

The Socio-Anthropological Value of Oral and Intangible Expressions of the Bedu in Southern Jordan

*Abdel Hakim K. Al-Husban **

ABSTRACT

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu in southern Jordan represent a very valuable legacy for humanity, that has been developed through a very sophisticated process of adaptation and interaction between man and nature. By oral and intangible expressions I mean all forms of non written expressions such as story telling, songs, poetry, dances, games...etc.

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu are reflecting the particular form of cultural responses that the Bedu have developed while they were adapting to the natural environment. As such, it is extremely important to study and analyze the Bedouin oral and intangible expressions.

This article is trying to analyze the historical, social, anthropological and economical value of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedouin society in southern Jordan. One of the basic assumptions is that these expressions have a double value; universalistic and particularistic. By universalistic, I refer to the value that these expressions represent for the whole humanity. In return, by the particularistic value of these expressions I refer to the local and particular elements of this heritage which is valuable for the Jordan and the region.

Keywords: South of Jordan, Bedouin Society, Legacy.

INTRODUCTION

Studies of cultural heritage have traditionally concentrated on the material parts of culture, neglecting its intangible elements. Cultural heritage has thereby been reduced to architecture, technological tools, or historical and archaeological monuments- i.e everything material and tangible-whereas mythology, poetry, music and folk tales have been neglected. It is significant, for example, that a whole corpus of legislation for the protection and organization of property rights over tangible cultural heritage have already been developed, but we cannot find equivalent legislation regarding intangible cultural productions.

Currently, increasing attention to intangible cultural forms represents an evolution in the meaning and scope of the term "cultural heritage" as it is defined by elites, government policies, and national and international

institutions. Jordan, too, is participating in the evolution of these global discourses; more and more, Jordanian government and elites have begun devoting attention to their intangible culture and giving it its due place as a basic component of Jordanian heritage. After a long period of concentration on archaeological excavations and the study of historical monuments, Jordan is now turning to its intangible culture.

The principal goal of this study is to make a surveying study on oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu of the south of Jordan, as an essential element of the larger project of maintaining Jordan's cultural heritage. The primary importance of the study will be in its efforts to show the importance of preserving intangible cultural forms that have developed in Jordan over the course of millennia, which are now threatened by the impact of modernization.

It has been amply demonstrated that globalisation imposes increasing homogenization-which means that cultural diversity and particularism are correspondingly threatened. In the name of progress, civilisation and democracy, the oldest and richest cultural traditions are

* Department of Anthropology, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan. Received on 17/4/2005 and Accepted for Publication on 12/4/2006.

disappearing. Such as the concept of *multiculturalisme* as it was used by Journet, seems to be threatened. (Journet, 1997). This occurs because the cultural forms that acquired their legitimacy from their ability to effectively satisfy the socio-economic needs of their people are threatened now that these needs have changed.

The Bedu of the Arab world are nomadic, tribal people, similar to those who have lived and traveled in the deserts of Arabia for centuries. Today, a combination of many factors has resulted in the settlement of the majority of the nomadic population of the Arab world. The evolution of the new model of state that has taken the form of the nation state, the expansion of the state apparatus and bureaucracy, the openness to the outside world and the settlement policies adopted by the Arab states, have lead to gradual decline of the nomadic Bedouin culture in the Arab world including Jordan. In all but a few places, their traditions are in danger of being lost forever.

Due to the fact the Bedu are nomadic, pre-literate people, much of their cultural heritage is little documented; it was kept alive solely through oral transmission from one generation to the next. Their mythology, music, poetry, honor code and customs have received inadequate scholarly attention over the years, and there is thus little written reference to the rich legacy that forms so much of the socio- cultural identity of much of the Arab world today.

The last nomadic Bedu of Jordan mainly dwell in the eastern and southern areas of Al Sharah and Wadi Rum, which are composed of highland, steppe and desert. They migrate from one location to another in order to satisfy a number of basic needs, including pasture and grazing land for their herds, water supply, favorable weather conditions and safety. They have developed extraordinary survival skills and a profound knowledge of their environment, but have diminished in number due to rangeland degradation, socio-economic changes and the lure of absorption into settled society. Those remaining are mostly elderly members of their tribes. These continue to live in the traditional tent dwelling which is not only well adapted to the changing seasons, but also serves as a significant cultural space encoding relationships within the family, between genders and with visitors.

The Bedu's traditional values may be generally characterized as being rooted in a semi-egalitarianism that is reflected both in relationships between the two

sexes, and in the absence of rigid hierarchies of power. Generosity, chivalry, sacrifice and nobility are the attributes prized most highly by the Bedu, and commended in their poetry and story telling.

Oral and intangible expressions embedded in Jordan's Bedu heritage include storytelling and the transmission of cultural forms, values; poetry, song, proverbs and sayings, mythology, traditional medicine, shepherding language and communicative sounds, honor and legal codes, desert tracking codes, and knowledge of the crafts of tent making and settlement. The recognition, preservation, transmission and celebration of these oral and intangible expressions seem urgent.

The current study is basically consisting of three parts. The first one is trying to describe the geography and the ecology of the southern Jordan. It tries also to describe the socio-economic context in which the oral and intangible expression of the Bedu is produced. Whereas, the second part of the study is making a kind of survey to show the different components of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu. In return, the third part aims at analyzing the socio-anthropological importance and value of these oral and intangible expressions produced by the Bedu.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The notion of tribal and Bedouin society is very central in most of the studies concerning the Middle East in general, and the Arab world in particular. Meanwhile, literature studying Bedouin society seems to be abundant and characterized by a huge diversity. This diversity of literature can be explained by the different disciplines to which researchers and scholars on Bedouin society used to belong. Human geographers, ecologists, economists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and others, all contributed to the study of the Bedouin society whether in the Arab world or in other parts of the world.

One can notice a considerable quantity of literature concentrating on analyzing the ways and the strategies for the resettlement of the Bedouin societies in the Arab countries (1997, 1983, 1996) as if the Bedouin culture is a very bad and miserable mode of life that should be disappeared and be replaced by the so called civilization based on the permanent settlement whether in rural or urban centers.

Other studies are concentrating on the Bedouin

culture in terms of their modes of subsistence and their linguistic legacy. Here we are trying to show the elements of continuity, discontinuity between the modern linguistics formations and modes of subsistence and those of the Bedouin (Musil, 1968; Al Sarairah, 2000; Al Husban, 1997; Lyne, 1994))
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In addition to those tendencies in studying the Bedouin culture; one can notice another trend that tends to deal with the Bedouins in terms of their role in the historical and current political role in the politics of the old and new Arab States. As such scholars adopting this approach are trying to show the points of articulation, overlapping and conflict between the traditional Bedouin spaces and the modern ones. Consequently, one can talk about an overwhelming vague of literature that deals with the impact of the Bedouin culture on the political formations in the Arab world (1986 1995 1995).

Contrary to the overwhelming point of view that tries to show the Bedouin culture as a historic and a passive style of life that should disappear for the sake of the new civilization, this study is trying to show the historicity and the elements of richness in the Bedouin culture. As such the study is describing the key elements and components of the Bedouin culture to show later their socio – anthropological value.

The study is arguing that Bedouin culture must be considered as a basic element of the human history, and that Bedouin mind is reminding us of Lévi-Strauss (The famous French anthropologist) notions on the savage mind (*La pensée sauvage*). The oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu in southern Jordan can provide us with a very effective tool to study the structure of the primitive mind. Consequently, the study of the Bedouin oral expressions can play the same role that the Indian mythologies played in Lévi-Strauss analysis of the primitive mind, which is universal according to Lévi-Strauss.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been used to accomplish this study is a mixture of the fieldwork and theoretical activities and of the qualitative and quantitative approaches. As such, the theoretical tools that have been employed in this study, are belonging to different disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political

sciences and history. The list of these methodological tools are comprising:

1. The participant observation: The researcher accompanied by a specialized team has conducted a fieldwork stay in different areas in southern Jordan. The team participated in some of the activities where oral expressions are reproduced.
2. The interviews techniques: Very long visits to interview some key persons have been conducted to collect data on oral expressions.
3. The local informants: A long list of local informants has been investigated to have more data on the local community.
4. Some written sources.
5. Some theoretical works produced by members of the local community related to the oral expressions have been also used in this study.

The Area of the Study:

The Socio-Economic Context of Al Sharah Mountains and Wadi Rum

The particularity of the Bedouin culture and then the particularity of their oral and intangible expressions is part of the particular socio-economic context in which these oral and intangible expressions have been produced and reproduced. By the socio-economic context we mean all the economic and social components that are interacting between each other, to form a coherent and sophisticated system, where every element depends upon other elements and every change in one element leads automatically to changes in other elements.

Natural resources, the geology of the region, the climate, fauna, flora, the demography, the social groupings, language, the system of symbols, oral and intangible expressions...etc are related to each other, and every element is in mutual dependency relationship with other elements of the socio-economic context. Every element is influencing and shaping other elements while being all the time influenced by them. Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu of southern Jordan are the result of this historical, sophisticated and particular interaction between these particular elements of the socio-economic context existing there.

The region included by the study of the oral and intangible expressions is that of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* in southern Jordan. This huge region includes many districts, towns, villages and Bedouin complexes living, whether in dispersed tents or in a

modern houses built recently, either by the Jordanian government or by the Bedouins themselves. As such, the study will mainly include these regions, Petra District, *Ail* District, *Mraighah* District, *Al-Hussyniyah* District *Al-Shoubak* District, and *Al-Qwierah* District. The last includes the famous region of *Wadi Rum* and *Al-Dissi*.

The particularity of the geology of region, of its climate, of its morphology, of its demography, of its fauna and flora, of its history, of its social groupings and the particularity of the historical process of interacting between all these particular, and unique elements constitute the main factor behind the particularity of its oral and intangible expression.

As such, the unique oral and intangible expressions result from unique and particular elements of socio-economic context, and the way these elements are interacting with each other. Therefore, it is extremely important to describe briefly the basic elements of this socio-economic context dominating in the region of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum*.

Southern Jordan is quite varied and interesting from a geological point of view⁽¹⁾. It consists of rocks and features, which are considered very old, such as the *Aqaba* granite complex that is over 600 million years old. This complex is largely exposed due to a relatively young event, which is the uplift and rifting event which led to the formation of the gulf of *Aqaba*, the *Araba* Valley and the Dead Sea.

Topographically, the area ranges in elevation from sea level in *Aqaba* to over 1700 m at *Jabal Um Ishrin*, the highest point in Jordan. The rift valley extending from *Aqaba* towards the north is the lowest area, with the bottom of valley filled with recent river sediments and sand dunes. Towards the north and east of *Aqaba*, the pink and white granite of the *Aqaba* complex is exposed (Precambrian in age). This granite is distinctive in that it is very rugged and is almost completely devoid of plant cover, except in the alluvial sediments at the base of the granitic mountains.

To the north and east of the *Aqaba* granite lie the beautiful sandstone regions seen in the *Wadi Rum* and *Petra* areas. These sandstones are Paleozoic in age (300-500 million years old) and are believed to have been deposited in ancient river environments. The landscape here is defined by steep cliffs and deep ravines, which are characteristic of sandstone weathering environments. The beautiful red and white sandstones combine with the distinctive topography to produce unforgettable scenery.

The sandstone in the area is the aquifer containing abundant water from ancient times. In the *Disi*, *Sehl es Suwwan* and *Qweira* areas, water is extracted and large farms have been built. Some very pure white sand is extracted for glass industries. Between the sandstone exposures are recent sediments consisting mostly of windblown sand derived from the adjacent sandstone.

Farther north, the limestone, chert and phosphate of the Mesozoic era (Cretaceous) is exposed. These rocks range in age from about 80-60 million years. This region is also very different in that the slopes are typically less pronounced, and the river valleys are less defined and more rounded. Phosphate is extracted from the *Shidiya* area to the east of *Maan*, and *Maan* itself is well known for its high quality limestone used in construction all over Jordan. The limestone forms important aquifers at some levels, and water is extracted from them both in *Ma'an* and in the *Shobak* areas. Springs also emanate from the limestone where it is exposed along the rift valley.

In some areas, basaltic flows of Eocene age (about 30 million years old) are found from ancient volcanoes that existed at that time. The black rocks are found in the *Jurf ed Darawish* area as well as in some locations north of *Karak*.

Towards the east, in the *Jafer* basin, recent sediments lie in the mudflat that extends for large areas in the heart of the region. In the past, the center was a well-known oasis, however, due to over extraction of water, the amount available has been significantly reduced.

It is obvious that climate is one of the factors that contributed to the uniqueness of culture in the southern of Jordan. Climate has and still contributing in the reciprocal relationship between man and nature. In addition, climate can be considered as the crucial element in the formation of fauna and flora in a particular area, which in return form the whole mode of life of the population. As such, one cannot imagine the Bedouin culture without this particular form of climate in southern Jordan.

The climatic conditions in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* are characterized by a huge diversity. Whereas, desert climate is dominating the region of *Wadi Rum* and its surroundings the Mediterranean climatic conditions are dominating in the region of *Petra*, *Wadi Moussa* and its surroundings. Summer temperatures average in the desert region of *Wadi Rum* and its surroundings is around 36° whereas, it is 28° in the hilly areas i.e. in *Al-Sharah* Mountains. In winter a radical

drop in temperatures can be observed. In Wadi Rum and its surroundings temperatures average is around 2°, while in the hilly region of Petra it is around 4°.

These fluctuations in temperatures according to the regions and to the season can also be observed in the level of precipitations. In desert regions the annual precipitations are very weak, and fluctuate between 50-250mlm. While in the western hilly areas, the populations are familiar with the heavy rains and snows. As such precipitations fluctuate between 500-750mlm.

These climatic conditions must be one of the factors that explain the crystallization of two different cultures in southern Jordan. The weak precipitations and the dry and hot weather most of the months of the year lead to the rare and a dispersed fauna and flora in the region of Wadi Rum and then the crystallization of the tribal mode of life in that region. As such herding and hunting are the base of the socio-economic life. While the high level of precipitations in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and the Mediterranean climate, have produced more rich vegetation in the region of Petra and its surrounding. Fauna and Flora are also rich in that region.

The traditional Bedu are mobile dwellers of the desert, who don't only endure it, but have learned to survive its harsh conditions and treat it with due reverence. They are true nomads, but in Jordan as elsewhere, most tribes are semi-nomadic, if at all (meaning that they rely to some extent on livestock and travel only in search of pasture, while their home bases and settlements are permanent one). Today, very few Bedu communities in Jordan are completely nomadic.

These radical differences in climate conditions in the two regions that lead to radical differences in the modes of life of the population in southern Jordan have obviously lead to a cultural diversity in terms of oral and intangible expressions in the two regions. While oral and intangible expressions in Wadi Rum are reflecting a purely Bedouin mode of life, those of *Al-Sharah* Mountains are expressing more mixed and sophisticated culture, where both the Bedouin mode of life and peasantry are historically coexisting.

Social Grouping

Social groupings in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and in *Wadi Rum* are reflecting the way the Bedouin culture has responded to the climatic, geographical and the economic factors dominating historically in that region. In addition to these factors, we can talk about the role of the political

factor in the way the Bedouin society has elaborated its particular form of social groupings. By the political factor, I mean the historical weakness or absence of the State apparatus from the Bedouin culture in southern Jordan. The absence of the State oblige members of the society to elaborate certain form of grouping and aggregating in order to assure some socio-economic functions that should be assumed by the State such as the security, the defense and the solidarity.

Social groupings in southern Jordan are historically based on what is called in the anthropological and sociological studies as primordial ties, such as blood relationships, ties based on religion, region, ethnicity...etc. The basic social units to which individuals are identifying themselves are essentially composed by blood relationships. As such, kinship was and still playing the crucial role in the social grouping in southern Jordan including the region of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum*.

It is true that tribe is the most dominant form of social grouping in southern Jordan, but it is important to note that the population of southern Jordan including those of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* are identifying themselves to other forms of tribal social groupings. Tribe is the biggest social unit. It appears in particular contexts such as the case of war or homicide. But inside the tribe we can talk about a smaller sub groupings or what anthropologists call as tribal segments. The term 'segmentary society' was used by the British anthropologist to describe the tribal Arab society (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). The term describes the tendency of the individuals in the Arab society to have different levels of tribal identity according to the context in which they find themselves. These levels are varying from the smallest tribal segments to the largest ones i.e the tribe.

The tribesmen of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* are belonging to this form of segmentary tribal society. So one can observe the simultaneous existence of a big tribe that counts tens of thousands, to which individuals belong and the other tribal sub groups or segments. As such, social groupings in southern Jordan can be described as the following: the tribe *Qabilah*, the clan *Ashirah*, the sib *Fakth*, and the lineage *Khamsat*. The last three units are the segments of the tribe and their amalgamation creates the tribe. Consequently, individuals are belonging to all these social groupings according to the contexts. In some context the individual belongs to the tribe, in other he belongs to the clan while in other

context he may belong to the sib or to the lineage.

The biggest tribe dominating in southern Jordan is the *Qabilat Hwaitat*. It counts tens of thousands of people and its members are living in a very vast area between the extreme south of Jordan to the center of the county. In the region of *Wadi Rum* and its surroundings some segments of this tribe constitute the indigenous people who formed the social history of the region. The most important tribal segments living in this region are the *Zalabiyah*, the *Dmani*, the *matalqah*, the *Fraijat*, the *slymaniyeen*, the *Marayeh* and others.

In the region of Petra and its surroundings, other kin groups are living for a long time. While the tribe of *Hwaitat* constitutes a form of political confederation based on the concept of kinship, whether real or fictive, the region of Petra does not know this form of kin groups where politics and kinship are overlapping. Although some of its kin groups are belonging to the tribe of *Hwaitat*, this region includes tens of small kin groups called *Ashayer* or clans but not tribes.

These clans are; *Ubaidiyah*, *Al-Al Alaya*, *Bani Ata*, *Al-Shour*, *Al-Malahim*, *Al-Habahbeh*, *Al-Twarah*, *Al-Rafaya'ah*, *Al-Shqairat*, *Al-Lwama*, *Al-Sha'ibat*, *Al-Hawarneh*, *Al-Matalqah*, *Al-Fraijat*, *Al-Ammarin*, *Al-Bdoul*, *Al-Taqtqah*, *Al-Btouneyeh*, *Al-Attoun*, *Al-Mahaziz* and *Al-Manajdah*.

Statistics collected from southern Jordan show some particularities in terms of the demographic context. First of all, the density of the population is weak in comparison to the north and the center of Jordan, where the majority of the Jordanians are settling. The Bedu of the south are scattered in tens of small villages and camps. It is worth to note that due to its climate, its rich soil and then the rich fauna and flora, the region of Petra and wadi Moussa is demographically the most important. The region knew the permanent modes of settlement for a long time whereas, the region of *Wadi Rum* is characterized by a weak demography. Tents and houses are scattered in a very extended area. This is due to the climatic and natural conditions that produce a very weak fauna, and flora that constitute necessary conditions for the existence and the continuity of human life.

Petra region consists of six main towns; *Wadi Moussa*, *Al-Taybeh*, *Al-Rajef*, *Umm Sayhoun*, *Dlagheh* and *El-Beida*. The population inhabiting this region is about 26 000. More than 16 000 are living in *Wadi Moussa*, whereas the town of *Al-Taybeh* is inhabited by 5 000, and that of *Al Rajef* is inhabited by 2 000. The town

of *Dlagheh* is inhabited by 2 000 people and *El-Beida* by 400 people (Tuwisi, 2003).

The demographic survey conducted in the south of Jordan, showed that the weakest rate of illiteracy is registered in the region of Wadi Moussa. It is important to note that females are suffering from illiteracy more than males in this region. The percentage is 4.2% for males over the age of 12 while it is about 5.8 for females at the same age. This means that the total percentage of illiteracy for both sexes is about 10% (Al Shawish, 2002).

Oral and Intangible Expressions

Oral and intangible expressions can be defined as all non-written forms of expression that are collectively produced and reproduced in a particular society. Oral and intangible expressions can include linguistic or physical forms of expression. Thus, poetry, songs, stories as well as gestures produced by the hands, eyes, head as well as the whole body, can be considered as types of oral and intangible expression.

In addition, an essential element of technical skills and know-how (le savoir-faire) is transferred from one person to another or from one generation to another through oral and intangible expressions. Since the Bedouin culture is a pre-literate culture, where systems of writing are totally absent from the socio-economic aspects of life, oral and intangible expressions can be considered as the pot in which the whole Bedouin culture is historically produced and reproduced.

Contrary to the flagrant generalizations or stereotyping reproduced on the Bedouin society that classify this society as very patriarchal one, the study of the oral and intangible expressions in southern Jordan shows that the woman used to play a crucial role in the different domains of the socio-economic life. And that the marginalisation of women is a recent aspect of contemporary society, which has nothing to do with the historical conditions of women in the Bedouin society. One of the reasons for this genre of generalization, is due to the fact that is contrary to men who are assuming their socio-economic functions in an explicit way, women are practicing their activities and roles in an implicit way. Women are playing a very important role in the non-visualized spaces of the society.

The deep study of the Bedouin society in southern Jordan shows that. In the contrary to the western anthropological generalizations classifying these Bedouins society as very patriarchal ones, Bedouin

society can be mostly classified as matriarchal one. Oral and intangible expressions are produced and reproduced by both men and women, but the socio-economic context is produced mainly by women as most economic activities such as herding, shepherding, milking, fabricating the tents, educating the children, preparing food, preparing coffee can be classified as matriarchal activities (A detailed list of the persons who provided data on these expressions can be found on the end of the text).

One who is examining the Bedouin culture in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* will quickly notice that three particular elements occupy a special place in the Bedouin culture whether tangible or intangible. It seems as if the Bedouin culture is based on three pillars; the camel, the tent and coffee lie at the symbolic center of the Bedouin culture. Oral and intangible expressions dealing with these three elements-or any one of them-are intense and charged with a rich and complex block of symbols.

Oral and Intangible Expressions on Camels

Camels play an important role in the socio-economic system of the Bedu, since they are well suited to the climate and the natural resources of the desert. Oral and intangible expressions concerning camels in Bedouin society can be classified in three groups: taxonomical expressions, symbolic expressions and practical or technical expressions. The Bedouins of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* have developed a rich and elaborate system of non-written terminology concerning all aspects of camel husbandry.

The camel is the main domestic animal which accompanies Bedouins and as such it plays a central role in their lives. It participates in many aspects of social life, such as fighting, raiding, transporting heavy loads and delivering messages. Camels are trained by specialized experienced trainers. Training is a significant process and requires patience and time to come up with good results.

That the Bedouin is always proud of his camel is demonstrated by the fact that it generally occupies the opening lines of Bedouin poems (Gaseed.) Poems begin by lauding the camel as beautiful, strong and fast.

There are three main groups of camels⁽²⁾

Oral expressions of the Bedu describe the camel as of pure and noble origins (Aseel), it is called "the perfect of the five". This phrase refers to five matings of five original camels, from which the most prized camel is believed to have descended. This camel as described in

the Bedouin oral discourse is very beautiful, fast and easy-going. It can travel quickly for many consecutive days and is very clever in fighting.

The second group of camels is (*Khawwarah*), which comprises those camels which are not of this valued breed. This camel is dedicated for carrying heavy loads such as water, luggage, household effects and merchandise.

The third breed falls between the two previously mentioned groups. The camel of this breed bears a mixture of the characteristics of the other two.

The Tent "Bet esh-Sha'ur"⁽³⁾

Physical description

The Bedouin oral discourse call their tents Beit esh-Sha'ur, which means "house of goat hair". The tent material is a handmade of goats' hair and wool. Women weave it with a simple loom, constructed by fixing pegs in the ground. Strings of mixed hair and wool are strung from the pegs to form the warp; similar strings are then woven across.

Mixing hair with wool gives the material of the tent the capacity to shrink and contract when rain falls on it, which prevents water from penetrating it. Every sheet or piece in the tent has a name. Wooden pillars and poles of different heights support the tent. They are of three categories, front, middle and back. Ropes and pegs fix the whole tent. The tent is divided into two to seven chambers. These sections function as the guest space (*Shiq*), which is the open, main, part of the tent and the closed sleeping and living quarters.

Usually the tent is raised on a smooth upright plane opening eastward and looking over a landscape. Men, women and children together share in raising the tent.

For the Bedouin, the tent represents many concepts and abstract values. It is the house of honor and dignity. Additionally, it allows him simply to move to another place when he cannot endure the neighborhood, or if circumstances become difficult-unlike a stone house which compels its owner to stick it out regardless of what happens.

The Bedouin tent is made only once because it is renewed through a gradual, imperceptible process. When any of the individual sheets or poles of the tent is worn out or rotten, it is replaced. Therefore, the tent as a whole stands for the permanent and eternal; once it is made, it does not need to be remade. Further, unlike the stone house, which could be emptied and deserted, the tent is

always inhabited and populated.

It is worthy to note that oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and Wadi Run are important in terms of the know how (le Savoir Faire) of fabricating the tent. All the know how of the tent that has been developed throughout a very sophisticated relationship between man, weather, fauna and nature can be documented by documenting the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu.

Oral and Intangible Expressions on Coffee⁽⁴⁾

No one knows when coffee began to play a central role in Bedouin daily life. Making and drinking coffee is confined to the Sheik's tent, where his people and guests gather. It is always open, day and night.

Coffee preparation is a special ritual; the coffee maker should follow specific steps to create the desired blend. The art of preparing coffee consists of many details. If it is not followed strictly, the coffee will have an undesirable taste and color-which will be immediately apparent to professional coffee makers and drinkers. Roasting, decoction and adding specific amounts of water while boiling-all of these techniques could affect the quality of coffee. If there is any defect in the coffee, that will severely harm the Sheik's reputation and may have further negative consequences.

Bedouins serve coffee on three types of occasions: they serve it to guests, drink it for pleasure and also drink it "for sword". Coffee is the first thing to be served to an arriving guest. If he drinks, it is a sign that relations are normal and right between the guest and his host. The hosting family will pour each guest three small cups of coffee; finally the guest will shake the cup as a sign that he has had enough. After this social ritual, guests will proceed to the purpose of their visit, which may be requests, needs or problems to be solved or answered.

For pleasure, coffee is the main drink for men and women, but not for the younger people. As such, drinking coffee is a sign of maturity. Coffee is served at regular intervals; the man responsible, pours it to everyone present in turn, beginning from his right.

Finally, coffee is served "for sword." When someone swears to take revenge, he drinks a cup of coffee and then breaks his cup. He will not drink coffee again unless he achieves his mission.

Storytelling

Storytelling plays an important role in the production

and reproduction of the Bedouin culture in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum*. Stories can be considered as an important tool in the process of acculturation in the pre-literate Bedouin culture, since the whole Bedouin system of values or at least some parts of it, are transferred from one generation to another through storytelling. Bedouin stories can be considered as a part of the corpus of Jordanian popular stories that concentrate mainly on social reality, and whose details are deeply rooted in history. The details of these stories concentrate on much loved personalities who are well known by the community. The popular imaginary rather than objective reality has played the most active role in producing and reproducing these stories. Consequently, the inventions of the social imaginary have become, with the passage of time, facts for the society.

Stories about animals occupying an important place in the Bedouin oral tradition in the south of Jordan. As we know, the Jordanian desert was the habitat of many wild and domesticated animals such as wolf, tiger, fox, wild rabbits, etc. Therefore, animals are frequently mentioned in Bedouins oral expressions, especially in storytelling. Stories about animals can be classified as descriptive stories and interpretive ones. They may describe or interpret some elements of the nature or some natural phenomena. Stories about animals are mainly addressed to children, so they are short and simple. They aim at explaining natural or human phenomena.

In addition to children's stories, another form of storytelling can be found in the Bedouin culture which aims at general entertainment. Such stories are usually short. They relate humorous historical events and are characterized by happy endings. They tend not to focus on the unusual or the supernatural; rather, the themes of these stories are mainly derived from daily life. Since they are used socially for entertainment and to create an atmosphere of fun, such stories must be brief.

Poetry⁽⁵⁾

From an anthropological and linguistic point of view, poetry is the richest form of expression in Bedouin culture, not only in Jordan but also in the whole Arabian Peninsula. A particular and unique relationship between the Bedu and poetry can be traced in the whole region, throughout history. In a way, poetry can be considered as a synonym for the Bedu because of the special place of poetry in Bedouin culture.

Content analysis of Bedouin poetry shows the

importance of documenting this form of expression. Bedouin poetry talks about the most important events in Bedu life-wars, droughts, political alliances between tribes, nature, the moon. In other words, Bedouin poetry is the central form of documentation for the whole of Bedouin society. It reflects the worldview that the Bedouin culture has developed regarding time and space, and the Bedouins' reciprocal relationships both with nature and with neighboring people. In addition, due to the fact that the Bedouin culture is a pre-literate form of culture, we can conclude that the Bedouin poetry is the best available register of their past, since it documents the most crucial events of their society throughout history.

History is omnipresent in the Bedouin poetry and the events of the past are dominant. In addition, different forms of customs, rules and habits which organize different aspects of Bedouin society are extensively documented in the poetic form of oral and intangible expressions. Bedouins' emotions and sentiments are also represented. Thus, sagacity, legacy or commandment, glory, enthusiasm, elegy, censure, grief, eulogy, panegyrics, disparagement and amatory can be observed in the Bedu's oral poetry.

For many specialists, the importance of the Bedouin poetry lies in the fact that it represents the original, embryonic form of the modern written Arabic poetry, which is a central high art form throughout the Arab world. Since a considerable part of the Bedouin poetry speaks mainly about the historical events of their society we can expect a kind of a repetitive, melodic form of narration which is highly influenced by the folkloric spirit.

Retelling stories of heroic events and drinking coffee are the Bedouin's main leisure activities, performed every night. The stories are supported by long verses of poetry which parallel their events. The events narrated reveal the poetry's purposes, which resemble those of classical Arabic poetry. This includes love, fighting, praise, ridicule, yearning ...etc.

As for the structure of the poems, most poems begin with a formal opening focusing on the camel, detailing its qualities and merits. This is followed by a section of praise. The poem concludes with the purposes and results.

Most of the people of *Wadi Rum* recite poetry. The typical Bedouin there retells a number of poems, and knows their poets, events and occasions. Some people can spend a full night telling stories and poetry. Shepherds are often good memorizers of poetry. They

spend the day with their herds playing a music instrument and repeating verses of poetry. For example, we met one blind shepherd who can dance, play flute and recite numerous stories with their poems. In addition, there are many poets of different levels in the tribe.

Bedu Folk Music⁽⁶⁾

Jordanian Bedu consider folk music to be an important form of cultural expression. The affections, hopes and aspirations -in fact, all of the emotions- of these people, as well as their reflections on the reality that surrounds them, take shape in these marvelous songs. Everyday life, philosophical and ethical outlooks, customs and traditions, and most importantly a long history of artistic excellence are brilliantly reflected on folk songs of Jordan.

Jordanian vocal forms fall into two categories: syllabic songs and long songs. Certain stylistic characteristics differentiate the two categories in terms of structure (words and music), performance circumstances and other factors.

The Bedouin song can be considered to be one particular form of Jordanian popular song. It combines the poetic oral text with a musical melody. Like popular songs, Bedouin songs often change over time, reflecting the evolution of the society and its culture. This genre of song is characterized by its flexibility, its ability to be transformed into melody, its popularity, and the fact that the identity of its original composer is unknown.

The Bedouins' folk songs reflect their life style. Thus, their themes are serious. They lack the warmth of emotion because they are produced and reproduced collectively. Since they reflect social, political and historical events -mainly hard and painful- that Bedouin society which has witnessed, joy and fun are not represented in Bedouin songs.

The *Qasid* or the *Samer*

The *Qasid* or *Samer*, can be defined as a long poem concentrating on a variety of different themes. Tribal and historical events, epics and battles constitute favorite themes for the *Qasid*. Other themes like the eulogy, the amatory and descriptions of a beloved can also be found in this poetic genre. With regard to the form, the *Qasid* is a long poem composed of many stanzas. Each stanza consists of four lines, and every stanza should end with the same refrain. While as the first three lines of each stanza rhyme with each other, the fourth line, or refrain,

ends with a different rhyme.

In general, the narration or the performance of the *Qasid* is accompanied by a slow dance and a very soft hand clapping which one or more women perform. The person performing the *Qasid* is called Qasood. It is extremely important to note that the *Qasid* is a collective form of oral expression.

Songs Expressing Grief and Sorrow

This form is a feminine form of singing par excellence. It is performed in the case of death. It can be performed when the woman concerned receives the news of the death of one of her relatives, often a father, son or brother. In general, we can say that this type of poetry talks about the philosophy of life and death. It is not marked by symbolism, since it aims at describing a concrete reality.

A text belonging to this genre should be composed of two thematic parts. The first part describes the emotions of sorrow and grief which the speaker feels when receiving the news of the death, while the second part speaks about the characteristics and the legacy of the deceased person during his life (Al Amad: 1996).

The authors of these traditional songs are not known. They are long melodies sung by women to express sorrow and grief.

Syllabic Songs

These songs are built on one or more musical phrases that remain unchanged over a fixed measure. These phrases form the basis for rhymed lyrics. These songs are usually performed a cappella by a group, but are sometimes sung individually. Most of the time they accompany movements such as walking, dancing, working or playing.

Huda

This type of singing originated among camel drivers and horsemen, and “was used to encourage the animals to move faster when traveling long distances or during battles. Huda singing is also an integral part of the wedding tradition” (Gründ, 1998) These songs are characterized by short verbal and musical phrases. Their rhythm is active, and tends to become either moderato or allegro with clear accents on the main theme.

Hjeni

This is another type of song performed while riding on a camel. It seems that the word *Hjeni* comes from the

word *Hejin*, which means camels in Arabic, because this type of singing is usually performed on camel-back. This form of song is not only well known in the Jordanian desert and among the Bedu, but it is also known and performed in the Jordanian countryside. It can be performed by two men, with one repeating the words of the other; alternately it can also be performed by two groups of men. It is clear that the purpose of this style of song is to help the Bedu while they are traversing long distances in the tough conditions of the desert (Gründ, 1998). Each song is composed of many lines; each set of two lines should have a unique rhyme.

Though similar to the *huda*, the *hjeni* tends to have long passages and a simple, quiet rhythm. *Hjeni* varies according to the geographical or social origin of the singer, and can thus be classified into the southern, central, Karak, and Bedouin types of *hjeni*.

The Bedouin and southern *hjeni* depend on bilateral rhymes, which are in turn built over two different rhymes at the ends of each half-line. This pattern is repeated until the end of the poem.

Dahiya

This song is also called *Sahja*, ‘hand clapping’, *halaba* (a melodious poetic refrain) or *samer*. Usually the participants are divided into two groups that sing alternately (verse-refrain). Here, poet alone, accompanying himself on his *rebab*, sings the song (Gründ, 1998).

Dabkeh

This means ‘foot stamping’. This dance, performed by men, is characterized by a suite of fast rhythmic songs which include intervals of audible stamping. There is also a type of *dabkeh* performed by women, in which foot stamping is replaced by hands clapping (Gründ, 1998). Usually this kind of song accompanies rituals for various special occasions, so that the movement of the dance is not rapid but rather moderate, and even slow in some places.

Desert Tracking Code

Desert tracking is the ability of a specialized person called *Qassas* or *Mirri* to follow foot traces. This kind of skill plays an extremely important role in the traditional Bedouin society in which the state apparatus is weak and consequently, all of the socio-economic functions are assumed by the society itself, without the direct intervention of the state and its institutions.

The function of trackers is to trace and to follow lost animals in the desert or to locate those animals, which have been stolen by other tribal groups or individuals. The tracker also plays an important role in tracing lost or stolen objects from the Bedouin group. The Bedouin trackers have highly specialized mental skills that enable him to acquire this technique rapidly and effectively and to transmit it later to the coming generations.

According to one tracker, "every man has different tracks distinguishing him from others. It is like the fingerprints that the police use in the modern states. Every animal has its own foot traces, which are different from all other animals. For example, every individual camel can be recognized by the tracks that it leaves, while walking on the desert sands. The effect of heredity creates many similarities in foot traces between fathers and sons-even for animals. A skillful tracker can make a distinction between the traces of goats and wild animals like gazelles, dogs and hyenas.

There are many key characteristics which allow trackers to identify specific individuals. For example, some people when walking put more pressure on their toes, while others lean on their heels or on the sides of their feet. Each difference in pressure creates a corresponding deeper indentation in the sand. Many individuals also have personal characteristics, such as a limp, which aid trackers in identifying them.

The skills of the traditional Bedouin trackers can overcome all the tricks that a thief may use to trick him, such as changing his shoes while walking, stepping in water, walking on solid ground or riding a car. It is sufficient for the tracker to see the traces of the animal or the thief one time, in order to be able to identify it later-even if it is lost between thousands of traces.

In addition, the Bedouin tracker can distinguish the traces of a man from that of women. He can recognize the tracks of a pregnant woman even if she is wearing shoes.

The tracker's role does not end with restoring what has been lost or stolen; trackers also serve a preventive function. Many would-be thieves who don't commit crimes against other tribal groups, as they know that they will be traced and identified by their trackers.

This knowledge is particular to the Bedouin culture in the south of Jordan. It grew up through a sophisticated relationship between man and the particular habitat of the south of Jordan; now, it appears to be threatened with disappearance. Nowadays, only a few elderly trackers

have this kind of skills, and with the passage of time their number is decreasing.

The Bedouin Juridical System⁽⁷⁾

The juridical system of the Bedu demonstrates another aspect of the sophisticated and rich culture that the Bedouins have developed in the south of Jordan. Since the Bedouin culture is a pre-literate form of socio-economic organization, their entire juridical system is produced and reproduced orally and can thus be revealed by studying their oral and intangible expressions.

Social control and social equilibrium are the goals of every society and social group. This cannot be achieved without social mechanisms and institutions to settle disputes, both between individuals and between groups. In most contemporary societies, the state apparatus plays the crucial role in dispute settlements and in imposing social control. Written laws are indispensable for the construction of the state and society in these modern societies.

Bedouin oral juridical tradition is an evidence of their brilliant capacity to develop a very rich and effective pre-literate form of juridical system. Social control in Bedouin society is achieved without using the physical violence which is used in state societies.

Oral and intangible expressions in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* reveal particular techniques and strategies for disputes settlements and for imposing social peace. The Bedouin juridical system in this region, it appears, has developed a sophisticated form in response to a sophisticated daily life. Oral and intangible Bedouin expressions can reveal the rules that the Bedouin have developed to deal with many different crimes and disputes such as homicide, rape, disputes over land and commerce, etc.

A sophisticated juridical hierarchy can be observed from the oral expressions in the south of Jordan. There is one tribal judge, called *Mikhlis* or *Qassa*, who is specialized in dealing with homicide, while another judge, concerned with land use settlement, is called *Qadi aradi*. Since herding camels constitutes an essential element of the Bedouin mode of subsistence, there is a judge specialized in solving disputes over camels, called *Qadi El-Ebel*. The *Aqbi* represents another type of judge who depends largely on physiognomy in judging the innocence or the culpability of an accused criminal; he makes his decision by looking at the accused's facial traits or features.

As in most simple societies, the efficiency of the pre-literate form of juridical tradition can be reduced in some cases to the supernatural capacities that the society attributes to some Bedouin judges. Thus, oral and intangible expressions in the south of Jordan can reveal a kind of articulation between the juridical and the supernatural. The belief in the supernatural strengthens juridical efficiency and performance.

Rainmaking or Umm El Gheith⁽⁸⁾

The Bedouin society, as revealed in their oral and intangible expressions, shows a great deal of resemblance to other simple societies all over the world, particularly in Africa, in terms of the anthropologically observed phenomenon of rainmaking. The low level of precipitation, as well as its yearly fluctuations, creates the need in the society to develop specific techniques to bring water and to make the sky rain.

Since the Bedouin society, like many simple societies, believes that nature is an organic part of the human being which can be controlled by him, the Bedouin believe that they can control rain both in terms of timing or quantity. Oral and ritual expressions are used by the Bedouin society in the south of Jordan as a technique to control nature and to make the sky more generous with the water that the society and its herds need. Thus, the Bedu of *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* used to organize annual rituals and ceremonies to make rain.

It is noteworthy that, since these rituals and ceremonies used to be organized in the different regions of Jordan, we can talk about some particularities concerning the details of practice from one region to another. The details concerning the expressions and gestures used as well as the gender-based roles of women and men in these collective rituals then vary from one region to another. The rainmaking expressions used in *Al-Sharah* Mountains are not the same as those used in *Wadi Rum*; the role of women in the ceremonies also varies between the two regions. While rainmaking can be considered to be a feminine ceremony in *Wadi Rum*, it tends not to be so in *Al-Sharah* Mountains where men and women together participate and it is usually a masculine initiative that inaugurates the ceremonies.

In *Wadi Rum* the rainmaking ceremonies used to start, when one of the clan or a segment of a tribe fixed the date and the time of the ceremonies and called other clans to participate in them. At that time, women of different

tribes and clans gathered and started digging pits in order to fix flags into the earth. Camels were grouped together in one place and vessels generally used for water transportation were put, empty of water, on the camels' backs. After that, many families brought either a goat or a sheep to be slaughtered and began to prepare food. Meanwhile, everybody talked about rain and the rainmaker, *Umm El Gheith*. Throughout this period, songs were sung asking the sky to rain.

The belief in the efficiency of rainmaking in the Bedouin imaginary in the south of Jordan is largely reflected in a story called *Mtayyer*, which has been passed down from generation to generation.

The story speaks of a tribe in *Wadi Rum* that suffered from weak precipitation and finally of a critical water shortage, during which they and their herds were in desperate need of rain. During this period, the tribe hosted a guest called *Mtayyer*-a word means, in the Bedouin dialect, rainmaker. The tribe's members told the guest that since his name is *Mtayyer*, he had to make rain and save their herds from the drought and famine. The guest told them that he can do nothing for them and that his name has nothing to do with rainmaking.

The tribe's members refused his argument and insisted that, by virtue of his name, he can at least bring water for the kids of their goats; if he refused, they threatened to kill him. As such, *Mtayyer* has no choice but to tell the tribe's members that he would comply with their request. He then he asked them to reinforce and fortify their tents because he would disappear behind the mountain and ask the sky to rain. According to the story, *Mtayyer* intended to escape after he was hidden behind the mountain, but to his surprise, rains started to fall heavily. Thus, instead of escaping to save his life *Mtayyer* came back to the tribe to become a hero. Since that time ceremonies and rituals have been organized for rainmaking, the story said.

The same phenomenon of rainmaking was historically practiced in *Al-Sharah* Mountain, but the details and the rituals accompanying it seem to be different. If rain does not fall in the expected months, people in the villages come together and start to put white pieces of tissue on the ends of a number of sticks. They then start collecting wheat and olive oil from the different families in the region, gathering what they have collected in one place. After that they use the ingredients that they have collected to prepare bread, and distribute it among the neighbors. A number of

different songs are sung during these ceremonies. To the present day, people believe strongly that these ceremonies are efficient in bringing rain.

The Visit of Prophet Haroun Shrine in Petra⁽⁹⁾ (*El-Zowarah*)

A collective form of ritual accompanied by a very dense bloc of oral and intangible expressions called *El-Zowarah* was developed in the famous Nabatean archaeological site of Petra and in Wadi Mousa, a few kilometers from Petra. This collective form of oral and intangible expressions is no longer practiced, but its details are still present in the collective memory of the population.

El-Zowarah was organized around of what the population has, for many centuries, considered to be the shrine of prophet Haroun. The shrine is situated on the highest summit of the site of Petra. Though there is no scientific evidence proving that the shrine belongs to prophet Haroun, it is treated as such by the local population and accordingly incorporated into their oral and ritual culture. Many collective ceremonies and rituals have therefore developed, inspired by the place and its holiness.

Two annual visits are organized to the shrine, the first one at the end of august, called *El Qneis*, and the second one at the end of October, i.e. in winter. The ceremony starts when a man called *Darwich* launches the inaugural call, after having dreamt that the prophet Haroun has visited him as he slept.

Usually the *Darwich* fixes Wednesday as the day for the ceremony. The populations of the different villages of *Al-Sharah* Mountains walk on foot or ride horses and donkeys to gather in a particular place. They wear their most beautiful clothes for this occasion. Olive oil, candles and white tissue are carried to summit where the shrine lies.

The march from the village of Wadi Mousa to the shrine takes approximately six hours. Once they arrive at the summit, the visitors perform ablutions and then enter the shrine. As they enter, they repeat specific oral expressions. Next, they light the candles. After that many incantations and religious songs are performed before celebrants start to leave the shrine.

While returning home, the populations enter a liminal state, similar to that observed by anthropologists during rituals in many societies. They attain a temporary sense of freedom and begin to disregard many of the moral and

ethical obligations to which they are normally committed. Men and women come back together. On the day following the visit to the shrine, the populations organize a number of horse races, while women sing and dance. During these collective ceremonies, men and women use many significant oral and intangible expressions.

At the end of these collective ceremonies, everybody returns home. Each family slaughters a sheep or a goat on the entrance of their house. At this moment, the family is obliged to recite some particular oral expressions that request the blessing of prophet Haroun.

As was true of the rainmaking rituals in *Wadi Rum*, the people of *Al-Sharah* Mountains still believe that visiting the shrine of the prophet Haroun is an indispensable condition for the coming of rain.

Oral and Intangible Expressions on Flora⁽¹⁰⁾

The oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu demonstrate a great deal of a detailed knowledge accumulated throughout their long interaction with nature, and particularly flora. Unlike the younger generations, the old generations of Bedu are capable of identifying hundreds of species of plants and herbs, which grow in the south of Jordan. In addition to the morphological identification of these plants and herbs, they have a great knowledge of the different uses of these herbs and plants, including plants useful as animal feed and those which are edible and nutritious for humans. They can also identify all of the plants that contain any sort of poison that could be harmful for them or their animals.

The Bedu knowledge of flora enhances their ability to manipulate nature and to develop various kinds of medicines and healing techniques for diverse diseases and other types of health problems particular to their region. This accumulated knowledge is the product of a sophisticated experimental relationship between the Bedouins and their surrounding environment, which is the natural habitat for these plants and herbs.

The Bedu's wide knowledge of flora, as reflected in their oral and intangible expressions, shows that to a great extent the Bedu can identify the plants and the herbs that the camel, goat or sheep have eaten by tasting their milk.

This detailed knowledge of flora reveals a unique cognitive relationship between the Bedu and their ecology in *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum*. It is clear that the Bedu's deep knowledge of flora reinforces the feeling in Bedouin society, that nature is an organic

part of the human being, and that man and nature are integral parts of one another. Nature cannot be separated from the Bedouin conception of self and vice versa.

The intimate relationship between the Bedu and flora is expressed also in a pragmatic way. In addition to the collective knowledge developed by the whole society on flora and reproduced collectively from one generation to another, another form of this pragmatic relationship can be observed. Here we are talking about an individualistic form of knowledge that aims to achieve practical or empirical results. Knowledge on Flora is employed and invested by certain individuals in elaborating effective types of healing and medicine. In each community in southern Jordan there is a kind of consensus on particular names of persons considered as healers in virtue of their huge knowledge and their ability to manipulate this knowledge on flora.

This extensive knowledge of flora whether in its collective or individualistic form, appears to be in danger as a result of the spread of new modes of subsistence, new types of food and the new techniques of healing and curing. These modern methods are replacing the traditional Bedouin knowledge of flora as well as their modes of manipulating this knowledge. Whereas the older generations of Bedu were able to list and identify hundreds of herbs and plants in the *Al-Sharah* Mountains and *Wadi Rum* regions which constitute their historic home, the younger generations were unable to list or to recognize more than ten species of these plants and herbs. Consequently, it is clear that the unique cognitive relationship between the Bedu and their habitat is going to be lost.

Games

There are many games which are played by children and also, some of them are played by adults. In their Games children like to imitate the older people's fighting and chivalry. They carve camels of stone, furnishing them with saddles and other preparations.

In general, the games of children are games of "chasing" and "hide and seek" which are played in teams.

Some of the children's games⁽¹¹⁾

1. el-Kurah "the ball"

Two equal teams play this game. The children dig two pits on opposite sides of the play yard. A small ball is made of limestone and every player should have a stick. During the game, every player tries to push the ball to the

pit of the opponent. When he succeeds in putting it in the pit, he wins one point.

2. el-Houmah

Children collect a small pile of stones and they are divided into two teams, each one formed of at least five people. One of the teams defends the pile while the other attacks it. If any attacker passes between the defender and the pile, the defender is eliminated. If the defender kicks the attacker, the attacker is eliminated. When all of the players of one team are eliminated, it is declared to be the loser.

3. Dwegisih

This game is played by smaller teams.

Each team stands five shaped stones on end. one is large and is put in front; the other four stand behind it. Both teams throw stones in turn at the standing stones in order to make them fall. The team who makes all the stones of the opponents fall is the winner.

4. Shdhay dh'arik

It is played by two teams at night. Each player throws a stick over a long distance. The player whose stick knocks down the centre of the game, which could be a rock or a pile of stones, is the winner.

5. esh-Sheezih

This game is played by two adults. A square of forty-nine pits is made on the surface of the ground. Each player has twelve pebbles, which are distinguished from the pebbles of his opponent by color. They move the pebbles among the pits in turn, according to a complex set of rules. The winner gains all of his opponent's pebbles.

3. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The value of the bedouin oral and intangible expressions

Due to the processes of rapid sedentarization of the nomadic Bedouin society, the transformations in the socio-economic basis, the openness to the world, and the imitation and the assimilation of the foreign cultures, the Bedouin society is losing rapidly its cultural unique character. The documentation of the Bedu's cultural intangible heritage constitute then an urgent need as the factors producing the metamorphosing of this heritage are getting more and more threatening.

In one way or another, the documentation of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu means that the heritage of a unique and rich human culture that evolves

over thousands and thousands of years, and that developed a particular and a unique form of mutual relationship between nature and human beings, will be safeguarded. As such the documentation of this intangible cultural heritage will enable the coming generations in Jordan and in the world to know about a rich cultural system that humanity can lose once for ever.

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu have an outstanding value from historical, ethnological, sociological and anthropological points of view and are deeply rooted in the cultural history of Jordan. Today, most of these expressions are only available in the memory of the Bedu.

Through the shift of the Bedu lifestyle from nomadic to semi-nomadic or settled urban life, the oral and intangible expressions that reflect their heritage are at risk of being lost. Every year, the few remaining nomadic Bedu diminish in number; this may be our last chance to record and safeguard oral and intangible expressions that have long been preserved, prior to the complete urbanization of this community. Safeguarding these oral and intangible expressions would lead to the protection of such heritage, enabling it to be transmitted into future.

Younger and urban members of Bedu tribes will no longer be desert dwellers, so these oral and intangible expressions and their content will slowly cease to be relevant to them. Safeguarding this heritage will enable it to be transmitted to future generations through its inclusion in educational curricula, its availability in community and cultural spaces or by means of local media outlets, and through its use in the creative industries.

The Anthropological Importance:

Human societies have often been classified, both during their historical evolution and in their modern diversity, according to bipartite divisions such as simple/complex, prehistoric/ historic, writing/ non-writing, and state/ stateless societies. While the respective merit of these terms is subject to debate, I will use the simple/complex classification as it is the most comprehensive. The invention of agriculture represents a widely accepted criterion according to which we may classify societies as simple or complex.

From an anthropological point of view, then, the Bedu society in the south of Jordan can be classified as a simple form of society with important parallels to ancient societies. Several factors lead us to consider the traditional Bedouin society as simple: their mode of

subsistence which is based on simple food production (herding); the absence of any centralized political system or state apparatus; and finally, the absence of the writing and the domination of oral forms of culture. Such simplicity indicates that Bedouin life ways have ancient roots and hence key similarities to ancient cultures.

Due to the absence of writing and the written records, oral and intangible expressions can be considered as the most effective means to understand and to analyze the Bedouin culture. Oral and intangible expressions are the pot or the framework in which all the elements of Bedu culture, whether material or non-material, are produced and reproduced; we can thus say that all components of Bedu culture are included and represented in their oral and intangible expressions. In other words, the integrity and integration of the Bedu society exists in the integrity of their oral and intangible expressions. The material and non-material culture of this society is produced and reproduced by the system of oral and intangible expressions.

Since Bedu oral and intangible expressions are the nexus of a society which conforms in important respects to ancient patterns, we believe that the study of these oral and intangible expressions will enable us form revealing theses for the study of some aspects of human history. Anthropologists and Ethno-archaeologists use the analogy approach to understand human socio-economic history. Similarities between past and present societies enable us to use the present as a guide to understanding the past. Thus, the documentation and the analysis of contemporary Bedu oral expression will provide an effective tool for examining the human past.

The study of Bedu oral and intangible expressions is also important because they provide a means of approaching and understanding of the world, which is different from the scientific view produced by the European Enlightenment. A number of contemporary scholars have demonstrated that, despite its obvious efficacy, scientific logic produces an incomplete view of reality (see for example Woolgar 1988 in sociology, Fauconnier and Turner 2002 in cognitive science.) Claude Levi-Strauss, in *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962), used a related argument to assert the value of what he called "mythical thought." He argued that while science strives to find the structures which can explain specific events, mythical thought creates new structures from the "debris of events" (1962:22), rearranging available elements to create new meanings. Mythical thought explores and is

constrained by what is culturally available, while the scientist is “always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization”(1962:19). This alternative form of reasoning provides insight, which scientific logic cannot attain. Only further study can reveal if these, or other, models are useful in understanding Bedu thought; however, it is clear that every cultural system is an expression of human cognition and as such has something unique and valuable to offer humanity in general.

The ancient mind as it is called by the American anthropologist Franz Boas or *La Pensée Sauvage*, as it called by the French Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss provides humanity with another form of world view. The French anthropologist considers that humanity has lost a lot when it renounce the mythological thought or *La Pensée Sauvage* since it represents a very rich cognitive form that humanity developed and used over thousands and thousands of years.

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu can also contribute to the debate on what is universal and what is particular in human cultures and histories. It is clear that both Bedu oral and intangible expressions and cognitive systems share many elements with cognitive structures in other parts of the world. Content analysis of Bedouin mythology reveals a great deal of resemblance to other world mythologies. Thus, the documentation and study of the oral expression of the Bedu are expected to provide evidence for -and deepen our understanding of- the universalistic conception of human culture and history. In other words, content analysis of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu can enrich the debate over what is universal and what is particular in the world's cultures.

Since the nineteen seventies, studies in the social sciences in general and in anthropology in particular have focused more and more on social discourse. Needless to say, oral and intangible expressions in every culture constitute an essential element of global social discourse and discursive practices. Therefore, it is extremely important to document and to analyze the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu as an essential step in the understanding of the dominant social discourse in their culture. It is noteworthy that, for many anthropological theories, the understanding of culture can't be achieved without analyzing the dominant social discourse since all of the components of culture -whether tangible or intangible- are transformed into and reduced to discursive practices. As such, the study of the oral and

intangible expressions of the Bedu constitutes an indispensable key to the understanding of the economic, social, political, cognitive, religious and symbolic components of their culture.

The Social Importance

The documentation and the preservation of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu can contribute to the achievement of many of the Bedu's own social and cultural objectives, as well as those of Jordanians in general.

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu contain a very rich system of moral values. Generosity, hospitality, courage, equality, justice, attachment to nature, taking care of animals...etc constitute basic notions in the Bedu's culture.

Bedu identity and particularly Bedouin values are important to many Jordanians, since Bedouin culture is considered by most of the Jordanians as a historical source of their identity. The Bedu are seen by the Jordanian as the holders of the original Jordanian identity. In our globalized world, the question of identity is posed on all levels due to the hegemony of particular cultural patterns and the marginalization and disappearance of others. Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu, can serve as an effective tool to strengthen and to rebuild a wider Jordanian national identity.

The documentation and the preservation of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu can contribute to the achievement of many objectives related to the social and cultural life of the Bedu and of the Jordanian society as a whole.

One of the results that can be reached by the documentation and the transferring of the oral and intangible expressions is the construction of a Jordanian national identity based on the cultural diversity. The Bedouin culture is offering for the Jordanian an authentic cultural form that can be added to the cultural identity that the Jordanians are seeking for. Jordan as all other nations in the world is interested in building a national identity based on concept of cultural diversity.

Documenting, recycling and transferring the Bedu oral and intangible expressions can contribute to the creation of a new cognitive relationship between man and nature, and the whole society and the place in which it is living. Whereas, new generations of the Bedu are knowing less and less about the place and its components in which they are living. The recycling of the oral and

intangible expressions which is crowded with information and symbols about the place, its components can restore the historical relationship between man and nature, i.e. nature is an organic part of man. And the two entities cannot be separated cognitively from each other.

While an ethical system is indispensable element in the construction of a national identity in any society, oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu contain a very rich system of Values. Generosity, hospitality, courage, equality, justice, attachment to nature, taking care of animals etc constitute basic ethical notions in the Bedu's culture. As such the documentation of this system of values and recycling it can contribute to the continuity of this system of values inside the Bedu culture itself, and to the insertion of these ethical value in the Jordanian values system as a whole.

In our globalized world where the question of identity is posed on all levels, due to the hegemony of particular cultural patterns and the marginalisation and the disappearance of others, oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu can serve as an effective tool to strengthen and to rebuild a wider Jordanian national identity. It is well known that the construction of a national identity should be based on two kinds of values; particularistic and universalistic. The first strengthens the feeling of being different and unique while, the second strengthens the feeling of sharing other cultures the same values and identity. Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu are consisting of these two dimensions; of what is particularistic and what is universalistic.

Since the international community is recognizing more and more the right of multiculturalism and then the right of every society to have its own unique and particular culture and identity, Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu are unique in a sense that they are particular to this region of the world. As such they can contribute to the production and reproduction of unique national identity in the south and for the whole Jordanian society. At the same time, the uniqueness of the Bedu culture will not lead to an excessive feeling of particularism, that could lead to the hostility of the other and of other cultural identities in the world. The universalistic values in the Bedu culture can strengthen and deepen the feeling of the Bedu that they are part of the humanity since they have the same universalistic values. In return the documentation of the Bedu's oral, and intangible expressions and its diffusion all over the world can show the universalistic values of the Bedu to the world.

Since one of the consequences of the studying of the Bedouin intangible heritage is to encourage the Bedu to take part in the documenting and recycling their own culture by documenting their oral and intangible expressions, an eventual project can contribute to modify and to correct the so called by the Bedu themselves "negative image" of the Bedu in the collective imaginary produced and reproduced since a long time. The Bedu in *Al-Sharah* mountains and *Wadi Rum* are complaining of the stereotyping and then the distortion of the image of the Bedu in the Jordanian media. As such, the documentation of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu and the integration of the local community will transform the Bedu for the first time maybe as an active element in the production of their own image. Worthy to note that until now the Bedu are not producing their own discourse about themselves, but Jordanian educated intellectuals in the urban centers who are mainly producing this discourse and then the image of the Bedu.

One of the most flagrant generalizations about the Bedu culture is the role of women in the public life. Bedouin Woman as she is stereotyped by the most of the Jordanian intellectuals and the media is playing a very marginal role in the socio-economic life of the Bedouin society. This imagined role of woman in the Bedouin society is used by the conservative forces in the Jordanian society to justify the marginalisation of women in the different spheres of public life in Jordan. The accurate documentation and study of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedouin society will show the real image of woman, and the active role she played historically in the Bedouin culture.

In addition, Bedu communities will gain ownership of all their cultural products and their rights. Through such ownership they maintain contextual integrity, empowering them with the intellectual rights of their heritage and its uses. The Bedu's heritage and identity are assets which once recognized, can offer many opportunities for enhancing and sustaining their community well being.

The Economic Importance

The documentation and preservation of the oral and intangible expressions can serve many economic objectives, whether in the region of *Al-Sharah* mountains and *Wadi Rum* or in Jordan as a whole.

Songs, poetry, stories, dances, the know-how and all other components of the Bedouin oral and intangible

expressions can be transformed to a cultural and touristic commodity. An intelligent and controlled process of commodification of the Bedouin oral and intangible expressions can accomplish two goals; first, it serves the purposes of wide spreading of these expressions and consequently, their diffusion to the public, second this controlled process of commodification can help the Bedouins or the so called local community economically, by providing them with new economic opportunities. As such, new jobs can be created by the creations of new commodities i.e the Bedouin oral and intangible expressions.

Since the region of *Al-Sharah* mountain and *Wadi Rum* are very rich in terms of the tangible cultural heritage such as the famous site of Petra, the documentation and the commodification of the oral and intangible expressions can lead to the integration of the touristic product in the south of Jordan. Note withstanding those oral and intangible expressions in Wadi Mousa can be considered as an integrant part of the site of Petra. Oral and intangible expressions were produced in relation with the site of Petra and many cultural rituals were produced and organized in relations with the main parts of the site of Petra. So we can say that the presentation of the site of Petra can be better achieved when the oral and intangible expressions produced historically in the site documented and presented.

The commodification of the oral and intangible expressions and their transferring in Jordan and all over the world can encourage the so-called sustainable development in the south of Jordan. It is worth to note that contrary to the north of Jordan this south of Jordan did not benefit from the fruits of the economic development that Jordan knows since the nineteenth seventies. In spite of the continuous efforts of the government to create a real development in that region, poverty can easily be observed. So transforming oral and intangible expressions to cultural and touristic product can support the efforts to create a sustainable development produced by the local and community itself.

Since oral and intangible cultural expressions in the south of Jordan can not be separated from the wider regional context, and due to the fact that no clear cut boundaries can be put to make a distinction between oral and intangible expressions in the south of Jordan and the neighboring countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the documentation of the oral and intangible oral expressions in Jordan will contribute to the

documentation of the oral and intangible oral expression in the whole region. Consequently, this study can serve not only the local community in the south of Jordan but other local communities in the surrounding countries.

Last not least, the scientific and the systematic documentation of the oral and intangible expression of the Bedu will lead to establishing a huge archive containing huge quantities of data and information about the Bedu. This will help the researchers and the academicians to conduct more detailed and specialized researches on the different aspect of the socio-economic organization of the Bedouin culture. This archive means that the details documenting the Bedu's civilization produced over thousands of years will not disappear once for ever. The detailed documentation of a particular culture leads in one way or another to the conservation of this culture in space and time.

4. CONCLUSION

Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu in southern Jordan represents a very valuable legacy for humanity that has been developed through a very sophisticated process of adaptation and interaction between man and nature. Oral and intangible expressions of the Bedu are reflecting the particular form of cultural responses that the Bedu have developed while they were adapting to the natural environment. As such, it is extremely important to study and analyze the Bedouin oral and intangible expressions.

The socio-economic transformations in southern Jordan including the expansion of the Jordanian bureaucracy or the state apparatus have changed radically the traditional Bedouin style of life. Bedouin culture seems to be threatened by a rapid process of urbanization and settlement. As such, the oral culture of the Bedu seems to be very threatened of decline and metamorphose.

The article is trying to analyze the historical, social, anthropological, and economic value of the oral and intangible expressions of the Bedouin society in southern Jordan. One of the basic assumptions is that these expressions have a double value; universalistic and particularistic. By universalistic, I refer to the value that these expressions represent for the whole humanity. In return, by the particularistic value of these expressions I refer to the local and particular elements of this heritage which is valuable for Jordan and the region.

One of the implicit aims of this article is to make

decision makers, scholars, and civil society more sensitive to the ongoing process of destroying the Bedouin culture in the name of civilization and progress.

Bedouin culture is authentic and unique and it deserves the mobilization of organized efforts for the preservation, documentation and recycling this oral Bedouin culture.

NOTES

- (1) Data on the geology of the region are provided by Dr. Nizar Abou Jaber, Head of the Department of Geology in Yarmouk University.
- (2) Data provided basically by Mohammed Ababneh.
- (3) Data provided by: and collected with the help of Mohammed Ababneh.
- (4) Data provided basically by: .
- (5) Data provided by: .
- (6) Data provided basically by: .
- (7) Data provided by: () -
- (8) Data provided by: .
- (9) Data basically provided by: .
- (10) Data provided by: .
- (11) Data provided by: - .

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