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Translation of Al-Fuzai's Story 'The Strike'

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Abstract. Al-Fuzai portrays a dispute between a wife and her husband's mother in 'The Strike.'¹ Every newlywed couple encounters this issue because a bridegroom typically likes to remain with his parents and is socially encouraged to do so in many Arab communities. As a result, the problem is cultural; translation may help in portraying new cultures. In 'The Strike,' Al-Fuzai discusses this social issue while criticizing the social setting a new bride is placed in. An environment that is conducive to everyone in the family exercising their rights and living comfortably and prosperously should be created; however, this is not the case in the story. One of Al-Fuzai's literary works is 'The Strike.' It has been translated to introduce the writer to the readers of this journal. It also addresses a social issue that some individuals might not give enough thought to. Moreover, translation is a way to communicate and bridge the gaps among different cultures.

Keywords. 'The Strike', Al-Fuzai, short story, translation

1. Introduction:

Some women, especially those from outside the family, are neglected and overlooked in patriarchal societies; the wife in this narrative is the clearest illustration of this behavior. She starts off by saying, "It's useless . . . as long as you believe that your mother is always right . . ."², but the husband ignores her and tries to defend his position by saying, "I see now why you didn't tell me when my mother beat you...." He believes that his mother has authority over her. Here, a human right is violated because it is uncommon for husbands who abuse their wives to face punishment.

Furthermore, the main character continues to speak on her behalf and lets us know by asking, "Are you crying?" Traditionally, as a wife, she has to be submissive, quiet and passive. In fact, Al-Fuzai addresses many social and cultural issues similar to those in this story that he encounters in his society. His stories are short and simple, yet innovative, expressive, and insightful.

Even if the wife tries to justify her behavior, the husband emphasizes his power and control by threatening her to take her children away from her. Here he sees the connection between marriage and children; for many people, a wife is no more than a mother. In a patriarchal culture, it is the woman who gives birth to children and takes care of the household.

Translation is an important tool to help people get to know each other and get connected. The process of translating 'The Strike' will introduce readers to a translated piece

of Arabic culture as well as the author Al-Fuzai (1940-). Readers of this story can search for other related articles to read and learn more about this culture (Dohal 2019).

2. Translation of 'The Strike':

The train crosses the desert, moving through the darkness that has begun to weave its web to turn the universe into a darkness whose sails are torn apart only by the lights of the locomotive and passenger trailers. . . Every now and then a bright light suddenly appears at one of the oil drilling sites scattered across the desert, but then disappears just as suddenly as it appeared. There is a bus so full of travelers that they will immediately be thrown out of their seats, they will walk around the trailer under embargo, in the train bar or in the reading room, not to those who dream of spending a few leave interesting hours . . . with a book. . . make this dream come true . . . and in one of these places . . . a gloomy man sits there - he appears to be angry for trivial reasons - and his wife sits next to him. The tone of her voice radiates desperation and announces her submission . . . perhaps this desperation is the reason for this submission . . . and pleads desperately, "It's useless . . . as long as you believe that your mother is always right . . . I don't want to upset her, but what can I do when she finds so many reasons for a dispute?"

She speaks in such a way as to attract the attention of others sitting, even if they pretend to be busy with their private business; She doesn't care if they hear . . . and it is as if he wants the world to witness the injustice of her cause. . . when she speaks loudly. . . We see pity in the eyes of the travelers and they sneak looks at the man and his wife.

The husband continues the dispute as if he did not hear his wife's conversation after looking at her, gives her a predatory look and says: "I was wrong . . . because I married you . . . She is my mother and she knows what is good for me. . . There's no way she's lying . . . You have a habit of lying, so you think others are lying . . . You are always unfair to her, that's why I can't believe you; you know nothing? These two, one of which you carry in your stomach and the other in your hands . . . I'll get them for you . . . a good mother is someone who protects her married life . . . and why you can't protect your married life . . . since you've made my life hell, I won't let her live with you. . . what? You cry . . .? Crying has no effect on me . . . You can cry forever, I won't change my mind . . . are you saying that my mother is behind all this? NO. You are guilty . . . she is my mother, I must have her, but you are the shoe on my foot that I can take off whenever I want; Now I'm taking you to your family where we won't see each other again. . .OH. . . why are you crying . . . do not you feel ashamed? . . . That's the bad ending you wanted to achieve; are you saying that this was not the result you wanted and that it was my mother who was looking for this result? . . . you're still lying; I see now why you didn't tell me when my mother beat you . . . you say you don't want to ruin my life, but you say you're patient and the fact is you're wrong because she wouldn't hit you for no reason.

"Are you saying he doesn't have the right to hit you?"

"Why? . . . she is my mother and has absolute power over you . . . I didn't choose you . . . she chose you for me and is therefore . . . should I waste my time taking care of you? . . . you know it's impossible for me . . . because I'm at work all the week and don't come home until Thursday and go back to work on Friday. So when I come home . . . I find life between you and my mother hectic and full of hostility; my mother says you're wrong and I believe her and you say she's wrong and I don't believe you.

"Are you asking me why I can't take you to my workplace?"

"What a stupid question! You know that such an act means that I would have to move my mother too . . . and there will be strife, contention, and confusion between the two of you.

"What . . . should I leave her and take you with me? . . . who says I will accept this offer . . . for me, she is more important than you. And you say that she is the reason for my separation from my two previous wives; these things are none of your business. It would be better to keep your mouth shut and let me get some sleep. What a slow train! . . . time flies so painfully that I can imagine we won't make it at all.

"Early in my life, I dreamed of a happy home; every time I thought of a good, honest, obedient and faithful woman, a glimmer of hope came over me . . . and I got married . . . but my first wife suppressed my hopes, so the constant spark of happiness I dreamed of died . . . and said that my mother was behind the sinking of the boat of our married life . . . no use . . . my mother and my wife embodied the cat and mouse tragedy. . . no harmony. . . no reconciliation . . . not even a temporary ceasefire. . .and we separated. . . I left my wife to please my mother . . . she is always right . . . she may seem harsh in some situations, but overall she wants nothing more than my

"And I got married for the second time . . .

"And the tragedy repeated itself . . .

"And I repeated what happened the first time.

"And the tragedy occurs for the third time.

"And I wouldn't have to repeat the same scenario a third time if she hadn't chosen you as my wife, but I think her choice is wrong; If you deny her kindness and treat her unfairly, you hurt her. . . She is my mother and wants the best for me and cares about my well-being.

"See how our life will end!

"The beginning was beautiful and pleasant . . . I thought I was the happiest person . . . but it became a mirage . . . a dream that I remember as I remember all enchanting dreams . . . I remember it, but without regret, because my mother is more important to me . . . calm the baby, don't let him cry and . . . save your tears for tomorrow . . . you will cry a lot . . . what? Don't cry for me, but cry for the beautiful dream you had . . . you failed to protect the beauty of this dream.

"I'll tell you something else . . . don't say my mother's name . . . I'll hit you if you say her name again . . . Oh Allah . . . how stupid am I to think that you would be honest with my mother because she chose you as a wife for me . . . and why do you swear she was wrong if I don't believe you? Is this her reward? She chose you to be my wife because she is your mother's friend . . . my mother gives orders and you have to obey them . . . and when she forbids you from seeing or visiting anyone, you must yield to her demands. I spent three years in a hell of disputes. Even when I went to my work, your differences remained in my mind. . . I tried to tell myself that I would stay away from your fight since I was away from both of you, but I couldn't . . . sometimes I tried to forget, but that only forced me to remember . . . apparently I'm tired of talking nonsense.

"Do you still mention my mother disrespectfully?"

And the travelers sitting next to their seats turn around when they hear a loud bang, echoing as a dark-faced man, who seems angry for some petty reason, hits his wife hard on her face.

3. Conclusion

In 'The Strike,' Al-Fuzai addresses a social problem that any young married couple in the author's Arab community may face. The husband should take his wife to his family. There will be necessary contacts, and every contact has its consequences. Another point in this story is that parents are responsible for deciding which girl their son will marry. The hero turned to

his wife and told her that his mother has chosen her to become his wife. He uses this statement as an excuse for whatever he will do.

In this story, however, the woman spends the whole week with his mother, as if she were a nurse or housekeeper rather than a wife, while the husband has his work. He doesn't come home until Thursday and goes back to work on Friday. In short, he neglects his wife; she is his third wife. After all, it is the mother whom he wants to please for "she is always right . . ." but if, as he claims, his mother's "choice is wrong," then one has to wonder whether "she is always right."

Such a woman should not stay with her family until her husband takes power because after marriage, the woman is traditionally under the responsibility of her husband, who in this society tends to leave her with his family. In short, this story characterizes the woman as an oppressed person in the author's society. It therefore represents a social problem that can be a topic that feminists can discover, research, and analyze.

The desire to know and understand other civilizations is a universal passion; The translation of this story will open doors for those who do not have access to the original Arabic text but want to learn more about this culture. Literature can really help people understand and experience the difficulties and challenges of others. Communication between nations and cultures can be facilitated through translation; that is one of the main purposes of translating this story.

References

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Notes

1. This story was translated from the following Arabic source:
Al-Fuzai, K. I. (1979). *Thursday Fair*. (سوق الخميس). Taif: Taif Literary Club, pp. 91-96.
2. Every now and then there are few dots found in the source text, and I kept as close as possible to the original text.



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