



The Popular Tradition In The Stories Of God's Mail By Maitham Al-Khazraji

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Abstract:

Folklore is an important part of human civilization, and it serves as a mirror reflecting the culture of society. It contributes to crystallizing national identity and determining the nature of personality. From here, this study began to highlight the folklore in the stories of the Gods' Mail by Maitham Al-Khazraji. In order to achieve this goal, we divided This study leads to an introduction in which we talked about popular heritage. Then, in the first axis, we discussed the intangible heritage in stories and the storyteller's experience in employing it. As for the other axis, we studied the material heritage included in the stories.

Keywords: The popular tradition, of God's Mail stories, Maitham Al-Khazraji.

Introduction:

Before talking about the concept of popular heritage, we must distinguish between inheritance and other concepts that overlap with it, such as heritage. If "heritage is the continuation of the past in the present," while "inheritance" is what we possess of heritage in kind, then it becomes like the specific part of the general, and the inheritance is not limited to it. It is based on the mental, with its religious, moral, psychological, and philosophical elements, but rather extends to the material heritage" (1), and it is not only connected to the past, but also to the present. "Heritage is not only what belongs to the distant past, but it is also what belongs to the recent past, and the recent past is connected to the present." The present has a narrow scope, as it is the point of connection between the past and the future... Whatever it is within us or with us from our present, in terms of its connection with the past, it is also heritage" (2).

Popular heritage (its concept):

Vladimir Propp is considered one of the most prominent people interested in folklore, especially in his book (The Morphology of the Story), along with the two scholars (Bohan Mir) and (James Fraser). In the Arab world, a group of important studies have emerged on the Arab scene, including the study of Ahmed Ali Morsi in his book (Introduction to... Folklore) in which he believes that heritage "includes the arts, beliefs, and living behavioral patterns through which the people express themselves, whether they use words, signs, movement, rhythm,

calligraphy, color, or the formation of simple primary matter” (3), then Ahmed Zoghab in his book (Folklore, Theory, method, and application) in which he stated that popular heritage is “the people’s cultural, social, and material cultural materials or cultural elements created by the people” (4), and Abdelhamid Bourayou’s book (Algerian Popular Literature), in which he cited Lotfi Al-Khoury’s definition of popular heritage. In it, he says, “Folk heritage is not just a passing whim or a blind imitation, nor is it entertainment as some like to describe it. Rather, it is an interest in an integrated science built on scientific foundations and a tangible social reality that stems from the belief that the people are the makers of history and are the ones who laid the civilizational foundations of the society in which they live.” He lives in it” (5), and let us not forget the book (Forms of Expression in Popular Literature) by Nabila Ibrahim and other books that celebrated heritage and popular sayings.

The concept of popular heritage expands to include multiple branches and types of extreme richness and diversity, such as customs, traditions, costumes, and various rituals on occasions. It also includes arts, crafts, types of dance, play, songs, proverbs, and others. However, our interest in this research will be limited to the tangible and intangible popular heritage.

First: the intangible popular heritage in the stories of the gods’ mail

It is represented by the intellectual heritage, which “manifests itself in all the intangible and intangible manifestations of the various formations and diversifications of human heritage as a cultural practice that is living and transmitted across generations through the bearers and practitioners of its basic elements. It is directly linked to the identity of its creator” (6), and it also means “the images that are drawn.” In the mind of man as he faces the mystery of existence, trying to understand it in the various stages of human intellectual life and its disturbances, in his coma and his awakening, in what he displays on the surface and in what he hides in his hopes and disappointments... in his joy and sadness, in his optimism and pessimism, these are intellectual images that do not know how to stop or remain still” (7).

So, intangible heritage includes all forms of intangible popular heritage, such as proverbs, customs and traditions, myths, mysteries, and others.

1- Popular beliefs

Popular beliefs are an integral part of the customs of peoples. Man has practiced them since ancient times on Earth and tries to adapt his life to the beliefs by monitoring and observing natural phenomena and finding an explanation for them. With the passage of time, man was able to draw his vision of this life and consolidate it out of a desire to confront unforeseen events. (8).

The definition of belief varies from one writer to another. Muhammad Al-Jawhari defines it as “those ideas and feelings that move people about normal and abnormal natural phenomena, such as people’s perceptions of earthquakes, lightning, eclipses, etc., as well as people’s perceptions of the secrets of some physiological and psychological phenomena, such as dreams, sleep, birth, birth, salvation, and death.” And the vision of the future” (9). As for Firas Al-Sawah, he mentions another definition of beliefs as “the first form of collective changes that emerged from the realm of emotional emotion into the realm of mental contemplation. It seems that the religious experience leading to the formation of a belief is an urgent psychological need because belief is what gives the religious experience.” Its reasonable form, which works to control and codify its conditions” (10), and we find Muhammad Tawfiq Al-Sahli defines popular belief as “a social phenomenon resulting from the interaction of individuals in their social relationships and their perceptions about life and existence and the frightening forces of nature that dominate or govern the management of universal life. Popular beliefs take on a sacred, spiritual and even religious character, as they are the life product of previous generations, with the ideas they carried, the struggle they practiced with the power of nature and other forces, and the teachings and morals they injected into their souls, dictated by their wise men and sent by their spiritual leaders” (11).

Folk beliefs differ in some characteristics from other folk types, as they are “complex in terms of study as part of the human entity, expressing those types and perceptions regarding normal and abnormal natural phenomena” (12), and “they are present in the countryside and the city among the illiterate and the educated, because Simple thinking, devoid of the principles of scientific knowledge, is not limited to groups and levels of the social ladder of members of a single society” (13), and it is “one of the most difficult forms of expression to study, but it is hidden in people’s hearts and is not taught by others, but rather it is summarized and shaped with difficulty, in which imagination plays a role to give it a character.” Especially, because it is difficult to reveal what others believe and what perceptions they hold” (14).

We conclude from the above that popular beliefs, or as clerics in the past called them myths or nonsense, are among the most difficult elements of popular heritage in terms of study because of the difficulty of revealing them, because their essence and nature are the same.

The stories of the Mail of the Gods by Maitham Al-Khazraji, within the scope of popular beliefs, rely on basic elements, represented by folk medicine, fairy tales, magic, the world of the jinn, and others.

A- Folk medicine

By it, we mean “the methods, methods, and means by which a person confronts and treats the diseases that he encounters in his life, whether that is through herbs, plants, minerals, as well as parts of the animal’s body, or using ruqyah, spells, and sacred words (the Holy Qur’an and praises), and the practices that result from that.” Or preventive and curative functions, whether those preparing them are family members themselves or people who specialize in treatment, such as: religious sheikhs, as well as elderly women who have experience in this field” (15). The topic of folk medicine in the stories “The Mail of the Gods” by Maitham Al-Khazraji included several treatments, including: herbal treatment, as he said: “There is no doubt that starting to prepare the herbal recipe requires great precision in terms of the amount of added material, and in completing the time necessary for it to be ready for the customers, whose number has taken off.” With a noticeable increase, which nullified the idea of me approaching him about work and its endless troubles” (16). Maytham Al-Khazraji mentioned in the story (Slow Screaming) the importance of herbal medicine to heal people from diseases, and he also tried to show the precision required to prepare the herbal recipe.

Other methods of folk medicine include (the incantation or the harz), and their use appears in the story (The Squeak of Places), where he says: “This is what the grandmother intended as she narrated with her anecdotes an elaborate book of nonsense that she had saved for her grandchildren as a talisman that would not grow old” (17), and his saying: “Where did you go with his threat, oh man?” The river? This is the question that made me astonished at what the grandmother said as she used her captivating style to camouflage the phrases with her right palm, which was wider than her five fingers, and had closed symbols tattooed on it, which her mother had marked when she had dreams of fertility as a sign that would nullify the bad intentions she had committed or as an indication of her purity at that time.”(18)). The talisman or harz is “consisting of amulets attached to them that contain Qur’anic verses, strange names, and a geometric shape that they call (Solomon’s Seal) in order for the sick to be healed, and other things” (19), and these two terms (the talisman and the harz) came explicitly in the story (The Squeak of Places). Because their owner believes that they are a means of protecting him from evil people.

B- Belief in the existence of jinn

One of the popular practices is sorcery, of which the jinn is one of the most important topics. The jinn was mentioned in the stories of “The Mail of the Gods” as a popular belief that believes that “the jinn are a world other than the world of humans and the world of angels. They have a common destiny with humans in terms of being characterized by the quality of reason and perception, and in terms of ability.” To choose the path of good and evil, and they differ from man in matters, the most important of which is that the origin of the jinn differs from the

origin of man, and they were called jinn because of their jinn, that is, their concealment from the eyes.” (20). The belief in jinn came in the story of “An Unforgivable Coincidence” in the writer’s statement: “The collapse of the body.” / The light that flees him, and his excitement that attracts him far away, where the corridors of the night did not allow him to hide, and his story, which some have justified as a kind of curse left behind by that ill-fated orchard, and his well-known fairy who prays from time to time to lock up the manhood of the one she seeks and goes on, leaving behind a mountain of rambling questions that spill into... One answer that cannot be accepted by doubt or suggested by suspicion” (21). The text reveals the belief prevalent among some people about the existence of a jinn or fairy that takes on the body of a man (the porter), and thus it is not possible to get rid of them.

C- Belief in fortune-tellers

Belief in fortune-tellers is one of the common popular beliefs. Fortune-telling means claiming to know present-day matters, and fortune-telling tells about unseen events. It was used in the stories of “The Mail of the Gods” in the writer’s words: “In that period, the porter devoted himself to knocking on the doors of magicians and fortune-tellers planted between the wings of The city and those to whom the opinions of the simple people have called for salvation in the hope that they will find a way out of the distress that has befallen them.”(22). The fortune teller is a sacred person in the eyes of the simple people, so his importance lies in the fact that they turn to him in all the events that happen to them in their lives.

2- Customs and traditions:

The heritage of any nation is not devoid of popular customs and traditions that have an impact on the life of the individual and society. These customs and traditions may be shared between societies, but each society remains with its own peculiarity in how it performs them, as they are “the largest reservoir of the system of values that govern behavior.” The individual and the group, and direct the course of the daily life of society, with familiar, visible physical signs that facilitate resolving disputes and making reconciliations, often without the need for professional popular judges, and with the least possible losses” (23), and customs and traditions “are distinguished by their ability and normative power, as they require collective compliance.” Social restrictions and approval may sometimes amount to obedience, and customs and traditions differ from one society to another, and they also change with the change of time” (24).

The writer has intended to employ some of the customs and traditions prevailing in Iraqi society, given their importance as they are of an inherited nature, as in the habit of (drinking cigarettes) which has been known to Iraqi society for a long time, as the writer says: “I often resented hearing him groan at my behavior that he condemned.” I feel foolish as soon as I sting him with questions that seem a

little clear to him, so he examines me with his keen eyes, showing an expression of anger that makes him grab his wide wallet and hasten to roll up a tobacco cigarette to press it between his unbalanced lips.”(25) The habit of drinking a cigarette was used by the writer in the stories (The Mail of the Gods) at specific times, when the character is in a bad mood, as in a time of anger, when the father became angry with his son for his bad behavior, or in a state of anxiety, which we find in the writer’s saying, “The grandmother put out her cigarette after... With her anxious gaze, she scanned the grooves of the room” (26). The grandmother was smoking a cigarette while suffering from anxiety.

The custom of (drinking tea) is also one of the ancient and well-known customs in societies, especially Iraqi society, which the writer employed in his stories, as in his saying: “She shouted in a shaking voice to one of the boys who ran beside her:

- Hey, bring me some tea.

Tea was brought and she was drinking it greedily, despite its heat, which was highlighted by its striking steam.” (27). Drinking tea, as the text appears, is necessary in society and has no specific time.

One of the customs that the writer employed in the stories (The Mail of the Gods) is the habit of relying on the eldest son, especially when he is the only son with four daughters, as in his saying: “My father used to avoid accompanying me with him to the herbal shop that he inherited from my grandfather, Hajj Muhammad - and which became a landmark. It makes a difference to someone who is confused by the paths of the place - so that I do not fall into the pitfalls of his customers who are practicing nonsense in their hopes for usefulness and purity of mind, but reality forces him to go with him because I am the eldest son of four daughters, so there is no power nor strength except in God” (28), so the customs and traditions of Iraqi society The son is required to accompany his father in his work, not the daughter.

Second: The material popular heritage

It is "all the elements and things that a person can touch that are always subject to the factor of continuous change and that a person has sought to acquire in order to satisfy his basic needs. Material culture is represented in architecture in general, archaeological sites, ancient cities, virtual museums or museums without borders in particular, buildings, facilities, and various means of transportation." And also the arts and literature, which is what is called the literary and artistic heritage, and is represented in clothes, jewelry, musical instruments, manuscripts, and handicrafts...”(29). This type of heritage includes everything that comes from human activity, in accordance with the words of Zaki Naguib Mahfouz: “I am knowledgeable.” That there is something called heritage, but its value to me is that

it is a set of technical means that can be taken from the predecessors in order to embody them in new ways..." (30).

The material heritage is represented in clothing, food, and construction, through which any nation is distinguished from other nations.

A- Popular (traditional) dress

Traditional dress is considered one of the civilizational and cultural manifestations that represent the community's popular identity. It "carries social connotations. Dress is not just an external appearance, but behind it comes many values and controls that express the spirit of society and its cultural existence" (31). Popular dress does not only express the community's identity. Rather, it has the ability to reveal the social values that are hidden behind wearing a certain outfit, and the storyteller Maytham Al-Khazraji used in his collection of stories (The Mail of the Gods) what they used to wear in the past in Iraqi society, such as (yashmagh) in his saying: "When we crossed the other side to complete the journey Welcoming phrases poured in that herald a people full of long-standing customs and traditions that took from their souls a torrent of deep-seated pain. Some of the men, wearing their balled-up shemaghs, approached us, hastened to greet us in their usual way, and then one of them shouted to take us to the Sheikh's office, as is the prevailing custom when guests arrive."(32) Although (yashmagh) is part of the popular traditional dress in Iraqi society in the past and is still worn in some areas until now, the Khazraji storyteller did not include it frequently in his stories, as he mentioned it in this text only.

Another type of traditional clothing that Al-Khazraji used in his stories was the dishdasha in his saying: "The porter withdrew in a manner most slowly, drawn by this illusion/reality that had become close to him. His feet were no longer able to support him in carrying his wandering body in this scene. He pounced with one hand on his dishdasha to bite him." With his teeth grinding against its frayed limbs, he hastened to flee" (33). (The dishdasha) is a type of clothing that both women and men are obligated to wear every day in Iraqi society. Despite this, it is not mentioned in the stories of the Mail of the Gods except in this place.

Ornamental clothing (the rosary) is considered a type of popular clothing, which the writer employed in his saying: "The preacher is one of those whose holiness was sought from a place of which we have no knowledge (...). Then he soon reveals his face with a smile that continues to circle his broad face." Raising what hung from his right palm, which embraced the sole of a rosary that looked expensive" (34). Having a rosary is one of the beloved customs of Iraqis and Arabs in general, and having the rosary in the hand of the preacher is a sign of piety and reverence.

B- Popular urbanism

Popular architecture in the stories of the mail of the gods was represented by rural architecture (the marshes) and city architecture (the darbin or darbouna). Rural architecture was subject to the local environment in terms of materials and simple construction methods that were devoid of ornamentation, which is evident to us in his saying: "The Mashhaifs took us to cross." To the other side, where we did not economize, we were captured by the slow bellowing of buffaloes and the houses of the banks planted on the banks of the marsh and paved with skillful craftsmanship" (35). From here it becomes clear to us that rural architecture is a traditional building with a simple appearance and is located on both banks of the marsh, where houses are built with sarifa (palm leaves) according to a specific system and skilled craftsmanship.

As for the architecture of the city, the darbuna had a special place, as the darbuna is one of the symbols of the popular heritage that distinguishes the city's residents, as it is their stable home in which social relations and family ties are embodied. The storyteller Al-Khazraji says: "The city could only sleep with one eye open, hoping to beware of madness." Who preyed on her paths burning with pain" (36). The city is distinguished by its special urban character in these stories.

Conclusion :

Through the above-mentioned study, we arrive at the most important results, which are:

Popular heritage is a group of expressive forms through which we express our human experiences. It is divided into material popular heritage and intangible popular heritage.

Popular beliefs are important popular cultural symbols in which the element of imagination plays a major role.

Peoples are distinguished by their customs and traditions that express values and customs passed down from generation to generation.

The material folk heritage did not receive much attention from the writer, as he did not monitor the material culture that distinguishes Iraqi society from other societies.

The use of popular dress in the stories of Gods Mail helped give other societies an image of the nature and type of dress in Iraqi society.

The Iraqi folk architecture in the stories of the gods' mail was distinguished by its special and distinctive character.

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