Research Paper Education

`Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī Wearing the Mask of Farīd Ed-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār

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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss the mask of Farīd Ed-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār as portrayed in the poetry of 'Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātīwith the view of studying the link between the Sufi mask and intertextuality, and between poetry and meta-poetry.
Seeing that Al-Bayyātī and Al-`Aṭṭār have a lot of things in common in spite of the gap of time that lies between them, we will deal with some important questions: Why was Al-Bayyātī interested in Al-`Aṭṭār? Was he merely fond of a prominent ancestral poet? Does he protest against severe spiritual and intellectual deficit characterizing modern Arab literature? Was Al-`Aṭṭār simply used as a Sufi mask, or as a signal of inter-textuality? Did Al-Bayyātī intend to pay homage to an ancient ancestor without whom he could not live his present and lead an efficacious struggle? In other words, did Al-Bayyātī intend to resurrect the revolutionary spirit of Arab poetry by using Al-`Aṭṭār's legacy? If so, is Al-`Aṭṭār a revived Sufi living among us to guide in person the battle for freedom and to promote the level of Arab literature or was Al-Bayyātī revived by Al-`Aṭṭār, the Sufi saint?

KEYWORDS The Sufi mask; intertextuality; meta-poetry; Al-`Aṭṭār's heritage; modern Arab poetry and'Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī's poetry.

In this paper we will discuss how the mask of Farīd Ed-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār is portrayed in the poetry of `Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī. Our goal is to study the link between the Sufi mask and intertextuality, and between poetry and meta-poetry.

In spite of the gap of time that separates between the two, Al-Bayyātī and Al-`Aṭṭār have many things in common.They both made use of poetry to fight oppression of the ruling authorities;both embraced practices of Sufism, which endowed them with an ever-flowing river of mystic thoughts thatfuelled their fight. Andboth were celebrated as great poets who left a rich legacy with an impact so weighty, extensive and ceaseless that surpassed their own culture and time.

Both grew up in an environment that shaped their lives. Al-`Aṭṭār (1145/46–1221), a Persian Muslim poet and theoretician of Sufism from Nīshāpūr, practiced the profession of pharmacy, and so had the opportunity to seemanyclienteles and listen to their stories, whichinfluenced him profoundly. His Sufi deeds and conceptsmade him a very dominantcharacter. During the Mongolian assault, Al-`Aṭṭār used his guidance to stir people against the externalaggressors. As a result, the Mongols murdered him in consort with the people of Nīshāpūr, his native city, in April 1221. Upon his death at 70, Al-`Aṭṭār left an everlastinginspiration on Persian poetry and Sufism. Although known as a poet during his own lifetime, his greatness as a mysticand a poet was revealed only in the 15th century (Reinert, 20-25). His works inspired poets in the past like Ar-Rūmī and in our time like `Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī.

Similarly, the leftist politics of Al-Bayyātī got him into trouble. Al-Bayyātī (1926–1999) was an Iraqi poet who had a tumultuous relationship with the successive Iraqi regimes over the course of his life. Speaking about his relationship which was the central topic of many of his poems, he once drew an analogy between his own story and that of Prometheus. "Of course," Al-Bayyātī said, "my relations with Iraqi governments were never conciliatory. I belong to the Iraqi people. I cannot separate myself from the people" (Wikipedia, 14 Jan 2010).

Al-Bayyātī's rebellious spirit was reflected in the writing of poetry. He led Arabic poetry beyond the constrictions of classical Arabic poetical structures, thus going beyond the age-old rhyme schemes and typical metric models that had reigned for more than fifteen centuries. His poetry impressed many Arab poets particularly Darwīsh.

Both poets led a nomadic life. After abandoning his pharmacy store, Al-`Aṭṭār traveled widely to Kufa, Mecca, Damascus, Turkistan, and India, meeting with Sufi sheikh s with the view to promote Sufi ideas (Bashiri, 2002). Correspondingly, Al-Bayyātī lived in a wide range of major cities in the world; he kept moving between Cairo, Paris, London, Madrid, Jeddah and Delphi but always returned to the Middle East. Al-Bayyātī was philosophical about his constant wandering; he says, "I've always searched for the sun's springs. When a human being stays in one place, he is likely to die. People too stagnate like water and air. Therefore, the death of nature, of words, of the spirit has prompted me to keep traveling, to encounter new suns, new springs, and new horizons. A whole new world is being born," (Rakha, 1999). Yet, there is a profound difference in the two forms of nomadic wandering: Al-`Aṭṭār's traveling is for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, while Al-Bayyātī's is a self-exile.

In their works,both poets refer to materials and figures from within and outside their own culture. In explaining his thoughts, Al-`Aṭṭār employed data from older ascetic legacies rather than depend on strict Sufi sources. He introduced stories from historical records, volumes of tales, and all sorts of well-regarded literature. Still, he viewed the ancient Aristotelian legacy with cynicism and incredulity and so he made use of pagan ideas only in the context where the theme of a story dictated it.

The works of Al-Bayyātī are full of references to contemporary and ancient writers, philosophers, poets and politicians the world over. Always involved in world affairs, in some of his poems,Al-Bayyātī addresses international figures such as T. S. Eliot and Che Guevara.

And both of them are related to Sufism. As a child, Al-`Aṭṭār was stimulated by his father to be attentiveto the Sufis, their sayings and way of life. Therefore, he grew up regarding their

saints as his spiritual guides. Later, he became a major theoretician of Sufism. Similarly, Al-Bayyātī had exposure to Sufism in his early childhood and afterwardshe employed Sufi meanings and sources in his poetry. He was also born near the shrine of the 12th century Sufi 'Abdel Qādir Al-Jīlānī. Al-Bayyātī was not a devout Muslim or a Sufi practitioner, though.

In this paper, we deal with some important questions: Why was Al-Bayyātī interested in Al-`Aṭṭār? Was he merely fond of a prominentancestral poet? Does he protest against severe spiritual and intellectual deficitcharacterizing modern Arab literature? Was Al-`Aṭṭār simply used as a Sufi mask, or as a signal of inter-textuality? Did he intend to pay homage to an ancient ancestor without whom he could not live his present and lead anefficacious struggle? In other words, did Al-Bayyātī intend to resurrect the revolutionary spirit of Arab poetry by using Al-`Aṭṭār's legacy? If so, is Al-`Aṭṭār a revived Sufi living among us to guide in person the battle for freedom and to promote the level of Arab literature or was Al-Bayyātī revived by Al-`Aṭṭār, the Sufi saint?

Farīd Ad-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār as Depicted in `Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī's Poetry

In his volume, Mamlakat As-Sunbulah (The Kingdom of the Spike,) which is rich with Sufi masks, `Abdul Wahāb Al-Bayyātī inserts a long poem of ten length- varied parts titled, "Parts of Farīd Ad-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār's Tortures." He says,

He faced me with intoxication, and said, "I am the wine and you are the butler;

So be, oh you, me, my beloved." He mortgages his rag for wine and cries

While maddened by passion. My heart's dust from excess of travels to you

And from you covered him. Hand me the wine and cushion me under grapevine while crazy

5 And look for the corundum of my mouth under the seven orbits and ignite with the
Thirsty kisses in the flesh of the earth a fire. A mirror for me you were and now I became
The mirror; I undress you in front of me and see my nakedness; I look in my intoxication
For you and in my consciousnesses, as long as the cups of the butler speak without
A tongue.
10 Oh, the soul of this world's elements! Oh, the silver and blue lights
Of the night!
Here I kneel in the Presence intoxicated,
I am a guest to this night haunted by the soul of white-red wine;
I hallucinate and the wine hallucinates with me; oh, guitar of the passion! I undress you
15 In front of me in tavern.
I would not have revealed my love, if these woods- the queen- had not poured
Their greenness in the water.

Nothing is in the turban except the man.

A mirror for me you were and now I became the mirror.

20 I butcher the camel of this sorrowful, desolate night and I hallucinate
Next to the wounded cask, I say: An era or time will come
When the man becomes mist to his fellow man
(And a king of the seven …) orbits, and mortgages his rag for the wine
And cries while maddened by passion. And `Aaeshah rises from under the wild
25 Herbs and the black stones like a golden deer running and
I crazy-like follow her
Under the grapevine. I catch her, undress her, and see my nakedness.
A mirror for me you were and now I became the mirror; I say: He will come! But
The wind, behind the doors dances with the bodies of naked, yellow trees
And throws the poets' lamps
30 Into the bottom of the wells.
I would not have undressed my wound in the Presence if I had not lost `Aaeshah
In the tavern of fates.
I would not have revealed my secret to the star of the piercing light, hadn't it been for you!
There is no victor except the butler so hand me the wine and cushion me under
35 The grapevine crazy
And look for the corundum of my mouth under the orbits.

Around you in the sleep, I circle and fall in the polluted nightmare of awareness.

I will not be defeated until the last line I write; so let us drink in the blue dome
40 Of this night
Until the eternal night catches on us and we take a nap in the belly of earth.

I will die and so will you;
Why do you in the weddings of the universe cry?
And circle?
45 Oh, the apple of the mad butler's eye!

Travelling that is limitless and a filthy race in the arenas of universe, and the universe
In spite of glittering stars of the night, is clouds, which run defeated and fall
From windows of her love: the eliminating thief and the owned slave, why
Do we depart if we already came? And why before the picking of flowers do we die?
50 Why in the weddings of our childhood do we cry, revolve in fear and circle?
So hand me the wine and cushion me under the grapevine crazy-like because the live death
Lurking in the taverns, in the markets and in the eyes of this butler
Slots into my chest a knife; I cry but from the excess of travelling
To you and from you, I ask in my intoxication about you and in my consciousness;
55 So be oh you my beloved, who mortgages his rag for wine and cries
While maddened by passion.

A mirror for me you were and now I became the mirror.

There is no victor except the butler."

The poem is full of terms of passion and deep infatuation. However, a deeper reading indicates that this intense craving is the Sufi love. Moreover, a deeper reading signals that the central purpose of this poem is poetry itself. This poetry, which is stated in Sufi terms, is reflected in words of passion. To be more precise, the speaker of the poem is engaged in a dialogue with an absent "other" who surprises the speaker by revealing his passion. The "other" is the beloved, God or the poem, while "he" is the lover, the Sufi or the poet. The "other" tells the speaker that their souls have merged and become one and for the remainder of the poem there is a detailed description of the perfect union between the lover, the Sufi saint or the poet and the beloved, God or the poem.

Thus, the poem is a dialogue between a Sufi saint and his follower. The focus of talk is intoxication, divine passion and craving. This dialogue reveals to us the attitudes, practices and

beliefs of these two Sufi characters. The murīd (the follower) is exhausted by his constant Sufi travels to God but he is happy to submit himself to Him. On the other hand, the Sufi saint maintains that he spends his time in the tavern intoxicated with the wine of his passion to God until his soul unites with God's. In addition, the saint states that he has become a mirror to God, the beloved, after God has been the mirror to him.

The speaker adds that he sacrifices many things so that he can be worthy of God's love. He slaughters his camel to feed the poor and the guest, avoids earthly travels to devote himself to the journey leading to God and remains close to the divine wine. Moreover, he wishes that the world were better and more just and that man loved his fellow man.

What helps the Sufi saint attain this situation is `Aaeshah, his beloved, who made him abandon the mundane world and seek refuge in God. Furthermore, instead ofsubmittingto hopelessness in this deteriorating world, which is jam-packed with concerns and worries, this Sufi saint is motivated to find shelter in God. In the lover's opinion, the universe is doomed to end and the victor is inevitably God. So he asks `Aaeshah not to shed tears because they will all die sooner or later and eventually they will return to God.

Al-Bayyātī regards the poem as a mirror through which he can see and transmit his ideas. After he gets rid of all bad ideas and enjoys a pure mind, he can dissolve within the poem and write it freely. For him, the poem is his tongue, the light of his soul and the source of his life. The passion that he has for poetry is everlasting. `Aaeshah, who stands for all the beloved women throughout ages and places and poetry, gives him love, life and energy to go on.

This poem represents a phase in Al-Bayyātī's poetry where he deviates from the familiar poetical experience to the technique of the mask where he employs a wealth of images, advanced structures, Sufi terms, practices and philosophy, and implicit meanings and connotations (Al-Yanhoum, 2002 19-21). But this poem is particularly affluent with Sufi intertextualized phrases, terms, meanings and characters. Notably, the title is indicative of Farīd Ad-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār. Al-Bayyātī's investment of this functional or redolent title is not meant to merely present Al-`Aṭṭār. Instead, Al-Bayyātī intends to make use of the various aspects of this character, his life, career, philosophy, manners, works and relationships. Moreover, the word "tortures" in the title hints at a wide range of modern poetical works containing or suggestive of this word. The list is long but one might consider Kamal Abu Deeb's introduction to his `Athābāt Al-Mutanabbī (The Tortures of Al-Mutanabbī), where he comments on the word "tortures," its association with the historical figure of Al-Mutanabbī and the relationship of the figure with him. He says,

> It's a dual career and enigmatic writings of two fascinating men; each was fascinated by the other and each one was a man possessing a charm. They lived in an era when all times vanished and all types of corruptions were ignited. So people were enchanted by them and they enchanted people. Both lived like strangers. They knew no one and were acquainted by no one and when they departed, nothing was left of them except words mixed with words (Abu Deeb, 1996).

What Abu Deeb says about Al-Mutanabbī can be used to refer to what Al-Bayyātī feels towards Al-`Aṭṭār. Al-Bayyātī too believes that the relationship between him and Al-`Aṭṭār is a form of duality where they are combined by speech, poetry and tortures. Al-`Aṭṭār is known to have been a figure who gave up himself for the sake of others and his principles. Al-`Aṭṭār's torture is entwined with poetry and Sufi passion as is Al-Bayyātī's (Este`lami, 2003 31 and Beneamarah, 2000 91).

In addition, Al-Bayyātī's use of the word "parts" in the title signifies that Al-`Aṭṭār's anguish is too excruciating to be depicted in full. Besides, Al-Bayyātī's employment of the plural form of torture intensifies the sense of pain that Al-`Aṭṭār suffered from. In other words, Al-Bayyātī feels he cannot transfer to the readers the awful experiences that Al-`Aṭṭār underwent. Thus, he picks only tiny fractions hopefully to give justice to the saint's life of anguish so the title that he eventually coins is "Parts of Farīd Ad-Dīn Al-`Aṭṭār's Tortures."

The meaning of torture here is different from Al-Bayyātī's in his other poem, "Al-Ḥallāj's Torture," because the torture of Al-Ḥallāj is material. This Sufi saint was exhibited to actual torment while Al-`Aṭṭār's pain was spiritual and rooted in tasawwuf (embracing of Sufism) and unremitting devotion. Moreover, "Al-Ḥallāj's Torture" is a title that calls to mind the historical story of Al-Ḥallāj's agony whereas the other title indicates no actual occurrence that is attached to Al-`Aṭṭār.

However, this is not the only example of intertextuality. In fact, the poem includes several types of intertextuality. The title refers us to previous Sufi texts; the interpretation of the poem is strongly related to the general spirit of the Sufi text and the poem is attached in particular to Al-`Aṭṭār's life, experiences and philosophy. In addition, the poem contains a wide range of Sufi vocabulary strewn in the poem. Investigating these items helps the reader to understand the connotative meanings rather than be trapped by their superficial import. The "drinking," and "intoxication" are widely used in this poem:

> *He faced me with intoxication and said, "I am the wine
> and you are the butler
> *…I look in my intoxication …
> For you.
> *Here I kneel in the Presence intoxicated
> *…so let's drink in the blue dome
> Of this night
> (Lines: 1, 6-7, 12, 39-40)

In Sufi terms the word "intoxication" means "the absence from distinguishing between things rather than absence from things" (Al-Ajam, 2000 468). These lines highlight the condition of the first-person speaker who is probably the poet wearing the mask of Al-`Aṭṭār. The speaker is surprised by a mysterious power that proves to be Allah, Who presents him the Divine love, becoming therefore the reason for the intoxication of the speaker. As a result, the speaker is persistently engaged in looking for Allah while intoxicated and kneels to Him in presence while intoxicated, too. So the first person speaker is intoxicated by the godly love while Allah is the beloved.

The word "passion," meaning in Sufism "a noun which exceeds the limit of love" (Al-Ajam, 2000 641), is another term used abundantly. The utterance "And cries while maddened by passion" alone is repeated three times in the poem. In so doing, the speaker wishes to confirm that his love of his Lord in the Presence trespasses any convention. It is analogous to crying, intoxication and madness.

The word "corundum" means "the psyche as a whole because of the merging of its light with the darkness of the attachment to the body compared with the departing mind defined as the white pearl" (1061). Al-Bayyātī repeats this word twice to confirm that the mouth of the beloved, the speaker, glows with light.

More to the point, Al-Bayyātī speaks of "the seven orbits," which means "the seven heavens." Surely, he alludes to Al-`Aṭṭār, who uses the term profusely in combination with "corundum." Writing about the creation of these orbits, Al-`Aṭṭār writes, "In six days He created seven stars (seven orbits) with the command of two letters 'be;' and He created all the stars as if they were beads of golden righteousness so that the orbit can play with it every night…" (1979, 139). In the chapter titled "The Seven Orbits," Al-`Aṭṭār says, "That whose ascent across the seven orbits/ And the prophets and the God-picked

people were in desperate need of him" (1972, 32). The reference is to Muhammad, the prophet of Islam.

And the word "Presence" is one of Al-Bayyātī's Sufi terms. He says,

*Here I kneel in the Presence intoxicated,
*I wouldn't have undressed my wound in the Presence if I hadn't lost `Aaeshah
In the tavern of fates.
(Lines: 12, 31-32)

The term means "the presence of Him in the heart while full of truth during His absence" (Ibnul-`Arabī, 2001 410); and it also means "The whole truth of the godly truths or the truths of the universe with all their manifestations in all the worlds compose a presence" (2001, 323). Al-Bayyātī alludes to the Sufi meaning in order to tell about the moment when the beloved God appears to the Sufi lover.

All the previous Sufi terms indicate the common type of intertextuality whichis associated with the common presence of two texts or more in another text. The presence may be wholly quoted, literally adopted or hinted at by another text.

Why does Al-Bayyātī's resort to Sufism? Apparently, his use of Sufi material or wearing the mask of Al-`Aṭṭār comes forward after the suffering of Al-Bayyātī has become too deep to be expressed by straightforward reports. Al-Bayyātī, it seems, has reached the conclusion that he could no longer depend on his words only to meet the needs of his vision. Hence the need for the mask which comes to give him a new outlet. So in this poem, Al-Bayyātī invokes Al-`Aṭṭār's mask which gives him the chance to use the tongue of Al-`Aṭṭār and simultaneously allows Al-`Aṭṭār, the Sufi figure, to express his pain which is associated with poetry and craving. In the conclusion of his Manṭeq aṭ-Ṭayr (The Language of the Birds), Al-`Aṭṭār, points out that he is a suffering craver who addresses the crowds of all lovers to endow them with his painful craving (Beneamarah, 2000 91). Addressing himself, Al-`Aṭṭār makes use of his pen-name which means "the perfumer" or "the pharmacist." He says,

You, Al-`Aṭṭār, have sprayed the full scent of must which is full of secrets over the world at all times. Soon the horizons of the universe became full of your perfume and the disturbance of the universe cravers increased because of you. So always talk about passion and forever and a day reiterate the songs of cravers since your poetry incessantly supplies the cravers with ammunition (Al-`Aṭṭār, 1979 432).

By giving his approval to Al-`Aṭṭār's talk about the tortured lover-poet, Al-Bayyātī exemplifies the extent to which poetry is linked to pain and paradoxically to ecstasy. This point, however, is expressed implicitly rather than explicitly. Like Sufi figures, the poet resorts to the use of symbols a lot. If the symbol is regarded a necessity in the Sufi discourse, it is equally so in this poem of Al-Bayyātī.

The poem, as it has been asserted, is a dialogue between the speaker and the mask of Al-`Aṭṭār, who is skilled at intoxication. Al-`Aṭṭār's wine, however, is not the earthly wine nor is his intoxication analogous to intoxication of this world. Rather, it is the intoxication attained after drinking the divinely wine derived from the Sufi experience, which causes the Sufi to wander aimlessly and cry deeply because he is maddened by passion. By referring to the wine, Al-`Aṭṭār intends to highlight its spiritual concept rather than the sensual or gustatory aspects.

The speaker sees the listener, "the other," or Al-`Aṭṭār as a mirror reflecting his own philosophy. Furthermore, the speaker initially has spotted the ideas of tasawwuf, asceticism and godly love in the whole world (Fadl, 1995 16). Today, however, the speaker's attitude has drastically changed. He has embraced the concepts of Al-`Aṭṭār in full and he feels elated to have done so. This is reflected in his repetitive confirmation of the alteration in his position in the poem: "A mirror for me you were and now I became the mirror." Evidently, this line connotes that Al-Bayyātī lives in between the life that he has lived and the life he will move to. "A mirror for me you were" is the first state while "now I became the mirror" is the second. As a result, Al-Bayyātī has two lives: the first is pre his present era whereas the second succeeds the present era. The first is the age of Al-Bayyātī's heroes like Al-Ḥallāj, Al-Ma`arrī, Al-Khayyām and Al-`Aṭṭār, who export their experiences, philosophies, wisdom to our age to teach, warn and show us the good things necessary for our redemption. Consequently, these heroes' lives are the models that will guide us and show us our future lives. This means that these heroes died in the past only to be resurrected in our era for the purpose of our redemption (Al-Bayyātī, 1999 86).

But the poem is not free from negative hints inherent in this exhausted world which is analogous to the similar state typifying the kingdom of poetry. According to Al-`Aṭṭār, theuniverse is like an old woman who made up herself to look like a bride. Therefore, the universe is tough as is the road to the Simurgh, the God of birds (Al-`Aṭṭār, 1972, 87). In other words, the road to the kingdom of poetry is hard-hitting, full of fear and hiding thieves. So one should follow a master to guide him in this life.

Indeed, the poet not only chooses Al-`Aṭṭār to be his guide, but also puts on his mask and speaks through it. This choice creates a confusion of pronouns as the opening lines indicate:

He faced me with intoxication and said, "I am the wine and you are the butler;
So be, oh you, me, my beloved."
(Lines: 1-2)

There are three pronouns: "he," "I" or "me" and "you." The "he" becomes "I" while the "me" becomes "you." This confusion between the speaker and Al-`Aṭṭār's mask is so subtle that it is difficult to distinguish the identity of the speaker. The truth is that the speaker is Al-`Aṭṭār while the speaker puts on Al-`Aṭṭār's mask to portray the meanings of his own time. The content of the talk indicates that Al-`Aṭṭār, his passion for God and sense of ecstasy are parallel to the poet's, his love for poetry and the sense of pleasure rising from the process of writing poetry. In other words, in the spirit of Al-`Aṭṭār, who is undergoing a crucial phase of ecstasy emerging from the divine passion, the poet is in a state of intoxication derived from writing poetry. Despite the prevailing sense of joy accomplished by linking the past to the present, the poet seizes the opportunity to criticize the world exhausted by all sorts of plights including the deteriorating level of literature and poetry (Subhi, 1990 84). Additionally, the poet manages to talk about his torture derived from writing poetry in the same way that Al-`Aṭṭār expressed his anguish in the wake of his godly yearning. Both types of suffering are detached from the personal agendas. Both Al-`Aṭṭār and Al-Bayyātī are subject to anguish and torture to reform the society and to create a world where man befriends his fellow men and is crowned king of the seven orbits (Al-Bayyātī, 1999 160).

In the fourth part, the poet invokes the head of the misled Arabic poetry: "I butcher the camel of this sorrowful, desolate night" and repeats Al-`Aṭṭār's words: "And a king of the seven orbits." Then, he narrates how `Aaeshah rises from under the wild grass and runs like a golden deer. He, crazy-like, follows her under the grapevine, catches her then he strips her off only to see his own nakedness. This experience which is presented by Al-Bayyātī but attributed to Al-`Aṭṭār epitomizes a futile existential experience which does not emerge from the spirit of *tasawwuf* (Este`lami, 2003 31-35). Nor is it related to the Great Being. Instead, `Aaeshah in this experience presents a range of images of life, ponders at the comedy of existence and makes fun of the futility of death. Furthermore, `Aaeshah considers intoxication and ecstasy as the only exit from the

plight which modern man suffers from. Accordingly, the inference here is that there is no victor but the butler. Amazingly, this assumption is purely secular; it is in fact a revision of "There is no victor except with God," the famous slogan adopted by Banī Al-Aḥmar, rulers of Spain (Fadl, 1995 16-17).

Still, the excessive use of terms related to intoxication, nakedness and craziness that generally denote intensely mundane images connote in this context deep Sufi conditions. The crazy intoxication which, as already emphasized, is the epitome of ecstasy reached by the Sufi floods not only the speaker but the others surrounding him. Similarly, nakedness which is a recurrent image in the poem exceeds its being a mere deed. All the trees and the wounds are also stripped naked. Additionally, the poet seeks to give expression for the presence of modernity in the poem. This suggests the first person speaker, i. e. "I," is the actual speaker here while his assistant is "he," the third person speaker, who, as said in the text, "placed the rag of his tortures upon him so that we can meet him in this filthy context, in the noisy places of the universe."

The meta-poetical indication in this poem asserts that Al-Bayyātī's poetry is famous but unknown. Since he writes about subjects of interest to all people who remain unconscious of his writings, he is famous but not known. Like Al-`Aṭṭār, whose poetry and ideas were a true translation of his heart's words (Este`alami, 32) and an interpretation of his concerns (Avery, 2001 14), Al-Bayyātī's poetry has become a reflection of the torture of poetical creativity, the concerns of writing and the condition of society where he lives. This means that Al-Bayyātī, or the speaker, employed the poets and Sufi figures (their philosophy included) like Al-`Aṭṭār, As-Sahrawardī, Al-Ma`arrī, Al-Mutanabbī and Iben `Arabī as sources of inspiration. The poet regards the poem as a reflection of himself. In other words, the poem, which is the tongue of the poet and his storage of ideas, experiences and philosophy, is an integral part of the poet. In so doing, the poet imitates Al-`Aṭṭār, who regarded his own Sufi self and ideas as defenders of him. But it is not a mere rereading emptied of real values or recopying of ancient heritage. Rather, Al-Bayyātī shows great perception of this tradition. He has digested it and integrated it within his depth which suggests he has perceived both the Sufi philosophy and the historical heritage (Ash-Shamaah, 2002 74-75). So, by wearing the mask of Al-`Aṭṭār, Al-Bayyātī rereads the Islamic legacy, which is considered a cultural key, a revitalized turning parallel to the claim of the European culture that it emerges from Greek and Romanian roots and simultaneously has Christian and Jewish derivations.

Conclusion

One of Al-Bayyātī's goals in employing Sufi masks, therefore, is the confirmation of the avant-garde, spiritual thinking of the figures represented by these masks. Sufi figures like Al-Ḥallāj and As-Sahrawardī did not only call for asceticism and giving up all sorts of materialism but they also sought to radically reform society. In appealing to these figures, Al-Bayyātī means to demonstrate and market his rebelliousness. Therefore, he calls for discarding the material life and resorting to the spiritual world which includes poetry and literature in addition to the simplicity or harshness of life (Azouqa, 1999 260-261).

But the question to be asked is: Why does the modern poet have to wear a mask of Sufi figures or to resurrect the past to address his fellow citizen? There are many answers to this question. One may be related to the claim that our modern culture suffers from a severe lack of philosophy and thinking. Another is linked to the poets' fear of the ruling authorities. But it is most likely that modern poetry despite its abandonment of many rules that the traditional poetry maintains cannot strip itself from its heritage. The modern poet is a natural extension of his predecessors. He has to return to his past to express the plights of his own era (Asfour, 1990 11- 20). He needs to revive the Sufi figures so as to guide oppressed people on the way to freedom and to show poets the true core of wisdom.

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