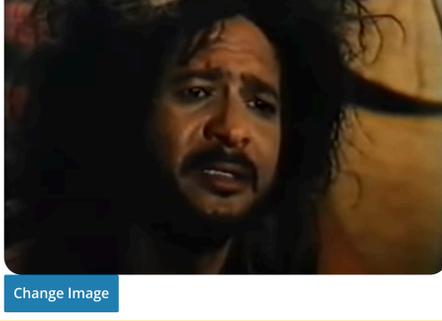




The story of Tajooj and Mahalq

Other names: ...



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Domai n **ORAL TRADITIONS** Story

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCATION

Community groups

Tribe of Al-Hamran. East Sudan.

Practitioners

N/A

Purpose / Use

Literature, stories, theater, and field historical research.

Knowledge / Skills

A good poetic narrative with excellent structure and construction.

Transmission

The folk heritage was initially passed down orally, but it has been collected and documented academically multiple times, and has since been used as inspiration in various literary and theatrical works.

Tools, Equipment, Services

Poetry language.

HISTORY

There is no historical story or novel in Sudan that differs about its origins, and many studies, research, literary works, and artistic works have addressed it from different angles, such as the story of Tajuj and Al-Mahlaq. Many historical books have referred to this tale, with some agreeing that it is a type of folklore and popular imagination, while others attribute it to a historical event that actually occurred. Some sources, narratives, and field research have agreed on a unified form of the story and its narrative structure, as seen in references by Naoum Shuqair in his book "Geography and History of Sudan," researcher Majd Al-Tayeb Muhammad Al-Tayeb in his book "Heritage of the Hamran Tribe," Abdullah Al-Tayeb in his book "Sudanese Riddles," as well as the Sudanese historian Muhammad Saleh Durar and many others. All of these writings have agreed on the request of Al-Mahlaq for Tajuj to see her as she was born, as a main thread of the story, entering the doors of literature and art from this entrance. Durar recounted his struggles in collecting the tales of Tajuj, saying that in the year 1955, only one man from the Tajuj clan remained, named Muhammad Saleh Humaid, like all the other Bedouins who do not agree to mention the incidents of Tajuj or recite the verses of Al-Mahlaq in their gatherings. In his book on the folklore of the Hamran tribe, Al-Tayeb Muhammad Al-Tayeb continues in the same direction, stating that this book is the result of fieldwork in the Hamran lands three times: March 1968, February 1969, and November 1969, where he managed to collect this material after much effort and hardship from the mouths of storytellers. He does not consider extracting a historical issue, story, or narrative from the Hamran tribe an easy task, as they have established a psychological barrier between themselves and the story of Tajuj and Al-Mahlaq, and many of them feel embarrassed to mention Tajuj, considering it a matter that must be preserved. This was confirmed by Professor Muhammad Al-Mahdi Bushra. Among the different narratives of the story, we summarize here the narrative of Muhammad Saleh Durar, which states that Tajuj, the daughter of Sheikh Muhammad bin Ali bin Mahlaq bin Muhammad bin Ali, was a girl of exceptional beauty and charm. Al-Mahlaq asked his mother to propose to her for him from her uncle. The mother complied and asked her brother, and the uncle agreed, but he requested a high dowry from his nephew's son. Al-Mahlaq sought the help of his father and provided the required dowry out of his intense love for her. Tajuj lived under the roof of marriage with Al-Mahlaq, surrounded by the embers of love and the fluttering of mutual love angels, and they were the happiest couple known to the tribe's land. However, his burning love for her was the cause of the end of that legendary tale, as he indulged in excessive flattery and descriptions of her beauty, arousing the jealousy of the other young men. One of his cousins, known as Al-Nur bin Al-Lammam, could not bear to hear his wife mentioned in his poems, turning it into a song for individuals and groups, a morsel that tongues chewed on, and her name and description were known far and wide. This led to a great disaster, as his love for her consumed his mind to the point where he no longer knew what he was doing. He called Al-Lammam to see her, saying, "Come with me to the hiding place so that I can show her to you in her unawareness." This invitation was enough for the madness of his love and infatuation to manifest, and he no longer knew what was right or wrong in terms of values. Al-Lammam accompanied him to a place where she was not supposed to be seen, and he made a hole in their hiding place, thinking she would not notice, then entered and asked her to dance for him naked. She was surprised by his request but endured and obeyed, saying, "I hear and obey," but in return, she made him swear to fulfill one request after she complied with his request. He promised, thinking that her request would not exceed what women usually ask for in such cases. When she secured his promise to fulfill her request, she made her request, and when she finished dancing and singing, joy overcame him, and he was intoxicated with love and infatuation. He thanked her and asked her to remind him of her request. She looked at him for a long time and said, "My request is one: divorce and eternal separation between you and me." Al-Mahlaq was shocked when he heard her request, and Al-Lammam was annoyed and left, fleeing from behind the hiding place after sowing discord and division that could not be undone in the hiding place of mad love. However, the matter had ended, and the divorce occurred with no turning back. Thus, Al-Mahlaq lost his wife, whom he yearned for despite all his attempts to regain her, but he could only mourn his love like any other lover. Tajuj took what she had in her hands of belongings and left to her father's house, while Al-Mahlaq pleaded with her with all that was dear to her, clinging to the edges of her garment, begging in vain. The light was ashamed of what had transpired and avoided gatherings and meetings. It was said that he left the village for another village far from the Mahlaq family village. The Mahlaq family imposed a large sum on Tajuj, and even her father's mercy and compassion towards his niece's son did not prevent him from lamenting the condition of the lover and the deterioration of his health due to the pain caused by Tajuj's abandonment. The father demanded that Al-Mahlaq give up poetry entirely, and he would take care of returning his beloved wife to him in return. Al-Mahlaq said, "It is impossible for me to give up poetry, as it has become my speech, my drink, and my food." The uncle took pity on him and said, "If you refrain from singing for one night, I will return her to you." Al-Mahlaq agreed, filled with joy. The uncle arranged for guards and witnesses for the promised night. Al-Mahlaq showed his ability to control his emotions until midnight, when he began to toss and turn, as if a snake had bitten him, until his bed was soaked with sweat. He got up and walked back and forth, holding his arms around his chest, fearing he might explode. Sometimes he sat, sometimes he stood, overwhelmed by extreme distress, but he managed to control himself and tighten the noose around his neck. It was a long, quiet night, with the witnesses listening to every sigh and groan that came from him, and just before dawn, a rooster woke up before the others, flapping its wings and crowing loudly, piercing the ears of everyone, including Al-Mahlaq. The rooster's call stirred his dormant feelings, and he found himself involuntarily saying, "O rooster, why do you crow? The morning is bright, have you not seen the tribe rising from the smoke? The honest one says, 'I am with the gazelles,' and the liar says, 'I was created without a tail!'" When morning broke, the guards testified that Al-Mahlaq could not restrain himself from singing, contrary to his agreement with his uncle. Al-Mahlaq left and wandered in the desert of Hamran, hoping to one day find Al-Nur bin Al-Lammam, who did not treat him well during his stay behind the hiding place, until he found him, both of them on horseback. Al-Mahlaq asked Al-Nur to wrestle with him, but Al-Nur refused. Al-Mahlaq attacked him, dismounted him from his saddle, and they wrestled on the ground. Al-Nur fell to the ground and got up, feeling frustrated, and they resumed wrestling. He fell again after several rounds and struggles, and after that, Al-Nur fell to the ground, ashamed of himself. He brushed off the dust from his clothes and got to mount his horse. However, Al-Mahlaq cut off the horse's tail and ears, a custom of all those who triumphed over their opponents among the horsemen of the Baja tribe. He said to him, "O Nur, will you carry a message to Tajuj's cousin?" He answered, "Yes." Al-Mahlaq said to him, "Tell Safiyya Al-Alamah: 'Between two hills, the dove of the tail and the pigeon flew, a sign of honor.'" When Al-Nur reached his home, he informed Tajuj of the message. She replied, "Woe to you! Did you wrestle with Al-Mahlaq and defeat him?" He said, "Yes, and how did you know that?" She said, "May Allah disgrace you! Do you not feel ashamed to convey your disgrace to me? By Allah, I will not accept you as a husband after today." And she left the second marital home without returning. In the end of the story, Al-Mahlaq dies from his excessive infatuation and love for Tajuj, and some tales suggest that Tajuj died, killed because of the turmoil caused by her captivating beauty. However, even Tajuj's death in the popular source is based on the Hamran tribe's purpose for pilgrimage within a caravan and their confrontation with the Hadendoa on the way to Suakin, the incident in which Tajuj was killed, a fact agreed upon by Naoum Shuqair in his book "Geography and History of Sudan," Tayeb Muhammad Al-Tayeb in his book "Heritage of the Hamran Tribe," Abdullah Al-Tayeb in his book "Sudanese Riddles," and even his death was agreed upon by sources that he died among his people.

INTRODUCTION

It is likely that the story took place in the mid-18th century, and there is no reliable date to accurately determine it. Some studies and lectures have suggested that it occurred during the period of Turkish-Egyptian colonization, while others have said that Tajooj herself was born in the year 1921.

It is a story of man Mahalq who loves his cousin Tajooj and sets to marry her. He eventually succeeds and continues to be mesmerised by her, writing poetry about her and performing it in public gatherings. His love overpowers his ethics and behaviours, leading to a heartbreaking divorce for Mahalaq.

Cultural Value:

One of the most inspiring stories in the field of literature and arts, especially in the realm of theater, is the story of Tajooj. We have seen how many research and historical books have addressed this story and collected it in various ways, confirming its high cultural value alongside its captivating poetry. It is likely that the first Sudanese literary novel written in this field is the novel "Tajooj" authored by Osman Hashim in 1948. As for the field of theater, the adaptations of theatrical texts of this story have been inspired by its oral storytelling techniques and diversity. Since the 1930s until today, the story of Tajooj has remained an inspiration for many theatrical works, initiated by the pioneering playwright Khaled Abu Al-Rous in his play "The Death of Tajooj and the Culture". He greatly benefited from the contents of the popular story and focused primarily on the verses of the culture and his pursuit of Tajooj and her death. The writer Mubarak Azraq then addressed it in his play "The Riddle of Tajooj", and the writer Youssef Khalil drew inspiration from it in his play "The Vulture", as well as Majdi Al-Noor in his play "Tahouj in Khartoum" and many other works. The Sudanese director Jadallah Jabarah also adapted it for the cinema in his film titled "Tajooj" in 1977.

Associated Practices:

The heritage of Ahaji is a novel, theater, and cinema.

Cultural Expressions

Poetry, books, plays, novels, and a film.

VIABILITY

Threats:

...

Natural Resources used

N/A

► Image(s) source :

► Link(s)