

Aspects of Social and Symbolic Boundaries amongst the Bedouin of the Emirates

Dr: Abdullah A Yateem



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Abstract:

Setting itself against the social and cultural background of southeastern Arabia, this paper explores the social and symbolic boundaries of the peasant and pastoralist Bedouin of the Western Hajar range of the Emirates. In this context, the modes of livelihood, associated ritual symbolism, and the rhetorical devices of tales and metaphors are examined in order to discover how boundaries are constructed and manipulated by the members of the Hajari community and the rest of the world. In order to arrive at such a result, the Hajari ecology, social organization and economic practices are delineated and used as a context for examining the constructions and manipulations of these boundaries.

Introduction

The Hajari bedouin of the United Arab Emirates (henceforth, "Emirates") reside in the Hajar mountain range. The Hajari, who consist of both agriculturalists and pastoralists, differ in social organization from the desert bedouin of the Emirates, the majority of whom depended, until recently, on nomadic pastoralism⁽¹⁾. Hajari social differences raise several interesting issues related to the society and culture of southeastern Arabia. The first problem is the distribution of social power among the main social categories of Hajari community, especially between the settled agriculturalists and the pastoralists. The question which I want to deal with in this respect is how social and political power is negotiated and then distributed, in

* Bahrain National Museum.

practice, among various Hajari social groups, especially in a community whose official ideology and moral values are based on egalitarianism, segmentation, patronage and male dominance⁽²⁾.

The second problem will be to look into the symbolic forms that are created by both the peasant and the pastoralist groups, particularly those symbolic forms associated with the boundaries of each specific group. Borrowing anthropological notions on classification in general, particularly those which relate the boundaries of the categories of nature to social and symbolic boundaries (Douglas 1975), this paper will try to answer questions such as: how Hajari symbolic boundaries are constructed (Cohen 1985, 1987), the meanings invested in them, and how these symbolic boundaries are negotiated and manipulated in the practice of everyday life of the Hajari.

Some approaches, such as Barth's action oriented one (Barth 1969), and others, have argued the case of social boundaries with reference to the relationships between ethnic groups. For Barth, the boundaries are observable actions in behaviour and in the relationships of individuals which can be observed by the ethnographer⁽³⁾. By contrast, symbolic anthropology (Douglas 1975; Cohen 1985, 1987) is concerned with the symbolic nature of these boundaries and, like any symbols, they exist in the minds of their holders. Therefore, these symbolic boundaries demand an attempt by the anthropologist to search for their meanings (Cohen 1987), and thus to interpret them (Geertz 1973, Rabinow and Sullivan 1987). Structuralism, on the other hand, has recognised the problem of social differences as one that could be examined through the notion of polar opposite: as if the concerned groups are in a constant opposition to each other. Hajari life, as we will see, demonstrates that the ritual symbols which are formally associated with the social and gender categories are not rigid structural categories of mind; rather, they undergo a form of social dialogue in which they are socially reproduced and thus they

may end up by complementing, overlapping, competing, or accommodating for each other (cf. Rasmussen 1992). Social and gender categories cannot afford to be in a constant opposition, despite the fact that this is part of their reality, they are also in continual process of exchange (Mauss 1925). While exchange between these groups keeps the members of Hajari communities in need of each other, it also allows the Hajari to maintain a balanced relationship with the regional centres, and with the other non-Hajari communities and cultures with which the Hajari come into contact.

Along with the problem of these negotiated symbolic boundaries, there arises a problem of how the power structures of centre-periphery of domination and control are set out in everyday social discourses. How far, for instance, can Foucault's notion of "discursive event", in which statements of the "already-said" and "never-said" (cf. 1972, chapter 1), constitute a major arena for the ethnographer to unveil the power structures of the negotiated "symbolic power" (Bourdieu 1977, 1990); or can the use of those discursive events as a social context reveal those employments and exchanges of tales (Bauman 1986) and metaphors? Someone like Fernandez, for instance, views these metaphors as the forms with which the human experiences are represented: i. e. the metaphors are seen as representational forms with which the symbols take their earlier modes (Fernandez 1986: 30-31). Other important devices are also used to convey the meaning of these symbols, such as the rhetorical device of tales. Thus, this paper will try to show how rhetorical devices such as tales and metaphors constitute in everyday life the tools with which the Hajari arm themselves in order to convey the meanings of their symbols. So, what we are faced with then, in the Hajari case, is a persistent effort by the agriculturists and pastoralists to establish, and thus impose one single, hegemonic hermeneutics of what these symbols mean.

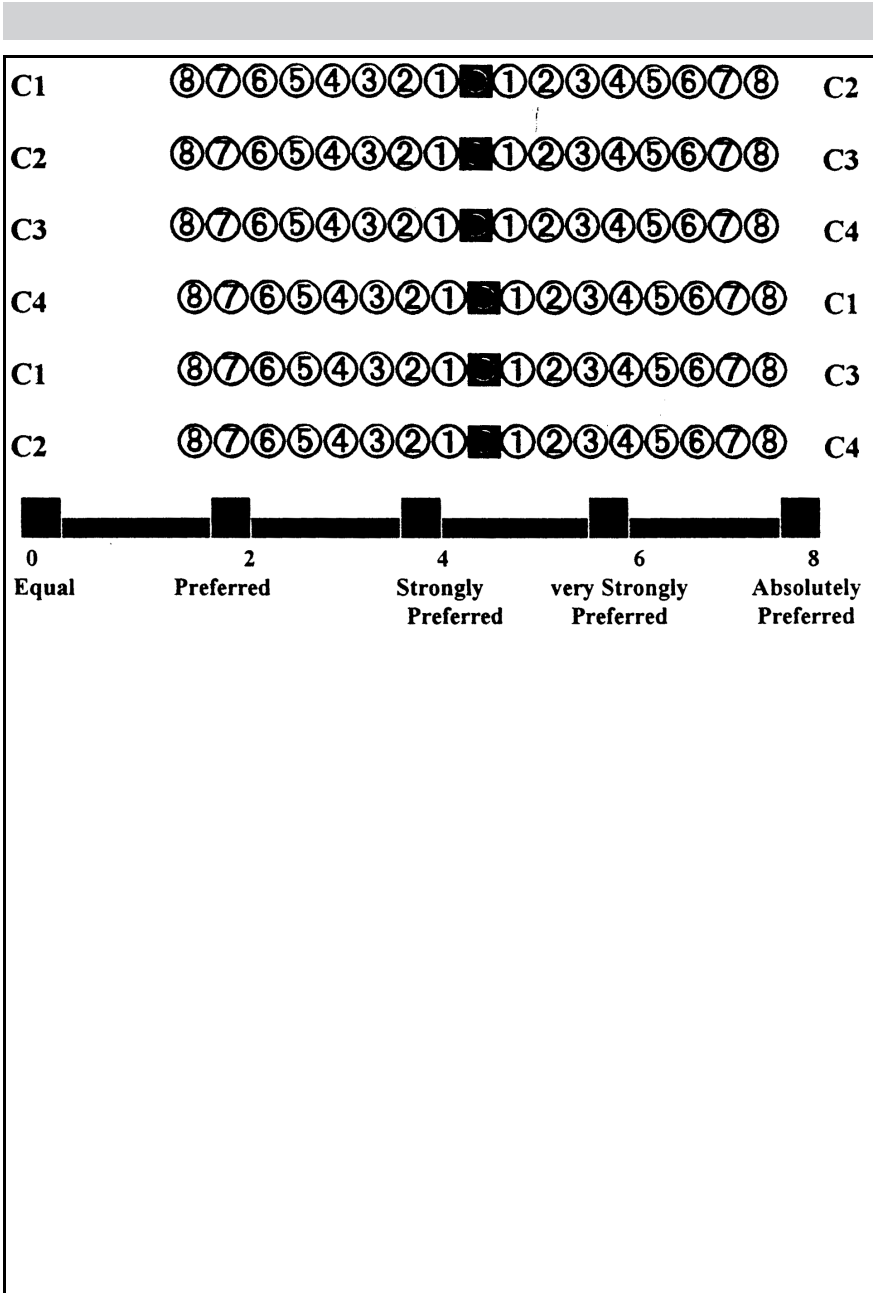


Figure 1. The Western Hajar of the Emirates

The Hajari

The Hajari claim descent from the ancient Arab tribes of Yemen. Some of these tribes, such as the Sharqiyin tribes, who are the subject-matter of this essay, trace their descent to Malik bin Faham of the Azd, a tribe which migrated to Oman in the 6th century A.D. (Omar 1983: 26). Some other tribes of the Hajar, such as the Kunud, trace their descent to the well known Kinda tribe. The Kinda is one of the largest Arab tribes in the Yemen, some of whom migrated to Oman at about the same time as the Azd migration (al-Awtabi 1984: 1, 375; Beeston 1986: 118-119)⁽⁴⁾.

In general, many clans and lineages in each tribe in the Emirates live in the mountainous Hajar region, all of them claim descent from the ancient Arab tribes: Qahtan and Adnan. In the Emirates, as well as in Oman, these two ancestral tribes are locally referred to as Hinawi and Ghafiri⁽⁵⁾. The Hinawi and Ghafiri were the two major tribal alliances who have formed the political allegiance in Oman and the Emirates since the 18th century (Lorimer, 1908-15: 1432-6) Every tribe in these two countries must identify itself with either of these two tribal groupings. As for the Sharqiyin tribes of Fujairah emirate, the first group of tribes, for instance, which established the Sharqiyin tribal confederation - such as the Sharqiyin, Hafaitat, Yamamahah, Zuyud, Sufadnih, Suriydat and Abadilah - formed the major elements of the tribal alliance in its early establishment. These tribes considered themselves as descendants of Qahtan, and believe that their descent goes back to one common ancestor: Faham bin Malik. Faham himself is believed to have been an Islamic warrior who fought beside Umar Ibn al-As, the governor of Oman, during the Islamic invasion of Persia in the late 7th century. Faham is also the grandson of Malik bin Faham who was the great ancestor of most of the Omani tribes, and was the first to migrate from Yemen to Oman in the mid 6th century (al-Izkawi 1989: 19; al-Awtabi 1984: 2, 122). Politically speaking, the Hajari are to be considered as part of several tribal confederations which run across the country. Of these

tribal confederations, there are: the Bani Yas, al-Bufalah, al-Qawasim, al-Sharqiyyin, al-Naim and al-Ali.

the Hajari and the Hajar

In order to locate the Hajari within their proper social and cultural context, thus showing the distinctiveness of the Hajari sub-culture as compared to those in the rest of the Emirates, I will provide some detailed description of the Hajari environment, aiming to show later the influence of such an environment on the Hajari social and cultural systems.

The Hajar region in the Emirates is part of a larger region known as the Hajar Mountain (*Jabal al-Hajar*): a region which consists of a mountain range covering an area of about 35,000 square kilometres of south-eastern Arabia. The Hajar plateau stretches from the steep cliffs in the Strait of Hormuz, in the north-east, to Ras al-Hadd in the south-east of Oman. The range is divided by the plateau of the Jabal al-Akhar, whose altitude reaches over 3,000 metres, into two sections known as the Eastern Hajar and the Western Hajar. Most of the Eastern and Western Hajar ranges are situated in Oman, and only a small part of the Western Hajar stretches into the Emirates. The part which lies in the Emirates constitutes one tenth of the whole country. Territorially, the Hajar is divided between the Sultanate of Oman and the Emirates. The section of the Western Hajar, which occupies the south-eastern region of the Emirates, is also subdivided territorially between the seven emirates which constitute the federation of the U.A.E. Thus each of the emirates has a portion of its country and people stretching into the Hajar region.

Geographically, the Hajar region belongs to the arid zone environment, thus, the terrain is extremely barren and the mountains are dominated by bald, dark rocks. The fertile soil in the small pockets of terraces is mostly deposited by infrequent floods. The soil is of silt and red clay, and very grained in texture. The scarcity of loamy soil, combined with its loss through winds and floods, makes it precious to the villagers. With the exception of light rainfall over a very few months, the Hajar remains dry most of the year. The valleys

of the Hajar region are surrounded by steep and high mountains. The altitude of these mountains varies from north to south. The highest mountains are in the north where their altitude is 2,000 metres above sea level; in the south, the altitude ranges between 1,000 and 1,5000 metres. The overall average rainfall in the Hajar region is 140 mm (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 1986). The Hajari do not rely directly on the rain, so the village's winter crops are not irrigated by rain. Instead, the village depends on water storage beneath the wadi-basin. The villagers irrigate their farms and gardens by using an underground canal system known as *falaj*. Agricultural products vary according to the season. An agricultural year-cycle in the Hajar will take a peasant from growing tobacco, sorghum, wheat, barley, millet, fodder and alfalfa, in winter; to dates, mango and lime in summer. The Hajar, furthermore, is famous for its livestock which includes mountain goats, sheep, camels and a few local cattle.

Due to its location, the Hajar region has powerfully influenced the society and culture of the Emirates. Al-Hajar, thus, formed a community that is different from the desert one, or al-Dahirah, and from the maritime one, or al-Batinah. Traditionally, the coastal villages and towns formed a community that was dependent on trade and fishing, and was exposed to direct contacts with foreign cultures, such as those of Persia, India and Africa. This geographical positioning offered the coastal region the power to dominate and hence to operate as the centre. The desert, on the other hand, also had its distinct resources for domination. With its vast track of sandy land, the desert region acted as a homeland for the camel herders, whose people and tribes formed the backbone for the ruling shaikhs of the centres.

In contrast to the desert and coastal regions, the Hajar formed a community and culture that was, and still is, remarkably different from the two regions. The Hajar region is a community constituted by tribes that are neither town dwellers, desert nomads, nor bedouin. The Hajari of the Emirates, as well as those of Oman, form sections of tribes, some of whom are totally dependent on mountainous

pastoralism, while others depend on agriculture or combinations of these economic activities.

Of the various tribes who occupy the Hajar range, the Sharqiyin are considered the largest. The Sharqiyin, who reside in the mountain zone of the Hajar region, are part of the Sharqiyin confederacy of the Fujairah emirate. The Sharqiyin, in general, can be divided into two distinct groups. Those who live in the small towns and villages in the coastal area of Fujairah are the town-dwellers and villagers (*ahl al-Batinah*). The rest of the Sharqiyin, which constitutes two-thirds of the Fujairah population, reside in the mountains of the al-Hajar region. The people of this region are known as *ahl al-Hajar*; they are the tribal people of the mountain zone. The Sharqiyin are scattered among several valleys in the part of the Hajar range which lies under the sovereignty of the Fujairah emirate. Of these valleys, Wadi Ham is the most strategic and regionally important one.

Social Organization

The Hajari of the mountain range are distributed among small villages and hamlets, which constitute scattered communities of either peasants (*bayadir*) or pastoralists (*shawawi*)⁽⁶⁾. The former group mostly occupies canyons or gorges centred around a water resource. The wadi-basin, in this case, and the terraces in the mountain steeps hold the small gardens and farms. These gardens and farms are normally irrigated either by the *falaj* or well system. Summer crops, such as dates, and some lime and mango, are exclusively grown in the gardens, whereas the winter crops, such as tobacco, barley, sorghum and sweet potato are raised in the farms. The settled agriculturalists encompass a group of landlords who largely come from shaikhly and native inhabitants (*ahl al-bilad*); and also a group of tenants and ordinary peasants. Besides their agricultural activities, the peasants also keep small herds of goats and sheep, as well as cattle and few camels. In most parts of the Hajari region, the political power lies with the settled agriculturalists.

The *shawawi*, on the other hand, are pastoralists who reside in

the mountain's hills and slopes throughout the year. With their herds, which consist of goats, the *shawawi* spend the winter in the up-hills and the summer in the lower hills. Most of the hills which are either used as grazing land or for camping belong to the dominant tribes in the villages, whose members form the largest group of the inhabitants.

The Hajari economy, which is characterized by its division of Hajari lives into dual livelihoods, of agriculture and pastoralism, is associated with a system of ritual symbolism and moral values. This ritual symbolism divides the social world and the things belonging to it into a dichotomy of pure (*tahir*) and impure (*nayis*). This dichotomy is firmly tied with moral values and the notion of honour. Thus purity and honour are attached to men and to all sorts of agricultural activities, whereas impurity and shame are associated with women and all work that is related to pastoralism, especially raising goats and cattle. According to this ritual classification of the world, all men who accept "women's work" are considered like "them", as impure. The only exception in this Hajari cosmology is reserved for camel herding. Camel herding is valued as an honourable job, since the camel is seen as a pure animal, and therefore men who attach themselves to camels acquire prestige and respect as a result. In this context the *shawawi* in the hills and the women in the villages are seen as an impure part of the world, whereas those men in the villages who are involved in tending their land and growing tobacco and dates are treated as the pure part. A whole world of ritual symbols and metaphors has been substantially used by the Hajari to used reinforce this duality. I shall return to this point later, but here I will try to throw some light on the Hajari social organization.

Comparing Wilkinson's interpretation of the Omani tribal system (1977: 178, 1987: 121-23) with my own ethnography on the Hajari, I found that the concept of *shaff*, which means alliance, is commonly used by the Hajari tribesmen. Certainly, Wilkinson's interpretation fits well with the way Hajari view and apply it in everyday practice. *Shaff*, accordingly, is a form of tribal organization which unites a group of tribes or clans, with different ancestors, into one tribal confedera-

tion⁽⁷⁾. Probably this was one of the reasons why some of the European sources used the term "tribe" to describe such a type of tribal confederation.

An ordinary Hajari tribesman views the people related to him through a patrilineal link as the people of his tribe. Such kinsmen can form different types of descent group, such as clans, sub-clans and lineages. He calls these patrilineal kinsmen *bani umm*, if they are more distant kinsmen of his tribe or clan; and *ayal umm* if they are members of his own lineage. But to distinguish those whom a Hajari relates to by descent from those by tribal alliance only, the Hajari will call the kinsmen of his tribe *asba*.

Members of the *asba* - in the case of tribe, clan, sub-clan and lineage are obliged to show their group feeling (*asabiyah*), since they are united by their common descent. Thus a Hajari tribesman expects help and protection to come first from his *asba*, that is from those whom he feels he is united with by blood (*dam*). Therefore he believes that to protect the tribe's honour, whether in a feud or in his everyday behaviour, is a matter of showing his loyalty and respect to his *asba*. The Hajari feeling and responsibility towards each other is dominated by the ideology of patrilineality. Members of the lineage (*dhila*) not only interact and meet every day, but will have a common guestroom (*majlis*) and a common obligation towards their guests for as long as their father or the elder person of the lineage is alive. The lineage's ideology of patrilineality is also manifested through the dominant authority of the lineage elder (*shabih*), where the sons and the brothers' sons never call him by his name. The lineage's patrilineal ideology and corporateness are demonstrated by their insistence on keeping their land undivided, because dividing the land always indicates or carries with it the seeds of intra-lineage disputes and conflicts.

In general, marriage amongst the Hajari follows to a large extent the rules of endogamy. The majority of marriages take place between members of the same tribe. For instance, of the 178 cases of marriage I recorded in the Ham valley, 103 (58%) cases took place between members of the same tribe (*tyaifa*). These marriages are

called by the Hajari "cousin marriage" (*zawaj bani al-umm*). The second main type of marriage is exogamous. The majority of instances of this type of marriage occur between members of different tribes within the one single alliance, and they are described as the marriage of the alliance's sons (*zawaj bani al-shaff*). Whatever form the marriage takes, most of the marriages in the wadi are virilocal. Marriage still acts as a means of presenting and enforcing the solidarity of the descent group, the unity of the Hajari *shaff* and the ideology of patrilineality.

Households (*gum*) in the Hajar vary in size and type. The average size of a Hajari household in the valleys is between five and six persons. The Hajari households vary as far as their pattern is concerned, but the majority of them are nuclear families. The nuclear families, which constitute 72% of Ham valley families for example, comprise either young couples with or without children, or couples whose children have married and moved to a near-by house. The peasant or settled families, until recently, had almost the same pattern of dwelling as that of the *shawawi*, but with an additional place assigned as a stable for the cattle, and one more hut which is used as a guestroom. Today, Hajari peasant families live in houses built with modern bricks and cement. These houses, which were built with the help of the federal state in 1976 in a standard design, have been modified by the Hajari in order to suit their traditional lives. A *shawawi* family usually lives in isolation in one of the small canyons in the wadi, therefore they have fewer visitors than the peasant families in the village.

No matter what the type of household is, it constitutes the smallest economic unit in the Hajar. The household was, until very recently, a unit of production and consumption. It can either produce its own income (and put it in the common pot) from the herding of animals as the *shawawi* do, or by working on the land and looking after some animals as the *bayadir* and landowners do. With the increasing opportunities to work in the towns in the state army and police, the household has started to be a unit of consumption.

One Mountain, Divided Livelihood

The *bayadir* (sing. *bidar*) themselves are not sure about the nature or the sources of the word *bayadir*, and all they can say is that they are *bayadir*, and all they can say is that they are *bayadir*: "because we are part of the share-cropping (*baydarah*) business". Being a *bidar* is a vulnerable status: it is a status whereby a landless peasant becomes a tenant for a landowner; or where a landowner peasant, for various reasons, enters into a tenancy with another landowner, thus both of them turn into *bayadir*. The *bayadir*, as a social category, include also the farm labourers, who neither own nor hold land. Seen from without, the *bayadir* can also belong to different tribes, different ethnic groups and also to social groups that are unmatched in their wealth. However, what distinguishes the *bayadir* as a social category is the fact that people from within and outside their community treat them as the people of the land.

A *bidar*, be he landless, a tenant or a labourer, is involved in two major agricultural seasons. The *bayadir* of the Emirate's Hajar region grow many crops. In winter, for example, they grow sorghum, barley, wheat and sweet potato for local consumption, and tobacco as a cash crop. In the summer, the Hajari grow dates, lime and mango which are cultivated both as cash crops and for local consumption. After storing their tobacco crop in their warehouse in April, the *bayadir* leave their open farms and turn to their gardens for date cultivation. This sort of agricultural activity forces the *bayadir* to make a seasonal movement. The *bayadir* move from the open farms, in the upper part of their wadi-side, where the ancient farms are constructed, to the lower part of the wadi-side, at the bottom of the wadi-basin. This seasonal movement from farms to gardens was until recently held within the authority of the village's or valley's governor (*wali*), who officially should declare the inauguration and the termination of each season.

Between the months of April and the end of September, the Hajari *bayadir* enter into their shaded gardens, away from the burning sun and heat in the farms. This period is considered as the

date harvesting season, for pollenating the date palms would have been carried out already between December and February. Pollenating the palms does not require a large labour force: a *bidar* alone can come twice a week to pollenate between five and ten palms on each day, thus completing both the early and late season's palms. Beside the date palms, most of the gardens also contain some mango and lime trees, but their proportion to date palms is extremely low, therefore not much time need be spent with such trees.

The *bayadir's* seasonal movement from the open farms to the shaded gardens was until very recently associated also with the their households' movement from their winter dwellings - built mostly either completely from mud or half stone and half datefrond - to the summer reed-camps, somewhere near the gardens. Thus until as late as 1970s the *bayadir's* life consisted of dual agricultural activities and dwellings. This duality in economic activities and settlement is referred to by the Hajari as *magid* (summer) and *mishita* (winter). The two words here refer to a type of economic pursuit that is forced upon them by the natural environment. Semantically, these words - *magid* and *mishita* - refer to the activities that are associated with them, in this situation because the date palms are ripening, thus their crops have reached their final stage, the peak of the summer (*gad*), therefore, the *bayadir* have to go to their *magid* camp where the date crop is waiting to be picked.

The summer season, which is very much associated with date cultivation, turns the season into a socially active period. The gardens in the morning provide a place for the men to meet in groups. A leaf mat is laid under a plam and fresh coffee is served to visitors and to the group which comes everyday. Afterward there is a period of intensive work in the garden in which some men climb the trees, others help with loading dates and some others take the new branches of dates to segregate the ripe dates from the hard ones. The ripe dates are gathered on one side for consumption and the hard ones are laid on the leaf mats for the sun to dry them up, and then turned into dried dates (*sih*). Later in the season the best dates are packed in sacks and taken to stores to finish the drying process,

whereas the poor quality dry dates are kept as food for the family's animals. Although lime and mango crops are small in size, nevertheless they are used for family consumption during the season. Some limes are also dried whereas the rest are sold fresh.

Comparing tobacco to date cultivation, the former demands intensive work throughout the whole season. Tobacco as a crop, for instance, involves several risks: first; it is as a crop that is based on loans; second, it demands intensive care and patience to grow a certain quality of tobacco. For example, the care is more than essential to protect the crop from the winter hazards, such as the notorious hailstones which can destroy the whole crop.

Generally, tobacco growing starts after cleaning the harvested wheat and sorghum from the farm; the tobacco seedlings are quickly moved from the small beds to these same farms. Once the tobacco is transplanted, it will remain on the farm for over five months. Tobacco, as the Hajari says, requires more attention than one's own children: it demands daily work in the farm. To produce worthy tobacco and thus secure a good price, a *bidar* has to keep his eyes open and his nose sensitive. The crop needs a limited amount of water in each stage of its growth; an adequate supply of dry fish, manure and goat dung; sufficient quantity of ashes to discourage the spread of insects, and an eye open fully to chase the hungry foxes who dig under the plant and eat the dry fish. When the plant starts to reach maturity, only eight leaves on it are left, the rest are continuously removed. The leaves at this stage grow so expeditiously, thus leaving more leaves to grow out of control could lead to a poor crop. Peasants should also fight a threat caused by eye envy, which "could spread" an uncanny disease in the crop. When the time finally comes for harvesting, the work is expected to be carried out very swiftly; since no one could be sure that the same southern, humid wind would be available the following day. The whole crop could be severely damaged if the wind changed its direction to the north or the west, therefore, a peasant is expected to act instantaneously in such situation. As the Hajari say, "a good *bidar* should'nt let the wind make fun of him." However, this

southern wind (*kus*) is also needed after two months (somewhere in July) in order to lay down the hung tobacco and tie it up in bundles.

Tobacco and dates, as the two main crops, have been for years closely tied to the system of patronage in the Hajar. Access to land holding in any village was either through the absentee landlords, the shaikhs, or the native landlords and owners (*ahl al-balid*). Most gardens and farms in the village operate through share-cropping tenancy (*baydarah*). Traditionally, share-cropping tenancy of the date gardens is based mostly on the quarter system (*rubu'*): one quarter for the tenant and three for the owner. In tobacco, share-cropping is based on the triple system (*thilith*), that is, one third to the tenant and two to the owner.

As the cultivable land is located usually around the small hamlets and villages, which themselves are constructed on the small wadi-side, these lands, hamlets and villages are considered part of the tribe or lineage territory (*hiram*). Here, at the village level, the gardens and the farms (referred to as *rum*) and the small land encircling them (*haram*) are generally owned collectively by the lineage. It is only recently that splitting in lineage land has taken place, and accordingly an increasing number of families have begun to own their own gardens and farms separately. Although the phenomenon of family ownership is increasingly common, the *haram* of the lineage still remains intact.

When contrasting cultivation as a pattern of subsistence with pastoralism, the latter resembles the second pole, which together with cultivation, constitutes the Hajari identity. Pastoralism, which is as ancient a mode of subsistence in the Hajar as cultivation, involves between a quarter and a third of any Hajari community in its activities. These activities, of course, are positively influenced by the Hajari mountains and plains which are considered as reasonable grazing land for the type of mountain goats which are raised together with a few sheep. Since each tribe, or sub-tribe, claims ownership of a small wadi or canyon, together with the grazing land surrounding it, all households of the village community should have equal right to use this area as communal land for their herds. A peasant household

normally keeps a few head of goats, cattle and sheep which are considered as part of the women's world, whereas if camels are raised as part of the household's herd, they are treated as belonging to the realm of men. The world of camels is seen as the men's affair and business alone.

The world of goats, cattle and camels has a substantial effect on the division of labour between men and women. Though camels, for instance, are proportionally raised less as compared to goats, nonetheless camel herding together with agricultural practice is considered as the domain of men. This being said about pastoralism among the settled agriculturalists, it appears then that pastoralism in such a context forms the dominant mode of subsistence among the mountain-goat herders of the Hajar. Pastoralism, thus, formulates the life of this section of the Hajar population in quite a different way than that of the peasants or the camel herders of the desert. Ecology, in this context, has a similar effect on the pastoralists' life as on that of the peasants. The Hajari pastoralists are not as nomadic as those of the Arabian desert (Cole 1975, Lancaster 1981), nor are they similar to the mountain nomads of Persia (Barth 1961; Beck 1986, 1991). The Hajari pastoralists do not migrate seasonally on long routes in search of good pasture: they remain instead in one valley for as long as there is sufficient water for their herds. Their year-cycle witnesses, if necessary, only a movement from uphill in the winter to downhill in the summer. The Hajari pastoralists spend the winter - from September until late May - in the hills as long as there is good pasture for their herds. In June they leave their semi - permanent camps, which are built with lower walls of stones and covered with datefrond and tree branches, for the summer camps which are not very far from their winter camps. The summer camps are normally constructed with less complexity and are mostly situated somewhere near the village outskirts so as to ensure access to water in case of any emergency. Otherwise, the *shawawi* would remain in their summer camps and rely on their own sources of water. Their reliance on the villagers would continue, even in the winter: they need fresh

and dry dates, barley and sorghum for family consumption; they also need fodder and dry dates for their herds.

The two seasons of the year (winter and summer) transform the Hajari *shawawi* form a type of intensive pastoralist activity in the winter to moderate work in the summer. In the winter the *shawawi* are challenged to feed their herds with the rich greens available in the mountain plains. A camp, which consists of a father and his sons' families, should continue to take its herd for grazing everyday, from early morning till noon. Failing to do that, could make the selling poor and could also lead to the loss of part of the herd in the summer season. For when the summer arrives, the camp's job would be to maintain the quality of the herd at a good level. It is becoming more important nowadays for the *shawawi* to maintain a good reputation in the market, especially among the livestock traders who visit the camps once or twice a year to buy the young nannies and kids of the previous year. When a trader comes, the pens should be open for him to examine the herds. He catches nannies and kids, and presses his fingers on their necks and backs to see how fat they are. When the deal is struck, and the father of the camp feels that the money is good, the members of the camp are praised metaphorically by the father as people of the "white faces". This is because their good work in the winter proves to be the work of a hardworking family (*ayal habin rih*).

When summer comes, and there is not enough water available in either the camp's well or in the temporary, seasonal streams created by the winter rain, the *shawawi* camp should make a move to an area near the village where they can enjoy access to water. Here they construct their summer camp, and it is here that the herd spends a period of four months (June to September). the main task in the summer for a Hajari pastoralist is to ensure that the herd survives the hardship of the summer, and returns to the winter camp with minimum loss. To avoid any dispute with the villagers, the *shawawi*, according to previous agreement, must keep their herds away from the village farms and gardens. Thus, most of the *shawawi* would water their herds in the camp by transporting water from the village to

the camp by jeep and keeping enough of it in the camp's water tanks. Previously, the *shawawi* used skin-bags to transport water from the village to their camps. The summer, which signifies scarcity for the *shawawi*, encourages them to enter into economic barter and trade with the agriculturalists. The *shawawi* establish contracts with the villagers so as to have a secure supply of fresh dates for family consumption, and dry dates and fodder as food for their herds. Most of the village's peasants grow some fodder in their gardens for their households' livestock, and also sell some of this fodder to the *shawawi*, who pay for it either in money or in kind.

The relationship between the *shawawi* and the *bayadir*, which I shall discuss in more detail later on, shows the nature of the power structures and relations, between these two communities. The domination of the agriculturalists in this power structure is apparent through the clientship status which the pastoralists occupy. The pastoralists' vulnerability is determined by an environmental factor manifested largely in the existence, or the disappearing of suitable pasture. This status makes the *shawawi* vulnerable to the need of changing their camping place once the good pasture and water are exhausted.

Changing the camping site does not happen frequently, but if it does happen, then this means that the *shawawi* family or lineage must either depart from its lineage's or clan's territory to another one within the tribe's main territory; or leave the tribe's homeland altogether and seek a place in another tribe's territory. Such situations are responsible for the clientship status of the *shawawi*. It forces them to accept the patronage of a new tribe or clan, who normally claim ownership over both the cultivable and the grazing land of a wadi or a canyon. The *shawawi* would be offered the following: a right to build their camps, an access to water and grazing land, a right to collect wood and finally political protection. In return, they are expected to show their acceptance of what Bourdieu terms the "symbolic violence" of their patrons (1977: 192). Therefore, these pastoralists have to give in return: loyalty, support, gifts, and

tribute. Besides, they are expected to police the area and to give their goats' dung to their patron's farms and gardens.

When Symbolic Values Become Worldviews

Having offered this much ethnographic detail on the Hajari livelihood, social organization and political structure and relationships of the main social groups - the *bayadir* and the *shawawi*-, I want now to go further and thus show how the Hajari ritual symbolism, moral values and ideology intersect with the Hajari practice, which I see as responsible for reproducing their social and symbolic boundaries. I would like to argue, therefore, that the Hajari in their endeavour to locate their internal and external social and symbolic boundaries are governed very much by their indigenous system of classification. This involves the classification system in exactly the same way as Mary Douglas has indicated a long time ago, that is, viewing classification as a universal human tendency which has little to do with physical attributes. This human tendency towards classification, on the contrary, has very much to do with the social pattern of rules and meaning which creates an anomaly in the social world (Douglas 1975: 281, 285). According to Mary Douglas, this anomaly allows a constructed, continuum of social system to place, at one end, the full members of the society and at the other end the outsiders. Corresponding with these two ends of the continuum, there are parallels from the natural world. These parallels are from the normal and anomalous beings who approximate to human beings (Douglas 1975: 281).

As it was shown, social inferiority of the *shawawi* amounts to their symbolic subordination, especially when they are compared in their relationship with the *bayadir*. However, it is time now to see the other side of this relationship; to see the effect of ritual symbolism in the reproduction of social and symbolic boundaries between the *bayadir* and *shawawi* and between these former groups and the rest of the world.

I begin by saying that the Hajari people have, like any group of people, several ritual symbols. Of these symbols, there are dominant

ones which are drawn from nature, such as: land, camel, goat, cattle and sheep. For the Hajari, these natural symbols are believed to have a degree of purity and pollution, as well as a degree of honour and shame. Thus, according to this cosmological schema of the natural world, the Hajari consider their mountain zone as one located in the middle, that is between two natural environments: the desert (al-Dahirah) and the coast (al-Batinah). To them, the desert is the purest part of the natural world whereas the coast is impure. Their mountain zone (*al-Hayar*, as spoken locally) lies in the middle.

When these three regional environments of the Emirates are put together with the above mentioned natural symbols, it is obvious that the Hajari affiliate some of the above mentioned symbols with each of these regional environments. Hence the camel is associated with the desert, or al-Dahirah, and the two are viewed as signifiers to the homeland of the pure and most noble race, that is, the bedouin. The Hajari consider themselves descendents from these bedouin, and it is to this bedouin society and culture that they appeal in their everyday practice as their ideal-type. The purity of the camel, as a symbol of honour, should also explain the insistence of the agriculturalists to raise them, even though there is no practical need for them in today's life as compared to the past years.

At the other end of this symbolic classification are the cattle. Of all livestock, cattle are seen as the most impure domestic animals. Though they are raised in the Hajar, as a livestock animal they are associated with the coast, or al-Batinah. Both al-Batinah and cattle are counted as impure, and as such, are categorized symbolically as objects of disgrace. In everyday talk, the Hajari use al-Batinah to refer to their rubbish dump. For example, when an individual tries to introduce to the Hajari community a controversial idea or behaviour which is considered bad, this idea or behaviour is seen as one that is transported from "there", that is to say from the al-Batinah. They will point scornfully at the area that lies behind their mountains, that is to the east of the Hajar, as the source of such shameful practice. Between these two ends- the desert/camel and coast/cattle- lies the mountains zone, or al-Hayar. In this zone lies the Hajari predicament:

here is situated some of the pure and honourable part of the natural world, such as the agricultural land, but also there are less pure and less honourable livestock animals, that is the goats and sheep.

If we put aside, for a moment, the Hajari symbolic classification system and look at the way the Hajari are seen by the outside world, this may allow us to understand the Hajari predicament more. Viewed from without, i.e. by the bedouin of the desert and the townsmen of the coast, the Hajari are located in the middle. The Hajari themselves do recognize this particular, intermediary nature of their position, as people who are situated between the desert and the coast, i.e. between the two worlds of purity and pollution. This is how they are seen by the bedouin of the desert, and likewise how they are treated by the townsmen of the al-Batinah⁽⁸⁾. In fact, this is also how the Hajari wanted to be treated. Seen from within, the Hajari draw their boundaries differently. Here, in the Hajar, the worlds of purity/honour and pollution/shame are used in reference to two dichotomous livelihood practices and gender categories. Purity and honour are associated with the peasants who live from the land and also with men as a gender category, whereas impurity/shame is identified with the *shawawi* pastoralists and women in general⁽⁹⁾. This is how the symbolic boundaries are set out ideally between the main social categories in the Hajari community.

In both patterns of livelihood, that is of pastoralism and agriculture, the strict division of labour between men and women and between agricultural practice and pastoralism (especially related to cattle and goats) corresponds to the Hajari ritual symbolism and moral values system which divide the natural world into pure and impure. This division of purity and pollution in the natural world are paralleled with the moral values and the ideology which divide the social world into honour and shame. Thus, according to this Hajari classification system, natural symbols such as land and camels are considered as categories that belong to purity, whereas cattle and goats belong to impurity, or pollution. Consistent with this ritual division of the world, the Hajari view and thus treat women as polluted objects and therefore associate them with shame. Men, on

the other side, are regarded as pure and as such they are viewed as a source and embodiment of honour.

In conformity with these ritual beliefs and moral values, men and women are expected to keep their domains and boundaries distant. In village life, where agriculture and pastoralism are practised, working in the land therefore is seen as an honourable thing man should do and affiliate himself with, whereas tending cattle and goats is expected to be carried out by women. Thus women may find themselves asked to give a hand in the tobacco or date seasons, but never consider the gardens or farms as a welcoming place for them. Women, on the contrary, could be accused by men as being the source of any natural disaster which might happen to the crops. For a woman is always polluted and therefore could cause mischief. Hence women ought to remain within their animal stables and leave men to gardens and farms.

This ritual division of the natural world extends to the rest of Hajari community and accordingly the *Shawawi* and their pastoral subsistence are seen, according to this ritual division, as being impure and therefore are treated morally as being dishonourable. This sort of judgement is based on the belief that these men have affiliated themselves with goats and sheep, and thereby accepted the job of women as their main trade. Consequently, the *shawawi* should remain with goats: although the *shawawi* men maintain a division of labour by keeping the decision-making of the camp within their hands and leaving the women to tend the herds, yet this does not justify their pastoral pursuit⁽¹⁰⁾. According to this common ideology and moral value, whenever a woman and an animal are combined in one place, one should not expect much blessing from such place. For neither does a woman have an honour to show off nor can an animal ever keep clean. What is combined here is shame and pollution. Therefore a man should keep away from such places so that he can combat the shame and pollution, which were created in such place, by bringing honour as part of his substance, and purity from the virtue of the job he normally practises. This is what the dominant ideology of shame and honour says.

Negotiated Boundaries and Contested Tales

As argued earlier in this paper, storytelling practice is among the various ways with which the Hajari *bayadir* and *shawawi* try to articulate their power relations and structures and thus negotiate their social and symbolic boundaries and enact them in everyday life. The following two tales were among several ones that I came across in the Hajar: told to me, exchanged, or fired by the *bayadir* against the *shawawi*, or vice versa. The first tale- A bayadir Tale- is one that is told by the *bayadir* and thus represents their views of the *shawawi* as people of suspicious attitude, ignorant of religious practice, and ones who do not keep high value for generosity. The second tale- A Shawawi Tale- is one that is told by *shawawi* and mostly repeated by them. It depicts the *shawi's* loyalty, and portrays his value to faithfulness. On the other hand, it shows the envious mind of the *bayadir* and their wickedness. It is assumed, also, to show the genuine faith and religiosity of the *shawawi*, to the degree that it represents them as people who used to have some saints amongst them. All that, as the tale tries to tell, is due to their true belief and honest heart. In general, the two tales, however, show how both, the *bayadir* and *shawawi*, were incorporating the sacred symbols such as religious faith (*iman*), piety, and other social symbols such as generosity, in their efforts to demarcate each group boundaries. Finally, it is obvious, as we will come to see later, that the *bayadir* and *shawawi* were using the symbols to refer to Hajari ideal model.

A Bayadir Tale

Once there was a *shawi* (sing. of a *shawawi*) who was granted a canyon by a village *wali* as a pasture and camping place for his family and herd. The *shawi*, after a few years became so rich that his herd numbered around one thousand goats. But during the years he lived in the canyon he neither gave away some money for the sake of God (*zakat*), fed the poor, invited people from the village, nor was he seen in the village mosque. One day, while he was milking a goat, a religious man (*mutawa*) passing by as a traveller stopped at his camp and asked him if he could camp for a few days near his camp. The

shawi permitted the *mutawa* to camp, but never invited him for dates and coffee. The *mutawa* noticed the *shawi's* meanness and irreligiosity and advised him to keep up to his religious duties as a Muslim. The *shawi*, however, replied angrily at the *mutawa* with much abuse and cursing. The *mutawa* left the following day and, as a result of his distress and agitation, died on his way home. A week later, nearly half of the *shawi's* herd disappeared, and the rest died as a result of a strange disease. When the village's *mutawa*, where the *shawi* camped nearby, was asked by the *shawi* for a work of divination in order to return the missing herd, he told the *shawi* that a blessing can never be placed upon a man who had divorced generosity and married meanness and filth.

A Shawawi Tale

A *shawi* once lost his herds as a result of severe drought. Subsequently he left his camp in the hill and went down to the village asking for work. A landlord (*hangari*) who happened to be his patron in the village agreed to employ him as a *bidar* on his estate. After one year, the *shawi* became more vigorous and began to compete against other *bayadir* of the village who worked for the same landlord. As the *hangari* began to trust him more, he gave him some extra tobacco farms to look after. A few years later, the *shawi* became a share-cropper, similar to the rest of the landlord's *bayadir*. This particular new status of the *shawi* provoked the envious *bayadir*, so they started to create trouble between the *shawi* and the *hangari*. They accused the *shawi* of having a relationship with one of the village women. In addition, they also told the *hangari* that they had seen the *shawi* leaving his hut every evening after the prayer call (*adan*) and with a kettle of water in his hand disappearing into the hills. Next evening the landlord, with a gun on his shoulder, followed the *shawi* into the hills. After a while he saw the *shawi* sit down on a flat rock and begin purifying himself with water, and then starting to pray. The *hangari* noticed a strange thing about the way the *shawi* performed his prayer. He saw the *shawi* repeating "God is great"

(*alah akbar*) many times when starting the prayer, whereas the prayer requires this only once.

When the *shawī* finished his prayer, the landlord came and hugged him and apologized for his suspicion, and then asked him: "Why do you repeat "God is great" many times? There is no need for such a thing". The *shawī* replied that unless he did that many times, he could not see Mecca. The hangari asked him again with astonishment: "You mean, you can see Mecca in your prayers here?" The *shawī* said "yes" and turned to ask the landlord: "Don't you *bayadir* see Mecca when calling "God is great" only once?". "How can one see Mecca in his prayers?" The landlord inquired. Later in the village a *mutawa* informed the landlord that seeing Mecca in prayer is a sign of divination and sainthood, hence the *shawī* must be a saint (*walyī*). As a result, the landlord offered him a farm (*dahiyha*) and a garden (*ziriba*), and married him to one of the village women.

As shown from the above tales, they represent the images created by one side against the other. Also, they explain in many respects the symbolic and social boundaries created by each social category against the other, likewise they reinforce the ideology and moral values of the ritual symbols, thus establishing the symbolic boundaries through continual attempts of contests and negotiations and not only as mere categories of mind as suggested by Levi-Straussian structuralism (1961, 1966), but one of a dialogical nature. References in these tales are made to many symbols, for instance: purity and pollution, shame and honour, generosity and meanness; and the links between these symbols and land, on the one hand, and the animals raised by the *shawawī*, on the other. These symbols, however, are also tied to the ritual symbols of Islam. Thus every social category tries to strengthen the tie between its mundane ritual symbols-including camels, cattle, goats, and land- and religious symbols such as: generosity, piety and chastity.

Several anthropologists have argued the case of storytelling, and thus showed the significance of those stories and tales that are normally cited and recited either by community's members for the community's members, or for the newcomer, the ethnographer. Thus

it is through these tales that *gumsa* and *gumlao* in highland Burma (Leach 1954: cf. chap. 9); and rival landlords in southern Lebanon (Gilsenan 1996) as well as tribal leaders in highland Yemen (Caton 1990) and Jordan (Shryock 1997) settle aspects of their power struggle. With gender orientation as a backdrop for her celebrated ethnography, Abu-Lughod impressively demonstrates the role of stories and tales in the negotiated power among bedouin women and men of the Western desert in Egypt (1993).

Thus storytelling among various cultures and societies is not just “fun”. Community members convey many things through these tales and stories: their values, ideologies, world view and ambitions; as well as love, hatred, wisdom and passion. Through these tales and stories, the community tries to pass on its symbols. It is through these tales, stories, metaphors and other rhetorical devices that these symbols used to be illustrated. The Hajari, in that case, are no exception for their views and judgements of each other, especially that of the *bayadir* and *shawawi*. Such views and judgments could be noticed through the tales and stories they construct about each other.

Relating *bayadir* and *shawawi* to the symbolic problem of honour and shame, both of which the *bayadir* and *shawawi* manipulate in the reality of their everyday life, is one way of showing how the *bayadir* and *shawawi* are negotiating their social and symbolic boundaries; and how they tie symbolism so tightly to the realm of ritual. Thus, both the *shawawi* and the *bayadir*, by relating their mode of livelihood to the notion of purity and pollution, are in fact trying to tie these notions to the moral ideology of honour and shame. Hence each of these groups strives to associate the nature of its livelihood to the symbolic power of honour.

Despite the fact that the dominant Hajari ideology of honour classifies land as ritually more pure than goats and sheep, nevertheless the *shawawi* in their turn resist such hegemonic practice and ideology by showing the approximation of their mundane practice of pastoralism to that of the camel herding practised by the bedouin of al-Dahirah. This sort of resistance taken by the side of the *shawawi*

demonstrates that neither the notion of honour, nor other notions related to ritual symbols and boundaries have ever been left in the reality of everyday life without negotiation and contest by the respective social categories.

Both the Hajari peasant and pastoralists, in their various levels of social dialogues and bargaining, try to make sure that all doors should be open to every possible use of any kind of tool so as to settle "one" meaning and interpretation for those symbols which are associated with their boundaries. All tools are laid down and open to use: from generosity, bravery, knowledge, news, to wisdom and passion, and all other resources. One set of these powerful tools, through which the Hajari *shawawi* and *bayadir* arm themselves, are the rhetorical devices of tales and metaphors. It is through these tales and metaphors that both groups try to convey the meanings of their symbols, and thus set the boundaries and the images of each other. So, what we are faced with is a constant attempt by these groups to establish a single, hegemonic hermeneutics of what these symbols mean.

As for women, though ideologically classified as weak, in reality they are simultaneously the source of men's power and weakness. A woman's power originates from her weakness, because she is the one upon whom honour depends, hence she is metaphorically referred to, in many contexts, as a stone. The Hajari men see a woman as a stone with which you can build a good house, and as an object also on which you may hurt or break your foot if you fall on it. And as such, woman is viewed as the stone upon whom lies the decision to maintain the honour of her husband, or alternatively destroy it, and thus bring shame to him (cf. Douglas 1966: 24, 113; Bourdieu 1977:40-44).

The above two tales and their implicit metaphors have shown the form of practice which has its significant role in reproducing the system of ritual symbols among the Hajari. I hope that these tales have also illustrated how the social and symbolic boundaries of the Hajari are themselves an enactment of everyday rhetorical discourse. And if Bakhtin sees that through rhetorical discourse

heteroglossia is dialogized (1981:273), I may also add that, through everyday rhetorical discourse, the social and symbolic boundaries are dialogized. So it is that through this social context that the metaphors and tales are narrated for an outsider like myself; and that through this rhetorical discourse the tales and metaphors are constructed, told and retold.

Thus the narration of these tales and metaphors and subsequently their usage serves, among other things, to institute the social and symbolic boundaries among the *bayadir* and *shawawi* and thus negotiate the implication of their power structures and relationships. If the narration of these tales and metaphors serves to handle the politics of the boundaries, likewise it helps their narrator: it allows him/her to invoke what Rosaldo refers to as the sentiment of mutual concern of the respective symbols (1980:25). The problem of the effect of narrative experience on the meaning of the symbols has been illuminated further by Rosaldo. He views both- the narrative and its experience- as factors which have undoubtedly great effect on people's understanding of the symbol and on their conduct (1986:97). So, as in Turner (1986) and Frenandez (1986), it is the experience of such tales and metaphors which are so important in perpetuating the symbolic forms and thus provide the power for the people to argue their case, and endow the anthropologist with the opportunity to learn the meaning of these symbols.

Conclusion:

Looking into the aspect of livelihood practice was one way for a number of ethnographic studies on the pastoralists of the Middle East to examine issues related to symbolism and ritual (Barth 1961, Tapper 1979, 1989).⁽¹¹⁾ Thus migratory activity, for instance, was considered a major realm in which ritual symbolism is embodied. But recently, other studies (Abu-Lughod 1986, Beck 1991) have shown that the anthropologist's competence in his/her group's language could add more to the understanding of symbolism. With an orthodoxy, such as that of Islam, which categorically excludes some ritual practices of certain local communities- for such ritual practices,

in one way or another, may represent the non-Islamic influence of their native culture- thus, according to Abner Cohen: 'if Islamic orthodoxy opposes the employment of painting, carving, dancing and music in its symbolism, extensive use is made in orthodox Islamic countries of a wide range of linguistic forms -rhetoric, proverbs and the like' (1969: 219-20). One will also add tales and metaphors to Cohen's list. For through tales and metaphors, which are used in various discursive contexts, one can grasp: 1) the elementary, symbolic forms that are used to represent the specific nature or aspects of human life; and 2) the meanings that are employed in these symbolic forms.⁽¹²⁾ Accordingly, the study of symbolism in the Islamic tribal societies of the Middle East may, therefore, require enough fluency in the natives' languages to be able to engage in deep dialogue with their pastoralists and peasants. For in such dialogues and conversations sensitive ears and eyes are the most important means by which one can make sense of those utterances and gestures, through which, i.e. through these discursive formations, many tales and metaphors and other rhetorical messages are conveyed. It is not always the case that publicly performed religious or secular rituals are necessarily the cultural representations in which symbols are manifested.

Notes

Acknowledgement: Data for this article are based on my residence in the coastal region of the Emirates (1976-1983), and later, on field research in its Western Hajar (1987-1995). My research has been carried out largely among the semi-nomadic tribal groups who reside in the mountain zone of the Emirates, al-Hajar. I gratefully acknowledge support from the University of Bahrain for the research period between 1987 and 1988.

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Rasmussen for the amount of inspiration and enlightenment I have gained by reading their works (1987, 1992).

1. The Hajari bedouin may include, as a community, people who practise agriculture, however, all Hajari, whether peasants or pastoralists, are viewed and called by the rest of the Emirates' people, the Hajari bedouin (*badu al-Hayar*). Thus, the word "bedouin" is used in this article in a similar way and context.

2. Though this paper does not deal with the political nature of power relations per se, a reader who is interested in this aspect of relationships between the pastoralists and agriculturists should consult several works, among them, for example, the work of Nelson (1973), Tapper (1979), Khoury & Kostiner (1990), and the interesting work of Eickelman which surveyed the problem with reference to Middle East ethnographies (1997). One may also refer to the more recent study which tackles the problem through a regional perspective approach with specific reference to the southern region of Baluchistan (Fabietti 1992).

3. Barth, for instance, has examined social boundaries in a southern Arabian context. In his study of the Omani town of Sohar, he examined the relationship between the different social categories which constituted Sohari community, including the bedouin and non-bedouin groups, by using the concept of ethnicity in the context of an action oriented approach rather than a symbolic one. For further details, see the defence he makes for his preference in chapter 21; and for information on the *shawawi* bedouin of that part of Arabia, see chapter 8 and 19 (Barth 1983). Another example of the action oriented approach, as applied in a complex society, is also found in the study of social differences in the southern Yemeni town, Hureideh, by Abdulla Bujra (1971).

4. Although this article talks about the Hajari in general, however, I want to draw the reader's attention to the fact that my fieldwork has been carried out largely among the Sharqiyin tribes, whom I spent most the time with. My generalization, here, on other tribes of the Hajar region is based on my few fieldwork trips which

have been carried out among other tribes of the Hajar, and on my knowledge and research on the Hajar region in general.

5. The genealogical construction which is presented here is based on sources such as: al-Awatabi (1984), al-Siyabi (1965), al-Hamdani (1983), Wilkinson (1972), and also on my own fieldwork data.

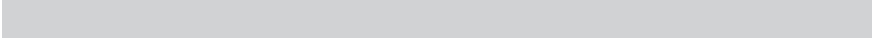
6. The word *bayadir*, in the Hajari contextual usage, refers not only to tenants and farm labourers, but to any person whose livelihood depends on agricultural activity. For further, historical elaboration on the *bayadir* as a social category, and on their relationship with other social groups in Oman and in the Emirates see Wilkinson (1974, 1977) and Heard-Bey (1982). On the economic aspect of date cultivation of inner Oman peasants, see the anthropological treatment offered by Barth (1978). For a general, socio-economic description of the *shawawi* of northern Oman, see Birks (1976). In addition, see Barth (1983), also, for some description and analysis of the relationship between the *shawawi* who live in the edges of the southern Omani town, Sohar, and the people of that town.

7. This kind of usage of the word tribe exists commonly in the writings of British geographers, historians and travellers (Miles 1919; Thomas 1931, 1932; Kelly 1968; Lorimer 1908-15), and in the British administrative reports on the Gulf.

8. This is based on repeated visits to, and discussion with, some relatives and friends of the Hajari who still live in the desert region.

9. I am restricting myself largely, in the discussion of symbolic boundaries, to the peasants and pastoralists alone. Therefore, the relevance of symbolic boundaries to gender categories are only shown when necessary. For gender oriented, ethnographic studies of woman's role and status in relation to men in context of the southern Arabia, see Unn Wikan (1982) and Christine Eickelman (1984).

10. It will be interesting to see the different values that cattle, land, sheep and goats occupy in the Hajari system of ritual symbols



when compared with the Greek and Kafir pastoralists (Campbell 1964, Parkes 1987).

11. See a more elaborate discussion of this point in Peters (1984).

12. For an interesting application of metaphor studies in the economic sphere, see Gudeman's lucid discussion of several case-studies in the context of some African pastoralist societies (Gudeman 1986).

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