course should be made available.

⁹² (e.g., Types: 327B-regional: Saudi and Gulf; 318A§, *The Man Who Lost his Thing and Regained it*; 0720C§, *Stepmother Slew me, Father Avenged Me* (regional: Gulf); and 872*-- (regional: Gulf, South Arabian).

⁹³ Tale-type AaTh 884B*, *Girl Dressed as a Man Deceives the King*.

⁹⁴ The narrator is a female 40's, married, accompanied by another old woman (in her 80's) named _mnah, who interfered repeatedly.

His mother said to him, "Perhaps she detected the ploy. Now you say to her, "You [*'inti*, i.e., you feminine] come--I mean, '*inta* [you masculine] come let us go to the palace's garden so that we may climb up the palm tree to bring dates off the palm trees and see what she will do."

[Narrator pauses. Âmna, her companion asked: "Why did you become silent? You have said it already [i.e., what you are too bashful to say now, you have already said]."

Narrator [resumes]: But, it is ("May God's name [protect] your status ..." [i.e., it is indecent].)

El-Shamy: That is perfectly alright!

Narrator: Thus, she went... She said to him, "All right." She went and got two *doam*^[95] (fruits of doam palm) [Narrator giggles nervously ...] and something like that which men have (Say: a cucumber, a carrot ...! Any thing in that form) [i.e., which looks like a phallus], and she tied them to herself [thus giving the appearance of having the organs of a male].

He climbed up the palm tree first and brought down a *shamrûkh* (a ⁸¹ single stalk) of dates. Then she climbed up while he kept on gazing at her--[climbing upwards: narrator raises her eyes gradually upwards, as if observing a person climbing a tree] and would find her having those things of men!! She brought down a *sobâtah* (a whole bundle usually containing dozens of stalks)--a heavy load!!

He went to his mother [declaring]: "Mother! She has men's things! I still don't believe it: the mouth is the mouth of a lass, the eyebrow is the eyebrow of a lass, the regards are the regards of a lass, but the willpower is the willpower of men!! Mother! He brought down a whole bundle [of date stalks]!" His mother said to him [with a little despair], "Invite him to go [bathing]...tell him that the two of you should go and bathe your horses at the river [...]."

A more explicit expression of an erotic scene is characteristic of a Nubian tale.⁹⁶ The male narrator explained that Nubian men are usually absent from home for periods of years at a time-- working in distant cities; therefore, they prefer not to marry a beautiful woman. In the absence of their husbands, women occasionally narrate erotic tales. One such narrative

⁹⁵ *doam* is a nut which has a fiber-textured skin with sugary taste and wood-like consistency; typically it has an irregular round shape; its size ranges from about 5 cm. to 10 cm. in diameter; its color ranges from light hazel to dark tan. The cognitive association between *doam* and testicles is expressed in a pseudo-erotic folk riddle in which the overt referent seems to be testicles, while the referent (correct, but deceptive answer is: *doam*).

The same episode appears in a rendition of this tale from the Western Oasis area, also told by a female and collected by Ms. S. Hasan (CFMC New-Valley 1970).

⁹⁶ 318AŞ, "The Man Who Severed His Own Thing," in H. El-Shamy, "Tales Arab Women Tell," (MS.) no. 17. This text is, however told by a Nubian male, who had "learned it from a woman" and heard it repeatedly from a "number of women, as well as men." Being an outsider, I could not get any Nubian woman to tell me this story.

Is "The Man Who Lost his Thing." The tale tells of a man who married a woman, who--due to being *too beautiful* was unmarried. She fell seriously ill, and asked her husband to sever his own penis in order to convince her that he will not remarry. He did, But she soon recovered and reproached him of "being without a thing." He fled to a distant land, and was selected by lot to become king and marry a princess. He confided in the princess and she kept his secret, but her sisters (or a slave) discover the matter and told the brothers-in-law, who accused him of being "without." The man fled anew. He met a supernatural being. The tale goes as follows:

He hugged the [supernatural] shadow tightly. He found out that *el-mawdûi* (the subject), his `subject' dropped out just like it used to be and perhaps a little better. He gave her a good one. He went down the hills trotting, with his clothes lifted up. (The man who told me this story used to say, "He lifted up his clothes like this [narrator demonstrates how it is done.] and r-a-a-a-a-n down.")

His wife said to him [with great apprehension], "Why did you come back? They will kill you!"

He said to her, "Look!" He grabbed her to his bosom and gave her one, a very perfect one: *tamâm it-tamâm* ('perfecting on perfection').^{<82>}

(El-Shamy: What was the nature of that `shadow'? Was it an angel or what?)

(Narrator: No, the shadow was the image of the girl, his wife herself, because she was the good-hearted girl [i.e. woman] who kept his secret.)

Now he gave her a very, very good one and got ready to meet the other princes.

Now, (my friend), the other princes took him and pushed him into the water. When they took him out and stripped his clothes off to find out whether the `subject' was there or not, they found out that his `subject' was there.

My! My! My! They found that his `subject' was perfect.

They saluted him [in a military] manner. [...]

Similarly, a scene involving a pseudo-homosexual encounter is expressed without the use of any "dirty" (tabu) words:

A king marries a bedouin maiden. Since she is used to sleeping only under an open sky, he builds a crystal dome for her on a remote spot at the seashore. A fisherman pulls out of the sea a magic gold-providing purse, and offers to give it to the "princess" in exchange for a kiss. She agrees provided that she would remain inside, and place her cheek against the crystal while the fisherman kisses her "cheek" with the crystal wall in between the two of them.

Upon hearing from his wife the story, the king is furious and divorces her. She disguises herself as a man, and with her magic purse spends extravagantly until the news of the "wealth of that new youth [in the kingdom]" reaches the king's ears. Upon hearing of the magic purse, the

financially strapped king approaches the youth and requests to borrow it for a period. The youth sates: "Certainly! But only, your majesty, if you drop your trousers, turn around and let me 'a_ḥmil fīk ('do [it] to you') once!" Finally, the overwhelmed king surrenders.

The disguised wife reveals her identity, declaring: "This [i.e., surrendering your honor to another male in a homosexual intercourse] is what you acquiesced to have done to you" only to borrow the purse! Think of what you did to me for my having purchased it for a kiss from behind a crystal wall!!!"

<83>

For members of the folk community "obscenity," especially in the context of tale-telling, is not determined by the mere appearance of specific words of reference to certain acts, but rather of the context of their appearance, and the intent for uttering them. Significantly, the story of "The Porter and the Three Women of Baghdad," of 'Alf laylah, does not appear in oral traditions. Yet, the theme of the man who stumbles into a band of exquisitely beautiful and unattached maidens, lives in happiness and elation amongst them, as the sole male, until he breaks a tabu, is recurrent as a component of "Utopias." Although, these situations represent *male* fantasy and may be unconsciously (or perhaps, subconsciously) erotic, scenes depicting sexual intercourse or "obscene pleasantries" (as in "The story of Porter ..") are typically not part of overtly expressed aspects of these folk utopia.⁹⁷

III. THE FOLK NARRATIVE REPERTOIRE

The Gender Difference

Curiously enough, some tales which are highly recurrent in various parts of the Arab world are absent from the native editions of 'Alf laylah. These include ALL "formula tales"⁹⁸ and narratives designated as AaTh: 123; 310; 327; 403; 408; 432; 450; 451; 480; 510; 510B; 511; 511A; 720; 872*; 879; 894; 898; 923C§; 1387*.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁷ See for example "The Sure News is Up Ahead," (collected, translated and annotated by H. El-Shamy), in *Folktales Told Around the World*. R.M. Dorson, Ed. (Chicago, 1975), pp. 149-168, esp. p. 154 (Motif: F111 "Journey to earthly paradise"), where a man lived with seven maidens. The entire narrative--a frame story--is designated as Type 472§ (as in note no. 106, below).

⁹⁸ Tale-types AaTh 2000- 2399.

⁹⁹ This preliminary list is based on the conclusions of H. El-Shamy's "Tales Arab Women Tell," (1984, M.S.); and current research on "A [Demographically-Oriented] Index for Tales of the Arab World," (see note no. 30, above), [published, Indiana University Press, 2004].

These tale-types^[*] are:

123, "The Wolf and the Kids. [Mother goat rescues her swallowed young from predator's belly]"; 310[A1§]/(310A§), "The Maiden in the Tower: Louliyyah. Youth cursed to fall in love with ogre's (ogress,, witch's) daughter: elopement, transformation (separation), and disenchantment (reunion)"; 327, *The Children and the Ogre*; 403, "The Black and the White Bride. [Ugly bride substituted for beautiful bride]"; 408, "The Three Oranges. The quest for the Orange Princess. The [negress as] false bride"; 432, "The Prince as Bird. [In form of snake (serpent), he visits heroine and is wounded by her jealous sisters]"; 450, "Little Brother and Little Sister. [They flee from home;

common denominator among these fantasy folktales is that they are mainly female-bound. Even in cases where a tale is narrated equally frequently by both *adult* males and *adult* females, behavioral differences correlated to the narrator's gender can be seen in quantifiable (measurable)¹⁰⁰ manner. In tale-type AaTh 872*, a jealous wife slanders her husband's sister. The sister is supernaturally made, or made to look as if she were, pregnant.

[...] adult male narrators [tend] to eschew the theme of illicit pregnancy of the sister. Among adults the ratio of female to male narrators of this salient trait of the narrative is 12:3. If we include within the female group the non-adult males--who have not yet developed strong observance for the strict rules of social distance among sex [gender] groups [...] and who are still close to female circles--the ratio jumps to 16:3. Furthermore, if we consider the "error"^[101] in variant 7 to be emotionally binding (especially since Spitta's ^{<84>} informant specified that he had learned all his tales from women relatives), the female-male ratio would then climb further to 17:2.¹⁰²

Thus, the total absence of female-bound tales, in addition to the dominance of

brother transformed into deer, sister nearly murdered by jealous rivals]; 451, "*The Maiden Who Seeks her Brothers*. [Brothers transformed into ravens"; the sister marries the king and becomes speechless]; 480, "*The Spinning Women by the Spring. The Kind and Unkind Girls*. [Ogress rewards the kind stepsister and punishes the unkind]; 510, "*Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes*"; 510B, "*The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars*. [Girl flees from her father who wants to marry her]; 511, "*One-Eye, Two-Eyes, Three-Eyes*. [Stepsister and her brother spy on heroine]; 511A, "*The Little Red Ox*. [Cow helps orphans (brother and sister)]; 720, "*My Mother Slew Me; My Father Ate Me; [My Sister Buried Me]. The Juniper Tree*. The boy's bones transformed into a bird"; 872*, "*Brother and Sister*. [Brother's wife calumniates his sister]; 879, "*The Basil Maidens (The Sugar Puppet, Viola)*. [Daughters of poor vendor match wits with prince]; 894, "*The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity*. [A maiden's long sufferings caused by her accidental learning of teacher's secret]; 898, "*The Daughter of the Sun. (The Speechless Maiden; the Puppet Bride)*. [Bride is to maintain silence until addressed by her proper name]; 923C§, "*Girl Wins against Boy (usually, her Eldest Paternal-cousin) in a Contest of Worth*"; 1387*, (passim) "*Woman must do Everything like her Neighbors*. Absurd results".

*[Note: titles of tale-types added].

¹⁰⁰ See "Performance;" note no. 3, above.

¹⁰¹ Wilhelm Spitta's *Contes arabes modernes* (Leiden, 1883) no. 7, pp. 94-104 especially pp. 100-104; Narrated by a male, presumably adult, Moslem, worked as Spitta's cook; he had heard it from his mother and "*ses tantes*," which may refer to either his maternal or paternal aunts. In the Arabic transliterated text of this tale, the narrator states that the brother's mother-in-law gave the magic eggs to "*bint 'ukht ibn-el-malik*"; that is, to "the daughter [not even born yet] of the sister of the king's son," and consequently not to the sister (as is usually the case).

The same "error" also appears in Budge's English translation: (Ernest A.W. Budge, *Egyptian Tales and Romances*, London, 1931, pp. 363-370). According to Budge, his translation relied on the original Arabic manuscript. See note no. 56 above.

¹⁰² El-Shamy, *Brother and Sister: Type 872** pp. 50-51. (as in note no. 90, above).

male-bound themes and stylistic features, lead this preliminary examination of the contents of *'Alf laylah wa laylah* in the direction of concluding that it is predominantly an illustration of a male's world.

The Worlds of Words: the Written and the Spoken

Until its discovery in Europe in the eighteenth century, multiple manuscripts (editions) of *'Alf laylah* seem to have existed for centuries side by side, but independently of one another, in countries stretching from India to Morocco. These more or less separate works share a core of narratives linked together through a frame story and identified as *'Alf laylah wa laylah*.¹⁰³ Conversely, they also diverge; numerous narratives are found only in one edition.¹⁰⁴ Although each native edition seems to have had a domain of wider circulation, it would be useful to differentiate between two "hemispheric"¹⁰⁵ groups of this anthology: native, typically referred to as *'Alf laylah wa laylah* (Thousand Nights and a Night), and European, often labelled "The Arabian Nights." The European being a composite of a number of native editions and other narratives not found in the native ones, thus, being more inclusive but less representative of the actual edition(s) circulating in one country (or area of domain).

Western translators and editors of the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, especially A. Galland, and Burton, added *new* texts to their European editions. Some of the tales Galland, for example, included are: "Aladdin ou la lampe merveilleuse" (Type 561), "Ali-Baba et les quarante voleurs exterminés par une feuille esclave" (Type 676+954), "Pari Banou" (Type 653A), "Les deux soeur jalouse de leur cadette" (Type 707), "Aventures du calife Haroun Alraschide" (Type 471), "L'aveugle Baba-Abdalla," (Type 726**-836*), "Sidi Nouman," (Type 449-1511) "Cogia Hassan Alhabbal" (Type 935**).¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Burton appended complete tale collections to his edition; one of

¹⁰³ See note no.15, above. Also see Elisséeff's *Thèmes*, pp. 209-210.

¹⁰⁴ See Chauvin's concordance table, *Bibliographie*, vol. 4, pp. 187-93; and Elisséeff's *Thèmes*, pp. 185-205. Also compare Muhsin Mahdi, Ed. *'Alf laylah wa laylah min 'usûlih al-ʿarabiyyah al-ʿûlâ* ("The Thousand and One Nights From the Earliest Known Sources: Arabic Text Edited with Introduction by [...]"). Leiden, 1984, esp. pp. 14-52.

¹⁰⁵ On the concept of "hemispheric," patterns of culture, see Alan Lomax, *Folksong Style and Culture*, (Washington D.C., 1968).

¹⁰⁶ See Chauvin, *Bibliographie*: (Type 561, "Aladdin. [Magic wishing lamp (ring) from treasure trove stolen and subsequently recovered by means of another magic object]") Chauvin vol. 5, p. 55, no. 19, 20; (Type 676, *Open Sesame* + 954, *The Forty Thieves*) Chauvin, vol. 5, p. 79, no. 24; (Type 653A, *The Rarest Thing in the World*) Chauvin, vol. 6, p. 133, no. 286; (Type 707, *The Three Golden Sons*) Chauvin, vol. 7, p. 95, no. 375; (Type 472§, *Eccentric Occurrences Witnessed by Chieftain (King and Vizier) in Marketplace Reveal Life Experiences=frame story*) Chauvin, vol. 6, p. 44, no. 209=Chauvin, no. 72, 202, 371; (Type 726**, *The Prince and his Three Hosts [(Guests, Subjects)] Tell their Adventure; 836F*, The Miser and the Eye Ointment*) Chauvin, vol. 5, p. 146, no. 72; (Type 449, *The Tsar's Dog (Sidi Numan)*, 1511, *The Faithless Queen*) Chauvin, vol. 6, p. 198, no. 371; (Type 935**, *The Poor Rope-maker*) Chauvin, vol. 6, p. 31, no. 202.

these spans more than one entire volume.¹⁰⁷ These new texts were taken predominantly from traditional folktale repertoires. Except for "The Jealous Sisters" (Type 707), the added texts are decidedly male-bound.¹⁰⁸

<85>

A comparison between the contents of '*Alf laylah wa laylah* and those of the current Arab oral folktales repertoires reveals the existence of numerous items (independent tales) common to these two parallel traditions.¹⁰⁹

As pointed out earlier, literary tradition have perceptibly influenced the perceptions of the élite concerning the Arab folktale ("fairy-tale"). But the question as to the extent to which the stories contained in '*Alf laylah* have influenced folk groups in their oral tale-telling is quite intricate and requires extensive studies on individual narratives before a definite answer can be formulated.

Walter Anderson and Albert Wesselski debated this very issue; Anderson argued on behalf of the stability of oral traditions *sui generis*

... jeder Erzähler das Betreffende Märchen [oder Schwank, Legende U.S.W.] von seinem Vorgänger in der Regel nicht einmal, sondern mehrmals gehört hat.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ E.g., The "Wortley-Montague collection": Burton, vol. 10, pp. 347-475 and all of volume 11.

¹⁰⁸ See El-Shamy *Folktales of Egypt*, no. 9, esp. pp. 255-256.

¹⁰⁹ The *Type Index* identifies 64 tale-types in *The Arabian Nights* (Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vols. 5-7). These are: AaTh 322*, *Magnetic Mountain Pulls Everything to it*; 331, *The Spirit in the Bottle*; 402, *The Mouse (Cat, Frog, etc.) as Bride*; 449, *The Tsar's Dog (Sidi Numan)*; 471, *The Bridge to the Other World*; 513A, (passim) *Six Go through the Whole World*; 516, *Faithful John*; 550, *Search for the Golden Bird*; 653, *The Four Skillful Brothers*; 655, *The Wise Brothers*; 676, *Open Sesame*; 681, *King in the Bath*; *Years of Experience in a Moment*; 706, *The Maiden without Hands*; 712, *Crescentia [the Faith-healer]*; 726, *The Oldest on the Farm*; 736, *Luck and Wealth*; 736A, *The Ring of Polycrates*; 766, *The Seven Sleepers*; 851A, *Turandot*; 871A, *The Unfaithful Queen*; 881, *Oft-proved Fidelity*; 883A, *The Innocent Slandered Maiden*; 885A, *The Seemingly Dead [Princess]*; 910A, *Wise Through Experience*; 910D, *The Treasure of the Hanging Man*; 920, *The Son of the King (Solomon) and of the Smith*; 921, *The King and the Peasant's Son*; 921B, *Best Friend, Worst Enemy*; 921E, *Never Heard Before*; 922A, *Achikar*; 934, *The Prince and the Storm*; 954, *The Forty Thieves*; 970, *The Twining Branches*; 973, *Placating the Storm*; 976, *Which was the Noblest Act?*; 1132, *Flight of the Ogre with his Goods in the Bag*; 1381B, *Sausage Rain*; 1417, *The Cut-off Nose (Hair)*; 1419E, *Underground Passage to Paramour's House (Inclusa)*; 1423, *The Enchanted Pear Tree*; 1529, *Thief Claims to have been Transformed into a Horse [(Ass)]*; 1551, *The Wager that Sheep are Hogs*; 1563, "Both?"; 1600, *The Fool as Murderer*; 1615, *The Heller into Other's Money*; 1642A, *The Borrowed Coat*; 1645, *The Treasure at Home*; 1675, *The Ox (Ass) as Mayor*; 1730, *The Entrapped Suitors*; 1737, *The Parson in the Sack to Heaven*; 1741, *The Priest's Guests and the Eaten Chickens*; 1889H, *Submarine Other World*.

However, further examination reveals a much greater number of tales with explicit typological qualities.

¹¹⁰ *Kaiser und Abt*, (1923), p. 399. On the behavioristic nature of the controversy, see: "Walter Anderson and Albert Wesselski," "Concepts of Memory and Learning Theory in Folklore Scholarship" (pp. 17-29) in H. El-Shamy, "Folkloric Behavior," esp. pp. 21-8. Also see El-Shamy, "Behaviorism and the Text," as in note no. 1.

Wesselsk vehemently disagreed and asserted

Tale-telling is a maimed creature which must depend upon the "Krücke des Buches" if any stability is to be gained in its constant state of flux, and oral repetition --as postulated by Anderson--does not contribute to this stability simply because it does not occur.¹¹¹

An examination of two [cases of tales] which recur in both literary and oral traditions may help shed some light on the issue.

Two Cases:

Case 1. "Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr" or "El-'asîl we-l-khasîs"?

One such tale of dual literary and oral recurrence is that which may be designated as AaTh 613, *The Two Travelers (Truth and Falsehood)*. In its literary format, the story bears the title of *Abu-Qîr wa Abu-Sîr*; it may be summarized as follows:

Abu-Qîr wa Abu-Sîr¹¹²

Two poor craftsmen from Alexandria--a dishonest dyer named Abu-Qîr and [an honest] barber named Abu-Sîr--form a pact. They travel together by sea; the barber works and earns plenty of food and the dyer <86> gluttonously devours all the barber's earnings. They reach land where they live on the barber's savings; the barber becomes ill and his friend steals his money and abandons him.

The dyer discovers that the inhabitants have only partial knowledge of the art of dyeing; he applies his craft and becomes rich. When the barber visits him, the dyer accuses him of being a thief and gives him a beating. The barber, in turn, discovers that the inhabitants have no knowledge of public baths; he applies his art, refuses to overcharge his customers and still becomes very rich.¹¹³

The dyer visits the barber, claims that he had been searching for him in order to repay his debts, and suggests to the barber that he present to the king a medicine for removing body hair. But the dyer tells the king that the barber intends to kill him with a smelly poison claiming it to be medicine; he further proposes that the barber should be put in a sack full of 'live lime' and thrown into the sea in order to die by burning and drowning simultaneously.¹¹⁴ The king assigns this task to the captain of his ship, but

¹¹¹ Albert Wesselski, *Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens* (Reichenberg, 1931), p. 131.

¹¹² As given in '*Alf laylah wa laylah*, vol. 4, pp. 182-197. Compare the resumé by Chauvin, in *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, no. 10, pp. 15-17. Also see note no. 122, below, (language).

¹¹³ Compare this theme with AaTh 1651, *Whittington Cat*, and 1651A, *Fortune in Salt*.

¹¹⁴ Compare with AaTh 910C, *Think Carefully Before You Begin a Task* [regional variants]. As narrated in Egypt, this tale deals with a good-hearted youth (who is a barber or a soft drink

out of gratitude to the barber, the captain spares his life.

The barber works as a fisherman and catches a fish that had swallowed the king's magic ring in which his power to rule resided. He takes the ring to the king and the truth is learned.¹¹⁵ The king refuses a plea from the barber to forgive the dyer and has him executed in the same manner proposed for killing the barber.

The barber leaves for Alexandria with his wealth; upon reaching his homeland, he finds in the sea the sack containing the corpse of the dyer. The barber mourns his friend, gives him a decent burial in a shrine, and when his own death comes, he is buried nearby. "And due to this [dual burial], that place was named Abi-Qîr and Abî-Sîr, and has now come to be known as [only] Abu-Qîr [...]."¹¹⁶

The two names of Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr seem to have acquired in Egypt an additional meaning: "The-One-Who-Hails-from-Abu-Qîr and The-One-Who-Hails-from Abu-Sîr," due to the presence of towns bearing these names. The etiological ending of the literary text suggests that it is affiliated with the concept and belief expressed in the current folk truisms: "Truth and Falsehood are brothers" and "Good and Evil are always side by side," which is also a major premise in the ancient Egyptian account of "The Contending of Horus and Seth for the Rule."¹¹⁷ (See below).

<87>

Besides the printed form, this literary narrative was presented in a radio-play series (*Hörspiel*) aired from Cairo in the early 1950s. During the fasting month of Ramadân, and after *'iftâr* (sunset-meal), listeners settled down and awaited the western musical-theme (from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*) signaling the beginning of a new *halqah* (episode). The haunting voice of "Shahrzâd" uttered the "rhymed-prose" of Egypt's foremost vernacular poet.¹¹⁸ Like the printed work, Scheherazade's descriptive statements were in "classical" Arabic, but the dialogues themselves were in the more realistic (and preferred by the audience/listeners) colloquial Cairene-Egyptian dialect. Thus, the printed literary story gained wide *aural* currency.

Currently available type indexes do not allow for an adequate examination of

vendor) and a jealous vizier who seeks to destroy the successful youth through a schema similar to that devised by Abu-Qîr. The theme of the barber who plots against the king but reconsiders his act-- designated in AaTh 910C--has not been reported from Arab cultures in this narrative context. See also note no. 126, below.

¹¹⁵ Cf. AaTh 736A, *The Ring of Polycrates*.

¹¹⁶ This etiological ending suggests an earlier "legendary" nature for the tale. See The contending of Horus and Seth in El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, pp. 261-262.

¹¹⁷ See El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, pp.261-262.

¹¹⁸ Written by Tâhir Abu-Fâshâ (d. May 1989). The voice of Scheherazade was that of movie actress Zuzu Nabîl. The series comprised some 800 units, and was directed by Muḥammad Maḥmûd Shaḥbân. (More recently, a variation was produced by Cairo Television).

this tale within a broader context of other Arab variants. Evidently, due to the emphasis placed on theme of "magic remedy," a *secondary* facet in the narrative, the *Type Index* classifies tale type AaTh 613 as an "Ordinary Folk-Tales,"¹¹⁹ in the subcategory of "Magic Remedies" (Types: 610 - 619). This classification places the tale out of its cardinal thematic context of "envy" and conflict between good and evil, or a close parallel such as "truth and falsehood," "nobleness and villainy".¹²⁰

At first glance, the story of "Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr," seems not to be directly related to AaTh 613. The *Type Index* cites no Arab occurrences for the tale,¹²¹ while Nowak's "Beiträge" deals with marginal cases of this tale-type.¹²² The literary treatment of the story incorporates salient themes from other tale-types which tend to eclipse the basic plot of the core narrative;¹²³ Significantly, the *Type Index* cites one of the tale's occurrences but only under type 736A, *The Ring of Polycrates*--a detail episode in the version (subtype) given in 'Alf laylah. Although Chauvin's *Bibliographie* includes five versions (texts) of this narrative (four of which are attributed to the various editions of *The Arabian Nights*¹²⁴ and the fifth to Ibn ʿArab-Shâh's *Fâkihat*¹²⁵), none of these are acknowledged in the *Type Index* as belonging to Type 613.¹²⁶

Another tale-type which depicts the basic plot of Type 613 is AaTh 980*, *The Painter and the Architect*.¹²⁷ It tells of

an evil "painter" who conspires against an architect and provokes the king

¹¹⁹ Tale-types: AaTh 300-1199.

¹²⁰ Chauvin aptly identifies this story as dealing with "envy." See note no. 123, below.

¹²¹ See note no. 123, below.

¹²² Chauvin vol. 5, pp. 15-17, no. 10; Elisséeff, no 103, p. 20. Nowak's "Beiträge" no. 180, and no. 300.

¹²³ Tale-type AaTh 1651, 910C, 736A; see notes no. 112-114, above.

¹²⁴ Chauvin gives four renditions of this tale (AaTh 613), as they appear in *The Arabian Nights*. Variants from oral sources (subtypes) of the story of "Abu-Qîr wa Abu-Sîr" are included in the various European editions of *The Arabian Nights* under the titles: "*Abu-Niyya wa Abu-Niyyatayn*" (which Richard Burton translated as "the single-minded" and "the two-minded"); "*Mouhsini and Mousi*" (Benevolent and [probably] mu'dhî, i.e., Harmful) % Chauvin, vol. 5, p. 13, no. 9; *L'envieux et l'envié*. See Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, pp. 11-17.

¹²⁵ Ibn ʿArabshâh, Abu-Muhammad, *Fâkihat al-Khulâfa'* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 35-36. This version deals with an evil paternal uncle and his good-hearted nephew. See Chauvin, vol. 2, p. 193, no. 12.

¹²⁶ Presumably due to the absence of "a magic remedy" in this rendition, Aarne-Thompson's *Type Index* cites the present text under Type 736A, *The Ring of Polycrates*, only a detail-episode in this version. See note no. 114, above. However, less impressive types of treatments (medicine) are found in this text (e.g., the barber's remedy for removing hair off the body).

¹²⁷ Tale-type AaTh 890* has limited distribution; it is reported only from Estonia and India, and is classified under "Other Romantic Tales" (tale-types: 970-990).

into assigning him the impossible task of building a tower to heaven. The architect accomplishes the task and escapes death, but the painter perishes by his own ruse when he goes through the burning tower.

<88>

It is evident that Type 890* and "Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr" are affiliated. In addition to sharing the same narrative pattern, the characters of the evil "painter" suggests the evil "dyer" Abu-Qîr, while that of the architect suggests that of the good-hearted barber-and-public-bath-builder Abu-Sîr.

As an oral traditional tale, a typical representative subtype may be summarized as follows:

El-'asîl we-l-khasîs

Two neighbors, 'Asîl and Khasîs (Noble and Vile) agree to travel together; each has a parcel of food. Vile proposes they eat Noble's food first. When the food was gone, Vile reneges and forces Noble to exchange his hands legs, and finally his eye for bits of Vile's food and a swallow of water. Vile then dumps Noble-- totally mutilated--into a well.

Benevolent supernatural beings happen to meet inside the well and reveal that an herb that grows on the walls of the well cures all ailments, and that the daughter of a king is blind and is being offered as a reward to whomever could cure her. Noble makes use of this knowledge; he heals himself and the princess, and marries her.

Vile, now in a pitiful condition, passes by Noble's palace. Noble orders his servants to take Vile in and treat him well. The two meet, and Noble reveals his identity to Vile, his guest. But Vile demands to know Noble's secret. Unselfishly, Noble tells Vile.

Vile rids himself of all things he had received at Noble's home, runs to the well, inflicts upon himself the same bodily harm he had inflicted on Noble, and leaps into the well.

But this time, it chanced that malevolent supernatural beings gather there and quarrel with one another. They destroy the well with Vile in it.¹²⁸

The cognitively salient names Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr pose an interesting problem. All editions of 'Alf laylah and the radio-play cite them as the names of the protagonists, with corresponding contents of the narrative (thus constituting a *subtype* of tale-type AaTh 613). Yet-- as will be demonstrated-- these two names and their companion narrative components (associated with a subtype) hardly appear in oral traditions. In all its literary and oral formats, the story revolves around the pivotal theme of conflict between an evil and goodness, the temporary defeat of virtue (or triumph of falsehood), and the ultimate <89> victory for truth. Such is the situation in the literary tale "Abu-Qîr and the good-hearted Abu-Sîr;" from the outset the text describes Abu-Qîr as a vile or evil:

¹²⁸ Resumé base on an oral text from El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, no. 14. The tale was narrated in Cairo by a middle-aged male who had heard it from another elderly man in their village in southern Egypt.

Kâna [...] nassaban, kadhdhâban, sâliba sharrin qawiyyin (i.e., he was a swindler, a liar, and of potent evil),¹²⁹ [...] *wa-sh-shaqâwatu ghâlibaton çalayhi* (i.e., being a wretched, [or being a habitual criminal] dominates over him)¹³⁰ [And that] in spite of *hâdhihi al-khisâli adh-dhamîmati* (i.e., these despicable traits of character) he was an adept dyer.¹³¹

Similarly, his cheated clients are perceived as being either "*min ahli el-khayri* [...] or *min ahli i-sh-sharri* (i.e., benevolent or malevolent);"¹³² they reacted to his tricks according to their character. In short, Abu-Qîr, the dyer, is portrayed as vile. At the same time, Abu-Sîr is referred to as being of "[...] *tamâmi [es-]saçdi* (i.e., perfect good fortune),"¹³³ and "*min khawâsi 'awlâdi al-halâl* (i.e., of the very select of those who have been legitimately begotten)."¹³⁴ His actions can further be described as honest, content, sincere, equitable, and forgiving. In short, Abu-Sîr, the barber, is depicted as noble, or good.

This conflict between good and evil, is indeed the universal characteristic of all available renditions of Type 613 in Egypt, where the title of *El-Asîl w-el-Khasîs*, with corresponding contents (*subtype*) is used most frequently to label this narrative. These renditions include three texts from El-Minya province,¹³⁵ one text from Suhâg¹³⁶ province, another from El-çAyyât,¹³⁷ three renditions from Kafr El-Shaikh province in the Delta,¹³⁸ one rendition from Sinai,¹³⁹ and a published text

¹²⁹ 'Alf laylah, p. 182. Note the noun: *sharr*; see also note no. 166, below. Note that the language is *muçrabah* (i.e., desinently inflective classical Arabic).

¹³⁰ 'Alf laylah, p. 183.

¹³¹ 'Alf laylah, p. 183.

¹³² 'Alf laylah, p. 183.

¹³³ 'Alf laylah, p. 184. Compare the title: "Good Fortune and Bad Fortune" cited earlier; notes no. 148 and 149, below.

¹³⁴ Meaning "of good character." This aspect of folk beliefs which attributes the nature of a person's actions to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of that person's birth is part of "folk theory of personality," or what psychologists term: "implicit personality theory." Compare tale-type AaTh 655, *The wise Brothers*, where the king's inhospitable treatment of guests leads them to conclude that "the king is bastard." See El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, no. 16.

¹³⁵ Collected by El-Shamy, in March, 1969, April 1969, and in July 1970 respectively.

¹³⁶ Collected by A. çAbd-ul-Rahîm, in January 1971 from a 30 years old man, an immigrant in Cairo; transcribed in: "Sawâmçah," (MS.), no. 31.

¹³⁷ Collected by male school pupils for çUmar çU. Khidr, in the mid-1960s CFMC collection.

¹³⁸ Three renditions from Kafr El-Shaikh. As in note no. 137, above.

¹³⁹ Collected by El-Shamy, from a young male, a Bedouin: the narrator of tale no. 4 in *Folktales of Egypt*.

from an unspecified location.¹⁴⁰ Of these, only the rendition from Sinai is given under the title of "*Mabrûk wa-Matlûf* (i.e., Blessed and Corrupt)," while the text from an unspecified location is given a title which cites the two common names of "Hasan and ʿAbd-el-Muʿîn" as the protagonists. Two renditions collected in Cairo¹⁴¹ deviate from this seemingly established pattern in oral traditions and presents major components of the literary version including the names Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr, and the professions of barber and dyer, Mot. K2297 and AaTh 736A.

On a much broader scope which includes other Arabic and Islamic Middle Eastern variants (which constitute a number of sub-types), the title of "El-Asîl and el-Khasîs" does not appear. Yet, the exact pattern of conflict between good and evil recurs with remarkable consistency. Four groups of closely affiliated <90> titles-- corresponding to the specified characteristics of the two protagonists-- may be identified. The first group refers to "Wicked and Good": a Palestinian rendition given by H. Schmidt and P. Kahle appears under the title "Abu-I-Khêr und Abu-Scharr," which they translated literally as "Vater des Guten" (i.e., father of Good) and "Vater des Bösen" (i.e., father of Evil);¹⁴² a more recently collected variant is given by F. Al-Ghûl under the title "*tayyib wa khabîth* (i.e., Good-hearted and Wicked);"¹⁴³ a recent Syrian text uses the names "*al-malîk wa al-radî*" (i.e., the fine-one and the bad-one);¹⁴⁴ a related rendition from Iraq is entitled "*ibn al-faqîr wa ibn al-ghaniy* (The Son of the Poor Man and the Son of the Rich Man."¹⁴⁵ A variant from Saudi Arabia bears the title "*Abu-Niyya wa Abu-Niyyatayn*" (Sincere and Hypocrite);¹⁴⁶ another from the island of Socotra is given by D.H. Müller in two languages (Shauri and Socotri)-- the first speaks of "Die Erzählung vom Listigen und Aufrichtigen" (The Tale of the Shrewd One and the Sincere One) which the Socotri rendition specifies as "des einem Herz war schlecht und des andern Herz war gut" (i.e., one had an evil heart and the other was of a good heart);¹⁴⁷ also a

¹⁴⁰ ʿAbbâs Khidr, *Ḥawadîṯ ʿarabiyyah* (Arab Folktales), vol. 1, pp. 21-9.

¹⁴¹ The first text is in ʿA. Ibrâhîm's "Cairo," (MS., 1966) no. 22; narrator is a 55 year-old woman. The other, was collected by a young woman, a university student from a 50 years old door-keeper, originally from Upper Egypt (AUC24, no. 9). The collector observed that the informant was trying to present only "dignified materials" and seemed to alter data to achieve that goal. In this rendition the greedy dyer is *saved and repents*.

¹⁴² *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina*, vol. 2, no. 85, pp. 50-57. It is worth noting that Schmidt and Kahle find the two names similar to those of "Abu-n-nije and Abu-n-nijetaïn," in the *Thousand and One Nights*, which they translated as: "Aufrichtige" (i.e., Sincere) and "Unaufrichtige (i.e., Insincere)" respectively. Also see note no. 146, below.

¹⁴³ *al-dunyâ li-kâyât* (The World [i.e., Life] is tales) vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 189-203.

¹⁴⁴ Aswad, *shâmiyyah*, pp. 295-9. Informant is an adult male.

¹⁴⁵ Sadiq Râjî, *al-Turâṯh al-Shaʿbî*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1973), (Baghdad, Iraq), pp. 136-143.

¹⁴⁶ al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, vol. 4, no. 21, pp. 150-165. Informant is a young man, presumably literate; but Juhaymân states: "I [re-]narrated the story in my own style." Compare with Burton's text, cited in note no. 142, above.

¹⁴⁷ *Südarabische Expedition*, vol. 7, *Mehri-und Soqutri Sprache*, pt. 3 (*Shauri-Texte*, (Vienna,

related narrative (an etiological legend from the Tigré Arabs of Eritrea in Abyssinia) is given by Enno Littmann under the title: "The tale of the pure Hearted One and the one with Black Soul."¹⁴⁸ All the Egyptian variants may be viewed as falling under this broader label of "good and evil."

The second group uses the title of "Good Fortune and Bad Fortune" and is closely associated with the concept of good and evil but adds an element of being lucky or fortunate, as opposed to being unlucky or hapless. It includes a rendition from a Moroccan Jewish narrator given in D. Noy,¹⁴⁹ and the Bedouin Egyptian variant from Sinai cited above.¹⁵⁰

The third group deals with a *karîm wa-bakhîl* (i.e., "Generous and Miser," or "Generous and Niggardly"); generosity being a good quality while miserliness is an evil one. This group includes a variant from the Jazaliyyîn of the Sudan given by S. Hurreiz;¹⁵¹ another from a Jewish narrator from Tunisia is given by D. Noy;¹⁵² an Iraqi variant, narrated by a Christian woman from Baghdad, appears in E. Stevens;¹⁵³ another Iraqi rendition by a Jewish informant uses the title "The Mountain of the Sun" and states that one of the protagonists "[...] was miser[,] a stingy envious man was he."¹⁵⁴

The fourth group, which seems to be confined to the eastern most parts of the Middle East with no recurrence in the Arab World, centers around the virtue of patience. The villain in this subtype of AaTh 613 is an impatient man who does not take the time to listen carefully. Thus, the considerably edited text given by I. Shah¹⁵⁵ is titled "Wayfarer, Strangeness and Savetime;" <91> Wayfarer is soon dropped out of action, while Savetime proves to be too impatient and is devoured by beasts. A related Persian text is given in Lorimer's under the title: "Roads and Shortcuts, or No Gains Without Pains."¹⁵⁶

1907), p. 59.

¹⁴⁸ *Tales, Customs, Names, and Dirges of the Tigré Tribes*. Leiden, 1910, p. 18.

¹⁴⁹ *Moroccan Jewish Folktales*. New York, 1966, pp. 69-75.

¹⁵⁰ As in note no. 138 above.

¹⁵¹ In S. Hurreiz, *Jazaliyyin Folktales* (Indiana University, Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1977, no. 49, p. 118. It should be pointed out that Hurreiz identifies his text as a combination of AaTh 613 and AaTh 671, The Three Languages. However, only motif N451.1 "Secrets of Animals (demons) accidentally over-heard from tree (bridge) hiding place," appears as detail-motif <114> within AaTh 613. The narrator of this rendition described as a 76 year-old farmer-cobbler, with social and links to Egypt.

¹⁵² *Folktales of Israel* (Chicago, Ill., 1963), no. 22, pp. 50-53.

¹⁵³ *Folk-Tales of Iraq*, no. 46, pp. 267-74.

¹⁵⁴ Noy, *Folktales of Israel*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁵ *Tales of the Dervishes* (London, 1967), pp. 183-5.

¹⁵⁶ David L. Lorimer and Emily D. Lorimer, *Persian Tales* (London, 1919), pp. 160-68.

Normally the tale appears as an independent narrative which manifests a great deal of congruity with the AaTh 613 as designated in the Type Index.

Occasionally, strong components of the tale--especially those dealing with blinding and subsequent restoration of sight, or an equivalent act-- appear in secondary narrative roles as details within other tale types. Significantly, the narrative components which appear as pattern elaboration in the literary text of Abu-Qîr and Abu-Sîr (Types, 1651A, 910C, 736A) do not occur in this broader narrative context. A Berber tale given by A. Moulieras¹⁵⁷ injects major elements of AaTh 613 into AaTh 516, *Strong John* and maintains the pattern of conflict between good and evil; in this case a good-hearted son and his evil father. Also a Yemenite text--which introduces elements from AaTh 613, AaTh 300, *The Dragon Slayer*, and other Middle Eastern narrative themes--maintains the pattern of conflict between a good man and a "Betrüger (i.e., a cheat)."¹⁵⁸

Reference to other titles (but no texts given) recurrent in the Mesopotamian region are: "*hâmîd al-laban wa tayyib al-laban*" (i.e., The One Who Had [been suckled] bad milk and the one who had [been suckled] good milk), "*Khayr wa Sharr* (i.e., Good and Evil); "*Sa'îd wa Shaqiyy* (i.e., Fortunate and Unfortunate, or Happy and Miserable)" (Kurdish), "*Wafiy wa ghayr wafiy* (i.e., Faithful and Unfaithful)" (Persian).¹⁵⁹ With the possible exception of the reported Kurdish title of "Fortunate and Unfortunate," which may belong to the second group dealing with "Good Fortune and Bad Fortune", all these titles fall within the first group: "Wicked and Good."

Still, on an even broader scale, sub-Saharan renditions of Type 613 secured from areas adjacent to Arab and Moslem groups have maintained this pattern of conflict between good and evil or between generosity and stinginess. A Shilluk variant from the Sudan given in D. Westermann under the title "The Two Travellers" deals with two men "...one of them is stingy;"¹⁶⁰ a related Masai tale deals with two Drobo, "one of them is a miser."¹⁶¹ A Swahili variant entitled "Lila and Fila," deals with a man and an evil companion.¹⁶² A Malagasy variant speaks of two brothers.¹⁶³ A rendition from the Duala of the Cameroon is entitled "Two Children," one of whom is evil and blinds his younger brother in return for food.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ Camille Lacoste, ed. *Légendes et contes merveilleux de la grande Kabylie*, recueillis par Auguste Moulieras; (Paris, 1965), no. 2, pp. 16-25.

¹⁵⁸ In D. Noy, *Jefet Schwili Erzählt* (Berlin, 1963) no. 11, pp. 33-35. Noy does not identify this text as belonging to AaTh 613.

¹⁵⁹ S. Kâzim, "The Iraqi Folktale," *al-Turâth*, vol. 3, no. 10, pp. 9-14.

¹⁶⁰ *The Shilluk People, Their Language and Folklore* (Philadelphia, 1912) no. 92, p. 224.

¹⁶¹ A.C. Hollis, *The Masai: Their Language and Their Folklore* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 223-229.

¹⁶² C.H. Stingar, *Black Tales for White Children* (London, 1914), p. 111.

¹⁶³ See Lee Haring, *Malagasy Tale Index*. F.F.C. no. 231 (1982), no. 5.613, pp 436-7.

¹⁶⁴ W. Lederbrogén, "Duala Fables," *Journal of the African Society*; vol. 4 (1904-1905) pp. 74-76. Also see R. Christiansen, *The Tale of the Two Travellers*, F.F.C. (Helsinki, 1916) no. 24, p. 137, where he prematurely

As pointed out elsewhere,¹⁶⁵ tale-type 613 is directly related to the ancient Egyptian belief account (exoterically referred to as: myth) of "The Blinding <92> of Truth by Falsehood" in the account of "The Contending of Horus and Seth for the Rule," which dates back to the 19th Dynasty of the thirteenth century B.C. Without delving into the issue of origins, it may be observed that the geographic continuum among the oral texts cited above strongly suggests they seem to be related to one another (due to lack of historical records, a temporal continuum may only be surmised). Considering the fact that only two of these renditions seem to be derived from '*Alf laylah*', it should be concluded that this printed anthology is *NOT* the source from which these narratives were derived. Moreover, in the text from '*Alf laylah*', the "Arabic" names Abu-Sîr and Abu-Qîr represent a case of phonemic distortion--either aural or visual¹⁶⁶--of the names: Abu-Khair (i.e., the one who is benevolent, or good)" and Abu-Sharr (i.e., the one who is malevolent, or evil)." Also, contrary to the universal sequence of the occurrence of the two names (qualities), the text from '*Alf laylah*' reverses the order of their appearance; it cites the evil Abu-Qîr before the good Abu-Sîr.

In this case of tale-type AaTh 613-980*, oral telling of the tale--with the exception of two texts from Cairo¹⁶⁷-- is free of any readily perceivable influence exerted by '*Alf laylah wa laylah*'. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the narrators of the two renditions affiliated with the literary version of the story, had acquired their texts visually from a book, or aurally from a tale-teller or via the radio-play; both narrators reside in a major urban center (Cairo), where the influence of the radio is virtually unavoidable. Whatever the case might have been, in this inclusive sample the ratio of the occurrence of the oral versions to those derived from literary traditions is 42:2 or 41:3, if we judge Juhaymân's Saudi text (see note no. 146) to be derived from Burton's.

Case 2. "¿Ali Bâbâ," or "The Brother"?

Another case of dual life (traditional existence) for a tale is posed by the story that came to be known as "¿Ali Bâbâ and the Forty Thieves," designated under

concluded that this text "seems...to be European." A similar variant from the Agni, of the Ivory Coast, was collected in a written form from an 18 year old boy by Susan Domowitz of Indiana University in the 1970s.

¹⁶⁵ For a comparison between the ancient Egyptian account and the contemporary tale, see El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, pp. 261-2.

¹⁶⁶ Visual misperception is relevant in case the editor of the tale had seen it (i.e., read it) in a written form. It should be pointed out that according to the folk dialect of the northern coastal area of Egypt, the words "Aba-Qîr" and "Aba-Sîr" are pronounced "abo-'air" and "abo-sair" respectively; meanwhile the classical word "Khayr (i.e., good)" is typically pronounced: "Khair." The words *sharr* (i.e., evil) and *qarr* (pronounced: 'arr," i.e., to continuously speak with envy about something or someone) are correlated; a folk saying states: "*ya nâs yâ-sharr, battalo 'arr* (i.e., You evil folks, cease envy-laden talk). Thus, the association between the name "Aba-Qîr" and the quality of being evil is plausible.

¹⁶⁷ See note no. 140, above.

tale-types AaTh 676, *Open Sesame* and 954, *The Forty Thieves*.¹⁶⁸ With reference to the 448 narratives constituting the texts of individual tales in the various editions and manuscripts of *'Alf laylah*, this story may be found *only* in the European editions; A. Galland --as indicated above--had added it to his translation of the work.¹⁶⁹ In 1901, Victor Chauvin commented on the absence of this tale in then available sources: "on n'a pas retrouvé le texte arabe d'Ali Baba; mais Palmer a entendu raconter une histoire tout à fait semblable par des arabes du Sainai."¹⁷⁰

<93>

As in the previous case (AaTh 613), currently available data provided in type indexes does not allow for an adequate examination of this narrative. Tale-type AaTh 676 is classified within the category, "Supernatural Power or Knowledge,"¹⁷¹ an unstable component in the oral renditions of this tale since numerous renditions of available texts have no supernatural components at all.¹⁷² As for the tale's recurrence in Arab communities, the *Types of the Folktale* cites "Chauvin, V 79", as the only occurrence of the story in Arab sources. Two published versions with indisputable typological qualities of this tale-type were available in major collections: one from Jerusalem¹⁷³ and another from Morocco;¹⁷⁴ a text from Egypt--in a work not covered by *Type Index*--is given by A.H. Sayce.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, Nowak's "Beiträge," does not report any occurrences of AaTh 676; Nowak cites the text from Jerusalem along with that of another Iraqi tale¹⁷⁶ under number 142 of her own classificatory schema and identifies both as "TTV 214 III" (i.e., Eberhard and Boratav's Turkish Index),¹⁷⁷ which corresponds to AaTh 613 (discussed above). Clearly this typological identification by Nowak is in error. Except for the absence of the names of ʿAli Bâbâ, Qâsim, "[Open] Sesame!," Murgânah, etc., Littmann's text, exemplifies the oral renditions of AaTh 676. Presumably, for Thompson and--consequently-- for Nowak, the absence in these unreported texts of the earmarks for the literary version of AaTh 676: "Open Sesame," has led to the disregarding, or misidentification of these important texts (though, Légey's text has the phrase: "O

¹⁶⁸ See note no. 174, below.

¹⁶⁹ See not no. 106, above.

¹⁷⁰ See Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 79.

¹⁷¹ Tale-types: 650 - 699.

¹⁷² For examples of renditions with no supernatural elements, see: Littmann's (as in note no. 173, below), Sayce's (as in note no. 175, below).

¹⁷³ Littmann, *Arabische* [no. 14], pp. 253-65.

¹⁷⁴ F. Légey, *Marrakech*, no. 26, pp.118-20.

¹⁷⁵ "Cairene," *Folk-lore* (London) vol. XXXI 1920, no. XIV, pp 187-199. Sayce wondered (p. 197) whether this upper Egyptian text may be an earlier form of That recounted in the *Arabian Nights*.

¹⁷⁶ Stevens, *Iraq*, pp. 264-74; see note no. 54, above.

¹⁷⁷ W. Eberhard and P.N. Boratav, *Typen türkischer Volksmärchen* (Wisebaden, 1953).

Lalla Mimounna, je t'ensence avec le *cumin* [emphasis addaed]", as the formula to which the door opens).

As for tale-type 954 the Type Index cites "Chauvin, V 83, n. 3 " for the text in "(1001 Nights)" and "Basset, *1001 Contes*, II 302" (Basset, *Mille*, vol. 2, pt 4, no. 57, pp. 301-2). This identification is inadequate. The text in question refers to a historical narrative--taken from Ibn al-Jawzî's '*akhbâr al-'azkiyâ*' (Reports [i.e., stories concerning] the Sharp-Witted); it is based only on the classical theme of conquest by hiding men in chests (Motif K312), a peripheral and unstable aspect of tale-type AaTh 954; frequently, the treasure belongs to ogres¹⁷⁸ and the conclusion of the story may overlap with that of AaTh 327, where an ogress is killed when she seeks revenge over the hero/heroine. Furthermore, AaTh 954 does not normally constitute an independent tale; it serves mainly as plot-elaboration in other tales including Type 676.¹⁷⁹

Non the less, the story as a whole exists in two distinct circles. One is the more renowned but less diverse (frozen) literary variant as it appears in the *European Arabian Nights*, and in related Arabic publications, especially a Radio-play bearing the famous title; the other, is the less emphasized but considerably ⁹⁴ richer, oral circle, where the narrative occurs in various formats. Some thirty texts may be cited.¹⁸⁰ In all its manifestations the tale coheres around the following basic themes: 'kind poor and unkind rich' siblings, 'reversal of fortunes' where the poor comes

¹⁷⁸ See notes no. 192 and 198, below.

¹⁷⁹ AaTh 954 is classified within the category of: "Robbers and Murderers" (tale-types: 950-969). In the Nile Valley culture area, for example, Type 954 appears in conjunction with themes related to AaTh 955, *The Robber Bridegroom*: See Gertrude Von Massenbach, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunuzi und Dongolawi: Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XXXIV, no. 4 (Wiesbaden, 1962), pt. II, no. 30, p. 69; CFMC, Aswan, 70-12B, 9-2-9 (Collector, Miss S. Hasan); and El-Shamy, "Minya, 3", no. 4.

¹⁸⁰ AaTh 676 is classified within the category: "Supernatural Power of Knowledge" (tale-types: 650-699).

Egypt: Sayce, "Cairene" (as in note no. 175, above); ; Abd-ul-Hakîm, *al-lukâyah*, pp. 200-2, (as in note no. 59, above). For additional archival variants from Egypt, see note no. 184, below.

Arabian Peninsula: al-Juhaymân, *Jazirat al-ʿarab*, vol. 3, [no. 27], pp. 274-85 (see, Fadel, "Beiträge, no. 41); Dov Noy, *Jefet Schwili erzählt*, (Berlin, 1963), no. 35, p. 111; AGSFC: QTR 87-3ff., 701-2-no. 5 (Collector. Miss. Zabyah Hamad al-Kaʿbî); also cf. al-Duwaik, *Qatar*, vol. 2, [no. 89], pp. 190-3 (as in note no. 46, above).

Levant Coast: Littmann, *Arabische*, pp. 253-65 (as in note no. 173, above); Sâʿî, *Lâdhiyyah*, "no. 10" [*sic*, no. 11], pp. 86-9 (as in note no. 23, above); cf. Aswad, *Shâmiyyah*, [no. 31], pp. 139-41, and [no. 55-A] pp. 259-61 (as in note no. 46, above).

Mesopotamia: Qasîr, *falsafah*, pp. 41-51.

Maghreb: Rabah Belamri, *La rose rouge* (Paris, 1982); [no. 1], pp. 11-23; Françoise Légey, *Contes et légendes populaires du Maroc, recueillis à Marrakech*. (Paris, 1926), no. 26, p. 118; A. Laroui, *Vieux contes de Tunisie* (Tunis, 1978), [no. 8] pp. 131-8; Jeanne Scelles-Millie, *Contes arabes du Maghreb*, (Paris, 1970), no. 21, p. 190; Leo Frobenius, *Atlantis: Volksdichtung und Volksmärchen Afrikas*, 12 vols. (Jena, 1921-1928), vol. 2, no. 13 (see the Berber variant from Siwa, Egypt, cited in note no. 184, below).

Also cf. Dov Noy, Ed., *Moroccan Jewish Folktales*. (New York, 1966) no. 66, p. 160, 461 [psychological pattern of Type 676].

into riches-often through a supernatural source, and 'fatal imitation' by the greedy and heartless rich sibling. Thus, the tale projects the same affective structure characteristic of narratives in a cycle of stories manifesting these themes (affective structure); they include: AaTh 480, *The Spinning Women by the Spring. The Kind and the Unkind Girls*, pt. VI-VIII; 503, *The Gifts of the Little People*; 620, *The Presents*; 750F* *The Old Man's Blessing*; etc.

A Radio-Play (A "Musical Portrait")

As presented in the *radio-play*,¹⁸¹ the story may be viewed as a literary re-presentation of the text known through the European *Arabian Nights* and other Arabic sources in print; it bears the title "ġAli Bâbâ." The play begins with a gathering of men at a coffee-house asking a *shâġir* (bard, minstrel) to tell them one of his "treasured-pieces." To the tunes of a *rabâbah* (rebec), the bard begins to chant the story, then--as is the case with the delivery style of '*Alf laylah*-- his words fade away into dramatic enactments of the scenes. The various episodes are introduced through lyrics sung by the bard, but the bulk of the story is performed in prose as a drama, in vernacular Cairene dialect. Another *aurally* salient feature of this artistic re-production is the unidentified use of a musical theme from Sergei Rachmaninoff's *The Isle of the Dead*, designating the spooky atmosphere associated with the opening of the cave's door in response to the magic formula: "Open, Sesame!" This mode of telling the story seems to be a writer's idealization of the narrating situation; as of yet, no oral rendition of this story by a folk *shâġir* (poet) has been encountered in actual social life.

The play may be summarized as follows:

Qâsim and ġAli Bâbâ are two brothers; the first was a rich but unkind merchant, while the second was poor and good-hearted "wood cutter in the forest." Murgânah--the *ġâryah* (white slave-girl) of ġAli Bâbâ suggested that he should sell her to ease his financial burdens, but he refused. In despair, ġAli Bâbâ went into the hills and accidentally observed forty robbers enter a cave which opened up at the uttering of the (supernatural) command: "Open Sesame!" The robbers departed in a hurry to rob "the palace of 'Mġammad' el-Bughdâdi." ġAli Bâbâ wondered <95> out-loud about the incident and inadvertently uttered the formula; to his surprise, the door opened. At first he was afraid, but [as a true believer in God] decided that "there is only one life-span [to be lived by a person; i.e., no one will die before his/her predestined time] and only one Lord [for the Universe]" and timidly entered the cave. He found unlimited treasures, but took only enough to meet his needs, thanked God repeatedly and departed.

The secret of ġAli Bâbâ's new wealth was detected when Qâsim's wife noticed the change in his life and smeared honey (or gum) on the bottom of the wheat measuring cup, which Murgânah borrowed to measure the gold

¹⁸¹ This "borrowed" drama is labelled "*obrett [i.e., operetta]: a musical portrait*" written by ġAbd-ul-Qâdir Maġmûd, music by Maġmûd El-Sharîf, directed by the late ġAbd-al-Waġġâb Yûsuf (Cairo, early 1950s). (Info by Mr. Salâġ <116> Khalîfah, and Mrs. Nihâd Ġâd of Cairo, Egypt, Radio Station--currently of Doha, Qatar Radio).

ʔAli Bâbâ got. Qâsim demanded an explanation from ʔAli Bâbâ, and was told about the robbers and the magic formula.

Qâsim went to the cave to try his "*lazz*" [i.e., luck]¹⁸² and, arrogantly, stated the formula. Due to his greed, he took too much, failed to thank God, planned to return for more; but when he wanted to depart he discovered that he forgot the words; he heard the robbers returning and hid. Unfortunately for him, the *rayyis* ['Boss'] decided that the band will remain in the cave for a period of weeks, but the men were unhappy with the decision: an eerie silence fell. Qâsim sneezed. The 'Boss' thought his Deputy-- Abu-Srîʔ-- was the one who sneezed and addressed him: "*yarhamukum Allâh, y-Abu-Srîʔ* [i.e., "*Gesundheit!*," or "Bless you!"] Abu-Srîʔ replied: "It was not I who sneezed, Boss!" Qâsim was found and killed, but not before he had selfishly betrayed his brother.

The robbers hid in oil jars and were smuggled by their chief into ʔAli Bâbâ's home. Murgânah accidentally overheard two of the men inside the jars talking and wondered: "*ya salâm sallim, hiyya l-'idarr bi-titkallim!!!*" ['Lord, save us! Do jars talk!!!'] She detected the scheme and foiled the attempt on her master's life. The robbers were delivered to the police.

ʔAli Bâbâ [freed] Murgânah and took her as "life's partner" [i.e., wife].

To what extent have the renowned literary variant and its radio-play off-shoot influenced the telling of their counterparts in folk oral traditions?

It is worth noting, in this respect, that this radio-play generated considerable interest among the public. For years, parodies and allusions to salient phrases, brief dialogues and lyrics from this aural text were commonly made, especially by urban youth. Thus, it was common for a person knocking on a <96> door and hearing the usual answer: "*mîn?* (Who is it?)" to humorously reply: "Open, Sesame!;" and for a person who had sneezed and received the traditional benediction: "*yarhamukm Allâh* (i.e., Bless you!)," to reply in jest: "It was not I who sneezed, Boss!," and for a person to put-down another who spoke-up or out of turn by exclaiming: "Lord, save us! Do jars talk!!!" An obscene parody became recurrent among male teenage-groups in *urban* schools and colleges as a recreational mock-play sung in the absence of adults especially during trips and camping. The *sung*-lyric portions of the radio-play were altered to become indicative of erotic acts. For example the bard's lyric presenting ʔAli-Bâbâ's harsh situation:

When his comrades saw him:
crying and grieving: "Oh, H-e-e-e-lp!"
They gather around him and consoled him,
while they were in the *ghâbah* (forest)!
while they were in the forest!

In the parody, this passage was altered to:

¹⁸² To be differentiated from *tawakkul ʔala-l-Allâh* (reliance on God), which is viewed positively as a mark of faith in God.

When his comrades saw him:
crying and grieving: "Oh, H-e-e-e-lp!"
They ganged up on him and f[...] him,
while they were *fi-kharâbah* (in a ruins)!^[183]
while they were on a ruins!

Similarly, the bard's lyric describing the mood after ʔAli Bâbâ returned home with the treasure states:

And lady Murgânah!
And lady Murgânah!
Is in mirth all day-long.
And happiness [reigned] all night-long.

In the parody, this passage was altered to:

And lady Murgânah!
And lady Murgânah!
Is in "heat" all day-long.
<97>
And `intercourse' is [being had] all night-long.
And `intercourse' is [being had] all night-long.

This urban parody on an item of *popular* culture (which is, itself, a variation on a traditional tale) is indicative of the extent to which the radio-play reached various geographic regions in Egypt; no information is available as to its impact on other categories of the population. Yet, the prose narrative portion gained no such wide oral circulation, neither among school-pupils, nor other social groups.

Eleven oral renditions from Egypt can be cited,¹⁸⁴ of which eight manifest varying degrees of overlap with *the* aural or visual literary version to warrant a consideration of the possibility of direct derivation.¹⁸⁵ Of these eight, only two,

¹⁸³ The word *kharâbah*, denotes a ruined site, typically a dwelling. Such a site is usually perceived as an abode for supernatural beings (e.g., jinn, afrits), and as the "natural" place where deviant acts [requiring secrecy] are committed.

¹⁸⁴ These are: Sayce, "Cairene" (as in note no. 175, above); ʔAbd-ul-Hakîm, *al-likâyah*, (as in note no. 59, above) cf. Mursi, "Fayyûm", no. 23, pp. 140 (as in note no. 47, above); AUC7, no. 19 (Collector: Miss Shâdya el-Bakry); AUC18, no. 07 (Collector: Miss Niʔmat Nagîb); AUC26, no. 05 (Collector: Miss Nâdyâ Wasfî, in Eng.); AUC39, no. 24 (Collector: Miss Shîrîn Tabrîzî); CFMC, Sawamʔah 71-1, 13-2-1; (Collector: A. ʔAbd-ul-Rahîm); CFMC, Khidr's-Pupils, no. 481; El-Shamy, ʔAayyat 1969, no. 20.

A Berber rendition: CFMC Siwa, 71-10, 13-2-3 (Collector: A. ʔAbd-ul-Rahîm).

¹⁸⁵ These are:
ʔAbd-ul-Hakîm, *al-likâyah*, pp. 200-2; AUC7, no. 19; AUC26 no. 5; CFMC, Sawamʔah 71-1, 13-2-1; El-Shamy, (ʔAayyat collection, 1969), no. 20; CFMC, Khidr's-Pupils, no. 481; CFMC Siwa, 71-10, 13-2-3, (collector, A. ʔAbdul-Rahîm).

bear the earmarks of the literary version: one¹⁸⁶ includes the names ġAli Bâbâ, Murgâna, and other salient narrative components: it was narrated by an upper class, 20 year-old female university-student who reported that she had heard it from her "governess;" the other¹⁸⁷ was also narrated by an upper class, 21 year-old female university-student who--likewise--had heard it from her "nanny". It is worth noting that each young woman was acting as "informant" (in response to a *collector's* request for tales for recording), rather than "operant" (in response to typical motivation in the social milieu, e.g., a brother, sister, or friend asking to *hear* a tale told);¹⁸⁸ neither one had told the tale to anyone before then. The rest of the texts are decidedly independent of the literary version. This is also the case with a text from Siwa¹⁸⁹ using the formula: "open Sesame" (but not the name ġAli Bâbâ); this rendition is of a marked local character congruent with the regional pattern (compare Légey's text); it was narrated by an 11 year-old boy, who had learned it from his grandmother.

In its oral sphere, the tale manifests the dynamic diversity characteristic of folk traditions. In addition to the sibling rivalry, a variety of affective factors play significant narrative roles. These factors pertain mainly to kinship relations (paternal uncle's wife, brother's wife, maternal aunt). In the version from Jerusalem,¹⁹⁰ a younger brother feels slighted by his older brother's wife because she laundered her husband's clothes but not his; in a rendition from Qatar,¹⁹¹ a rich brother and a poor brother are married to two sisters, the antagonism is between the sisters who are also sisters-in-law. Yet, in spite of this diversity, the affective pattern characteristic of the tale-type (676+954) remains stable throughout the Arab World.

<98>

The Ogre's Treasure

The following *full* text¹⁹² is an example of a feministic-bound rendition. It was narrated by a 20 year old housewife from Dammâm, Saudi Arabia. She is the mother of two small children and is literate (elementary education). She accompanied her husband during his studies abroad (U. S.). The narrator heard the story back home from her mother and had told it to other *female* relatives in her own age-group or younger.

The *Seġluw's* Treasure

¹⁸⁶ AUC 26, no. 5.

¹⁸⁷ AUC 7, no. 19.

¹⁸⁸ See data cited under note no. 63, above.

¹⁸⁹ CFMC Siwa, 71-10, 13-2-3.

¹⁹⁰ Littmann, *Quds*, [14] pp. 163-71, (Gr. tr., *Arabische*, p. 253).

¹⁹¹ Duwaik, *Qatar* vol. 2, [no. 89], pp. 190-3, first part pp. 190-191.

¹⁹² Collected in 1977 by El-Shamy The narrator wrote-down the text, after having told it orally, typically, she felt it was improper to have her voice tape-recorded by a male who is not a close relative of her's.

One day there was a mother and three children [of hers] without a father to look after them. This poor family had a *khâlah* [mother's sister] who was very rich. She owned a large palace, inside of which there were many children [of hers] and a father who looked after them. But that maternal sister was without feelings [i.e., had no mercy or pity]. She did not think of her sister and her children, nor did she ever happen to grant them some of her great wealth out of kindness.

Time passed [with things the way they were] and that widow raised her children on what people gave them as alms. One day [while] she was asleep, she sensed something in the image [or form] of a human being like [i.e., resembling] her [late] husband saying to her, "I thank you because you cared for my children and did not [cause them to be dispersed in the streets i.e., become vagabonds]. In return, I will make you comfortable for the rest of your life."

She interrupted him saying, "My beloved husband, never leave us [again]; we need you. Where have you been? And how could you have led us to believe that you have died!"

He interrupted her saying, "I am not your husband, but I am the *ẓafrît* [i.e., the jinni]¹⁹³ who [had] killed your husband because I had fallen in love with you and wished that these children were my children. Before killing your husband I was a jinni. I felt and lived just like a typical human being would [feel and live]. It is because of this that I decided to kill your husband and to take his place because you have taken away [i.e., stolen] my heart and soul and I cannot [i.e., could not] live without you. But unfortunately for me, after I killed your husband my jinn family took revenge on me [i.e., punished me for my evil deed] and made me live without the [sense of] touch, hearing, eating or drinking, and made me [able to] talk only once a year. I beg you to forgive me [for having] become greedy for [i.e., lusting after] you and <99> your beauty. If you happen to have forgiven me, you will accept this gift from me which will make you very rich. [The gift is] that you take your children and go to the house of the *el-Saẓluw*. He is the king of the Jinn. It is essential that you go during daytime, for if you went during nighttime, he will see you and will devour you. When you get there, the only thing you need to do is to wound [yourself in] one of your fingers, and the door [to the house of the *Saẓluw*] will open, for the door does not open unless it sees blood."

¹⁹³ It should be noted here that the exact nature of this supernatural being is not clearly identified; consequently, the narrator uses the Arabic word *jinni* to refer to the same being. Possession is typically perceived to be by a *jinni* rather than by *ẓafrît*. See H. El-Shamy, "Belief Characters as Anthropomorphic Psychosocial Realities," *al-kitâb as-sanawî li-ẓilm al- 'igtimâʿ* (Annual Review of Sociology), Department of Sociology, Cairo University, vol. 3, (1982), pp. 7-36; Arabic Abstract, pp. 389-393. Also see, Hasan M. El-Shamy, "The Brother-Sister Syndrome in Arab Family Life. Socio- cultural Factors in Arab Psychiatry: A Critical Review," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, Special Issue, *The Family in the Middle East*, Mark C. Kennedy, ed. Vol. 11, (1981, no. 2, July - December), pp. 313-323; El-Shamy, "Belief and Non-Belief in Arab, Middle <117> Eastern and sub-Saharan Tales: the Religious-Non-Religious Continuum. A Case Study." *al-Ma'thurât* vol. 3, no 9 (Doha, January, 1988), pp. 7-21.

She listened to his [i.e., the jinni's] words and after he had disappeared, leaving a trace of smoke in his path [i.e., wake], she took her children along and went to the house of the *Saḡluw* so that she may get the jewels, the camels, the sheep and the cows. When she arrived, she wounded one of her fingers and suddenly the door [swung] open. She saw all *el-halâl* [the livestock] and a special room containing the remains of all the women, children, and men that he had eaten; these were in the form of hung skeletons. When she saw that scene she became fear-stricken, had a violent trembling, and fainted for a brief while. She, however, came to upon hearing her children cry. She hurried up and took all she wanted.

When she reached her home she sent her children to their maternal uncle [error: i.e., aunt] to [borrow] the gold scales in order to use it [in weighing her find]. But she [the maternal aunt] ridiculed them and kicked them out. So the mother herself went and told her the whole story. She warned her [sister] against going during nighttime.

The following day her sister went in order to get for herself the same wealth which her [poor] sister had gotten. However, she did not believe her sister [i.e., did not heed her warning] and went during the nighttime. When the *Saḡluw* saw her he ate her up and hung her skeleton up [with the others]. [Thus] she left her children behind-- [thus, they became] orphans--after having lost her. Luxury and wealth [which they had enjoyed] collapsed due to [her] greed and her not believing her sister.¹⁹⁴

At first glance, this text seemed an individualistic variation on (or distortion of) the better known "ʿAli Bâbâ and the Forty Thieves." However, in 1987 I discovered another nearly identical rendition involving two sisters; it also was narrated by a female.¹⁹⁵ An akin text from the same region is given by al-Juhayman;¹⁹⁶ it involves two brothers and an ogre's treasure (and true to the <100> oral form, the name "ʿAli Baba" does not appear). Other narratives which project an affective (psychological) pattern comparable to that characteristic of AaTh 676 in conjunction with 954 and are, perhaps, affiliated with this regional subtype are also found; these include a narrative which involves two women (unrelated) during famine, one of them is kind, she stumbles into an ogre's cave and is helpful to the ogre's children: she is rewarded with riches, the unkind woman is killed when she imitates the kind-one;¹⁹⁷ another involves *ḡadâyil* (men who are married to sisters, i.e., brothers-in-

¹⁹⁴ The tale contains a number of salient including the following: K2212, Treacherous Sister; F361.17.10§, Fairy kills human husband of the human woman he secretly loves; F386.5, Fairy imprisoned as punishment; F301, Fairy lover [cf. *ḡafirîṭ* falls in love with a woman]; F401.6, Spirit in human form; J2401, Fatal imitation; S166.7§, Mutilation by skinning (flaying). Cf. E573, Ghost tried in court. (Also cf. fairy, jinn, *afirîṭ* tried in court).

¹⁹⁵ AGSFC, C701-2-5; narrator is an 80 year-old illiterate widow (as in note no. 180, above).

¹⁹⁶ *min 'asâtîrina*, vol. 3, [no. 27] pp. 274-285; for a German translation of this text, see Fadel, "Beiträge," no. 41 (as in note no. 51, above).

¹⁹⁷ Cf. al-Juhaymân, *min 'asâtîrinâ*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 25-36. Author's source is an adult male informant.

law).¹⁹⁸

Thus, this Saudi *sablûnah* (fantasy tale, *Zaubermärchen*) portrays the negative feelings between two sisters: one is rich while the other is poor. The cruelty of the rich woman toward her less fortunate sister is congruent with the negative role which that woman plays as a maternal aunt (compare AaTh 403 cited above, p. 76). It is worth noting here that this tale-- as many others narrated by women are, (e.g., AaTh 123, *The Wolf and the Kids*; 327HS, *Foolish Husband Ignores his Wife's Advice and Leads his Wife and Children to Ogress. He is Devoured*)-- is structured in a manner which betrays a woman's perspective on the force which holds a family together: the presence of a mother is a must, but a father's is not so.

The present tale portrays two situations where the role of the father is marginal and his presence is not a prerequisite for the continued existence of the family. In the case of the poor mother without a husband, the family persisted; but in the case of the rich woman, her death caused the "collapse" of the family, in spite of her surviving husband (i.e., the children's father). In this respect, the tale constitutes a feministic variation on the better-known renditions of the tale which involve sibling rivalry between two brothers in the literary tale of "ʿAli Bâbâ and the Forty Thieves."

Today (1988), the situation observed by Chauvin¹⁹⁹ nearly a century earlier remains basically unchanged. The literary text is largely confined to its fixed (printed) "book" format with little oral circulation. Conversely, the oral traditional renditions are multiple and manifest the dynamic nature of social interaction within the kinship group as they are expressed in oral traditions. The appearance of the earmarks of the literary texts (e.g., cAli Bâbâ and Qâsim--his cruel brother, Sesame-- as a magic formula, Murgânah--the loving bond-woman, etc.) is indeed rare. In all cases where such literary-bound formulae (themes) have surfaced, their occurrence can be directly traced to the "aural" influence of the *radio-play* rather than to the printed form derived from the European *Arabian Nights*, or other Arabic printed literary-texts of ʿAli Bâbâ and the Forty Thieves.

<101>

IV. CONCLUSION

It may be stated that on the basis of the evidence presented here, the influence of the printed text from *ʿAlf laylah* on its oral traditional counterpart is virtually negligible. By contrast, the impact of the printed "literary tale" on the literary-writer has been profound and pervasive. The need for the printed form of a tale as "crutches" without whose aid tales can not move, as Wesselski had ardently argued, seems to be true only of literary writers, but *not* of oral tale-tellers. Clearly, oral traditions and literary traditions, at least in the two cases discussed above, do indeed belong to parallel categories of traditions.

Each of the two "types [i.e., sorts]" of narrative traditions belong to a separate cognitive system. In the words of one narrator: "The [story from]

¹⁹⁸ Duwaik, *Qatar* vol. 2, [no. 89], pp. 190-3. Narrated by a 40 year-old male 'employee.' (as in note no. 47, above).

¹⁹⁹ See note no. 170, above.

'*Alf laylah* is something that comes out of a book. But, [the oral folktale I just narrated to you] is something we just know.'²⁰⁰

EDITORIAL NOTES

Textual Presentations

()= asides, comments made by an informant, and translations of Arabic words are given parenthetically

[]= data not uttered by an informant, or not part of an original text is given within brackets.

Diacritic Marks:

The transliterated Arabic texts follow the system adopted by "International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies," with some modifications (due to printing requirements):

â = aa

î = ii

û = uu

h = hâ'

z = zâ'

kh = khâ

dh = hdâ'

s = sâd

<102>

d = dâd

t = tâ'

q = qâf

°/ç = `ayn

gh = ghayn

Sources and Bibliographic Notes

AUC = (Archives) *The American University in Cairo Collection*.

CFMC = (Archives) *Center of Folklore, Ministry of Culture, Cairo*.

AGSFC = (Archives) Arab Gulf States Folklore Centre, Doha, Qatar.

The sign "§" following a tale-type number= New tale-types; designated by H. El-Shamy in "A Demographically-Oriented Index of Tales of the Arab World" (MS., 1988) in relation to the system devised in Aarne-Thompson *The Types of the Folktale*. [See: *Types of the Folktale in the Arab World: A Demographically Oriented Tale-Type Index*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004].

²⁰⁰ M.A. Tilib, quoted in El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt*, p. xlix.