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Curses and Profanity in the Languages
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*Curses and Profanity in the Languages and Cultures
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LITERARY CREATIVITY AND CURSES. A STUDY CASE: *'AN TAKŪN 'ABBĀS AL-'ABD*, BY 'AḤMAD AL-'ĀYDĪ

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Abstract. Every language has a repertoire of insults, swear words, and curses which speakers can draw from. When canonical curses do not seem fit for purposes, individual creativity coins new ones, adding ironic elements to traditional and crystallized utterances. So, the divine, by which many curses are inspired, can be abandoned to draw on profanity, searching for agents, objects, and actions of the curses in ordinary human life. But what happens in literature, which is one of the highest expressions of human creativity? The characters of literary texts, like their real counterparts, swear, insult, and wish bad luck. Often, and for a long time, these speech acts have been considered taboo by most Arab authors. The wider freedom of how to speak, given to the characters in the 2000s, allows the occurrence of a large amount of curses and swearing, borrowed from both the vernacular and standard Arabic, but also invented. They are incisive elements in the texts, nevertheless, they could be destined to remain linguistic and rhetorical exercises, like the ones contained in the novel *'An takūn 'Abbās al-'Abd* (2003), by 'Aḥmad al-'Āydī, that this article aims to study basing its arguments on syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives.
Keywords: curses, standard Arabic, Egyptian vernacular, creativity, rhetoric, pragmatics.

Introduction

Literature reflects and influences life, with its forms and contents. On the one hand, it provides images of the world and its languages, and, on the other, it contributes to forge them. By narrating, in oral or written forms, all the functions necessary to represent both reality and fantasy can be fulfilled, including the emotional one, which cursing belongs to. Similarly to people in ordinary life, literary characters curse. They use expressions that writers draw from everyday experience or from their own imagination, thus inventing a new effective bad language. To explore the practice of such imaginative language solutions, I have taken into consideration a postmodern novel published in Egypt in 2003, *'An takūn 'Abbās al-'Abd*, by 'Aḥmad al-'Āydī, an interesting narrative concerning obsessive-compulsive behaviours, which exhibits a special mixture of varieties: standard and vernacular Arabic with Western and new media loan words. This story of madness and transgression has as protagonist a man who suffers from a dissociative identity disorder and is alienated from society. His mental patterns cause an uncontrollable use of cursing that looks pathological, the result of neurological, social, cultural, and psychological

factors. The protagonist "cannot control thoughts and actions that "normal" people can control", "reveals the forbidden thoughts and words that are inhibited by normal speakers in a culture" and "has a unique history behind the disorder that creates a personalized set of forbidden thoughts and words", which happens to victims of Tourette Syndrome, as explained by Jay (1999: 5). The manifold nature of the narrator's cursing is reflected on different language strategies: adopting ordinary curses and coining new ones. My study intends to highlight this dual aspect.

Methodology

The analysis starts with direct observation of data contained in the literary text, pointing to propose possible links between the observable facts and mental constructs. As first step, an inventory of words, phrases, and sentences has been collected and catalogued according to rhetorical and pragmatic functions,[1] to deal with both the utterances' figural value and the author's intended meaning, in a cognitive perspective which considers

> communication not as a process by which a meaning in the communicator's head is duplicated in the addressee', but as a more or less controlled modification by the communicator of the audience's mental landscape – his *cognitive environment*, as we call it – achieved in an intentional and overt way (Wilson & Sperber 2012: 87).

Moving from the kernel idea that language choices are correspondent to specific purposes, my study explores the connection of signifiers with references, implicatures, presuppositions, and speech acts. Several curses, insults, and imprecations, in fact, have not any degree of conventionality unlike others whose non-literal, figurative meaning has a default interpretation and do not require further effort of inference; they are the results of a vivid imagination and to grasp their meaning we have to consider the structure of conversation, both the dialogues between two participants and the protagonist's conversations with his dissociative identities, that take the form of monologues. The second step of my research effectively consists in inferring the non-literal meaning of utterances in their context of use, highlighting their lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions.

The English version is taken from Alaidy 2006[2] and accompanied by footnotes when required for a better comprehension of al-ʿĀydī's usage of lexicon. Vernacular speech is highlighted by the presence of (V); chapters and pages are indicated in square brackets.

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[1]   A broader investigation on language choices in this novel was the object of an article of mine (Avallone 2012). For a psychoanalytic approach to the story, see Borossa, Julia. 2011. "The extensibility of psychoanalysis in Ahmed Alaidy's *Being Abbas el Abd* and Bahaa Taher's *Love in Exile*", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 47(4). 404-415.
[2]   English translation by Humphrey Davies.

Corpus
Curses (direct and indirect)

(1) *kullu ṭumūḥ-ī ’an ’abqā waḥd-ī salīman wa-’an yaḏhaba l-‘ālamu ka-package*[3] *’ilā l-ǧaḥīmi* [1:11] ‘My only ambition is to survive on my own, in one piece, and for the whole world, as a ball of wax, go to hell’ [1:3]

(2) *’a tabṣuqu fī kūbi l-šāyi kullamā qaddamū-hu la-ka [...]?* [1:11] ‘Do you spit in every cup of tea they bring you [...]?’ [1:4]

(3) *’a ḏuqta dama-ka l-nāzifa fī ḥiwārin bi-l-qabaḍāti ma‘a man yafūqu-ka ‘umran wa-ḥaǧman?* [1:11] ‘Have you ever tasted the blood draining out of you during a dialogue of fists with someone older and bigger?’ [1:4]

(4) *hal tamannayta ’an (tirza‘) ṭabaqa l-šūrbati sāḥinan fī waǧhi qarībi-ka allāḏī lā ya‘rifu sma-ka wa-yuḥbiru-ka: kam sayakūnu kūbu l-šāyi (ḥulwan) min yadi-ka?* [1:11] ‘Have you ever wanted to slam a plate of hot soup into the face of your relative who doesn’t know your name but tells you how ‘sweet’ a cup of tea from your very own hands would be?’ [1:4]

(5) *Allāhumma ’adim la‘nata l-nisyāni ‘alā ’aṣḥābi-hā* [2:15] ‘God bless the absent-minded and make their curse a joy to the forever!’ [2:8]

(6) *Allāhumma ’abqinī waḥd-ī salīman wa-’arsil al-’āḫarīn ’ilā ǧaḥīmi-ka l-mu‘tādi* [2:15] ‘God, save just me and send the rest to the usual hell.’ [2:8]

(7) *ya nahār-ak bi-l-lēl* [2:17] (V) ‘Have a horrible day!’ [2:10]

(8) *rūḥ fi dahya llāh yisahhil-ak* [2:18] (V) ‘Go to hell and God speed!’ [2:11][4]

(9) *al-la‘natu ‘alā mīzāni l-madfū‘āti. li-yaḥtariq al-madīnu wa-l-dā’inu* [3:22] ‘Goddamn the balance of payments. To hell with borrower and lender alike.’ [3:16][5]

(10) *li-yaftaḥ*[6] *daqqāqu l-’asfalti dimāǧa kulli man lam yataqaddam fawran li-ṭalabi yadi l-’ānisati w.r.d. al-bayḍā’i malfūfati l-qiwāmi ḏāti 43 rabī‘an* [3:24] ‘A jack-

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[3] Worthy of note is that in the Arabic text the English interference ‘package’ occurs, but it is rendered by the translator with ‘a ball of wax’ (slang). Speakers exposed to language contact displays features of both contemporary (*ka-package*) and classic (*’ilā l-ǧaḥīmi*) Arabic. For the recurrence of semantic and pragmatic values, besides syntactic and lexical aspects, compare utterance (1) to utterance (6).

[4] *Rūḥ fi dahya* is a type of curse commonly used. For the entry *dahya*, Badawi and Hinds (1986) quote the basic meaning of ‘calamity’, the sentence *rāḥ fi dahya* ‘he came to a bad end’, and two curses: *gat-ak dahya* ‘to hell with you!’, ‘may a calamity befall you!’; *waddā f-dayha* ‘he caused him a lot of trouble’. An unusual combination of a cursing formula with a blessing one (*Allāh yisahhil-ak*) occurs, conveying a sense of irony to utterance (8).

[5] The narrator invokes curse (*la‘na*) on money management. A classical linguistic item used in religious curses, “in which the Almighty or a supernatural power is asked to give or to withhold something from a person” (Masliyah 2001: 272), occurs to suggest the stressful effect of dealing with money in contemporary job sites. The lines preceding the curse refer to a reality which the speaker presupposes as known by the interlocutor and the reader: “Amerco Video Film. Here it’s not you that matters, or your color, or the size of your tragedy. Here you won’t find the answers but you can obliterate the questions. You are you. You are the exhausted accountant who’s just got home from his loathsome job” (Alaidy 2006: 16).

[6] Malediction is invoked through an exhortative verbal voice which has as subject a pneumatic drill. A similar construction occurs in utterance (12) where the logical subject – a presupposed supernatural power capable of destruction – is omitted.

hammer split the head of any who does not come forward this instant to ask for the hand of Miss R.O.S.E., white, of curvaceous figure and forty-three springs' [3:18]

(11) *il-'ilm miš fī r-rās wi-la l-kurrās. il-'ilm fī l-bakītuh. wi-tifuww[7] 'a lli bada' iṭ-ṭābūr* [3:25] (V) 'Knowledge doesn't come from the mind, or the academic grind…. Knowledge comes from the "sack" and flob on the one who thought up morning roll-calls!' [3:19]

(12) *li-tataḥaṭṭam[8] al-waẓā'ifu llātī lam taqbal-nī. li-tataḥaṭṭam al-maḥaṭṭātu llātī lam tantaẓir-nī. li-tataḥaṭṭam al-ḫiṭābātu l-ṭawīlatu llātī lam yursil-hā 'aqribā'u l-mawtā* [3:25] 'Destruction to all the jobs that didn't accept me! to all the buses that didn't wait for me! to all the long letters that my dead relatives didn't send me!' [3:19]

(13) *illi bi-yifham yisḫaṭ-ak 'išārit murūr fī 'awwil ta'āṭu'* [4:26] 'He Who Understands should turn you into a traffic signal at the nearest intersection' [4:21]

(14) *'aw ya'mal-ak 'awma' fī ḥtibār siwā'a li-wāḥid 'a'ma* [4:26] 'or make you a plastic bollard on the course for a blind man's driving test' [4:21]

(15) *'illi yibarra' l-ak infaḫ it-turāb fī 'ēnē-h* [5:30] (V) 'If someone widens his eyes at you, blow dust in them' [5:25]

(16) *ḥārr wa-nār[9] fī lli nata'it-ak* [5:37] (V) 'hell and damnation to the one who spawned you!' [5:32]

(17) *illi yibarbiš-l-ak intif rumūš-uh* [7:55] (V) 'if someone gives you a dirty look, pluck out his eyebrows' [7:52]

(18) *illi yilwī-l-ak dirā'-ak i'ṭa'-ha* [7:55] (V) 'if someone twists your arm, cut it off' [7:52]

(19) *illi yirfa' 'al-ēk il-kūrīk il'ab bi-l-fitīs fī 'afā-h* [7:55] (V) 'if someone comes at you with the jack handle, make merry on the back of his neck with your gear stick' [7:52]

Insults

(20) *hurā'[10]* [4:26] 'shit' [4:21]

(21) *'aṣd-ak wasāḫa, miš hiwāyya* [5:38] (V) 'I'd call it a filthy habit' [5:33]

(22) *'ayyu-hā l-'aḥmaqu* [5:41] 'imbecile!' [5:35]

(23) (Pull Shit)[11] [5:42] (E) 'Pull-shit' [5:36]

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[7] For the entry *tifūh, tifuww*, Badawi and Hinds (1986) give as definition: 'onomatopoeia for the sound of spitting, indicating disgusting'.

[8] Destruction upon people, things, and places is a concept strictly linked to cursing. A destructive supernatural power is attributed to curses and, in the case in point, oriented to annihilate the obstacles and the enemies encountered during life. Three forms derived from the root *ḥtm* occur six times in the Quran ("ḥtm" in *DQU*).

[9] Hell and fire are recurrent concepts in traditional curses; *nār* ('fire') and *ǧaḥīm* ('hot place') occur in the Quran as references to the eternal fire of Hell, whose proper name is *Ǧahannam*. See the articles on "Nār" in *EI²* and "Fire" in *EQ*; interesting examples concerning Hell as punishment (fire, hell, burning, demons, and Satan) are quoted in Masliyah 2011 and Stewart 1997.

[10] Literally "nonsense".

[11] "Pull Shit" is written in Latin letters. The English word "bull" is rendered with the initial "p", although the phoneme /p/ does not exist in Arabic. It is a phenomenon of hypercorrection that reflects the stigmatization of the wrong pronunciation of the phoneme /b/ in foreign words. The result is witty, as a semantic shift occurs: "bull shit" becomes "pull shit".

(24) *ʾinta nadl*[12] [6:43] (V) 'You're a bastard' [6:39]
(25) *ya bint il-mariḥa* [6:48] (V) 'Funny bitch!' [6:43]
(26) *ya bn il-faʾriyya* [7:73] (V) 'Cocky bastard!' [7:70]
(27) *ʾinti miš bint sū'*[13] '[7:74] (V) 'You're not a pro' [7:71]
(28) *ya bn malādī*[14] *il-kalb* [9:98] (V) 'You miserable son of a bitch!' [9:97]
(29) *wilād malādīʿ il-kalb* [9:99] (V) 'And those asshole sons of bitches' [9:98]

Hyperbolic images

(30) *ʾanā man baṣaqa l-ʾāḫarūn naḥwa waǧh-ī ʾalfa marratin* [1:11] 'I am the one in whose face others have so often spat' [1:3]
(31) *ʾaʿrifu ʾanna-ka lan tuʿṭiya (tabban)*[15] *li-hāḏā, lākin ʾarǧū-ka lā taqlaq* [1:12] 'I know you don't give a genteel shit about that but please, don't be afraid' [1:4]
(32) *ʿalā l-kursiyyi ʾamām-ī yabṣuqu rākibun min nāfiḏati-hi l-maftūḥati fa-lā yustadallu li-l-buṣāqi ʿalā ʿunwānin. yartaddu – al-buṣāqu – maškūran li-l-ʿarabati, wa-yatakaffalu indifāʿu l-hawāʾu bi-tawǧīhin naḥwa waǧh-ī* [2:18] 'A passenger sitting in front of me spits out of his window and the post office rejects it as "Unknown at this Address". The gob, God bless it, re-enters the car, the air stream taking upon itself to deliver it directly to my face' [2:11]
(33) *tilka muʾallafātun yaṣṭaḥibu-hā l-nuqqādu li-l-ḥammāmi li-tuʿīna-hum ʿalā l-taḫaffufi min ʿibʾi muʾaḫḫarātin mumtaliʾatin* [7:54] 'These are the works that go along with the critics to the lavatory to assist them in floating free of the burden of fat buttocks' [7:51]
(34) *ḫuḏ ʿinda-ka – maṯalan – tilka l-laḥẓata allātī yamuddu fī-hā ʿAbbās yada-hu naḥwa fami-hi li-yastadriǧa baqāyā ṭaʿāmi-hi l-ʿāliqi bi-ġiṭāʾi mušṭi l-kibrīti baynamā yataʾammalu-hu ʿan qurbin bi-lahfati ġarīziyyati. hāḏā laysa bi-muqrifin. fa-ʾiḏā lam tuṣaddiq-nī taʾammal maʿ-ī ʿAbbās wa-huwa yuʿīdu nafsa l-ṭaʿāmi li-fami-hi. yamḍaġu-hu wa-yatasallā bi-ʾifrāzi l-mazīdi min ḍalāli ḥikmati-hi* [7:55] 'Take, for example, that moment at which Abbas extends his hand toward his mouth to remove bit by bit the remains of the food stuck between his teeth with the cover of a book of matches, which he then scrutinizes closely with an instinctive sigh. This is not really disgusting; if you don't believe me, observe him with me as he returns the same food to his mouth, masticates it, and entertains himself by spitting out further pearls of his misguided wisdom' [7:52]
(35) *ibn-ī law balʿat rī'-ak ḥaygī-l-ak tisammim* [7:55] (V) 'If you swallowed your spit you'd get stomach poisoning' [7:52]

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12 The vernacular lexeme *nadl* has the standard equivalent *naḏl*. Badawi and Hinds (1986) translate it as 'low', 'base', 'despicable', and 'mean', likewise Wehr (1976) who adds 'vile', 'debased', 'depraved', and 'coward'. In current language the term has acquired a higher grade of vulgarity, as confirmed by the Davies' translation into 'bastard'.
13 The expression *bint sū'* ('pro'), listed as (27), is similar to *ibn sū'* ('a born businessman'), but has a negative sense; it is employed as an euphemism for *šarmūṭa* ('whore').
14 *Maldūʿ* (singular of *malādīʿ*) is translated by Badawi and Hinds (1986) as 'son of a bitch' and 'rotten bastard'.
15 Literally 'damn you!'.

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(36) *luʿāb-ī l-munsālu muqrifan* [7:61] 'my drooling a bit distasteful' [7:58]

(37) *tanaššaq al-būla [...] dumūʿun wa-būlun wa-maṭarun [...] ʿaynun tumṭiru, faraġun yabkī wa-ġaymun yabūlu* [7:64] 'Inhale the urine [...] tears, urine, rain [...] an eye that rains, an orifice that weeps, clouds that piss' [7:61]

(38) *kullu mā ʿalay-hi fiʿlu-hu huwa ʾan yarsama qalban bi-taṣwībi l-būli ḫalfa l-ḫaymati* [7:73] 'all he'd have to do would be to draw a heart with his piss in the dirt behind the tent' [7:70]

Sexual taboo (allusions and metaphors)

(39) *lā šayʾa yuʿallimu l-sibāba ʾakṯara min zawġatin mutaṭallibatin nasiyati l-ḥikmata min wuġūdi sarīrin* [2:14] 'Nothing can teach you better how to bawl someone out than a wife who's hot for it and loses of proportion on catching sight of a bed' [2:7]

(40) *ʾahrušu minṭaqata l-malali l-muʿtādata – laʿalla-ka tafhamu mā ʾaʿnī-hi – wa-ʾantaẓiru* [2:15] 'I scratch the usual "area of low pressure"[16] if you know what I mean and I think you do. And I wait' [2:8]

(41) *ʾana hina min ʾabl ʾumm-ak mit'aššar li-ʾabū-k il-mōz* [2:17] (V) 'I've been around since before your mommy peeled your daddy's banana' [2:10]

(42) *rakibt il-fīša wa-la''a..* [7:71] (V) 'So did you put the plug in the socket yet or…' [7:68]

(43) *il-bāku lissa bi-l-ʾastik.. il-babaġān lissa mišaḫḫiš fi l-ʾafaṣ.. maliʿbtiš ʿarīs wi-ʿarūsa* [7:71] (V) 'the pack's still got the cellophane on, the parrot hasn't shat in the cage, you haven't played mummies and daddies yet' [7:69]

Results

Offensive speech, including scatology [*e.g.* (23)], slang [*e.g.* items (21), (25), (26), and (27)], and vulgarity [*e.g.* items (22), (24), (28), (29)], typifies many parts of the text.

The narrator's seditious stance towards society is enforced by cursing people and using a rude lexicon that sounds as a celebration of rebellion. In addition to the ordinary curses, in vernacular or standard Arabic, such as *ya nahār-ak bi-l-lēl* (7), *rūḥ fi dahya* (8), *al-laʿnatu ʿalā…*(9), and some wishes of bad luck starting with *Allāhumma* [*e.g.* items (5), (6)], weird fate anathemas are created to threaten their recipients: "Goddam the balance of payments. To hell with borrower and lender alike" (9);[17] "a jackhammer split the head of any who does not come forward this instant to ask for the hand of Miss R.O.S.E., white, of curvaceous figure and forty-three springs" (10). A comparison between the formula beginning utterance (10) and two curses with a certain "humour or shock value" quoted by Stewart (1997: 350) is worthy of mention: *allāh yiftaḥ nafūḫ-ak* ('may God open up your

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[16] The sentence, literally rendered as 'I scratch the usual area of boredom', is further clarified with a following statement ('if you know what I mean and I think you do') that highlights a presupposition, a shared knowledge of the situation.

[17] The damnation to financial circles is wished as a revenge for "an exhausted accountant who's just got home from his loathsome job" (Alaidy 2006: 16).

skull!'), "which presents an image of God opening up a person's head the way one might open up a tin of sardines"; *fataḥ fī rās-ak ṭā'a* ('may (God) open a window in your head').

Images such as a pneumatic drill, together with references to banks, money, shops, streets, schools, museums, and libraries – all of them damned –, help the reader to figure the urban set of this underground story. The narrator's concept of society makes him curse the whole world: "My only ambition is to survive on my own, in one piece, and for the whole world, as a ball of wax, to go to hell" (1); "God save just me and send the rest to the usual hell" (6).[18] Cursing is practiced as a means of destruction, namely of what the threefold protagonist/narrator demands before constructing a new world, different from the one refusing him: "Destruction to all the jobs that didn't accept me! to all the buses that didn't wait for me! to all the long letters that my dead relatives didn't send me!" (12).

In addition to direct curses, there are aphorisms that could be defined as indirect curses because of their function of suggesting vengeance. In this framework, we find four paradigmatic mottos with a same conditional structure were the possible victim of a hostile behaviour is invited to react strongly: '[i]f someone widens his eyes at you, blow dust in them' (15), 'if someone gives you a dirty look, pluck out his eyebrows' (17), 'if someone twists your arm, cut it off' (18), 'if someone comes at you with the jack handle, make merry on the back of his neck with your gear stick' (19).[19] The nexus between these aphorisms and the corresponding curses is inferable from a pragmatic perspective: 'if someone gives you a dirty look, pluck out his eyebrows' is semantically equivalent to 'pluck out the eyebrows of whom is giving you a dirty look', but the speaker's stereotyping of aggressive guys and the punishments suggested for them indicate a more general purpose, akin to 'may the eyebrows of who is giving you a dirty look be plucked', although expressed as an indirect curse.

A reference to patterns of behaviour is due: a normal response to an offence, according to social and cultural acceptability, would be proportional and not so extreme and grotesque. Instead, the character's position towards society emerges inciting to an inflated revenge, encouraging the provocation of harm on persons, actions, institutions, places, and things.

Curious examples of that are two short metaphorical invectives against a traffic policeman where the narrator envisages a ridiculous, but dangerous, fortune of his victim: 'He Who Understands should turn you into a traffic signal at the nearest intersection' (13) 'or make you a plastic bollard on the course for a blind man's driving test' (14). The speech does not contain offensive nouns, adjectives, or verbs, but the whole utterances, apparently senseless, convey a figurative meaning of ill omen, they are examples of verbal attack, as "[n]o word is inherently good or bad. Badness is more accurately formulated in terms of appropriateness and offensiveness, which are pragmatic variables defined within a context" (Jay 1999: 148). At the same time, the above utterances could be used with an ironical, but not aggressive intention; "a key criterion for distinguishing between politeness and impoliteness is the aim of the speaker, specifically "whether it is the speaker's intention to support face (politeness) or to attack it (impoliteness)"" (Christie 2013: 154).

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[18] Hell is alluded to in utterance (16) too.
[19] A similar construction typifies utterance (15).

As highlighted, transgression is the writer's stylistic cipher. He generates a text that does not cease to amaze the reader from incipit to epilogue, for both the plot and discourse. Among the rhetorical devices largely used, hyperbole is very significant and emphasizes the distance between a comprehensive, rational, and realistic vision of world and a postmodern one. Cursing, through powerful words not supposed to be said in a polite environment, fulfils the connotative function of giving information about the speaker's feelings (Jay 1999: 11), which are of astonishing intensity.

The narrator, with his three uncertain identities, owns an inventory of curses – codified or just conceived – enriched by a series of insults, offensive words, and disgusting images, all employed to wish destruction on the current world and construction of a different one; the novel, on the whole, is a huge curse, a passionate "go to hell!".

In a context in which social and cultural norms would oblige to a polite behaviour with family and older persons, even if they are unbearable, al-'Āydī's antihero insinuates himself into his two alter ego (or his reader?) inciting them, in an underhand way, to spit in a cup of tea, when received by detested people (2), to taste their own blood during a fight[20] (3) and to slam a plate of hot soup into the face of relatives considered annoying (4). Disgust,[21] rage, and hot temper are the ingredients of this smouldered desire of retaliation, in a framework where feelings, moods, social norms, appropriate or not appropriate actions mix producing an original and innovative literary text.

Worthy of attention is that God's name is especially invoked in blessing and more rarely in cursing. In a narrative devoted to harsh criticism and desire of destruction, wishes of good luck are not lacking and show a link to the classical idioms referring to deity, for instance in some utterances starting with *Allāhumma*,[22] which can be also followed by *'āmīn* at the end of the discourse [7:66]. *Allāh* is mentioned in several eulogies: *yā ḥawla llāhi yā rabbu* [6:49], *bi-smi llāhi l-šāfī* [6:52], *lā ilāha 'illā llāha* [7:56], *yā llāhu yā ğamā'atu* [7:65], *li-llāhi yā wilād-ī* [8:84], *Allāhu yarḥamu-hu* [8:86], *'an 'aḥmada*[23] *llāha li-'anna-nā lasnā fī Faransā* [9:96], *'in šā'a llāhu* [9:100], *lā qaddara llāhu* [9:108]. Few times the God's epithet 'Lord' occurs: *rabbi-na yi'īn-ak* and *ya rabb* [2:16], *rabbi-na yizīd-uh* [2:19], *illi yigīb-uh rabbi-na kwayyis* [6:51]. Four of *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* occur, in addition to *al-šāfī* [6:52] already mentioned: *yā fattāḥu yā 'alīmu yā razzāqu yā karī...* [2:17]. Moreover, three bizarre samples of profane blessing are: *būrika l-tamalluku* [2:19] 'God bless the property' [2:12], *būrika takāfulu l-credit card* [2:19] 'God bless the charity of the credit card!' [2:12], *al-mağdu li-sābūnītī l-mufaḍḍalati* [3:23] 'God bless my favourite bar of soap!' [3:17].

Yet, profanity becomes vulgarity in other utterances, epitomizing the story's setting. Tropes and figures frequently convey a sense of disgust, reflecting, as the same al-'Āydī

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[20] In this utterance an oxymoron, formed by two lexical items generally in antithesis, occurs: 'dialogue' (*ḥiwār*) is matched to 'fists' (*qabaḍāt*).

[21] See also utterance (11), where an onomatopoeic word is used to suggest sense of disgust, and the repulsing images contained in utterances (30), (32), and (34).

[22] In items (5) and (6) blessing is matched with cursing in the same discourse.

[23] The laudation deriving from the formulaic phrase 'praise belongs to God' (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*) is matched with an ironical content: 'Abbas stretches out his hand toward the family-size bag of Chipsy chips (salt flavor) and asks me to thank God we don't live in France where there's been a tax on salt since 1780' (Alaidy 2006: 94).

states, "the ugliness of Cairo and the horrible situation of living there like in a huge prison" (Caridi 2006). As occurring in (33) and (38), unpleasant images originate from the gap between intellectual (*tilka muʾallafātun yaṣṭaḥibu-hā l-nuqqādu*) or sentimental (*ʾan yarsama qalban*) contents and taboo speech; in the former case a place (*ḥammām*), body parts (*muʾaḫḫarātin mumtaliʾatin*), and an action (*ʿalā l-taḥaffufi min ʿibʾin*) are not appropriate in educated speaking; in the latter the romantic and popular image of a lover drawing a heart is overturned by describing this action as accomplished with a urine squirt (*bi-taṣwībi l-būli*). This author's language choice has the specific intent to display the narrator-protagonist's uncontrollable bad behaviour that in a normal oral communication would be inhibited in accordance with the sociocultural context. There are repulsive images about an alleged poisoning effect of spit (*ḫaygī-l-ak tisammim*) (35) and the distasteful (*muqrif*) savour of drooling (36).[24] Verbs and names generally belonging to different registers and sensorial or cognitive fields are juxtaposed like in (37): tears/urine/rain (*dumūʿun wa-būlun wa-maṭarun*), eye/to rain (*ʿaynun tumṭiru*), orifice/to weep (*faraǧun yabkī*), cloud/piss (*ġaymun yabūlu*). Clearly, the common speech collocations are revisited to produce an atypical mixture of rapid frames astonishing the reader in a synesthetic experience.

Eventually, some sexual taboo are expressed in rhetorical figures: *minṭaqata l-malali l-muʿtādata* (40) alludes to the male sexual organ; *ʾumm-ak mitʾaššar li-ʾabū-k il-mōz* (41) and *rakibt il-fīša wa-la ʾʾa?*[25] (42) are metaphors for a sexual intercourse. Another sentence (43) assembles three metaphors about sex not taking place: *il-bāku lissa bi-l-ʾastik*; *il-babaġān lissa mišaḫḫiš fī l-ʾafaṣ*;[26] *ma-liʿbtiš ʿarīs wi-ʿarūsa*.

In the rough language of the novel references to parents are limited and, as in item (41), they can be part of allusions. Nevertheless some curses contain patronymics, having parents as indirect object of insults – *ya bint il-mariḥa* (25), *ya bn il-faʾriyya* (26), *ya bn malādīʿ l-kalb* (28), and *wilād malādīʿ il-kalb* (29) –; mother is defined as 'funny woman/bitch', 'miserable woman', and father is classified as a 'dog'. Of course *ibn kalb* is a classic insult, like *ʾaḥmaq* (22) and *nadl* (24), but other swear words popular in Egypt that involve parents, *e.g. kuss ʾummak* ('your mother's cunt'), does not appear in the text.[27] However, it is interesting to notice that al-ʿĀydī, who sets his sights on disconcerting the reader with unbiased uses of bad speech, sometimes replaces popular coarse words with euphemisms.

Final remarks

I have restricted my work to present a number of linguistic items corresponding to the semantic and pragmatic functions of cursing. The use of insults, curses, and sexual taboo expressions has resulted as a field where al-ʿĀydī gives free rein to his creativity, but not avoiding classical forms or vernacular formulas common in everyday language. This

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[24] On the occurrence of words concerning 'spit', see also items (1) and (29).

[25] A similar allusion is *fīša yilʿabu bi-ha*, [4:29] 'an electric socket to fiddle with', while utterance (39) alludes to the loss of sexual desire.

[26] The male sexual organ is alluded to also in *rukba, fitīs, rukba, fitīs wa-hākāḏā (rubbamā ʾilā ʾan yahdaʾa l-fitīs)* [2:19] 'knee, gear stick, knee, gear stick… (waiting perhaps for the gear stick to calm down)' [2:12].

[27] For a thorough discussion on coarse words in modern Egyptian writing, see Rosenbaum 2004.

juxtaposition between the clichéd curses and the artistic license produces a contrast that heightens the reader's perception of profanity in the story.

’An takūn ‘Abbās al-‘Abd quickly became a cult novel spread in the Egyptian youth milieus during the 2000s and, though some aspects of its success rely on contents and narrative techniques associated with postmodern fiction, plurilingualism is a salient feature of the narrative. It includes standard and vernacular Arabic, interferences of foreign languages, slangs, typical expressions of youngsters, and a rich repertory of utterances with figurative meanings, several of which sound bizarre even to native-speaking readers. Offensive words and sentences cover a large amount of this informal language that met the favor of young readers most likely because of its response to their call for a freer way of acting and speaking, but a question remains open: did the author's linguistic and rhetorical exercise affect his readers' ways of using curses?

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"الله.. ابن ضعف الإنسان" عن التجديف من أجل فرح الوجود في شعر نزيه أبو عفش
GOD .. SON OF HUMAN WEAKNESS". ON BLASPHEMY FOR THE
JOY OF EXISTENCE IN THE POETRY OF NAZĪH ʾABŪ ʿAFASH

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Abstract. This article addresses the phenomenon of blasphemy in the poetry of the Syrian poet Nazīh ʾAbū ʾAfash (born 1946) as part of his attempt to replace secular existential alternatives that transcend the religious propositions of absenteeism and introduce a new knowledge system that changes the profile of human existence for the better. The in-depth textual reading of this article reveals that the poet used blasphemy and the denial of God to criticize human moral behavior, which, as for ʾAbū ʾAfash, led to the destruction of this world. This article is based on the fact that ʾAbū ʾAfash is a rebellious poet who rejects religious moral values completely and calls for a secular ethical system based on the natural and ex-existence of God's existence in human existence, according to ʾAbū ʾAfash. In addition to the textual analysis of ʾAbū ʾAfash's poems, which refers to blasphemy and dialogue with God on the basis of equality, this article traces the intertextuality of the Christian and biblical religious heritage that ʾAbū ʾAfash employs to establish his alternative existential secular values
Keywords: *Blasphemy, Nazīh ʾAbū ʾAfash, Religious moral values, Existential secular values.*

يتداخل شعر **الشاعر السوري نزيه أبو عفش**[1] **(ولد 1946)** بكلّيّته مع النصوص الدينيّة الّتي تقسم الوجوديّ إلى جنّة فوق وجحيم تحت، فهو وإن لم يبرز في مواقع معيّنة من شعره هذه الكلمات عن الحياة على الأرض والانتقال إلى الجحيم أو الجنّة، فإنّ قراءة متمكّنة لنصوص تكشف عن تداخل عميق مع النصوص الدينيّة في كلّ تشعّباتها وطروحاتها وفلسفتها. على أنّه في كلّ نصوص الّتي يحاور فيها النصوص الدينيّة المسيحيّة والتوراتيّة يخرج أبو عفش عن هذه الطروحات ويعتمد الحياة الأرضيّة، ويحاول تفنيد المفاهيم الدينيّة المعتمدة على الفكر الغيبيّ ويضرب بها عرض الحائط، وبالأساس يخلع عن الله سماته المقدسة الإلهية ويحاوره بل وينكر قيمته العلوية وكونه خالقا لهذا الكون. أبو

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[1] وُلد الشاعر نزيه أبو عفش في قرية مرمريتا في العام 1946، وبعد إنهائه الدراسة الثانويّة توجّه إلى حمص وطرطوس للدراسة الجامعيّة. انتقل للعيش في دمشق في شبابه، ليعيش وسط أجواء الحزب الشيوعيّ السوريّ، ويعاني بذلك ملاحقات واعتقالات عديدة، غذّت، وفق ما يقول تجربته الإنسانيّة. كانت حياته في دمشق سعيًا وراء لقمة العيش والعمل السياسيّ المنظّم. على أنّه انقطع في العقدين الماضيين عن العمل السياسيّ وعن صفوف الحزب، واختار أن يعود في العام 2005 إلى قريته مرمريتا ويعيش في عزلة، محاولًا اكتشاف العالم من جديد. أبو عفش رسّام أيقونات دنيويّة، وهو يعرّف نفسه بعد كونه عربيًّا سوريًّا على أنّه مسيحيّ ملحد. عضو في اتّحاد الكتّاب العرب منذ سنة تأسيسه الأولى. عمل في وزارة الثقافة السوريّة خبيرًا لدى مديريّة التأليف والترجمة منذ العام 1992 وحتّى مطلع العام 2002، حاز على جائزة الشعر الدورة الثالثة عشر 2012-2013 من مؤسّسة سلطان بن عليّ العويس الثقافيّة، وترجمت أشعاره إلى لغات عديدة. راجع: Bawardi 2011, pp. 257-268، وموقع مؤسّسة سلطان بن عليّ العويس الثقافيّة: Abu ʾAfash 1997; http://www.alowaisnet.org/ar/winnersbio/acjbiahbahfigchbha.aspx. Ruocco 2000, pp. 63-75.

عفش من هذا المنظور يطرح نموذج الإنسان الدنيويّ الَّذي يتخبّط في خطاياه ومنظومة أخلاقه المشوّشة الَّتي تؤدّي إلى هلاك العالم. في أغلب نصوصه، يستدعي الشاعر النصوص الدينيّة المسيحيّة والتوراتيّة ويؤسّس من خلالها قاعدة متينة لطرح أفكاره العلمانيّة الدنيويّة. فهو يتخطَّى الغيبيّ ليشرح معنى الخطيئة من وجهة نظر الإنسان العاديّ المجروح والضعيف. لا نرى عند أبي عفش هذا الإنسان البطوليّ الخارق القوّة، بل نرى الإنسان العاري الشفّاف الضعيف الحالم لأكوام آثامه. أبو عفش في مجمل قصائده لا يتعامل مع هذه الآثام من منطلقات التوبة أو العقاب، أو الجزاء والثواب، أو الضدّيّات الدينيّة الَّتي تعطي الحقّ لله أو الأنبياء في محو الخطايا أو الصفح أو التكفير، إنّه لا يعطي للإنسان هذه الهديّة القيّمة الَّتي يمكنها أن تنزل عن ظهره أكوام الآثام هذه، بل يحمّل الإنسان أسبابها ويحمّله بالوقت ذاته مسؤوليّة التخلّص منها إذا استطاع. يعتمد هذا المقال، إضافة إلى تحليل قصائد أبي عفش المتعلقة بمحاورة المقدس الإلهية، على تقصّي التناص الديني من الموروث المسيحي والتوارتي والذي يجنّده أبو عفش لتعزيز طروحاته الوجودية الرافضة لهذا المقدس الإلهي والتي تحمّله مسؤولية دمار الوجود الإنساني. من هنا تكشف قراءتنا لأبي عفش عن أنّه يستدعي النصوص الدينيّة في أغلب نصوصه الشعريّة ليستطيع من خلالها تأسيس منظومة واسعة لأفكار قد تتيح للإنسان إعادة التفكير في سلوكه وأخلاقيّاته بعيدًا عن منطلقات الثواب والعقاب والصفح والغفران. كذلك يستدعي أبو عفش النصوص الوجوديّة والعالميّة، ويناقش من خلالها مفاهيمه حول الألم والموت والحياة المعيشة.

تشكّل نصوص **أبي عفش** نموذجا نصيا لظاهرة أوسع في الشعر العربي الحديث تتناول العلاقة مع الذات الإلهية من منطلق التمرد عليها، في محاولة لإحلال بديل معرفيّ وأخلاقي وقيميّ مختلف عن النظام الدينيّ، وبالتالي الاجتماعيّ والسياسيّ المسيطر. وتنضوي علاقة الشعر العربي الحديث والخطابَ الدينيّ المهيمن، ضمن ظاهرتين أساسيّتين؛ الأولى ظاهرة الحداثة الشعرية والوجودية الباحثة باستمرار عن الجديد والقائمة على التساؤل الحركي، أما الظاهرة الثانية، وهي تنبثق بالضرورة من مفهوم الحداثة، فهي ظاهرة التمرد والرفض الشعريّ الحديث، ونخصّ بالذكر، في هذا السياق، التمرّد الوجوديّ الذاتيّ الذي يحاول طرح طروحات قيميّة ومعرفية وأخلاقية تخرج عن الأنظمة الاجتماعية والدينية والسياسية القائمة. وينطلق هذا المقال من أنّ أبا عفش هو أحد شعراء الحداثة والرفض في الشعر العربي الحديث. وتتعدّى حدود الرفض عند الشاعر، على ما سنرى، الرفضَ الأيديولوجي الضيّق أو مساندة الوحدة العربيّة والخروج ضدّ الأنظمة العربيّة، إلى الرفض الوجودي وكتابة الاختراق أو الانتهاك ضدّ القيم الجماليّة والأخلاقيّة والفنّيّة البلاغيّة السائدة. هذا الرفض هو بمثابة المحرّك الأساس، حسب رأيي، لدراسة نصوص أبي عفش الشعريّة؛ إذ يمكننا من خلاله الوقوف على نظرة الشاعر من العمليّة الشعريّة ودور الشاعر ونظرته لمسائل الوجود العميقة ومساءلته المستمرّة للكينونة الإنسانية. ويتشابه تمرّد أبي عفش الوجوديّ إلى حدّ عميق والتمرّدَ المارورائي الميتافيزيقي، بحسب نموذج الكاتب والمفكر الوجودي ألبير كامو(Albert Camus) (1913-1960)[2].

يتعامل أبو عفش مع التناصّ[3] بكلّ أنواعه ومصادره المختلفة؛ التاريخيّة والأدبيّة وبالأساس الدينيّة المسيحيّة. التناصّ في نصوص أبي عفش مساحة للحواريّة مع مسائل الوجود والحياة الكبرى، بحيث يمكن تلخيصها بثيمات طاغية على أعماله وهي: الموت، الألم، القلق الحرّيّة، الخراب الأخلاقيّ والغضب. على أنّنا في هذا السياق يتوجّب علينا الإشارة إلى التناصّ مع الموروث والأيديولوجيا المسيحيّة المتمثّل بالحوار المكثَّف مع "شخص الله" كان يهدف بالأساس إلى طرح الرفض الوجوديّ معبّرًا بذلك عن موقفه من أحوال الخراب الأخلاقيّ للعالم. يأتي التناصّ في هذا السياق بالذات ليكون أداة مقارنة تبرز حدّة هذا الخراب وتداعياته الهدّامة على سيرورة الإنسانيّة جمعاء.

يتحاور أبو عفش في تعاليّاته النصّيّة، وفق تعبير جينيت جرار[4]، مع تراثه المسيحيّ مجنّدًا إيّاه لنقد السلوك الإنسانيّ ومنظوماته الأخلاقيّة، على أنّ هذا النقد لا ينسحب فقط على المسيحيّة كعقيدة دينيّة بل يضرب من خلالها كلّ العقائد الدينيّة الَّتي تكوّن بعرفه، المسبّب الأوّل لخراب هذا العالم. على أنّ تجنيده للتناصّ الدينيّ المسيحيّ متعدّد الوجهات، ويهدف، على ما سنرى، إلى قلب المعايير الدينيّة رأسًا على عقب، في محاولة لـ "فضح" الممارسات الإنسانيّة الَّتي أدت إلى فساد الإنسان وتحطيمه للعلاقة الوثيقة بينه وبين الطبيعة.

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2   حول فكر ألبير كامو والوجودية الملحدة راجع:
    Sefler 1974, pp. 415-421; Sagi 2002, pp. 159-172; Crittenden 2012, pp. 495-507;
    Foley, J. 2014; Arnell 2015, pp. 3-27.
3   حول التناص عامة، راجع: .Pfister 1991, pp. 207-224; Juvan 2008. Sanders 2015.
4   بعلابد 2008، ص 25.

التناصّ مع الموروث الدينيّ المسيحيّ والتوراتيّ:

يعي أبو عفش أنّ سمات الرفض في شعره ما هي إلّا مواجهة عميقة الأثر ضدّ تكريس الوضع القائم؛ الوضع المليء بالصراخ والنحيب والجنازات والفوضى الأخلاقيّة وانعدام الحرّيّة الفرديّة والجماعيّة، ومن خلال هذا الوعي لأبي عفش بالتزامه الوجوديّ يضرب بأقدس المقدّسات الدينيّة المتمثّلة بشخصيّ الله والمسيح. وهو لذلك يدأب في أغلبيّة قصائده على استدعاء اسم الله أو المسيح، محاورًا، معاتبًا، ناقمًا، متحبّبًا، طالبًا المساعدة، ماحيًا مجدها ومطالبًا بالعدل ورفع الظلم عن الوجود الإنسانيّ. ومن هنا نرى بوضوح أنّ أنواع المحاورات التناصّيّة الّتي يتبنّاها أبو عفش تتعدّد بتعدّد تناوله لمواضيع المشكلات الكبرى للحياة، تلك المشكلات الّتي تبدأ، برأيه، من المفاهيم الدينيّة للوجود:

لا يا أبتِ/لستُ ابنكَ، لستُ حفيدكَ،/لستُ وريثَ خطاياكَ،/منشدَ أعراسِكَ،/لستُ أخاكَ ولا عبدك، لا القدّيس ولا الخاطئ، لستُ يهوذا النادم يتمرّغ تحت صليبٍ يسوع كي يطلبَ غفرانَ يسوع،... ولستُ يسوع لكي أمنحَه مغفرتي.[5]

يمارس الشاعر في هذا المقطع القطيعة التامّة مع المفاهيم الدينيّة المسيحيّة والتوراتيّة. وهو عن طريق التناصّ المفارق والصريح بحوار جريء ومنتهك لأسس العقيدة المسيحيّة القائلة بأنّ المسيح يسوع هو ابن الله وهو جزء من الثالوث المقدّس (الأب والابن والروح القدس). هذا النكران بنسب الأبوة صارخ ويهدم العلاقة الأبويّة الّتي ترسي لأهمّ قاعدة بالدين المسيحيّ؛ أي ألوهيّة يسوع المسيح الشاب الّذي تجسّد من الروح القدس ليصبح إنسانًا عاديًا من لحم ودم.

إنكار الصلة مع الأب/ الله يثير بقارئ النصّ تساؤلات جوهريّة حول أسباب قطع صلة الأبوة والتجريح المبطن للذات الإلهيّة. بالمقام الأوّل يتنكّر الابن للأب ويمعن في تكرار الإنكار، ليفهم القارئ أنّ القصد ليس ليسوع المسيح حصرًا إنّما لكلّ إنسان على هذه الأرض. إنّ أسلوب الطباق الّذي يستعمله أبو عفش داخل استدعائه النصّيّ يشير بوضوح وحسم إلى شموليّة النكران. فليس يسوع وحده خارج ونشرحدود البنوة إنّما كلّ الخلائق على الإطلاق، مهما كانت صفاتها الروحيّة أو الأخلاقيّة. لا يستطيع الأنا الشعريّ المتكلّم أن يمنح يهوذا الأسخريوطي مغفرةً، فالمغفرة من عمل الآلهة في هذا السياق، وهو، يسوع لا يمت للألوهيّة بصلة تُذكر. وقد يكون استحضار شخصيّة يهوذا الأسخريوطي في هذا السياق لتعظيم الإحساس بندم الخيانة الإنسانيّة وجشع الإنسان وسلوكيّاته اللاأخلاقيّة.

إنّ الخطاب الضدّ دينيّ هنا لا يدحض فكرة ألوهة يسوع الشاب فقط وعلاقته بالأب، بل يتوجّه لله بشكل مباشر، وينفي عنه هالة القداسة العظيمة والعصمة والتنزيه عن ممارسة الأخطاء. لا يرفض الأنا الشعريّ المتكلّم علاقة الأبوّة عامة، بل يرفضها لأنّها قد تسيء إليه، لما فيها من مسؤوليّة تحمّل أخطاء العناية الإلهيّة، وفق تعبير أبي عفش، وهي مسؤوليّة غير مرغوب بها أبدًا. يأتي هذا النصّ من موقع يخفى على عين القارئ، ولكن القارئ المتمرّس سيعرف أنّ هذا الحوار المقطوع والّذي يعتمد على طرف واحد من المتحاورين، هو سيرورة لأسئلة افتراضيّة يردّ بها الأنا الشعريّ المتكلّم على المعتقدات الدينيّة المسيحيّة.

على أنّ التناصّ الدينيّ هنا لا يهدف برأيي إلى نفي القداسة عن الله بقدر ما يهدف إلى دحض فكرة الخلق الإلهيّ، وفق ما يراه أبو عفش. الظلام أصل الحياة عند أبي عفش قبل الوجود الإنسانيّ، هو مصدر التكوين والنشأة وليست عمليّة خلق قام بها الله كما ينصّ النص الدينيّ وبالأساس سفر التكوين. عمليّة الخلق تمّت في المكان/ الأرض ودون أي تدخّل خارجي:

لستُ سوى نفسي.../خرجتُ من ظلمتها الأولى/ فأضاءت هذا الطين البالي (ص 93)

النفس الإنسانيّة أضاءت ذاتها من طين يخصّها هي، وهو ليس طين الّذي نفخ فيه الله روحه. التناصّ المفارق هنا يصرّح عن موقف علمانيّ عميق وجريء، لم تتمّ عمليّة الخلق في جنّة ولم تأخذ بعدها مراحل العقاب والثواب، إنّها الفطرة والتكوين البيئيّ المعتمد على تطوّر الحياة في هذا الكوكب دون فوقيّة إلهيّة مسؤولة عن تكوينه. هذا الموقف من الخلق هو لبنة أخرى من سلسلة مواقف أبي عفش الفكريّة وخطاباته العلمانيّة الّتي تكرّس الأرضيّ وتحصر الحياة ضمن

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5 أبو عفش 2003، ص 93. وقد نشرت هذه القصيدة "شكوى الذئب" في مجلّة **البيان الكويتيّة**، العدد 386، 1 سبتمبر، 2002، ص 95-97.

حدوده. ليس التناصّ في هذا السياق عفويًا أو يؤدّي دورًا شكليًا، إنّما مقصودًا ويلعب دورًا مهمًّا في بثّ رسالة المرسِل إلى قارئ يحسِن عقد المقارنات بين السياقات الأدبيّة والفكريّة المختلفة.

في ديوان **إنجيل الأعمى** ينكبّ الشاعر نزيه أبو عفش على كتابة إنجيله الخاصّ به، معتمدًا على شعريّة تستمدّ بلاغتها من السرديّة الإنجيليّة، حيث تأخذ من الأسفار صورتَها، في محاولة منه لتحويل الشعريّ الرؤيا من مفهومه الروحيّ المتعارف. وهو يفتح المخيّلة الشعريّة على الأرض الّتي يعتبرها أبو عفش جحيمًا لعالم خاطئ. إنّ شعر أبي عفش هنا يتعامل مع شخصيّة غاضبة، تخرج عن أساطير وتقاليد الاستعارة واللاهوت التقليدي ليخلق لاهوتًا وأساطير شخصيّة خاصّة بها قوامها مواضيع الوجع والجراح والموت الإنسانيّ.

لا تتشكّل رؤية أبي عفش في هذا السياق من معجم صوفيّ أو رؤيويّ عاديّ، أساسه جدليّات الضدّيّات الأخلاقيّة مثل الذنوب والتوبة، أو الضياع والرجوع إلى درب الخلاص. الذات الّتي يصوّرها أبو عفش ضحيّة السياقات الدينية المتحالفة مع السياسيّ والسلطوي، وقد تمّ نذرها للهزيمة، ذاتٌ وحيدة ومرعوبة ومهزومة، ذات لا تنتمي إلى الإلهيّ الفوقيّ بل الدنيويّ التحتيّ الحقيقيّ. يختبئ أبو عفش خلف أقنعة مختلفة، ويشكّل من خلالها مسيرة الإنسان الحامل لأخطائه اللانهائيّة، إنّه الإنسان الضعيف الّذي تعصف به قضايا دنيويّة تقوم على الألم والشك والقلق والهموم الوجدانيّة، إنّها "النفس الأولى" للأنا الشعريّ المتكلّم الّتي تكوّنت من عناصر الأرض وليس من أمر ربّاني، "النفس الأولى" الّتي لا تدين بتكوينها إلّا للعناصر الأوّلية لتكون الحياة على الأرض:

نفسي الأولى/ بنت الأعشاب/ومرضعة الورد حليب الورد/بنت الحلزون اللائب/والدود الأعمى/والنحل السكران./بنت العذاب/....فإذن يا أبتي/لا آثامي تبعدني عنك/ولا آمالي تشفع لي عندك/فإذن: ماذا أفعل؟/أنت هنا وأنا قدّامك خلفك، بين يديك/شقيّ، لماح، نكد، قدوس، طمّاع وكريم/تعس، مكّار قاسٍ، وعطوف، نزق ورقيق/القلب.. إلى آخره.... (ص 96)

ليست الهموم الوجوديّة الّتي يشكّلها أبو عفش لمنظوره الشعريّ في هذا الإنجيل الخاصّ به، الموازي بل والضدي لإنجيل المسيح، متعلّقة بالوجهة النبويّة أو الصوفيّة، بل هو برأيي سيرورة البحث اللامنتهي الّذي يؤرخ الشاعر لعذاب الإنسان الأرضيّ المنزّه عن الصفات الغيبيّة، البحث المتعلّق بما يجري ماديًّا وأخلاقيًّا من حوله. إنّه العالم الخرب المحكوم بنهايات مدمّرة لا يأتي بعدها الفرج والخلاص أبدًا كما تعد السردية الدينية التقليدية:

لا تشهق/ يا روحَ أبيكَ العالي/يا روحَ أبيكَ النائم /يا درّة روح أبيك/ لا، يا ذا الجالسُ يتبسّمُ في أيقونته لا تشهق هو ذا بيتُ أبيكَ الأزرق/ لا يلبثُ أن يغرق. (ص 41)

إنجيل الأعمى يواصل الصراخ الّذي بدأه أبو عفش من بدايات كتابته؛ صراخًا يجذب القارئ للاستماع على الدوام إلى ممارسات العذاب والألم الإنسانيّ وبالأخصّ محور الموت الّذي يلخّص ماهيّة كتابة أبي عفش الشعريّة. إنّ الاستدعاءات النصّيّة لقصص الإنجيل الدينيّ التقليديّ والحواريّة المفارقة لماهيّتها تصبّ في صلب نصوص أبي عفش هنا. الأسلوب كما نرى ينتهك قوانين المفارقة العاديّة والمجاز البسيط ويعتمد على أسلوب المجاز المركّب الّذي يجعل من الاستدعاءات النصّيّة مادّة غنيّة للحواريّة وطرح الأفكار بصورة فنّيّة مركّبة.

في إنجيله يرتكز الشاعر على الصراع الأبديّ بين السلوك الغريزي المقدّس للّهو واللذة والسعادة الدنيويّة الجسمانيّة، من جهة، والسعي العقلانيّ للمعرفة والبحث والمنطق. على أنّ هذا الصراع، وإن بدا متناقضًا في ماهيّته، إنّما يؤسّس لكينونة الإنسان الحقيقيّة الّتي تحتوي على هذين الطرفين على الدوام. فالقلق الغرائزيّ الجنونيّ والهدوء العقلانيّ المعرفيّ يشكّلان جوهر الوجود الإنسانيّ، بحسب أبي عفش:

ما أيتمه جثمانًا! قلتُ لنفسي، ما أيتمه!/حدّقتُ إليه مليًّا/لسعتْني حُمّى عينيه الباردتين /وذابت غُصّتُه مالحةً تحت لساني./قلتُ: فهذا جثماني؟/أم ذا أنا مدفونًا في جلدِ أنايَ الثاني؟[6] (ص 112)

إنّ الأنا الشعريّ المتكلّم يجول بين قطبين الأنا المتمزّق بينه وبين نفسه وبينه وبين الآخر أو بين نفسه الحية ونفسه الميتة الّتي تسحبه إلى مدارك العالم السفليّ ليرى الحقيقة الغائبة عن أعين الأحياء. هذا الموتيف المتكرّر عند يأخذ في هذا السياق منحى الضدّيّة مع السرديّة الدينيّة التقليديّة الّتي تفصل فصلًا باتًّا بين الحيّ والميت. على أنّ أبا عفش الّذي يؤمن أنّ الموت يسمح للإنسان بإجراء مقارنة عميقة يكتشف فيها ماهيّة وجوده، من هنا يشارك الموت في تطهير البشريّة:

وحدي؟!

إذن وحدي... وأمواتي كثيرٌ!/ وعليَّ الآن أن أجعلني ميتًا لكي أسمع ما يُهمَسُ في حظيرة الموتى. (ص 86)

الموت من هذا المنحى ترجمة لعمق مسيرة الإنسان من حياة وحركيّة نحو خمود أبديّ يتوقّف فيه الزمن ولا يعود مهمًّا، من هنا يصبح الموت منبع الحياة الّذي لا مفرّ من تناوله من أجل حياة بشريّة أفضل، فالموت ذلك الحضور المسيطر على جميع مجالات وجودنا:

موتٌ، على الأعشاب/موتٌ في التراب الميت/موتٌ في هواء الميت... موتٌ طالعٌ من لحية الكاهن. (ص 80-81)

إنه ليس الموت المفهوم ضمنا في السردية الدينية المتعارف عليها؛ أي تقسيم الموتى ضمن مصطلحي الثواب والعقاب، والجنة والجحيم، بقرار إلهي لا يُردّ أبدا، بل هو الموت الذي يشير إلى بشاعة التصرّف الإنساني ومدى طغيانه على أخيه الإنسان.

إنّ بشاعة الأوصاف الّتي يبثّها أبو عفش في هذه القصائد إنّما تخدم بالأخير الأبعاد الجماليّة العميقة الّتي يرغب الشاعر في إيصالها للقارئ المتمرّس. إنّ سلوك الإنسان وألمه ينحوان بالأخير نحو الموت أو نحو الفناء، ونحو نهاية ترافقها العذابات الإنسانيّة بكثافة، على أنّ طقوس الآلام هذه الّتي ترافق سيرورة الإنسانيّة يمكنها أن تحمل في طيّاتها جمالًا يخفّف عن الإنسانيّة بعضًا من عذابها. إنّ الانحدار نحو النهاية حاصل لا محالة، فـ"الإنسان شجرةُ آلام وحيدة"(ص 7) محكوم بمسيرة الموت بشكل تدريجيّ، لذا فمن المهمّ أن يخطّط سلوكه بما يتلاءم وحقيقة حتميّة النهاية؛ الموت.

وعلى الرغم قساوة الموقف الّذي يتّخذه أبو عفش من الإنسان العاديّ المتّجه حتمًا نحو الموت إلّا أنّه لا يقترح العقاب والجحيم حلًّا لسلوكه الغرائزيّ، إنّه يفهم هذا الكائن الحيّ الّذي يتحكّم بمصيره ولا يحدّد نهايته، على أنّه إنسان هشّ يمرّ بمراحل الكسر رويدًا رويدًا، لذا فهو مشغول بفعل الندم من جهة، وبالجمال كقيمة قد تسهّل عليه وجوده ومسيرته نحو الموت.

رأينا أنّ أبا عفش في كتبه **إنجيل الأعمى** ينتزع عنه، كما في كتبه السابقة واللاحقة، اللاهوتيّة المسيحيّة والتوراتيّة التقليديّة ويتبنّى طريقًا آخر لمسيرة الوجود أساسها فعل الندامة والألم والموت. لقد استعار أبو عفش اللاهوت بشكل مفارق ولبس أقنعة الشعراء المتعدّدة ليستشرف المستقبل المتّجه نحو الموت. **إنجيل الأعمى** هو إنجيل يَشغل فيه الأعمى منصب عرّاف يرى ما لا يستطيع المبصرون رؤيته. الرؤيا هنا قد تلبس ثوبًا لاهوتيًّا ولكنّها بالحقيقة رؤيا علمانيّة لوجود الإنسان العبثيّ؛ يعرف مصيره ولا يقوى على إحداث أيّ تغيير فيه.

في كتابه **ذاكرة العناصر**[7] يعود أبو عفش إلى موضوع الألم والموت "الحياة ممرّ طويل إلى الموت" (ص 137) كرافعة لطروحاته السابقة. وهو يكثر من الاستدعاءات النصّيّة مع التراث الدينيّ المسيحيّ والتوراتيّ. يستلهم أبو عفش اللاهوت المسيحيّ ليحاوره ويعبّر من خلال سرديّته المفارقة (أبو عفش) عن نبوة أخرى مختلفة ودنيويّة الأبعاد. أبو عفش يرجع إلى العناصر الأولى للتكوين والخلق المتمثّلة بعناصر الطبيعة الأولى قبل أن تدرك الحيرةُ الإنسان. هذه

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6   "الجثمان الّذي أنا"، راجع أبو عفش 2003.
7   أبو عفش 2005.

العناصر ملازمة لشقاء الإنسان وألم اللاحدوديّ، وهي البوصلة الَّتي يُرجع إليها أبو عفش الإنسان ليستعيد قوّته بعد ضعفه الَّذي خلق من خلاله الله، كما رأينا سابقًا.

إنّ الألم بحسب أبي عفش مدى أزليّ يرافق ضعف الإنسان الممتدّ عميقًا في جذوره. الألم عنده هو المهماز الَّذي يذكّره بوجوده وبكونه حيًّا، إنّه المهماز الَّذي يخرج الإنسان عن حيّز عدم الاكتراث أو الخمول:

الآلام تنبّهني بلا هوادة/إلى أنَّي/ ما أزال/داخل الحياة. (ص 121)

الألم في هذا السياق أداة تتصدّى لقبول الضعف البشريّ الوجوديّ العام:

تألَّم أمام عين الله/تألّم عاليًا وقل:/ ما أضعفني! (ص 135)

هذا الضعف يؤدِّي بالشاعر إلى الاعتقاد بوجوب الحذر على الدوام من الإنسان الغادر الَّذي لا يقيم للآخر أي حساب. الضعف الَّذي يولّد الأنانيّة الوجوديّة، إذا صحّ التعبير. ففي قصيدته "أحفاد قابيل" يفقد أبو عفش الأمل في إنسان محبّ ومخلص ويمتلك عاطفة إيجابيّة، البشريّة هنا أحفاد قابيل الَّذي قتل أخاه هابيل وربّى بذلك على شرعنة القتل في مسيرة صراع البقاء، أحفاد قبيل يضيفون لأخطائهم خطيئة أخرى لا تقلّ أهمِّية عن الخطيئة الأولى الَّتي طُرد الإنسان بسببها من الفردوس:

إذا تقول "أحبك"... أتحسَّس قلبي/ وإذ تقول "أخي"... أشمُّ في ندائك العطوف/ طلاوة السمِّ في اللقمة/ ولسعة الرصاصة في الظهر. (ص 171)

نرى في نصوص هذا الديوان مسحات الشكّ بكلّ ما يتعلَّق بالأخلاق الإنسانيّة، وهو بذلك يخرج عن تلك اليقينيّة الدينيّة الحالمة بالأفضل في فردوس طاهر. الشاعر لا يؤمن بالخير البشريّ الَّذي تحاول الكتب السماويّ أن تكرّسه، العكس هو الصحيح، فالشاعر مؤمن بأبديّة الشر الإنسانيّ:

تحت قشرة التآخي الكونيّ/لسلالات الديكة والتماسيح والأرانب/ينكشف عطشُ الفولاذ وشذوذُ الدم/ونهمُ ميليشيات أبناء الرب/ لاحتكار عضوية "نادي العراة" السماويّ... تنكشف السكين/ وينكشف أن: كلانا آخر / كلانا قابيل وكلانا ذبيحته. (ص 41)

يدقّ الشاعر في هذا الديوان، من خلال استدعاءاته النصّية مع السرديّة المسيحيّة والتوراتيّة، ناقوس الخطر من سيادة الشر. يجب ألا ننخدع بمظاهر "التآخي الكونيّ"، فهو قشرة واهية تخبّئ تحتها الشغف البشريّ للقتل الغادر. الخير إذن وهم لا غير يتغنّى الإنسان به ليستر حقيقته، وهو يخرج ضدّ التقاطب الَّذي تعتمده السرديّة التوراتيّة حول محور الخير ومحور الشر، أو القاتل والضحيّة، "كلانا قابيل"، وهو لا يستثني أحدًا ويعتبر الجميع في خانة واحدة ومتشابهة، لا مكان للتقاطب في النفس الإنسانيّة، إنَّما هي نفس واحدة تحتوي على نفس الصفات البشعة المؤدِّية إلى الشرّ:

اجعلوا الجدار عاليًا، أو: اجعلوا النفق عميقًا لأن: الإنسان هاربًا من أقفاص نفسه/ يريد أن يحتمي بعتمة النسيان. (ص 51)

ويمتزج الشكُّ بالله وبالحلول الغيبيّة في هذا الديوان، بالشكّ البشريّ والدنيويّ وفي قدرة الإنسان على التغيّر. ليس الحلّ بالإلهيّ الفوقيّ، فهو أيضًا غير قادر على تغيير الأوضاع الأخلاقيّة المتردِّية والطباع البشريّة المتوحّشة والتائقة إلى سفك الدماء:

ما جدوى الله (الله أو سواه)/إذا كان لا أحد يستطيع/بين الزناد والهدف/أن يوقف طلقة الرامي! (ص 148)

فهو يسخر من قدرة الإله على إحلال تغيير جذريّ، إله يستطيع أن يوزّع الرحمة ويخرج عن نسيانه للإنسانيّة ولما يحصل فيها من قتل ودمار، الرحمة أو الشفقة عند أبي عفش هي الحلّ الأمثل لبشاعة الوجود المليء بمظاهر القتل والسيطرة:

والكل يسأل، الكل يسأل:/أما من إله "فوق".../ يطل برأسه من شقوق هذه السماوات القاحلة ويشفق؟! ما من إله؟! (ص 76)

ومن المسح النصّيّ أعلاه نرى بوضوح مدى تأصّل التناصّ بالموروث الدينيّ المسيحيّ والتوراتيّ في نصوص أبي عفش. وهي بمجملها استدعاءات حواريّة مفارقة تحاول أن تقوض الفكر الدينيّ ومنظومة تفسيرها للوجود الإنسانيّ. يستغل أبو عفش السرديّة الدينيّة لأنّها كما رأينا سابقًا، إحدى أهمّ المنظومات، برأيه، الّتي تتحكّم بالوجود الإنسانيّ. لذا، ومن أجل إحلال تغيير جذريّ بمفاهيم الإنسان، يقوم بمهاجمة الأقدس والأهمّ في حياته؛ الله والمنظومة الدينيّة.

إنّ الله، كحد يستعصى عبوره، حاضر بشدّة في شعر أبي عفش، والله عنوان أخير يلجأ الشاعر إليه ليعرف، أو يتساءل، أو يصبّ غضبه، أو ينتقد، أو يستنكر، أو بالمجمل إنّ الله عند أبي عفش المرجعيّة الأخيرة والأكثر ازدواجيّة لديه، بين كونه، أي الله مسؤولا عن الشرّ اللامتناهي، من خلال النظام الأخلاقيّ المتعارف عليه، أو المسؤول عن بعض من لمحات الخير في عالم يعيش بين هلاكين، على حدّ تعبيره. أين اللاحدوديّ؟ حسب رأيي ينطلق أبو عفش من الفكرة المسيحيّة الّتي تجسد الله وتجعله بشرا/ ذاتا قابلة للحوار والجدل، من منطلق التساوي أو من منطلق شرعيّة التحاور مع الله على أنّه موجود كذات[8]. وجوده كذات يمحو العديد من الحدود، فوق تحت، سماء دنيا، أو فلنقل تمحو الدونيّة والمحدوديّة الإنسانيّة مقابل الكمال الإلهيّ اللامحدود المتعارف عليه؛ بمعنى آخر، ومن خلال الله، الذات المتجسّدة، يصبح النقد للمرجعيّات الأخلاقيّة الدينيّة والاجتماعيّة أسهل وأكثر مرونة.

وغني عن الذكر أنّ فكرة التساوي مع الله في الفكر الدينيّ يعني الكفر بوجود خالق أوحد، على الإنسان العبد أن ينصاع لتشريعاته، ويلتزم بها في ممارساته اليوميّة؛ بكلمات أخرى، يلغي الفكرُ الدينيّ فكرةَ الجدليّة في علاقة الإنسان بالله، لاغيا عنها حوار الأنداد، ومحافظا على تركيبة الأعلى أمام الدون.

إنّ الله عند أبي عفش أداة انتقاد عنيفة ضدّ السلوك الإنسانيّ العاجز والّذي يجرّه عجزه إلى فقدان صوابه وممارسة الموبقات المؤدّية إلى الخراب، كلّ هذا لأنّ السلوك مستند إلى شبكة قوانين أخلاقيّة عاجزة عن تطهير حقيقيّ. فالانتقاد الّذي يعبّر فيه أبو عفش عن حدود علويّة الله إنما ينصب في الأخير على الممارسة الإنسانيّة البشعة. في قصيدة "قبل وبعد" يقول:

منذ أن خلق الله الإنسان../ وهو يقول له:/ يا إنسان خلّ يدك نظيفة وبيضاءُ/ وقلبك نظيفا وأبيضْ/ وشرشف حياتك الصغير/ نظيفا وأبيضْ/ ومنذ أن خلق الإنسان الله.../ :على يديه وقلبه وشرشف حياته العريض/ حبرٌ أحمر../ حبر أسود../ وبقايا عظام!...[9] ويقول: في البدء صنع الله الإنسان:/ العنق...للالتفاتة/ الفم...للقبلة/ القلب..... للخفقان/ الأظافر... للدغدغة... وفي الخاتمة صنع الله الإنسان:/ العنق للسكين/ القلب للرصاصة/ الذراعان للبلطة[10]

ويقودنا هذا إلى تبيان فكرة الله كما يراها الشاعر والّتي سوف نرى ترجمتها نصّيّا لاحقا. يقول أبو عفش: "الله عندي فكرة. فكرة الله اخترعها الإنسان عندما انتبه لمقدار عجزه الأخلاقيّ المطلق والألم المطلق والخوف المطلق، ما بقي لديه شيء يلتجئ إليه، لا إطباء ولا مساعدين نفسيّين، ولا أسبرين، فكّر الألمَ فتكتشف اللغة الرسميّة لجدّك الحزين. الله اللغة الرسميّة هي الألم والقمع... هي الخوف والقمع... هي العجز. فكرة الله هي فكرة عبقريّة بالنسبة لأناس يعيشون في أقصى

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8 حول فكرة التجسّد في المسيحية راجع: Dunn,1996.

9 أبو عفش 2003، ص 445.

10 أبو عفش 2003، ص 56.

الألم. ولكن الله وأنا أكشف لك سرا، الله لا وجود له، (س. لماذا إذن تحمّله المسؤولية؟) الله هو فكرتي، وهو فكرة الآخرين، الله أيضا هو القوّة هو القادر هو الّذي استطاع وهو الّذي يستطيع، وعندما أحاوره أحاور اثنين العطوف اللطيف؛ وأحيانا ما يخصّ الآخرين القاهر والمتجبّر، (س. لماذا الله وليست السلطة بشكل مباشر)؟ لأنّه، أخلاقيّا، هو أكبر كفكرة، يكون الله المتجسد هو أكبر ديكتاتور بين الجميع، هو الأكبر، فإذًا أنا عندما أخاطبه لا أخاطب السلطة الصغيرة الملك حسين أو جورج بوش أو غيره، أنا أخاطب من هو أكبر منه. المستبدّ الأكبر والقادر الأكبر والمانع الأكبر"[11]. إذن، يقوم مصطلح الله عند أبي عفش على مبدإ الازدواجية التي تعتبره موجودا بصنع الإنسان وبالوقت ذاته تعطيه قوة وجبروتا ليكون أداة صالحة للانتقاد الفعّال. إن إجابة أبي عفش حول نفي التناقض بين عدم وجود الله، من جهة، وتحميله الذنب الأكبر من جهة أخرى، إنما تشير إلى إدراك أبي عفش العميق لتجذر الألوهية في الحياة اليومية والوجود الإنساني ككلّ. من هنا يأتي التعامل مع الله على أنه موجود كآلية للانتقاد الأكثر فاعلية للأوضاع الراهنة. إن انتقاد أبي عفش لله والمقدس ليس في الحقيقة إلا انتقادا للسلوك الإنساني الذي يعلق ذنوبه وآثامه على الله؛ الله الذي اخترعه الإنسان ليختبئ وراءه. من هنا يمكن فهم التناقض في إجابة أبي عفش، فالله إدراك إنساني لا غير، وإنما تقديسه يدخل ضمن مضمار السلوك الإنساني المحض.

يعود الشاعر إلى خيارات ما قبل "اكتشاف الله" ليعيد للسلوك الإنساني عناصر "الخليقة الأولى وفطرته الأولى" و"فطنته من طلاسم العبارة الأولى" و"لؤلؤة اللطافة الأولى". هذه الخيارات إنما تعني فيما تعني تخلّيه التامّ عن الخلق الإلهي الأوحد؛ ليس الله، حسب أبي عفش المعبود الوحيد، بل تشاركه في هذا الفعل العناصر الطبيعية الأولى المتمثلة، في كثير من نصوصه، بالدودة "الهيولى الأم" والأشجار و"النمل الحكيم" و"النحل الشجاع راهب الزهور" و"الماء النبي توأم النور." عناصر الطبيعية هذه كلها تطلب من الإنسان أن يعبدها وهي أولى من عظمة الله الذي تعب أبي عفش من وجوده، لأنها تبعث على اكتشاف الحيرة المباركة والجمال المفقود. لذا، فهو يبحث عن بدائل الضعف في الطبيعة الأولى، في الطبيعة النقية القوية التي لم تخضع لمسيرة القتل والخراب، يقول الشاعر:

وأحني كبرياء الوحش قدّام إله الوحش/"يا ألله، يكفي ألما./ تعبثُ. بل تعبثُ. بل تعبثُ ممّا تتعب الوحوش منه./ تعبثُ من مخالبي، ناري، حديدي، شهوتي./ تعبثُ من طيش رماحي.. وتعبثُ منك./ داوني إذن../ داو حديدي بحليب الضعف../ داو حيرتي بحيرة الجماال"[12]

إن هذه الحيرة تخوّل الأنا الشعري المتكلم الانتقاء وتتيح له خيارات عديدة ليختار معبوده الحقيقي. إنّ صفة التعب الوجودي للإنسان والشكوى إلى إله خلقته لحظات ضعف الإنسان، بحسب أبي عفش، إنما تشير إلى مدى حاجته للتغير ولإحلال نظم حياتية بديلة تخلّصه من الألم والتعب وتفتح بوجهه من جديد آفاق الجمال المعدوم في هذا الوجود. ومرة أخرى نقف أمام انتقاد جارح لألوهية الخالق بقصد الانتقاد والنيل من ممارسات الإنسان وسلوكه المدمّر للوجود. الحلّ البسيط والفطريّ التي يقترحه الأنا الشعري المتكلم يكمن في التخلّي عن حديده القاتل لكل ما هو أخضر وجميل وثبوتيّ وتبني فكرة الحيرة الدينامية والجمال. الله كما ذكرت سابقا، هو مقدار ضعف الإنسان، وقد صيّر هذا الضعفُ الإنسانَ وحشا يعبد "أله الوحش" ويمتهن القتل والدمار والألم والظلام:

منذ زمان وأنا أحفر في هذا الظلام الوحش [...]...إذن: أحفر./........../ بل أحفر كي أرى/ ما لا يرى إلا بعين القلب:/ أحفر كي أراني [...] وها الآن الآن كأن لست أنا/ أعود كالمنجّم الأعمى إلى ديار أسلافي:/ أعد الحجر الصامت والغبار/[...] ما خلّفه النسيان من تأتأة الطيور / فوق غصن الحضارة الدامي...[13]

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[11]   من حوار مع الشاعر، راجع: بواردي 2009.
[12]   من قصيدة "حديقة الأموات"، أبو عفش 2001، ص 11.
[13]   من قصيدة "حديقة الأموات"، أبو عفش 2001، ص 7-8.

إن الوجود الذي يعيشه الأنا الشعري المتكلم ظلامٌ وحشي، لذا يقترح الرجوع عن هذا الضعف والتفكير العقلاني القاتل الذي أدى إلى خلق الله والحضارة الدامية، والرجوع إلى رؤية الوجود بعين القلب التي تكشف عن الذات الإنسانية الحقيقية وسط هذا الوجود المظلم. العين العقلانية التي يحيا الإنسان في نطاقها أدّت إلى الويلات وإلى عمى القلب، عين القلب هذه غيّبتها الممارسات العقلانية الوحشية فأدت إلى نسيان تأتأة الطيور؛ الطبيعة الأولى. إن الله هنا كما في كل شعر أبي عفش يشكّل آلية انتقاد واسعة لتخلّي الإنسان عن تفكيره الفطري الأخضر ومعانقته للقتل العقلانيّ المتحضّر والخراب بكل أنواعه.

على أن الله، الممثّل لضعف الإنسان وظلامه، يأتي متلازما مع ظلم الأنظمة المسيطرة على العالم. هذا التلازم يضيف لمصطلح الله بعدا إضافيا يستغله أبو عفش من أجل ضرب المؤسسات الحاكمة والحكّام، فالله ضعف الإنسان، يرسل رسله ليعيث اليأس بالعالم. إنّ اتحاد السلطة الدينية والسلطة السياسية الدكتاتورية هو أمر طبيعي، حسب أبي عفش، في خدمة السيطرة وتملّك ضعفاء البشر، بحيث يشكّل هذا الاتحاد مصدر الحزن البشري العامّ:

> ألهذا إذن أشعر الآن أنّي حزين؟/ [...] وأنا ساكت في السديم الأصمّ/ هادئ وضعيف... كما شاءني الله .../ منكسر تحت آلام نفسي/ أراقبهم ملكا ملكا ورسولا رسولا/ أمّيز أصواتهم.. ملكا ملكا ورسولا رسولا/ وأبغضهم.. ملكا ورسولا/ أعدّ نقوشَ خناجرهم ورنين المفاتيح،/ أقراطهم،/ خُوذ الجنرالات تفضح وحشتهم،/ ضجر الأنبياء ويأس اللصوص/ جسارة أفكارهم وصليل عقائدهم[14]

إن تعابير الحزن والضعف والانكسار الإنساني تتشابك مع مسبباتها؛ الله والرسل والملوك والجنرالات، لتكون النتيجة الحتمية البغض، ذلك البغض الذي يؤدي إلى البحث عن وضعيات إنسانية بديلة تتيح للإنسان العيش ضمن حدود عدالة وفرح. الوضع الإنساني والوجودي القائم يلفّه يأس الحياة؛ أن تكون حيّا في مثل هذا الوجود يعني الألم والتعاسة والانتباذ والقبح والعمى الوجودي:

> أرى ما يرى الميت في نومه/ ليل يسيل على الليل، أسئلة الموت تدفع أسئلة الموت/ قل لي وماذا؟.../ أرى ما يرى الميت في نومه:/ الأرض عمياء والنور أعمى/ أرى الله ملتبسا في عقائده.../ وأرى رسل الله يبكون أنفسهم في مهب الندم/ وأرى قسوة الخوف في ضجر الكائنات.../ أرى الضعف منتبذا... والجمال حزينا!../ أرى كيف تطهو العدالةُ لحم الحياة بملح الدمْ!../ وأرى الأرض طافيةً في خرائب دمْ:/ [...] غصّة الناس... دمْ./ الحقيقة... حيلة دمْ/ كلّ ما تلمس اليد فوق التراب... دمْ./ زَوَغان الخلائق في الأرض سعي إلى حقل دمْ/ والعدالة دمْ.[15]

إنّ الإنسان الحيّ يعجز في مثل هذه الحالة الوجودية عن الرؤيا الصحيحة لمسارات حياته التي تعود عليه بالفرح، الإنسان الحي أضعف، بحسب أبي عفش، من أن يرى الفرح والحقيقة المؤدية إلى العيش البديل القائم على العدالة الحقة. الميت فقط مخوّل لصياغة الأسئلة الصائبة[16]، تلك التي قد تشير إلى بدايات التغيير الجذري عند الأحياء وبناء العالم من جديد، فالميت لا يخشى الموت أو التعذيب أو القتل. الحلّ في هذه الحالة الوجودية الخارقةِ اليأس، برأي أبي عفش، مشروط بإجراء حوارية صارخة مع الله والمطالبة الغاضبة من بأن يردّ اللهُ الإنسانَ إلى الطبيعة الأولى، إلى تلك الحالة الهيولى للوجود الإنسانيّ، قبل أن يخلق ضعفُ الإنسان اللهَ وقبل أن يحرمه من الألم المحيي؛ سمة الحيّ الأولى:

> يا إله السماء.../ يا ألهي الذي كنتُ أرضعته حيرتي في أعالي السماءِ/ ردَّني خائبا وضعيفا كسابق عهدي./ ردَّني... حجرا في العراءِ/ [...] ردَّني دودة، سلحفاة، غزالا ينطّ على الصخر،/ [...] ردّ قلبي الضعيف إلى جسمه.../ ردّ لي العطف. ردّ الجمال القديم، وشوق اليتيم إلى الحبّ/ [...] وردّ إلى الروح بعض الألم.../ ردّه

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[14] من قصيدة "ساعة الذئب"، أبو عفش 2001، ص 53-54. وساعة الذئب وفق ما يشير الشاعر هي الساعة التي يموت فيها جميع الناس، راجع أبو عفش 2001، ص 51.

[15] من قصيدة "ساعة الذئب"، أبو عفش 2001، ص 60-61.

[16] قارن مع قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 53-61.

شاهقا وجليلا... لكي نتعرف على نفسنا/ حين تغرب شمس الحنان عن الأرض./ ردّ الألمَ/ أو أعدني إلى خالتي الشجرة.../ غيمةً تتلألأ تحت لحاء الحياة الكتيم...[17]

إن الحالة الوجودية التي يصوّرها الشاعر تلقي الضوء على وضعية الخواء الشعوري التي وصل إليها الإنسان عندما تخلّى عن طبيعته الرحيمة العطوفة وعن أبسط مقوّمات الإنسانية الحقة المتمثّلة بحنينه إلى الشوق والحنان والألم. إن المنتوج الإنساني الذي خلقه الله، بعد أن أرضعه الإنسانُ حيرته الوجودية وبعد أن ابتدعه الإنسانُ ليجد عنده الحلول لكينونته، منتوجٌ غريب عن الإنسانية الطبيعية، إنّ رغبة أبي عفش ببعض الألم أو بالألم تشير إلى أنّ هذا المنتوج مشوّه، لافتقاره حس الألم؛ الأداة الأكثر فاعلية لمحو الاغتراب الوجودي بين الإنسان ونفسه.

إنّ الله حاضر في الشقاء الوجوديّ الذي يصوّره الشاعر في جميع دواوينه، الشقاء الوجودي المؤدّي إلى العدمية وإلى استيعاب الحياة على أنها عبثية محض. الشقاء الوجودي المنتشر في كلّ زاوية يبعث على اليأس الوجودي وفقدان الأمل من أية بادرة خير قد تنبثق عن الوضع الوجودي القائم. على أنّ هذا الشقاء هو المهماز الأنجع في التحوّل إلى مواجهة الله وتحدّيه:

ها أنذا، أخيرا، دونما حياء أو خوف،/ أرفع يدي الكليلة إلى فوق.. وأشدّ لحافك الدامي./ ها أنذا، وقد تكلّستْ روحي من الشقاء والصبر، أهزّ إصبعي في وجهك.. وأصرخ أمام عينيك:/ "لا جدوى يا إلهنا. لا جدوى".../ أهزّ الهواء حول عرشك، وممالكك، وقبور أوليائك/ الصالحين/ [...] لا جدوى أيتها الأوهام الموؤودة في أدمغة البرابرة/ وتحت قفطانات القديسين[18]

إنّ الأوضاع الوجودية التي يصوّرها أبو عفش في المقطوعة أعلاه تشير إلى مسيرة طويلة من التعاسة المستدامة، فالتكلّس عملية طويلة الأمد تتكوّن بفعل تراكمات بطيئة وعبر مدة زمنية طويلة، وكذا هو شقاء وصبر روح المتكلّم الشعريّ، فبعد كلّ هذا الصبر يؤول إلى اللاجدوى وإلى عبثية الوجود. إن الاعتراف بلا جدوى الوجود هو الخطوة الأولى على طريق إيجاد الحلّ، الخطوة الأولى هي تحدّي المقدسات جميعها وعلى رأسها الله وما يمثله من عروش السلطة المطلقة وأتباعه، حسب أبي عفش، من البرابرة والأولياء الصالحين والقديسين[19]. إنّ التعابير القاسية والصريحة المقتبسة أعلاه تعابيرُ تحمّل الله المسؤولية لما يحدث في العالم من قتل دائم ومن فقدان الأمل بأيّ تغيير، فاللحاف الذي يلفّ الله به العالم دائم ويَعِدُ بالموت، ولذا وبعد عذاب طويل الأمد يتخلى الشاعر عن حيائه وخوفه من هالة المقدّس الإلهي يرفع يده المتحدية وإصبعه المهدّد ويصرخ غاضبا أمام ما قد آلت إليه أحواله المعيشية والوجودية على حدّ سواء.

ينكر أبو عفش الدور الذي يلعبه الله في إدارة هذا الكون، وهو يرى أن الله لم يعد يشغل منصب من يوجه العالم إلى مكوّناته الخيّرة، أو إلى نظافته الأخلاقية وعدالته ورحمة الكائنات، فبرأيه، في الكوكب الذي يديره الله تتكدس كل الظواهر التي تبعث على الاشمئزاز والنفور:

تحت غطاء الكوكب السقيم/ حدائقك مطموسة بالرماد والقاذورات/[...] تقيء الجرذانُ إفطارها/[...] وأرى الأرض خاوية،/ والسماء مرصعة بالأختام/[...] كل لفتة سواد، كل صلاة جنازة، كل فم شاهدة قبر./ عسكريون. حروب. قديسون./ مجازر قادمة. صمت كلّي، وعدالة نائمة في الكتاب[20]

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[17] من قصيدة "ساعة الذئب"، أبو عفش 2001، ص 62-63.

[18] من قصيدة "لأجل هذا"، أبو عفش، 2001، ص 100. يقول أبو عفش أيضا: "ولأني نفسي أيضا/ يمكنني أن أرفع صوتي في وجه إلهي الشيخ/ أعاتبه أو أسأله صفحا". من قصيدة "خوف أخضر"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 394.

[19] قارن مع ما يقوله أبو عفش: "وقليلا من الخجل أيها القديسون/ قليلا من القلب أيها الفلاسفة،/الخراب يستحوذ على العالم.. وأنتم تتكئون على الماضي/ إليكم عني!" راجع قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2 ص 58. وقارن أيضا مع قصيدة "ما يشبه كلاما أخيرا"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 184.

[20] من قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 60-61.

وأمام هذا الخواء الوجودي والدمار الكلّي للكوكب الذي فشل الله في قيادته إلى الرحمة والعدالة بل إلى القتل والدماء والقسوة، يقترح أبو عفش تحطيم هذا الكون والموت موتا كليا من أجل إعادة البناء من جديد وفق أنظمة تحترم المحبة والرحمة والجمال، لأنّ إصلاح ما في العالم في ظلّ هذه الأحوال المأساوية وبتسلّط الإله عليه أمرٌ غير معقول، فالله وفق أبي عفش مسؤول عن هذا الدمار:

وأرى الله إلى جواري.. يرتجف من الخجل والحمى/ [...] يحصي الفيضانات والزلازل ونعوش الموتى/ ثم ينسحب إلى منفاه الأزرق الأثيم/ دامعا، أشعث، مَلويّا من البراءة والذلّ والعدالة الشائخة./ وحيث تشي الدمعة بالحبّ، والآلهة باللذة، والقربان المقدّس/ بديدان الموتى، أكتشف أنّ العالم يفتقر إلى النظام، والأرض إلى/ الثبات وقلب الإنسان يتضوّر من الكسل والفوضى وانعدام الشجاعة/ [...] أركل الأرض الهائجة، وأبعثر موجوداتها ودماملها وفساد قلبها./ أضرم النار في المعسكرات والسجون، وأوقف عقارب الوقت على/ ملمس قبلة.. موعد المساء ورشفة النبيذ الأولى[21]

إن الشاعر يخرج عن كسل الإنسان المحدود نحو إيقاظ الكائنات من سباتها المميت، منصّبا نفسه في منزلة الله ليسوّي حساباته مع العالم المنقاد نحو هاويته الوجودية بسبب تقاعسه عن تنحية الكراهية وسفك الدماء والعدالة المسنة التي لم تعد الكائنات تستند إلى حكمها. إن الحبّ والرحمة والعدالة والجمال والعلم، ستكون من هذا المنظار حصيلة الثورة التي يقوم بها الشاعر عندما يمزج السماء بالأرض، فالله رمز هذا الوجود الرحب، سيده الأعلى، لا يملك عناصر الحياة الجديدة التي يرغب أبو عفش في إحلالها: "أيها الله.../ إن قلبك يفتقر إلى العدالة والرأفة والمعرفة/ افتقار العاشق الكسول إلى الألم"[22]. إن الله الموسوم بالمعرفة القصوى والرأفة اللاحدودية والعدالة المطلقة يفتقد عند أبي عفش إلى مقوّماته الأساسية ويفقد بهذا آهليته المقدسة في سيادته على العالم. الإنسان النشيط "كإله نشيط، كطاغية، كشاعر مائل إلى الصمت"[23]، هو المخوّل الوحيد لإعادة ترتيب مكوّنات العالم من جديد، وفق مبادئ الرحمة والرأفة والمحبة والعلم.

إنّ نظرة أبي عفش هذه تدعو الإنسان إلى مراجعة حساباته الأخلاقيّة وغير الأخلاقيّة، من أجل صوغ حلوله، فإذا كان الله حلّا لعجز الإنسان وألمه، فعليه أن يعيد ترتيب ألمه وتوجّهه نحو عجزه ليعرف أنّ حلولا كثيرة قد تغني عن اختراعاته: يقول في ديوانه **ذاكرة العناصر**، في قصيدة "ما قبل الأسبرين":

فكّر في الألم./مثلما كان ميكل آنجلو يفكّر في عذاب الصخر/فكّر في أحزان النباتات،/في ما يتألّمه الطائر/وما تشقاه البذرة/وما يحلمه عرق النبات المقطوع../. فكّر في صداع الحلزون/ فكّر في العِجْلة البتول، تحت ميزان موتها،/تعصر الهواء بعينيها/وتتوسل حنان أخيها الجزّار[24]

هذا العنوان لديوانه **ذاكرة العناصر** يتقاطع مع ما يقوله حول فكرة الله ما قبل الأسبرين. فالعناصر المكوّنة لهذا العالم يجب أن تعود إلى ذاكرتها الأصليّة، وبالتالي إلى وضعيّاتها الأولى قبل التكوين لتعيد تكوين ذاتها وفق مركّبات خلق أخرى، ولا تحتاج إلى مهدّئات وأيضا لا تحتاج إلى نظام الأخلاقيّات الدينيّ المتمثّل بالله.

جدليّة الله والإنسان عند أبي عفش لا حدوديّة على الإطلاق، فهو يستطيع متى يشاء أن يتبادل الأدوار أو على الأقل يتمنّى ذلك، فما دام الله من صنع الإنسان فإنّه لا شكّ على شاكلته، أو هكذا يريد الإنسان لله أن يكون، يقول في قصيدة "ندم الله":

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21 من قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 53-54.

22 من قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص. 54.

23 من قصيدة "ما سوف يبقى"، أبو عفش 2003، مج. 2، ص 54.

24 أبو عفش2005، ص 48.

الله.. ابن ضعف الإنسان./ لماذا إذن يدجّجون خصره بكلّ هذه الخناجر!/... صُنعنا من نطفةٍ موتٌ/ جاءت من قلوب وندم وأحلام./ لم ترسم صورتُنا فوق../ : السماء تحت أقدامنا./ ... أيّها الناس../ أنتم ندم الله[25]

إنّ أبا عفش بصدامه مع الدينيّ، إنّما يتصادم مع الأطر الاجتماعيّة والأخلاقيّة المتداخلة فيه، لينتج عن هذا الصدام تشعّبات أخرى تخصّ الحرّيّة الفرديّة للإنسان أمام سلطات عديدة؛ دينيّة واجتماعيّة وسياسيّة، تتحكّم بتصرّفاته. وإذا أحلنا هذا الصدام على علاقة المبدع مع هذه الأطر، وحرّيّته في التعبير عن ذاته كيفما يرى، فيمكن القول إنّ أبا عفش، ومن خلال نصوصه الحواريّة مع الله، إنما يفتح سجلا إشكاليّا في العالم العربيّ، يرفض التعامل مع المقدّسات، أيّا كان نوعها، إلا بأسلوب النقد العقلانيّ، العامل على تفكيك مركّبات المقدس، وفحص مستويات علاقته بالفرد. وتتيح هذه النصوص بثّ مضامين غير متداولة، تضرب، من خلالها، المؤسّسة الدينيّة، دون التعرّض لهجومات الأوساط الدينيّة، الإسلاميّة منها على وجه الخصوص. وهي بهذا، وبطريقة غير مباشرة، تتيح للقارئ العربيّ التعرّف على مستويات تعبير ثائرة على المؤسّسة المقدّسة، كتمهيد لا يُستهان بمقدرته، في للتحرّر من أطر ذهنيّة محدّدة مسبقا.

إنّ هذا الخروج عن المسلّمات الدينيّة والأخلاقيّة المتعارف عليها تتيح له التحرّر من أطر الجماعة، وإغناء الذاتيّ والشخصانيّ، على أنّ هذه التحرّر يؤدّي في الوقت ذاته إلى خدمة الجماعة بشكل أفضل، من هنا فإنّ رفض أبي عفش لا تصبّ ثماره في التقوقع الفرديّ كما قد يظنّ القارئ، بل هو رفض يحاول إعادة بناء النظام الأخلاقيّ للعالم، بل وترتيب العالم من خلال جدليّة قد يسميها كثيرون كفرا وإلحادا، وهي كذلك على ما ذكر الشاعر، إلّا أنّها ليست كفر الذاتيّ المحدودة، بل كفر الذات المتّحدة مع الجماعة والتائقة إلى محاولة إصلاح العالم الخرب أخلاقيّا. يقول "جعلتُ من طبعة قدميك أيقونة/وعلّقتها على صدري/لهذا/كلما دقّ قلبي أثناء الصلاة/تفوح من ضميري/رائحة كفرٍ حامضة"[26]. ها هو أبو عفش يفرض بديلا واضح المعالم للمرجعيات الأخلاقية الدينية، فالضمير الحيّ يرفض (يكفر) الاحتكام لها، الضمير الحي هو البديل الإنسانيّ لأخلاقيّات الحياة الدنيا.

إن التحليل النصي أعلاه يحيلنا بالضرورة إلى معارضة أبي عفش للمذهب الإيماني (Fideism)[27] ومحاولة تقويض أسس الإيمان المطلق. تقوم ماهية المذهب الإيماني على أنّ الإيمان هو أساس الدين وليس بالضرورة أن يكون متلازما والإثباتاتِ المنطقيةِ والذهنية، لذا فالمذهب الإيماني يتعارض مع المنطق ويعتبر أنّ الالتصاق بالإيمان لوحده يمكنه أن يوصل الإنسان إلى جوهر الحقيقة الإلهية. إنه بالضبط ما يخرج أبو عفش ضده. إنه يحاور الذات الإلهية من منطلق محاولة محوها أو على الأقل مشاركتها بالسلطة، كون هذه السلطة الإلهية بحسبه لم تؤدِ إلا إلى الخراب البشري. وإذ يقوم المذهب الإيماني على الطاعة التامة للقوانين والشرائع الإلهية وتطبيقها بحذافيرها يأتي نص أبي عفش ليلغي عن هذه القوانين شرعيتها ووجودها أصلا، ويقترح بديلا عنها قوانين الطبيعة البكر[28]، كما رأينا أعلاه.

إن هذه الوضعية للتمرد المنهجي عند أبي عفش، تنطبق تماما على ما يسمّيه ألبير كامو[29] المتمرّد الماورائي الميتافيزيائيّ (metaphysical rebel). فهذا المتمرّد، أو الأنا المتكلّم في نصوص أبي عفش، يشاهد عالما من الحطام يجبره على المطالبة بوحدته. إن العدل المكثّف في ذاته يتحدّى الظلم الموجود في العالم. من جهة أخرى فإن الرفض الميتافيزيائيّ يثور عن طريق الموت ويحتج على ما في الأوضاع القائمة من نقصان، لذا فالتمرّد هذا مطالبة مباركة وضدية لآلام الحياة والموت. هذا المتمرّد، كما تمّ التعبير عنه عند أبي عفش، يرفض القوة كمحرّك وجوديّ في هذا

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[25] أبو عفش 2003، ص 527.

[26] أبو عفش2003 ، ص 56.

[27] حول المذهب الإيماني راجع: Amesbury 2012; Bishop 2007, pp. 387-4042 .

[28] وهو أقرب بهذا إلى فكرة الربوبية (Deism) القائلة بوجود مدبّر أول للكون، لكن على الكون أن يُساس بقوانين طبيعية تدبر الكائناتُ فيه وجودها دون الاحتكام إلى النبوءات والمعجزات والشرائع الإلهية. حول الربوبية راجع: Massner 1967, pp.326-336; Byrne 2013.

[29] يقول أبو عفش إن تكوينه الفكري الذي كونه في حمص ودمشق كان مزيجا من متناقضات فكرية حادة: "هكذا ستتسع قائمة أصدقائي ومُلهمِيّ. وسيغدو في إمكاني منذ ذلك الحين أن أوفّق ما بين شبح «المسيح» الذي لم يكن ماركسياً، وكارل ماركس الذي لم يكن مسيحياً، وكامو الذي لم يكن هذا ولا ذاك. نعم، من هذه الخلطة الرائعة التي تربطها الرحمةُ وتواخي بين متناقضاتها الأحلام، تشكّلتْ أثمنُ عناصر حياتي وأشدّها حيويةً ورسوخاً". راجع: أبو عفش 2014.

العالم، من هنا فهو في أقسى الأحوال ليس ملحدا بقدر ما هو مجدّف، وهو يمارس التجديف أوّلا بما يرمز إليه النظام مؤكدا أن الله هو أبو الموت وهو برأي كامو العار الأكبر[30]. ويؤكد كامو ومثله أبي عفش أن هذا المتمرّد يتحدّى السماء أكثر مما ينكر وجود الله فيها، فهو على الأقل بداية لا يحذف الملكوت الإلهي بل يطوّر معه حوار الندّ للندّ، على أن هذا الحوار ليس حوار المجاملة اللطيف بل حوار الجدل العميق المشبعة برغبة التغلّب. هكذا تصبح المطالبة بالعدالة فاتحة للمطالبة بالسلطة[31].

من هنا تصبح النظرية القائلة بالإله الشخصيّ مركزيةً في سياق هذا البحث، لأنها تُسنِد إلى الخالق المسؤولية عن مجمل الأشياء، وبالتالي تعطي للاحتجاج الإنساني معناه. ويشدّد نص أبي عفش كما رأينا سابقا، كما يفعل كامو، على أن تاريخ الرفض لا ينفصل البتة عن تاريخ المسيحية لأن الإله الشخصي والمقدس الديني معه مسؤولان عن الحالة الوجودية التي آل الإنسان إليها[32].

إن الوضعية المميتة المتمركزة في السماء، بحسب كامو، تتماهى ووجهة نظر أبي عفش فيما يخصّ العالم بوضعيته الحالية، حيث يعتبران كل عناصر الكون مجدبةً ومقفرة، إنه الجمود المميت الذي فيه تختلط القيم لتنتج رؤيا الدمار الشامل، إنه العالم الذي خرج عن مساره فلا يحيا بعد إلا في حياة المهاوي. هنا يأتي دور الصرخة، بحسب كامو وأبي عفش، لتنفخ الروح في هذا الدمار المجدب المميت[33].

إنّ المتمرّد الرومانسي والوجودي عند كل من كامو وأبي عفش يخاطب الله كأنه ندٌّ له، إنه لا ينكر جبروت الألوهية وبالتالي فهو يحاول الارتقاء إلى مستوى الله ويبقى مجدّفا، وفي التجديف محاولة للاشتراك بالقداسة وسلطانها[34]. فهو يعنى بتوجيه اللائمة له مع أنه يعلن إلحاده ومعارضته لوجوده. إن أبا عفش من هذا المنظار لا يهمه جوهر وجود الله أو عدم وجوده بقدر ما يهمه تسليط الضوء على ضرب المقدس والإيماني الذي يشكّل لديه سلوكا شاذا عن الطبيعة الإنسانية[35].

وتتشكّل حوارية نصوص أبي عفش مع الله والمقدّس، برأيي، من خلال ما يسميه جورج طرابيشي القطيعة المعرفية والأيديولوجية[36] التي توجب كل منهما ليس فقط الوقوف عند حدّ الجدلية ونقد الوضع السائد وإنما طرح البدائل الوجودية العلمانية الروحانية التي تتيح للإنسان الفرد تقرير مصيره وأساليب تفكيره، بل وهويته أيضا.

إجمال

على وجه العموم، تقدّم قصائد أبو عفش بدائل علمانيّة وجوديّة للخطاب الدينيّ السائد وللخطاب السياسيّ والقوميّ المتحالف مع الدينيّ، حسب رأيه. وهو خطاب يؤدّي بمفاهيم أبي عفش إلى تنصّل الإنسان لطبيعته الفطريّة المتناسقة مع الطبيعة واعتبار القوّة والقسوة والصرامة والقتل مقياسًا للإنسان المثاليّ المسيطر. بينما يقترح أبو عفش في شعره عامّة مقياسًا آخر للإنسان المثاليّ، يعتمد على اتّخاذ الضعف والندم الإنسانيّين منطلقًا لحالات من الرحمة والتسامح والمحبّة والجمال يمكن ضمنها أن يعيش الإنسان دون خوف. الضعف والندم غير مفهومين لليأس أو الاستسلام، إنّما هما نقيضا القسوة والانعدام الرحمة والقدرة على التسامح الإنسانيّ. يعتبر الشاعر الخطاب الدينيّ المتعلّق بالخطاب السياسيّ مصدرًا لتشويه الحالة الإنسانيّة الحقّة وانحرافًا عن فطرة الطبيعة المعطاء. لذا فهذا الخطاب يخلق إنسانًا لا

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[30] Camus 2012, p. 24.

[31] Camus 2012, p. 25.

[32] Camus 2012, p. 28.

[33] Camus 2012, pp. 57-58.

[34] Camus 2012, p. 62.

[35] قارن مع أقوال بيت هالحمي وتسوكرمان:

"Those who have shaped the modern human sciences have been preoccupied with explaining the phenomena of religion and religiosity. Accounting for the absence of religious faith has never been of much concern to them […] Atheists as Deviants Most theories of religion assume that it stems from universal aspects of the human condition or the human mind". Beit-Hallahmi 2007: 300; Zuckerman 2010: 30.

[36] طرابيشي، 2008، ص 235.

يعرف الألم إنّما يسبّبه ولا يعرف الندم إنّما يمعن في القتل والطغيان. إنّ الخطاب العلمانيّ الوجوديّ الّذي يقترحه أبو عفش لا يعترف إلا بمركزيّة الإنسان العادي غير المتجبّر، ذلك الّذي يعشق الجمال ويخاف الشرّ ولا يبادر إلى ابتكار أدوات التعذيب أو اختراع أدوات غيبيّة من شأنها تحويله إلى مسخ وحشيّ لا يرحم. خطاب أبي عفش ينتهك النظم الأخلاقيّة السائدة والنظم المعرفيّة الّتي تنتهي بأدوات الغيب أو لخطاب الدينيّ، وهو في انتهاكه يزوّدنا من خلال نصّه الشعريّ بأدوات أخرى تتلخّص بالرجوع إلى فترة ما قبل اختراع النظم الغيبيّة.

تبثّ قصائد أبي عفش شعور الاغتراب الروحانيّ والوجوديّ المتأثّر كما توهن سابقًا بمفاهيم الفلسفة الوجوديّة. وهي قصائد قلقة لا تتماهى مع النظم الأخلاقيّة والمعيشيّة للبيئة المحيطة بالشاعر. الاغتراب من هذه الناحية منطلق الرفض في قصائده، فهو يخرج عن عالم يرفض ويخلق له عالمه الغرائبيّ الخياليّ، يُنزل الموتى ويتحدّث إليهم، يساوي بين العناصر الطبيعيّة كلّها ويلقّبها بالبشر، ويصف عالمًا لا يذوّت الرحمة والجمال والمحبّة. هذا العالم بالنسبة للشاعر آيل للسقوط في دوّامة عنف لا تنتهي أبدًا. ويعزو أبو عفش هذا السقوط في هاوية العنف إلى سيطرة الخطابين الدينيّ والسياسيّ ويحمّل الإنسان مسؤوليّة خضوعه التامّ لسيطرة هذين الخطابين والانصياع لهما. إنّ السلوك الإنسانيّ المحكوم بهذين الخطابين ينتج إنسانًا عنيفًا ولا شفقة في قلبه وعالمًا يدور في دوائر التعاسة. وهو إذ يغترب عن هذا العالم يعلن رفضه التامّ لعناصره ومركّباته الوجوديّة كلّها ويبحث عن الحلول في الرجوع إلى ما قبل سيطرة الدينيّ والسياسيّ عليه، إلى فترة الألم الفطريّ والتشابك الحيويّ مع الطبيعة. هذا التشابك برأيي ينتج إنسانًا متوازنًا وسويًا وبالأساس ينتج إنسانًا معتدلًا في سلوكه على العموم.

شعر أبي عفش من هذا المنظور يعمل على تعقيد العلاقة بين النصّ الشعريّ الحديث والمحيط الخارجيّ. وهي علاقة تتشكّل في نصوصه بالأساس، من خلال مرجعيّة المحاكاة. ويدخل قارئ نصوصه في هذه الخلخة، بحيث يصبح لزامًا عليه أن يعيد، هو الآخر، تشكيل علاقاته بالموجودات الخارجيّة، بقدر ما عليه من إعادة تشكيل علاقته بالمغمور المحتاج للكشف، "وقد أصبحت العلاقة بين الشعر وبيئته، أو خلفيّته أو مرجعيّته، معقّدة منذ بدايات الحداثة في هذا القرن؛ لأنّ الشعر نأى بشكله عن المحاكاة الّتي كانت قديمًا هي النهج الرئيس في تكوين الشعر".[37]

عمليًّا، تستجيب قصائد أبي عفش بكلّيّتها لحالات الاغتراب الخمس الّتي حدّدها عالم الاجتماع ميلفين سيمان (Melvin Seeman). يرى سيمان الاغتراب في العجز (عدم القوة)، اللامعنى، اللامعياريّة، العزلة والقطيعة الذاتيّة[38]، وهي في مجملها حالات الإنسان المنسلخ عن اللاأخلاقيّة الاجتماعيّة واللامعياريّة والخلل الاجتماعيّ وتفسّخه (anomie)[39]. هذه الحالات تجمل ما كتبه أبو عفش من نصوص شعريّة، لأنّها تكشف عن هذه الحالات وتعبّر عن سؤمها منها وتعطي بدائل أخلاقيّة ووجوديّة في محاولة لمصالحة الإنسان مع ذاتها بعد قطيعة وجوديّة قسرية فرضتها عليه أنظمة دينيّة وسياسيّة.

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[37] شاهين 2000، ص 141.

[38] Seeman 1959, pp. 783-791

[39] قارن مع: Twining 1980, pp. 417-428

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THE TUNISIAN SWEAROSAURUS.
SWEAR WORDS IN THE SPOKEN ARABIC OF TUNIS

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Abstract..This study aims to identify the swear words in the Spoken Arabic of Tunis, an Arabic variety of North Africa and classify them according to their origin (the denotative meanings behind them) or their usage (they are pragmatically very versatile, because they can be utilized for different pragmatic reasons, including negative politeness towards friends). This research is part of a bigger endeavor that aims to record and describe a complete list of insults, curses and obscene language employed in the Spoken Arabic of Tunis, with a clear pragmatic analysis of each category.

Keywords: *swear words, Tunisian Arabic, Spoken Arabic of Tunis, curse words, profanity.*

Introduction

Profanity (or offensive language, bad words, cuss words, curse words, swear words, etc.) represents an intrinsic part of our daily routine, whether we are the ones using it or simply hearing it around us (in conversations, or at the TV or the radio), or reading it in books, newspapers, and the internet (especially on social media websites).

Profanity is the kind of language that usually refers to taboo words or swear words. Such words are considered either inappropriate or very unacceptable in most social contexts. Swear words usually refer to body parts (especially "private areas"), religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual activity, bodily functions or anything that a particular society or culture would find offensive or inappropriate. The contexts in which people usually resort to swearing include arguing with or insulting the other, joking and mocking, being in pain or frustrated, or as a product of anger or stress.

This study aims to list as much of the swear words utilized in the Spoken Arabic of Tunis (henceforth SAT) as possible, while also classifying them according to their origin and usage and discuss some cases where the swear words were employed for different pragmatic reasons.

As mentioned by Ritt (2004: 165), it is very difficult for a foreing researcher to be able to record linguist material containing swear words and insults, because the attitude that Arabs take in front of foreigners is one with reservations and, as such, these words are seen taboo and very shameful for the Arabic speakers, when they are outside their comfort zone (outside their friends and family circle, where they can express themselves freely).

The study of cursing

From the theories of linguistic (im)politeness, Robin Lakoff (1973) argues, based on the cooperative principle in verbal interaction (Grice 1975), that there is a choice of certain strategies of courtesy, according to the "cost-benefit" scale, that the action in question supposes for the speaker or the listener. That is why a swear word is almost never involuntarily (unless the person is under a lot of stress or pain) uttered by a person, because it requires too much of a situational investment to just be thrown away, without gaining something in return.

Geoffrey Leech (1983), in this same sense, formulates a principle of politeness based on the conversational maxims of generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987), taking up Goffman's interaction theory (1967) and, in particular, the notion of face, postulate that there are universal principles regulating social relations linked to courtesy, which work to avoid latent interpersonal conflict in all verbal exchange.

The only issue involving these theories is that they are all built on the premises that communication is taking place within the same ethnic or social context; thus, communication can be thought of as a universal principle for human interaction. Nonetheless, there is a plethora of forms of communication out there and they vary immensely from one situation to another and from one social class to another, not to mention the case of intercultural communication.

According to Jay (1999) cursing refers to several uses of offensive speech:

Technically speaking, *cursing* is wishing harm on a person (e.g., *eat shit and die*). But the term cursing is used comprehensively here to include categories such as: swearing, obscenity, profanity, blasphemy, name calling, insulting, verbal aggression, taboo speech, ethnic-racial slurs, vulgarity, slang, and scatology.

However, compared to most other forms of speech, cursing is meant to suggest connotative meanings rather than denotative, because the meanings that the speaker builds and suggests to the listener using curse words are primarily understood as connotative (Jay & Danks 1977):

Dirty words are unique because connotative meaning is dominant over denotative meaning, and these two aspects of meaning can be easily separated. Dirty-word expressions are typically interpreted connotatively (Jay and Danks, 1977). For example, when we call someone a bastard we are not questioning the legitimacy of his birth but expressing dislike for him. Connotation is generally linked to emotional expression, not to denoting a specific feature of the person in question. (Jay 1981:30)

Data collection and informants

The corpus on which this research is based consists of my own recordings (all of which are non-scripted and naturally-occurring, written or audio) employed in the summers of 2009, 2014, and, more recently, in February 2019, in the capital city of Tunis, as well as in 2015 and 2016 in Bucharest, from SAT speakers who were born and raised in Tunis.

Other important sources for my corpus of recordings were written recordings that I have been able to save from social networking websites and forums on the internet (as well as dedicated websites for corpora collection like ArabeTunisien.com, Tunisiya.org, and TuniCo). I then asked the help of SAT speakers to read the texts I found and thus I was able to better understand some utterances I was struggling with from only their written samples and was finally able to transliterate them properly.

I have also used some works consecrated to SAT and to Tunisian Arabic in general to get a better picture of some morphology and syntax issues I had while trying to transliterate my recordings, as well as for identifying terms I may have missed during my field research (Cohen 1975; Singer 1984; Ritt 2004; Mion 2006, 2008, 2013; Ritt-Benmimoun & Procházka 2009; Procházka 2018).

For the SAT samples I have utilized a phonemic transcription system and I used the data I found on TuniCo (*Linguistic dynamics in the Greater Tunis Area: a corpus-based approach*) to double-check the phonemes I've chosen for some of the words from the examples provided in this paper.

The informants were of all ages (from teenagers to elderly people), with various levels of education and formation. However, in almost all cases, the informants were male. I was only able to hear women swearing in very few cases, as it almost never occurs in general, especially outside of their homes, or in front of

Swear words related to body parts

In SAT the most frequent taboo words refer to body parts and the private areas (especially the genitalia). These words are used in full-fledged swear expressions, but some of them also act as stand-alone transmitters of inappropriate meanings and insults. The following list indicates the swear words referring to body parts and bodily functions as found in my corpus of recordings:

(1)   *zibb* "dick"

(1a)   **zibb-i**,   *ḫū-ya, malla sūjē   ḫtārt-u*
        dick-1SG brother-1SG   what a topic   choose.2SG.PST-3SG.M
        "fucking hell, bro, what a topic you've chosen…"

(1b)   *wijh-ik*   **kīf**   **zibb-i**
        face-2SG   like   dick-1SG
        "your face is ugly as fuck!"

(1c)   *w-nḥibb*   *nqūl-ik*   *inti*   *ṭbīᶜt-ik*   **ki-zibb-i**
      and-PRS.want.1SG   PRS.say.1SG-2SG   2SG   nature-2SG   like-dick-1SG
      "I gotta tell you [something], you're a fucking asshole!"

(1e)   *š-bī-k,*   **iz-zibb-i***?*
      what-with-2SG   DEF-dick-1SG
      "What the fuck's wrong with you?"

(1f)   **iz-zibb-i***!*   *ᶜālāʰ?*
      DEF-dick-1SG   why
      "Fuck! Why?"

(1g)   *f-āš*   *taḥki*   **ya**   **zibb-i**   *mā-fhimt-ik-š*
      in-what   PRS.speak.2SG   VOC   dick-1SG   NEG-understand.PST.1SG-2SG-NEG
      "What the fuck are you saying, I didn't understand you"

(1h)   *yidd-ik*   *fi*   **zibb-i**
      hand-2SG   in   dick-1SG
      "I don't give a fuck"

(1i)   *yidd-ik* "I don't give a damn"

(1j)   *sayyib*   **zibb-i***!*
      IMP.release.2SG   dick-1SG
      "Leave me the fuck alone!"

(1k)   *nᵃᶜan*   *dīn*   **zibb-i***!*
      curse   religion   dick-1SG
      "God fucking damn it!", "I'm fucked!"

(1l)   *iža*   *hūni,*   *ya*   *sī*   **zibb-i**
      IMP.come.2SG   here   VOC   mister   dick-1SG
      "Come here, motherfucker!"

(1m)   *kassart*   *l-i*   *zibb-i*
      PST.break.2SG   for-1SG   dick-1SG
      "You fucking annoy me" (lit. "you broke my dick")

(2)   *zabb* "dick", a variant for *zibb*

    zibb is probably the most frequent swear word used in Tunisian Arabic. It is oftentimes utilized for expressing not only its denotative meaning, but its many connotative meanings also. In (1a) it is used when someone is feeling desperate or miserable. In (1b) and (1c) the term is used in comparisons to show that something is in a really bad situation or it is ugly and undesirable. In (1e) and (1f) is used for expressing astonishment or surprise or as a reaction to something unexpected, but mostly not desired. The example in (1g) marks the fact that the situation is much more serious or sever than what it would normally be. *zibb-i,* in (1h) has almost lost its meaning, being employed only to express "it does not

matter". As such, the entire expression can also be rendered in a shorter version, as in (1i). There are other expressions with *yidd-ik* like: *yidd-ik fī-l-maʕšūš* (lit. "your hand in the little one") or *yidd-ik fī-l-qaḏīb* (lit. "your hand in the penis"). The examples in (1j) and (1k) showcase the fact that the term *zibb* replaces *ṛūḥ*, which is expected when referring to oneself. In (1l) the term is used as a form of negative politeness and can only be employed among friends with this connotation.

In the following examples, there are seven other recorded words for "penis" in SAT, three for "buttocks", five for "vagina" and one for each of the following: "testicle", "breast", "clitoris", "semen", "feces", and "urine".

(3)   *ʕaṣba* "dick", probably developed from Old Arabic *ʕasīb* "tail bone (of the horse)"

(3a)   *ya*   **ʕaṣba** *baṛṛa* *iḥši*   *fi*   *ṣoṛm-ik*
       VOC   dick   out   IMP.fill.2SG in   pussy-2SG
       "You asshole, go fuck yourself!"

(3b)   *yaʕtik*   **ʕaṣba** *li-k*   *w*   *li-l-ʕarīs*   *w*   *ⁱlli*
       PRS.give.3SG.M   dick   to-2SG   and   to-DEF-groom   and   REL
       yġannī fī-ha   *w*   *ⁱlli*   *ktab-ha*   *w*   *ⁱlli*
       PRS.sing.3SG.M-3SG.F   and   who   write.PST.3SG.M-3SG.F   and   REL
       laḥḥan-ha
       compose.PST.3SG.M-3SG.F
       "Fuck you and the groom and the guy singing it and the one who wrote it and the one who composed it."

(3c)   A: *mā-taʕtī-nī-š*   *ḥwayža,* *hwayžtīn?*
          NEG-PRS.give.2SG-1SG-NEG   thingy   thingy-DU?
       B: *il-ʕaṣba!*
          DEF-dick
       "A: Aren't you going to give me a little something-something?
          B: You fucking wish!"

(3c) is remarkable because it also indicates a completely connotative use of the term *ʕaṣba*, inferring that using it as an answer when someone asks for something, it becomes synonymous with saying "I have nothing to give you" or "I will never give you anything.".

(4)   *namm* "dick", etymology unknown.

(4a)   *ḥaṭṭū*   *ġunnāya*   *žō̄*   *nēm*   *pā,* *ya*   **namm-i**
       put.PST.3PL   song   I   love   not,   VOC   dick-1SG
       "The put a song that I don't like, damn it!"

(4b)   *sayybū-na*   *nḥibbū*   *nafraḥū*   *waḥad-na* *ya*   **namm-i**
       IMP.release.2PL-1PL PRS.love.1PL   PRS.be happy.1PL   alone-1PL   VOC   dick-1SG
       "Let us love and be happy on our own, God damn it!"

(5)   *katla* "dick", cf. Old Arabic *kutla* "a chunk of meat"

(5a)   *yilzim-ik*   **katla**   *mtāˤ*   *žmal*
      PRS.have to.3SG.M-2SG   dick   of   camel
      "you need a camel's dick"

(6)   *baššūla* "dick"

(6b)   *tawwa wallīt*   *taḥki?*   *yaˤṭī-kum*   **baššūla**
      now   become.PRF.2SG?   PRS.speak.2SG   PRS.give.3SG.M-2PL   dick
      "Oh, so now you're speaking? Fuck you (pl.)!"

(7)   *baˤbūṣ* "dick"

(7a)   *škūn-u*   *hā-l-**mbāˤbiṣ***   *illi*   *yrāpi*   *fi*   *bāl-u*
      who-3SG.M   this-DEF-fucked-up   REL   PRS.rap.3SG.M   in   head-3SG.M
      "Who's this fucker that raps in his head?"

     mbāˤbiṣ is a participle derived from the verb *bāˤbas - ybāˤbiṣ*, which was formed in its turn from *baˤbūṣ*. Both the verb and the participle inherited the denotative meaning from the noun term and developed accordingly.

(8)   *zannāna* "dick"

(9)   *ṭannāna* "dick", cf. Old Arabic *ṭunn* "reed straw"

(10   *tirma* "ass", cf. Old Arabic *taram* "buttock" (Kazimirski 1944: 198)

(10a) *wāḥid*   *yaˤṭī-hum*   *ṭrīḥa*   ᵃˤ*lā*   **tram**-*hum*
      One   PRS.give.3SG.M-3PL   spanking   on   asses-3PL
      "Somebody [should] give them a spanking on their asses."

(10b) *baṛṛa aˤṭi*   **tarmit**-*ik* *fi* *blāṣa* *uḫra*   *kālībġə* *ṣoṛm-ik*   *wsaˤ*
      out   IMP.give.2SG ass-2SG in   place   other.F   caliber pussy-2SG   wide
      "Go and give your ass away someplace else, [more appropriate to the] caliber of your wide pussy."

(11)   *zaˤka* "ass", cf Old Arabic *zaˤka* "tail of quadrupeds"

(12)   *bassāsa* "ass"< *bass – ybiss* "to fart", lit. "farter"

(12)   *ṣoṛm* "pussy", "ass", probably cf. Old Arabic *ṣarm* "rupture, cleavage"

(12a) *yā   ˤaṣba   baṛṛa   aḥši   fi   ṣoṛṃ-ik*
      VOC   dick   out   IMP.fill.2SG   in   pussy-2SG
      "You asshole, go fuck yourself!"

(13) *žaˤb* "pussy", cf. Old Arabic *ǧuˤb* "part of the lower abdomen, from the navel to the sacrum bone" (Kazimirski 1944: 298)

(13a) *ṭufla   ki-tqūl-ha   nḥibb-ik   žaˤb-ha*
      girl   when-PRS.say.2SG-3SG.F   PRS.love.1SG-2SG   pussy-3SG.F
      ywalli   qadd   barmīl
      PRS.become.3SG.F   size   barrel
      "When you tell a girl 'I love you' her pussy becomes the size of a barrel."

(14) *zabbūr* "pussy"
     naˤan   zabbūr   umm-ik
     curse.PST.3SG.M   pussy   mother-2SG
     "God damn your mother's pussy!"

(15) *flūb* "pussy"[1]

(16) *zukk* "pussy"

(16a) *ˤalāʰ   rabb-ak   ḫḏīt   ūtīl   fi   zukk   il-mdīna?*
      Why   God-2SG   take.PST.2SG   hotel   in   pussy   DEF-town
      sē dēgōlās,   blāṣa   masḫa,   ya   zibb-i   w   mnayyika
      it's disgusting   place   dirty   VOC   dick-1SG   and   fucked
      "Damn you, why did you book a hotel in the middle of the fucking town? It's disgusting, the place is dirty, god damn it, and fucked!"

(16a) is another example that conveys the connotative meaning of *zukk* "pussy": that of "center", "middle", but with a pejorative nuance. This does not seem to be totally unrelated to the denotative meaning of the word, as the location of the vagina is central, between the legs, thus using the term to suggest a metaphor for "middle". Other languages

(17) *bazzūla – bzāzil* "tit – tits"

(17a) *ʾnḥibb   narḏaˤ   bzāzil   uḫt-ik*
      PRS.want.1SG   PRS.suck.1SG   tits   sister-2SG
      "I would like to suck your sister's tits."

(18) *nūna* "clitoris", probably cf. Old Arabic *nūna* "dimple on the chin"
     šnuwwa   talḥas   fi   nūna   hāk?   ˤalāš?   ržāl
     what   PRS.lick.2SG   in   clitoris that   why   men

---

[1] *flūb* seems to have developed via the French *Trompe de fallope*, i.e. "the fallopian tube", or the uterine tube that is found in all female mammal reproductive systems.

mā-fammāš   *fi*   *tūnis*   *zabb*
NEG-exist-NEG   in   Tunis   dick
"What? You're licking the clit like that? Why? There aren't any men left in Tunis, god damn it."

(19)   *bzāˤ* "sperm"

(20)   *ḫrā* "shit"

(20a)   *qul*   *l-i*   *ya*   *sī*   *l-**ḫrā***
         IMP.say.2SG   for-1SG   VOC   mister   DEF-shit
         "Tell me, motherfucker."

         (20a) is frequently used in a "friendly" context, as a negative politeness strategy.

(21)   *būl* "piss"

(22)   *kuṛza – kṛāṛiz* "testicle – testicles", probably cf. Old Arabic *kurz* "shepherd's bag" (Kazimirski 1944: 883)

(22a)   *nfaḫt*   *l-i*   *kṛāṛz-i*
         Inflate.PST.2SG   for-1SG   balls-1SG
         "You're so fucking annoying!" (lit. "you swole my balls")

Other swear words, not related to body parts

Most of the words in this second category refer to verbs that are considered inappropriate or obscene. Some of these verbs are denominal, derived from nouns referring to other taboo concepts and terms. The most productive root here is *n-y-k*, which gives room to meanings such as "fuck", "fucker", "fucked", etc.

(22)   *šīša* "blowjob", a metaphor of *šīša* "hookah, bottle of narghile"

(23)   *šayyaš - yšayyiš* "to give a blowjob"< *šīša*

(23)   *šayyaš*   *l-i*   *zibb-i*
         IMP.suck.2SG   for-1SG   dick-1SG
         "Give me a blowjob!"

(24)   *ṛaḏˤa* "blowjob"

(24a)   *ṛḏaˤ - yaṛḏaˤ* "to suck"

(24) *aṛḏaˁ*   *l-i*   *zibb-i*
   IMP.suck.2SG for-1SG   dick-1SG
   "Suck my dick!"

(25) *nāk – ynīk* "to fuck"

(25a) *tawʷ* *nnīk*   *l-ik*   *il-ˁarš*   *w-il-qabīla*
   now   PRS.fuck.1SG for-2SG DEF-tribe and-DEF-trive
   w-il-faḏīla *mtāˁ-ik*
   and-DEF-vritue of-2SG
   "I'm going to fuck your tribe and your family and your fucking virtues"

(25b) *ˁand-i* *wāḥid* *ṣaḥb-i* *ˁand-u*   *āpāġēy* *fōtō* *bāhi, tawwa*
   POSS-1SG one friend-1SG POSS-3SG.M machine photo good now
   nžibū-h   ***nnīkū-h*** *rwāḥ-na* *waḥad-na muš* *ḫīr?*
   PRS.bring.1PL PRS.fuck.1PL selves-1PL alone-1PL NEG better
   "I have a friend who has a good photo camera, we'll bring it and fucking use it ourselves, isn't it better?"

(25c) *waḷḷa* *wṣalt*   *tlāṯa* *bakwēt fi-n-nahār* *nitkayyif*
   by God arrive.PST.1SG three packs in-DEF-day   PRS.smoke.1SG
   zūz   *nōġmāl* *w* *waqt* *illi* *fi-l-līl* *ˁand-i*
   two   normally and time REL in-DEF-night POSS-1SG
   sahriyya, dīskō, walla *ḥāža,* *ᵓnzīd*   ***ᵓnnīk*** *bakō*
   party disco or   thing PRS.continue.1SG PRS.fuck.1SG pack
   āḫar *ya* *zibb-i*
   other VOC dick-1SG
   "I swear, I ended up [smoking] three packs a day, I smoke two normally and, when I have a party or disco or something else in the night, I continue to fucking smoke another pack, God damn it!"

   In (25b) and (25c) the verb "to fuck" is used with the connotative meanings of "doing" or "performing" an activity. Instead of saying "we'll use the camera", the SAT speaker literally said "we'll fuck the camera" in (25b), while the speaker in (25c) preferred "I continue to fuck a pack [of cigarettes]", instead of simply saying "I continue to smoke a pack [of cigarettes]". In both cases, the pragmatic reason for choosing the swear word is to imply the seriousness of the situations. Nonetheless, the verb *nāk* would have never appeared in any of the abovementioned occurrences, had the speakers been in close proximity to older people or their parents.

(26) *nayyak – ynayyik* "to be fucked", probably developed from *tnayyak – ytnayyak*, where the prefix *t-* has been assimilated into the verb form

(26a) *mā-tqūl-hā-š*   *āna pġōfēsyōnēl,* *rā-ni*
   NEG-PRS.say.2SG-3SG.F-NEG 1SG professional PART-1SG

mā-naʕraf-š		*nṣawwir*		**nayyik**	
NEG-PRS.know.1SG-NEG		PRS.take photo.1SG		IMP.be fucked.2SG	

"Don't tell her I'm a professional, I don't know how to take fucking photos!"

(26b)

baṛṛa	**nik**	*il-umm*	*mtāʕ*	*umm-ik*	*yā*	**mnayyak**
out	IMP.fuck.2SG	DEF-mother	of	mother-2SG	VOC	fucked

"Go fuck your grandma, motherfucker!"

(27) *nayyāk* "fucker", "homosexual"

(28) *ṭaffār* "pedophile"

(28b)

rā-hu	*ražil*	*ṭaffār,*	*nayyāk fi*	*mūḫḫ-u*
PART-3SG.M	man	pedophile	fucker in	brain-3SG.M

"He's a pedophile, fucked up in the head."

(29) *mibūn* "homosexual", pl. *mwābna*

(30)

w	*baʕdīk*	*nwallī*		*āna*	*kaḏḏāb*	*yā*	*mibūn*
and	after	PRS.become.1SG		1SG	liar	VOC	homosexual
w	*twallī*		*inti*	*kaḏḏāb*	*maʕ-ya*	*w*	*baṛṛa*
and	PRS.become.2SG		2SG	liar	with-1SG	and	out
ʕād	*ywallī*	*fīlˡm*		*sēks*			
so	PRS.become.3SG.M	movie		sex			

"And afterwards I'm gonna be called a lier, you fucker and you're gonna be called a liar together with me and soon after it will all become a fucking nightmare."

(31) *ṭaḥḥān* "homosexual",a metaphor developed from the root *ṭ-ḥ-ṇ* "to grind"

(32) *qaḥba* "whore". This term has given the

(32a) *tqūḥub -yitqūḥub* "to fuck around", "to joke around". Denominal verb, developed from *qaḥba*, probably from the denotative meaning of "acting like a whore".

(33) *ʕaṭṭāy* "homosexual", a metaphor from the denotative meaning of the term,"giver"

(33a)

na3rif	*aṣl-ik*	*mˡn-īn*	*yā*	*mibūn,*
PRS.know.1SG	origin-2SG	from-where	VOC	homosexual,
min	*banī*	*ʕaṭṭāy*		
from	people	homosexual		

"I know your origin, you faggot, son of faggots!"

The discrepancy between the classical utterance *banū* ...(indicates the family origin or heritage), with which someone can take pride in, and the shock given by the combination

of this classical utterance and such an inappropriate term makes this utterance weigh even more heavily on the listener.

(34) *būnīta* "handjob", probably from Spanish *bonita* "pretty"

(34a) *rā-hu*   *yaẓbid*   *būnīta*
      PART-3SG.M   PRS.pull.3SG.M   handjob
      "He's jerking off."

(35) *taḫrā*   *l-i*   *fī-h*
      PRS.shit.2SG   for-1SG   in-3SG.M
      "I don't give a fuck

Final remarks

Although the list of curse words in SAT presented throughout this study is, by far, not complete, it still manages to showcase the versatility of some of these taboo terms. The most productive ones were the words referring to the penis and the verb used to indicate the act of sexual intercourse, showing that the society in which these swear words are used, is not only a patriarchal society, but, more than anything, one that is dominated by "machoism" and the need of men to step up and call attention to themselves by resorting to foul language.

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دلالات الاهانة عند الطوارق من خلال طقوس الأداء
INSULT INDICATIONS IN THE TOUAREGS' SOCIETY
THROUGH RITUAL PERFORMANCES

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Abstract. Disparage, cursing and verbal abuse are among the discarded topics, or which society tries to avoid, to say the least. The Tuaregs share with numerous other societies their interest in the Word and its purpose. They know that it more painful than a strong hit that causes physical pain. The saying "Wounds do heal while the Word doesn't" (T∂zza ∂boussen W∂r T∂zza t∂yna) may be an indication of the word impact on its hearer if it is "bad" or hurtful. Slander affects individuals, men or women, and tribes as well. It collectively harms these hierarchical societies governed by relationships that balance between seriousness and humor. The latter is nothing but an essence of a wind-proof of the painful events witnessed by the society. It allows transformation of social pains into outlets through which harmony could be achieved and embarrassing situations could be avoided. We try, through the proverbs, poems and various tales, to limit the words and forms of curse and insult within the Tuaregs, by focusing on ritualistic cursing through the pertaining poems and songs, which has become prohibited topics except in rare situations with heavy reservations. That is because poets quitted sarcasm until it became prohibited due to its impact on individuals and groups, propagation rapidity of songs and poems and the lightning-like memorization, transmission and broadcast of such songs and poems.
Keywords: curse, sarcasm, Tuareg, poems, songs, seriousness, humor, power.

1. المقدمة

اقتصرت اهتماماتي البحثية في موضوع الاهانة، عند طوارق *الأزجر* [1]، على مجال الشّعر ومختلف اشكال الأداء الغنائي والحكائي، ولم اعر اهتماما للّعن والسّباب بين الأشخاص خارج المجال المذكور. كما ركّزت على الهجاء ومايلحقه من أذى وإذلال بالخصم من خلال أشعار شعيرة عاشوراء (*سبّيبه*) [2]. هذا الموضوع الذي لم يحظ بأي دراسة، فيما يتعلّق بطوارق منطقة *الأزجر*، اقصى الجنوب الجزائري لحساسيّة الموضوع، ولم نكن لنهتدي اليه لو لم ندرس الأغاني والأشعار في سياقات الطقوس والشعائر، طقوس الزّواج وشعيرة عاشوراء.

سوف نتطرّق في بعض أجزاء هذا المقال، إلى الانتاج الشّعري بين سكّان الواحة أثناء احتفالات *سبّيبه*، وكيف أنّ المرأة تمثّل شرف القبيلة، بصفة خاصّة، كما هو الحال لدى الشّعوب الأخرى المجاذية لبلاد الطّوارق وأنها لاتشكّل

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[1] منطقة *تاسيلي آزجر*، حمادة *آزجر*، تقع أقصى الجنوب الشرقي الجزائري. صنفتها اليونيسكو كتراث عالمي في 1982.

[2] سبيبه، أو عاشوراء، هي احتفالات تنافسية بين سكان قصر *زلواز* وسكان قصر *الميهان*، تدوم عدة أيام، والتنافس يكون شعريا وموسيقيا ومن خلال النساء والرجال والمسنين والشباب، وأزيائهم ومختلف آداءاتهم، ولابد أن يكون هناك منتصرا في النهاية.

استثناء في هذه القضيّة، بالرّغم من الرّواسم والكليشيهات التي تحيط حول ظاهرة العذريّة في هذه المجتمعات والادّعاءات الجزائفيّة بأنها غير ذات أهمّية، ولو رمزيّا. [3]

2. صدق الأسد، يبرأ جرح الجباه ولا تبرأ الكلمات

يحكى أنّ امرأة تخاصمت مع زوجها، وتركت بيت الزّوجيّة، وغادرته كئيبة حزينة باكية، فوجدها اسدا في طريق العودة إلى بيت أهلها مكسورة الخاطر، فقام بحملها إلى أن أوصلها إلى المكان. فعندما سئلت عمن احضر ها ورافقها في طريقها الطّويلة قالت لهم "السّي السّبع" ، السّيد الأسد، لكن ياخسارة لولا رائحة فمه الكريهة، بينما والأسد كان الأسد يسترقّ السّمع...ففي مرّة من المرّات ذهبت المرأة لتحتطب من الغابة فجاء الأسد وقال لها هل عرفتني، فقالت بالطّبع عرفتك، قال لها اضربيني بالفأس بين عيني، على الجبهة، قالت كيف ولماذا وهل هذا هو جزاء احسانك لي، قال لها أمرتك ان تفعلي فضربته، فسالت دماؤه، مسحها وغادر....بعد مدّة عاود الظّهور ووجد المرأة فقال لها أنظري إلى جبهتي هل بقي الجرح قالت لا، قال لها لكن كلماتك مازالت تحفر بداخلي ولن تموت...ثم انقضّ عليها وافترسها...

اعتقد أنّها الأسطورة التي تؤسّس لهذا المثل الانساني الشّامل، الموجود في كلّ المجتمعات، والتي توضح أنّه لايوجد تكافؤ فيها بين الحديد والكلام...فالكلام أشدّ أذى من ضرب الحديد. ومايمكن أيضا أن يستنتج من الأسطورة هو أنّ المرأة "سليطة اللّسان" أو ناكرة للجميل، كما توحي به رواية غات. (الغندور، ف.، 2012)

الحكاية قديمة جدا عندما كانت الحيوانات تتكلم...وتعقّل قوة الكلمة وعواقبها الوخيمة...وربما تحكي أصل افتراس الأسود للبشر، بينما كانوا متفاهمين بدليل أنه أحسّ بوجع المرأة وحملها...مهما يكن من امر، فإن ماتريد ان تبلغه الحكاية هو أنّه منذ غابر الأزمان على الانسان ان لا يتلفّظ باي كلمة دون ان يعرف وقعها على الآخر. كما تبيّن لاوعي البشريّة، أو المشترك بين المجتمعات فيما يتعلّق بأضرار الكلام، والكلمة التي تفوق ضربة الفأس أو طلقة بارود، في مجتمعاتنا العربية والأمازيغية، مثل المجتمعات الأخرى، فقد يراها الإنجليز مثل: الخناجر التي لاتحملها الأيدي يمكن أن تحملها الكلمات، والمثل الاسباني، السّهام تخترق الجسد والكلمات تخترق الروح (Lefébure, C., 2004)

3. طبيعة الاهانة وحدودها عند طوارق آزجر

يطلق لفظ *أوال* في كل اللّهجات الأمازيغيّة للدلالة على الكلام[4] ، أو الكلمة الجادة التي تخرج كالرّصاصة أو القاطعة كالسيف[5] . تسمّى الأشياء بمسمّياتها عند الطّوارق، فـ*أوال*، كلام، و*أساهغ* الغناء، والهجاء، تِرْجَمُت والنّميمة تِزْميت...لكن هناك الكلام القبيح *ازك أوال* وهناك اللّعن، الذي يطلق عليه، *اللّغن*[6] وهذا له العديد من المستويات، يأخذ أشكالا في اللّغة اليوميّة، وأشكالا أخرى أثناء مختلف الأداءات الشّعرية، والغنائيّة ضمن طقس التّنافس الجماعي أو حتّى جلسات الطّرب، إن صحّت التّسمية.

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[3] في عام 1996، قمت بالقاء محاضرة حول طقوس العذرية عند كيل جانت فكان من بعض المتدخلين أن استغربوا أمر القول بوجود العذرية بهذه المجتمعات، وهذا من خلال بعض الافلام الوثائقية على القنوات الفرنسية التي تقول بحرية العلاقات الجنسية لنساء الطوارق. تجدر الاشارة أن حتى الدراسات الاثنولوجية لاتعير للقضية أي أهمية، ويهتمون بما يعرف بآهال وحرية العلاقات بين الجنسين، وهذا مناف لما يعرف بقيم التبادل، وبطقوس الزواج من الداخل، ومعاينتها لأنها تتم بين النساء. صدر المقال بعنوان: "*تاغتست*، طقوس العذرية عند كيل *جانت*" في حيوانات وطقوس: تصورات وتجدد الحياة. المركز الوطني للبحث في عصور ماقبل التاريخ وعلم الانسان والتاريخ. ديسمبر، 1998، ص : 11-17.

[4] هناك فرق بين الكلمة التي يطلق عليها*تَفِرْتْ*، الكلمة عموما دون تخصيص لمحتواها، والكلام *أوال*، الذي يقاس من خلال محتوياته ومايتضمنه من خير أوشر، من مدح اوذم...الخ بينما الكلُمة بالعربية الدارجة، هي مايقابل *اوال* من حيث التشديد عليها وعلى ضرورة اختيارها، حتى لاتجرح ولا تلحق الأذى بالآخرين.

[5] لكن قد يستعمل اللفظ بمعنى مغاير كلية، جرت والعادة أن يراد بلفظ أوال تعيين الغناء...فإذا سئلت امرأة في مناطق الشمال أوال نَم، في عرس ما فهذا يدلّ على أغنيتك، ويدلّ أكثر على أنّ الغناء في هذه المجتمعات غير لائق، لذلك يغلف ويوارى خلف الكلمة الصارمة المهذبة، أوال دون اي نعت أو إضافة.

[6] تنطق العين غينا، والحاء خاء، فالعديد من الحروف تنطق مغايرة للنطق العربي، فيصبح محمد مخمدا، وعلي غالي...الخ.

مثلها مثل بقيّة المجتمعات، تركّز مجتمعات الطّوارق على الكلمة، وتوليها اهمية بالغة، وهم من يطلق عليهم كِيلْ أَوَال أي أهل الكلام، الموزون الجاد، لذلك حري بالإنسان قبل أن يلفظ أي لفظ أن يفكّر في عواقبه، وبأن لا تكسر كلمته ولا تهان هيئته، فالأمثلة التي تدل على ذلك كثيرة:

" أُوفْ /اِلَّلْ /اِرْزَنْ ۞ /دَغْ /تَغْمَا /وَلَا /يَرْز /دَغْ/تَنَّا "[7]
أفضل/الحر /يكسر /في/ساقه/و لا/يكسر /في/كلامه

أي يفضّل أي يكسر الحرّ من ساقه على أن تكسر كلمته، ونفس المثال نجده بالأزواغ، عند طوارق النيجر وكذلك الأمر بالنسبة لطوارق الآزجر.[8]
وكذلك الحال بأذى الكلمة فكل الشعوب تؤكّد على أنّ للكلمة وقع أكثر من ألم الأعضاء مهما كانت جراحا أو بضربة عصا أو حجر أو سيف. وهناك من الشعوب من يعتبر: " أن الكلمة مثل البيضة، إن كسرت لايمكن أن تعود لحالتها الأولى، وقد تترك آثارا صعبة المحو، وكذلك الكلمة يمكنها أن تترك آثارا عميقة وعواقب وخيمة ". (-Roulon Doko, P., 2008)
وأمثال الطوارق حيثما وجدوا تعبّر بوضوع عن عظم مايمكن للكلمة أن تتركه من آثار إن كانت مهينة ونابية. يقول "كِيلْ بِرُو" بمعنى ناس زمان:

تَنَرَا/ اِبُوسَّنْ/ وَرْ/ تَنَرَا/ تَنَّا
تشفى/ الجروح/و لا/تشفى/الأقوال
أي تشفى جروح(الجسد) ولا تشفى (جروح) الكلمة
أو : تَأَزِينْ/ بُوسَّنْ/ وَرْ/ تَأَزِينْ/ اِيْثَاْلَسَّنْ
تشفى/الجروح/لا/تشفى/ كلام اللسان
تشفى الجروح ولا يشفى كلام الألسن

فبمجرّد بلوغ الجنسين، بارتداء اللثام للرجل وغطاء الرأس للمرأة تتحدّد العلاقات وتتكرّس القوانين التي تجعل كلا الطّرفين يعرف حدود الكلام المباح والكلام المحظور، ومتى يثرثر ومتى يكفت عن الثّرثرة ويصبح البالغ يعي الأفعال والمواقف المحرجة له وللآخرين، والأفعال التي تزيّن صاحبها[9]. كذلك يعرف مايقتضيه "الشّك" أو الحياء الاجتماعي.[10]
ومن المظاهر التي تبيح للمجتمع التّنفيس عن مكبوتات التّاريخ والعلاقات الصّارمة، هي تلك العلاقات المازحة بين القبائل وممازحة الأقارب، التي سنستطرّق لها في جانب من هذا المقال.

3.1. اللَّغَنُ، اللّعنة

كثيرة هي عبارات اللعن المرتبطة بلعنة الله على الملعون، كدعوة شر يراد بها الحاق الأذى بالملعون والتي تمارس لفظا في الحياة اليومية، فكثيرة هي اللعنات المرتبطة بعواقب الهية جراء الدعوة السيئة أو التي تعبر عن احداث كارثية على المدعى عليه.
اللّغْنُ أو اللعن أو النّعل، لفظ عربي بتحويرات صواتية وتغيير لموقع الحروف، مرتبط فقط بالله، وهو الفاعل الوحيد (Taine-Cheikh, 2004)...واللّعنات تجري على لسان الكبار أكثر من الشّباب، واللّعنة التي ترتبط بالله أشدّ وقعا وفعالية من غيرها. ومن خلال اللّعنات السّابقة تتضح العلاقة بالدّيني من خلال تعابير اللّعنة ذاتها والتي

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7 مثل من الأضاغ، عند طوارق مالي.
8 للمزيد من المعلومات حول الأمثال ارجع إلى مقالنا: " وليست المرأة الطاقية "تَكَمْبُوث" " ملاحظات حول أمثال الطوارق "، في " الأمثال الشعبية المشترك الثقافي الانساني"، مجلة المأثورات الشعبية، العدد 94، السنة 25، 2016، ص: 26-39
9 تطرق برنو Bernus لمايسميه توارق اولمدن بالآير ، تَغَدَسْتْ ، أي الضرطة، باعتبارها من الأفعال غير اللائقة، والتي تلحق بصاحبها العار...وهي سمة لاتخص الطوارق وحدهم وفي الخلفيات الحكائية لسكان الشمال أشدّ أذى لصاحبها قد تصل حد الموت.
10 يطلق عليه أيضا تكراكضت لدى طوارق الأضاغ.

ترتبط أحيانا بصيغ تعبيريّة تنمّ عن الثقافة الدينية بين أوساط اللّاعنين، كربط اللّعنة بحطب جهنم، أو يعذبكم الله على وجه الأرض...الخ

يَبْخَسْ اكِيْ / يَالله

أبخسك(قلل من شأنك)/الله

أوهِي / يَبْطَلْ اكِيْ / يَالله

نفس المعنى

اي / مَسِّيْنَغْ / اسَطْسَنْ / دَمُ / امَكَّسَنْ

يا/ ربي/ يشفي غليل/ أعدائكِ

الله يجعلك مضحكة لأعدائكِ

اي / مَسِّيْنَغْ / اسْ / اجَاتَن / امَكَّسَنْ / نَّم

يا/ربي/يكْثر /أعداءكِ

أكثر الله من أعداءك[11]

كذلك نجد لعنات اخرى:

يَسَّسَرْ غِبِكُ / يَالله

يحرمك/ الله

يَسِسَنْ / كَوْنْ / مَسِّيْنَغْ لدَغْ / أزوري / اَنْ / اگَالْ

يعذب /كم/ الله / في/ ظهر/ الأرض

أي الله يعذبكم على وجه الأرض.

اسّ / اگْزْكَاضْ / اكِيْ / مَسِّيْنَغْ

ي /فضح/ك/ الله [12]

يفضحك الله

اي / مَسِّيْنَغْ / اَكُ / ايجَنْ / اسَغِيرَنْ / انْ / تمُسِي

يا/ رب/ يجعلك /حطب/ النار (جهنم)[13]

3.2. العلاقات المازحة، تحويل الكلام المؤذي وتطهير المجتمع

تطرّقت الدراسات المتعلّقة بمجتمعات الطوارق إلى علاقات المزح(الجد والهزل) عرضا، واقتصرت على القرابة المزاحيّة(parenté à plaisanterie) ولم تتقن تحليلها، إلا فيما ندر (Gast, M., 1982) وذلك لاقتصار هذه العلاقة، كما ركّزت هذه الدّراسات، على ما يعرف ب "تبويزا" أو "تبوبها"(cousinage à plaisanterie) في عالم الطوارق أي علاقة القرابة التي تربط أبناء الخال والعمّة، أي الأبناء الناتجين عن النّسب المتصالب(cousins croisés) بالمقارنة مع النّسب المتوازي والذي تحكمه العلاقات المنضبطة الصّارمة. أي لم تربط هذه الظاهرة المزاحيّة:*تبويزا أو تبوبها* بسياقاتها الاجتماعيّة والثقافيّة وانعكاساتها على النّظام الاجتماعي ككلّ، ولم تعط أمثلة على ذلك بل مجرّد إشارات عابرة، في سياق الحديث عن أشكال القرابة وأشكال الزّواج.

كذلك يمكن إيجاد إشارات للعلاقات المزاحيّة التي تربط فئة "انضن" الحرفيّين بالأسياد، لقيام "انضن" بدور الوسيط في المجتمع، لاسيّما اثناء حفلات الزواج وغيرها من الطقوس المجتمعية الهامة. (Rasmussen, S. 1997)

3.3. تِكْتِشِيوت: أشكال أخرى للممازحة بالآزجــر

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[11] أدعية ولعنات أمدتني بها السيدة خ. جانت.

[12] لعنات أمدتني بها سيدة من غات، 2018ذات ثقافة من الأضاغ وجانت.

[13] هذه عملية جمع أولى، لكل تعابير الاهانة لدى طوارق الآزجر. والاهانة لفظ شامل لكل ما أوردناه من تعابير، كاللعن، الذم، القدح والهجاء والسباب والشتم...الخ.

تتأسّس هذه الممازحة بعيدا عن علاقات القرابة الدمويّة، بل تربط بين مجموعات قبلية وقبائل ربطت بينها لحمة البناء الأسطوري أحيانا والعلاقات التّاريخيّة البعيدة وثقافة التعايش والاستئناس، أحيانا أخرى.

لماذا يعبّر بالشّتم والهجاء وبالسّلوكات النابية المخالفة للمعايير والقيم، دون إثارة ردود أفعال عنيفة؟ لماذا تنتهك حرمة الديار ويضيع المال ويبدد دون أي أذى يلحق بالجاني؟ وهل تبرز تكنّشوت في ظروف معيّنة للتّخفيف والتّرويح عن النّفس وخلق جوّ من الاسترخاء، أي أيمكن اعتبار تكنّشوت هذه فعلا ممازحة بريئة؟

لا ترتبط تكنّشوت بظروف معيّنة، بل تحدث في أيّ زمان ومكان (Alles, E., 2003) فلم أهتمّ بهذا الموضوع إلاّ صدفة، والصدفة كالحلم والحدس توصل إلى المعرفة. يلاحظ أيضا أنّه لامجال للخطأ في تحديد الطرف الآخر الذي نمزح معه، وحتى لدى الشباب، فهناك معرفة جيّدة بعلاقات الممازحة المفروضة على الأفراد والجماعات، تورّث وتنتقل عبر الأجيال كما تنتقل الأساطير ومختلف المحكيّات، وتبقى تكنّشوت كغيرها من الظّواهر مرتبطة باستمرار لتقاليد وثقافة الآباء والأجداد وإن جهل الكثيرين أسباب وجودها.

ترتبط تكنّشوت بالمجموعات المجاورة فيما بينها، أي المجموعات القصوريّة بواحة جانت، كما تكون بين المجموعات والقبائل الأصليّة بالواحة، أي سكان القصور القديمة والقبائل الوافدة، كثلك التي تربط بين كِبُلْ اِجِيفْ، أهل اجيف من قصر زَلُوَاز، وقبيلة اِجضَانَارَنْ الوافدة من الآير. تنتج عن علاقات الممازحة هذه، أشكال وتنظيمات اجتماعية تحترم وتظهر في مناسبات معيّنة يطلق عليها: الغادة، أي العادة: ففي عادة الزواج، عندما تتزوج امراة من قبيلة اجضانارن يقدم افراد هذه الأخيرة لحما متمثلا في شاة ل"كيل اجيف"، وإن تزوجت امراة من اجيف يعطى للاجضانارن طبقا من الأكل: طبق من الطعام من قمح اوشعير، أي رمز الاستقرار في مقابل رمز البدو اللحوم والماشية.

يمكن القول أنّ هذه العلاقات مبنية ومتأسّسة على تباين اجتماعي وثقافي وسلطوي لأحدى الطرفين: سواء كان جماعات متجاورة أوقبائل متباعدة، ولاتتأسّس البتّة بين مجموعتين متعادلتين ممّا يجعلها علاقات محمّلة بأعباء التاريخ الثقيلة وبآلام الذاكرة التي لم تندمل بعد.

فـتكنّشوت تؤسّس لعلاقات بين جماعات يصعب تعايشها مع بعضها وقد تحدث المواجهات بينها في أيّة لحظة، حيث تمتصّ أشكال المزح هاته الاختلافات بصور شتّى: الخضوع، وقدريّة التبعيّة والتراتبيّة الاجتماعيّة والتبادل الاقتصادي

تكنّشوت هي نوع من أنواع المزح الطقوسي، أومؤسّسة المرتكزة على الهجاء والمدح، كما عايناهما مرارا في شعيرة سبيبه، فيتهم فريقا آخر بالعبودية، بينما يذهب الآخر باتهام النساء بسوء السمعة والابتذال الجنسي وهما موضوعان شديدا الحظر أثناء ممارسة البحث.

ترتبط إذا أشكال الممازحة والعلاقات بين المتمازحين، بترتيبات اجتماعية وثقافيّة، عبر التاريخ المحلّي بكلّ روافده، والتي قد تضيع في الكتابات والأسئلة المعتبرة" كبيرة" وأساسيّة، إذا ماتعلّق الأمر بدراسة هذه المجتمعات، فـتكنّشوت تنقل لنا التواريخ الكاملة، من حركات وكلام وأساطير وطقوس.

فهذه العلاقات المبنية على تكنّشوت، بالشّتم، والتفادي و غضّ الطرف، في آن، والهبات المتبادلة، تشكل مجموعة فواصل وعلامات في نسق أكثر شموليّة في توزيع الهويّات الجماعيّة. فتتولّد عن كلّ ذلك الكلمات والمعاني المركبة والدقيقة من رحم المعاناة الدفينة في الصدور والمتقاطعة بخلايا الذاكرة مشكّلة لحمة التاريخ النافذ عبر فضاءات متقلّصة تحكم مصائر المجتمعات.

4. اجيتان وتنڤالين14 ...بين الأفعال والمعاني.

الفعل اِجَا، أي قام بفعل ما، وايجي، هو الفعل في حدّ ذاته، والجمع اِجِيئَان، والأفعال هذه هي التي تعطي الصّورة الحقيقيّة للإنسان وليس الهيئة وجمالها. ويقال اِجِيئَنْ مُوسَائِينْ، أفعال جيّدة، واِجِيئَنْ شَاضْنِينْ، بمعنى أفعال مذمومة. على المرء أن يختار الأفعال على الشكل، فإذا كان جمال المرأة شيئا أساسيا في اختيارها كزوجة فإن البحث عن أفعالها إن كانت جيدة أو سيئة أجدى وأنفع لأنها هي الباقية والجمال زائل، ف اِجِيئَان، ترتبط بجمال العقل، العقل زينة، تَابَتِّي، والمرأة الجميلة هي من تفهم تِنُڤَالين وتحسنها، أي تلك التي تفهم المعاني والمعاني تُكتشف ولاتعرض عرضا، أي هي امرأة ذكيّة أيضاً.15

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14 الحرف ڤ ينطق في تنڤ الين جيما مصرية.

15 بالعامية يقال فلان أو فلان: يفهمها وهي فالسما، أو يفهمها وهي طايرة.

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كل المجتمعات تميّز بين الكلام الصّريح الواضح والكلام الضّمني المعبأ بالتّورية والمجاز...وهذا مايعبّر عنه المثل "الحَاذق بالغمزة والمهبول بالدّبزة، أي اللّبيب بالإشارة يفهم، بينما الأخرق الأبله لايفهم الاّ بالضّرب. "...ليس طارقيا، ولايعرف تماشق، ولا" يحسن الكلام" الا ذلك الذي يلعب بلباقة *تنقَل*[16] لعبا ، الذي يعبر بتكتم مناسب ويفهم بنصف كلمة. في هذا التحكم بالإشارات، وبالكلمة الخفية، يوجد المقياس الصحيح بين الكلام المفرط الذي يشغل الثرثار، والكلام القليل جدا لمن نتوسل اليه لـ"يقوم ب بتو". (Casajus, D., 1987)

ومن هنا يمكن القول بان *تنقَالت* تقع بين طرفي الثرثرة وقلّة الكلام. وتعبير *جَثَ نَ اوالُ*، كلام كثير دون معنى غالبا *وازكُ أُوَال*، كلام بذيء.

ولفظ أوال وان ارتبط بالكثير من السياقات المتناقضة، بين الخير والشرّ، والمدح والذم، فإنّه وفي سياقات مغايرة تماما قد يصبح بمعنى الغناء، كما اشرنا اليه في بداية المقال. كذلك بالرغم من الفواصل والحدود بين *أُوَال* و *تفرت*، إلاّ أنّهما يصبحان مرادفات، عندما تصبح *تفرت* تعبر عن بيت الشعر: ...يصبح *أوالْ* مرادفا لـ*تَفرْت*، جمع *تِفيرَا*. ومن جهة أخرى يصبح لـ*تَفرْت* معنى مثيرا يستحق التّعليق(Casajus, D., 1987).

5. النّساء في ميزان الهجاء
5.1. المرأة العانس والهجاء الصريح

مهما تكن مكانة المرأة في مجتمعات الطوارق إلا أنها تشترك في نعت من تتأخر بالزواج، ببعض الأوصاف التي تجعل الرجال ينفرون منها، وكذلك الحال بالنسبة للرجل الذي تأخّر في الزّواج.

يطلق على العانس لفظ*تَنَبَّأُيوت*[17] وقد حظيت ببعض الأشعار التي تبيّن صفاتها وخصالها الذّميمة:

تَنَبَّأُيوث /س /مَال /أَنيث
العانس/بأوصافها
هَرْكُواكُ /تَفِرْث /أَنيث
دائما/كلمتها(تسبقها)(دون تفكير في العواقب)
زَجَرَت /تيكُلي /أَنيت
طويلة/مشيتها (تمشي مسرعة)
نَائتَّي /أُفولُ /اِسِنينْ /أَنيث
الأكل/على/أسنانها
آرْ/ اد /أسَنْ/اِميدوَنْ /أَنيث
إلى (أن) /يأتي/أصدقائها

فهذه المرأة، تكرّس مكانتها ودونيّتها بين النساء والرجال، لأنّها لا تلتزم بالمعايير الاجتماعية في شبكة العلاقات التي تجمع الرّجال بالنّساء، والتي عادة ما يحدث فيها التوافق العاطفي ومن ثم الارتباط...فالعانس لاتعطي فرصة للاقتراب منها، لأن صفاتها بادية للعيان فهي ترمي بالكلمات دائما كيفما تشاء، ومشيتها سريعة، بينما يفترض على المرأة أن تتثاقل في مشيتها ولاتسرع، أي عليها أن تمشي بنوع من الدلال...عندما تأكل لاتنظف اسنانها فتظهر بقايا الأكل عليها، وحتى إن أتى اصدقاءها يلاحظون ذلك عليها...وهذه كلها صفات مذمومة في المرأة عامّة.

فمن صفات*تنبايوت* بمنطقة *الأضاغ*، شمال مالي، إلى صفاتها بـ*جانت*:

تَنَبَّأُيوث /تَمُونْ /دْ /سِلْسَا /أَنيث
العانس/تبدو/ من/ملابسها (هندامها)
تَنَبَّأُيوث /تَمُونْ /دْ /تيكُلي /أَنيث
العانس/تظهر /من/مشيتها

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[16] *تنقالت* أو*تنقَل*، الفهم بالاشارة هنا، سة اللبيب.

[17] كما يوجد لفظ *أنبَايو* المتعلق بالرجل، ولكن لم نيمع ولم نسجل أي شعر أو حكايات عنه، هل يعتبر هذا إفلات من الرقابة الاجتماعيّة؟

وَر/اِيزِيضْ/آضُو/اَيِّيثْ
وليست/زكية/رائحتها

تضاف صفات غير محبّبة لهذه المرأة، بأنّها تظهر من خلال ملابسها، فمن عاداتها أنها تستقبل أصدقائها، خاصة الرّجال، بأسمال بالية، وكذلك تظهر بأنها امرأة يتأفف منها الرجال من خلال مشيتها، والروائح الكريهة التي تنبعث منها...وهذه من أبشع النعوت وأقساها للنساء.

فعندما نتكلّم على المكانة المرموقة التي تتميّز بها النّساء في هذه المجتمعات فلا يمكن أن تكون في المطلق ، بل هناك انتقادات لأصناف من النساء في المجتمع، كما كان الأمر بالنسبة للمرأة ضعيفة البنية التي لا مؤخرة لها، مقابل المرأة الممتلئة...

5.2. علاقات نسائيّة مهينة، الهجاء بالكنايات

في مقطع شعري، يقول أحد شعراء واحة جانت:

بْنَت/السُّودَان/نَ/اكْلاَّن
بنت/السودان/ للعبيد
تَبْخَاس/اِيري/اسْخَانْ
أبخست/الرّقبة/ الحقيقية
اجيت/تكناس/امان

يقصد من هذه المقطوعة هو مصاحبة نساء قبيلة الشّاعر لما يطلق للرجال سود البشرة من القبائل الأخرى. والذين رمز لهم بعطر بنت السودان(Pomaria)، كما يدل اسمها بوضوح، وهذا الفعل المشين يسقط قيمة رجال القبيلة، وكلمة يَبخَاس من البُخس، أي فعل كهذا يأتي على شرف القبيلة، والرّقبة ترمز لعلو الرأس والهامة أو انتكاسه. ونجد نفس الشاعر يدعي على هؤلاء الرجال سود البشرة، وبوصفهم بالثيران، وبأنهم كثر مثل الذباب، والذين صاروا ينافسونهم على جلب اهتمام نساء قبيلته، وهذا مما يزيد من قوة الاهانة وبالمقابل يشعل الهجاء إلى اقصاه.

هذا الهجاء بين شاعرين من جانت، أقسما بعد أن حجّا بيت الله أن ينتهيا عن نظم الشّعر ولاسيّما شعر الهجاء لما فيه من أذى للبشر.

6. المناظرات الشّعرية بين الجنسين

نقف هنا عند نمط من المناظرات الشّعرية الهجائية الطريفة والغنيّة بالصور البديعية والاستعارات القوية، التي لايتّسع المقام للوقوف عندها، لكن فقط لنؤكّد على قوة الكلمة الشّعرية الموزونة في القول اللاّذع، ومن البيان ما يأخذ بالألباب، مثل ما جاء في هذه المقاطع التي انتقيناها من قصائد مطولة، على لسان امرأة ورجل من جانت، والتي سرعان ماتحوّلت إلى أغاني، ضمن المنظومة الشّعرية الموسيقية لسكان جانت، لجمالها وقوتها.

تبدأ المرأة بالهجاء قائلة:

بَانْ/تَغَاشِيمْثْ/يَلَّ
قلّة/الحياء/موجودة
اِبَّا/نَ/وَان/اَدَغْ/اَيْوَى
قلة/ الاحترام/متوفرة /أيضا
إلى أن تبدأ بذكر المستحيلات:
اذ/اقَّلْ/آنْجِي/سَنْبها
حتى/ يأتي/الوادي/ من سبها ، حتى لو يأتي الوادي من سبها
اِجَدْ/وَانْ/اَغَرْدَايه

يأخذ/ طريق/ غردايه ، يمر من غرداية

بَيِّكِيدُ /دَاوُ /تِينْ /خَاتَّمَة

يعبر / تحت/ تين /خاتمة[18]

يَكُنَى /زَ غَنْ /ان/ الْفَضَّة

يصنع/مدقا/ من/الفضة، أي يصبح مدقا فضيا

مِيغُ /الْنَّغَسْ /ان /الْقهوة

أو/ مروج/ من/ القهوة

غُّوزْ /دِينْ /ادَغْ /ات /مَسْرَى

حتى/عند/هذا/ يا/فتيات

أُور اْقُلِيغُ /سَ/ ان /اَنًّا

لن/أتراجع/في/كلامي

يردّ عليه الرجل على نفس منوال التحديات وأكثر قائلا:

آسْ /ادَّكَّا /اسْ /تّنَّها

عندما/كنا/ في لفة/الصبيان

نَ /ازَّرَّغْ /اوَانْ /ت/ اُقُدا

تبّا/ لمن/مثلي، تبا لأقراني

إلى أن يقول:

أدْ /يَقَّل /انَّجِي/ فزان

عندما/يأتي/ الوادي/ من فزان

يُومَاسْ /اجِيظُ/ الْقَنْطَان

يصبح /الحمار / قبطانا

تُومَاسْ/ نَدَاسْتْ /اسْنِران

تصبح/الباعوضة/واقية ريح

يُنَغَسْ /مَلُولْ/ الدَّكَّانْ

وتغلق/ العثّة/ الدكّان

غُّوز /دِينْ /ادَغْ /ات /مَسْرَى

عندها/ يافتيات

أُوز /قُلِيغُ /سَ/انَّ /اَنًّا

لن/ أتراجع/ عما/ قلت

هجاء متبادل، وحتى وإن حدثت المستحيلات فلن يتراجع أحدهما عن هجوه للآخر. ومع هذا حدث وأن صمت الثنائي الكبير مساهلي وبن عومر عن قول الشعر، ليس خوف من البشر، أو من لسان الشعراء، بل خوفا من يوم الحساب.

7. الوظيفة الشّعائرية للهجاء

يرتبط الهجاء عند العرب فقط بالشعر، كما هو الحال عند الطوارق، ف تزْرَجَمْثْ لا تكون الاّ شعرا، فعندما يقال يَرْجَمْت، أو "يَكْنَى تِزْرَجَمْت" ، فهذا يدلّ مباشرة على أنّه الذّمّ والمعايرة شعرا وليس بأي تعابير أخرى. فالهجاء هو الذّمّ شعريّا، ويقابل تِزْرَجَمْث تَامُولِي، وَارَجَامْ تَمَّال، وَيَرْجَمْت [19]، أي ذَمّه بواسطة الشّعر.

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[18] حي من أحياء جانت الحديثة نسبيّا.

[19] وهذا الفعل يرجم (مع نطيق الجيم مصرية) يوجد لدى أمازيغ الشمال، بالجزائر والمغرب الأقصى، ويعني السبّ القبيح، ولايرتبط بالشّعر، بل الشتم اليومي.

من خلال طقوس الأداء الشعري والغنائي والشعائري، استطعنا حصر بعض العبارات والصيغ الدالة على الحاق أقصى الضرر بالخصم من خلال مايزعجه ويقض مضجعه ويؤرقه.

فقد استطعنا حصر جوانب من خلال أشعار الهجاء *ترَجُمِين* بين الرجال، أو بين النساء والرجال، أو بين فريقين من النساء مثل حال أشعار *سَبّيبه* أثناء احتفالات عاشوراء.

وكما الكلام مختلف الدّرجات والدّلالة، فكذلك للضّحكات مستويات مختلفة، فهناك ضحك يخرج من القلب، وهناك ضحك الشّماتة وهناك ضحك أصفر، يقال بالعربية الدارجة الضحكة الصّفراء، ضحكة لاتتبع من القلب، وبتماهق، *تاضَرَّا تَانْ اَغَفْ تَانُا* (1282 :1951-1952 ,Foucauld)

إلاّ أنّ التّمييز بين *تيزْرِميثْ وتِينَاوُت* يبدو لأول وهلة صعب، لانهما يتشابهان في القيل والقال والبحث في مثالب الآخرين وعيوبهم. إلاّ أنّ *تِزْرِميثْ*، أقوى فهي النّميمة، والخوض في حياة وأعراض الناس.

بينما *تِينَاوُثْ*، كما عرفها الأب فوكو، *انْ تِينَاوُثْ*، *انْ تِينَاوِينْ*، بمعنى الكلام القبيح الجارح.

لم أصادف عبارة *تِينَاوُت* بأي مقطع شعري مما جمعت، بينما وجدت *تِيزْرِميثْ*، كما في صدر هذا البيت:

وَا /اُيوزَرَمْنْ /اَتوكّلْ /مَاسْ
من/اِنمّم/اوحي/أمّه
ويح أمّه النمام (بوزيد سبابو، م. 2013، 2016)
وهذا في قصيدة، مطلعها
آزْ /اَمَنَايْ /او /اُيوجّنْ
لـ/الاله/المتعال، نطلب من الله المتعال
تَغْلَقَدَ /انغ /مِيَّنْ
تحمي/لنا/الرجال

كما نجد لفظ *اَسْكُوَارْ*، بمعنى أيضا الذّمّ، في مقطع شعري أثناء آخر:

انَاسْ /الْمِيهَانْ /ايْ /اَسْكُوَارْ
قل/ للميهان[20]/ دعكْ/ والذّمّ
سَبّيبَه /اتَا /اجِيغْ اْبَلَا /اكُوفَارْ
سبّيبه/ أوّدّيها/ بدون/ الفرنسيين[21]

كما نجد عبارة *تَكُنَّى مَسُو* في المتن الشعري لعاشوراء، والذي يدل على الفعل المشين للمرأة، أيّ كانت طبيعته، والاشارة هنا للفعل الجنسي مع الفرنسيين. وهذه دائما للرّغبة في الحاق الضّرر بالخصم وهزمه شعريا، وذلك بفضل القدرة في التحكّم في الكلمات وبيانها حتى تحقق غايتها في كسر شوكة الخصم. يتمّ توظيف أقسى أنواع الذّمّ والاهانة في الجوانب التنافسيّة الهجائية العلنيّة، لكسر الحظر والمنع الذي يطال الاهانة بين الأفراد والقبائل في مجتمع تراتبي، حيث تصبح كل كلمة في مكانها، كما لكل مجموعة أو قبيلة حيزها في الهرمية تلك.

إذن، يسمح للشّعراء وللمغنّيات ما لايسمح لغيرهم، بالرّغم من الذم والقدح اللاذعين إلاّ أنّ النّساء يصدحن بهذه الأشعار علنا مدّة اسبوع، دون أن يثير هذا أي حرب ودون أن تسيل دماء، لكن وقع الكلمات على الأرواح لايعلمه الا الله والراسخين في شعيرة تعتبر أحد ركائز الهويّة القصوريّة لسكّان واحة جانت بقلب منطقة *تاسيلى آزجر*.

هكذا تنتهي نوبات وحالات الهجاء بالتّوبة، أو التّناسي وتغاضي الطّرف أو بتحويل الذّم والقدح عن مساره، أو بالاعتذار.

لقد وجدنا من خلال أشعار طقس الحنّاء والمناظرات بين الرّجال والنّساء في مناطق الشّمال، وبعد مقاطع فيها سبّ وكلمات نابية مشينة، تنتهي بالاعتذار ولباقة الشّعراء، في هذا المقام، جعلت من الرّجال سبّاقين للاعتذار من النّساء.

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20 الميهان قصر من القصور الثلاثة القديمة بواحة جانت، أقصى الجنوب الشرقي الجزائري، وهو القصر المنافس لزلواز أثناء شعيرة سبّيبه، أي عاشوراء بينما القصر الثالث جاهيل لايشارك في هذه الاحتفالات مباشرة.

21 كان من عادة الجنود الفرنسيين أن يطلبوا من سكان الواحة أن يقومون بعروض سبّيبه خارج زمنيتها، أي شهر محرّم وهذا من أجل الترفيه عنهم فقط.

الرجل

الله يَا بَابا حنيني
الله ياصاحب الحنان والرأفة
لاَ تَامَنْ الْهَجَّالَه
لا تصدّق الأرملة
يَاكْ تَخْدَمْ فَالشَّيَاطِين
فهي في خدمة الشياطين
وْ تَغْوِي فَالرِّجَّالَه
وتغوي الرجال

المرأة

الله يَا بَابَا حْنِينِي
الله ياصاحب الرَّأفة
وَاشْ رَاهْ يْقُولْ ذَاكْ الْحْمَار
ماذا يقول هذا الحمار
الله يَعْطِيكْ الْجْرَب
الله يبتليه بالجرب
وَتْكُونْ بْلْظْفَارْ

وتصاب بمرض الظفر [22] (بوزيد سبابو، م، 2015: 73)
كما أسلفنا يبادر الرّجل، هنا للاعتذار من المرأة قائلا:

انَا جِيتْ نْحَنِّي لْلْعْرِيسْ... وْجِيتْ من بْلَاد بَرَّانِي
جئت لتخضيب العريس...وجئت من بلد براني
وَانَا مَانَعْرَفْ الْمْلِيحْ وْمَانَعْرَفْ الدُّونِي
وأنا لا أعرف الصالح ولا اعرف الطالح

و ترافق طقوس ليلة الحناء العديد من المظاهر التي اختفت حاليا، والتي تدخل في باب الاهانة الشعائرية، فهناك طقوس التنكّر بين النساء في أزياء رجالية فيها الكثير من التعابير والعبارات النابية الخادشة للحياء، لكنها ذات دلالات اجتماعية ورمزية لابدّ من معاينتها وتحليلها، قد ترتبط بالخصوبة(1992 ,.Abrous, D) في مجملها وترتبط بما يحدث في عاشوراء من مظاهر تنكرية وحالات سرقة لبعض الأواني المنزلية من بيت العروس ليلة الحناء، أو مايسمّى ب" التِّبيَات". فالملاحظ أنّ السمة التنافسية المبنية على المناظرات الشعرية والهجاء كانت تطبع طقوس الزواج كذلك، ولحد الساعة مازالت آثار ذلك التنافس واضحة وإن تغيّرت فضاءات الاحتفالات وطريقتها.

8. خاتمة

تعتبر الاهانة الشعرية، والمتمثّلة في الهجاء، أكثر المواضيع التي لايراد الخوض فيها لكنها تخرج عن صمتها بقوة الشعيرة وتكرار الطقوس السنوية والدورية. ومن خلال هذه الأداءات الشعائرية سواء فيما تعلّق بطقوس الزواج أو الشعائر الدينية، كعاشوراء، والمناظرات الشعرية التي كانت تحدث أثناء التقاء الجنسين بالقرب من مجرى الوادي في ليالي الصيف طلبا للرطوبة والسمر،تمكننا من حصر بعض عبارات الشتم أو ماينجرّ عنه الهجاء من سياقات

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[22]   مرض يصيب عيون الحيوانات ولاسيما الثيران.

اجتماعية وتاريخية يحاول المجتمع، باستمرار تمويهها، بإحالتها إلى المزاح المؤسّس، ليس الهزل من أجل الهزل، بل بقيوده وشروطه، كحال تكتشوت. أو تغيير مساراتها بكنايات كثيفة لحدّ تصوير الأشخاص غير المرغوب فيهم اجتماعيا وقبليا، في مجتمع تراتبي، إلى مجرّد أسماء عطر غير ذي اهميّة، أو مجرّد حيوانات.

فالإهانة هنا، ليست مجرّد سب وشتم عابر يومي، بل تدخل القبيلة والجماعة والمجتمع بأكمله بكلّ ثقله في حصرها وتوجيهها ومراقبتها حتى لاتنفلت وتكشف مستور التاريخ والمجتمع معا.

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GROS MOTS AND CURSES IN ASGHAR FARHADI'S MOVIES

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Abstract. People use *gros mots* and curses in their everyday life in order to express their feelings of anger, dissatisfaction, frustration, and even their humor. In this study we provide an insight into the *gros mots* and curse utterances in the Iranian cinema. For this purpose we have chosen the most iconic movies of Asghar Farhadi (*About Elly*, *A Separation*, *The Salesman*), then we have extracted the *gros mots* used in the movies and classified them into tables based on the characters' utterances. A literal translation and its equivalent in English are also provided. The aim of the study is to present some *gros mots* used in Iranian culture and to prove whether female or male characters make more use of this kind of language in Asghar Farhadi's movies and also if the same amount of swear words is used by different social class members or not.
Keywords: gros mots, curse words, Iran, Asghar Farhadi, Iranian movies.

Introduction

Gros mots (sing. *došnām*) and curse words (sing. *l'anat*) have been used in the past and are still being used in the present. It doesn't matter the gender, the age or the place people come from, we all curse and use "bad language" in our day-to-day life. Jay (1992) believes that *gros mots* are inevitably used in everyday language and they are indeed a psychological phenomenon. The first recorded cases of swearing and cursing words are attributed to the Ancient Egyptians and have been used for many years verbally before they were finally recorded in the form of written language. (Ljung, 2011)

In Iranian culture *gros mots* are a delicate subject to approach, since in a conservative and religious society, swearing is considered as something that should be avoided because of its offensive, vulgar, indecent or blasphemous side.

Swearing is a form of expression and even if swearing is discouraged, Iranians still use bad language in order to express their feelings of anger, frustration, surprise, hatred, and dissatisfaction of a situation. With modernity and capitalism from the West penetrating the Iranian culture, lately there is a stronger influence remarked in people's language. Iranians tend to adopt more and new *gros mots* in their daily conversations and they tend to swear quite frequently, without paying attention to the "norms" of the society. This can be seen in Iranian movies too. After the 1979 Revolution, the cinema industry of Iran faced many upside-downs and restrictions were imposed on many subjects tackled in the movies. During Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's presidency and after that, Iranian cinema developed due to more tolerant views in cultural and political fields. (Issari, 1999)

This study aims to present and analyze the use of *gros mots* and curses in some Iranian movies. For this purpose, three of Asghar Farhadi's post-revolutionary movies were selected: *About Elly*, *A Separation*, *The Salesman*. The screenplay of the three movies also belongs to Asghar Farhadi. The characters of the movies belong mostly to the upper-middle class of the Iranian society, but people from the lower class are also portrayed in the movies.

The questions raised by this study are:

1. Which are the *gros mots* and curses used in the three movies?
2. Who uses more *gros mots*? Men or women?
3. Are the characters from the lower social class using more *gros mots* than the ones from the upper-middle class?

Discussion

In the present inquiry, after the *gros mots* were extracted from the three movies, they were classified into tables based on the characters utterances, they were translated literally and then their equivalent in English was provided. Persian to Persian dictionaries as *Sokhan* (Anvari, 1393) and *Dehkhoda* (Dehxodā, 1390) and English to Farsi and Farsi to English *Aryanpur* dictionary (Āryānpur Kāšāni, 1390) were looked up for double check of the word meanings. After the aforementioned classification, we tried to identify whether men or women use more *gros mots* and swear words in the three selected movies. Gender differentiation has an important role in using *gros mots* and curse words, as women and men express their feelings differently and, according to Bird and Harris (1990), men are more likely to swear in comparison with women when frustrated or angry.

In what follows, a short summary of the movies will be provided. We will also make reference to the characters of the movies (their gender and to which class of the society they belong) and then we will provide a brief analysis of the utterances and by whom they are delivered. It is to mention that even if the characters' utterances are currently being used in Iran, the findings of the study may not reflect the actual Iranian society in general, but only the realm of the three movies and, in consequence, some aspects of the Iranian upper-middle class and lower class.

Movie 1. *About Elly*

The first selected movie was *About Elly* (2009), a tragic-drama film. As the movie begins, a group of educated young Iranians belonging to the upper-middle class are driving out of Tehran in order to spend their weekend in the North of Iran by the Caspian Sea. When they arrive at the destination they find out that the villa they wanted to rent for the weekend was available only for one night. It turns out that Sepideh, the female character who organized the trip, knew about this. They move to another villa, near the beach. Sepideh has invited Elly, her daughter's kindergarten teacher, to their trip, in order to present her to Ahmad, a friend who came for a week from Germany and who recently divorced a German woman. Sepideh lies again when she wants to rent the other villa, telling to the woman in charge that Elly and Ahmad were newlyweds. Elly does not feel comfortable about this but she

does not share her feelings with anyone. In fact her personality is different from the group and she dowsnt fit there. While Sepideh and her friends were trying to match her up with Ahmad and making jokes about that, Elly seems not to like it, but again, she does not say anything about this. When the group arrives at the villa, Elly tries to phone her mother but there is no signal on the beach, so Ahmad takes her to the village so she can have a mobile phone connection. When calling her mother, we find out that she does not tell the truth about her coming to the Caspian Sea, she tells her mother that she came with her colleagues from the kindergarten. On the way back to the villa, Elly's phone rings and she does not answer, telling to Ahmad that she knows the number and she will call back later. The next day, the group plays around the beach, two of the women go to the grocery and at one point Elly remains to take care of the children. The sequence interrupts and suddenly we see one of the kids screaming and calling for help, as one of the boys is drowning. After saving the kid, they discover that Elly is missing too, but they do not know if she drowned in the sea trying to save the boy or she left without telling anyone as she previously insisted to go back to Tehran, but Sepideh didn't allow her to leave before the weekend was over. In the following scenes the group finds out that Elly had actually a fiancé, but she wanted to break up with him. The fiancé appears and the action continues on whether to tell him the truth or not.

The characters:

Table 1. *About Elly* movie characters

Name and role in the movie	Gender	Social class
Sepideh the main character, the one who brings Elly to the group	Female	Upper-middle class
Elly The main character, who drowns	Female	Upper-middle class
Ahmad Sepideh's friend who comes from Germany- Elly's suitor	Male	Upper-middle class
Amir Sepideh's husband	Male	Upper-middle class
Shohreh Sepideh's friend	Female	Upper-middle class
Peyman Sepideh's friend	Male	Upper-middle class
Naazi Sepideh's friend	Female	Upper-middle class
Manouchehr Sepideh's friend	Male	Upper-middle class
The old woman The person in charge with the villas	Female	Lower class
Elly's fiancé	Male	Upper-middle class

As seen above, there are five female characters in the movie and five male characters. Beside the old woman from the North of Iran, who seems to belong to the lower class, the other nine characters belong to the upper-middle class of the society.

In the table below (Table 2), the *gros mots* utterances of the characters, their literal translations and their pragmatic translation will be provided.

Table 2. *Gros mots* and curses used in the movie *About Elly*

Characters	*Gros mots* and curses extracted from the movie	Literal translation	Pragmatic equivalence
Amir	*xodā l'anatet kone, Sepide!* *gur-e bābā-ye man!* *goh zadi be hameči!* *našenāxti in divune ro?* *če marget-e to!* *kesāfat!* *doxtar-e bi sare!*	[God damn you, Sepideh!] [grave father me] [shit you put at everything!] [haven't you met this crazy?] [what your death is you?] [dirt/filth] [girl headless]	God damn you, Sepideh! The hell with my father! You fucked up everything! She drives me out of my mind! What is wrong with you? You bastard! She's worthless
Peyman	*in xol-e!* *tul-e sag!* *tu ālmān kuft koni* *in či-ye divune!* *mesl-e bače-ye ādam t'arif kon!* *ver mire!* *ye mozaxraf bud.* *hamin gohi-am ke hastam.* *Ey bābā! Goh be in šāns!*	[this crazy is!] [puppy dog] [in Germany you suffer] [this what is crazy!] [like child people describe] [messes around] [an embellishment was] [this shit I am that I am] [oh, father! Shit on this chance!]	She's crazy! Whelp Pig-out in Germany! What is this, you crazy! Tell us clearly He messes around It was nonsense I am a piece of shit Oh man! The hell with this bad luck!
Ahmad	*xar tu xar-e* *xar tu xarihā-ye talāq bāzihā-ye man*	[donkey inside donkey is] [donkey inside donkeys divorce games my]	It's fucked up The troubles of my divorce
Sepideh	*xāk bar saret!* *hič qalati ham nakardi!* *zahr-e mār!* *gur-e bābā-ye man!* *kesāfat!*	[earth be on your head] [any mistake as well didn't do] [venom snake] [grave father me] [dirt]/[filth]	May you die! You didn't do anything! Shut the fuck up! The hell with my father! You bastard!
Elly	*xāk bar saram!*	[earth on my head]	Dammit!
The old lady	*elahi bemiram!*	[divine I die]	May god kill me!
Elly's fiancé	*olāq!* *'avazi!* (2)	[donkey] [false],[wrong]	You moron! You asshole!
Naazi	*xol šodam*	[crazy I became]	I messed up!

As the data presented in the table above show, eight out of ten characters of the movie use "bad language". There are four female and four male characters swearing or cursing, but the number of male characters *gros mots* utterances is higher than that of female *gros mots* utterances. The intensity of the utterances is also different. For example, Elly who seems to be a shy and more reserved character in the movie, only uses one swearing expression, that is *xāk bar saram*, which means "Dammit!", whereas Sepideh, who seems to be a nasty and rebellious woman, uses more *gros mots* with a higher intensity, like, for example, *gur-e bābā-ye man!*, which means "The hell with my father!". This kind of expression she resorts to is used when someone is very angry and wants to look stronger than the person whom he/she is confronting. Sepideh also uses *zahr-e mār!* when she argues with her husband; moreover, the meaning of the expression is "Shut the fuck up", which in Iranian culture requires a little bit of courage to say in front of a man. Peyman is the character who uses the higher number of *gros mots* and in some instances in the movie when he argues with his wife, he says *hamin gohi-am ke hastam.* His wife disapproves of his acts, so he admits that he "is a piece of shit" and she should go on with it. This kind of utterance is made when someone is nervous and angry and he/she wants to end the argument but in the same time he/she wants the opponent to agree with his/her state of being or his/her state of mind. In this way, he/she will be situated at a higher level than his/her opponent when ending the fight. A common swear word used both by Amir and Sepideh is *kesāfat*, which means "You bastard" and is used when the above-mentioned characters are angry and very irritated. The old lady who is in charge with the villas uses only a curse idiom, namely *elahi bemiram!*, which means "May God kill me!", but which is used more in a sympathetic way than actually when cursing someone. In fact, in Iranian culture, the expression is used when someone feels pity for someone else and, instead of cursing the trigger of the situation, curses himself/herself because he/she wants to be in the other one's place. This may suggest that elder people usually are not used to pronounce swear words, but using curse utterances is a more common way to express their feelings when faced with unpleasant events. So, in the movie *About Elly*, the characters from the upper-middle class, even if they belong to a more educated area, tend to use *gros mots* frequently. Considering the fact that there was only one character from the lower class and the old woman's presence was occasional in the movie, a comparison between the lower class' use of *gros mots* and that of the middle class' one would be irrelevant in this case.

Movie 2. *A Separation*

The second movie is *A Separation* (2011), also a tragic-drama film. Asghar Farhadi won an Oscar Prize for this movie (2012, Best Foreign Language Film). The story is about a married couple and their teenager daughter. The characters are mostly from the upper-middle class, but there are also characters from the lower class of the Iranian society in the movie. As the movie begins, we see Nader and Simin in front of the judge, with Simin asking for her husband's divorce. Simin actually wants to travel abroad, but Nader doesn't accept because he wants to take care of his father who has Alzheimer's. So Simin proposes him either to give her the divorce, or to let their daughter accompany her. Nader accepts

neither of the two proposals, so Simin leaves to her parents' home waiting for Nader to change his mind. The crisis begins when Nader hires a young woman named Razieh to take care of his father while he and his daughter are not at home. Razieh belongs to the lower class. Her husband is a typical Iranian lower class traditional man who, after losing many jobs, doesn't manage to find one, so he has many debts and "visits" a lot the prison. As she struggles to earn money, Razieh does not tell her husband that she works for Nader, because he would not allow her to do that. One day when Nader comes home earlier than usual, he finds his father tied up to the bed and Razieh absent. When she comes back, he fires her, accusing her also of stealing money from the house. Razieh, who is pregnant, accuses him of pushing her down the stairs and causing her a miscarriage. The plot continues with proving who lies and who says the truth about the incidents.

The characters:

Table 3. *A Separation* movie characters

Name and role in the movie	Gender	Social class
Nader The main character and Simin's husband	Male	Upper-middle class
Simin The main character and Nader's wife	Female	Upper-middle class
Termeh Nader and Simin's daughter	Female	Upper-middle class
Razieh The charlady	Female	Lower class
Somayeh The charlady's daughter	Female	Lower class
Hojjat The charlady's husband	Male	Lower class
Azam The charlady's sister-in-law	Female	Lower class
The judge	Male	Upper-middle class

As illustrated in the table above, there are five female characters in the movie and three male characters. Four of them are from the upper-middle class and four of them belong to the lower class of the society.

In the table below (Table 4), the *gros mots* utterances of the characters, their literal translations, and their pragmatic translation will be provided.

Table 4. *Gros mots* and curses used in the movie *A Separation*

Characters	*Gros mots* and curses extracted from the movie	Literal translation	Pragmatic equivalence
Razieh	*az kudum guri lebās biāram!*	[from which grave clothes I bring]	How the hell should I find you clothes?!
Nader	*bi šaraf!*	[without honor]	You scum!/ You trash!
	bar pedaret!	[on your father]	Damn your father!
	un ru-ye sag-e mano dāri miāri bālā!	[that face dog mine you are upraising]	You're driving me crazy!
	bi voğdān!	[unscrupulous]	Unscrupulous
	če mi-dunam kudum guri rafte!	[what I know which grave did she go]	How could I know Where the hell did she go?!
	mozaxraf mige!	[embellishments says]	She talks nonsense!
	mard-e hesābi!	[man respectable]	You're shameless!
	qalat mi-kone!	[mistake he makes]	He fucked up!
	to kudum guri budi	[in which grave were you?]	Where the hell have you been?
Somayeh	*šošide ru xodeš*	[He pissed on himself]	He has pissed his pants.
Azam	*maraz daštin umadin inğā?!*	[illness have you come here?!]	Are you insane to come here?!
	qalat kardam!	[mistake I made]	I fucked up!
Hojat	*kesāfat!*	[dirt]/[filth]	You bastard!
	bačehā-ye mā tul-e sagan?	[children our puppy dogs are?]	Our children aren't dog's offsprings!
	bi xod rafte!	[needlessly she left]	She made a mistake that she left
	mesl-e sag andāxtan-am birun	[like a dog they threw me out]	They fired me bluntly
	boro gom šo bešin xune!	[go get lost stay home]	Go fuck yourself!
	bi šaraf	[without honor]	You scum!/ You trash!
	goh mi-xori!	[shit you eat]	You are full of shit!
	gur-e pedar-e man	[grave father mine]	The hell with my father!
	'alāf	[weed]	You're good for nothing!
Simin	*gur-e bābā-ye xāreğ*	[grave father abroad]	The hell with overseas!
	gur-e pedar-e talāq	[grave father divorce]	The hell with the divorce!
	man qalat kardam!	[I mistake made]	I fucked up!
	mesl-e ādam harf bezan!	[like a human being talk]	Say clearly what you mean!

The table above shows that, in *A Separation*, six out of eight characters use *gros mots*. Four of them are females and two of them are males. One of the females belongs to the upper-middle class and the other three (which include an eight year old girl), belong to the lower class. One of the males belongs to the upper-middle class and the other one to the lower class of the society. So it is obvious that in this movie, the *gros mots* belonging

to the lower class are expected to be more used than the ones emanating from the upper-middle class. The males also are the ones who swear the most, and Hojjat and Nader have the same number of swear utterances. The swear words used both by Hojjat and Nader are *bi šaraf*, which means "You scum!" or "You trash!"; in Persian language people use it when someone is angry and regards his opponent as an unhonorable and despicable person. Hojjat and Simin use frequently expressions in which *gur-e pedar* is common. *Gur-e pedar* in Persian means "The hell with…" and it is used mostly when disapproving of something. *Qalat kardam* (which means "I fucked up") is uttered by both Azam and Simin; in Iranian culture this imprecation is used when the one who delivers the utterance repents for something that he/she has done and he/she wants to end the quarrel, also placing him/her at a higher position in the quarrel. Razieh's daughter, Somayeh, when telling her mother that Nader's father urinated in his pants, she says it in a rude manner, that is *šošide ru xodeš,* which means "he has pissed his pants". Hojjat makes use of words that have deep meaning in Iranian Islamic culture: *mesl-e sag andāxtan-am birun* (which literally means [like dog they threw me away]) and *bačehā-ye mā tul-e sagan?* (which means "our children aren't offsprings of a dog").

According to religious beliefs, dogs are unclean and filthy and they are seen by the majority of the lower class people as unsacred and untouchable animals. The subject of owning a dog or touching it is controversial and also usually misunderstood in Iran, thus we will not enter into details, but exactly the fact that it is a controversial subject makes an animal like a dog to be seen as something very bad, thus the aim of uttering that kind of insults is to look down and discredit the one the expression is addressed to. So, when using the expressions quoted above, Hojjat wants to appear in the position of a victim. Because he was thrown away like a dog from his job, it is obvious that he thinks that they discredited him and his hard work was not appreciated because he did not belong to another society class and when he talks about his miscarried child, he seems to accuse Nader of not valuing and ignoring them for coming from a poor family. Because of that, Nader eventually pushed Razieh down the stairs causing her miscarrying her child, who, as Hojjat states, is not an "offspring of a dog". In one of the scenes, when Azam wants to show Nader and Simin that they made a mistake by coming to the hospital when Razieh had the miscarriage, Azam asks *maraz daštin umadin inğā?* and the literal translation is [illness did you have you came here?] whereas what she wanted to say was "were you insane to come here?"

Movie 3. *The Salesman*

The Salesman (2016), like the other two movies, is a drama. Moreover, it won an Oscar Prize for Best Foreing Language Film (2017) and also other important distinctions in the cinema industry. The movie has in the front row two main characters, Emad and Rana, from the upper-middle social class. After their apartment collapses, Rana and Emad are forced to find another place to live. Emad is a school teacher, but he and his wife work also in the theatre. Babak, their colleague at the theatre, finds another apartment for them. The intrigue begins when, one night, Rana is home alone, expecting Emad to come. She opens the door for him without asking who is at the door and she starts to have a bath. In the next scene we see Emad coming home and blood on the stairs and in the bathroom. He rushes

to the hospital and we find out that Rana was assaulted by an intruder, who appears to be the lover of the previous tenant of the apartment, a prostitute, as the neighbors reveal. When they come back home, Emad finds traces of the attacker (car key, mobile phone, money, etc.). Even if Rana suffers a trauma from the event, the two do not talk to the police, but Emad tries to make justice on his own. Consequently he finally traces the truck belonging to the attacker and goes after him. It becomes apparent that the attacker was a married old man. In order to enact his revenge, Emad asks the old man's family to come to their previous apartment where he is expecting them in company with the attacker and he wants the old man to tell his family the truth.

The characters:

Table 5. *The Salesman* movie characters

Name and role in the movie	Gender	Social class
Emad Main character and Rana's husband - school teacher - theatre actor	Male	Upper-middle class
Rana Main character and Emad's wife - theatre actress	Female	Upper-middle class
Kati Theatre actress	Female	Upper-middle class
Sanam Theatre acress	Female	Upper-middle class
Majid Theatre actor	Male	Upper-middle class
Babak Theatre actor - the one who finds the apartment for Emad and Rana	Male	Upper-middle class
The student	Male	N/A
Emad's neighbor	Male	Middle class
Driver	Male	N/A
Mansour The old man - Rana's attacker	Male	Middle class
Mansour's future groom	Male	Middle class
Mansour's wife	Female	Middle class
Mansour's daughter	Female	Middle class

As it can be seen in the table above, there are five female characters in the movie and eight male characters. Six of them belong to the upper-middle class, Emad's neighbor seems to be from the middle class and Rana's attacker and his family seem to be from the middle or lower class. The position of Mansour is ambiguous, since he doesn't own a job and sells clothes at night in his future groom's truck, which puts them in the lower class, but their appearance in the movie and their way of clothing and behaving is closer to the middle social class. So we will refer to Mansour and his family as belonging to the middle class. There are two characters who appear occasionally in the movie (Emad's student and the driver who insults Emad for his bad driving). Thus, due to the lack of information about their status, their social class is difficult to be established.

In the table below (Table 6), the *gros mots* utterances of the characters, their literal translations and their pragmatic translation will be provided.

Table 6. *Gros mots* and curses used in the movie *The Salesman*

Characters	*Gros mots* and curses extracted from the movie	Literal Translation	Pragmatic equivalence
Kati	*xāk bar saram!*	[earth on my head]	Dammit!
Sanam	*maraz!*	[sickness]	You're sick!
Majid	*qalat kardam!*	[mistake I made]	I fucked up!
Babak	*bače našo*	[child do not become]	Don't be a child!
	gur-e mādar-e to	[grave your mother]	Fuck your mother!
	martike-ye harze!	[man immoral]	Mother fucker!
Emad	*'avazi*	[false]/[wrong]	Asshole!
	mard-e hesābi	[man respectable]	You shameless!
	man če qalati bāyad bokonam?!	[what mistake should I make]	What the hell should I do?!
	če xāki bāyad be saram mi-rixtam?	[What earth should on my head have poured]	What the hell should I have done?
	nāqôla!	[naughty]	Naughty
	mozaxraf	[embellishment]	Nonsense
	šoql-e l'anati	[job damn]	Damned job
	l'anat be to	[damn on you]	Damn you!
	to ādam-e bi š'ôri hasti	[you human being unreasonable are]	You are a jackass!
	martike-ye harze!	[the man who immoral]	Mother fucker!
	yeki az in bi hame čizā	[one of these lacking everything]	An immoral person
	martike	[the man who]	Asshole
	dāmad-e bi šaraf-e šomā	[groom unhonorable yours]	Your unhonorable groom
Emad's neighbour	*bi nāmus*	[unhonorable]	Unhonorable
Driver	*'avazi!*	[false]/[wrong]	Asshole!
	olāq!	[donkey]	You moron!

The table above shows that seven out of thirteen characters of the movie use *gros mots* and curses. Two of them are female, whilte the other five are male characters. Rana, the main character of the movie, does not use *gros mots*. Five of the persons uttering swear words are from the upper-middle class, Emad's neighbor belongs to the middle class and, as previously stated, the driver insulting Emad is impossible to be associated with a specific social class. Emad uses the higher number of *gros mots* and the most intense expressions uttered by him are *to ādam-e bi š'ôri hasti* (You are a jackass), directed to Rana's attacker, and *martike-ye harze!* (Mother fucker!). Babak also uses the last expression; in fact there is a swearing exchange on the stage between Emad and Babak, which for the audience seems to be between the characters in the theatre, but in reality Emad has lost control on the play lines and took his anger out on Babak on the stage for not letting him know about the previous tenant of the apartment who seemed to be a prostitute. Emad somewhere uses the expression *mard-e hesābi*, which normally is used with positive connotation and means

"a respectable and honorable man", but in this context, has the opposite connotation: in Emad's view, Babak is "a shameless person". In another situation, when Emad says *nāqolā* when talking to Sadra, who is the son of one of his colleagues from the theatre, it means "you naughty". This is a proof of friendship and closeness between Emad and Sadra. *Martike* literally means "the man who", but in reality it has a bad connotation in Persian because it means "an immoral person", "an immoral man". As the tables above show, it can be stated that, in *The Salesman*, the members of the upper-middle class use more *gros mots* than the middle class members. Also, people from the lower social class are not portrayed in this movie.

Conclusion

The results of the study confirm the fact that even if in the Iranian society the use of *gros mots* and curses is highly discouraged, mostly on religious principles, Iranian people still use swear words to express their feelings of anger, frustration, dissatisfaction or even their humor, as reflected in the tables above. From the three movies analyzed in the paper, it can be concluded that male characters use substantially more swear words as compared to the female characters. Only one of the female characters is more "daring": Sepideh. In the Iranian culture and tradition, men are mostly seen as the "tough" , whereas women are meant to be "sensitive" ones, tending to apply more refined and polite language than men, in order to act as society expects them: that means to behave femininely and avoid any rough, crude, and impolite language. Thus Sepideh manages to break the limits and the stereotypes of the Iranian society. Also, as shown by Table 1-6, elder people tend to use curse words instead of *gros mots*. Concerning the classification of utterances based on social classes, the subject could be analyzed only in the movie *A Separation*, due to the fact that in the movie *About Elly* only one character was belonging to the lower class, while the other ones were connected to the upper-middle class; in the movie *The Salesman* none of its characters acttually belongs to the lower class. However, we have been able to demonstrate that in the movie *A Separation*, the utterances containing curses and *gros mots* are mostly related to the members of the lower class of the Iranian society, which means to less educated people, with "lower chances for a good living".

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CURSES, INSULTS AND THE POWER OF WORDS: VERBAL STRATEGIES IN MAGHREBI DIALECTS

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Abstract. The system of verbal impoliteness in Maghrebi dialects of Arabic (as in any given language), far from being random, is governed by principles that have successfully been described by Brown and Levinson (1987). These principles revolve around the two concepts of positive and negative face, which are in turn rooted in the ideas concerning the nature of our social persona, of honor, virtue, shame and redemption that are common to all cultures (D'Anna 2014: 13). For this reason, (im)politeness has alternatively been considered as "... a kind of residue from our earlier ritually dominated forms of public life" or, in contrast, as "... a model or prototype for other kinds of ritual (Brown and Levinson 1987: 44)." This paper analyzes the verbal strategies employed in verbal impoliteness by speakers of Maghrebi dialects, investigating the link between curses, profanities and the ritual usage of words, with particular reference to magic and religion.
Keywords: *dialectology, linguistics, Maghrebi Arabic, verbal politeness, curses, insults.*

1. Introduction

Curses and profanities are part of the more general phenomenon of verbal politeness, which has been described in Brown & Levinson (1987). Systems of verbal politeness and impoliteness are a language universal, which means that no currently spoken or extinct language is known where politeness and impoliteness are not verbally expressed (D'Anna 2014b: 27). Brown and Levinson's seminal work successfully provided a theoretical framework that is able to account for both the universality of the phenomenon and the culture-bound diversity of its outer manifestations. In doing so, the two scholars resorted to the anthropological concepts of *face* and *face-wants*, first elaborated by Erving Goffman:

> Central to our model is a highly abstract notion of "face" which consists of two specific kinds of desires ("face-wants") attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be un-impeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face). This is the bare bones of a notion of face which (we argue) is universal, but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13).

Around the two concepts of *face* and *face-wants*, Brown and Levinson set up the theory of a universal symbolism of exchange (D'Anna 2014: 11). In his social life, man is constantly torn between the contrasting needs of fulfilling his personal goals and of

preserving his social relations. A countless number of acts that are part of our everyday life, in fact, inevitably threaten our interlocutors' face-wants. Simple requests, for instance, threaten the addressee's freedom of action (negative face), while criticism and disagreement potentially damage the positive image that he has of himself (positive face). Speech acts that threaten the addressee's positive or negative face are consequently labelled as *face-threatening acts* (FTAs) (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65-68). A complete abstention from performing FTAs, however, would obviously result in a complete paralysis of human social interaction. At this point, verbal politeness steps in, providing speakers with face-redress strategies that enable them to pursue their goals without jeopardizing the network of their social relations (Brown & Levinson 1987: 70).

The greatest part of Brown and Levinson's work, then, is devoted to the description of the strategies employed in different cultures to redress FTAs. When a given culture (e.g. the American one) tends to value personal freedom higher than group membership or solidarity, face-redress strategies will hinge upon negative politeness. The Arab culture, on the contrary, has a system that heavily leans toward the satisfaction of positive face-wants, which form the greatest part of its redress strategies (D'Anna 2014b: 29).

The system of redress strategies, however, is of very limited interest for the present paper, which is concerned with those acts that intentionally destroy the addressee's face, i.e. curses and insults. An exhaustive description of courses and insults in Maghrebi Arabic dialects is contained in D'Anna (2014). Insults "… explicitly and deliberately aim to damage and denigrate the positive image that the addressee has of himself" (D'Anna 2014: 210), and they can target a wide range of objects, synthetically listed below:[1]

    I. Insults related to physical aspect and bodily defects;
   II. Insults related to moral qualities;
  III. Insults comparing the target to animals;
  IV. Racist insults;
   V. Insults related to the target's religion;
  VI. Insults targeting the addressee's family;
 VII. Insults containing four letter words.

Curses, on the other hand, can be defined as:

> … a wish expressed verbally for something bad to befall a certain person or object. […] Curses may or may not take the form of a prayer. Not every expression of a wish is a prayer. It is a prayer if God is addressed either directly or indirectly to fulfil the wish (Masliya 2001: 268).

D'Anna (2014) also includes a list of the most common targets of curses in Maghrebi Arabic dialects, reported below:[2]

    I. Curses against the target;

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[1] D'Anna 2014: 211. The following pages contain a thorough description and wide exemplification of the different categories of insults.

[2] D'Anna 2014: 229. The following pages contain a thorough description and wide exemplification of the different categories of curses.

   II. Curses against the target's religion;
  III. Curses against the target's family;
  IV. Curses against the target's property;
   V. Death and ill-wishes;
  VI. Curses involving body parts and obscenities.

The present paper will not discuss in detail the different types of objects that can be targeted by curses and insults, a through description being provided in D'Anna (2014). It will, on the other hand, describe some of the strategies employed by speakers to enhance the effectiveness of their curse or ill wish. The notion of face and the systems of verbal politeness, in fact, "…naturally link up to some of the most fundamental cultural ideas about the nature of the social persona, honour and virtue, shame and redemption and thus to religious concepts" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13). For this reason, they share with religious systems a profound belief in the magic power of words and their ritual employment, to the point that Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework has been recently applied to the analysis of ritual itself (Brown & Levinson 1987: 29). The power of words, moreover, can be enhanced through the use of specific rhetorical means, such as metaphors, metonyms, rhymes and alliterations, a feature often observed whenever language is employed in ritual or liturgical contexts (Malinowski 1922: 452). The following paragraphs, thus, will analyze in detail four strategies commonly employed in Maghrebi dialects to express curses and ill wishes and to enhance their power, highlighting their connection with the religious and ritual employment of language. The four strategies are root-echo forms, rhyme / alliteration, word-echo forms and repetition. While the first three will be analyzed individually, repetition is a common trait of Arabic (and Semitic) rhetoric, which will equally occur in the three different strategies.

2. Root-echo forms

The employment of root-echo forms is a widespread strategy in the Semitic languages, which can be equally employed in manifestations of verbal politeness and impoliteness and builds on their root-and-pattern derivative mechanism.[3] It consists in the employment of the root around which the interlocutor's utterance revolves to shape a response. In other words, the speaker, after being addressed a generic expression by his interlocutor, individuates the key word around which the utterance revolves, extracts its root and employs it to shape an adequate response, featuring a root-echo keyword, i.e. a different derivative of the same root. The most common example of this strategy is the Arabic greeting exchange:

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[3] Ratcliffe (1998) rejects the so-called root-and-pattern morphology as an abstraction with no psycholinguistic reality, but different works by Al Jallad (2010) and Boudelaa (2013) prove the existence of the root in the mental lexicon of Arabic speakers.

A.   *mʕā   s-**slāma***! 'Goodbye!'   (Gen.)[4]
     with   DEF-safety
B.   *allāh   **isallm**-ək!* 'Goodbye!'
     God   PRS.3.M:save.SG-you

Within the field of Arabic dialectology, root-echo forms have been almost exclusively investigated with reference to Mashreqi dialects[5]. In Maghrebi dialects, they are commonly employed to express both blessings (which will not be dealt with in this paper) and curses, as the following examples show:[6]

* ʔ – x – ḏ

A.   ***xud**!* "Take it!" (rude)   (Lib.)
     IMP.take.2.M.SG
B.   ***xdā**-k*   *azrā⁽ʸ⁾īl /   əlli   ma   yəngāl!*
     take.3.M.SG.PST-you   Azrael   who   NEG PASS.PRS.3.M:say.SG
     "May Azrael[7] / the one that must not be named (the Devil) take you!"

* ʔ – k – l

A.   ***kul**!* "Eat!" (rude)   (Lib.)
     IMP.eat.2.M.SG
B.   ***yākl**-ək*   *əṭ-ṭāʕūn!* "May the plague eat you!"
     3.M:eat.SG-you   DEF-plague

* ḥ – b – b

A.   ***nḥəbb**-ək!* "I love you!"   (Lib.)
     PRS.1:love.SG-you
B.   *yaʕṭī-k*   ***ḥabba**!* "May God give you a papule!"
     PRS.3.M.:give.SG-you   papule
     or
A.   *yā   **ḥbīb**ti!* "Sweetheart!"   (Lib.)
     oh   beloved-my
B.   ***ḥabb**-ək*   *əl-buṛṣ!*[8] "May the plague hit you!"
     love.3.M.SG.PST-you   DEF-plague

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[4]   We will provide, in brackets, the geographic provenance of the sample (for samples drawn from existing literature, the source will be provided). (Gen.) will be used when the formula is widespread in the entire Maghrebi area or when it was collected in several sample points.
[5]   Stewart 1996 and 1997 with regard to Egyptian Arabic and Ferguson 1997, 1997b and 1997c with regard to Syrian Arabic.
[6]   Samples, when not differently indicated, are drawn from D'Anna 2014: 275-276.
[7]   In the Islamic tradition, Azrael is the angel of death.
[8]   The exchange is commonly heard when boys tease girls in the streets.

*r – f – ʕ

A.   ***ərfaʕ!*** "Take!"   (Lib.)
        IMP.take.2.M.SG

B.   ***yərfaʕ-ək***   *əl-mōt!* "May death take you!"
        PRS.3.M:take.SG-you   DEF-death

*r – w – ḥ

A.   ***rawwəḥ!*** "Go away!" (rude)   (Gen.)
        IMP.go.away.2.M.SG

B.   *ṭalʕat*   ***rūḥ-ək!*** "May you die!"
        go.out:3.F.SG.PST   spirit-your
        or

B.   *ṭallaʕ*   ***rūḥ-ək!*** "May God make you die!"
        take.out.3.M.SG.PST   spirit-your

* š – b – ḥ

A.   ***əšbaḥ!*** "Look!" (rude)   (Lib.)
        IMP.look.2.M.SG

B.   ***šabḥ-ək***   *əl-murr /*   *əl-gahra!*
        look.3.M.SG-you   DEF-bitterness   DEF-humiliation
        "May bitterness / humiliation look at you!"

* š – y – l

A.   ***šil!*** "Take it!" (rude)   (Lib.)
        IMP.take.2.M.SG

B.   ***yəšīl-ək***   *əl-hamm!* "May your worries take you!"
        PRS.3.M:take.SG-you   DEF-worry
or
B.   ***tšīl-ək***   *mṣība!* "May a catastrophe take you!"
        PRS.3.F:take.SG-you   catastrophe

* ṭ – l - ʕ

A.   ***əṭlaʕ!*** "Go out!" (rude)   (Lib.)
        IMP.go.out.2.M.SG

B.   *ṭalʕa blā*   *ražʕa!* "May you go out and never return!"
        exit   without   return

    As evident from the previous examples, the curse usually represents a retort to a rude expression uttered by the collocutor, in a specular representation of the ritual exchange of

blessings. "While blessing responses imply that an initial statement contained its own fulfilment, curse responses imply that an initial statement contained its own refutation." (Stewart 1997: 331).

In some cases, speakers also distort the original root to achieve the desired effect. The following examples all show occurrences of curses and insults in which the root has been distorted or in which an element of speech that is not part of the derivative root-and-pattern system (such as the negative particle *lā*) is "given" a root to be used in the echo form:

*ʕ – m – m   →   *ʕ – m – y

A.   *yā   ʕamm-i!* "Uncle!"   (Lib.)
      oh   uncle-my
B.   *yaʕṭī-k*   *əl-ʕamē!* "May God give you blindness!"
      PRS.3.M:give.SG-you   DEF-blindness

*ʔ – m – m   →   *ġ – m – m

A.   *mmwa!* "Mother"   (Alg.)
      mother
B.   *yaʕṭī-k*   *ġumma!* (Dekkak 1979: 221) "May God give you a choking!"
      PRS.3.M:give.SG-you   choking

*ʔ – x – w   →   *x – w – y

A.   *yā xū-ya!* "Brother!"   (Gen.)
B.   *yaʕṭī-k*   *xāwiya!* "May God give you a void!"
      PRS.3.M:give.SG-you   void

The curses, here, perform a pragmatic function. The trigger, in fact, is not a rude expression as seen for the other samples. Quite to the contrary, it is a polite kinship term of address that signals the interlocutor's will to come closer to the addressee. Positive politeness strategies, in fact, are often resorted to in Arabic-speaking societies as "social accelerators", to create, maintain and strengthen solidarity bonds (Brown & Levinson 1987: 101). In Arabic-speaking societies, kinship terms also play a role in face-redress, being commonly used to edge requests, reproaches and other FTAs.[9] For this reason, a speaker

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[9]   In societies leaning toward negative politeness (i.e. to the preservation of the speaker's freedom of action), requests are usually redressed resorting to negative politeness strategies. For instance, the speaker can apologize before uttering his request, use a modal verb or shift the focus from the addressee's willingness to his ability to comply with the request itself, in order to leave him a safe way out. Imperatives, on the other hand, are generally avoided and considered rude (D'Anna 2014: 168). In Arabic-speaking societies, on the contrary, negative politeness strategies are exceedingly rare when redressing requests, being limited to cases in which the distance between the two speakers is very large or when the request is considered as extremely burdensome. For regular requests, on the other hand, the use of the imperative, edged by a kinship or endearing term of address, seems to be the most

who is addressed by means of a kinship term might feel that his interlocutor is trying to manipulate him. The three examples above reported, thus, share a common structure. Speaker A, in fact, opens the exchange resorting to positive politeness and trying to establish common ground by claiming in-group membership (Brown & Levinson 1987: 101). The interlocutor, however, refuses to acknowledge this common ground, symbolically distorting the root of the kinship term employed and using it to shape a curse.

In the next sample, on the contrary, speaker A violates a basic principle of positive politeness, since a direct and unmitigated "no" implies that A does not care about B's feelings and does not share his wants (D'Anna 2014: 85). Speaker B, as a consequence, responds with a more (in the first sample) or less (in the second one) elliptic curse:

*Ø →   *l – w – y

A.   *lāʔ!* "No!"   (Gen.)
     no
B.   *lāwiya!* "May you be crooked!"
     crookedness

or

B.   *yaʕṭī-k*   *lwā!* "May God make you crooked!"
     PRS.3.M:give.SG-you   crookedness

A retort, finally, can also be triggered by a non-verbal initiator. A speaker laughed on by his interlocutor, for instance, may replicate saying (D'Anna 2014: 276):
A.   –
B.   *yᵊḍaḥḥək*   *ən-nās*   *ʕalē-k!*   (Lib.)
     PRS.3.M:make.laugh.SG   DEF-people   on-you
     "May God let people laugh on you!"

As evident from the majority of our samples, the so called *Allāh y…-k* pattern is probably the most common structure in root-echo forms. In *Allāh y…-k curses,* God is the (sometimes covert) subject of a verb that is either a derivative of the root employed in the preceding turn or is followed by a nominal derivative of the same root.

Ferguson (1997b) shows that the diffusion of root-echo forms is not limited to Arabic, but more widely concerns a great number of Semitic languages. Occurrences, for instance, can be found in biblical Psalms. The two final lines of Psalm 129, for example, were interpreted by Ferguson as a textbook occurrence of root-echo form:

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common choice. Consider the following sample, where the interlinear gloss and the non-literal (culturally appropriate) English translation give an idea of the different strategies employed in the two languages:

yā   *wudd-i*   *dīr-l-i*   *maʕrūf*   *allāh*   *ixallī-k!*   (Lib.)
oh   dear-my   IMP.do.2.M.SG-to-me   favor   God   PRS.3.M:keep.SG-you
"Could you do me a favor?"

*The **blessing** of the Lord be upon you.*
*We **bless** you in the name of the Lord.* (Ferguson 1997b: 206 – 211).

Similarly, root-echo forms also occur in the Quran, as shown in the following sample:

*yā ʔayyuhā-lladīna ʔāmanū ʔidā qīla la-kum tafaṣṣaḥū fī-l-mažālisi fa-**fṣaḥū***
***yafṣaḥi**-llāhu la-kum…*[LVIII, 11]
"O ye who believe! When it is said unto you, Make room! in assemblies, then make room: Allah will make way (lit. room) for you…"

The preceding samples, thus, demonstrate how root-echo forms are part and parcel of the linguistic stock of both ritual / religious language and verbal politeness, which in turn constitutes further evidence of their common origin.

3. Rhyme and alliteration

The element common to verbal politeness and ritual is, as said above, a fundamental belief in the magical power of words. Stewart (1996), in this respect, points out that "The logic behind the use of cognate derivatives, which represents only one method of responding in kind, seems based on the idea that paronomasia or cognate derivatives emphasize the magical powers of language." (Stewart 1996: 169). Since the employment of rhymes and assonances is another way to emphasize such a power, the two strategies are often combined, as in the following Libyan examples:

* **ḥ – b – b**

A.   *nḥəbb-ək!* "I love you!"   (Lib.)
      PRS.1:love.SG-you
B.   ***yaʕṭī-k***   *ḥabba*   *f-əḍ-ḍīg!*
      PRS.3.M.:give.SG-you   papule   in-DEF-narrow
      "May God give you a papule in a narrow place!"
or
A.   *nḥəbb-ək!* "I love you!"   (Lib.)
      PRS.1:love.SG-you
B.   *ḥabb-ək*   *əl-**buṛṣ***   *fī*   *ʕašara*   ***ḍurs**!*
      love.3.M.SG.PST-you   DEF-plague in   ten   tooth
      "May the plague hit you on ten teeth!"

The religious and ritual undertones of rhyme and assonance in the Arab culture can hardly be downplayed, since the Quran itself is composed in a variety of rhymed prose (*sağʕ*). Assonance and alliteration, in particular, are especially frequent in those chapters that have an apotropaic value, such as the two famous *al-muʕawwidatāni* (chapters 113 and 114, owing their name to the common incipit *ʔaʕūdu* "I seek refuge"). Rhymed blessings or politeness formulae, thus, are particularly frequent in Maghrebi Arabic dialects, and used independently of root-echo forms:

1. *allāh yažʕl-ək*   *ki* **rummāna** *mən kull žiha* **məlyāna!**
    God PRS.3.M:make.SG-you like pomegranate from every side full
    (Untranslatable thanking expression usually addressed to young girls, basically
    wishing them a happy pregnancy) (Dekkak 1979: 214).

2. *tāklu*   *b-əl-**hnē***   *u* *š-**šfē**!*   (Lib.)
    PRS.2:eat:M.PL with-DEF-happiness and DEF-wellbeing
    "Enjoy your food!" (Dekkak 1979: 214)

3. *msā*   *l-**xīr***   *u*   *l-**xmīr**!* "Good evening!"[10]   (Mor.)
    evening DEF-wellbeing and DEF-yeast!

The same rhetoric device, then, can also be used to enhance the effectiveness of the
speaker's insult (sample 4) or curse samples (5 – 7):

4. *yā waḥd əl-**həžžāla**,   yā ddi mā-təssḥī-š*
    oh one DEF-abandoned.PL oh who NEG-PRS.2:be.ashamed:F.SG-NEG
    *mn-ər-**ražžāla**!*   (Ph. Marçais 1954: 37) (Alg.)
    from-DEF-men
    'Oh abandoned one, oh you who are not ashamed of men!'

5. *yəbaʕʕəd*   **xabr-ək** *wa yəqarrəb*   **qabr-ək**!*
    PRS.3.M:distance.SG news-your and PRS.3.M:approach.SG grave-your
    "Damn you!"(Dekkak 1979: 219)   (Alg.)

6. *allāh yəballəʕ*   **ṣadr-ək** *wa yəḥall*   **qabr-ək**!*   (Alg.)
    God PRS.3.M:close.SG chest-your and PRS.3.M:open.SG grave-your
    "Damn you!" (Dekkak 1979: 219).

7. *allāh yəžīb-hā*   *l-ək*   *bīn*   *əl-**bēb***   *wa lə-**ḥžēb**!*(Alg.)[11]
    God PRS.3.M:bring.SG-her to-you between DEF-door and DEF-curtain
    "Damn you!"

As particularly evident from samples 5 – 6, rhymes are not the only rhetoric device
employed in shaping blessings or curses. These formulae, on the contrary, make use of a
form of repetition and parallelism that serves to reinforce the magic power of words. It is
here possible to follow Ferguson's lead and expand our investigation beyond the scope of
Arabic, to look for similar structures in religious or ritual contexts in other Semitic
languages. Once again, the biblical text gives us different examples of parallelism. The
following analysis, originally developed to explain the function of parallelism in the
Psalms, holds its value also when applied to samples 5 – 6: "A first type of parallelism is

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[10] Yeast, whose fermentation allows the baker to prepare bread, is generally considered a well-wishing element.
[11] What should be "brought" to the addressee, here, is obviously death.

synonymous parallelism, in which the second line is somewhat synonymous to the first one, but enriches it in many ways (Muilenburg 1953: 98)".

3. Word-echo forms

Word-echo responses follow a pattern that shows many similarities with root-echo forms, yet have not been, so far, described. The main difference consists in the fact that root-echo forms, described in paragraph 2, employ the root of the keyword of the first turn to shape a well or ill wish which is, in general, semantically linked to the expression that triggered it. The following polite exchange exemplifies, once again, the concept.

A. ***ṣabāḥ***   *əl-xēr!* "Good morning!"   (Lib.)
    morning   DEF-good
B. ***iṣabbḥ-ək***   *b-kull*   *xēr!* "Good morning to you!"
    PRS.3.M:make.you.wake.up.SG-you   with-all   good

A partial exception is represented by root-echo curses, since the speaker often purposefully reverses the meaning of the first expression in order to disorient the addressee. This strategy, however, is usually limited to the dominion of verbal impoliteness:

A. *yā*   ***ḥbībt-i!*** "Sweetheart!"   (Lib.)
    oh   beloved-my
B. ***ḥabb-ək***   *əl-buṛṣ!* "May the plague hit you!"
    love.3.M.SG.PST-you   DEF-plague

Word-echo responses, on the contrary, are precisely based on this last strategy. The speaker, in this case, does not extract a root from his interlocutor's utterance to use it in shaping his response. He limits itself to the employment of the same keyword, which is placed in an often completely different semantic field, generating surprise in the addressee, thanks to the sudden change of tone. From a formal perspective, word-echo responses tend to employ two main strategies.

    a) A parallel response, in which the speaker roughly replicates the structure of the first turn, varying the first verb or noun to achieve his surprise effect.

A. *lā*   ***bās*** *?* "How are you?"   (Tun.)
    no   harm?]
B. *lā*   *iwerrī-k*   ***bās!*** "Fine, thanks!"
    NEG   PRS.3.M:show.SG-you   harm!

    b) A symmetrical response, in which the speaker starts his sentence using the key word that closed the first turn of the verbal exchange and then varies the semantic context in which the word is placed.

1. *ikattər*   ***xēr-ək!*** "Thank you!"   (Lib.)
    PRS.3.M:increase.SG   good-your!

2.   **xēr-ək**   *sābəg!* "You're welcome!"
       good-you ACT.PTCP.precede.M.SG

This second structure is particularly suitable for curses and insults, since the sudden change of the context in which the keyword is used effectively bewilders the interlocutor, achieving the desired goal. As seen above, for instance, the kinship term *yā ʕamm-i* "uncle of mine" can be used to claim common ground and establish a relation with the interlocutor, but also to mildly convey annoyance at him. In both cases, the addressee can refuse to acknowledge the existence of such a common ground between himself and the interlocutor, resorting, for instance, to the following insulting expression:

A.   *yā*   **ʕamm**-*i!* "Uncle!"   (Lib.)
       oh   uncle-my
B.   *dawwər*   *mən*   **ʕamm**-*ək!* "I'm not your uncle!"[12]
       IMP.search.M.SG   who   uncle-your

The Libyan artist Fuad Gritli employs the same strategy in one of its satiric songs, in which the same sentence contains the trigger and the retort:

gālu   *ṭrābləs* **āmina**, **Āmina** *xālt-ək,* *gālu*
say:3.M.PL.PST Tripoli   safe   safe   aunt-your say:3.M.PL.PST
ṭrābləs **āmina**, **Āmina** *ḥannā-k*
Tripoli   safe,   safe   grandmother-your
"They said Tripoli is safe, safe / Āmina is your aunt, they said Tripoli is safe, safe / Āmina is your grandmother."

Here the artist is playing with the double meaning of *āmina*, which can mean 'safe' but is also a first name, to disorient his audience.

Once again, the repetition of a keyword in different turns of conversation finds interesting parallels in the phenomena of ritual repetition found in biblical poems but also in Ugaritic epics: "In many instances the keyword of the opening line is repeated at the close. More important is the repetition of central key-words throughout a poem." (Muilenberg 1953: 99, 104). Also in this third case, thus, a verbal strategy which is commonly employed in everyday speech is deeply rooted in the shared rhetorical strategies of Semitic languages.

4. Concluding remarks

The previous pages contained a synthetic survey of four common verbal strategies employed in North African dialects of Arabic to enhance the effectiveness of insults and curses. Curses, in particular, are rooted in the belief in the magic power of words. For this reason, the same rhetorical strategies employed in religious and magic contexts to enhance

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[12]   The impolite response here is an indirect offence to A's mother. B, in facts, tells him to find his real paternal uncle, which means he is not sure who his father is, with the consequent offense to his mother.

the effectiveness of the ritual are often employed in the domain of verbal (im)politeness, ultimately due to the common origin of the two phenomena.

The analysis of root-echo forms, word-echo forms, rhyme / alliteration and repetition, thus, finds parallels in other documented Semitic languages. Following Ferguson (1997b), close parallels have been found in the biblical Psalms, while the repetition of a keyword across different turns of speech (also attested in the biblical text) can be traced back at least to the Ugaritic epic poems.

These findings confirm once more Brown and Levinson's assumption according to which the concept of face is rooted in the most ancestral ideas of virtue, shame and redemption, calling for more research on the understudied systems of politeness of Arabic-speaking communities.

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THE USE OF YOUTH LANGUAGE AND COARSE WORDS IN THE MASHREQ AREA

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Abstract. A language is not a uniform, immutable block but varies over time, in diachrony. Each language changes in the lexicon and its structures in relation to the passage of time and to the changes that take place in culture and society. Over time, vulgar or offensive language has evolved (Allan, Burridge: 2006). The curse expressions or coarse words are an aspect of the linguistic creativity of the Arabs and belong most of all to the domain of orality (Zawrotna: 2016). The language of young people and adolescents, in general, is made up of a very expressive nonconformist vocabulary sometimes imbued with highly colloquial, even vulgar terms and not very comprehensible for those who are not part of the group. Youth language seems to change very rapidly: some terms attested in a certain period seem to be obsolete just a few years later. There are not many studies on youth language in the Arab world, especially in the Mashreq area.

The present research, which also takes into consideration previous works, is based on a collection of data deriving from oral and written sources of the Mashreq area. The oral sources are made up of interviewees aged between 18 and 30 years of Egyptian origin. The written sources consist of the texts of rap songs from the Syro-Lebanese area. This kind of text has been selected because rap is a typically youthful artistic expression and therefore uses a sometimes even irreverent youth language.

Keywords: *youth language, coarse words, rap songs, Egyptian Arabic, Syro-Lebanese Arabic.*

Introduction

Communication between young people is constantly evolving; the phenomenon of youth terminology comprises one of the social elements in the natural process of language change.

The language of young people and adolescents, in general, is made up of a very expressive nonconformist vocabulary, sometimes imbued with highly colloquial, even vulgar terms[1], which renders it difficult to understand for those who are not part of the group.

This language originates in different social stratifications, sometimes they are the product of small groups of friends. Other terms come from popular films and songs, and also from the mass media.

Youth language seems to change very rapidly: some terms attested in a certain period seem to be obsolete just a few years later.

"Slang" is an English term which might be translated by the Arabic term *sīm* or the phrase *raṭāna ʿāmmiyya*. The first term is comparable to "argot" or "cant" for a specific form of slang, the second expression can be translated as "slang". However, all of the terms

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[1] However, it should be emphasized that although highly ostentatious and expressive terminology is particularly frequent among young people and adolescents, it is not always exclusive to the juvenile lexicon.

refer to forms of spoken language and all denote a deviation in some way from a standard (Versteegh 2006).

No good definition of slang is available in the literature. The linguist Paul Roberts said that slang was "one of those things that everybody can recognize and nobody can define" (Andersson and Trudgil 1992: 69). This is supported by Miller (2004) who states that the criteria which enable to distinguish between "youth language", "secret language" and "argot" are not always well defined.

In spite of this, there have been many attempts to define "slang"; it may be regarded as "a set of informal and colloquial words and phrases used within particular social groups and that are not part of the 'mainstream' language" (Dictionary-Sociolinguistics 2004: 281); Partridge (1970: 3) notes that "slang has, from about 1850, been the accepted term for "illegitimate" colloquial speech".

The widespread attitude of some Arab intellectuals, among others, is to deplore the new terminology, that is described as a form of social decadence.

Previous studies on youth language

Studies on youth language[2] in the Arab world are small. The debate concerns the contemporary state of Arabic in relation to diglossia, the infiltration of foreign languages, especially English and the increase of slang among the younger generations.

There are several studies about the language of Egyptian youth from a sociolinguistic point of view; these include descriptions of some of the new slang vocabulary. There are also lexicons which contain older and newer slang. The appearance of new terms in the Cairo dialect has inspired many discussions both linguistically and culturally.

In his study, Rosenbaum (2004) demonstrates the use of elements of slang in modern Egyptian writing. He states that written discourse always reflects societal linguistic conventions, which are not fixed, but which change over time. Thus, he expounds, the more permissive nature of Western society is reflected in its use of slang and coarse language, which have entered the literature. Similarly, in the generally more restrictive Arab society, where such language is taboo, the literature reflects this, by its exclusion. He identifies some slang expressions in several types of writing, such as: *fīl* (lit.: "elephant") with the meaning of one milliard, *'arnab* (lit.: "rabbit") one million, *'astik* (lit.: "rubber band") one thousand, *zalamukka* a Mercedes, *kōsa* (lit.: "zucchini") which has become a slang word for favouritism or favourable treatment.

Peterson (2000), in his study on youth terminology in Cairo, highlights lexical loans mainly from English, the derivations from Arabic and the new usage of the standard Arabic vocabulary. The terms collected by the scholar are specific to Cairo, although they have their equivalents also in other areas and dialects. She states that youth terminology in the Arab world is characterized, for the most part, by internal changes to the language.

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[2] Many sociolinguistic research focuses on two socio-demographic factors: age and sex. These two variables influence the linguistic behavior of the speakers in an interesting way.

The research has shown that those who generate the new terminology, as well as those who use it the most, are predominantly men. The language of women has fewer new terms and those same women choose not to use them, perceiving them as obscene.

Another study on the language of teenagers was carried out by Allam (2000), who examines the new youth vocabulary of Cairo. He takes into account twenty words, which mostly express an intensification of a good or bad rating of someone or something.

He classifies the expressions into three groups: those that exist both in standard and in slang and that have the same meaning; those that exist both in the standard and in the slang and have different meanings, and those without an origin in the standard and that exist only in the slang.

Allam also provides another type of grouping based on the understanding of these words by a group of older individuals. Unlike the unanimous understanding of these slang words by young people, a great disparity has been found in the understanding of some terms by older individuals. The understanding of slang terms by these older groups has various socio-cultural reasons: the understanding of slang terms can be explained by a parent's interaction with their children or result from watching film and television.

Another difference that Allam underlines is the use of some terms between young people and older people. While almost all terms are used by the vast majority of young people, 12 of the 20 terms are not used by the older generation, while the rest of the terms are used only by very few of the individuals interviewed. The non-use of these terms, even if understood by adults, gives a clear indication of the function of slang, that is to reinforce a sense of group identity within a social group.

In Egypt the interest in this variety of language culminated in a two-volume dictionary, whose first edition dates back to 1999. The second edition of 2006 contains more lexis, expressions and sentences than the first. The dictionary is entitled *Riwiš ṭaḥn* (2006), translatable as "very fashionable", in which *ṭaḥn* stands for "extremely" or "very", whereas the etymology of *riwiš* is more problematic but can derive from "fashionable", "beautiful" or "cool". Giving just a few examples taken from this dictionary*: dabbūr* "hornet" intended as playboy, *laḥlūḥ[3]* to mean an Egyptian pound, and *'astik* to be understood as "a hundred Egyptian pound".

Historically, youth language was systematically documented in 1916 in a pioneering work in the field of folklore by Muḥammad Luṭfī Gumʿa. His article entitled *Studies in folklore* includes a dictionary of the ungrammatical language and the slang of the workers in use among the common people in Egypt. This includes not only youth speech, but also the language used by pickpockets, thieves, artists, drug addicts, jewelers, beggars, criminals, belly dancers and their male assistants, usually gay, actors, musicians, and other categories. The article contains about 550 words, expressions, and sentences, some of which can still be observed in the spoken language, and 360 of these were found in the *Riwiš ṭaḥn* dictionary.

In 2007, *The Gulf* a United Arab Emirates newspaper[4] reported on the widespread use of youth speech in some Gulf states. This language diverges from traditional linguistic

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[3]   From the root *l-ḥ-l-ḥ* which refers to movement and activity.
[4]   Sanad, 2007, issue no. 10446.

norms and comprises existing words and expressions whose meaning has been altered, or new words, puns and borrowed terms.

There are several studies about youth language in the North African area. Bevacqua (2008) carried out a study on the language of Tunisian young people in which he demonstrates how the Tunis dialect integrates French loans used in youth language; the research shows that loans undergo phonological and morphological changes.

Tounsi (1997) analyzes some aspects of juvenile language in Algeria and emphasizes its role, underlining that 70% of Algerians are less than thirty years old.

Among the other sources on youth language and diachronic aspects in North Africa, the work of Ritt-Benmimoun (2017), composed of several contributions, focuses on common trend and language developments of Tunisian and Libyan Arabic dialects.

Considerations about the *corpus*

The present research, which also takes into consideration previous works, is based on a collection of data deriving from oral and written sources of the Mashreq area.

As regards the oral sources, they comprise participants aged between 18 and 30 years of Egyptian origin. The terms consist of names, adjectives, verbs, sentences, and idioms. The terminology generally tends to describe people and situations. In this work only part of the collected data will be reported.

As regards the written sources, they consist of the texts of rap songs from the Syro-Lebanese area. This type of text was selected because rap is a typically youthful artistic expression and therefore uses youth language, which is sometimes even irreverent.

Here the texts of two singers, one male and one female, representative of the rap genre were selected.

Although rap songs may be considered written sources, as they are endowed with texts, they are characterized by a language which is very close to spontaneous locution.

Oral sources

Juvenile terminology, related to standard Arabic through derivations of existing roots and semantic re-adaptations, is used in spoken language. In the Arabic world characterized by diglossia, slang is used in the dialectal variant, the register of the language used, mostly, at the oral level.

In the present study the data provided by the young Egyptian participants partly confirm and partly contradict data from previous studies, because youth terminology changes rapidly: some terms used fifteen years ago are no longer common today.

The research shows that a minor part of terms are loans, in particular from English, while the majority of terms are created through the use of standard Arabic with new meanings.

As regards loans, some examples of expressions that were used by all the interviewed subjects, are shown below: *yā mān* "man", as an appellation, *mood,* as in the phrase *miš fi-*

l mūd "not being in the mood", *stāyil* "style", adjective to describe a attractive person, and *vōlgār* "vulgar" from the French *vulgaire*.

Most of the lexicon in youth terminology is composed of three consonants roots. These roots often correspond to roots already existing in Arabic, whether modern standard Arabic or Egyptian Arabic.

For example, in youth speech the lexeme *ṭaḥn* "very" derives from Standard Arabic طحن "grinding, flour". This term was used a lot by previous generations, today it has been replaced by young people with *fašḫ*, from فشخ *fašaḫa* literally "to split", as in the expression *ḥilū fašḫ* "very beautiful". In youth speech the term *bi'a* is used with the meaning "unkempt, vulgar, low level", and it derives from بيئة "environment", but my participants agree that the loan *vōlgār* is more commonly used. The noun قشطة *ᵠišṭa* from standard Arabic "cream" is employed, in the youth language, with the meaning "cool, fashionable"; the term صاروخ *ṣārūḫ* "missile" is used by young people with the sense of "nice girl". Today, with a similar but coarser meaning, the adjective *mōzza* is more common.

Other terms have been created through the formation of new derivations of existing standard roots: مفخذ *mifaḫḫad* "lazy" from the standard Arabic فخذ *faḫḏ* "leg", هشكة *haššaka* "sexy girl" from هشك *haššaka* "to cuddle, to rock", from which comes the expression *heššek beššek* "to walk swaying hips", محيص *miḥayyiṣ* "drunk" or "stoned", but also "confused" from حاص *ḥāṣa* "to escape".

The term *laḥluḥ* with the meaning of an Egyptian pound, attested in the aforementioned dictionary *Riwiš ṭaḥn*, is no longer used by the new generations. Similarly, the word *fīl*, used up to a few decades ago with the meaning of one milliard, is today no longer known with this meaning, but is used with the meaning of a very fat person.

Also in reference to car models, youth language is very creative. The young Egyptians interviewed reported: *al-ᵠirda* (lit.: "monkey") for Fiat, *at-timsāḥa* (lit.: "crocodile") and *al-ḫanzīra* (lit.:"pig") for specific models of Mercedes, *debbāna* (in Egyptian Arabic "fly") for BMW, *al-ḫunfisa* (lit.: "cockroach") for Volkswagen Beetle.

Youth language is common in universities and other institutions, in streets, markets, and venues. The Egyptian participants interviewed said that even coffee shop orders are characteristic of youth speech; for example: *wāḥid mustašfa* means "one aniseed drink", *wāḥid wilāda* "one fenugreek" (aromatic drink), *wāḥid ṣuwān* "one black Turkish coffee"[5].

By taking a quick look at contemporary discourse, the language of young Arabs is further evolving because of the influx of new media. As Rosenbaum (2004: 200) states: "Many Internet users are presumably young people who do not hesitate to include slang and coarse words in their electronic messages". In this context, most words are taken from English. In addition to *mobāyl* and *kombyūtar*, which have become standard words in Egyptian Arabic, the young people interviewed reported words, such as: *flobi* "floppy (disk)", *drayver* "driver", *skanar* "scanner", *šāt* "chat"; verbs or expressions, such as: *farmat* "to format", *kansil* "to cancel", also in the phrase *kansil ʿalēh* "refused to talk to him (on a cell telephone)", *ʿamal delīt* "to erase (a disk)", *ʿamal kōbi* "to copy", *ʿamal skān* "to scan", and *brintar* "to print".

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[5] The participants affirm that these expressions are common in a kind of very popular coffee shops called *ᵠahwā baladi.*

Also calques are used, such as: *saṭḥ al-maktab* "desktop", *fa'ra* "mouse", *muḥarrik al-baḥṯ* "search engine", and *dardaša* "to chat".

In communications through new technologies, the transfer of typical oral discourse into written discourse is taking place and the traditional division between written and spoken is becoming narrower. For more research on juvenile language also on websites it is possible to find all the latest fashions and trends in relation to the language.

Written sources

Although slang is used mostly in spoken discourse, there are also cases of its use at the written level: examples can be found in some newspaper articles, humorous vignettes and some literary texts. Rosenbaum (2004: 186) notes: «Such "illegitimate" speech does not easily find its way into written literature. However, the use of the colloquial as a written language sometimes does lead to the use of slang elements in both literary and semi-literary texts».

So words and expressions of youth language can be found even within artistic forms, such as the texts of songs. Examples of it are predominant in rap song lyrics, in which youth dissent in the Arab world is expressed through strong language, marked at times by vulgar slang. This kind of language is used to protest against corruption, poverty and social inequalities, and as an expression of one's national identity.

Miller and Caubet (2011) observe for Morocco that the transposition of vulgarity into the artistic domain is associated with male rap artists.

Despite this, unlike the American hip-hop culture, recourse to foul language is more contained among the Arab rappers, as local norms and traditions are taken into consideration. Rappers, in the Arab world, adapt their songs to the local situation, so it can be argued that the Arab-Islamic cultural context can influence language and themes[6]. LeVine (2008), through the testimony of an anonymous Moroccan rapper, emphasizes that Moroccan MCs avoid the use of vulgar language and the apology of guns, cars and "bling bling", since these elements are not part of Morocco and its traditions. So the singers use expressions of offensive language and curses used in everyday life more than vulgar terms. Referring to the Syro-Lebanese area, the texts of two singers are taken into consideration.

The first is the Syrian rapper Abu Hajar from the city of Tartus in the north-west of Syria. Within his texts he recurs to curse expressions. In the lyrics of *Hōn Ṭarṭūs* "Here Tartus" there are the following verses: *əḫt-ak 'a-əḫt ha-n-nahār ya zalame* "Damn this day!" (lit.: " your sister, sister of this day, man!", *w-lak yəl'an əḫt-ak* "Damn your sister", *Aḷḷah lek Aḷḷah yāḫud-ek*[7] "Let God take you".

In the same text we also find irreverent expressions, such as: *w lamma təhezz bə-ḫaṣr-a btə'mal 'až�q at*[8] *sīr* "and when she shakes his hips, she sends traffic haywire", or words used only in dialect and mostly by young people, such as *ma'ṣəlže* in the verse *tuf*

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[6] Regarding the language used in hip hop music in general, it developed in the Bronx, reflects the language spoken in that neighborhood, and marked by a vernacular jargon (Gupta, 2012). Vulgar language can be seen as normal and therefore perceived in a way that is not as offensive as it can be in another culture.

[7] Expression also used to wish death, sometimes in a playful tone.

[8] Dialectal term is not found in classical Arabic, from which *ma'žū �q o 'āže�q* "messed up".

taḫ[9] *ēh... šakl-a ma ʿṣəlže* "tuf takh... it seems like a mess", and the term *ʿāžeq* in the verse *bass əl-yōm ʿāžeq ḥāl-i* "But today I'm messed up".

Instead in the song *Bə-ha-l-yōmēn* "In two days" in the following verse *w l-ḫāzūq šwayy šwayy fī-na ʿām bifūt*[10] the author uses the term *ḫāzūq* with a not so elegant meaning; however, this term is also found in standard Arabic with the meaning of "pointed pole". In the lyrics of this singer there are also terms deriving from linguistic loans used mostly, but not only, in youth speech. Loans from Italian: *mōḍa* "fashion" (it. "moda"), *liṛa* "lira" (it. "lira"), *fabrakāt* "invented things" (it. "fabbricate"), *dōmīnū* "domino" (it. "domino"); from French: *maykiyāž* "makeup" (fr. *maquillage*), *rūdāž* "running in" (fr. *rodage*), *bārfān* "perfume" (fr. *parfum*), *vōlgēr* "volgar" (fr. *vulgaire*), *əl-kwāfīr* "hairdresser" (fr. *coiffeur*); from English: *bay* "bye", *būṭ* "boot"; and from Turkish: *balṭažī* "assassino" from *balṭa* "ax" + *ži* with suffix *čī* indicating the name of the professions, *qabaḍāyāt* "bullies" (trc. *kabadayi*, "quarrelsome", "thug").

In the verse *btənzel bətšūf šbāb honīk ʾmlūk bə-t-tafnīṣ* "Come and see the young people in there, the kings of the vanity", the author uses the neologism *tafnīṣ*, a term that does not exist in standard Arabic. This *maṣdar* derives from a non-Arabic root, probably from English "vanity".

The second singer considered is Malikah[11], a famous Lebanese rapper. She always sings in Arabic and sometimes employs even vulgar language to express her ideas and to create a public reaction. In rap the linguistic differences linked to gender can be unhinged in a sort of equality of roles in the function of denunciation that the artist covers. The author, in some cases, in fact, also uses vulgar terminology: in the text *Samm bə-d-damm* "Poison in the blood" the verse *ha-l-balad məntāk šū bədd-kon mnə l-balad məntāk* means "this country is fucked, what do you want from the country, it's fucked"; in the other text *Heyk ṣāyra blēd-na* "This is our country" the phrase *əntāk əḫt-a blēd-na* "Our country was fucked" acts as a refrain, so it is repeated several times. In these cases the verb *nāk* appears; some of the strongest taboo words in Arabic are derived from the root *n-y-k;* some of them are regarded as very vulgar and are absent from some Arabic dictionaries[12].

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9   It reproduces the sounds of the fight.

10   The most literal translation is: "the scam is coming slowly".

11   In the musical context Arab women have had to undermine the conception between internal and external space; they appeared in a public space and performed in front of the community, expressing visions and ideas through the language of their songs. In the hip hop scenario, rappers tend to follow a masculine jargon and a style characterized by direct language and strong expressions. It can be said that the language, expressed in their songs, is more aggressive than that used by girls in society and in everyday life, in contrast to the general stereotype of what is expected of women's language. Presumably this could be the result of male dominance in the rap scene in which the artists work, but also a consequence of the possibilities and freedom offered by the rap at the level of communication, providing them with a public space in which to express themselves and to affirm their identity and their own thoughts.

12   Concerning the definition of the verb *nāk* we find in Spiro the following definition: "to copulate", avoiding the coarse tone of the word (Spiro, 1973: 589); in Wehr: "to have sexual intercourse" (Wehr, 1974:1014), concealing the actual coarse usage of this verb. Also in Traini we find: "avere rapporti sessuali (con una donna)" [to have sexual intercourse (with a woman)] (Traini, 1993: 1590). Badawi and Hinds point out that the word is coarse and give "to fuck" as the only definition (Badawi and Hinds, 1986: 894). In Elihay (2007: 393), a dictionary of spoken Eastern Arabic, we find *nāk, inīk*: "to fuck, have sexual intercourse with".

In the same text, we find another vulgar expression: *bəkra mənbūs ṭīz-ak* "Tomorrow we'll kiss your ass". This kind of expression exists in many languages with the meaning "to submit to someone". In these cases we find words (the verb *nāk* and the noun *ṭīz*) which usually belong to the domains of sex and intimate organs and are regarded as coarse or taboo by society.

Conclusion

A language is not a uniform block, immutable but varies over time, in diachrony. Each language changes in the lexicon and its structures in relation to the passage of time and to the changes that take place in culture and society.

In general, the data provided show that youth terminology is the result of changes within the language: through the collected data, we state that the most common method of creating youth terminology consists in the mechanism of using standard Arabic with new meanings. Some terms resulting from the reported data show the close link between juvenile terminology and standard Arabic. However, this fact disturbs a part of society because young people alter the precise meaning and use of the lexicon. Changes in language are considered deviations or corruptions not only at the linguistic level but also at cultural values.

Moreover, where speech requires it, offensive and curse expressions are taken from the quotidian and colloquial language.

Linguistic loans are also used, above all to emphasize certain concepts or for ironic ends. Loans from English are employed mostly in the information technology sphere.

Some of my participants were proud of being the creators of the new terms. Others use the new terminology as an attempt to impress others. As Versteegh (2006: 251) notes: «Slang deviates from standard language and dialects; that is, slang is speech which employs either newly minted words or ordinary words with newly developed meanings to impart a vividness to one's speech as well as to set the speaker apart as a member of certain ʿinʾ group». Linguistic variation can be used as an important means of formation, affirmation and transmission of socio-cultural identity.

Therefore, the language of young people is not a niche phenomenon in the Arab world and has gained importance acquiring its status and forming linguistic and sociolinguistic rules. This is evident in the continuous documentation and classification of its own vocabulary and in the public attention to this form of language, although studies in this regard are still rather scarce, especially in some Arab countries.

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CURSING AND REVILING FORMULAS IN THE EGYPTIAN ARABIC DIALECT

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Abstract: The study deals with expressions denoting cursing and reviling found in the Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. In material of our present interest, on the one hand, purely formula-type expressions are singled out, which exist in the ready-made, unchanged form, and, on the other one, those which might be conventionally regarded as situational as they do not represent set formulas and are composed at the moment of speaking, however also follow the general principles on which expressions of this type are based. The paper is aimed to offer linguistic analysis, discusses the formal and semantic characteristics of such utterances.
Keywords: *Arabic, Egyptian, cursing and reviling formulas.*

The present article deals with the analysis of cursing and reviling formulas attested in Egypt. The material is gathered from the Egyptian informants, or is retrieved from the specialist literature and fiction; internet resources also rendered certain assistance (see: Adnan 1994; Elder 1927; el-Messiri 1987; el-Sawi 1981; ʿĪsā 1988; at-Tonsī 1992; al-Ḥakīm 1987; Mušarrafa 1991; as-Sibāʿī 1965, etc.). Direct source of each example is not additionally indicated below.

From the formal viewpoint, in the above-mentioned expressions can be identified the following groups:

1. One-constituent expressions

These are lexemes which are usually perceived as abusive and insulting (among these, cursing formulas are found rarely). This group often includes nouns which are understood as adjectives, as they in fact represent comparison. E.g. well-known and widespread words, such as: *zift* "tar", *hebāb* "soot" refer to everything bad, as both are black (black color in Egyptian speech metaphorically denotes either "bad" or "center, concentration", see: Amīn 1999: 129-130). They may be used as an offensive word with respect to another person, or may convey a negative attitude towards oneself, it may add uninflected *zay* ("as"), but not necessarily. E.g. *šakl-u zift* means: "looks as tar, looks awful, very bad". In this group adjectives are also found: *aqraʿ* "shaven-headed", which is regarded in Egypt as an offensive word. In such expressions sometimes verbs may occur: *iḫras* – "shut up", *ingar,*

ġūr – "get away! beat it!", also interjections: *hes* – "Fie!" Sometimes a noun, adjective or verb, used as a formula for reviling, practically occurs with the function of an interjection: *ṣōt!* – "voice!" denotes "Hush! Shut up!", *'ēb* – "flaw", means "do not do this! Don't you dear!" the word *iḫṣa* – "(you) spit on smb" is used with the function of a forbidding interjection, denoting "Fie!" Words occurring in one-constituent formulas at the same time are quite likely to be found as members of multi-constituent formulas as well.

2. Expressions presented with more than one constituents unites the following:

a) expressions represented in the form of a syntagma or a phrase, which is based on the coordination or subordination, as well as those which are represented in the form of a simple (or compound) sentence.

In syntagmatic variants *al-iḍāfa* construction is especially predominant, often based on the word *ibn* or *bint*, like *ya ibn (bint) el-kalb* – "son (daughter) of a bitch," *ya bint el-qirʿa* – "daughter of pumpkin".

These expressions are interesting due to the fact that they are also used with respect to inanimate objects. In this case the expression is devoid of its direct sense and denotes metaphorically merely useless, annoying.

mišwār ibn kalb – "a bitch of an errand, distance", or *ṭaʿm-u ibn kalb* – "It tastes horrible".

In addition, on the contrary, the name of an inanimate object may refer to a human being: *ibn/bint el-gazma* – "son/daughter of a shoe" (a shoe is associated with dirt and, accordingly, degradation of a person), *moḫḫu gazma* – "his brain is a shoe" (i.e. he is brainless, stupid).

b) Expressions beginning with relative pronoun *elli* are frequent. In the material, variants produced on the basis of collocation *elli yinḍarib* – "he is deserving a beating" were recorded most frequently, which belong exactly to the type which does not exist as set expressions and is composed according to a situation: *elli yinḍarib f kebdu* – "he is deserving a beating in the liver", *elli yinḍarib ʿala lsānu* – "he is deserving a beating on the tongue".

c) There often occur expressions constructed on the derivatives of the root *smm*:

> *ḫud itsammim* "take, be poisoned",
> *idfaʿ et-taman es-sem el-ḫāri elli kaltu* – "pay the price for the venomous poison that you have eaten".

d) Expressions are quite frequent in which the Perf., 3rd p., sing. of a verb is used, as the Subject in this case Allah is meant (he may or may not be mentioned):

> *yiqṭaʿak* – "May cut you",
> *yiqsif ʿumrak* – "May mow down your life",
> *yiḫrab bētak* – "May destroy your house",
> *yiḫra' 'alb ummak ʿalēk* – "May burn your mother's heart for you".

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In all the above-mentioned cases Allah is implied as the Subject.

In general, with respect to verbs it should be noted that a characteristic phenomenon for Arabic, when a verb represented in Perfective in fact denotes the future (e.g., as in proverbs, or in conditional clauses), in these expressions is not usually found; instead, Imperfective without the dialectal prefix *bi-* (as the verb often denotes exactly the future meaning), or Imperative is used.

e) A separate group is made up of expressions based on the principle of parallelism, one part of which does not derive from another. They are often connected with conjunction *wa-*, which in Arabic, as is known, joins equal constituents: homogeneous members, phrases making up a compound sentence, renders simultaneousness of actions, etc. Examples:

safāla (masḫara) w-ʿillit adab – "(What) obscenity (buffoonery) and insolence";

(*inter alia*, as is known in Arabic the word *qillat* "fewness" (dialect. *ʿillit)* or corresponding adjective *qalīl* denotes negative meaning of absence in expressions as:

qillatu/qalīlu ṣ-ṣabri "luck of patience, impatient" and not, e.g.,
ʿadamu ṣ-ṣabri; qillatu /qalīlu l-ḥayāʾi "luck of modest, unblushing", etc.);

ḫār wa-nār f-gettatak – "Hot and fire to your body",

Asydentic connection is also possible:

ġūr ingar min hena – "Go, get away!"

In such expressions the device of repetition, generally characteristic for Arabic, is used especially frequently:

gatkum el-qaraf fi tarbiyitkum – "Woe be to you in (this) upbringing of yours", rather than *gatkum el-qaraf fi t-tarbēya* – "Woe be to you in upbringing".

Repetition and parallelism in the cases of our present interest serve to achieve the effect of intensification or stressing the meaning:

ya qirʿa ya bint qirʿa – "You pumpkin, daughter of a pumpkin (you fool)."

The effect of parallelism may be achieved on the basis of repetition of words of the same/approximated form or semantics:

dāhiyat ummak w-abūk w-ʿēlik wa-lammatik – "Woe befall your mother, father, family and kin" (words having the semantics of "family" are used);
ġūr ingar min hena – "beat it, get away! (Imperatives are used);

awwalan... wa-ṯaniyan... wa-ṯāliṯan... wa-l-lā la yiṯalliṯu ʿaleyhim – "Firstly …, secondly…, thirdly…, and may Allah bereave him of the third" (numerals are used);

Or, by using different derivates from one and the same root:

ḫamsa w-ḫamīsa – "five and the fifth" (*cf. ḫamsa f-ʿēn el-ḥasūd* "five (fingers) in the eyes of an envious person", i.e. "may an envious person go blind"). Sometimes the first utterance is also a remark of the second one and is aimed to accentuate to a greater extent the emotional side of the cursing.

Some formulas of cursing and reviling, as, e.g., latter utterances, as well as some formulas of blessing (*ism al-lā ʿalēk* – "may the mane of God protect you"), might be used only by women.

f) Expressions constructed on the principle of subordination are singled out separately, one segment of which is subordinated to another, one derives from the other:

dāhia tġallabhum zayyima b-yiġallabu n-nās – "Hell will oppress them as they oppress the people".
ya ʿuma, dōl elli ramētu l-māya ʿala ʿēši – "You, blind people, who poured water on my bread".

Such expressions are characterized by the use of the plural with respect to a single object/subject, which serves the purpose of intensification of the meaning. In the last two examples the object is one person, but the plural number or the collective word "people" is used.

g) Remark-type expressions are frequent, which are based on a word uttered by the object of the reviling:
a remark upon mentioning upbringing:

gatkum el-qaraf fi tarbiyitkum – "Woe be to you in this upbringing of yours";

a remark on the expression "I did not hear you well":

smiʿt raʿd – "May you hear thunder";

a remark on asking 30 pounds:

gāk talatīn ʿifrīt lamma yirkabūk – "May 30 ifrits attack you to go on a ride on you".

h) It was noted above and it is natural that many such expressions were recorded which are not perceived as formulas proper, in this article they are conventionally referred to as situational expressions. They greatly depend on the factor as a result of which they are

produced, however, they are characterized by the style, artistic devices and separate lexemes typical of similar expressions in general:

> *yā di l-muṣība elli ṭarbaqit ʿala dmāġi, enta <u>maqtūm er-ra'aba</u> ē elli gābak hena* – "What misfortune has befallen me, you <u>deserving to have your neck broken</u>, what made you turn up here?"
> *<u>ya bahīm</u> enta ya-lli qāʿid ʿ-al-bāb malakši šoġla* – "<u>You brute</u>, sitting at the door and having nothing to do";
> *<u>el-mankūb</u> da madafaʿši taman elli <u>itsammam</u>* – "<u>This damned person</u> has not paid for the poison which <u>he has stuffed down</u>".

The underlined elements are constant in these expressions and may occur with different variations.

i) There are expressions which have no constant emotional constituent and whether they are to be realized as reviling or joking depends on the intonation of the utterance:

> *iḫṣa ʿalēk* – "fie upon you", *yiḫrab bētak* – "May (Allah) destroy your house", etc.

j) Interesting cases of metaphorization are also found, in particular, metaphorization of toponyms, common nouns, numerals were recorded:

> *rāḫ fi Ṭawkar* – "went to Tawkar" (went to hell). Tawkar is a town in far South-East Sudan, where Egyptian political criminals were exiled.

Adjectivized nouns *zift/hebab* were already mentioned above.

In Egyptian, cases of metaphorization of numerals also occur, which offers a separate area for observation. E.g. "24" always has a positive meaning, it is associated with perfection (as the mass of pure, unmixed gold is 24 carats), whereas "60" occurs in expressions of a negative meaning:

> *sittīn dāhiya* – "60 woes",
> *sittīn bārid* – lit. "60 cool", one who do not care about anything.

k) Some formulas simultaneously represent idiomatic expressions:

> *qattaʿū-hu l-wizz* – lit. "ducks crossed his way" means "it is a lost cause, there is no hope for him".

Expressions of odd character also occur:
aqraʿ "shave-head",
maḫrūq bi-l-gāz – "deserving to be burned with gas",

as well as utterances of less level of reviling, as:
maʿgūn bi-mīt ʿafarīt – "rolled by 100 demons" (i.e. very frolicsome child),

manfūḫ ʿa-l-fāḍi – "inflated in vain" (arrogant person),
wiššu yiqṭaʿ el-ʿagīna min el-bēt – "his face cats yeast from the house" (means "he is woe-begone"), etc.

Finally, it may be generalized that in Egyptian formulas of cursing and reviling the cases of comparison, parallelism, repetition, metaphorization, idiomatic re-interpretation, specific transformation of lexeme semantics are frequently identifiable, which is mostly related with some extra-linguistic realia.

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RHETORICAL FEATURES OF CURSING AND FOUL-MOUTHED SPEECH IN CONTEMPORARY MASTERS OF MUĞŪN: MUẒAFFAR AN-NAWWĀB AND NAĞĪB SURŪR

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Abstract. Studies in pragmatics have shown that cursing and foul-mouthed expressions (C/FMEs) are influenced by conversational variables such as the speaker-listener relationship, implicatures, and the context of communication. Within the Arabic linguistics tradition, and specifically with respect to *al-balāġa*, these variables are one of the main subjects of inquiry. Specifically, the linguistic *naẓm* of cursing and swearing and their features such as brevity (*īğāz*), communicative impact (*ṭabʿ balīġ*) and use of figurative speech (*luṭf li-l-maǧāz*) reveal how these expressions are based on rhetorical patterns. Taking into account the jestful, foul-mouthed and/or libertine poetical style of *muǧūn* within the Mediaeval Arabic Literature tradition, the rhetorical patterns of implicit and explicit illocutionary C/FME acts, as mostly used in ironic/satirical discourse, reveal how C/FME can be employed as a powerful literary device. This paper aims to observe the rhetorical features of C/FME as employed in contemporary *muǧūn*, drawing upon the in-depth analysis of excerpts quoted from the poetic works of the Iraqi poet Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb (b. 1934), and the Egyptian poet Naǧīb Surūr (1932 - 1978).
Keywords: cursing; balāġa; muǧūn's poetry; pragmatics; Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb; Naǧīb Surūr.

Cursing and foul-mouthed expressions [1] (abbr. C/FMEs) have been part of human communicative experience since the beginning (Vingerhoets et al. 2013). Looking more closely, modern linguistic sources (Lakoff 1989; Jay 1992; Locher-Watts 2005) and, more specifically, studies on politeness and face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Goffmann 1967: 5; Locher 2008: 513-516) reveal the occurrence of C/FMEs in a wide range of communicative contexts beyond cases of verbal aggression (with which they are most commonly associated). As demonstrated in the pioneering studies of scholars in Arabic Rhetoric such as Gully (1995), Ghersetti (1998), Moutaouakil (1982) and Fassi Fehri (1982), *balāġa*'s subjects and inquiries reflect, in many ways, the linguistic investigations of pragmatics and (some areas of) cognitive pragmatics. As asserted by the master of *balāġa,* ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Ğurǧānī (fl. 1009 - 1078) (*Dalāʾil*: 358 – *Asrār*: 3 and f.), it is impossible to criticize a literary/non-literary text without an initial inquiry into its full meaning. This inquiry, which can be applied in considering C/FME, proceeds from the observation of the single word (*al-kalima* – the text) to the grammatical and semantic structure of the text (*an-naẓm* - the

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[1] The term cursing is used in this text in its meaning of *damning, swearing* and to an extent, *insulting -* although there are subtle distinctions between these ones. Foul-mouthed speech is understood as the obscene, vulgar speech which may include/not include necessary damning aims. However as both phenomena occur frequently joint in libertine mocking poetry, they will be treated together.

co-text)[2] and finally, to the full meaning of C/FME according to contextual influences (*muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*)[3]. Drawing upon *al- balāġa* as well as pragmatic tools, this paper argues that the employment of *balāġa*'s figurative forms in C/FME gave rise to fully-formed literary (poetic) devices[4] in the case of *muǧūn* (a jestful, foul-mouthed and/or libertine poetical style - Szombathy2013: 40-1)[5], providing insight into the evolution of this style from the classical (Abbasid) to the contemporary literary period. Specifically, the present inquiry examines little-investigated contemporary examples, considering the works of Naǧīb Surūr (Fontana 2018) and Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb (Bardenstein 1997; Gohar 2011).

1. Rhetorical Features of Literary Cursing/Foul-Mouthed Expressions
1.1. Text Level - *Ǧalāt al-Kabš! (His Majesty the Billy Goat)*

As claimed by relevant pragmatics studies (Anderson-Lepore 2013; Langton 2012), C/FMEs (alternately, though not synonymously described in Arabic as *suḫf, fuḥš, baḏā'a, muǧūn*[6]) are complete - i.e. not 'defective' - and primarily connotative (*lutf li-l-maǧāz*) statements characterised by brevity and incisiveness (*īǧāz*), and clarity *(tabyīn)*[7]. Verse 4 of an-Nawwāb's poem *Qimam! Qimam!* (*Summits! Summits!*) (2007: 440-442) demonstrates how these features can be gathered in a single expression. Here, the insulting expression "*ǧalālat al-kabš!*" (his majesty the billy goat) is characterized by brevity, and clearly addresses a specific target. Furthermore, the etymon *kabš* (billy goat/ram i.e. cuckold) is not employed according to its literal meaning.

Borrowing from the modern philosophy of language, Jay and Janschewitz (2008: 270) recognize "unpropositional swearing[8]" as that which is used to publicly vent strong emotions through "volcanic rudeness" (Beebe 1995: 159) – in Arabic, this is termed *al-*

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2   While the linguistic *co-text* is commonly translated as *siyāq* (Ghersetti1998a: 245)*,* I suggest directly linking it to the speaker's organization of the text i.e. *an-nāẓm* as this is the main field/area of observation in the present study. Although some scholars in Arabic rhetoric (Moutaouakil 1982;1990) propose to reduce the distance between the two concepts, I agree with Ghersetti (1998a: 216-217) that in *al-balāġa* the distinction between them (*siyāq* and *an-naẓm*) is nonetheless significant (as-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ,* 256; cf. Qāsim2013: 129).

3   For the difference between *al-ḥāl* (situational context) and *muqtaḍā al-ḥāl* (influences of the context of enunciation) see Ghersetti (1998b: 64).

4   The present article investigates the topic only as employed in poetry though it also occurs in prose (Szombathy 2013: 283-284).

5   I adopted the suggested definition of Szombathy for the term (2013: 40-41) according to *muǧūn*'s as literary practice and excluding further considerations on *muǧun* as a social behaviour.

6   I restricted myself to the quotation of the most employed Arabic translations as referred to linguistic act of cursing or to the employment of foul-mouthed speech. About differences in meaning, *suḫf* is almost related with "*ḍu'f al-'aql*" i.e. foolishness*, fuḥš* to "*qabīḥ al-qawl*" i.e obscenity (see also Van Gelder 1988: 45), whereas *baḏā'a* is better understood as *the employment of foul-mouthed speech* which deserves "*izdirā' wa-iḥtiqār - disdain*" and *muǧūn* as *jestful, foul-mouthed libertine speech* performed by someone who "*la-hu qillat al-istiḥyā'- lacks decency*". See Ibn Manẓūr (*Lisān*: III 1964; IV 135; I 236; VI 4142)*.*

7   The three terms indicated (*īǧāz; tabyīn; lutf li-l-maǧāz*) are the main features of the text *balīġ* (i.e. rhetorical) al-Ǧurǧānī *'Awāmil* 33.

8   The words *swearing* and *cursing* are used synonymously in this text, although it may be argued that there are subtle distinctions between them, depending on the linguistic context of employment.

infiǧār šarran (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* V: 3351) or more simply defined as *fuḥš* in al-Ǧāḥiẓ (*Burṣān*: 104). "Propositional swearing", on the other hand, is defined as a "perceived polite, impolite – or potentially neither – expression" (Pinker 2007: 334; Jay et al. 2015: 252). Such expressions may be used for several purposes: to deliberately attack a target person/group; to promote social harmony; or to highlight/reinforce hierarchies within the speaker-listener relationship (Kasper 1990: 205).

Additionally, and as asserted by Bianchi (2015: 117), C/FME is a commissive illocutionary act[9] which a) publicly confirms a point of view[10] and b) establishes, especially in poetry, a "normalization" of invective attitudes and behaviours towards something/someone, regardless of whether the target is necessarily blameworthy (al-Ibšīhī, *Mustaṭraf,* ii, 6). As expressed by Bach and Harnish (1979: Ch. 1), the illocutionary acts inherent to C/FME also tend to be perlocutionary in their effects[11]. However, the *linguistic act* of describing a head of state as a goat/cuckold, rather than overtly stating that he/she is ill-suited to his/her role, must also be located within the context of more complex *linguistic action* (Sbisà 1989: 20-2). In the case of literary C/FME and their effects, these actions are most frequently tied to *istihzā'* (irony) or *suḫriya* (sarcasm/parody).

On this basis, I argue that literary C/FMEs - such as the previously observed example – are both a means of amplifying and communicating multiple aims/meanings, and/or intended to be heuristically uncovered by the audience/listener according to their connotative employment. In both cases, these literary processes/purposes tend to arise within the co-text (*naẓm*) and context (*maḍmūn*) of ironic/satirical discourse.

1.2. Co-text Level – Ironic/Satirical Discourse and Linguistic "Boosters"

Moving beyond Grice's theory of conversational implicatures and maxims, which defines ironic discourse as a form of "flouting" (Grice 1975: 53), Sbisà (1989: 30-2) theorizes irony in terms of its disregard for the rules relating to the logical construction of utterances. Irony also, according to Sbisa, reflects the ironist's conscious decision (and hence: *responsibility*) in flouting the maxims of quality and manner (Grice 1975: 41-58) as well to his/her awareness of and willingness to face a pragmatic *sanction* (Hart 1951: 144-146), especially when employing slurs or C/FMEs [12].

According to Aḥmad Maṭlūb's *Muʿǧam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-balaġiyya* (2007), *istihzā'* is the most neutral (Arabic) term referring to irony as a concept, whereas the various forms/employments of irony are differently defined as *tahakkum, hazl yurād bi-hi al-ǧidd,*

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[9]   The taxonomy for the linguistic acts here quoted refers to Searle's distinctions (1979: 14-16).
[10] Though not always shared personally by the speaker who may rather act as a spokesperson (al-Ǧāḥīẓ *Ḥayawān* iii: 40)
[11] For more on the debate regarding the proximity between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts see Strawson (1964: 88-91) and Searle (1969: 76 and f.). For more on the conceptualization of illocutionary acts characterized by strong accents of perlocution in their effects see Austin (1962: 79) cf. Wittgenstein (1951: 146).
[12] More broadly, Sbisà questions Austin and Grice's pragmatics approaches as being largely founded on retrospective evaluations of language effects as well as focused on the speaker's *competences* rather than on the speaker's *responsibilities* in conveying the desired meaning (Sbisà 1989: 30-32).

taġāhul al-ʿārif, [13] and *suḫriyya,* which refers to the mocking intentions of an ironic discourse (i.e. sarcasm or parody). At the level of *naẓm* (co-text), C/FME may arise in all forms of ironic discourse. Az-Zamaḫšarī's (fl. 1075 - 1144) first attempt at defining *at-tahakkum,* quoted in Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ʿArab* (VI: 4681), states: "*huwa al-istihzāʾ wa-fī kawni-hi manqūlan min at-tahaddum aw al-ġaḍab*"[14]. Building on this, as well as Russo Cardona's considerations on irony (2009: 22-6), I argue that ironic literary C/FME speech is an illocutionary act with strong perlocutionary effects, revealing what Wittgenstein referred to as the *leerlaufen* - "empty wheels" (*Researches* 1951: 71) - of communicative rituality. Further to this, ironic literary C/FME speech challenges the alleged clarity of human language and destroys its conventions, giving rise to a representation (*tamṯīl* - as considered in al-Ǧurǧānī, *Asrār* 1991: 102)[15] of scorn through overt praise/respect (*madḥ bi-lafẓ al-iġlāl*) or intimation through well wishes (*inḏār bi-lafẓ al-bišāra*) (Manẓūr *Lisān* VI: 4682)[16].

If implicit C/FM speech works according to ironic processes of meaning reversal (as is the case with "*ġalālat al-kabš*" (an-Nawwāb, *Qimam*: v. 4), explicit cursing, on the other hand, can be seen as a linguistic "booster" of sorts, employed by the author to clarify the connotative meaning/processes of other, more implicit utterances within the text. At the opening of the vernacular *muǧūn* poem *Kussummiyyāt* (*Mother-Cunt-ets*), for instance, Naǧīb Surūr employs a *ǧinās nāqiṣ* (paronomasia, pun[17]) in replacing the typical *dandana*[18] "*Yā ʿayn! yā layl!*" (*Ouch! What a love! What a night!*) with "*Yā ʿayn! yā nayk!*" (*Ouch! What a love! What a fuck!*). Here, the *naẓm* of the text is changed through the replacement of a single word, revealing a Bakhtinian carnivalization (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 1963; *Rabelais and His World* 1965) of more conventional literary themes/motifs[19]. Notably, these processes are only fully comprehensible when taking into account how the three actors of communication (i.e. the poet, the 'target', and the audience), the authorial aim (*qaṣd*) and canonic literary conventions are played off of one another at the contextual level of analysis.

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[13] *Tahakkum* i.e. a serious statement employed for mocking; *hazl yurād bi-hi al-ǧidd* i.e. a mocking, hilarious statement employed to bring attention to serious issues; more broadly-speaking, *taġāhul al-ʿārif* is the process of reversal in the construction of *naẓm* implied by irony. See Maṭlūb (2007: 429, 670, 256).

[14] "It is (synonym) for *istihzāʾ* (irony) as it results in words aimed by a destructive/angry will".

[15] Zamaḫšarī's reasoning reiterates, in more specific terms, his master al-Ǧurǧānī's broader considerations about cursing/foul-mouthed speech in poetry, which he identified as *tamṯīl* i.e. the representation of a reality through a more effective 'fake'.

[16] Ibn Abī al-Iṣbaʿ (*Taḥrīr*: 570) also stressed the importance of linguistic indicators within the ironic cursing statement, whereby the recipient easily realizes its "un-performative" character, while as-Sakkākī (*Miftāḥ*:168) also underlined the pervasive use of *istiʿārāt* (metaphors) in sarcastic statements. See also Van Gelder (1988: 122-123).

[17] Since it might be argued that it is not possible to find a perfect correspondence between the concepts of Arabic *balāġa* and Western rhetoric's ones, translations are merely indicative here and provided only if possible.

[18] A ritual moment in which the poet prepares himself for the performance of a vernacular lyric (e.g. mawwāl). See the entry "dandana - دندنة" in *Maǧmaʿ al-Luġa al-ʿArabiyya, Al-Muʿǧam al-Mūsīqī* (n.d.).

[19] In traditional *muǧūn* poetry, it was extremely common to find obscenities alongside technical terms referred to *aš-šiʿr al-ġināʾī* (poetry accompanied by music), classical *qaṣīda* or erudite writing conventions such as *isnād* (rel. to teology), *munāẓarāt* (philosophy) and *madḥ* (poetry) (Szombathy 2013: 121).

1.3. Context Level – Effacing Communicative Hierarchical Ladder and Aesthetical Remarks

In the case of propositional swearing – the subject of this inquiry – and *hiǧā'* (invective), Van Gelder argues that in evaluating the proper/improper nature of C/FMEs (in their specific contexts) "pragmatics, ethics and aesthetics are inextricably linked and mutually dependent" (1988: 12). Furthermore, the metapragmatic features of literary C/FME are best understood in relation to the literary and socio-cultural context. The poet who invokes propositional C/FME typically calls his/her audience and victims' attention to - as well as calls for their engagement with – the powers, responsibilities and restrictions that define/exist within a given era/context; without this engagement, the poet's C/FME acts/writing are of little consequence.

Deepening into aesthetical considerations, the curious story of the appreciation of the 'ugly' vs. the alleged superiority of euphemistic language within the Arabic classic tradition also deals with the evaluation of *ẓarf* (*poetical wit*) (Szombathy2013: 265 and f.), which is instead one of the most important literary aims for which foul-mouthed expression is employed and which ensures its appreciation, as in the case of Abbasid libertine courtly *muǧūn* poetry (Szombathy 2013: 292).

However, it is also important to remember that, at the contextual level, witty/ironic C/FMEs (as the basis of humourous *muǧūn*) are not only achieved through *taṣrīḥ* (*explicitness*) but also through *ta'rīḍ* (*implicitness, allusion*). Hence, in the poetic context, they are necessarily suspended in a limbo between euphemistic/dysphemic registers and implicit/explicit modalities[20], though this point has been neglected by certain treatises, such as al-Ḫafāǧī's *Sirr al-balāġa* quoted in Erez (2013)[21] .

At the contextual level, I suggest that literary ironic/sarcastic C/FME is therefore an epi-pragmatic action: the speaker, before negotiating powers or engaging with his/her interlocutors so as to prompt action – and effectively efface the hierarchy between speaker, target and audience - already implies a shared knowledge of rules and values. It is on this basis that the author/speaker recurs to explicit references, together with implicit representations, as a means of highlighting norms and values to be brought into dialogue via the text. When an authority (also a literary canon), performs directive/declarative acts, they will often gather (and at times combine) a number of *language games*. The *māǧin* poet, endeavouring to perform irony, hazards to do the same, sometimes in jest (acknowledging but not necessarily accusing the authority, as in classic *muǧūn*)[22], and sometimes as an act of dissent

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[20] According to pre-modern *Balāġiyyūn* both *taṣrīḥ* and *ta'rīḍ* are capable of enhancing a literary text aesthetically as to convey *tazyīn* (embellishing representation) and *tašwīh* (disfiguring representation), terms that are limited to mere aesthetic judgment and therefore opposed to those employed by the coeval philosophers of *taḥsīn* (improvement) and *taqbīḥ* (worsening), which instead refer to a moral judgment (Van Gelder 1988: 117).

[21] Despite the value of this work, Erez appears too focused on semantically confirming the vested proximity between *euphemism* and *kināya* (metonymy), mostly due to a heavy reliance on rhetorical/literary sources from the XI century e.g. ath-Thaʿālibī, at-Tawḥīdī).

[22] The poet's act of blaming an authority (usually the target/victim) on behalf of a community could also paradoxically enhance, in certain cases, the popularity and merit of the blamed. See al-Ǧāḥiẓ (*Bayān* iv: 36-39; *Ḥayawān* i: 357).

(disregarding/criticizing the authority, as in contemporary *muğūn*). *Muğūn* therefore evolved from being a poetry tied to those who held power/authority to a poetry that is loaded with ideological and political considerations, builds solidarity with the common people, and calls for resistance to authorities' corruption and abuses.

2. 2. «*Muğūn Is a "Serious" Game*»[23] : *Rhetorical/Literary Features and Remarks on the Evolution of Premodern and Contemporary Muğūn*

Without fully delving into the extensive literature on classical Abbasid *muğūn* (Szombathy 2013; Talib-Hammond-Shippers 2014; Lagrange 2014; Massad 2007)[24], it is worth recalling that, traditionally, *muğūn*'s style was essentially related to *al-ḥazl* (*jesting, humourous literature*) - and was thus opposed to *al-ğidd* (*serious literature*) - and was mostly *en vogue* within the classic Arabic literary tradition of the Abbasid period[25].

Given that *māğinūn* (i.e. *muğūn* libertine poets)[26] principally employed literary C/FMEs within the context of ironic and parodistic processes aimed at upending of moral and social frameworks through language, they frequently – and deliberately – engaged in humorous provocation and literary experimentation. Hence, they filled verses with sexual innuendos, allusions to homoerotic desire, the scorning of religious norms/actors and mysticism, and mockery of erudite literature such as *fiqh* (theology) and *naḥw* (grammar) – suggesting a fierce and joyful carnivalization of more conventional themes/motifs[27] and also resulting in the frequent censorship of the *māğinūn*'s works over the centuries[28].

Provocation aside, a keen grasp of *balāġa* tropes was (and remains) essential to a good *muğūn.* In both classic and contemporary *muğūn,* we observe the widespread use of *'ilm al-bayān's* (the science of clarification) devices and tropes, typically arising in the lyrical composition according to an expressive climax[29]. We also find sophisticated

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[23] The title of this section is a makes reference to of Emily Selove paper's title "Muğūn is a crazy game" (in Talib-Hammond-Shippers 2014: 141-159).

[24] Bauer (1998: 480-1) and Szombathy (2013: 284) have noted that, in classical literature, *muğūn* is not perceived as belonging to conventional *aġrāḍ* (literary genres) but is rather seen a libertine/vulgar literary style. I argue, however, that it may be considered a *fann ši'rī* (poetical speech typology). Cf. (Mestyan 2011: 69-100) .

[25] Notably – as attested by Van Gelder (1988: 76) – *muğūn* before this period was principally regarded as a vulgar and a-systemic feature of a generic poetical discourse (e.g. *ḥiğā' māğin – foul mouthed invective*) rather than as a recognized poetical speech typology.

[26] It is worth recalling that *māğinūn* poets mostly were erudite and sophisticated members of the high-class society of their times

[27] In traditional *muğūn* poetry, it was extremely common to find obscenities alongside technical terms referred to erudite writing conventions such as *isnad* (rel. to teology), *muḥāẓarāt* (philosophy) and *madḥ* (poetry) (Szombathy 2013: 121).

[28] As also posited by Ouyang with respect to al-Iṣfāhanī's Kitāb al-Aġānī (Ouyang 2014: 12) - only partial sources explicitly belonging to this style and many others might be discovered within the Arabic classic literary canon avoiding certain conventional prudish misclassifications (Meisami 1994: 8-15; Massad 2007: 61).

[29] This takes the form of less expressive/plain forms (e.g. *tashbīḥ/simile, maǧāz mursal/allegory, figurative language* to an extent also *metonymy**) as well as *ablaġ* (more impressive) ones that enhance *īǧāz - brevity, incisiveness* (e.g. *maǧāz 'aqlī/allegory, figurative language**; *isti'āra/metaphor* and *kināya/metonymy**). Since a perfect correspondence between *balāġa*'s rhetorical devises/processes and

muḥassināt lafẓiyya/maʿnawiyya (euphonic/semantic beautifiers) of *ʿilm al-badīʿ* (the science of embellishments), *alfāẓ dakhīla* (loanwords) from vernacular, malapropisms, *tabʿ mithālī* (proverbial stereotypicity) and *ḥiṣāb al-ʿuqd* (dactylonomy i.e. finger-counting)[30] used in jest.

 Muǧūn therefore, recalling Bergson's conceptualization of laughter (1900) "as an expression of power and an expression of liberation" (Langrage2014: 240), lives in the limen between elitism and vulgarity, respectability and provocation – inextricably fused into the whip of sarcasm. In the Abbasid era, however, *muǧūn* was not specifically designed to subvert the cornerstones of power and political strength within a society distinguished by male chauvinist/phallocratic accents (Massad2007: 109), but served instead to acknowledge power and an awareness of the rules of common morality (even when deliberately mocked and broken).

 Between the 14th and 20th centuries, due to the *inḥiṭāṭ* (decadence) (Sing 2017: 11-71)*, muǧūn* poetry was banned and had almost disappeared. Its revival was later opposed - or at least, not enthusiastically welcomed - by the intellectuals of the *Nahḍa*, including Ǧurǧī Zaydān (*Mashāhīr* 1922: ii, 112) and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (*Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿaʾ* 1925: 39). Aside from a European-inspired vision of the arts that was at once idealistic, cerebral and censorial (Lagrange2014: 240-1), endogenous historical/political conditions, and the impact of an increasingly rigid take on *al-iǧtihād* when it came to religious and philosophical issues, significantly denied contemporary *šiʿr al-muǧūn* the inherently powerful whilst innocent and carnivalistic existence of the earlier period. And thus, if the *muǧūn* of *Kitāb al-Aghānī* or Abū Nuwās's lyrics was, in the classical era, a poem *of power*, *šiʿr al-muǧūn* of the contemporary era might best be understood/conceived as a poem *against* power.

2.1. Towards a new conceptualization of contemporary *muǧūn*

Taking into account the changing role of intellectuals in building modern Arabic societies (Jacquemond 2008), the contemporary *māǧin* does not build solidarity with his patrons, as in pre-modern times (Meisami 1994: 13; Szombathy 2013: 171-211); rather, he builds solidarity with common people against political/social authorities. In 1950, Aḥmad Ḥassan az-Zayyāt tied the cultural/social significance of *muǧūn* to a "human primordial, animal instinct" towards questioning, through literature, modern society's ideological superstructures and disconnection from the value(s) of solidarity (*ar-Risāla,* June 1950: no. 883; 884; 885) which reinforced the individualistic and hypocrital pursuit of moral values (no. 885)[31]. In his new conceptualisation of *muǧūn,* az-Zayyāt hazards that it "stands under every form of literature" (no. 885) as a means through which the intellectual may attest his power, independence and social responsibility (no. 883). He further claims: "if you want to clean up the literature from the *muǧūn* and cursing, so clean your society of immorality,

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 Western rhetoric is challenging, the translation suggested, where possible is merely indicative, otherwise tropes would be explained. See Abul Raof 2006: 196-238; Fontana 2018: 494-541. Cf. Noy 2016; Maṭlūb 2007.

[30] It seems to be a feature of classical *muǧūn* only (Erez 2015: 481; Szombathy 2013: 276)

[31] Among these ideological framework az-Zayyāt addressed the *wuǧūdiyya* (i.e. the European-influenced existentialism of Egypt in the 1930s.

inequality, depravity and corruption. Because literature is only an image and its beauty is authentic. As well its ugliness" (no. 885).

In Szombathy's reading of pre-modern *muğūn,* he highlights the importance of distinguishing between *muğūn* as a form literary performance grounded in wit, and *muğūn* as a sexually/morally uninhibited social phenomenon (2013: 292)[32]. In the contemporary era and due to the new literary and political aims of the literary genre, the semantic reversal is two-fold. Hence, contemporary *muğūn* now corresponds to a furious, passionate call for morality that denounces decadence, corruption and hypocrisies through fierce sarcasm, within which *māğinūn's* words are not only an action in pragmatic and communicative terms but are also loaded with ideological meanings as well as critical intentions. As a result, literary *muğūn* is now no longer separate from its social and political phenomenology (Massad 2007; Fontana 2018; Koerber 2018), though it is still, of course, possible – and worthwhile – to analyze its formal realization according to a rhetorical, literary and critical point of view

3. Rhetorical Analysis of Examples from Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb's *Qimam! Qimam!* and Nağīb Surūr's *Kussummiyyāt*

This section seeks to investigate *muğun's* typical employment of literary C/FMEs according to the rhetorically grounded framework previously described. In particular, I observe how the ironic and parodistic processes used to upend moral and social frameworks occur in two strong examples of contemporary *muğūn* belonging, specifically, to the genre of sarcastic *ḥiğā' māğin* (i.e. foul-mouthed invective).

Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb (b. 1934 – Baghdad) and Nağīb Surūr (1932–1978 - Akhtab - Damanhur, Egypt)[33] are, respectively, Iraqi and Egyptian poets who were particularly active during the 1960s and 70s and whose impressive, unconventional and eclectic productions as well as political engagement rocked the Arabic literary mainstream in the late half of the 20th century following the *Naksa* (1967). Gifted in their ability to bridge both classic and modern genres and compositional techniques, both authors resorted to a scandalous revival of ancient *muğūn* both as a for literary experimentation and a sarcastic and self-mocking act of intellectual resistance against the historical failure of upholding the values of intellectual freedom, pan-Arabism and internal cohesion across the Arab world.

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[32] Szombathy highlights the difference between *muğūn* a literary practice followed also by allegedly 'upright' poets - such as al-Mutanabbī - who seek to demonstrate their own abilities in managing *muğūn*'s witty style - and *muğūn* as a social phenomenon i.e. a deliberately uninhibited lifestyle for poets such as Abū Nuwās or Bashār Ibn Burd (Szombathy 2013: 292).

[33] Nağīb Surūr (1932 - 1978) was an Egyptian poet, dramatist and literary critic whose frequent internment in psychiatric hospitals as a dissident - resulting in ostracism and the ruin of his artistic career - led his literary production to remain almost silent from the late 1970s to the present day. In this sense, the 'silencing' of Surūr was perhaps more extreme insofar as his work went relatively unheard/read, whereas an-Nawwāb, despite being stateless for many years, nonetheless found an audience in exile.

This analysis considers excerpts from an-Nawwāb's poem *Qimam! Qimam! (Summits! Summits!)*[34] - consisting of sixty free-verses and composed, in *fuṣḥā,* towards the late 70s - and forty-eight selected verses from Surūr's unpublished poem *Kussummiyyāt (Mother-Cunt-ets)* – composed between 1968 and 1974 and consisting of 550 free verses in *ʿāmmiyya miṣriyya* [35] . Though both works are known for their literary experimentation/sarcasm and considered to be acts of intellectual resistance addressed to the failed policies of Arab countries following the *Naksa,* there is a great difference between the two works in terms of how poetic discourse is handled. An-Nawwāb's poem is a brief composition, mostly built on the implicit conveyance of meanings and subliminal complaint; Surūr's composition, on the other hand, is long, organized into seven thematic sections, and built on explicitness - providing an articulate indictment of the widespread corruption in Egypt, as the well as of those responsible for persecution and torture of intellectuals[36].

3.1 Cross-Temporal References, the Humiliation of Victims and Stylistic/Technical Crossover

From a stylistic perspective, the main references to the classical Arabic literary tradition occur within the two incipits of the texts. In an-Nawwāb's case, the author achieves *tahakkum* by equating the human/social reality to the animal world – partly inspired by the great models of al-Ğāḥiẓ and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Surūr, on the other hand, offers a parodistic version of traditional *mawwāl* poetry based on a revised model of the *mawwāl subāʿī* composed of seven verses[37].

Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb's *Qimam!Qimam!* [v.1-8]

Summits!	قمم
Summits!	قمم
Summits!	قمم..
Goats and the herd!	معزى على غنم
And his majesty the billy goat	جلالة الكبش
with her highness the sheep	على سمو نعجة
also the donkey	على حمار
still there,	بالقدم
yet, since years.	

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[34] Due to its provocative style, obscenities and lampoons the work was published in only five editions of ten of the *al-Aʿmāl aš-šiʿriyya al-kāmila* ('Uda 2016: 68, 70-4). For the taped version of the poem performed by the author see link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRrIdjFz3Ng&t=21s.

[35] Surūr's work - at the author's request - was never published, although its taped version has been diffused extensively in Cairo up to the present day. The recording of the text performed by the author in private sessions with friends and colleagues was publicly uploaded on Youtube by Surūr's son, Šuhdī, only in 2004. See link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U34r6WIVfdw&t=130s

[36] On these points, the Surūr is unambiguous in his descriptions [v. 189 - 203].

[37] In this case, however, the accord of *al-qāfiya* (rhyme) between *mawwāl*'s main structural elements (i.e. *ʿataba, radafa* and *ġiṭāʾ*) is deliberately flouted. Note however that *Kussummiyyāt* is not a *mawwāl* and may be considered a free-verse composition of *aš-šiʿr al-ḥurr ġayr at-tafʿīlī* (free-verse poetry).

Naǧīb Surūr's *Kussummiyyāt* [v. 1-7]

In the beginning it was ahhh ...	الأوله آه
And then it was ufff ...	والتانيه أُف
And then oh my God! ...	والثالثه أَحّوه
Ouch! What a fuck! What a fuck! What a night!	يا نيك يا نيك يا ليل
Ouch! What a fuck! What a fuck! What a love!	يا نيك يا نيك يا عين
Where I find people	منين اجيب ناس
who dare to repeat my say,	لمعناة الكلام يتلوه
That if they just see a wretch	شبه المحرّق إذا شافو
like a faggot they bugger him	ا خول وناكوه
without complain!	

In an-Nawwāb's excerpt, the degradation process addressed to *hiǧā'* victims is conveyed through the representation of Arab rulers/dictators as courtyard animals and the linkage of *tabǧīl* (decorous appellatives) such as "his majesty [5]; her highness [6]" to *istiʿārāt taṣrīḥīyya* [38] for rulers (*miʿzā*/goats; *kabš*/billygoat i.e. cuckold; *naʿǧa*/sheep; *ḥimār*/donkey). Conversely, in *Kussummiyyāt*'s opening, Surūr's critique rests upon the unsuitability of traditional *mawwāl* in the present era/context. He demonstrates this implicitly by abandoning the conventional gnomic tone (now replaced by obscenities) raised by the typical protagonist in *mawwāl* – the wretch *(al-ġalbān; al-muḥarra')*. This character now, suggests Surūr, shares the same status as the Egyptian poet or intellectual.

Besides serving to degrade victims/literary targets, poetic *muǧūn* typically breaks apart the singular narrative voice/perspective, which is substituted with the alternation of homophonic/polyphonic discourse. This serves to build solidarity and engagement with the audience/readership. In this sense, several narrative indicators *in medias res* can be observed, such as an-Nawwāb's "*wa-tabda' al-ǧalsa* - the session is opened [9]" and Surūr's "'*alū-lī ḥanka! Ḥanka!* – They said to me: To the madhouse! To the madhous*e!*" Other utterances are often more stereotypical (i.e. marked by *ṭabʿ miṯālī*) such as an-Nawwāb's several lampoons in verses 26/28/42 and v. 46: "*Suwwidat wuǧūhu-kum!* – You darned!" which is also a *tawriya*, [39] or the sarcastic use of joyful expressions, such as "*Mubārakun! Mubārakun!* – Congratulations! Congratulations! [21]". With Surūr, we can also observe scornful expressions playing upon *riṯā'* (eulogy) such as "*Ṭīz faqīdu-nā al-ʿazīz* – The ass of our dear late one [530]," as well as an interesting alteration of the maxim "*ad-Dīn makārim al-aḫlāq* – Religion is the highest moral value*"* which becomes "*az-Zinā sayyid al-aḫlāq* – Fornication is the highest moral value [74]"[40].

The literary/poetic tactic of combining/deliberately confounding different linguistic registers is aimed at conveying paradox and *suḫriya,* thus calling into question accepted social

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[38] Type of *istiʿāra – metaphor* (*al-balāġa > ʿīlm al-bayān*) within which, given the implicit *tašbīh – simile,* only the *mušabbah bi-hi* (likened-to) occurs in the text (Maṭlūb 2007: 93).

[39] *Tawriya* is a *muḥassina maʿnawiyya - semantic beautifier/enhancer* (*al-balāġa > ʿilm al-badīʿ*) built on one etymon's polysemy and according to which the meaning employed is always the non-literal one (Maṭlūb 2007: 433-6).

[40] Prophet Muḥammad's *ḥadīth.* See Muḥammad Ibn Ǧaʿfar al-Ḫarā'iṭī's (d. 939) *Makārim al-aḫlāq* quoted in Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī's (d. 1999) *Ṣaḥīḥ al-ǧāmiʿ* (1998 VI: 1889).

norms and the values which purportedly inspired them. While an-Nawwāb mocks the actions and rhetoric of diplomatic officials, Surūr makes reference to Muslim jurisprudence terminology – such as "*šahr ḥarām* – Ramadan" and "*diya* – compensation[41]" – while denouncing the murder of the communist intellectual and mentor Šuhdī ʿAṭiyya[42]:

Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb's *Qimam!Qimam!* [v.37-40]

They watched carefully,	وحدقوا ..
and analyzed	وحللوا...
and postponed	وأجلوا
and examined	ومحصوا
and tut-tutted[43]	ومصمصوا

Nağīb Surūr's *Kussummiyyāt* [v. 189-191]

They killed Šuhdī ʿAṭiyya	ياما يا جيلنا قتل يا شُهدى ياعطيّه
Oh blood spilled in the prisons	يادم ساح ف السجون
in the month when the blood is not poured (Ramadan)!	والشهر شهر حرام
Oh victims! Nobody asked for justice (compensation)	ولا حد قال ياضحايا
for this murdered man	للقتيل ديه

3.2 Figurative Speech: a Closer Look at *'Ilm al-Bayān*

Other forms of humiliation/criticism (beyond humor and the dehumanization of *hiğā'*'s victims) are conveyed, in both poems, through obscene personifications of concepts/inanimate objects and the employment of *al-mağāz al-mursal[44]*. For instance, in verses 18-20 - "*Wa yanzilu al-mawlūd/ nuṣf 'awra/ wa-nuṣf famm* - And so the baby is born/ Half sex/ Half a mouth" - an-Nawwāb imagines the final resolution of the Arab rulers' summit (real subject) as a monstrous creature (allegorical subject) so as to indicate that the resolution is foolish, unreasonable and equipped only with sex (i.e. it serves only to satisfy

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[41] Compensation due to the family of a killed relative, whether killed unintentionally (*al-Qur'ān*: al-Baqara: 178) or intentionally (*al-Qur'ān*: an-Nisā': 92).

[42] Šuhdī ʿAṭiyya (Alexandria 1911 – Abū Zaʿbal 1960) was an Egyptian communist politician and intellectual and great inspiration for Surūr. In 1959, due to his political activism, he was deported with other communist intellectuals to Abū Zaʿbal's forced labour/detention camp. Badly beaten, he died on January 15th, 1960.

[43] Doubled dental avulsive interjection of disapproval or wonder.

[44] Type of *mağāz* - allegory, figurative speech (*al-balāġa > 'ilm al-bayān*). According to al-Ğurğānī, *al-mağāz* - declined in both its category of *m. 'aqlī* and *m. mursal* - calls for the employment of the word apart of its literal meaning (al-Ğurğānī *Asrār*: 302-305). The relationship between the literal meaning and the tropical one is built on an ontological shift of similarity/contiguity. Due to fact that *al-mağāz al-mursal* is built on *al-muṯbat – confirmed assertion* (on the contrary of *al-mağāz al-ʿaqlī* which is built on *al-iṯbāt – ongoing assertion*) (al-Ğurğānī *Dalā'il*: 243; *Asrār:* 328-330, 395, 536) usually achieved through metataxemes or metatexteme, its effects may be mostly considered as being built on contiguity rather than similarity, resulting in figurative speech, allegory or metonymy (Fontana 2018: 137-140; Cf. Erez 2013: 469), case-dependant. See Heinrichs (*Studia Islamica* 1984, no. 59: 111-140); Ghersetti (1998a: 243 and f.) and Owens (2013: 196-7).

despicable interests) and a mouth (it boasts about hypocrisies). Here, an-Nawwāb's critique is thus expressed through *mağāz mursal 'alāqatu-hu al-ğuz'iyya* (i.e. synecdoche).

Similarly, Surūr provocatively represents Egypt (real subject) as a whore (allegorical subject), insinuating its ruinous treatises with Israel and the prostitution of ideals through an allegory likening the map (of Egypt) to a body according to the metataxeme (map ↔ body), hence employing a *mağāz mursal 'alāqatu-hu al-maḥalliyya*[45] [v. 21-25]:

Oh fucking country now brothel!	بلد المنايك بلدنا الكل ناك فيها
Look a bit 'the map	شوف الخريطه
with legs open,	تلاقيها فاتحه رجليها
in front of the sea!	
God wanted it this way, what to do,	ربك خلقها كدا راح تعمل ايه فيها
it is our destiny!	

In both texts, the theme of moral integrity/conscience is evoked through several illocutionary acts with strong perlocutionary effects meant to encourage the audience to reflect upon the topic. This is all conveyed through figurative speech, as is the case in an-Nawwāb's use of *al-mağāz al-'aqlī 'alāqatu-hu al-fā'iliyya*[46] - "*Wa-šaḥḥat aḏ-ḏimam – The conscience peed in her pants.*" An-Nawwāb also employs *isti'āra makniyya*[47] built on *iḍmār* (ellipsis) in v.13 «*(naḥnu) fidā ḫuṣākum ṣayyid-ī, wa-d-daf'u kam?!* – (we are taken as) a sacrifice for your testis, my master, but what is the price?!" – condemning the intellectual and political servility demanded of the weak Arab states by the stronger ones.

Moreover, Surūr evokes both hilarity and bitterness in the verses parodying his personal epitaph [530-531/534-535]:

The ass of our dear late one	طيز الفقيد العزيز كانت مثل أعلى
was an excellent example of cleanliness.	كانت نضيفه
Cleaner than our consciences.	وأنضف من ضمايرنا
[...]	
Our dear late lived one	وعاش فقيدنا العزيز
worse than a dog in the dunes.	ولا كلب فى الصحرا
And he came to dreadful end,	ومات فقيدنا العزيز
worse than that of a dog	ولا حتى موته كلب

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[45] Allegory achieved through metaxeme based on a metonymical process of place relationship (the location or place's features for the institution). For more on *'alāqāt al-mağāz al-mursal – meaning relationships* - see Ğalāl ad-Dīn al-Qazwīnī – fl. XIII century - (*al-Īḍāḥ*: 205 and f.). T. O. Sloan (2001: 496).

[46] A type of *mağāz* which arises from the assertive will of the author (*iṯbāt*) in expressing a concept, linking a verb to a tropical subject. In this case, the relationship of meaning (*al-'alāqa*) between the proper subject and the tropical one is defined as *al-fā'iliyya* or *fā'il al-fi'l* because the one who acts as the subject of the action is in fact the victim of the action itself. In this case, the real meaning is that men have outraged (> vulg. *pee*) the conscience. However, paradoxically, the poet says that the conscience (the real victim of outrage), is the subject of the act of outrage, understood here reflexive. See al-Qazwīnī (*al-Īḍāḥ*: 209 and f.).

[47] Type of *isti'āra – metaphor* (*al-balāġa > 'ilm al-bayān*) within which, given the implicit *tašbīh – simile*, only the *mušabbah* (likened) occurs in the text (Maṭlūb 2007: 88).

This passage reveals the coexistence of several rhetorical figures. The *istiʿāra taṣrīḥiyya*[48] "*Ṭīz faqīdu-nā al-ʿazīz* - The ass of our late one" (i.e. his dignity) is linked to (two) *tawriya*s[49]. The first is conveyed by the term *naẓāfa* - cleanliness, which is never – in Surūr's text – intended to transmit its literal meaning but is rather connotative (i.e. implying moral integrity). The second is the stereotypical expression "*mawta kalb* – dog's end". These verses also stand out for their formal stylistic elements relating to the employment of *tarṣīʿ,* a derivative form of *saǧaʿ*[50]*,* which requires the construction of contiguous verses to be in consistent syntactic and euphonic accord.

3.3 *Suḫriya* Through Reversal in Meanings and Sounds: The Employment of *ʿIlm al-Badīʿ*

The above considerations on *tarṣīʿ* have critical consequences with respect to the typical and widespread use of devices from *ʿilm al-badīʿ* in classical and contemporary *muǧūn* poetry. Among the subcategories of *muḥassināt maʿnawiyya* (semantic enhancers/beautifiers)*,* the most-employed forms are the (already considered) *tawriya*[51] and, above all, the *ṭibāq* (similar to antithesis and oxymoron) and its derivative form (*muqābala*)[52] found in v. 55-56 of an-Nawwāb's poem: "*li-tanʿaqid al-qimma/ lā tanʿaqid al-qimma* – The summit goes ahead/ No, the summit does not go ahead.*"* This *ṭibāq salbī*[53] is used to ridicule the ambivalence and hypocritical behavior of participants at the summit. We also find *muqābala* in Surūr's v. 416: "*al-fann aṣbaḥ ḫiyāna wa al-ḫiyāna aṣbaḥat fann* - art has become a betrayal and betrayal an art" structured according to the typical oppositional construction of logical discourse found in the philosophical *munāẓarāt* (philosophical dialogues*)*.

Concerning the *muḥassināt lafẓiyya* (euphonic enhancers/beautifiers) of *badīʿ* - beside *tarṣīʿ,* several instances of *ǧinās* (*paronomasia, alliteration*) are also found in both texts - for instance, the (already quoted) obscene malapropism delivered through *ǧinās nāqiṣ al-ḥurūf* in Surūr's proem [4][54]. An-Nawwāb also employs this device in v. 53-54

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[48] See note 38.

[49] See note 39.

[50] The *tarṣīʿ* is a euphonic beautifier/enhancer (*balāġa > ʿilm al-badīʿ*) derived from *saǧʿ* (rhyming style in poetry or in prose in final/internal position of verses) that provides a rhyming couple between the two hemistichs of the same verse/two verses whose last two words share one or more final letters. The *tarṣīʿ* is featured by providing a marked euphonic and even syntactic correspondence among the syntagmas used in the involved verses. The *tarṣīʿ* is considered a sophisticate euphonic embellishment - mostly occurring in classical poetry - according to which "the syntagmas correspond from side to side like the pearls of a necklace" al-Quršī – fl. XIII – (*Maʿālim al-Kitāba*: 71). Cf. Maṭlūb (2007: 306).

[51] See note 39.

[52] It is a semantic beautifier/enhancer (*balāġa > ʿilm al-badīʿ*) derived from *ṭibāq* (antithesis, oxymoron). More specifically, it conveys opposite meanings within a structure which sometimes is comparable to that of the litotes or also chiasmus (this latter in Arabic rhetoric responds more properly to the figure of *radd al-ʿaǧz ʿalā aṣ-ṣudūr* - Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *al-Badīʿ*: 140).

[53] It is a specific type of *ṭibāq* – antithesis, oxymoron i.e. a semantic beautifier/enhancer (*balāġa > ʿilm al-badīʿ*) according to which both the negative form of a term and the affirmative form occur in a text contiguously (Maṭlūb 2007: 522).

[54] The *ǧinās* is one of the most employed euphonic beautifiers/enhancers (*balāġa > ʿilm al-badīʿ*). Its effects vary as vary its forms as in the case of *ǧinās tāmm (two or more omophonic terms with different meanings)* or *ǧinās nāqiṣ* i.e. alliteration or paronomasia between terms different in meaning which are

"miꜥzā ꜥalā ġanam / miḍraṭa la-hā naġam - Goats and the herd! / Such a melody this fart!" within which the humiliating *istiꜥāra* referring to an orator at the Arab rulers' summit is followed by a mockery of the speech, in *ǧinās nāqiṣ at-tartīb*[55].

3.4 This Is No Laughing Matter: The Roaring Dissent of Contemporary *Muǧūn*

The humiliation of literary targets, solidaristic aims, and (partly) concealed anger/criticism embedded in the sarcastic employment of C/FMEs are also tied, in contemporary *muǧūn,* to serious expressions of dissent. In this sense, the renewed (contemporary) conceptualization of *muǧūn* also reflects a renewed social/moral/political commitment - thus diverging from the (merely) witty style of the previous centuries. Among the non-satirical linguistic indicators in Surūr's poem, we find a pained objection to strategies of repression and misprision of treason in v. 202-203. Equally impassioned is an-Nawwāb's last heartfelt incitement to his public in front of the poor *cabaret* of rulers who show indifference to the suffering Palestinians and wars across the Arab World: "*Ayy! Tuffū ꜥalā awwal man fī-hā ilā āḫir man fī-hā/min mulūk, wa-šuyūḫ. Wa-ḫadam* - Come on, spit on them, from the first to the last, among kings, wise men. And servants".

As claimed by Russo Cardona, "the ironist is the one who courageously renounces his/her individual right to speak, so as to become the spokesman of a collective disagreement." (2009: 37). As we have observed in previous examples, Naǧīb Surūr and Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb were masters in doing this. Gifted in their ability to bridge both classical and modern genres and compositional techniques, both authors developed a scandalous, fascinating revival of an ancient poetic style and further adapted it to serve their own contemporary and political aims. Hence, in spite of Lagrange's suggestion that *muǧūn* was "unsuitab[le] to contemporary contexts" (2014: 240-1), it did in fact exist in contemporary literature and it is well suited to express ideological and political considerations, as the above examples have shown.

Conclusions

Using a theoretical framework (§ 1) methodologically inspired by al-Ǧurǧānī's model for textual analysis and modern pragmatics sources, this paper underlined how, from a cross-temporal perspective, ironic/sarcastic prepositional C/FME was - and still is - employed as a powerful literary device in Arabic literature. Further to this, C/FME is a leading feature of poetic *muǧūn*, and thus should not be dismissed in terms of its contribution to/role within the genre.

In this sense, the in-depth analysis of linguistic features – such as the employment of connotation (*luṭf li-l-maġāz*), reversal construction, effacing the hierarchical ladder, and flouting of literary conventions – is a prerequisite to pursuing a rhetorical analysis of an-

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similar in pronunciation even differing from each other according to the type/vocalization/number of letters or the order between them (respectively: *ǧinās nāqiṣ al-ḥurūf/aš-šakl/al-ꜥadad/at-tartīb*). In the example quoted at v. 4 of Surūr's *Kussummiyyāt* the *ǧinās nāqiṣ al-ḥurūf* involves the terms *«layl – night/nayk – fuck»* which have the same number, order and vocalizartion of letters but which differ one from each other in the type of letters employed (al-Qazwīnī, *al-Īḍāḥ*: 382; Maṭlūb 2007: 450).

[55]   The two terms *ġanam/herd; naġam/melody* share the same letters which have the same number and vocalization, but their order is inverted *(ǧinās nāqiṣ at-tartīb)*. See previous note.

Nawwāb and Surūr's selected writings. This analytical process is, arguably, essential if we wish to reconstruct/uncover the continuity of a literary style/phenomenon such as *muǧūn*.

The recognition of permanent features (bridging contemporary/classical texts), as well as the experimental employment of *balāġa*'s tropes/processes in contemporary *muǧūn*, further suggests that a specific form of tropical discourse is maintained throughout the evolution of *muǧūn,* though servingto different aims.

While this paper has sought to outline *muǧūn's* evolution from a witty literary style within the courts to a witty literary style aimed at expressing political dissent and building solidarity, further and more in-depth comparative analyses of an-Nawwāb and Surūr's works would benefit from more extensive inquiry, and a broader approach to the sociology of literature/literary studies. These topics might therefore be addressed more comprehensively in a further publication.

For now, however, this paper has demonstrated how a culturally embedded approach to Arabic rhetorical studies brings about several innovative and insightful results. Firstly, recognizing and using tools from the Arabic tradition allows for a more organic, critical and rigorous approach to the employment/significance of literary C/FMEs. Secondly, and drawing upon the holistic methodology employed in previous inquiries into Surūr's work (Fontana 2018), a cross-temporal/culturally embedded approach may help to reduce the gap between linguistics and literary studies, as well as to minimize possible social, political, moral biases in evaluating the linguistic/literary features of the texts in question, which are often assessed from a merely thematic point of view. Finally, evaluating an-Nawwāb and Surūr's works so as to uncover the ingenious and skillful use of ironic/sarcastic C/FMEs and vulgarities contributes to greater visibility and critical recognition of these literary productions, which have yet to be adequately acknowledged within the contemporary Arabic literary canon.

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بلاغة القُبْح في شعر ابن عُنَيْن: دراسة في الرؤية والتشكيل
RHETORIC OF OBSCENITY IN IBN 'ONAIN'S POETRY:
A STUDY OF CONTENT AND FORM

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Abstract. This study aims to shed light on obscenity in the poetry of Ibn 'Onain Al-Ansari (d. 630 Hijri/1232 A.D). Ibn 'Onain was a Damascene poet who lived during the Crusades wars which the Levant and the Arab Mashriq witnessed in the sixth and seventh Hijri/ twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD. The study tackles the issue of obscenity in Ibn 'Onain's poetry, the reasons for studying it and the moral considerations of discussing such a topic. The study has been divided into two sections that tackle two main issues. The first section deals with the thematic issues such as criticizing individual and communal behavior, lampooning statesmen, religious figures and eminent jurists, and challenging some common societal beliefs and assumptions. The second section discusses the formal and aesthetic features characterizing Ibn 'Onain's poetry such as argumentation, paradox, dialogue, storytelling, intertextuality and the depiction of popular culture. Finally, the study concludes with a summary of its main findings and conclusions. It has been shown that Ibn 'Onain's poeticism was unique among his contemporaries. His poetry is carnivalesque in nature since it calls for rejecting many of the societal practices the poet suffered from during his lifetime.

Keywords: *Rhetoric, obscenity, Ibn 'Onain, Arabic poetry, content, form, Crusades.*

مقدِّمة

القبح موضوع يتّصل بعلم الجمال وفلسفته، ويشكّل معَ نقيضه "الجمال" جدليّة متلازمة في فَهْم الفنّ والموقف منه. وللقبح دلالاتٌ ومحاورُ كثيرةٌ يضيق المجال في مثل هذا التقديم عن تتبُّعها وتفصيل القول فيها. وقد رأى بعض الدّارسين أنّ "القبح، شأنه شأن الهجاء، يندرج تحت مظلّة الملهاة (الكوميديا)، ويصعب تعريفه تعريفًا مقبولًا؛ إذ تتغيّر معانيه من حقبة إلى حقبة، ومن حركة فكريّة وثقافيّة إلى أخرى" (الرويلي والبازعي، 2002: 202). وقد ربط أرسطو بينه وبين المضحك؛ فالكوميديّ في نظره فنّ ينقل ما هو قبيح (إسماعيل، 1950: 17). وإذا كان تحديد المفهوم يثير شيئًا من الاختلاف، فقد حرص الدّارسون على حصر أبرز سماته الدالّة عليه، فرأوا أنّه يتّسم بالنّشاز وعدم التّناسق، والهزليّ والمرعب، والإسراف والمغالاة، والتشويه الخارج عن المألوف (الرويلي والبازعي، 2002: 204). وهي سمات كما يبدو مثيرة، ولعلّها قادرة على جذب مستقبل الخطاب واستمالته؛ ذلك أنّ النفس تميل بطبعها إلى كلّ ما هو غريب ومثير ومتجاوز للحدّ.

وتقف هذه الدِّراسة على ما رأتْ أنّه يمثّل ظاهرة القبح في شعر ابن عنين. ومعَ أنّ التفاوت واضح في حدّة هذا القبح ودرجته بين نموذج وآخر، إلا أنه (القبح) متحقّق معَ ذلك في النّماذج المدروسة كلّها بدرجة أو بأخرى فيما يرى الباحث. وتتمثّل مجالات القبح في شعر ابن عنين في الألفاظ الجارحة، والمعاني المنفِّرة والصّادمة التي تنتجها هذه الألفاظ، والصّور المشوَّهة والمنقوصة التي يقدّمها لمهجوّيه سواء ما اختصّ منها برسم هيئاتهم وأشكالهم أو بتصوير أفعالهم وسلوكهم.

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وقد وُصف ابن عنين[1] بأنه شاعر هجّاء، "بديع الهجو" (الذهبي، 2003: 939/13)، "أخذ فيه بنَفَس طويل، وتفنّن بأساليب السّبّ والثلب" (الحموي، 2663/6:1993). ويستوقف الباحثَ وصفُ كلٍّ من الذهبيّ وياقوت الحمويّ لهجاء ابن عنين؛ فوَصْفُ الذهبيّ: "بديع الهجو" يمكن أن يندرج فيما يُسمّى اليوم في النقد الأدبيّ والفنيّ عمومًا بـ "جماليّات القبح"؛ إذ يمكن أن يكون الهجاء بديعًا- وَفق الذهبيّ- وله جماليّاته الخاصّة به. وهو وصفٌ ينتصر للفنّ على حساب الأحكام الأخلاقيّة التي كثيرًا ما يُجابه بها شعر الهجاء. أمّا وصف ياقوت ففيه تأكيدٌ على أنّ الهجاء "فنّ": "تفنّن بأساليب السّبّ والثلب"، وأنّ له أيضًا أساليهه الفنّيّة والجماليّة التي قد لا يُحسنها كلّ هجّاء. وعليه، فإنّ مادّة الهجاء في شعر ابن عنين ستكون هي المصدر الأساس لما اصطلحتْ عليه هذه الدِّراسة بـ "بلاغة القبح"؛ ذلك أنّ ابن عنين قَد وصل في هذا الهجاء إلى حدود بعيدة من المجاهرة والفحش والمباشرة من جهة، ومن الإصابة والتأثير ودقّة الملاحظة من جهة أخرى. وهو أمر سيوفّر بالتأكيد مادّة غنيّة لدراسة هذه الشّعريّة.

وعلى الرّغم من وجود عدد من الدِّراسات التي تناولت شعر ابن عنين بالتّحليل والبحث[2]، إلا أنّها لم تتناول هذه الظاهرة وَفْق التّصوّر الذي تنطلق منه هذه الدِّراسة. ولعلّ أقرب هذه الدِّراسات لموضوع الدِّراسة الحاليّة هي دراسة شفيق الرّقب الموسومة بـ "الهجاء والنقد الاجتماعيّ في شعر ابن عنين" (الرقب، 2002). وواضح من عنوان دراسته أنّها لا تهدف إلى بحث ظاهرة القبح في شعر ابن عنين؛ إذ كان جلّ تركيزها على الهجاء بمفهومه الواسع وما يتخلله من صور النقد الاجتماعيّ لمظاهر "من الحياة اليوميّة في ديار الشّام زمن الحروب الصّليبيّة" (الرقب، 2002: 595). ومَع أنّ موضوع القبح قد يتضمّن كلّ هذا إلا أنّ دراسة الرقب لم يكن من غايتها أبدًا دراسة هذا الموضوع، وهذا أمر مسوَّغ لأنّ الدِّراسة تتبنّى تصوّرًا ومنهجًا محدّدين؛ ولذا حرص الباحث على انتقاء الشّعر الذي يخلو في مجمله من اللفظ النابي والمعنى الخادش والصّورة الجارحة. بل إنه يلجأ أحيانًا- إذا ما دعته الضّرورة إلى الاستشهاد بأحد النّماذج- إلى حذف البيت (أو الأبيات) الذي قد يحتوي على مثل هذه الألفاظ والمعاني.

وتجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ دراسة موضوع القبح لها محاذيرُها التي ينبغي ألا تغيب عن البال، ولعلّ أبرز هذه المحاذير الأحكام المعياريّة التي تحضر في مثل هذه الدِّراسات؛ إذ قد يتحرّج بعض الدّارسين من إيراد بعض الألفاظ أو المعاني التي يتضمّنها هذا الأدب، ممّا يدفعهم إلى الانصراف عن دراسته من الأساس، وإذا قُيّض لهم دراسة هذا الأدب ـ لسبب أو لآخر ـ فإنهم يقدّمونه على نحو من المواربة والالتفاف؛ فيقومون بالتّصرُّف في بعض الألفاظ واستبدال أخرى بها، أو يلجأون إلى حذف كلّ لفظة أو معنى يرون فيها/ فيه ما يعتقدون أنّه خدش للحياء أو خرقٌ لتابو ما.

ولعلّ المثال الأقرب على ذلك ـ وموضوع الدِّراسة هو شعر ابن عنين نفسه ـ ما ذهب إليه محقّق ديوانه خليل مردم بك؛ إذ يقول في مقدّمة التّحقيق: "ولولا أنّ أمانة العلم وصدق الرّواية تقضي بنشر هذا الدّيوان كما هو لكان حذف الفاحش من الهجاء أولى (ابن عنين، د. ت: 30)، ولذلك فإنّه ـ تجاوزًا لهذا الحرج الذي استشعره إزاءَ هذا الهجاءـ يذهب إلى إبدال بعض الحروف في بعض الكلمات التي يرى أنّ الشّاعر قد تماجن بها، فيجعل الكاف لامًا، والخاء حاءً، والراء دالًا "تفاديًا [كما يذكر] من الجهر بالسّوء في بعض المواطن، على أنّ المبدل يدلّ على المبدل منه ويشير إليه"[3] (ابن عنين، د. ت: 43). وما دام "المبدل يدلّ على المبدل منه ويشير إليه" وَفْق قوله، فلمَ إذن كلّ هذا التّحايل والعناء؟ وهو موقف أخلاقيّ يتعارض مع الأمانة العلميّة التي أشار إليها المحقّق في قوله السّابق. كما أنّه موقف يعبّر عن تحرُّج ينبغي ألا يكون موجودًا في ميدان البحث والعلم. وتبدو المفارقة بالغة حين يُقارن هذا الموقفُ بموقف القدماء، ومنهم الجاحظ الذي يدفع مثل هذا الوَقار المفتعل بقوله:

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1   هو أبو المحاسن محمد بن نصر بن الحسين الأنصاري، المعروف بابن عُنَين، شاعر شامي كان مولعًا بالهجاء، تولى الوزارة في عهد الملك المعظم عيسى، توفي سنة 630هـ. انظر ترجمته في: (الحموي: 1993: 2661/6-2666؛ الذهبي، 2003: 13/ 939-941؛ ابن تغري بردي، د. ت: 293/6).

2   من هذه الدراسات التي اطّلع عليها الباحث، فضلًا عن دراسة شفيق الرقب التي أشير إليها في المتن:
   - الشورة، ميسر سليم. 2004. شعر ابن عنين: دراسة موضوعية وفنية، رسالة ماجستير، جامعة مؤتة، الأردن.
   - العبدالله، أحمد محمد. 2012. بنية اللغة الشعرية عند ابن عنين، رسالة ماجستير، جامعة اليرموك، الأردن.
   - علي، محمد كرد. 1941. "ابن عنين: شاعر القرن السابع"، مجلة المجمع العلمي العربي، سوريا، م16، ج3، 4: 99-101.
   - المشرف، أحمد. 2005. "الوزير ابن عنين الدمشقي: عاشق الفيحاء وطريدها"، مجلة كلية الآداب، جامعة صنعاء، ع28: 35-57.
   - الهزايمة، خالد محمد. 1997. "ظاهرتا التضمين والاقتباس في شعر ابن عنين الأنصاري"، دراسات: العلوم الإنسانيّة والاجتماعية، م24، ع1. 122-134.

3   وسيتّضح هذا الإجراء في بعض النماذج الشّعريّة المدروسة في هذا البحث. وقد أُثبتت على الصّورة التي أوردها المحقّق وفاءً لأمانة التوثيق التي تتطلّبها أيّ دراسة منهجيّة.

وبعضُ النّاس إذا انتهى إلى ذِكْرِ الحِر والأير والنَّيك ارتَدَع وأظهَرَ التقزُّزَ، واستعملَ بابَ التَّورُّع. وأكثرُ مَن تجده كذلِك فإنَّما هو رجلٌ ليس معَهُ من العفافِ والكرم، والنُّبْلِ والوَقار، إلّا بقَدْرِ هذا الشّكل من التَّصنُّع، ولم يُكْشَفْ قطُّ صاحبُ رياءٍ ونفاقٍ إلّا عن لؤمٍ مُسْتَعْمَل، ونذالةٍ متمكِّنةٍ (الجاحظ، 1965: 40/3).

وإذا كان الحكمُ الأخلاقيّ حاضرًا- كما بدا - في دراسة هذه الموضوع، فإنّ ثمة إشكالًا آخرَ يُثار عند دراسته، وهو الإشكال الذي يتمثّل في القيمة الجماليّة والفنّيّة للأدب الذي يحمل هذا المضمون. وبعبارة أخرى: هل يمكن للأدب أن يعبّر عن القيم والموضوعات القبيحة والفاحشة دون أن يفقد شيئًا من قيمته الفنيّة ومستواه الجماليّ؟ ومثل هذا الإشكال ليس جديدًا في الدّرس النقديّ؛ فقد أعلن أرسطو "منذ القرن الرابع قبل الميلاد أنّ جمال الفنّ لا يرجع إلى جمال الموضوع أو دمامته، وإنّما إلى التّعجيب المقترن بإتقان المحاكاة" (عصفور، 2011: 207). والفكرة ذاتها يقف عليها حازم القرطاجنيّ الذي يرى أنّه "إذا حوكي الشّيء جملةً أو تفصيلًا، فالواجب أن تؤخذ أوصافه المتناهية في الشّهرة والحسن إن قصد التّحسين، وفي الشّهرة والقبح إن قصد التّقبيح" (القرطاجني، 1986: 101). وعليه فإنّه لا أفضليّة للموضوعات بحدّ ذاتها، وإنما المعوّل على معالجة الموضوع جماليًّا وفنّيًّا، والارتقاء به إلى آفاق الفنّ الرّحبة التي تغني التّجربة وتمتّع العقل والوجدان.

ومهما يكن من أمر، فإنّ دراسة شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عنين تهدف إلى التّعرُّف على نمط من الشّعريّة المؤثِّرة واللافتة. وهي شعريّة لها جماليّاتها المخصوصة التي ستجهد هذه الدّراسة في جلائها، ولها أيضًا إستراتيجيّاتها القادرة على الإصابة والتأثير؛ وذلك بما تنطوي عليه من لغة صادمة وسخرية لاذعة ونقد حادّ وصريح لكلّ أنماط القيم المعياريّة الرّاسخة التي تخشى أن يزعزعَها أو يغيّرَها أيُّ نقد أو احتجاج؛ "ولهذا رأى الكثيرون في فنّ القبح أسلوبًا ذا وظيفة تصحيحيّة؛ إذ قد يجعلنا نرى العالَم الحقيقيّ من منظور جديد يتّصف - على ما فيه من غرابة وتشويه مزعج - بالواقعيّة والموثوقيّة" (الرويلي والبازعي، 2002: 203).

وتتناول هذه الدّراسة شعر ابن عُنَيْن مدار هذه المقاربة من جانبين؛ الأوّل: الرّؤية التي مثّلتها هذه الشّعريّة والآفاق التي ارتادتها. والثاني: التشكيل الفنّيّ الذي تمظهرت من خلاله هذه الرّؤية وتشكّلت. ومعَ إيمان الباحث بتمازج رؤية النصّ الشّعريّ مع تشكيله حتّى يبدو الفصل بينهما في كثير من الحالات أمرًا متعسّفًا، فإنّ هذا التّقسيم يأتي هنا لغايات إجرائيّة اقتضتْها منهجيّة هذه الدّراسة لا أكثر.

أوّلًا: في الرؤية

تنطلق شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عنين من موقف ساخر متبرّم من الواقع ومعطياته المتعدِّدة. وهو موقف يتّخذ من هذه الشّعريّة وسيلةَ نقد واحتجاج على كثير من الأشخاص والمواضعات والمواقف المختلفة، ممّا كان يعرض له في زمنه، أو يتقاطع معَ موقفه ورؤيته، أو يتسبّب له في إكراهات مؤذية قد تحدّ من حريته وممارساته اليوميّة، لا سيما أنّ الشّاعر عُرف بشخصيّة متجاوزة لكثير من أعراف مجتمعها وثوابته (الصفدي، 2000: 83/5). وتتغلغل هذه النبرة الاحتجاجيّة السّاخرة لتصل إلى أغلب مناشط الحياة من سياسيّة واجتماعيّة ودينيّة وثقافيّة. وتبدأ هذه النبرة في السُّخرية من السُّلطة السّياسيّة في زمنه، سلطة صلاح الدين الأيوبيّ ورجال دولته النافذين، وفي ذلك يقول ابن عنين (ابن عنين، د. ت: 210-211):

فِــــي النّــــاسِ إلا الـبَـغـاءُ والـكَـذِبُ	قَـــدْ أصـــبَــحَ الـــرّزقُ مـا لــهُ سَـبَـبُ
ذو عَـمَـشٍ والـوزيـرُ مُـنْـحَـدِبُ	سُـلـطـانُـنـا أعـرجُ وكـاتـبُـهُ
وعارضُ الـجـيـشِ داؤهُ عَـجَـبُ	وصـاحـبُ الأمـرِ خُـلْـقُـهُ شَـرسٌ
فـي دُبْـرِهِ كـالسَّـعـيـرِ تـلـتـهِبُ	يـبـيـتُ مـن حِـكّـةٍ تُـوَرّقُـهُ
فـي غـيـرِ غُـرمـولٍ أسـودٍ أَرَبُ	وحـاكـمُ الـمُـسـلـمـيـنَ لـيـسَ لـهُ
وهـو عـلى قِشْـرِ بـيـضةٍ يَـثِبُ	والـدَّولَـعـيُّ الـخـطـيـبُ مُـعـتـكِـفٌ
ـنَـا سَ وعبدُ الـلطـيفِ مُـحْـتـسِبُ	ولابـنِ بـاقـا وعـظٌ يَـغُـرّ بـه الـنْـ
فـي فَـلَكٍ مـا سَـرَتْ بـه شُـهُبُ	عـيـوبُ قـومٍ لـو انّـهـا جُـمِـعـتْ

فالأبيات تقدّم صورة هزليّة لانقلاب الموازين في هذه السُلطة كما يراها الشّاعر، وتتعرّض بالنّقد والتّجريح لأركان الدّولة ابتداءً من السُلطان صلاح الدّين نفسه، وصولًا إلى الواعظ والمحتسب فيها. ويُلحظ أنّ الشّاعر يعمد إلى تشويه صور هؤلاء الأشخاص، وتقديمها على شكل نماذج كاريكاتوريّة مضحكة، معَ ميل إلى تقبيحها وتنفير النّاس منها؛ وذلك بما تبدو عليه من عيوب خَلْقية: "سلطاننا أعرج، الوزير منحدب..."، وعيوب خُلُقية: "وصاحب الأمر خلقه شرس..."، وانحرافات أخلاقيّة وسلوكيّة (البيتان الرابع والخامس).

وتشتدّ نبرة احتجاج ابن عنين حين ينفى من دمشق، فيعلن في وجه مقدّمي الدّولة هجاءً فاحشًا يكشف عن لغة صادمة وأوصاف بالغة الإقذاع (ابن عنين، د. ت: 236):

عـبـلَ الـذّراعـيـنِ فـي غُـرمـولِـهِ كِـبَـرُ	لـو كـنـتُ أسـودَ مـثـلُ الـفـيـلِ هـامـتُـهُ
لـكـنـنـي أبـيـضٌ فـي أيـدِهِ (كـذا) قِصَـرُ	كـانـتْ حـوائـجُ مـثـلـي عـنـدَكـمْ قَـضِـيـتْ

وقد يكون لشدّة الغضب الذي أحسّ به الشّاعر نتيجة هذا القرار أثرٌ في خلق هذا المعنى الحادّ والمكشوف؛ إذ إنّ التمادّي في استخدام لغة الفحش يأتي بمثابة سلطة يشهرها الضّعيف والمُقْصى والمُطارَد في وجه النِّظام السياسيّ والاجتماعيّ في زمنه (بوعزيزي، 2016).

ويشمل هجاءه كثيرًا من رجال السُلطة في عصره، ومن ذلك ما قاله في بدر الدّين مودود شحنة دمشق وأصحابه (ابن عنين، د. ت: 208-209):

إلا الـمُـبـارزُ إبـراهـيـمُ نـائـبُـهُ	مـا عـنـدَ مـودودَ مَـنْ قَـلَّـتْ مـثـالـبُـهُ
قَـدْ أعجزتْـنـي فـمـا تُـحصى مـعـايـبُـهُ	ومَـنْ سـواهُ فـكـلـبٌ لا خَـلاقَ لـهُ
يَـدي عـلـى لَـؤْمِـهِ مِـمَّـا أعـاتـبُـهُ	الـمـسـتـشـارُ عـفـيـفُ الـدّيـنِ قـدْ دَمِـيَـتْ
ـسُـنُ الـكـلـبِ مُـشـرفـةٌ والـعِلـقُ كـاتـبُـهُ	وابـنُ الـنّـفـايـةِ والـتّـيـسُ الـشّـريـفُ وجَـعْ
ـوانِ الأمـيـرِ وجـابـيـهِ وحـاسِـبُـهُ	والأقـلـفُ الـكـلـبُ رأسُ الأمـرِ صـاحـبُ ديـ
حبس الـعُـقَـيْـبـةَ عـن عِلـقٍ يُـداعِـبُـهُ	والأحـمـقُ الـجـاهـلُ الـكـرديُّ يَـسـألُ فـي
أعـلـى لَـخَـرَّتْ بـهـمْ مِـنـهُ كـواكـبُـهُ	قـومٌ لـو انّـهـمْ فـي خِـدمـةِ الـفَـلَـكِ الـ

فالشّاعر يجمع في هذه الأبيات أعدادًا كبيرة من الأشخاص بأسمائهم ومسمّياتهم الوظيفيّة ليوجّه إليهم هجاءه وسخريته. وشعريّة القبح واضحة فيما ينتقيه من ألفاظ جارحة وأوصاف تحقيريّة كتشبيههم بالحيوانات، وثَمّة تركيزٌ ظاهرٌ على الكلب تحديدًا. ويُلحظ أنّ الشّاعر قد أثقل هذه الأبيات بإيراد هذا العدد الكبير من الأسماء، وكأنّه يجهد في جمع أكبر عدد منهم ليصبّ عليهم جامّ غضبه وسخطه. وتنتهي المقطوعة بفكرة قريبة من الفكرة التي انتهت إليها مقطوعة سابقة، وهي تصوير مبلغ سَوْءَات هؤلاء الأفراد وخطاياهم الكفيلة بدمار الفلك واضطرابه. وواضحٌ أنّه بهذا يقدّم - من منظوره - نقدًا اجتماعيًّا في اختلال معايير السُلوك في زمنه.

وتمتدّ هذه النبرة الاحتجاجيّة السّاخرة لتصل إلى رجال الدّين من خطباء وفقهاء ووعّاظ وقضاة. ويبدو أنّ علاقة ابن عنين بهذه الفئات لم تكن على خير حال؛ ولعلّ ذلك بتأثير من أحد عاملين أو بتأثيرهما معًا، الأوّل: ما يُنقل عن ابن عنين من ميل إلى اللهو وشرب الخمر والاستخفاف بالواجبات الدينيّة (الصفدي، 2000: 83/5؛ الذهبي، 1996: 361/22). والثاني: ما قد تظهره بعض سلوكيّات بعض رجال الدّين من تناقضات بالغة بين "ما يقولونه" و"ما يفعلونه". وهو أمر يجد بالتأكيد تجسّده الواقعيّ الحيّ في كلّ زمان ومكان. وعلى أية حال فقد كان لهذه الفئة من طبقات المجتمع نصيبُها الوافرُ من تعريض ابن عنين وهجائه. وممّا يمثّل ذلك أبياتُه الآتية التي يسخر فيها من خطبة الدّولعيّ، كاشفًا ما ينطق عنه خطابُ هذا الأخير من تناقض، وما يتضمّنه من تخويف وتنفير وتجديف (ابن عنين، د. ت: 188):

فـأنـتَ فـي غـيـرِ ذا مُـقَـصِّـرُ	طَـوَّلـتَ يـا دولـعـيّ فـقـصِّـرُ
وبـعـضُـهـا لـلـورى مُـنـفِّـرُ	خـطـابـة كـأنّـهـا خُـطـوبٌ
كـأنـك الـمـغـربـيُّ الـمُـفـسِّـرُ	تـظـلُّ تـهـدي ولـسـتَ تـدري

ومع ما لهذه الشّخصيّات من حظوة عند السُّلطة، ومكانة في المجتمع ولا سيما لدى عامّة النّاس الذين يربطون - في الغالب - بين هؤلاء الأشخاص والذين بما له من مهابة وحصانة كبيرتين في النّفوس، فإنّ ابن عنين يعمد إلى مسخ هذه الشّخصيّات، وتقديمها على أقبح الصّور وأرذل الممارسات. وممّا يؤكِّد هذا المنحى هجاؤه لشمس الدين بن الجوزي الواعظ في دمشق (ابن عنين، د. ت: 226):

وظلَّ يُناغي الـفـاجـراتِ ويسـتـخـذي	إذا مـا امـتـطـى الـجـوزيُّ أعـوادَ مِـنـبـرٍ
ولا رجـلٌ إلا وغـرمـولُـهُ يَـمـذي	فـلا امـرأةً إلا وبـادٍ وَدَاقَـهـا

وهو هجاءٌ قاسٍ، بل صادمٌ لكلّ ذوق محافظ. وتتأتّى قسوتُه من هذه المفارقة التي يثيرها مقام القول بين المقدَّس والمدنَّس؛ فامتطاء ابن الجوزيّ المنبر (بما لهذا الأخير من رمزيّة وقدسيّة) يقرن بسلوكيّات مدنَّسة خادشة للحياء يشترك فيها ابن الجوزي نفسُه ومن يُوجِّه إليهم وعظَه وخطابته.

ويتلمّس ابن عنين جوانبَ من حياة رجال الدّين والفقهاء، فيتخيّر من سِيَرهم وحياتهم ما يمكن أن يبنيَ عليه هجاءه وسخريته. ومن الشّواهد على ذلك قولُه في فقيهين تناظرا، وكان أحدهما ينبز بالبغل والآخر بالجاموس؛ إذ يستثمر لقبيهما ليقيم أهجيته على ذلك. يقول (ابن عنين، د. ت: 205):

قـدْ أصـبـحـا مـثـلًا لـكـلّ مُـنـاظِـر	الـبـغـلُ والـجـامـوسُ فـي جَـدَلَـيـهـمـا
هـذا بـقـرنـيـهِ وذا بـالـحـافـرِ	بـرزا عـشـيَّـة لـيـلـةٍ فـتـنـاظـرا
لَـقِـنـا جـدالَ الـمـرتـضـى بـن عـسـاكـرِ	مـا أحـكـمـا غـيـرَ الـصِّـيـاح كـأنـمـا
إلا رقـاعـة مـدلـويـهِ الـشّـاعـرِ	جِـلـفـانِ مـا لـهـمـا شَـبـيـهٌ ثـالـثُ

فالشّاعر يغيّب - كما هو ملاحظ - اسمي هذين الفقيهين ويكتفي بذكر لقبيهما إمعانًا في السّخرية والتّحقير. وهو يقدِّم لهما صورة ممعنة في التشويه والمسخ حين يستبدل بحضورهما الإنسانيّ حضورًا حيوانيًّا يتجسّد من خلال دوالّه الواضحة (القرن، الحافر). وهو لا يكتفي بذلك وإنما يلجأ إلى أسلوب آخر - هو من الأساليب المتكرّرة في هجائه- يتمثّل في تشبيههما بسلوك شخص آخر (جدال المرتضى بن عساكر)، أو استحضار شخص آخر (مدلويه الشّاعر) بقصد السّخرية منه أيضًا، وكأنّ الشّيء لديه بالشّيء يذكر. وفي هذا ما فيه من صور السّخرية والنّقد والإضحاك.

وممّا يدلّ على سرعة بديهة ابن عنين استثمارُه لكلّ موقف أو حادثة يمكن أن ينفذ من خلالهما إلى الهجاء والسّخرية. ومن ذلك استغلاله الحادثةَ التي قام بها الملك العادل سنة 610هـ حين أمر "أيام الجُمَع بوضع سلاسل على أبواب الطريق إلى الجامع الأمويّ؛ لئلا تصل الخيول إلى قريب الجامع صيانةً للمسلمين عن التَّأذّي بها" (النعيمي، 1988: 392/2)؛ إذ يجد ابن عنين في هذه الحادثة ضالّته في هجاء قاضي القضاة الجمال المصريّ والخطيب الدَّولعيّ. يقول (ابن عنين، د. ت: 143):

مـأكـولـة مـا بـيـن نُـوَّابـهِ	لـمـا رأى الـجـامـعُ أمـوالَـهُ
مُـسـلـسـلًا مـن كـلّ أبـوابـهِ	جُـنَّ فـمـنْ خَـوفٍ عـلـيـهِ غَـدا
وقـدْ رأى الـمَـسْـخَ لأربـابـهِ	وكـيـفَ لا تَـعـتـادُهُ جِـنَّـةٌ
والـتَّـيـسُ فـي قَـبَّـةِ مِـحـرابـهِ	الـقِـردُ فـي شُـبَّـاكِـهِ حـاكِـمٌ

وواضح أنّ الشّاعر يتصرّف بهذه الحادثة التي جاءت بدوافعَ إيجابيّةٍ هي حماية المصلّين من أذى الخيل وقت صلاة الجمعة. وهي حادثة عاديّة قد لا تلفت نظر أحد، بيد أنّ ابن عنين يقرأها من وجهة مختلفة، فيقوم بقلب الأدوار وتحويل دلالة هذه الحادثة لتخدم ما يتقصّده من تعريض بالتّجاوزات الماليّة التي يقوم بها المؤتمنون على هذا الجامع. وتحقيقًا لهذه الغاية يصوّر الجامع- بالاتكاء على التشخيص- إنسانًا أصابه الجنون، فرُبط بالسّلاسل، وكلّ ذلك بعدما رأى ما رأى من سلب ونهب لأمواله، وتقليل من مكانته ومقامه حين مُسخ أربابُه الحقيقيّون، وتبوّأ غيرُهم (القرد والتيس) مواقعَهم.

وتتقاطع علاقة ابن عنين مع المكان، فلا يسلم من هجائه وسخطه. ويلحظ أنّ ذلك يقترن بغربته التي نجمت عن نفيه من دمشق، والتي ولَّدت - فيما يبدو- هذا الموقف الكاره لهذه الأمكنة. هكذا تغدو "بغداد خلوًا وما بها جميل ولا من

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يُرتجى لجميل" (ابن عنين، د. ت: 107)، ويتعاظم هذا الإحساس المتقاطع مع المكان فيدعو الشّاعر لبلاد مثل الهند بالسُّقيا من "الصّواعق والدِّما" (ابن عنين، د. ت: 79). أمّا مدينة بخارى فيبدو أنّ علاقته بها قد انقطعت إلى غير عودة (ابن عنين، د. ت: 211):

آلـيـثُ لا آتـي بُـخـارى بـعـدَهـا	ولـو انّـهـا فـي الأرض دارُ خُـلـودِ
فـلـقـدْ حـلـلـتُ بـهـا حنيفًـا مُسـلـمًـا	ورحـلـتُ عـنـهـا بـاعـتـقـادِ يـهـودي

وكذلك قوله في ذمّ (حرستا)، وذمُّه يتّجه في الأصل إلى القاضي الحرستانيّ الذي يُنسب إليها، ولكنّ هذا الهجاء للقاضي يقود الشّاعر إلى هجاء قريته حرستا، عامدًا إلى تشقيق اسمها لغويًّا لينفذ إلى معانٍ تهكميّة ساخرة تجمع الطَّرافة والإقذاع معًا (ابن عنين، د. د. ت: 185):

تـبًّـا لـحـكـمـكَ لا حُـرسـتـا	هـلْ أنـتَ إلّا مـنْ حَـرَسـتـا
بـلـدٌ تـجـمَّـعَ مِـن حِـرٍ	واسـتٍ فـصـارَ إذنْ حَـرَسـتـا

بل إنّ هذه السّخرية تصل إلى الذّات؛ ففي ديوانه غير مقطوعة في هجاء نفسه (ابن عنين، د. ت: 147، 148). ومع أنّ النّاظر في هذه الأهاجي يجدها أدخل في باب الدُّعابة، إلّا أنّ الدّلالة المستخلصة من ذلك تؤكّد أن ليس ثَمّة أحد يمكن أن يكون بمنأى عن هجاء ابن عنين وسخريته، ولا سيما أنّ بعض تلك الأهاجي جاء موجعًا. ومن اللافت أن يمتدّ هجاؤه حتى يصل إلى أبيه. يقول (ابن عنين، د. ت: 239):

وجـنَّـبَـنـي أنْ أفـعـلَ الـخـيـرَ والـدٌ	ضـئـيـلٌ إذا مـا عُـدَّ أهـلُ الـمـنـاسـبِ
بـعـيـدٌ عـن الـحُـسـنـى قـريـبٌ مـن الـخَـنـا	وضـيّـعُ مسـاعـي الـخـيـر جـمُّ الـمَـعـايـبِ
إذا رُمـتُ أنْ أسـمـو صُـعـودًا إلى الـعُـلـى	غـدا عِـرقُـهُ نـحـوَ الـدّنـيّـةِ جـاذِبـي

وإذا كان بعض الدّارسين قد شكّك في نسبة هذه الأبيات إلى ابن عنين (علي، 1941: 103) فإنّ شاعرًا مثله أولع بالهجاء ليس من البعيد عليه قول هذا. ولعلّه في ذلك يشبه الحطيئة الهجّاء الآخر الشّهير الذي هجا نفسه وهجا أباه أيضًا (الحطيئة، 1993: 168، 172). وعلى أيّة حال، فإنّ هذه الأبيات يمكن أن تؤخذ على غير وجهٍ وَفْق تقدير الباحث؛ فقد تكون على سبيل الدُّعابة التي كثيرًا ما تتشاكل لدى ابن عنين مع الجِدّ. أو إنّها من قبيل "التَّمرين الذاتيّ" على مثال قوله في هجاء ابن عصرون: "لكن أجرّب فيه خاطري عبثًا/ كما تُجرّب بيضُ الهند في الجيف" (ابن عنين، د. ت: 191). وقد تكون تعبيرًا عن علاقة قلقة ومحتدّة مع الأب دفعت الشّاعر إلى مثل هذه الجرأة في هجائه. وربّما جاءت نتيجة طبع وإحساس دفين بالكره حتّى لأقرب النّاس لديه. أو لعلّها أخيرًا رغبةٌ في تبرئة الذات من أيّ قصور، وإلحاقه بالأب الذي هو سبب ما قد تعيشه هذه الذات في بعض الأوقات - من منظورها - من خمول وبوار.

وفي المجمل فإنّ ابن عنين لم يكد يترك ظاهرة من ظواهر واقعه دون أن يعرض لها بالسُّخرية والنقد، حتّى كأنّ هجاءه هجاءٌ للوجود كلّه على حدّ وصفه (ابن عنين، د. ت: 193)؛ فقد وقف على كثير من الممارسات اليوميّة والسّلوكيّات الاجتماعيّة، فتعرّض لمنظومة القيم والأخلاق في مجتمعه، ورصد بعض المواقف التي تحمل تناقضًا بين الظّاهر والباطن أو بين القول والفعل (ابن عنين، د. ت: 132، 212)، أو تلك التي تتدثّر بلباس الدّين وتتّخذه وسيلة لمكسب أو مغنم (ابن عنين، د.ت: 227)، وكَشَفَ عن بعض مفارقات الواقع وتناقضاته الصّارخة (ابن عنين، د. ت: 210، 241)، وعمد إلى خَدْش بعض القيم الدينيّة والمطلقات الشّائعة (ابن عنين، د. ت: 138، 139)، وتحرَّش كثيرًا بالجانب الأخلاقيّ، ففضح بعض العلاقات المريبة والمشبوهة بين الأفراد (ابن عنين، د. ت: 144، 186)، وأكثر من ذِكر العورات والأعضاء الجنسيّة (ابن عنين، د. ت: 185، 187، 190، 197، 199)، وطَعَنَ في سِيَر بعض الأشخاص وشهَّر بها (ابن عنين، د. ت: 189، 190، 217).

ثانيًا: في التشكيل

تتّخذ شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عنين ملامحَ تشكيليّةً وفنّيّة متعدِّدة، وسيعمد الباحث إلى تناول أبرزها بالقدر الذي يراه كافيًا لإضاءتها وتوضيحها، معَ التنويه إلى أنّ بعض هذه الظّواهر يحتاج إلى دراسات مستقلّة لا يستوعبُها المدى المخصَّص لهذه الدِّراسة. وأبرز هذه الملامح ما يأتي:

1. الحِجاج

الحِجاج هو "جملة من الأساليب تضطلع بوظيفة هي حمل المتلقّي على الاقتناع بما تعرضه عليه، أو الزيادة في حجم هذا الاقتناع (الدريدي، 2011: 21). وليس ثمّة خطاب لا يهدف إلى مثل هذه الغاية؛ فكلّ مبدع يتوخّى أن يكون لإبداعه التأثير البالغ والإصابة المطلوبة. وقد وظّف ابن عُنَين الحِجاج في شعريّته هذه في سبيل أداء مقاصدها، وتأكيد مفعولها في مخاطبيه. ومن النّماذج على ذلك قولُه (ابن عنين، د. ت: 189):

حـاشـا لـعبدِ الـرّحيـمِ سـيِّـدِنـا الـ		فــاضـلِ مـمّـا تـقـولُـهُ السُّـفَـلُ
وتَـبَّ مَـنْ قـالَ إنْ حَـدْبَـتَـهُ		فـي ظهـرِه مِـنْ عَـبـيدِه حَـبَـلُ
هـذا قـيـاسٌ فـي غـيـرِ سـيِّـدِنـا		يَصـحّ إنْ كـانَ يَـحْـبلُ الـرَّجُـلُ

فالشّاعر يوظِّف – كما نلحظ – الحِجاج في التّعريض بالقاضي الفاضل وهجائه؛ فيسوق ما يتناقله "السّفَل" من حديث عن حدبة الفاضل التي هي بسبب من عبيده وَفْق رواية أولئك السّفل. وهي "تهمة" لا تصحّ في نظر الشّاعر؛ إذ كيف يمكن للرّجل أن يحبل؟ وواضح أنّ ابن عنين يرمي من هذا الحِجاج إلى السُّخرية من القاضي الفاضل والتّعريض بخَلْقه وهيئته من جهة، والطّعن في خُلُقه وسيرته من جهة أخرى. وكي يعمِّق الشّاعر من منسوب السُّخرية يلجأ إلى أسلوب المقابلة مرّة من خلال إقامة هذه العلاقة المريبة بين "القاضي الفاضل" و"عبيده"، على ما بينهما من فارق وتفاوت، وفي هذا ما فيه من التّحقير والغضّ من القيمة، ومرّة من خلال المقابلة بين الألفاظ التبجيليّة: "حاشا"، "سيِّدنا"، "القاضي الفاضل"، والألفاظ التبخيسية: "السفل"، "عبيده"، "تبّ" (على ما لهذه اللفظة الأخيرة من إيحاء قرآنيّ مؤثِّر) (المسد: 1).

ويتبدّى الحجاج أيضًا في تفسير ابن عنين لبغاء الرّشيد النابلسيّ، ذلك البغاء الذي يعدُّه طبعًا متأصِّلًا فيه مذ ولد (ابن عنين، د. ت: 187):

قـالـوا الـرّشـيـدُ بِـغـاؤهُ مُـستحـدَثٌ		كَسَـبـوا خـطـيـئـتَـهُ وبـاؤوا بـاثـمِـهِ
مـا ذاكَ إلّا عـادةٌ مـألـوفةٌ		طبعًا لـه مُـذ كـانَ فـي بَطـنِ امِّـهِ
كـانـتْ غـرامـيـلُ الـزّنـاةِ إذا أتـتْ		جـرَها تـلـقّـاهـا الـجنـيـنُ بِسـرمِـهِ
فـلـذاكَ يشـتـاقُ الـمـنـيَّ لأنّـهُ		مِنـهُ تـركَّـبَ لـحـمُـهُ مـع عـظـمِهِ

والمنحى الحِجاجيّ في تعليل بغاء الرّشيد النابلسيّ واضحٌ في هذه الأبيات؛ فالشّاعر يعدُّ هذا البغاء "عادة مألوفة" في الرّشيد، و"طبعًا له مذ كان في بطن أمه"؛ فهو (البغاء) إذن تجسيدٌ لماهيّة قارّة وجوهر ثابت في شخص الرّشيد وتكوينه الأوّليّ. والطّريف أنّ بغاء الرّشيد أمر لا خلاف عليه بين الجميع، ولكنّ الفرق أنّ "الآخرين" يرونه شيئًا مستحدثًا استجدّ له في مقبل حياته، بينما يراه ابن عنين شيئًا قديمًا خُلق معَ الرّشيد قبلَ أن يولد. وواضحٌ ما بين التفسيرين من فارق في السُّخرية والتّجريح. ولا يقف الشّاعر عند هذا الحدّ ولكنه يعرِّض أيضًا بأمّ الرّشيد وسيرتها الخُلُقِّية حين يذهب إلى تفسير شدّة نهمها الجنسيّ تفسيرًا غريبًا. وهو يتعمّد طَرْق هذا المعنى لما له من وقع مؤثِّر في العرف والثّقافة العربيتين.

2. المفارقة

تتوسّل شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عُنين بالمفارقة على نحو واضح؛ إذ قد يستخدمها الشّاعر الهجّاء لكشف الرّياء أو الجهل أو الكبرياء أو الحماقة (ميويك، 1987أ: 95). وللمفارقة مفاهيمُ كثيرةٌ، حتّى إنّه ليصعب الاتفاق على مدلول محدّد لها. بيد أنّه يمكن القول في مثل هذا المقام الذي لا يحتمل الإطالة والتّفصيل أنّ المفارقة "لعبة لغويّة ماهرة وذكيّة بين طرفين: صانع المفارقة وقارئها، على نحو يقدّم صانع المفارقة النّصّ بطريقة تستثير القارئ وتدعوه إلى رفضه بمعناه الحرفيّ، وذلك لصالح المعنى الخفيّ الذي غالبًا ما يكون المعنى الضّدّ" (إبراهيم، 1987: 132).

وقد تعدّدت المفارقات في شعر ابن عنين موضوع الدّراسة، ومن النّماذج على ذلك قوله (ابن عنين، د. ت: 185):

ضـــدُّ الـذي نُـعـتـا بـه بـيـنَ الـمَـلا	ابـنـا الـحـرسـتـانـيّ فـي لـقـبـيـهـمـا
فـمُـهـتَّـكُ الأسـتـار يُـدعـى صـائـنًـا	والسِّـفـلة السَّـفـلاء يُـدعـى بـالـعـلا

والمفارقة تقوم في هذين البيتين على استثمار الألقاب؛ فالشّاعر يهجو ابني الحرستانيّ الملقّبين بـ "الصّائن" و "العلاء"، ويولّد من دلالة كلّ لقب ما يناقضه تمامًا ليخلقَ هذه المفارقة السّاخرة.

ويستثمر ابن عنين أحيانًا بعض الحوادث/ المواقف فيصنع منها مفارقاته. ومفارقة الحدث من أشكال المفارقة الشّائعة في الأدب (ميويك، 1987ب:236). ومن ذلك قوله (ابن عنين، د. ت: 144):

لـهـم عـنـدي أحـاديـثٌ طـريـفـة	غـيـاثٌ فـاسـمـعـوا قـولـي وعـمـروٌ
وقـوّادٌ بـتـوقـيـعِ الـخـلـيـفـة	فـزانٍ مـا عـلـيـه مـن جُـنـاحٍ

فالشّاعر قال هذين البيتين إثر الموقف/ الحدث الذي يرد في الدّيوان على النّحو الآتي: "كان في بغداد رجل اسمه عمرو ويتردّد على امرأته رجلٌ اسمه غياث تزعم أنّه أخوها، فوجدهما يومًا على حال لا تكون بين الأخوين، فمنعه من دخول داره. وتحاكما فلم يُمنع غياث من زيارة "أُخته!" (ابن عنين، د. ت: 144). ووجه المفارقة الأول في البيتين السّابقين أنّ ابن عنين يورد هذا الموقف على أنّه "أحاديث طريفة"، وهو وصف ساخر موارب؛ إذ الموقف أقسى وأبعد من الطّرافة. ووجه المفارقة الثّاني أنّ الزاني ليس عليه جناح، وهذا أمر بالغ الغرابة في واقع مثل الواقع العربيّ! أمّا الوجه الثّالث والأدهى للمفارقة فهو أنّ "القوّاد" يعمل بـ "توقيع الخليفة"؛ أي بأمر من رأس السلطة الذي يُفترض أنه يرعى الحقوق، ويمنع الانحرافات. وكلّها مواقف وأوصاف تنطق بمفارقات صارخة. وواضح أنّ المفارقة هنا تهدف إلى نقد الواقع الذي تضطرب فيه المقاييس وتتبدّل القيم وَفْق موقف الشّاعر. ولعلّ البعد السّياسيّ فيها حاضر، وربما كان لموقف ابن عنين السّلبيّ من خليفة بغداد ورجال حاشيته حين أقام بها فترة من الزّمن بعد نفيه من دمشق أثرٌ في هذا النقد (ابن عنين، د. ت: 7).

ومن مفارقات ابن عنين قوله في الرّشيد النابلسيّ (ابن عنين، د. ت: 185):

وذلـك مـا زالَ مـن دابِـه	تـعـجَّـبَ قـومٌ لـصَـفْـعِ الـرّشـيـد
وقـد دنّـسـوهـا بـأثـوابِـه	رحـمـتُ انـكـسـار قـلـوب الـنِّـعـال
ولـكـنّـهـم صـفـعـوهـا بـه	فـواللهِ مـا صـفـعـوه بـهـا

ففي هذه الأبيات تتمثّل المفارقة أوّلًا في تعجُّب القوم من صفع الرشيد؛ إذ الأمر وَفْق الشّاعر لا يدعو إلى العجب؛ فهذا الصّفع عادة ترتبّى عليها الرّشيد ونشأ! وتتمثّل المفارقة ثانيًا في شفقة الشّاعر على انكسار "قلوب النِّعال" التي دُنِّست بأثواب الرّشيد بدلَ أن يكون دُنِّس بها! وتتأكّد المفارقة ثالثًا في أنّ النِّعال قد صُفعت به لا العكس. والشّاعر يقوم، من أجل بناء مفارقاته، بقلب الأدوار؛ فيبدو الشّيء الوضيع (النِّعال) هو المتضرِّر والمتأثِّر من الشّيء الرّفيع (الرّشيد)، وقد ساعد على تعميق المفارقة وإصابتها هذا التّفاوت اللافت بين طرفيها؛ "ذلك أنّ التوتُّر الناشئ من المفارقة يزداد حفزًا كلّما زاد التباين بين حدّيها" (الرباعي، 1996: 307).

3. الحوار/ الحكاية

وقد تتّخذ هذه الشّعريّة شكل حوار في سبيل تأكيد غايتها وإيقاع تأثيرها. وتختلف بنية هذا الحوار من حوار قصير لا يتعدّى مشهدًا ساخرًا يرصدُه الشّاعر على نحو خاطف وسريع إلى حوارٍ أطول نسبيًّا من سابقه، ولكنّه معَ ذلك لا يتّسم بالإطالة والاستطراد؛ إذ إنّ الغالب على هذه الشّعريّة التكثيف والإيجاز. قلتُ إنّ ثَمّة حوارًا أطول نسبيًّا من سابقه؛ وذلك حين يعمد الشّاعر إلى زيادة عدد أبيات مقطوعته الشّعريّة قليلًا. فضلًا عمّا قد يضمّنها إياه من صور الوصف والتعليق وغير ذلك. ويمكن التّمثيل على النّمط الأوّل من هذا الحوار بقول ابن عنين (ابن عنين، د. ت: 207):

فــي طــولِ شِـبـرٍ وعـرضٍ فـتـر	رأيـتُ عـنـدَ الـمِـطـواعِ مـيـلًا
فـقـالَ: هـذا لـعـيـنٍ ظَـهـري!	فـقـلـتُ: هـذا لأيّ عـيـنٍ؟

فالحوار هنا يأتي على شكل لقطة سريعة بين الشّاعر والمطواع الكحّال. وهو حوار يستثمر- على قصره- عنصر الوصف: "رأيت عند المطواع ميلًا/ في طول شبر وعرض فتر"، ومكوّني السّؤال والجواب: "هذا لأيّ عين؟" "هذا لعين ظهري!" لينتهي الحوار بهذه النكتة الموجعة من ذلك الكحّال.
ومثل ذلك قوله في أحد الشّعراء (ابن عنين، د. ت: 188):

بـمـثـلـي عـرضَ ذا الـكـلـب الـلـئـيـمِ؟	شـكـا شِـعـري إلـيَّ وقـالَ: تَـهـجـو
هـوى فـي إثـرِ شـيـطـانٍ رجـيـمِ!	فـقـلـتُ لـه: تَـسَـلَّ، فـرُبَّ نـجـمٍ

والحوار في هذا النّموذج مشابهٌ لسابقه، بيد أنّ الشّاعر هنا يقيم الحوار بينه وبين شعره، حين يعمد إلى التشخيص، وتقديم هذا الشّعر على صورة إنسان مُكرهٍ يشكو اقترانه بذلك الشّاعر حتّى وإن جاء هذا الاقتران على شكل الهجاء: "تهجو بمثلي عرض ذا الكلب اللئيم!". ويوظِّف ابن عنين من أجل تأكيد إصابته وسيلتين، الأولى: اللفظ الجارح الذي يتضمّنه السّؤال: "... الكلب اللئيم". والثانية: الحجّة الواردة في جواب ابن عنين: ".. ربّ نجم هوى في إثر شيطان رجيم". وعلى ما في هذه الحجّة من مغالطة منطقيّة، فإنّها ذات محمول دينيّ مؤثِّر، ولعلّ الغاية من توظيفها إضفاءُ صفات السّموّ والتبجيل على الذات (نجم) مقابل إلصاق صفات الإثم والتبخيس بالآخر (شيطان).
أمّا النّمط الثّاني من هذا الحوار فيمكن التّمثيل عليه بالمقطوعة الشّعريّة الآتية (ابن عنين، د. ت: 219):

عـلـيـهِ هُـزالٌ بـعـدَ شِـدَّةِ أسـرِه	سـألـتُ السّـديـدَ الـفـاضـلـيَّ وقـد بـدا
تـخـيّـرنـي عـبـدُ الـرّحـيـمِ لـسِـرِّه	أكـنـتَ مـريـضًـا؟ قـالَ: كـلّا، وإنّـمـا
لأوضـعَ فـحـلٍ مـنْ تـفـاقـمِ أمْـرِه	فـقـلـتُ لـه: إنّ الـقِـطـمَ اخـتـيـارُه
تـرافـعَ جـهـلًا أو عـلا فـوقَ قـدرِه	ولـكـنّـه حَـقٌّ عـلـى اللهِ وَضْـعُ مَـن
وأنّـك قـد أقـررتَ فـيـنـا بـأمـرِه	وهـبْ أنّ مـا يُـعـزى إلـيـهِ مُـصـدَّقٌ
تـقـعُـر صـدري مِـن مُـحـدَّبِ ظـهرِه	فـمـا هـذِهِ بـيـنَ ثـديـيـكَ؟ قـالَ لـي:

فهذه المقطوعة الشّعريّة تقوم على الحوار بين الشّاعر وشخص يُدعى السّديد الفاضليّ. ويستطيع القارئ - بمتابعته هذا الحوار- أن يستكشف أصل الحكاية التي تقدّمها الأبيات؛ وهي سَرْد تلك "العلاقة المريبة" بين هذا الشّخص والقاضي الفاضل كما يرويها الشّاعر. وقد لُحظ فيما سبق أنّ ابن عنين قد تطرّق إلى ما يشبه هذا المعنى في هجائه القاضي الفاضل. بل إنّ الفكرة تكاد تكون واحدة حين يشير إلى نمط من العلاقات الجنسيّة المثليّة بين القاضي الفاضل وآخرين هم - في الأغلب - أقلُّ منه موقعًا ومكانة. واللافت أنّ المعنى يتكرّر بالألفاظ والأدوار ذاتها: احديداب ظهر القاضي الفاضل وتقعُّر صدر الطّرف الآخر من هذه العلاقة.
ومن الواضح أنّ الحوار في هذه المقطوعة قد ساعد على تنامي السّرد وتطوّره، وكشفَ عن أفكار الشّخصيّات ونوازعها الداخليّة (مشبال، 2015: 104). وهو (السّرد) بما يقوم عليه أيضًا من توظيف لثنائيّة السّؤال والجواب المحفِّزة لفضول القارئ ودفعه لاستكشاف المزيد، وما يستثمره من صور الوصف المعبِّر: "وقد بدا عليه هُزال.. أكنت مريضًا..."، والحكمة المعزِّزة للإقناع (البيت الرابع)، من الواضح أنّ لكلِّ ذلك دورَه في أن يكون لهذه الشّعريّة سيرورتُها وتأثيرُها الفاعلان.

4. التناصّ

تتعالق شعريّة ابن عنين مدار الدّراسة معَ نصوص تراثيّة مختلفة، ولعلّ من المؤكّد أنّ أسلوب الحوار بين النّصوص ـ كما تقرّر جوليا كريستيفا ـ يشكّل ظاهرة معتادة على طول التاريخ الأدبيّ (كريستيفا، 1991: 79)؛ فالنصّ شبكة من العلاقات والترابطات التي تحيل وتتّصل بنصوص غائبة كثيرة، بعضها يحضر على نحو واضح وصريح، وبعضها الآخر يتخفى حتى ليصعب اكتشافه والعثور عليه. ويأتي هذا التّرابط/ التّعالق ليؤديَ وظائف دلاليّة وجماليّة يتوخّى المبدع تحقيقها في نصّه الحاضر.

وفي طليعة النّصوص التي انفتح عليها ابن عنين في شعره موضوع هذه الدّراسة القرآنُ الكريم، ولا غرابة في ذلك؛ فالقرآن الكريم يُعدُّ النصّ المركزيّ الأول في الحضارة العربيّة الإسلاميّة، ومن النّادر ـ إنْ لم يكن من المستحيل ـ أن يخلوَ أدبٌ عربيٌّ في القديم أو الحديث من التأثّر به أو التفاعل معَه. ومن النّماذج المعبّرة عن ذلك قول ابن عنين في أحدهم (ابن عنين، د. ت: 198-199):

<div dir="rtl">

إلـى لـحيـةِ الـمَـرءِ الـلّـعيـنِ ارتـقـتْ يَـدٌ   لـهـا فـي صُـعـودِ الـحـادثـاتِ سُـعـودُ

وقـدْ أصـبـحـتْ مثـلَ الـقُـرى الـلائي أهلكـتْ   قـديـمًـا فـمـنـهـا قـائـمٌ وحَـصـيـدُ

</div>

فالشّاعر يستدعي في البيت الثاني الآية القرآنيّة الكريمة: (ذلكَ من أنباء القُرى نَقُصُّه عليكَ منها قائمٌ وحصيد) (هود: 100). وهو يبقي على جزء من بنيتها التركيبيّة كما هو تقريبًا: "منها قائم وحصيد". والملاحَظ أنّ الآية الكريمة تأتي في سياق الحديث عن عقاب الله لبعض الأمم العاصية في سالف الزّمان، وما يمكن أن يثيرَه ذلك من عبرة لكلّ معتبِر، في حين ينقل ابن عنين دلالة الآية الكريمة إلى سياق مغاير هو السُّخرية من لحية المرتضى بن عساكر، وهو سياق ـ كما هو واضح ـ أقرب إلى العبث والهزل منه إلى الجدّ والعظة. ولعلّ مكمن الطّرافة في هذا التناصّ يتمثّل فيما يحدثه من مفارقة بين مجالين متباعدين: دينيّ مقدّس له وقارُه وهيبته في نفوس المؤمنين به، ودنيويّ مدنّس ليس له من ذلك الوقار في نفس من يقرأ/ يسمعه سوى السّخرية والإضحاك والتندّر.

ويبدو التناصّ مع الشّعر العربيّ واضحًا أيضًا في هذه الشّعريّة، ومن ذلك المقطوعة الشّعريّة الآتية التي يهجو فيها ابنُ عنين أحدَ أطباء العيون في عصره (ابن عنين، د. ت: 218):

<div dir="rtl">

سـلـيـمـانُ السُّـلـيـمـانـيُّ يَـبـغـو   ويُـصـفِـعُ دائـمًـا فـي أُخْـدعَـيـهِ

يَـرومُ تـطـبُّـبَ الأبـصـارِ جَـهـلًا   وكـيـفَ وداؤهـا نَـظـّرَ إلـيـهِ

يُـصـافـي بـالـمـودَّةِ كـلَّ نـذلٍ   شـبـيـهِ بـالـنَّـزيـهِ ومـدلـويـهِ

ولـكـنْ لـيـسَ هـذا مـنـهُ بِـدْعًـا   فـ"شبـهُ الشّـيءِ مُـنجـذبٌ إلـيـهِ"

</div>

فالشّاعر ينهي مقطوعته بصدر بيتٍ من شعر المتنبّي هو: "وشبه الشّيء منجذبٌ إليه/ وأشبهُنا بدنيانا الطّغامُ" (المتنبي، 1986: 192/4)؛ فيستحضره دون أن يجريَ عليه أيّ تغيير، ولكنّه يجعله عجزًا في نصّه ليتناسب ومقتضياتِ الدّلالة والقافية فيه. ويأتي هذا التّوظيف ليكون بمثابة "قفلة" يُنهى بها الكلام، وهي قفلة جاءت منسجمة انسجامًا تامًّا في سياقها الجديد حتى لتبدو كأنها جزءٌ أصيل منه. أمّا الوظيفة التي يؤدّيها هذا التناصّ فهي حجاجيّة إقناعيّة غايتُها تعزيز موقف الشّاعر والتأثير في متلقّي خطابه. ومع أنّ دلالة كلٍّ من النّصين الغائب والحاضر على درجة من التقارب ـ إذ ينقد كلا الشّاعرين ـ كل حسب موقفه ورؤيته ـ واقعًا غير سويّ (الحويطات، 2015: 249)، إلا أنّ نصّ المتنبّي يتّسم معَ ذلك بالجدّ والصّرامة، وهذا واضح في بنية نصّه الطّويل وسياقه الرّسميّ الذي يندرج فيه، بينما يتّسم نصّ ابن عنين بروح العبث والسُّخرية التي عُرف بها واشتهر، وهذا يتبدّى في قصر نصّه الذي يأتي على شكل مقطوعة قصيرة تتكوّن من أربعة أبيات غلبت عليها روح الهزل، فباستثناء إشارته العابرة إلى جهل ذلك الطبيب، فإنّ أكثر هذا الهجاء يتّجه إلى المعاني العبثيّة السّاخرة كتعريضه بغباء ذلك الطبيب وصفعه ومصافاته للأنذال من أمثاله.

وإذا كان النّموذج السّابق قد اقتصر على استحضار شطر من نصٍّ شعريّ سابق وتضمينه في بنية النّصّ الحاضر فإنّ ابن عنين قد يتوسّع أحيانًا في مثل هذا الاستحضار من نصوص الشّعر العربيّ القديم، ومن ذلك قصيدتُه في هجاء المؤيد بن القلانسي والجمال بن مهدي الكاتب (ابن عنين، د. ت: 231-232)، ففيها يتّخذ من معلقة امرئ

القيس الشّهيرة نصًّا مرجعيًّا لتوليد عدد من الصُّور والمعاني والمواقف. وقد تعدّى التناصّ هنا استعارة شطر أو بيت من هذه المعلّقة إلى استحضار عدد من أشطرها وأبياتها، ومن ذلك قوله:

سَـــؤَيَّـدِ مِثْـلَ الـرّاهبِ الـمُـتَـبَـتَّـلِ	ولـمّـا رأيـنـا الـمـغـربـيَّ بـخـدمـة الـ
"قِفا نبكِ مِنْ ذكرى حبيبٍ ومنزلِ"	وأخـلـقَ فـيـهـا عُـمـرَهُ فـكـأنّـهُ
"وهلْ عـنـدَ رسـمٍ دارسٍ مِـنْ مُعـوَّلِ"	سـألـنـاهُ هـلْ فـي ظِـلِّـهِ لـكَ مَـرتـعٌ
وكـمْ مِـن يـدٍ لـي عـنـدَهُ وتـطـوُّلِ	فـقـالَ أنـا الـمُسـدي إلـيـهِ تَـفَضَّـلـي
"بضـافٍ فـويـقَ الأرض لـيـسَ بـأعزلِ"	أسـدٌ إذا اسـتـدبـرتُـهُ مِـنـهُ فَـرجـة

... إلخ.

فالشّاعر يُدْخِل أشطرًا وأبياتًا من المعلّقة ليضمّنها نصّه فتبدو كأنّها نسيجٌ منه؛ وذلك كما في: "قفا نبكِ من ذكرى حبيبٍ ومنزلٍ"، و"وهل عند رسم دارسٍ من معوّلٍ"، و"بمنجرد قيد الأوابد هيكل".. إلخ. وعلى عادة ابن عنين في مثل هذا التناصّ فإنّه يتحوّل بدلالة الأشطر والأبيات المستعاة لتتوافق والسّياق الذي يأتي فيه نصّه، وهو سياق ساخرٌ تمادى فيه ابن عنين في تصوير شبقيّة الجمال الكاتب وعرام ابن القلانسيّ الجنسيّ على نحو حسّيّ مكشوف. وربّما صحّ للدارس أن يستنتج أنّ مثل هذا التوجّه كان بإيحاء من نصّ المعلّقة ذاته الذي لم يخلُ من مثل هذا الوصف الحسّيّ الصّريح.

وأخيرًا، لعلّ هذا النّمط من التناصّ أدخلُ في باب ما يسمّيه محمّد مفتاح بـ "المعارضة السّاخرة، أي التقليد الهزليّ أو قلب الوظيفة بحيث يصير الخطاب الجدّيّ هزليًّا، والهزليّ جدّيًّا.." (مفتاح، 1986: 121). وفي هذا الشكل من أشكال تعامل ابن عنين معَ نصوص التُّراث؛ فهو يعمد هنا إلى نصّ المعلّقة - على ما له من وقار وهيبة في ديوان الشّعر العربيّ - فيُعْمِل فيه مثل هذا المسخ والتشويه الكفيلين بخدش ذلك الوقار وتقليل تلك الهيبة. وهو موقف يعبّر - على كلّ حال - عن مشاكسة ابن عنين وثورته على كثير من معطيات عصره وتراثه.

5. النّزعة الشّعبيّة

من أبرز ملامح شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عنين وضوح النّزعة الشّعبيّة. ومن مظاهر ذلك توظيف المفردة العاميّة، واللفظة الجارحة، واستخدام التعبير السّهل المألوف للعامة، وتخيُّر الصّورة القريبة التي لا تحتاج إلى كدّ ذهن وإمعان خيال، والميل إلى النكتة التي لا تخلو - في كثير من الأحيان - من الإقذاع والفحش.

وإذا كانت شعريّة القبح قد وجدت تجسُّدها الأوضح لدى ابن عنين في شعر الهجاء، فإنّ وضوح النّزعة الشّعبيّة في شعره يبدو أمرًا مفهومًا؛

> فقد آثر شعر الهجاء - في مجمله - الأسلوب الشّعبيّ الذي يناسب طبيعته، فجنح في لغته إلى السّهولة والوضوح، بل لقد اقتربت لغة هذا الشّعر - في كثير من الحالات - من لغة الناس المحكيّة وتعبيراتهم الدّارجة. وليس هذا الأمر بمستغرب إذا ما عرفنا أنّ الشّاعر الهجّاء يهدف من ذلك إلى شيوع شعره بين الناس ليؤدّي غرضه المرجوّ، ولن يتأتّى له شيءٌ من هذا إلا بمراعاة الذوق الشّعبيّ العامّ الذي يؤثر هذا القول المباشر والمعنى الواضح القريب (الحويطات، 2015: 233).

والنّماذج الشّعريّة التي تمثّل هذه النّزعة الشّعبيّة كثيرة، ولعلّها قد استبانت من مجمل الشّواهد المدروسة، ويقتضي المقام هنا تخصيصها بشيء من تحديد. وممّا يمثّلها مثلًا قول ابن عنين في ابن عساكر: (ابن عنين، د. ت: 201):

فـأنـتَ مِـن أَمَـمٍ صُـوِّرتَ مَسـبـوكـا	يـا ابنَ الـعـسـاكـر إنْ صَـحَّ انتسـابُـكَ ذا
ديـكًـا فـأنـتَ ابـنُ مَـن حـتّـى أنـاديـكـا	يـا ابـنَ الـدَّجـاجـةِ كـلُّ الـنّـاسِ كـانَ لـهـا

فالمنحى الشّعبي واضحٌ تمامًا في هذين البيتين، إن على مستوى ألفاظهما الشّعبيّة المألوفة والمتداولة، أو على مستوى تراكيبهما السّهلة التي لا تفارق التعبير النّثريّ العادي كثيرًا، أو على مستوى معانيهما بما فيها من مباشرة وتسطيح واضحين.

وقريب من هذا قوله في ابن دحية (ابن عنين، د. ت: 220):

إلـيـهِ بـالـبـهـتـانِ والإفـكِ	دِحْيـــةَ لَــمْ يُـعـقـبْ فـكـمْ تـنـتـمـي
أنـكَ عـنـدَ الـنَّـاسِ شـيءٌ سِــوى	مـا صـحَّ عـنـدَ الـنَّـاسِ شـيءٌ سِــوى

فالملاحظ على هذا الأداء الشِّعريّ قربه أيضًا من أساليب العامّة وطرائقهم في الخطاب: "..أنك من كلب بلا شك!"؛ فالبيتان ينثالان على لسان ابن عنين انثيالًا، وكأنهما انعكاس للخاطر الأول الذي أحسّ به، فيوردهما بذلك على هذا النَّحو البالغ من التقريريّة والمباشرة. واللافت أنّ ابن عنين يركّز على قضيّة الشكّ في النماذج السَّابقين. وهو معنى له بالتأكيد أثره في نفوس العامّة؛ وذلك لما له من قدرة على استمالتهم واستثارة اهتمامهم؛ فكأنَّه بذلك يضرب على "وتر حسّاس" قادر على خلق الإثارة والفضول لديهم.

ومن الأساليب التي يلجأ إليها الشَّاعر في هذا الاتِّجاه توظيف ما يشبه النكتة، وهو أسلوب من المؤكَّد أنه يستهوي المزاج الشَّعبيّ كثيرًا، ولاسيما إذا كانت هذه النكتة تميل إلى الإقذاع والفحش اللذين يستثيران الأهواء، ويحرّكان الشَّهوات والغرائز. وممّا يمثِّل هذا المنحى قول ابن عنين (ابن عنين، د. ت: 197):

ولا سِــيـمـا إذا كـان ابـنَ سِـيـمـا	ولا تُــودعْ مَـتـاعَـك عـنـدَ عَـدْلٍ
ـــقَـوى فـأعـادهُ نِـضْـوًا سَـقـيـمـا	فـكـمْ أودعـتُـه أيـدًا (كـذا) شـديـدَ الـ

فالشَّاعر يشوّق متلقّي خطابه ويدفعه في البيت الأول إلى التعرُّف على كُنْه المتاع الذي أودعه عند ابن سيما، ليتكشّف له المشهد في البيت الثاني عن متاع غريب وبعيد عن أفق توقُّع المتلقّي. ولعلّ ما يجعل لهذه المقطوعة تأثيرها هو طرقها لهذا المعنى على هذا النَّحو من الجرأة والمباشرة. هذا فضلًا عمّا تثيره المفارقة فيها من إصابة؛ ففي حديثه عن ترك المتاع عند "عدل" يتوقّع مستقبل الخطاب نتيجة تتوافق مع هذا الوصف، لكن الموقف الذي يقدّمه الشَّاعر يتمخَّض عن دلالة مناقضة له تمامًا.

وقريب من هذا هجاؤه مملوكًا باعه فوجده في الطَّريق فلم يُسلِّم المملوك عليه، فقال (ابن عنين، د. ت: 233):

وقـد كـنـتُ أخـشـى مـن تـقـلّـب قـلـبِـه	وخِـلٍّ نـأى عـن صُـحْـبـتـي بَـعْـدَ قَـرْبِـه
بـمِـرودِ بـطـنـي كـاحـلًا عَـيـنَ صُـلْـبِـه	وأنـكـرنـي حـتّـى كـأنّـي لـمْ أكُـنْ
فـمَـنْ لـمْ يَـذذْ عَـن ثـقـبِـه لا تـثـقْ بـه	ألا لا تَـكُـنْ يـومًـا بـمَـنْ نـيـلَ واثـقًـا

فالأبيات تتوسّل بالحكاية التي تسرد قصّة العاشق وتقلّب قلب محبوبه وتنكُّره له. وإذا كان مثل هذا المعنى مألوفًا ومكرورًا في مدوَّنة شعر الغزل، فإنَّ غير المألوف هو التَّحوّل بالحكاية إلى هذه الوجهة الغريبة والمثيرة في تصوير العلاقة بين المحبين. ويختم الشَّاعر مقطوعته ببيت حجاجيّ يطلقه ليتَّخذ صفة المثل العامّ، ولكنه مَثَلٌ يثير من الضَّحك والسَّخرية أكثر ممّا يثير من الجِدّ والاعتبار. وتزداد حدّة السَّخرية حين يستحضر الشَّاعر ـ من طرف خفيّ ـ شيئًا من قول زهير بن أبي سلمى في معلقته الشَّهيرة التي اتَّخذت الحكمة صوتًا لها: "ومن لم يذد عن حوضه بسلاحه يهدّم..."، وبمقارنة السِّياقين: سياق المعلقة وسياق قول ابن عنين العابث تتولّد هذه المفارقة الصَّارخة بما تثيره من تندُّر وإضحاك.

والمتأمِّل في الصُّور الفنّية التي تجسّدت من خلالها هذه الشِّعريّة يلحظ أنّ المنحى الشَّعبيّ هو الغالب عليها، فهي صور بسيطة مستمدّة من الحياة اليوميّة للناس؛ ولذا جاءت على قدر من المباشرة ومحدوديّة الخيال، حتّى لكأنَّ الصُّور المعاينة في مشاهداته هي ذاتها التي انتقلت إلى النّصّ على هذا النَّحو التلقائيّ. ويمكن التَّمثيل على ذلك بقول ابن عنين في هجاء أحد الأمراء (ابن عنين، د. ت: 203):

يـنـطـحُ فـي الأفـقِ الـفَـلَـكَّ	لـنـا أمـيـرٌ قـرنُـهُ
تـدخـلُ فـي اسـتِ أمِّ بَـلَـكَّ	سِـبـالـهُ وذّقـنُـهُ
مـا غـيـرُ دقٍّ بـالـحَـنَـكَّ	عـطـاوهُ وطـعـنُـهُ
فـي أيّـمـا جـيـشٍ سَـلَـكَّ	فـهـو الـذَّنـابـى أبـدًا
ـبـيـرةِ صـيّـادُ السَّـمَـكَّ	كـأنـهُ فـي قـلـعـةِ الـ

فالصّور الفنيّة في هذه المقطوعة تجنح إلى السُّخرية من ذلك الأمير. والشّاعر يذهب في سبيل تحقيق ذلك إلى
تخيُّر بعض الصّور القائمة على المبالغة في تصوير العيوب الخَلقية بما يشبه أسلوب الكاريكاتور: "قرنه ينطح في الأفق
الفلك!". فضلًا عن توظيف الصّور المقذعة القادرة على شدّ العامة واستمالتهم (البيت الثاني)، واستخدام الألفاظ الشّعبيّة التي
تكثر في التّعامل اليوميّ من مثل تركيب "دقّ الحنك" الذي ما يزال مُستخدمًا في اللهجة العامّيّة الشّاميّة حتّى اليوم[4].

خاتمة

وبعد، فقد بحثت هذه الدّراسة موضوع شعريّة القبح لدى ابن عنين. وقد تبيّن أنّ هذه الشّعريّة تتمثّل لديه تحديدًا في شعر
الهجاء الذي بلغ به آمادًا بعيدة من المجاهرة والفحش وتقديم الصّور البالغة التشويه والمسخ لمهجوّيه على اختلاف
أقدارهم ومنازلهم. وقد اتّسعت مضامين هذه الشّعريّة ومجالاتها؛ فشملت تعريضه برجالات السُّلطة والدّين في عصره،
وبالأمكنة التي تضاربت مصالحُه معها، وبالأفراد الذين امتدّت علاقتُه بهم. بل لقد شمل هذا الهجاءُ نفسَه وأباه. وقد
انمازت هذه الشّعريّة ـ على المستوى التشكيليّ ـ بعدد من الملامح الفنيّة المؤثّرة، من مثل توظيف الحجاج والمفارقة
والسّخرية وأسلوب الحوار والتناصّ ووضوح النّزعة الشّعبيّة. وخلصت الدّراسة إلى أنّ شعريّة القبح كانت تشكّل ملمحًا
لافتًا تفرّد به ابن عنين من بين شعراء عصره. وهي شعريّة تذهب إلى قلب الموازين، وتنطلق من منظور احتجاجيّ في
التّعبير عن رؤيتها وموقفها الرّافضين لكثيرٍ ممّا كان يعاينه الشّاعر في زمنه من مواقفَ وممارساتٍ.

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[4]   واستخدام الألفاظ الشّعبية ظاهرة بالغة الحضور في شعر ابن عنين موضوع الدّراسة، وهو ملمحٌ يدلّ على تمكُّن النزعة الشّعبيّة في
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AL-MAQĀMA AL-KĀFIYYA OF ʿALĪ AL-MŪRĀLĪ (C. 1950): AN ARCHIVE OF TUNISIAN CURSING[1]

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Abstract. The article examines a collection of literary *maqāmāt* performed in the 1950s by the renowned Tunisian dramatist Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-ʿAqrabī (1902-1968), and attributed to his cousin ʿAlī al-Mūrālī. Composed in what we term "Mock Jewish" – a stylized variety of the Arabic dialect(s) of Jewish Tunisians – the four *maqāmāt* constitute a rare archive of profanities, curses, and euphemisms in the (Muslim and Jewish) Tunisian Arabic(s) of the early twentieth century, in addition to Hebrew argot expressions. We present a transcription, translation, and lexical analysis of a relevant portion of the first text in the collection, entitled *al-Maqāma al-Kāfiyya* (The Maqama of el Kef), with a view to publish a fuller sociolinguistic analysis of this and the remaining *maqāmāt* in subsequent articles.
Keywords: *Judeo-Arabic, mock languages, argot, Tunisian Arabic, maqāma, cursing, euphemism, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-ʿAqrabī.*
Abbreviations: TA = Tunisian Arabic; STA = Standard Tunisian Arabic; JA = Judeo-Arabic

I. The *Maqāmāt* of ʿAlī al-Mūrālī

The *maqāma*, if commonly understood as a showcase for eloquence and diction in literary Arabic, has never been a stranger to the curses and profanities of "lower" speech registers. On the contrary, erudition in the full range of Arabic speech forms, from high to low, has formed a central part of the genre since its inception: the seminal collections of al-Hamadānī and al-Ḥarīrī, for example, contain passages that modern editors deemed too obscene to publish.[2] Then there are those *maqāmāt*, composed mostly or entirely in dialect, which seem crafted primarily as celebrations of the obscene. Less than a handful of these "vulgar *maqāmas*", as Moreh (1992: 109) and Hämeen-Anttila (2002: 335-339) have called them, have elicited any scholarly attention, though they promise to offer crucial insights into language variation and change, language ideologies, social history, identity formation, class politics, and much more.

To this latter sub-genre belong a peculiar collection of texts from mid-twentieth-century Tunisia. Referred to variously as *Maqāmāt al-ʿAqrabī*, *Maqāmāt al-Mūrālī*, and *al-Maqāmāt al-Yahūdiyya al-Tūnisiyya* (or *les Séances juives tunisiennes*, "the Jewish

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[2] On some censored passages in the these *maqāmāt*, see Hämeen-Anttila (2002: 44, 50n25, 56-57).

Tunisian *Maqāma*s"),[3] the four *maqāmāt* were written by the poet ʿAlī al-Mūrālī and performed and recorded by his cousin, the renowned dramatist Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-ʿAqrabī (el-ʿAgrebi) (1902-1968). The last title here is a reference to the language of the texts, which al ʿAqrabī calls "the vernacular Jewish Tunisian language" (*al-lugha al-tūnisiyya al-yahūdiyya al-dārija*). However, while the texts do display a close familiarity on the part of the author and performer with Tunisian Judeo-Arabic vocabulary and phonology, their language is not any particular variety of Judeo-Arabic properly speaking, but rather what we will call "Mock Jewish", i.e. a stylized variety of the Arabic dialect(s) of Jewish Tunisians, deployed for humorous effect. This and other "mock languages" formed a significant element in the performance repertoires of numerous comedians, playwrights, actors, and satirical writers in Tunisia in the early-to-mid twentieth century, and likely have their origin in the pre- and early modern Arabic traditions of *khayāl al-ẓill* and street theater.[4]

The circumstances surrounding the composition and recording of these *maqāmāt* are obscure; of the author himself, ʿAlī al-Mūrālī, we have been able to gather but little information, apart from his relationship to the performer. According to folklorist Ali Saidane, al-ʿAqrabī made the recording in 1950, shortly after his return from Paris, where the dramatist had worked as director of the Arabic service of Radio France since 1945.[5] Beyond his personal relation to the author, al-ʿAqrabī may have been chosen to perform these texts due to his widely acclaimed vocal talents, or his linguistic skills.[6] This is purely speculative, however, since none of the available biographies of al-ʿAqrabī refer to these *maqāmāt*, for obvious reasons. Together with Muḥammad Bourguiba (brother of President Ḥabīb Bourguiba), Ḥasan al-Zamarlī, and others, al-ʿAqrabī has been counted among the "founding fathers" of Tunisian theater. As an actor and director, al-ʿAqrabī was known mostly for his commitment to canonical works, whether Arab and European, and despite his lack of aversion to the use of Tunisian vernacular on stage – he even translated a number of plays from French and *fuṣḥā* into STA[7] – the content and style of the present *maqāmāt* stand in sharp contrast to his other performances. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *maqāmāt* recordings were never broadcast, but circulated underground for decades on cassette tapes. At present, two different recordings have been digitized and are held at the Tunisian national audio archive of Ennajma Ezzahra (al-Nijma al-Zahrāʾ) (Centre des

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3   La Phonothèque Nationale (Centre des Musiques Arabes et Méditérranéennes, Tunis), item B-623. See also Saidane (2010) and the YouTube channel of Ali Saidane: *al-Maqāma al-Kāfiyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=tG78rjw_jQo>), last accessed 30 April 2018.

4   These performances of "mock languages" in the Arabic performance genres of Tunisia are the topic of an article currently in progress by this author (Koerber, "Styles of Linguistic Crossing in Twentieth-Century Tunisian Performance Genres"). The term is a reference to Jane Hill's seminal work on "Mock Spanish", or the "set of tactics that speakers of American English use to appropriate symbolic resources from Spanish", often for humorous effect (Hill 2008: 128; cf. Hill 1998). Much subsequent research has taken Hill's insights to "Mock Ebonics" (Ronkin & Karn 1999), "Mock Asian" (Chun 2004), "Hollywood Injun English" (Meek 2006), and other varieties of linguistic appropriation.

5   Ali Saidane, personal communication, January 2018. On al-ʿAqrabī's work in France, ʿAbāza: 117.

6   On the quality of his voice: ʿAbāza: 115, 116. al-ʿAqrabi's voice was so renowned that it was the subject of a panegyric by the Lebanese politician Shakib Arsalan (ibid.). On his skill at JA: Saidane's caption to the recording of *al-Maqāma al-Kāfiyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=tG78rjw_jQo>).

7   ʿAbāza: 134; 137-138.

Musiques Arabes et Méditérranéennes); since 2014, the recordings have also been accessible on YouTube.[8]

It is not improbable that the texts were written some years earlier than the date of their recording, given their similarity in content and form to the sort of mock language performances that proliferated in the 1930s, as well as to genres and styles established in the satirical press (*al-ṣiḥāfa al-hazliyya*) of Tunisia since the beginning of the 20th century.[9] The genre of the *maqāma* in particular had been a popular vehicle for social and political satire in Tunisia, although the present texts would appear to be rather exceptional in their use of mock language, their colloquial register, and the amount and degree of profanities they contain.[10] It is in this last respect that they resemble most closely the infamous *malzūma* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kāfī, although al-Mūrālī's *maqāmāt* far outdo al-Kāfī's poem in the amount and variety of argot, cant, and slang expressions they deploy.[11]

There are four *maqāmāt* in the collection. The first, entitled *al-Maqāma al-kāfiyya* ("the Maqama of el Kef"), follows the plot of al-Ḥarīrī's *al-Maqāma al-tabrīziyya* (the Maqama of Tabriz). The second, *al-Maqāma al-bājiyya* ("the Maqama of Béja"), parodies al-Ḥarīrī's "Maqama of Karaj" (*al-Maqāma al-karajiyya*); the third, *al-Maqāma al-sūsiyya* ("the Maqama of Sousse"), parodies al-Ḥarīrī's "Maqama of Sanaa" (*al-Maqāma al-ṣanʿāniyya*); the fourth, *al-Maqāma al-dīnāriyya* ("the Maqama of the Dinar"), parodies al-Ḥarīrī's *maqāma* of the same name. In each, al-Ḥarīrī's narrator, al-Ḥārith b. Hammām, has been refashioned as Msīʿid ("little Masʿad"), son of Tammām; the former's trickster, Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī, has become instead Dāvīd al-Ṭannūzī, son of Mrīdix Dāna ("David al-Tannuzi, son of 'little Mordechai' Dana").[12]

The "Maqama of el Kef", which is the focus of our analysis here, may be summarized as follows. It begins with Msīʿid, son of Tammām, lamenting his impoverished state, and his fear that he might end up in prison (lines 1-3). His spirits lighten, however, when he spots one "Naṭṭāf Qūsṭa, *fils*" – another Jewish-sounding name – about to board a public bus (lines 4-5). Naṭṭāf tells Msīʿid he is on his way to el Kef (a picturesque mountain village in northwestern Tunisia, whence the title of this *maqāma*), and our narrator is able to convince him to pay his way too (lines 6-7). Upon alighting in el Kef, Msīʿid spots our

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[8]   La Phonothèque Nationale (Centre des Musiques Arabes et Méditérranéennes, Tunis), items B-620 and B-623. Item B-620 contains only *al-Maqāma al-Kāfiyya*, while item B-623 includes all four *maqāmāt*. Also available on the YouTube channel of Ali Saidane: *al-Maqāma al-Kāfiyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=tG78rjw_jQo>), *al-Maqāma al-Bājiyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4Wh2h5I9hY>), *al-Maqāma al-Sūsiyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pQ6PQQC9sE>), al-*Maqāma al-Dīnāriyya* (<www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNc2cZTEeT0>). Last accessed 30 April 2018.

[9]   On the satirical press in Tunisia, see al-Sāḥilī (1996). See also my article in progress, Koerber, "Styles of Linguistic Crossing in Twentieth-Century Tunisian Performance Genres".

[10] A brief history of Tunisian *maqāmāt* is provided in al-Ghazzī, "al-Maqāma al-tūnisiyya bayn al-taqlīd wa-l-taṭawwur naḥw al-qiṣṣa", *al-Fikr*, Feb. 1982: 593-599 and March 1982: 800-807.

[11] On al-Kāfī's *malzūma*, see Khayati (1989) and Mion (2012).

[12] *Dāvīd al-ṭannūzī* < STA *al-ṭannūžī* ("David al-Tannuzi"), the name that al-Mūrālī has selected for his trickster, on the pattern of al-Ḥarīrī's Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī, is common among Tunisian Jews. Though the appellation here is likely generic, it is worth mentioning that as a dramatist, al-ʿAqrabī would likely have been familiar with David Cohen-Tanugi (1839-1928), a patron of the theatrical arts in Tunis. According to Sebag, the patronym is derived from the city of Tangier (تنجة [sic]) (2002: 139), but this is unlikely. Cf. Hamet (60: "Tenoudji").

trickster, David al-Tannuzi, "who is renowned in Tunis and Ariana" (line 9). It turns out al-Tannuzi is not alone: he is observed quarreling with his wife, whom he is dragging to the rabbinical court in order to divorce, or perhaps imprison (lines 10-12). Arriving at court, al-Tannuzi explains to the rabbi that after marrying this woman, he discovered she was rotten, "like shit" (*ki-l-xra*) (line 17). The rabbi scolds the wife, who quickly retorts that it is al-Tannuzi who has transgressed, trying to sodomize her (lines 18-19). The rabbi then scolds al-Tannuzi, who proceeds to launch into a verbal mudslinging match with his wife (lines 23-48). The invective between the two spouses reaches such a pitch that the rabbi is forced to scold both of them for their language, and ask them pointedly to tell him what the matter is, lest he summon the police (lines 49-52). Thereupon al-Tannuzi, followed by his wife, turns from invective to elegy: he has been reduced to poverty, and she has become so desperate that she considers prostituting herself (lines 53-69). They beg the rabbi for alms. After some protest, he tosses them each a few coins; the wife manages to extract a few more through seductive words and exhibition (lines 72-83). When al-Tannuzi asks for more, however, the rabbi fumes, and screams to his attendant to expel the two troublemakers (lines 84-86).

II. *al-Maqāma al-kāfiyya*: Transcription and Translation

The following represents an excerpt of *al-Maqāma al-kāfiyya*, focusing on the invective traded between al-Tannuzi and his wife, and the rabbi's initial response (lines 15-52). The transcription reflects only an approximate phonemic, rather than a full phonetic, rendering of the performance. In addition to the phonemic transcription in Latin script, we have included a transcription in Arabic script that represents the etymological forms of each line in STA, and is intended only for ease of reading.

15

قال له: يا ربي، جيت نشكيلك، حل وذنيك واسمع نحكيلك

qāl-lu: ya ribbi, zīt niskī-lik, ḥill widn-īk w-asmaʿ naḥkī-lik

He said to him, "O Rabbi, I've come to complain to you. Open your ears and listen, I'll tell you.

16

كنت عايش عيشة مرتاحة، آدوناي ايلويم آحا

kunt ʿāyis ʿīsa mrtāḥa, ādūnāy īluwīm āḥa

"I was living a comfortable life, Adonai Elohim 'oy'.

17

ياخي خذيت هالمرا طلعت كالخرا

yaxi xdīt al-mrā, ṭilʿit ki-l-xra

"Then I married this woman, and she turned out to be like shit."

18

قال الربي: ما تحشمش يا حمومة تعمل لراجلك خصومة؟

qal ir-ribbi, ma-tiḥšim-š ya ḥmūma taʿmil l-rāzl-ik xṣūma

The rabbi said, "Have you no shame, you good-for-nothing, picking a fight with your husband?"

19

قاتله: يا ربي يحب يكسّرلي برمتي، حطها منقالته في ترمتي

qat-lu ya ribbi, yḥibb ykassar-li burmt-i, ḥaṭṭ-a mungālt-u f-tirmt-i

She said to him, "O Rabbi, he wants to break my 'cooking pot'. He wanted to put his 'clock' in my arse."

20

قال له الربّي: بالمنجدّ يا بهيم تحب تعمل كالڤويم؟

qal-lu ir-ribbi b-il-minzidd ya bīm, tḥibb taʿmil ki-l-guwīm

The Rabbi said, "Seriously, you animal? You want to do like the Goyim do?

21

ما تعرفش آش قال الربّي حاي بسيس ما تعملش آفار بلا انتريس؟

ma-taʿraf-s as qal ir-ribbi ḥāy bsīs, ma-taʿmil-s āfār bla ntirīs

Don't you know what Rabbi Hai Besis said, 'Don't do a job without any interest'?

22

آش قلت؟ نُربطك في الحبس حتى تولي تبعبع كالكبش؟

ās qult, nurbuṭ-ik fi-l-ḥabs ḥatta twalli tbaʿbaʿ ki-l-kibs

"What should I do? Put you in prison, until you bleat like a goat?"

23

قال الطنّوجي: يا ربّي وحق العشر كِلمات والروشانة والشبّات

qal al-ṭannūzi, ya ribbi, w-ḥaqq il-ʿasar kilmāt, w-ir-rūssāna w-is-sabbāt

Al-Tanuzi said, "O Rabbi, I swear by the Ten Commandments, and Rosh Hashanah, and the Sabbath,

24

الّي مرتي كذّابة وراس أمّي وبابا

illi mart-i kaddāba w-rās umm-i w-bābā

That my wife is a liar; I swear by the head of my mother and father!"

25

قاتله مرته: لا! وحاي آدوناي هو أكذب منّي وقبل ما نعقله كان قلبي متهنّي

qat-lu mart-u: la! w-ḥāy ādūnāy uwa akdib min-ni, w-qabl ma naʿql-u kan qalb-i mitinni

His wife said to him, "No! I swear by Hai Adonai, he is more of a liar than I, and before I knew him my heart was content."

26

فصلها يا سيدي تغشش الطنوجي قاللها كلام بهيم مشى يقتلها

fṣal-a ya sīdi tġassas iṭ-ṭanūzi w-qal-i-la klām bīm msa yuqtil-a

And thereupon al-Tanuzi became angry and said to her savage words, about to kill her:

133

27
يا كلبة يا حمومة يالّي تعمل الدراش في الحومة
ya kalba ya ḥmūma ya lli taʿmil id-drās fi l-ḥūma
"You bitch, you good-for-nothing, you who makes a big fuss in the neighborhood!

28
يا فكرونة يا عتّوقة يالّي كي خذيتك لقيتك مفتوقة
ya fakrūna ya ʿattūqa ya lli ki xdītik lqītik maftūqa
"You turtle, you little hen, when I married you I found you to be damaged goods!

29
نعقل شكون كان يهشّخ فيك، وما حبيتش نقول عليك
naʿqil skūn kān yhassix fīk, w-ma-ḥabbīt-s nqūl ʿlīk
"I knew who had been screwing you, but I didn't want to tell on you.

30
موش هذاكا الفزاني سي خليفة يا منتنة يا جيفة
mūs hādaka il-fazzāni sī xlīfa ya mintna ya zīfa
"Wasn't it that Libyan, Mr. Khalifa, you rotten one, you corpse!

31
و زيد هاك اللي كان يجيب الما يعطيك والله عما
w-zīd āk illi kān yzīb il-mā ya ʿṭī-k w-allāhi ʿmā
"And also the one who brought us water, God make you blind!

32
يا واسعة يا عريضة، يا بوالة يا مريضة
yā wāsʿa yā ʿrīḍa, yā bawwāla yā mrīḍa
"You wide one, you broad one, you pisser, you ill woman!

33
وانوخي لو تولّي تضرب البيانو كي فرتونة
w-ānūxi lu twalli tadrab il-biyānu ki fartūna
"By Anoukhi, should you go play the piano like Fartuna,

34
ولّا تشطح كي بنت شيخونة، ولّا تغني كي سمحة بنت دندونة
w-lla tasṭaḥ ki bint sayxūna w-lla tġanni ki simḥa bint dandūna
"Or dance like Bint Shaykhuna, or sing like Simha bint Danduna.

35
ما عادش تذوق السمونة
mā-ʿād-is tidūq is-sammūna
"You won't get to taste my cock anymore!"

36

هي يا سيدي سمعت كلامه، وهي نقزت وجات قدّامه

iyya yā sīdi samʿit kalam-u, w-iyya naggzit w-zāt quddām-u

She heard what he said, and jumped and came in front of him.

37

وترعدت ترعيدة وولّات كالصيدة

w-traʿdit tarʿīda, w-wllāt ki ṣ-ṣīda

She became enraged and like a lion.

38

وقاتله يا خشاف يا عروق اسمع الكلام وذوق، يرّاك والله مشنوق

w-qāt-lu ya xassāf ya ʿarūq ismaʿ ik-kalām w-dūq, yarrā-k wallāhi masnūq

She said to him: "You babbler, you sweaty man! Listen to this and have a taste. May you, by God, be hanged!

39

يا تعيبة يا خطاف الشواشي، يا كذّاب يطيّح فيك الفاسي

ya tuʿība ya xaṭṭāf is-sawāsi, ya kaddāb, yṭayyaḥ fīk il-fāsi

"You queer, you chechia thief, you liar! May the farter make you fall down!

40

يا حجّام ترم، يرّا عينيك تضلم

ya ḥazzām trim, yarrā ʿīnīk tḍlum

"You shaver of arses, may your eyes go dark!

41

يا شايب يا شلاكة، يلّي كي كنت صغير كنت كبير نيّاكة

ya sāyib ya slāka ya-lli ki kunt ṣġīr kunt kbīr nayyāka

"You old man, you worn-out shoe! When you were little, you were a big fuckboy!

42

يا قلّاب يا حموم، يقوّي عليك حاكم سدوم

ya qallāb ya ḥmūm, yqawwi ʿlīk ḥākim sadūm

"You thief, you good-for-nothing! May the chief of Sodom overpower you!

43

الّي فيك تردُّه فيّا يالي منقالتك مرخية؟

illi fīk truddu fiyya ya-lli mungāltik marxiyya

"What's inside you, you dump inside me? You with the limp 'clock'!"

44

يا بصّاص يا عصّاص، يا فرطاس يالّي تاخذ بنات النّاس ولا تعطيهم لا ماكلة ولا لباس

ya baṣṣāṣ ya ʿaṣṣāṣ ya firṭās ya-lli tāxud bnāt in-nās w-la taʿṭīhum la mākla w-la lbās

"You farter, you kiss-ass, you baldy! You who marry nice girls and give them neither food nor clothing!

45

و راس الرّبي فراجي، وانشالله خويا يقاجي

w-rās ir-ribbi frāzi, w-insalla xuya ygāzi

"By the head of Rabbi Fraji – God willing you'll go get yourself killed!

46

صيم اصرينو لوكان تولّي تضرب العود كي برامينو

ṣīm iṣṣirīnu lukan twalli tadrab il-ʿūd ki barāmīnu

"The Name (of God) protect us, should you play the oud like Braminu,

47

وراس موسي ربينو ولا تولّي كيف دابيد برقيق وقرجومتك مِالنعاس تفيق ما عاد تذوق السقيق

w-rās mūsi rabbīnu, walla twalli kif dāvīd barqīq, w-garzūmtik mi-n-nʿās tfīq, ma-ʿād tidūq is-sqīq

"By the head of Moses our Teacher, should you become like David Barqiq, and your throat awaken people from sleep, you won't taste my behind,

48

وتطلع روحي ما عاد نعطيك بتّوحي

w-tiṭlaʿ rūḥi, ma-ʿād naʿṭīk bittūḥi

"And ravage me. I won't give you my vagina anymore!"

49

قاللهم الرّبي: امّا انتم مالماركة الزرانة من حانوت صبان في القرانة

qāl-ilhum ir-ribbi: amma ntum mi-l-mārka iz-zrāna min ḥānūt ṣabbān fi l-grāna

"The rabbi said to them: Well aren't you both a bad brand from Sabban's shop in [the market of] the Livornese!

50

ما تخافوش تتدارسو قبالتي؟ واحدة تقول بتوحي والاخر منقالتي

ma-txāfū-s titdārsu qubbālti, wāḥda tqūl bittūḥi w-il-lākhir mugālti

"Aren't you ashamed to quarrel in front of me? One saying 'my vagina' and the other saying 'my clock'."

51

وحق ربّي وراس زبي، إذا ما تقولوليش شنوة الآفار

w-ḥaqq rabbi, w-rās zibbi, ida ma-tqūlūlīs snuwwa l-āfār

"I swear by God, and the head of my penis, if you don't tell me what the matter is,

52

إلا ما نبعثكم للكوميسار ويعمللكم بروسي بربار وتمشيو على عام ونهار

illa ma-nabʿatkum li-l-kūmīsār w-yaʿmillkum brūsī barbār w-timsiyu ʿla ʿām w-nār

"I'll send you to the chief of police, he'll give you a barbaric penalty, and you'll end up in a sorry state!"

III. Linguistic Notes

[16] *ādūnāy* (<Heb. אֲדֹנָי): perhaps the most common, and oldest, element in Mock Jewish. Cf. a folktale collected by Stumme (1893: 59).

iluwīm (<Heb. אֱלֹהִים). Elision of /h/ is attested in Hebrew speech of Tunisian Jews (cf. Henshke: 66).

āḥa is most likely a pseudo-Hebraism invented to fit the rhyme pattern established in the previous line by *murtāḥa*. *aḥḥīt*, *aḥḥayt*, and similar interjections of pain or exasperation are widely attested in Tunisian Arabic, though they would communicate the opposite of the speaker's emotive stance in this phrase.

[18] *ḥmūma*, m. *ḥmūm*, "lousy, no good." Cf. Chelbi, "H fort" section: "HMOUME: nul".

[19] *burma*, lit. "cooking pot," also attested in the sense of "exhaust pipe" (TuniCo, root *brm*), here must be euphemistic for the wife's rear, genitalia, or possibly womb. Cf. the Moroccan profanity *ṭabūn*, "pudendum mulieris" (<Arabic *ṭābūn*, "oven"), and the Classical Arabic *tannūr*, lit. "oven" but also euphemistic for the female lap or womb. In the broader context of world folklore, Dundes follows Freud in suggesting that "the oven is a standard womb symbol" (1988: 172). *burma* is certainly not, as in Slouschz's controversial thesis, a Jewish argot form of Greek origin (cf. Slouschz, 1909: 65).
mungāla, lit. "clock, clocktower, watch," is euphemistic for the penis, perhaps by analogy to the phallic symbolism of the clocktower. According to Nahum, the euphemism is unique to JA (2000: 56).

tirma, "arse." Al-Ṭannūzī's wife has accused him of attempting to put his *mungāla* in her *tirma*, implying that he is a sodomite.

[20] *guwīm*, "goyim, non-Jews." The notion that Judaism prohibits alternative sexual positions, such as anal intercourse or penile-vaginal intercourse from behind, and the association of these practices with goyim, specifically Muslims, seems to be based on the incidents described by common *tafsīr*s regarding Qurʾān 2:223.

[21] *Basīs*, another common Tunisian Jewish family name.

āfār (< French *affaire*, "affair, business"), is a common word today in Tunisian Arabic.

intirīs (< Italian *interesse*), "interest" in all senses. Both *āfār* and *intirīs* are common to both STA and Tunisian JA. The expression *āfār blā ntirīs*, "an affair/job without interest", is likely meant in two senses: first, that sodomy is a non-procreative act and therefore is without profit, and second, the anti-Semitic association of Jews with usury, making profits, or stinginess.

[22] *tbaʿbaʿ ki-l-kibs*, "bleat like a goat", a common collocation, perhaps with the implication that the bleater is being forced to do something against his will or begging for repentance.

[23] *ir-rūsāna*, "Rosh Hashanah" (<Heb. רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה) and *is-sabbāt*, "the Sabbath" (<Heb. שַׁבָּת) both evidence hypercorrection, since their pronunciation by JA speakers across North Africa invariably preserves the Hebrew /š/ (for "Rosh Hashanah," cf. M. Cohen, 1912: 393; D. Cohen, 1964: 77; Henshke, 2017: 23; for "Sabbath," cf. D. Cohen, 1964: 70; M. Cohen, 1912: 494; Henshke, 2007: 76; Yoda, 2005: 316).

These oaths ("By the Ten Commandments, etc.") are not, to my knowledge, to be found in the speech of Tunisian Jews, and therefore must be considered patently Mock Jewish.

[27] *drāš*, "coquetry," especially of women or children, according to al-Mīsāwī (2011: 175). It would appear this word is no longer widely understood in Tunis, but the meaning seems to fit the context of marital infidelity better than two Aramaic-derived JA words to be found in D. Cohen (1975): "*drāš* 'disputes' (coll.)" and "*dṛāš* 'oraison funèbre' (27).

[28] *fakrūna*, lit. "turtle," used to insult one's miniscule figure. Cf. Marçai and Guiga (1959: 3018), "*fᵉ̂kṛᵘ̂n*".

ʿatūqa, lit. "little hen," used to insult one's lack of physical attractiveness. Cf. Nahum (2000: 71): "*'Atouqa mreïcha !* / Petite poule plumée. / Se dit d'une fille chétive et sans charme".

maftūqa, "damaged goods, (already) screwed," lit. "torn; infected with hernia." Cf. Chelbi, "M" section: "MAFTOUQ: enculé".

[30] *zīfa*, "corpse" (<Arabic *jīfa*). The epithet refers, obviously, to the wife's grotesque body, but it is also an old anti-Semitic slur, attested already by Hesse-Wartegg in Tunis in the nineteenth century in the form "Dshifa, ben Dshifa" (1899 [1882]: 117). Cf. Montels (1894), who cites the expression "*Djief ben Djief*" (94).

Sī Khalīfa, "Mr. Khalīfa." The appellative *sī* together with an adjective or profession is a common form of derision in TA (e.g. *sī klūfī*, "Mr. Nosey", *sī ṭaḥḥān*, "Mr. Pimp"). The *khalīfa* in Protectorate Tunisia referred to an official in the local administration, second in authority to the *qāyid* (al-Mīsāwī, "خليفة"). The idea is that the wife has had affairs both "high" and "low" (the water carrier in the following line). Alternatively, the name may be a reference to a legendary womanizer, "Khalifa," who carried out his affairs by adopting the guise of a midwife (Monchicourt, 1908: 7). Khalīfa is also a common Tunisian Jewish family name.

[32] *bawwāla*, "frequent urinator." Cf. D. Cohen (1975: 68).

[33] *w-ānūxī*, an oath (<Heb. אָנֹכִי), "by Anokhi (God)".

fartūna, "wealthy" (<It. *fortuna*, "fortune, luck"); also, as here, a common Tunisian Jewish female name.

[34] *Bint Šayxūna* and *Simḥa bint Dandūna*: generic Jewish-sounding names. If taken literally, "dancing" and "singing" here may be counted among the wife's disreputable habits, perhaps as part and parcel of her prostitution (lines 64-68). The stereotypical association between Jews and the musical arts in early twentieth-century Tunisia is likely also implied here. Otherwise, "dancing" and "singing" may perhaps be euphemistic for sexual acts.

[35] *sammūna*, "penis." Cf. Chelbi, "S" section, "SAMOUNA: zizi". The word is likely derived from *sman* ("butter"), which, according to Monchicourt, is euphemistic for "sperm" (1908: 5).

[37] *traʿad*, "to become irritated, enraged". The root *r-ʿ-d* has the sense "to tremble" in Classical Arabic, but its use in Tunisian Arabic seems not to be attested widely among non-Jews. Indeed we have only located occurrences of this verb in JA and Mock Jewish texts, and therefore it is quite possible the form is restricted to JA and may have its etymology not in the Classical Arabic, but in the Hebrew רָעַד ("to tremble"). For an occurrence in a JA text, see Cohen (1964: 137; cf. Cohen 1975: 120); for an occurrence in a Mock Jewish text, see al-Mārīšāl (1967: 18).

[38] *xassāf* (< *xaššāf*), "babbler, madman" (<Heb. כישוף "magic, sorcery"). Cf. Cohen (1975), "*ḫšāf* 'pauvre d'esprit, fou'" (155). Also attested is the verb *xaššef*, "to utter nonsense," and various derived forms (Henshke: 264-265).

ʿarūq, "excessive perspirator" (?).

yarrāk (*yarrā* + *-k*), "May it come to pass that you…". Cf. Marçai and Guiga (1958: رأي), who suggest the etymology *yā nrā-k*. Stillman (2007), in his valuable study of cursing in Moroccan JA, identifies this formula as constituting a special category, "curses of the type 'I should see you'" (149-151). Cf. Stewart (2014: 710).

[39] *tuʿība*, "queer" (<Heb. תּוֹעֵבָה, "abomination"). The word's association with homosexuality in Hebrew derives from its use in Leviticus 18:22[13]. In Tunisian slang, it refers exclusively to a homosexual:: Chelbi (2013), "TOUAYBA: pédé (judéo-arabe)" (T section); Nahum (1998), "*Ya touʿība* ! (hébreu = Abomination) / Pédé !" (245); Simeoni (2004), "Kane chwia touâiba. / (*Il était un peu efféminé*)" (49).

xaṭṭāf il-sawāsī (*šawāšī*), lit. "chechia thief". For *xaṭṭāf* as "pickpocket, thief" see Cohen (1975), "*ḫǎṭṭǎf* 'voleur à la tire'" (162). The chechia (*šāšiyya*) is the cylindrical brimless red hat of which Tunisians are proud; it is more familiar in English as the "fez." If taken literally, the insult alludes to al-Ṭannūzī's petty thievery, which moreover lacks any skill (the *šāšiyya* being the easiest garment to snatch). However, it is likely that a euphemism is in play here, though the sense is not clear. ʿAbd al-Kāfī (1982) associates the chechia in the popular imagination with respected elders, the (male) provider and head of the household, debts, weights and measures, octopuses, or anything that rests above something else (38-39). Of particular relevance is a JA proverb cited by Nahum (1998): "Laï nahi el chéchia mel rass el oulia, afélou meuria ! [*Lā ynaḥḥī il-šāšiyya mi-rās il-waliyya, afillu mariyya*] / Que Dieu n'enlève pas la chéchia, même en mauvais état, de la tête de la jeune femme !" (105). The *šāšiyya*, Nahum explains, is a symbol for the husband; depriving a woman of her "chechia" or husband can only bring her misfortune. The implication of the curse, then, is that al-Ṭannūzī is a "husband-snatcher" – an allusion both to his homosexuality, and to his depriving women of their due provisions, which is referenced in line 44.

[40] *ḥazzām trim*, "arse-shaver" (< *ḥāžžām*) or perhaps "arse-bundler." Either sense would elude to al-Ṭannūzī's alleged sexual predilection.

[41] *sāyib* (*šāyib*), "old man" (< CA *shāʾib*).

slāka (*šlāka*), "flip-flop; worn-out shoe." As an insult, the term refers to a cowardly, no-good person, or to an effeminate man (Murād, 1999: 244); cf. Chelbi, "ADDITIF" section, "chlaka: vaurien".

nayyāka is not, as the morphology might suggest in Classical Arabic, an active "fucker" but rather a passive "one who gets fucked", i.e. a "catamite". Cf. Cohen (1975): "Le seul exemple de *fǎyyāl* avec une première radicale n'appartenant pas à ce groupe est le mot *nǎyyǎk* proprement 'giton, mignon'" (69). It is derived from the verb *nayyik*, which in TA has the passive sense "to be/get fucked," as in the common insult, *barra nayyik*, "go get fucked!"

[42] *ḥākim sadūm*, "the ruler of Sodom." *ḥākim* in TA slang can refer variously to a judge, a police officer, the police in general, or the state (cf. Dallaji: 119; Abdellatif: 24). This is another swipe at the alleged sodomy of al-Ṭannūzī. Cf. an expression cited by Nahum (2000), "Hkeum Sdoum ! [*ḥkam sdūm*] / Les lois de Sodome !", which is explained as a response to a judgment or command deemed unjust (70).

qallāb, "crook."

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[13]   I thank Jonas Sibony for this reference.

[43] *illi fīk truddu fiyya*, lit. "What's inside you, you pour inside me?!" The allusion is to al-Ṭannūzī's impure or impotent seed. The collocation is also attested in Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq al-Rizqī's collection of Tunisian proverbs: سيدي غُطيّة اللي فيك ترودّو فيَّ (95). The meaning of the proverb is not explained.

mungāltik markhiyya, "your clock(tower) is limp," another reference to al-Ṭannūzī's inadequate male member.

[44] *baṣṣāṣ*, "compulsive farter" (< *baṣṣ*, "to fart"). Cf. Cohen (1975), "*bŏ̆ṣṣå̆ṣ*, 'qui pète souvent'" (162).

ʿ*aṣṣāṣ*, "kiss-ass, sycophant" (perhaps derived from ʿ*uṣṣ*, "vulva"). Cf. Chelbi, "A" section, "ASSASSE: lècheur [sic]"; Cohen (1975): "ɛåṣṣå̄ṣ 'qui fait des avances humiliantes à quelqu'un avec qui il est brouillé'" (162).

firṭās, "bald." According to Bacri (1986: 85: "Fartasse") there is a connotation of effimancy ("un moitié homme – moitié femme").

[45] *ir-ribbi frāzi* (*frāži*), "Rabbi Fraji," or Rabbi Frāžī Shawwāt, was a popular saint whose shrine is located in Testour. His popularity among Tunisian Jews is attested in folktales, an annual pilgrimage, and songs (Cohen, 1964: 126-128; Montels, 1894: 90-95; Nahum 2000: 131-133).

yigāži, "to enlist [in the army]; to risk one's life; to get oneself killed" (< Fr. s'engager, "to enlist"). The etymological sense appears to be the most commonly attested, as in Chelbi ("M" section: "MGAJI: engagé dans l'armée") and Cohen (1975): "*gā̆žä* 'il s'est engagé (dans l'armée)'" (31). However, it is apparent that the extended, derived sense ("to get oneself killed") is the intended here. Cf. Ghānimī and al-Khaṣkhūṣi (2010):

تقاجي: تخاطر بحياتها وتتجه إلى الموت. وأصلها من العبارة الفرنسية engager's وتعني في الاستعمال العسكري التزم بالخدمة في جيش (الاحتلال) وانخرط فيه كما تدلّ على الاشتباك والتلاحم ممّا يعني التعرّض للموت (169, n. 96).

See also Bar-Asher (2016): "gaza/גאזא" (36); and Murād (1999): فَاجَى (297).

[46] *šīm iṣṣilīnu*, "May the Name [God] preserve us!" (< Heb. הַשֵּׁם יַצִּילֵנוּ). A common apotropaic interjection, comparable to TA *ḥāšāk*. Cf. Cohen (1975: 266), Cohen (1964: 99), and Henshke (385-386). However, it appears to be (mis)used here as an oath.

tiḍrab il-ʿūd ki-Brāmīnū, "play the oud like Brāmīnū". The expression is likely euphemistic for a sexual act, and also alludes to the prominent role played by Jews in music and performance arts in early twentieth-century Tunisia. Brāmīnū, diminutive of Abraham, is another common JA nickname. As with previous JA nicknames, it is more likely that this refers to a generic "Jew" rather than to an historical individual.

[47] *mūsi rabbīnu*, "Moses our Teacher" (< Heb. מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ).

sqīq or *zqīq*, "arse" (?).

[48] *bitūḥ*, "vagina" (?).

[49] *il-mārka z-zrāna*, "bad brand" (?). *il-zrāna* (STA *il-žrāna*) means both "frog" and "violin." On *mārka* as in insult, see Ritt (2004: 176-177).

il-grāna, "The Livornese (Jews)," here for *sūq il-grāna*, the famous market, located in the medina of Tunis, that prospered with the influx of Jews from Livorno, Italy beginning in the 17th century.

[52] *brūsi barbār*, "a barbaric penalty" (< Fr. *procès barbare*). According to Mion (2012), *brūsī* in TA is not a "trial" but rather a "penalty" ("amende") due to semantic shift (183); *barbare* is speculative.

ʿām w-nār (*ʿām w-nhār*), lit. "a year and a day", here is idiomatic for "a terrible state." Cf. al-ʿArwī (v. 1): "خليقة عام ونهار: مخلوق ذو منظر مخيف" (203).

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ʾAḪU ŠARMŪṬE AND HIS RELATIVES: PRODUCTIVE GENEALOGIES FOR ARABIC EMBODIED CURSES

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Abstract. Insults and curses go hand-in-hand with the development of languages and civilizations, and constitute a field for multidisciplinary analysis. Sociology, gender studies, and linguistics are all involved in the investigation of this macro-topic. Insults and curses occupy an off-limits field, in comparison to the 1995 UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance: (1.3) "Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatisms and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments". In relation to Arabic language, we can proceed from the very old-fashioned Islamic curses toward the opponents of *dār al-Islām,* until we arrive to the modern hate speech and hollow insults, conveyed by social platforms. It is true that every addressee deserves a precise insult: *laˁn, sabb, šatm, or qaḏf.* Women and the human body play a leading role for communication effectiveness, for a sort of reverse ranking: insults give a privileged space to what is usually protected and sacred. Following a short introduction for framing the general question, I provide rude but effective examples of curses centered on women's body and their descendants, in both standard and colloquial Arabic.
Keywords: *Arabic insults and vulgarisms, embodied curses, sabb, šatm*.

Insulting and cursing: step-by-step from dysphemisms to hate speech

Bad or rude words are adopted for a precise aim: being offensive. Linguistically, such a choice takes place at utterance-level, it is named dysphemism and respond to a pragmatic function. If such a purpose is achieved beyond a reasonable limit, insults, *laˁnāt* or *misabbāt*, change into hate, *kurh* in Arabic. Demonstrating an intolerant or offensive attitude toward someone roots in some recurrent and elementary steps (Mazid 2012: 3-5):
  – creating a negative image of the other(s)
  – adopting a divisive attitude and language, based on the dicothomy "we vs. they"
  – accusing others of inferiority, compared to our superiority, morally first of all
  – accusing others of historical crimes or seizing of lands
     The mentioned steps are usually based on false facts and argumentations: any verification of the dogmatic statements is accurately avoided. It may (in case of previous humiliation or damages suffered) or may not (pure discrimination) exist a reason for the development of hate sentiments. In any case, an old Arabic saying still holds its validity: *əl- ˁēn tikrah əlli aḥsan minn-a*, the evil-eye hates what is better than it.

It is then evident that insulting and cursing roots in an ideological manipulation, which de-emphasizes both the good facets of the other and our bad-facets, so producing a misrepresentation of reality (Mazid 2012: 91).

Insulting and cursing in Arabic: terms and purposes

People insult each other when they lose their good manners and self-control. This is triggered by something specific that takes place during interaction and causes its victims, of course. Insults are inherent to social life, although belonging to its lowest manifestation. The main characteristic of insults is that they are bad or rude words, in addition to the accusation they may launch against a precise target. Classically, *sabb* and *šatm* equal expressions *qabīḥ al-kalām*, while accusation is specifically "launched by *qaḏf*". *Qaḏf* immediately targets female sexuality with the real purpose of dishonoring the male lineages, *ʾaṣabāt,* which stand behind it. The typical accusation addressed by *qaḏf* to a woman is fornication. Both the accused person and the accusatory have their prerequisite: it is requested that the woman never received the same accusation before, and the accuser must be preferably a capable Muslim men, or a men belonging to *ʾahl al-kitāb,* who lives in the *dār al-islām*, although exceptions are made for people of *dār al-ḥarb* personally benefiting from an official protection treaty set with *dār al-'islām*. Four witnesses are also required and in case the accuse reveals to be false, a Koranic punishment applies:
Surat an-Nūr XXIV, 4

"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses-lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient".[1]

Al-Ghazali in his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn* (III) provided a detailed analysis of the five human senses and their complementary organs, where the language emerges as the powerful tool that gives voice to a body organ, while the others are prisoners of their mutism. Of course, being so powerful, language must be regulated by Islamic precepts. According to Al-Ghazali, words and the language are ambiguous by nature, so that he defined four categories for them: purely beneficial; purely malefic; both beneficial and malefic at the same time; not beneficial nor malefic. Legally the third category poses challenges, and for this reason the philosopher made explicit a list of dangers caused by words that affect the moral rectitude. In fact, the jurist and philosopher listed twenty dangers (*ʾāfa*) that may arise from the adoption of insults toward others, and such original list has been recently commented by Ould al-Barra and Ould Cheikh (Ould al-Barra and Ould Cheikh in Larguèche 2004: 60–64). For what concerns us here, *ʾāfa* number two is partially interesting, number seven and eight are properly relevant as refer to the use of *gross mots* named *al-faḥs*, curse named *as-sabb*, verbal aggression named *baḏaʿat al-lisān*, and insults named *laʿnāt*. The mentioned *ʾāfa* number two, only partially interesting, expresses a *caveat* with regard to futile and useless speech named *fuḍūl al-kalām*, like the ones by which the word Allah is adopted in insults and curses. *ʾĀfa* number seven reveals the low morality of both the person who launches and receives the curse. In fact, Al-Ghazali

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[1]   https://quran.com/24/4

states that insults call for insults, so moral turpitude automatically affects all the parts involved. More, who makes use of *gross mots* will stand before the final judgment resembling a dog, or they will come out from a dog's belly. In detail for *ʾāfa* number eight, the term *laˁn* recalls the idea of being "turned away" from Allah, so it is correctly directed to unbelievers, *kafirīn* only. In any other use it manifests a very low moral profile, and it must be condemned.

The person who receives an insult suffers from the effect it generates on his/her violated honor. Consequences are more severe for Muslims, quite negligible for infidels. In fact, an interplay exists between insults effectiveness and (social) hierarchy. Who pronounces the curse or insult is called *nummām* (who betrays) *or liˁān* (who curses), particularly when s/he commits the so-called "linguistic sins", against God, the prophet, religion, or Muslim people in general. In those precise cases, insults change from a social manifestation to a legal question, where intentionality is seen to play a crucial role, and inevitably leads to punishment.

If we take punishment as opposed to tolerance, then the key-point is to establish a line between what and why something is admitted and the rest is not permitted. Concretely: who sets the red line between prohibition and tolerance? In classical ages, Power had this exclusive role and the Muslim authority or representatives were in charge for judging acts and sins. Nowadays, supranational organizations and agencies take care about this delicate aspect of human relations and cultures, for example the UNESCO Declaration well specifies what tolerance is by its "Article 1 – Meaning of tolerance":

> 1.1 Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. […] Tolerance is harmony in difference. […]
> 1.2 Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values. Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.
> 1.3 Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

Consequently, cursing clearly emerges as an intolerant attitude toward other people, their identity, religion, or beliefs.

The classic Islamic debate on *šatm*

There was not unanimous consent among the four Schools of Law on how to punish the act of vilification, *šatm*, against God, the Prophet or Muslim personalities. Historically, its legal prosecution was contextualized as apostasy-*ridda,* unbelief-*kufr,* or it may also lead to capital punishment. We read of some *ḥadīṯ* where *šatm* was not punished as severely as expected. For example, an episode collected in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* reports that Abu Bakr

was offended by a person, and the Prophet observed the fact, but did not support his Muslim friend. Instead, Muhammad got angry when his companion attempted to react. Another episode tells us that a certain Muhammad b. Saʿīd b. Ḥassān was executed in 770 because he added an extra statement (here in bold) to the original sentence "I am the seal of the prophets; there will not be any prophet after me **if God does not intend otherwise".** Both examples (E.I. supplement, *sub voce* "shatm") belong to the traditional literature and show that there was a running dispute among Law Scholars, with regard to the kind and degree of the punishment to implement. It seems that legal punishment was formally decided and agreed upon in a later era, from the 9th century onward, and particular attention to the topic was paid by Ibn al-Munḏhir in his *Al-Iǧmāʿ*. Probably, it is only from that time on that Sunni jurisprudence regularly extended the charge of unbelief to those who insult the Prophet or his Companions.

Nomina sunt consequentia rerum (?)

Names and naming are strictly linked to identity, both from an anthropological and legal point of view. We assign names to things and people in order to appreciate or stress their characteristics. The same can take place according to a negatively-marked aim. In such cases, altering a name or intentionally adopting a dysphemism toward someone manifests the purpose of violating his/her identity and right, albeit with different degrees of harmfulness. As remembered above, women's honor affects men's lineage. This is due to the first line importance detained by kinship and blood in (originally) tribal societies. The inventory of female offensive nick-names shows a creative (male) attitude toward the topic and it is quite globally shared across sexist cultures and civilizations. For example, the word 'prostitute' is adopted for offending women, and it may correspond to several Arabic terms (EALL, *s.v.* "insults" and "taboo").

Let's try to introduce a distinctive criterion. If the mother-progenitor is addressed, then we find:

šarmūṭa, *qaḥba*, *zāniya*, *mūmis*, *baǧīyya*, *ʿāhira* for "prostitute"

In case the daughter is targeted, then they'd rather call her:

bint al-hawā, "daughter of the pleasure"
*bint aš-šāriʿ, "daughter of the street"
*bint il-ḥarām, "daughter of the prohibited"
bint il-manyūka "daughter of the fucked woman"

Meanwhile, the following fit both the mother and the daughter:

qawwād, *ʿarṣ*, *dayyūṯ* for "pimp"
ya manyūka literally meaning "fucked" or "one on whom sex has been performed".

Religion related and Allah lexicon-insults as well are used for cursing, as they have a powerful identification strength. Such insults may generally address the other's religion,

like *yilˤan dīnak* and *yiḥriq dīnak* or may call God and religion in help for reinforcing the strength of one's malediction, like the citations[2] here below (Aida Kanafani-Zahar in Larguèche 2004:153-164):

(Allāh) yilˤan slīltak, (May Allah) maledict your lineage!
(Allāh) yiˤlan rūḥ elli khalaqak, (May Allah) maledict the soul of whom generated you
(Allāh) yiˤlan ˤiḏām elli khalaqak, (May Allah) maledict the bones of whom generated you
(Allāh) yiḥriq rūḥ/damm bayyak/ummak, (May Allah) burn the soul/the blood of your father/mother
(Allāh) yanˤel būk/dīn būk, (May Allah) maledict your father/the religion of your father (Roh in Larguèche 2004:81-101)

Additionally, Allah can also be invoked for:

– wishing anxiety to someone (Piamenta 1979:19):

Aḷḷa lā yrayyḥak " May God not give you peace of mind"
Aḷḷa yitˤib/yishghil bālak "May God trouble/engage your mind!"

– in case of an alleged misdeamour (ibidem: 177)

Aḷḷa lā ysallem fīk wa-la ˤaḏme, 'May God not keep a bone intact in you[r body]!"

– referring to or wishing death to someone:

Aḷḷa yākhdak " May God take you [to heaven]!" (ibidem: 47)
Lā yirḥam abūk " May [God] not have mercy on your father!" (ibidem: 76)
In shā-ḷḷa tmūt u-ʾatrayyaḥ minnak "I wish (lit.: If Allah wants) you die, leaving me in rest" (ibidem: 210)
ˤAm tibki? In shā-ḷḷa babki ˤalēk u babʾa balāk, "Are you crying? May I weep on you and stay without you" (ivi)

– if someone insists on leaving, in contradiction to one's wish:

In shā-ḷḷa rōḥa bala rajˤa, "I wish you go, and never come back. (i.e. die)" (ibidem, 211)

Men centered insults, intended as insults conveyed along a male lineage, are residual compared to those focused on women. It is also of interest to notice that when men or male lineages are addressed, Allah is constantly invoked. This rarely happens with women, whose body or nicknames alone are considered well sufficient for offending, cursing or maledicting. Examples of men-centered insults are:

ʾaḥu šarmūṭe "brother of a prostitute"

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[2] Transliteration here appears as adopted by the cited sources

ibn ḥarām "son of (the) prohibited*"*
Allāh yilʿan abūk "May God maledict your father"
Allāh yiḥriq rūḥ bayyak "May God maledict the soul of your father"
ya bu-l-fāsed "(God curse) the father of the dissolute (Roth in Larguèche 2004:81-101)"

Each of the three categories analyzed above – women, religion, and lineage based insults – carry a double weight, because they refer both to the individual and the group at the same time. Women and their body hold the major responsibility for the men's honor, so constitute the main source for inspiration of insults and curses, fancifully merged with productive genealogies. Effectively, women do generate genealogies, physically and symbolically. It is observed that if women are concerned, then taboos follow. Generally speaking, and for avoiding a deeper anthropological dissertation, which is not the core of this article, let's consider a taboo something "to be avoided" as refers to inviolability and may cause embarrassment, for some reasons. Taboos result blaspheme in the religious domain, obscene or vulgar in other spheres. In the following section and hoping not to disturb the sensitivity of anybody, I present some examples from the daily rudest language in use.

Women-centered insults: genealogies and embodied curses

Sins and religion have already been mentioned, women will immediately follow together with their sexuality. Insults mainly address men, but the scope is reached by referring to "their" women, their lineage or their religion. Insulting female sexuality by suspecting about the *ʿirḍ*-integrity of women, reflects on men and men's lineages. A Lebanese saying recites: *flaḥ ʿarḍak w stūr ʿirḍak*, "till your soil and hide your honor". In fact a respected woman, *muḥṣana*, must abide by the strict rules of *hayāʾ* (decency) and *ḥišma* (reserve), otherwise she will be pointed at as *iḫt ər-rājil*, or dishonored woman (Aida Kanafani-Zahar in Larguèche 2004:153-164). As for lineages, it is true that men are insulted for being sons or brothers of a vicious women-rarely the father is mentioned – and not for a characteristic of their own. A very common malediction is *yilʿan ʿirḍak* (alternatively: *yiḥriq* or *yifḍaḥ ḥarīmak*). Lineage may be intentionally addressed by some formulae that explicitly or implicitly refer to women's body

In practice, do genealogies reinforce communicative effectiveness? Historically, genealogy and kinship have been widely adopted in titles, and the names of many renowned intellectuals and philosophers – called *Ibn* or *ʾAbu fulān* – attest this cultural attitude. The practice of referring to parents by the name of their sons is called teknonymy and is pervasive across Arab countries. Analogously, but with a different scope, *ad hoc* expressions are built around exiting genealogies, and used for insulting and cursing. Many examples collected from the language in use confirm these cultural practices, albeit diverted from its original pure rationale.

Examples and a possible classification

The material collected and listed below is extremely rude, striking and bad-to-hear, but still allows a classification. Insults follow different templates and recurrent formulae, including or not: reference to body organs; reference to genealogies; Allah invocation. Such references can be explicit or implicit, obtaining a different degree of linguistic assault. The main typologies of insults can be sum up as follows:

> a) implicit reference to body organs, without invoking Allah;
> b) explicit reference to body organs without invoking Allah;
> c) genealogies without invocation of Allah;
> d) genealogies and/or body organs with explicit or implicit invocation of Allah.

Examples from the Levantine varieties [3]

a) Implicit reference to body organs, without invoking Allah

> *Badde nīkek,* "I wanna fuck you"
> *Badde nīk immek,* "I wanna fuck your mother"
> *Badde nīk iḫtek,* "I wanna fuck your sister"
> *Badde nīk wijjek*, "I wanna fuck your face"

b) Explicit reference to body organs without invoking Allah

> *kuss ʕirḍek* "(I penetrate) the vulva of your honor".
> *Ērī fīk,* " fuck (lit.: my dick inside you)"
> *Ēr fīk,* "id. (lit.: a dick inside you)"
> *Iḫtek bi-erī,* "fuck your sister (lit.: your sister with my dick)"
> *Iḫtek bizobdī,* "idem"

c) Genealogies without invoking Allah

> *ya-lli ummok fāžra* " oh you, whose mother is a woman without virtue" (Roh in Larguèche 2004:81-101)
> *ya-bn (il-mara) il-mitnāka/il-qaḥba* "you son of a whore!";
> *aḫū/iḫt-l manyūk/a* "brother/sister of the fucked" also with a positive meaning "fox, sly, smart person"

d) Body organs and Allah invocation

> *(Allāh yilʕan) kuss immak* "(God damn) the vulva of your mother"
> *(Allāh yilʕan) kuss iḫtak* ""(God damn) the vulva of your sister"

(Allāh *yilʕan) kuss mart abūk* "(God damn) the vulva of your father's wife"
(Allāh *yilʕan) kuss immak əl baghira əlli jibit-kon la-hon* "(God damn) the vulva of your mother's cow that brought you here" attested in Sothern Lebanon for insulting the military missions' staff tasked there

Examples from the Egyptian variety[4]

The two terms *miʕarraṣ* "pimp" and *garbūʕa* (from "jerboa", the name of a rodent of the desert) may replace *šarmūṭe* in Egypt.

Then, adopting the same distinction as above we find many other examples and expressions, for the indicated typology.

a) Explicit reference to body organs, without invoking Allah:

ma-lūš zobr, "he has no dick"
ṭīzak ḥamrā, "your ass is red"
ṭīz fīk, " fuck you"

b) Genealogies without invocation of Allah:

bint-il-garbūʕa, "daughter of the jerboa"
ibn-il-ḥimār, " son of the donkey"
ibən-kalb "son of a dog"
ibn-il-ʔarṣ, " son of a pimp"
ibn-il-wisḫa, "son of a dirty woman"
ibn-il-ʔaḥba, "son of a whore"
ibn-il-mitnāka, "son of the fucked woman"
ibn-il-labwa, "son of the lioness" (meaning: oversexed woman)
ibn-il-gazma, "son of a shoe" (associated with impurity, dirtiness)

c) Genealogies with invocation of Allah:

Allāh yinʕal abūk, "May God maledict your father"
Allāh yinʕal abū ommak, "May God maledict the father of your mother"

Conclusions

The 1995 UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance was proclaimed by The Member States of the United Nations alarmed by the current rise in: acts of intolerance violence, terrorism, xenophobia; aggressive nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism; exclusion, marginalization and discrimination directed against national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, refugees, migrant workers, immigrants and vulnerable groups within societies,

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[4] Sources: lexicon occasionally met on web social platforms; Egyptian male informants in Italy aged 19-30, fall 2018.

as well as acts of violence and intimidation committed against individuals exercising their freedom of opinion and expression. Although heavy, the previous list cannot be shortened, because all of the cited factors threaten the consolidation of peace and democracy, both nationally and internationally, and are obstacles to development.

The same alarm is today produced by identical factors, which also lead to linguistic violence. It is pervasive among social media, which in some ways may reflect human daily attitudes. It is sure that curses and insult linguistically represent a case-study, and its manifestation are only partially violence-driven. In many cases the supposed violence only marks sarcasm, youthful languages and exaggeratedly cheerful styles. In other cases, politics manipulates both young people and their language, in order to exploit some drifts, useful in unfair political competitions.

A part these preliminary observation, it is a fact that the adoption of women-centered insults prevails over any other kind of offensive language, and this is true for several idioms.

The analysis of insults and curses in Arabic offers a varied inventory of terms, their collocation, and combination. The resulting expressions reveal that the speakers' behavior and intentionality drive the linguistic choice that takes place at utterance-level. The mechanism that concretely gives rise to the act of insulting and vilification is called dysphemism. It may also happen thanks to an *ad hoc* teknonymy, where the circle of relatives goes far beyond parents and sons – as the term original meaning suggests – and the purpose is not to award titles, but to discredit someone. The aim of offending men is reached by targeting their women, with special reference to their *ʿirḍ* or (sexual) integrity, which represents a taboo. Women integrity is connected with kinship and blood lineage, and this recalls us the original tribal nature of Arabic cultures. If the target is being offensive and demonstrating intolerance, then speakers intentionally violate taboos. For that sake, elements usually protected and sacred deserve a first-line space. Anyway we still find residual tracks of taboos in the four typologies of insults, for which a classification has been offered above. Effectively, in the majority of cases when body organs are at stake, the invocation of Allah is avoided (*ērī fīk)* or just implicit (*[Allah yilʿan] kuss ʾimmak)*. On the contrary, invoking Allah is always present if a psychological state of mind is concerned (*Aḷḷa yitʿib/yishghil bālak)* or in case of life-death matters (*in shā-ḷḷa tmūt u-ʾatrayyaḥ minnak)*. As showed by the data I collected, the Levantine accent offers richer and more sophisticated variants of a same curse or insult. Egypt demonstrated to stay more "traditional", and its insults contain a lower degree of genealogy intertwining. In fact, many variants are offered for a same "*ibn il-…",* but the circle of relatives involved is closer and leaves space to the adoption of name of animals (*ibn-il-labwa)* and objects *(ibn-il-gazma)* instead.

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CURSES, INSULTS AND TABOO WORDS IN EGYPTIAN ARABIC: IN DAILY SPEECH AND IN WRITTEN LITERATURE

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Abstract. Egyptian Arabic is very rich in curses, insults, offensive language and taboo words. In Egyptian culture, as in many others, such words and phrases are more common in speech than in the written or literary language, but they occur with increasing frequency in written literature. Because there are Egyptian writers today who use curses and taboo words, more and more such words, traditionally absent from or rare in written texts, appear in print. The spread of the written word in social media and on the internet has also accelerated the use of curses and other taboo words and phrases in writing as well as in speech.

As is the case in other cultures, in speech as well as in writing, curses and obscenities may undergo changes and euphemisms are often used.

This paper, based on a larger study on non-standard Egyptian Arabic vocabulary, describes examples and types of curses and taboo words and phrases used in spoken Egyptian Arabic, the main formulas in which they appear and the social contexts in which they are used.

The curses, obscenities and taboo words described below have been collected and checked through intensive extended work with Egyptian informants and many Egyptian texts; they represent just a part of a much larger vocabulary that due to lack of space could not be quoted here, but will appear in my larger study.
Keywords: *Egyptian curses, Egyptian insults, taboo words, swear words, offensive language, Colloquial Egyptian Arabic, Egyptian literature, popular Egyptian culture*.

To Moshe Izuz

Moshe Izuz (born in Cairo in 1947, emigrated to Israel in 1961), wrote a seminar paper at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1970, nearly half a century ago, under the supervision of Prof. Moshe Piamenta, on curses in Egyptian Arabic, based on data collected mostly from informants, members of his family and friends of the family, all Egyptian Jews.

Izuz's seminar paper, containing several hundred curses and abuse words and phrases in Egyptian Arabic, is a pioneering study of modern Egyptian Arabic curses. Many years ago, he gave me the complete manuscript of his work, to be used in my studies on Egyptian Arabic; a considerable number of the curses and insults quoted below was originally taken from this unique seminar paper, and then re-checked with contemporary informants in Cairo. This article is dedicated to Moshe Izuz in friendship, gratitude and appreciation.

Preface

Curses, abuses, vulgar and taboo words, profane language and the like are a part of the vocabulary of Egyptian Arabic, as they are of any language spoken by any society or group of speakers. In Egyptian culture, as in many others, such words and phrases are more common in speech than in the written or literary language, although they are gradually penetrating into written literature as well. This article describes the most common ways of using curses and other vulgar words in Egyptian Arabic, with representative examples taken from data collected during my field work on this subject.

I first described some examples of this vocabulary in my PhD dissertation on *The Language of Dialogue in Modern Egyptian Drama* (Rosenbaum 1994: 100-105) and again in an article about the use of slang and coarse language in Egyptian Arabic (Rosenbaum 2004: 198-199). The current article reports on some of the findings from a larger study on non-standard Egyptian vocabulary (in preparation), based on intensive long-term work with informants as well as on written sources (in print and online).

I make no claim here to mention every curse or vulgar expression in Egyptian Arabic. This is not possible in the framework of a single article, and will be done in future works. My purpose here is to demonstrate representative and common manifestations of this vocabulary, as used in the spoken language and in literary texts.

Apart from my two above-mentioned publications, that touched on this subject briefly, several other studies deal with it as well. Many examples appear in Moshe Izuz (1970) mentioned above. Relevant entries are scattered throughout Badawi and Hinds' *Dictionary* (1986). Stewart (1997) gives numerous examples of cognate curses (see section 2.6 below), and some examples of curses and abuses appear in Stewart (1994: 59-61). In his article on grammaticalization in Egyptian Arabic, Woidich (1995) gives examples of this phenomenon in curses, and in his study on intensifiers in Egyptian Arabic (2018) he gives examples of intensifiers that originated in words of abuse. ʕIzzat 2000 (mainly 353-363) contains examples of curses and insults. Iris Mostegel, Manfred Woidich and myself contributed vocabulary on menstruation in Egyptian Arabic for Ritt-Benmimoun, Prochazka et al. (2009). Zawrotna gives many examples of body-parts vocabulary (2014), and of insult intensifiers (2018). Al-Minšāwī recently (2017) published a collection of words and phrases entitled *Qāmūs al-šatāʔim al-miṣriyya* ("Dictionary of Egyptian Curses"), but in spite of its promising title, many of the entries in this collection are not curses, and most of the words of abuse commonly used in Egyptian Arabic are not mentioned at all.

It should also be noted that today there are many digital publications on the internet that deal with Egyptian curses or quote them; some of them are not accurate or reliable, but all may serve as materials for further research (they are not quoted here due to lack of space).

Bearing in mind the limited scope of this article, I will briefly quote some relevant definitions dealing with curses and coarse language, mainly by Hughes and Jay, in order to place the Egyptian data in a wider context that demonstrates the universality of the phenomenon of curses, words of abuse and coarse vocabulary.

Without disregarding the importance of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, from which I quote in this study, the role of informants, in contributing materials and in confirming data found in literature, has been indispensable. People do not often tend to talk about the subject discussed here, and I am grateful to all of my informants who, regardless

of their own attitude toward using such a vocabulary, answered my questions with admirable patience and complete commitment.

1. Introduction
1.1. Some definitions

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (*OED*) a Curse (noun) is, among other definitions,

> An utterance consigning, or supposed or intended to consign, (a person or thing) to spiritual and temporal evil, the vengeance of the deity, the blasting of malignant fate, etc. It may be uttered by the deity, or by persons supposed to speak in his name, or to be listened to by him.

> And

> The uttering of a malediction with invocation or adjuration of the deity; a profane oath, an imprecation.

> According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (COED 2011), a "Curse" (noun) is

> 1. A solemn appeal to a supernatural power to inflict harm on someone or something; a cause of harm or misery. 2. An offensive word or phrase used to express anger or annoyance.

The term "curse", however, is often used with a wider range of meanings; the following are a few attempts at encompassing these meanings. Hughes (2015: 114-115) defines "curse" as

> the appeal to a supernatural power to inflict harm or evil on a specific person [...]. *Cursing* now has the generalized sense of a profane or obscene expression of disgust, anger, or surprise, especially in American English, where it is commonly used as a synonym for *swearing*.

Jay, in his book "Why We Curse" (2000: 9) that presents a neuro-psycho-social (NPS) theory of speech, broadens the scope of this term, as used in that book and, following his usage, also in this article:

> Cursing, as the term is used here, refers to several uses of offensive speech. Technically speaking, *cursing* is wishing harm on a person (e.g., *eat shit and die*). But the term cursing is used comprehensively here to include categories such as: swearing, obscenity, profanity, blasphemy, name calling, insulting, verbal aggression, taboo speech, ethnic-racial slurs, vulgarity, slang, and scatology.

Jay (2000: 9-10) adds that cursing is the utterance of emotionally powerful, offensive words, and that it enables a speaker to produce an emotional impact on a listener, an impression that can be positive or negative. In order to avoid repetitiveness, Jay uses the terms *cursing, dirty words, taboo words, offensive speech, swearing* interchangeably. Likewise, some of these terms and others will be used interchangeably below. In an earlier work, *Cursing in America* (1992) Jay remarks that "Many dirty words are emotion intensifiers" (11); "Taboo words also intensify descriptions" (63); "Any word could be intensified with additional taboo words" (209).

Taboo "generally describes that which is unmentionable because, on a hierarchical scale, it is either ineffably sacred, like the name of God, or unspeakably vile, like cannibalism or incest" (Hughes 2015: 462). "Taboo" (adjective) is "prohibited or restricted by social custom" (COED 2011); "abuse" (noun) is, among other definitions, "the improper use of something" and "insulting and offensive language" (COED 2011); "profane" (adjective) is "not respectful of religious practice", and when referring to language is "blasphemous or obscene" (COED 2011). In scholarly writing these (and other related) terms are discussed at length.

Profane (verb) means "to treat (something sacred) with abuse, irreverence, or contempt", and profanity "is based on a religious distinction. To be profane means to be secular or behaving outside the customs of religious belief. To be profane means to be ignorant or intolerant of the guidelines of a particular religious order" (Jay 1992: 3).

The verb "swear", according to CALD, means "to use words that are rude or offensive as a way of emphasizing what you mean or as a way of insulting someone or something"; as noted by Jay (2000: 9-10) and mentioned above, "swear", "curse" and other related terms are being used here interchangeably.

Curses, abusive language, coarse and taboo words and the like, together with non-standard language (what people may call "improper language" or "grammatical mistakes") are often generally referred to as "bad language". A more limited term, that excludes "grammatical mistakes", is "dirty language". Some modern scholars, however, see positive aspects in cursing and in the use of other forms of bad or dirty language, as conveyed by the first part of Byrne's book title (2017): "Swear!ng is Go*d F*r You". In the outset of their book entitled *Bad Language* Andersson and Trudgill state that there must be something good about "bad language":

> If the things called bad language were all bad and nothing but bad, people would stop using them and eventually they would disappear. The persistence of slang, swearing and all the rest calls for some kind of explanation. There must be some positive values connected with all this bad language. (Andersson and Trudgill 1992: 8).

Ljung (2011: 4) states that despite different views on what swearing actually is, studies of it all set up certain basic criteria that have to be met in order for an utterance to count as swearing:

> There is often considerable agreement concerning the majority of these criteria and many or even most of their creators would agree with most – but not all – of my own four criteria for what constitutes swearing. These criteria are:

1. Swearing is the use of utterances containing taboo words.
2. The taboo words are used with non-literal meaning.
3. Many utterances that constitute swearing are subject to severe lexical, phrasal and syntactic constraints which suggest that most swearing qualifies as formulaic language.
4. Swearing is emotive language: its main function is to reflect, or seem to reflect, the speaker's feelings and attitudes.

Judging by my extended research and intensive work with Egyptian informants on this subject, and by my long experience in Cairo, I believe that the criteria as formulated by Ljung are valid for Egyptian curses and insults, too.

1.2. Modern Egyptians "curse a lot"

Occasionally I hear Egyptians, when referring to curses, define themselves as belonging to a nation that curses "a lot". Although "a lot" is a relative concept that can be measured only by confronting Egyptian linguistic behavior with and comparing it to the linguistic behavior of other nations, this attitude has also been expressed also in the observations of foreign and Egyptian writers interested in Egyptian society and its customs and traditions. Lane, in his famous *Account* (2003 [1836]: 284-285), refers to this:

> The generality of the Egyptians are easily excited to quarrel; particularly those of the lower orders, who, when enraged, curse each other's fathers, mothers, beards, etc.; and lavish upon each other a variety of opprobrious epithets; such as "son of the dog, pimp, pig," and an appellation which they think still worse than any of these, namely, "Jew." When one curses the father of the other, the latter generally retorts by cursing the father and mother, and sometimes the whole household, of his adversary. They menace each other; but seldom proceed to blows. […] I have also witnessed many instances of forbearance on the part of individuals of the middle and lower classes, when grossly insulted: I have often heard an Egyptian say, on receiving a blow from an equal, "God bless thee!" "God requite thee good!" "Beat me again." In general, a quarrel terminates by one or both parties saying, "Justice is against me:" often, after this, they recite the Fát'hah together; and then, sometimes, embrace and kiss one another.

Clot-Bey, at nearly the same time (1840: 383), makes a similar observation:

> Les musulmans ne blasphèment jamais; les imprecations contre la Divinité les rempliraient d'horreur.
> Le vocabulaire des injures est très-riche. Il en est qui sont trop obscènes pour pouvoir être citées. Ils se traitent souvent de hanzir (cochon), thôr (boeuf). L'une de leurs fortes injures est: fils de chrétien ou fils de juif. Ils feignent quelquefois, et c'est le plus violent des outrages, de cracher sur la personne qu'ils invectivent.
> Muslims never blaspheme; imprecations against the Divinity would fill them with horror. The vocabulary of insults is very rich. There are some that are too obscene to be quoted. They often refer to themselves as hanzir (pig), thôr (beef). One of their harsh

insults is: "son of a Christian" or "son of a Jew". They sometimes feign, and it is the most violent of outrages, to spit on the person whom they insult.

I must admit that Egyptians indeed often seem to utter curses and abuse words and phrases, but this generalization needs to be modified, because such utterances often have various functions and their purpose is not always to offend or insult, as will be shown below. As for blasphemy, it is true that Muslim Egyptians do not curse Allāh or the Prophet, but they may curse their own religion (although they usually do not really mean it).

Many curses and insults are common to speakers of Arabic in various countries and regions in the Arabic-speaking world, while many others are unique to Egyptians. Nearly all of the curses and insults are phrased and performed in Colloquial Egyptian Arabic (CEA), but when they are reduced to writing this is often done in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

1.3. Traditional Egyptian *radḥ*

A few words must be said about the Egyptian popular art of *radḥ*, "an ancient form of set insults which is the domain of women addressing other women in street battles of verbiage" (Marsot 1993: 189). The verb is *radaḥ*, but since this tradition of insulting is practiced by women it usually appears in the feminine (*raḍaḥit/ tirḍaḥ*). Although indeed common among women, a woman may address *radḥ* insults to a man, but not vice versa.

The repertory of *radḥ* contains many set insults, such as *ya ʔibra miṣaddiyya/ gamb il-ḥēṭ marmiyya* ("you rusty needle/ thrown aside by the wall"), and *Aḥmad ya ʕUmar* (lit.: "Aḥmad oh ʕUmar") that conveys strong disagreement, contempt and disrespect, pronounced with lengthening the words. This tradition of insulting was common among women of lower strata of society; it has become less frequent, but still may be heard today. The most famous abusive phrase in this style today is perhaps *Aḥmad ya ʕUmar* (more on *radḥ* see Marsot [1993]).

Part 1: Curses and abuses in the spoken language
2. Structure and formulas of curses and insults

Although a speaker may use a curse or an insult of his or her own invention, in most cases these are chosen from the rich repertory that already exists in the speaker's language. The following are common curse-formulas, with typical examples.

2.1. A note on grammaticalization

Some common components of curses and insults may undergo a process of grammaticalization, concisely defined by *Macmillan Dictionary* as "the process of language change by which words lose some or all of their lexical meaning and start to fulfill grammatical functions", which is not discussed here; on grammaticalization in curses in Egyptian Arabic see Woidich 1995. Several words, some of them obscene, that are used as

intensifiers in Egyptian curses have gone through a process of grammaticalization, too; this has been recently described by Woidich 2018 and Zawrotna 2018, and will be mentioned here only briefly.

2.2. Verbal sentences and the presence of God

In curses God is either mentioned or implied, since they contain an appeal to God to be involved in fulfilling the curse. Curses appear in verbal sentences in which God is the subject even when He is not mentioned. Some insults may also appear in verbal sentences in which God is the subject (see below *Allāh yiḫayyibak* in this section), but in most cases they appear in nominal sentences (see below, section 2.4.).

Many curses in this group start with the word Allāh ("God") or its synonym *rabbina* ("Our Lord"), followed by a verb in the third person singular in the imperfect (unlike curses in classical Arabic in which the verb appears in the perfect preceding the subject), as in the common curse *Allāh yiḫrib bētak* ("lit.: "may God destroy your home/house"); this curse actually refers to the destruction of the whole family, and thus a more accurate translation would be "may God destroy your family".

In some common curses the word Allāh is absent, but it is obvious that He is the subject of the sentence, as in the common version of the latter example: *yiḫrib bētak* "may [God] destroy your family".

Many curse and abuse formulas may be intensified by adding family members to the formula and mentioning one or more ancestors of the family, as in the following variations on *yiḫrib bētak*: *yiḫrib bēt ʔummak* ("may [God] destroy your mother's family"); *yiḫrib bēt ʔabūk* ("may [God] destroy your father's family"); *yiḫrib bēt il-ʔumm ʔilli gabitak* ("may [God] destroy the family of the mother who brought you [to the world]"); *yiḫrib bēt ʔilli ḫallifūk* ("may [God] destroy the family of those who created you"). Instead of just using the short insult/curse *yinʕal šaklak* ("may [God] curse your appearance"), one may intensify it by adding *abu*: *yinʕal ʔabu šaklak* (lit.: "may [God] curse the father [or: the owner] of your appearance").

This method may be used in an exaggerated way; "the more you add the stronger it becomes", commented one of my informants, referring to the use of a long chain of family members mentioned in curses. Some examples given below are based on *ḥaṭallaʕ maytīn ʔummak* (lit.: "I shall dig out the deceased [ancestors] of your mother"), meaning: "I shall give you hard time, I'll make your life miserable" (the word *mayyitīn* in this formula is usually pronounced *maytīn*). This is an abuse formula which appears in a verbal sentence and in which God is not involved; it starts with a verb in the first person singular: *ḥaṭallaʕ maytīn ʔilli gabūk* ("I'll dig out the deceased of those who have brought you [to the world]"); *ḥaṭallaʕ maytīn ʔilli ḫallifūk* ("I'll dig out the deceased of those who have created you"); *ḥaṭallaʕ maytīn ʔumm-u ʔumm ʔabu ʔumm-u ʔummak* (lit.: "I shall dig out the deceased of the mother of the mother of the father of your mother's mother"). Another chain, with more components as curse intensifiers, is: *ḥaṭallaʕ talāta maytīn kuss ummak*; *kuss ʔumm-u ʔumm-u ʔummak ʕala ʔumm-u ʔumm-u ʔummak* (on *kuss* see below, section 4.3.).

Identical in structure to *yiḫrib bētak*, *yinʕal/ yilʕan dīnak* ("may [God] curse your religion") is a very common curse that has a strong impact on the addressee. Cursing the addressee's religion (in most cases, Islam) is regarded as very offensive; when I asked an

Egyptian why this curse is used when the addresser and the addressee are both Muslims, he said that by this curse the addresser excludes the addressee from Islam and thus the latter is no longer regarded as a true believer.

Some words that are used in curses and abuses, such as *dīn* ("religion") and *kuss* ("cunt") may also be used as curse intensifiers, as in *ʔibn-i dīn kalb* (lit.: "you son of a dog's religion") meaning "you bloody son of a dog", and *ḥaṭallaʕ dīn ʔummak* (lit.: "I'll dig out your mother's religion", regarded as very coarse because both the mother and the religion of the addressee are mentioned). The word *kuss* ("cunt"; see below, section 4.3.) may be added plenty of times to curses in order to intensify them, as in *Allāh yinʕal ʔabu kuss ʕumm-u ʔumm il-yōm ʔilli šuft-i fīh wišš-i kuss ʔummak* ("may God curse the father [also: 'owner'] of the cunt of the mother of the day in which I saw the 'front' [also: 'hymen'] of your mother's cunt"). (On *kuss* see below, section 4.3.; on *dīn* as an intensifier in curses see Zawrotna 2018).

The above mentioned curses imply a wish that something bad happen to the cursed person. Another version of such wishes is a formula wishing that something good should not happen to the cursed, as in *Allāh/rabbina ma yibaššarak bil-ḫēr* ("may God/our Lord not bring you good news"), said to someone who has delivered bad news, versus *Allāh/rabbina yibaššarak bil-ḫēr* ("may God bring you good news"), said to someone who has delivered good news.

Some other examples of the latter version are *Allāh la yikassibak* ("may God not let you earn money"); *Allāh la yiraggaʕak* ("may God not let you return"); *Allāh la yirḥamak* ("may God not have mercy on you"); *Allāh la yiwarrina ḫilʔitak* ("may God not let us see your ugly face [again]").

Another formula of this sort is *ma ʕāš ʔilli…* ("he who… may not live", i.e. "die"). For example: *ma ʕāš ʔilli yiʔūl ʕalēk miš rāgil* ("may he who says that you are not a man not live").

The phrase *Allāh yigazīk* may be understood in positive as well as negative senses, depending on the context: "may God reward you [for the good thing you have done]"), or "may God punish you [for the bad thing you have done]".

The following common phrase, which looks like a curse of this group, is in fact used as an insult: *Allāh yiḫayyibak* (lit.: "may God cause you to fail, may God make you fail"), actually means "you are a failure, you good-for-nothing".

Another group of curses and insults starts with a verb in the perfect with imperfect meaning, as in curse formulas in classical Arabic. This verb is *gih* ("to come"), in the suffixed form *ga-*, in the perfect with pronominal suffixes, meaning (lit.) "may… come to…", i.e. "may… befall…", as in the very common curse *gatak nīla* ("may a disaster befall you"). This verb may appear in the singular or the plural, in the masculine or the feminine, but sometimes with changes in grammatical agreement due to a process of grammaticalization (see Woidich 1995: 266). On the term *nīla* (lit.: "indigo") see below, section 7.

Many terms that are semantically related to various kinds of trouble, such as pains or diseases, may follow *ga*, for example *gak wagaʕ f ʔalbak/baṭnak* ("may you get a pain in your heart/ belly"). This formula may appear without an overt verb, and thus looks like a nominal sentence, as in: *wagaʕ f ʔalbak/baṭnak* ("[may you get] a pain in your heart/ belly").

A secondary version of the formula *gatak…* is *katak…*, with /k/ replacing /g/, as in *katak nīla* (see also below, section 13.2.).

2.3. Verbal sentences and the presence of God: the verb *laʕan/naʕal*

The verb *laʕan* ("curse"), also with reversed root *naʕal*, is used extensively in Egyptian Arabic. However, as opposed to curse formulas in MSA that start with the verb in the perfect, as in *laʕana -llāhu ʔabāk* ("may God curse your father"), in Egyptian Arabic the imperfect *yilʕan/yinʕal* is used, as in the very common curse *yilʕan/yinʕal ʔabūk* ("may [God] curse your father").

An enlarged and thus intensified version of this curse is *yilʕan/yinʕal salsafīl/sansafīl ʔabūk* ("may [God] curse the dynasty of your father", i.e. "may [God] curse your father and all of your forefathers").

Another version of this formula starts with the passive participle instead of the perfect, as in *manʕūl ʔabūk* ("may your father be cursed"), which is identical in meaning to *yinʕal abūk*.

2.4. Nominal sentences

Some insults appear in verbal sentences in which God is the subject (see above, sections 2.2. and 2.3.), but in most cases they appear in nominal sentences, as observed by Parkinson (1984: 200-201):

> While on a very few occasions terms of abuse may be heard as the predicate of equational sentences (*'inta xawal* 'You are a homosexual,' *'inta ʔibn kalb* 'You are a son of a dog,' […] by far the most common practice is to use them as terms of address, preceded by the vocative particle *ya*.

2.5. Mother and children in nominal sentences

Many insults refer to the addressee or addressees as the son, the daughter or the children of a mother who has a negative character, trait, profession and the like.

In this kind of offensive language the negative trait is not ascribed directly to the addressee, but rather to his or her mother. In fact, however, it is understood that it is the addressee him/herself who possesses these negative characteristics, intensified by referring them to the mother, implying that they are passed on by inheritance.

Thus, for example, the common abuse *ʔibn-i -š-šarmūṭa* ("son of a prostitute") implies that the addressee is not only a descendant of a woman of the lowest level, but also shares her bad character traits.

This is evident in insults in which, rather than calling someone *ġabi* or *ʕabīṭ* (both meaning "stupid"), the common abuse phrases *ʔibn- -l- ġabiyya* and *ʔibn-i l-ʕabīṭa* (in both cases, lit.: "you son of a stupid woman") are used. Another, very coarse, example is *ya -bn-i -l-hayga* ("you son of a horny woman"), meaning in fact "what a horny guy you are".

A common and clear example of this sort is often heard by spectators during a football match (either in the stadium or in front of the television): *ya -bn-i- l-ʔanāniyya* (lit.: "you son of an egoist woman"). This is usually shouted at a player who prefers trying to score a goal by himself instead of passing the ball to a player who is in a better position

in the field. It is obvious that this phrase means "you egoist", or even "you bloody egoist", said in anger and deep frustration, and the role of the addressee's mother is just to intensify the abuse, which in this formula is stronger than just saying *ya ʔanāni* ("egoist").

All insults aimed at males can be addressed to females, too. For example: *ya bint-i -l-ʕabīṭa* (lit.: "you daughter of a stupid woman'), i.e. "you idiot".

Some versions of this formula may be understood as either positive or negative, depending on the context. Thus, for example, *ya -bn-i -n-naṣḥa* (lit.: "you son of a smart woman") may mean "what a smart guy" but also "you nitwit", especially in reference to someone who thinks that he is smart or pretends to be smart.

The common abuse phrase *ʔibn-il-kalb* ("son of a dog"), in the version *ʔibn-i kalb* (without the definitive article), may also have two contradictory meanings, negative and positive, as in *ṭaʕmu ʔibn-i kalb*: "it tastes awful" or "it tastes wonderful [bloody good]".

2.6. A note on cognate curses in Egyptian Arabic

A cognate curse is defined by Devin Stewart in his extensive study on this subject as follows:

> This category of curses, root-echo responses to a number of common verbs and expressions, represents an important type of EA [Egyptian Arabic] formulaic speech. (Stewart 1997: 327-328).

This type of curse is very common in Egyptian Arabic, spoken and written. A famous example is the reply to the utterance *baḥibbik* ("I love you", to a female), a declaration to which the addressee who is not interested (or pretends not to be interested) may respond with the collocation *ḥabbak burṣ* ("may a gecko love you [but not me]"), echoing the verb *ḥabb* ("to love") used by the addresser. A speaker may echo a word he or she has used and promptly use both in one breath, as in *ʔimši, mašaš fi rukabak* ("go away, [may God] cast decay in your knees"). For more examples see Rosenbaum (1994: 103-105); Stewart (1997).

3. Curses and insults aimed at oneself

Great disappointment or frustration may lead one to curse oneself. The following, conjugated in the singular and the plural, with *ḥaẓẓ* and *baḥt* as interchangeable variations, are very common:

gatni nīla fi ḥaẓẓi/ baḥti -l-hibāb ("may I be cursed because of my bad luck" [lit.: "may a trouble befall me because of bad luck"]); *gatna nīla fi ḥaẓẓina/ baḥtina -l-hibāb* ("may we be cursed because of our bad luck"). The following is an example from a written text: جتنا نيلة في بختنا الهباب("may we be cursed because of our bad luck"; al-Qaʕīd 1994: 8). In literature, as in life, people may refer to cursing themselves, as in the following quotation: ونلعن ونسب حظنا عشان ربنا خلقنا فقرا)"we curse and abuse our luck because our Lord has created us poor"; al-Qaʕīd 1994: 75).

People may be more specific when cursing themselves, wishing that God take their lives: ربنا ياخدني يا شيخة ويريحني منكم)"may the Lord take me [i.e. take my life], woman, and set me free from you"; Maʕāṭī 2009: 46).

A similar self-curse is *rabbina yaḫudni ʕan wiššukum* ("may our Lord take me away from your faces [so I'll not have to see them]"). A simpler version is *rabbina yaḫudi* ("may God take me").

The perception of death as a refuge from the troubles of earthly existence appears at the end of a well-known *ḥadīṯ* quoting the Prophet, that also has been used as a part of a supplication to God:

اجعل الموت راحة لي من كل شر.

Make death a rest for me from every evil. (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, No. 4903).

There is also a self-reference version of the formula *ḥaṭallaʕ maytīn ʔummak* (see above, section 2) in which the speaker complains about the hard time he had; in this case, the verb *ṭiliʕ* appears in the perfect, in the first person singular in the beginning of the formula: *ṭiliʕ maytīn ʔummi* ("I have been through hell, I had a very hard time").

One may curse oneself conditionally, as part of a statement of intent, as in *ʔabʔa - bn-i wiša law ʔitdaḫḫalt-i fi -l-mawḍuʕ da tāni* ("I shall be [regarded as the] son of dirty woman [i.e. "prostitute"] if I interfere in this matter again"), or *ʔabʔa ḫawal law…* ("I shall be [regarded as a] homosexual if…").

When committing oneself to telling the truth, one may conditionally curse oneself, in case of a lie. For example, *ya rabb ʔaʕma law kunt-i bakzib* ("oh God, may I become blind if I am lying"); *rabbina yaḫudni law bakdib ʕalēk* ("may God take me [i.e. may I die] if I am lying to you". Other formulas are also possible, as *yiḫrib bēt ʔ]aummi law…* ("may [God] destroy the family of my mother if…"), and so on.

Likewise, when predicting something that according to the addresser will happen in the future, he may utter a curse on himself that would apply in case this does not happen, as in *ʔabʔa ḫawal law ʔinta nagaḥt is-sanā-di* ("I should be regarded as homosexual if you succeed this year").

People sometimes describe themselves in insulting terms, for example "*ʔana ḥmār*" (lit. "I am a donkey"), i.e. "I am stupid", or "*ʔana -bn-i sittīn gazma*" (lit. "I am the son of sixty shoes"), i.e. "I am damn stupid", after making a big mistake or something very stupid.

4. Egyptian curses and insults: hard core

Egyptians are most offended when their religion is cursed (see example in section 2.2.) and when their mothers are cursed or insulted. The vocabulary that is regarded as the most offensive and taboo contains words and phrases that refer to sexual intercourse, the genitals (mainly the woman's), prostitution and masturbation. Some items of this vocabulary may be used jokingly among close friends and even affectionately inside families, but when said by strangers are regarded as very coarse and offensive and are received with hostility.

4.1. The verb *nāk* ("fuck") and its synonyms

In English, "the most powerfully taboo term for copulation over several *centuries, fuck* is still regarded as unmentionable by the vast majority of middle-class people. It was unlisted in standard dictionaries from 1728 until 1965" (Hughes 2015: 188). The verb *nāk/yinīk* is the Egyptian counterpart of "fuck", and although appearing in earlier texts of Arabic literature, it was never legitimized and is still regarded as extremely obscene and a word to be avoided in conversation.

The verb *nāk* has several synonyms in Egyptian Arabic, some of which are very vulgar while others are regarded as milder. Vulgar synonyms are *ḫayyaṭ* (lit.: "sew"); *naṭṭ/yinuṭṭ (ʕala)* (lit.: "jump [on]"); *rikib/yirkab* (lit.: "ride"). The word *nām/yinām maʕa* (:lit.: "sleep with"), is less coarse, and the phrase *māris il-gins* ("to have sexual intercourse") is neutral and often used in writing.

There are several expressions in CEA that are derived from the root NYK in various forms and conjugations, and all are regarded as obscene, as in the following examples that also contain the forms *ʔistanāk* ("get fucked") and *nayyik* ("make someone fuck, cause to fuck"):

nīk wala tastanīk wala tiʕallim zibbak il-kasal (lit.: "fuck and don't get fucked and don't teach your prick to be lazy"), i.e. "you should have lots of sex, fuck as much as you can".

nīk ir-rāgil wuma tnikš-i kalāmu (lit.: "fuck the man but don't fuck his words"), i.e. "you should respect a man's words".

nayyiku -n-namla (lit.: "made him fuck an ant"), i.e. "gave him a hard time".

The word *mitnāk*, the passive participle of *ʔitnāk* ("get fucked"), is a vulgar term referring to a man who is sodomized (on the feminine form *mitnāka* see below, section 4.4.).

The coarse verb *ʔitmanyik*, also derived from the root NYK, means "to mess about, to do things improperly and not as expected"; the verbal noun is *manyaka* as in *baṭṭal manyaka* ("stop messing about").

The verbal noun *nēk* has become an intensifier in Egyptian Arabic, meaning "very much" (Woidich, 2018; Zawrotna 2018: 119, 124-125). The same process has happened with the verb *fašaḥ* (:lit.: "spread one's legs"). It often refers to a woman spreading her legs during sexual intercourse, and thus is semantically close to *nāk*. This is why this word is regarded as very obscene. The mere action of spreading the legs by women is regarded in Egyptian society as rude, impolite and immoral. Therefore women, when riding a motorcycle behind a man, almost always, except for when carrying a child who is then positioned between the woman's front and the man's back, turn their body aside, with both legs hanging out and positioned at one side of the motorcycle, rather than positioning them on either side of the motorcycle. Like *nēk*, the verbal noun *fašḥ* has also become an intensifier in Egyptian Arabic, with the same meaning as *nēk* (Woidich, 2018; Zawrotna 2018).

4.2. Body parts and secretions

Names of hidden body parts and secretions, especially those used in the colloquial and slang, are regarded as coarse and often are replaced by euphemisms; here we mention only a few such nouns, in addition to those mentioned in other sections (on this type of terminology see Zawrotna 2014; Ritt-Benmimoun, Prochazka et al. 2009 [on menstruation]).

Children are taught by adults to use euphemisms, such as *ḥamāma* (lit. "pigeon") for vulgar *zibb* or *zubr* ("prick, penis") used in the colloquial. Likewise, *kakā* (or *kāka*) and *bibī* are used instead of the coarse *ḥara* ("shit") and *šiḥaḥ* ("piss"). Still, young children sing mockingly *ya -bu šaḥḥa gnān* ("you who have an amazing urination"), alluding to Farīd al-Aṭraš's famous song *ya -bu ḍiḥka gnān* ("you who have an amazing laughter"). For some secretion terms see the video clip *ʕĀyiz tiṭarṭar*).

The vulgar word *ṭīz* ("arse", in the feminine, also pronounced *ṭīẓ*) is used in some expressions which are regarded as coarse because of this word, not because of the message they convey, for example *ṭīzu tʔīla* (lit.: "his arse is heavy"), meaning "stuck in one place without moving", and *ṭīzak ḥamra* (lit.: "your arse is red"), meaning "you are wrong, what you say or do appears to be wrong".

4.3. The "mother of obscene words": *kuss* ("cunt")

Kuss is the colloquial taboo word denoting "vagina", in Egyptian Arabic as well as in other Arabic dialects. "Cunt", the parallel of *kuss* in English, "has been the most seriously taboo word in English for centuries, remaining so for the vast majority of users" (Hughes 2006: 110). *Kuss* has a similar position in Egyptian Arabic; it is regarded as extremely taboo by almost all speakers. It appears in several insults that are regarded as highly obscene.

The most common, perhaps "basic", expression in this group is *kuss ʔummak* (lit.: "your mother's cunt"). Without any explicit reference, this insult attacks the addressee's mother's character and morals, and consequently those of the addressee himself. There is general unanimity among Egyptians that the word *kuss* should not be uttered in respected company, yet the expression *kuss ʔummak* is one of the most commonly used insults in Egyptian Arabic, though mostly by men and usually when women are not present. As is the case with some other very vulgar and taboo words, using the word *kuss* may also reflect familiarity and close relations among friends (see below, section 5.1.).

The collocation *kuss ʔummak* (كس امك) is also pronounced *kuss-ummak* and is nowadays often regarded and thus written as one word: *kussummak* (كسمك; see below, section 12.6.).

The word kuss appears in several offensive expressions, including the following:

Kuss ʔummak ʔaḥmar (lit.: "your mother's cunt is red"). This expression implies that the addrresee's mother is sexually very active.

Kuss ʔummak ʔaḥmar ṭarabīši (lit.: "your mother's cunt is dark red"). This is an intensified version of the previous insult, with the addition of *ṭarabīši*, derived from the word *ṭarbūš*, a red hat, signifying its dark red color. This insult has given rise to the following call uttered by young boys:

Kuss ʔummak ʔaḥmar ṭarabīši/ gēt ʔanīku ma rḍīši ("your mother's cunt is dark red/ I came to fuck it but it did not want").

One of the coarsest literary texts ever written in Egyptian Arabic is Nagīb Surūr's *Kuss Ummiyyāt* ("Mother's cunt matters"), uploaded to the internet in text and audio (Surūr, *Kuss Ummiyyāt* [text]; Surūr, *Kuss Ummiyyāt* [audio]). See also below, section 14.

4.3.1. The disappearing organ

A word that is rarely mentioned or appears in conversations is *zanbūr*, ("clitoris"). Due to ancient tradition, this organ is usually removed at an early age, in order to preserve the moral behavior of women when they grow up. In spite of objections to this act in our time and the campaigns to stop it, many still insist on carrying it out.

Interestingly, after the clitoris has been cut, it has no name and women no longer refer to it. It just "does not exist".

Men sometimes mention this term when they jokingly compare the penis to the clitoris: *zubr-i da walla zanbūr?* ("is this a penis or a clitoris?", i.e. "you have a small penis").

4.4. Words for prostitute

Terms denoting "prostitute" are common in curses and insults:

> Terms for prostitutes form perhaps the most powerful and extensive word-field for abuse and swearing in the language, emerging consistently throughout its history. (Hughes 2015: 364).

In Egyptian Arabic, as in other languages, there is more than one term that means "prostitute". The most vulgar word in this group is *šarmūṭa*, literally "a piece of a cloth". Because of its figurative meaning, speakers avoid using it in the original literal meaning and instead use the synonym *ḫirʔa*, that has the same basic meaning without the obscene connotation. The word *šarmūṭa* also has a masculine form, *šarmūṭ*, said of a man who does not behave as a man should and therefore is depicted as a woman of the cheapest kind.

The word *ʔaḥba* also means "prostitute", but is less common in use, and somewhat less coarse than *šarmūṭa*. *Zanya* and *ʕahra*, with the same meaning, are regarded as MSA words, and therefore are perceived as less vulgar. All three are much less common than *šarmūṭa* in speech, but tend to appear in writing.

Three other words do not literally mean "prostitute", but are strongly related to it in actual usage. The most common is *wisḫa*, which literally means "dirty, filthy (feminine form)", but almost always refers to moral filth, so that the meaning of this word is often close or identical to "prostitute". The common abuse *ya -bn-i -l-wisḫa* (lit.: "son of a dirty woman") therefore almost always means "son of a prostitute", although often said in admiration or even affection (see below, section 5.1.).

The word *mitnāka*, "a woman who has frequent sex", is often used in the sense of *šarmūṭa*, prostitute, but may also refer to a woman who in the speaker's opinion has frequent sex, but not due to her profession. This term also has a vulgar masculine form, *mitnāk*, that denotes a man who is sodomized (see section 4.1.)

The term *labwa* (lit.: "lioness") in CEA is an epithet for a nymphomaniac or a woman who enjoys a lot of sex; like *mitnāka*, this word is very vulgar, and its usage is similar to that of *šarmūṭa*.

During a conversation I had with informants about the latter terms, they could not agree on which were "worse" and more humiliating than the others. Some claimed that the

term *šarmūṭa* was the most obscene, because it denoted a woman who engages in sex for a living, while *mitnāka* and *labwa* do it for fun. Others argued that, to the contrary, a *šarmūṭa* must make a living, perhaps to support her children or family, while *mitnāka* and *labwa* are not compelled to do so, but still do it for fun.

4.5. Masturbation

Masturbation, which is forbidden in Islām (and in other religions as well), is strictly taboo as a topic of conversation, especially in mixed company; terms that refer to it are avoided by men when women are present and by women when men are present. Traditionally, attitudes toward masturbation have been negative in many societies, Islamic societies included, as reflected in the English language:

> Attitudes toward masturbation have generally changed historically from revulsion to acceptance. The severity of the older taboo was such that the early words were strongly condemning, such as *pollution* or *self-abuse,* or religious in origin, notably in the case of *Onanism* […]. Engrained myths about masturbation causing insanity, blindness, and deafness, are articulated in the early recorded uses of the term. (Hughes 2006: 309).

Egyptian Arabic has several terms for masturbation by men. All are strictly taboo and avoided when women are present.

The Standard Arabic, perhaps embarrassing but not vulgar, term for masturbation is *al-ʕāda al-sirriyya* (lit.: "the secret habit"). In the colloquial there are several terms, all regarded as vulgar.

The most common term is *ḍarab ʕašara* (lit.: "hit by ten; did it by ten"), the number apparently referring to "ten fingers". For example, *daḫal il-ḥammām wuḍarab ʕašara* ("he entered the bathroom and masturbated"). This phrase also has a plural form: *ḍarab ʕašarāt* ("masturbated several/ many times"). A synonym of this expression is *ḍarab barīza* (lit.: "did it by *barīza*"). *Barīza* in CEA is a coin of ten piastres (and in later slang also a bill of ten pounds), and since this word is associated with the number "ten" it replaces the number *ʕašara* ("ten") in this phrase.

Another term, which today is less common, is *ʕamal wāḥid wutalatīn* (lit.: "did it by thirty-one"). The literal meaning may seem strange, but apparently this expression is derived from Turkish *otuz bir* (lit.: "thirty-one"), also meaning "masturbation" in Turkish slang, and the phrase *otuz bir çekmek* (lit.: "to pull thirty-one") meaning "to masturbate" (Redhouse 1968 [1890]: 904). This term leads us to another unique term, the quadriliteral root verb *sartin* and its verbal noun *sartana*. This is another puzzling word, but it is reasonable to assume that its origin is the English translation of *otuz bir* or of *wāḥid wutalatīn*: "thirty-one" (often pronounced *sirti-wan* by Egyptians who speak English). This verb is more common today than *ʕamal wāḥid wutalatīn*, and is often used among men. For example: *ʔafaštu wuhuwwa bisartin* ("I caught him masturbating").

Some more examples are: *da haftān/ taʕbān min ḍarb il-ʕašara/ min ʕamal wāḥid wutalatīn ("he is weak/tired because of masturbating")*; *ʔitgawwiz badal ma ṭūl in-nahār*

tiḍrab ʕašarāt ("get married instead of masturbating all day"); *is-sartana ktīr miš kwayyisa li-ṣ-ṣaḥḥa* ("a lot of masturbation is not good for your health").

A milder term is *fakk-i nafsu* ("released himself"), which may be said among friends, sometimes jokingly but often seriously, as in *ya ʕamm, fukk-i nafsak fi -l-ḥammām* ("man, [go and] masturbate in the bathroom"), and even as an advice given by the doctor: *fukk-i nafsak* ("you should masturbate!").

An expression that refers to the advantages of masturbation is *ʕašara bil-yad wala ḥawga liḥadd* ("when you masturbate (with ten fingers) there is no need for anyone else"; lit.: "masturbate by hand and you'll not need anyone"). This may be said, for example, by a husband when his wife cannot or does not want to have sex with him, to youngsters in order to encourage them not to marry too early, and as a general piece of advice conveying the idea that masturbation is better than going to prostitutes.

All of the above-mentioned terms refer to masturbation by men only. There is a separate term that refers to masturbation by women: *ḍarabit/ʕamalit sabʕa wunuṣṣ* (lit.: "she did it by seven and a half"). The following examples were given by men: *gōzi miš mawgūd, ʔaʕmil sabʕa wunuṣṣ* ("[when] my husband is absent, I [might] masturbate"); *lamma ʔabʔa taʕbāna/hayga ʔaʕmil sabʕa wunuṣṣ* ("when I am tired/horny I masturbate").

5. Conveying familiarity and intimacy through curses and abuse words
5.1. Curses and insults among friends and in the family

In the year 1991 I met one of the daughters of the late Egyptian President Anwar al-Sādāt in a party in Cairo. We had a very long conversation, during which she told me that one day she and her sisters were speaking among themselves in a secret language (*sīm*) so that what they said would not be understood. Their father overheard them, approached them and said in rebuke: *ʔintu bitʔūlu ʔēh ya wlād il-kalb?!* ("what are you saying, you daughters of a dog?!"). The abuse term *wilād il-kalb* ("daughters of a dog"), however, in this context was not abusive at all, but rather reflected intimacy and affection of the sort that exists within the family and among close friends.

Likewise, some of the vilest curses and insults may be used as markers of close relations among friends, depending on how close they are, and often also on the communicative circumstances. Thus, curses and insults used by parents toward their children or among close friends, while possibly resulting in temporary anger, in fact reflect a close relationship. Mothers usually curse their children by referring to their mother, while fathers curse them by referring to the father, but when only one of the parents is present, the absent one may be mentioned, too. An Egyptian mother has told me:

> N. kānit bititšitim ʔaktar min M., ʕašān dimāġha našfa wuma tismaʕš-i -l-kalām […]. ʔana ma baḥibbiš ʔaštim bass-i hiyya kānit bitʕaṣṣabni ʔawi.
> N. [the daughter] used to be insulted more than M. [the boy] because she is stubborn and does not obey […]. I don't like to swear, but she used to make me very upset.

She also reported that her husband curses their son: *mumkin gōzi yiʔūl li-M. yinʕal ʔabūk, yinʕal ʔabūk ʔibn-i kalb-i ṣaḥīḥ* ("my husband may say to M.: may your father be cursed, may your father be cursed you son of a dog indeed"), but added that this was usually said jokingly.

Still, it is common among families and close friends to curse and insult also in anger. It is common for parents to angrily say to a daughter *bint-i -l-wisḫa* and *bint-i -l-kalb*, and to a boy *ʔibn-i l-wisḫa* and *ʔibn-i l-kalb* and the like. Such utterances, however, are not perceived as vulgar when said among family members and close friends as when said outside of the intimate circle.

Some obscenities may be regarded as relatively mild when used among close friends (for some examples see Parkinson 1985: 212-213). Thus, the word *ḫawal* ("homosexual"), which is regarded as vulgar and can often be heard in quarrels among men on the street, may be used affectionately among close friends. This is true even of *kuss ʔummak*, one of the coarsest abuse phrases in Egyptian Arabic, that may be heard when close friends meet each other. Some examples are: *ṣabāḥ il-ḫer ya -bn-i -š-šarmūṭa* ("good morning you son of a prostitute"); *waḥaštini ya -bn-i -l-kalb* ("I missed you, you son of a dog"); *ʔizzayyak ya -bn-i -l-kalb* ("how are you, you son of a dog"); *kunt-i fēn ya -bn-i -š-šarmūṭa ʔimbāriḥ* ("where were you yesterday you son of a prostitute").

Some coarse words may take on other meanings which, while still regarded as vulgar, are milder than the original meaning and thus will be used among friends. For example, the word *maʕarraṣ*, a variation of *ʕarṣ* ("pimp"), a very coarse word, has also taken on the meaning of "flatterer"; although still vulgar, it is often used jokingly among friends.

Likewise, the very coarse word *kuss* has received another meaning which is definitely milder; like the above-mentioned *maʕarraṣ*, it can also mean "flatterer". Thus, one may say to one's friend, criticizing him for his attitude towards their boss, but also jokingly: *ya kuss!* ("you flatterer!"), or *ʔinta kuss il-mudīr* ("you are the boss' flatterer"). The word *kassīs*, derived from *kuss*, also means flatterer; it is defined by Badawi and Hinds (1986: 750) as "arse-kisser, brown-noser".

The term *kuss* in the latter usage may be also communicated through sign language, without uttering the word. Joining the two hand palms next to each other with stretched fingers creates an accepted symbol of *kuss*, and one may approach a close friend and show him this sign, without saying anything. This action means the same as the verbal one: "you flatterer!".

Image 1: *kuss* ("flatterer")

5.2. Curses and abuses around the table

Eating at home is an event that often causes a lot of tension among families because children are not always well-behaved, or do not want to eat or do it in an annoying manner. In such circumstances the parents, more often than not the mother, may curse the children with one of the following curses that reflect impatience and being fed up with the children's behavior:

> *ḫud wu-tsammim* ("eat [lit.: "take"] and may you be poisoned");
> *kul bi-s -simm il-hāri* ("eat [the food] with the deadly [lit.: "disintegrating"] poison".

Two verbs, *ṭafaḥ* (lit.: "overflow"; also: "vomit") and *ṭaraš* (lit.: "vomit") may be said in circumstances connected to eating, similar to those described here. These verbs, which in such circumstances are regarded as vulgar, are usually said in the imperative, and mean "eat!", said in impatience or anger:
ḫud ʔuṭruš/ḫud ʔiṭfaḥ ("eat! [lit.: vomit!/make it overflow]"). The verb *ṭafaḥ* may also be said rudely in frustration or anger when talking about food: *muš ḫaniṭfaḥ in-nahārda walla ʔēh?!* ("aren't we going to gobble today or what"?!); this usage also conveys the idea that the food referred to is unattractive or monotonous.

6. Insulting references to animals

All cultures ascribe distinct traits and behaviors to certain animals, and people are often compared to these animals (see Allan and Burridge 2006: 79; for some examples from CEA

see Parkinson 1985: 208). By comparing people to animals their accepted traits and behaviors are automatically ascribed to the insulted person, with varying degrees of offensiveness. It should be noted, however, that some animals are associated with positive traits and behaviors, and thus human beings may receive names of animals as their given or sometimes family names. Here we provide merely a few examples of offensive animal names in Egyptian Arabic.

The general terms *bihīm* (masculine) and *bihīma* (feminine) pl. *bahāyim* (" [usually domesticated] animal") and *ḥayawān*, pl. *ḥayawanāt* ("animal") are sometimes used as insults. The term *bihīm* or *bihīma* denotes a stupid person, somebody who does not understand anything or an ill-mannared person, and *ḥayawān* denotes a vulgar, ill-mannered person.

The most common animal name in Egyptian Arabic (as well as in other Arabic dialects) that is used as an insult is *kalb* ("dog"), often in the formula *ʔibn-i -l-kalb* (lit.: "son of a dog"); fem.: *bint-i -l-kalb*; pl.: *wilād il -l-kalb*).

Ḥumār ("donkey") is a common insult meaning "stupid". *Ḥallūf* ("pig") and also *zayy-i -l-ḥallūf* (lit.: "like a pig"), is a derogatory nickname for a fat man who eats a lot, and also to an insensitive person who does not care about anything. *Tōr* (usually pronounced *ṭōr*; "ox") denotes a stupid person who does not understand anything, as does the expression *ṭōr Allāh fi barsīmu* (lit.: "God's ox in its clover"). Likewise, *gamūs* (masculine) and *gamūsa* (feminine) ("water buffalo") refer to ignorant people, as does the expression *gayy-i min wara -l-gamūsa* (lit.: "has come from behind the water buffalo"), usually said of peasants who work in the field with the buffalo.

7. The abuse word *nīla* and the like

The term *nīla* (lit.: "indigo") mentioned above (section 2.2.), merits some attention. When used in a curse it means "disaster". A number of insults are derived from the same root (NYL): *nayyil* ("to mess up") and *ʔitnayyil* ("to be messed up") are sometimes used with the meanings "fuck" and "get fucked" respectively. The sentence *il-bint-i ʔitnayyilit* means that a girl has experienced sexual intercourse (and consequently lost her good reputation). The adjective *mitnayyil*, also in the longer version *mitnayyil ʕala ʕēnu*, are insults that refer to a loser, someone who cannot get anything accomplished.

Nīla has several synonyms, all of which mean "disaster, trouble" and which may replace it in the formula *gatak...* ("may... befall you"; see above, section 2.2.): *muṣība* (also: *niṣība*), *balwa*, *nayba* and *dahya*. Thus, one may hear *gatak nīla, gatik muṣība/niṣība, gatku balwa/ nayba/ dahya*, all mean "may a disaster [or trouble] befall you", and in a freer translation: "the hell with you".

All of these synonyms may be preceded by the number *sittīn* ("sixty") or *sittīn ʔalf* ("sixty-thousand") that intensify the curse. These frozen numbers are used to intensify other curses and insults as well.

8. *Aḥḥa*: a meaningless word with many meanings

Aḥḥa (in the Alexandrian version: *ʔaḥḥē*) is an exclamation that has no definite meaning. It conveys a negative feeling, such as anger, dissatisfaction, objection, revulsion, contempt. It is regarded as very vulgar and hearing it arouses a sense of discomfort and embarrassment. People sometimes spell the word out instead of uttering it. *Aḥḥa* is sometimes written ˈ7ˈ or *A7A* and *a7a*, the number 7 representing the letter /ح/ as is the custom in digital communication in Arabic transliterated into Latin characters. Consequently, this version may be pronounced "A-seven-A", bypassing the Arabic pronunciation. All of these versions serve as euphemisms in the spoken and written language.

It is not surprising that poet Nagīb Surūr, who wrote the *Kuss Ummiyyāt* (see above, section 4.3., and below, section 14), also wrote a poem entitled *Aḥḥa*; like the *Kuss ummiyyāt*, this poem has been uploaded to the internet (Surūr, *Aḥḥa* [text]), as well as in an audio recording in the voice of the poet (Surūr, *Aḥḥa* [audio]).

A widespread popular etymology of this word takes it to be an acronym of *Ana Ḥaqqan Aʕtariḍ* ("I object indeed"), but this seems unfounded.

Children sometimes use the euphemism *aʔamus* (apparently after *Aḥmus* (Ahmose, the name of a Pharaonic king) instead of *ʔaḥḥa*.

9. Euphemisms

Euphemism (from Greek: "well-speak"; Wales 2011: 146) is a word or a phrase that replaces one that is regarded by society as improper, insulting, obscene, offensive etc. Offensive topics "vary from period to period and from society to society" (Wales 2011: 146). Definitions of euphemism also vary, according to the eye of the beholder. The following are two concise definitions of this term. Fowler's *Modern English Usage* defines it as follows:

> A mild or vague or periphrastic expression substituted for one judged to be too harsh or direct, e.g. *to pass away* for *to die.* The employment of euphemisms can be viewed positively as the use of words of good omen, or negatively as the avoidance of unlucky or inauspicious words. (Burchfield 2000: 267).

The second definition is taken from a glossary of literary terms:

> An inoffensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing. Euphemisms occur frequently with reference to such subjects as religion ("Gosh darn!" for "God damn!"), death ("pass away" instead of "die"), bodily functions ("comfort station" instead of "toilet"), and sex ("to sleep with" instead of "to have sexual intercourse with"). (Abrams and Harpham 2015: 117).

A more blunt definition of euphemism is suggested by Holder (2007: vii):

> In speech or writing, we use euphemism for dealing with taboo or sensitive subjects. It is therefore the language of evasion, hypocrisy, prudery, and deceit.

It is not surprising that the use of euphemisms is common in conservative societies or groups (in some societies more than in others, among women more than among men, among religious people more than among the secular, etc.). Euphemisms may also be more common in certain social strata, and often more in writing than in oral speech (but this, of course, also depends on the speaker and on the communicative situation). Over time, some euphemisms may be regarded as offensive themselves and avoided in speech or in writing (see the word *tīt* below in this section).

Dysphemism, the opposite of euphemism, merits mention here, too. Allan and Burridge (1991: 26), in their book on euphemism and dysphemism, define the latter as follows:

> A dysphemism is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason.

The term "dysphemism", which is not as prevalent in scholarly writing as "euphemism", covers a much larger linguistic stock than just curses, abuses and the like. Thus, we may state that all curses and insults are dysphemisms, but not all dysphemisms are curses, insults and the like.

Euphemisms in Egyptian Arabic do not always involve the replacement of offensive words with neutral ones, but may also involve changing an offensive word in a way that creates a new version, which out of context is incomprehensible. Egyptians do not like to use the word *ʔiswid* ("black"; feminine form *sōda*) when it means "black" or "unlucky", and thus may change *ʔiswid* to *ʔiswiḥ* or *ʔiswiḫ* and *sōda* to *sōḫa* or *sōḥa*, all euphemisms that are otherwise not found in Egyptian Arabic. Another option is saying *ʔabyaḍ* ("white") instead of *ʔiswid* ("black"). Egyptians are annoyed when someone curses their religion, so instead of the word *dīn* ("religion") they may say *dīk* (written and pronounced like the word that means "rooster"); a literal translation of this word in the context of curses is meaningless. The purpose of these substitutes is to enable speakers who believe in the power of words to express anger or other feelings without really cursing or abusing. The following are some examples:

Ya nhār ʔiswiḥ ("what a bad day"), *ʔiswiḥ* instead of *ʔiswid*; *ya nhār ʔabyaḍ* ("what a bad day", lit.: "what a white day"), but *nihārak ʔabyaḍ* (lit.: [may you have] a white day") means "may you have a nice day"; *ya sana sōḫa* ("what a bad year"), *sōḫa* instead of *sōda* (lit.: "black", in the feminine); *yinʕal dīkak* ("may your religion be cursed"), *dīkak* (lit.: "your rooster") instead of *dīnak* (lit.: "your religion); *ya -bn-i dīk il-kalb* (lit.: "you son of a dog's rooster"); *ḥaṭallaʕ dīk ʔabūk* (lit.: "I shall dig out your father's rooster", meaning "I shall give you a bloody hard time"). One of my informants told me that her mother, when complaining about a bad day, used to say *ya nhār muš ʔiswid* (lit.: "what a not-black day").

Euphemisms may also appear in phrases that contain insults but are used instead to express wonder and admiration, as in *ya -bn-i -l-ʔēh/ ya -bint-i -l-ʔēh* (lit.: "you son/daughter of what"), with *ʔēh* ("what") replacing any word of abuse, e.g. *wisḫa*, meaning "how amazing you are, what an amazing thing you have done" (but in some contexts may also be understood as "you bloody…").

The possessive particle *bitāʕ*, may be used to refer to something that is not mentioned by its name, as in *ḫud il-bitāʕ da!* ("take this thing!"). It may also be used as a euphemism

to replace taboo words, as in *bitāʕ ir-rāgil* ("man's penis") and *bitāʕ is-sitt* ("woman's vagina"), and also *il-bitāʕ* ("the genitals"). *Bitāl ʕiyāl* (lit.: "that one of children") is a common vulgar epithet for a pedophile.

Thursday night is the beginning of the weekend, and in many families it is the night for having sexual intercourse. Men, when mentioning this among themselves, may refer to that night with joking euphemistic terminology as *mūlid sīdi is-Sarāyri* ("the Feast of the Saint al-Sarāyri [lit.: "of the beds"]", and *mūlid sīdi id-Duʕaki* ("the Feast of the Saint *id-Duʕaki* [lit.: "the Rubbing", derived from the verb *daʕak*, "to rub"]".

An interesting word is *biʕīd* (lit.: "far, far away"). This word is sometimes added to curses and insults, when one does not really mean to curse or in order to make sure that a curse would not strike the addressee. Since it has been for long in constant use in curses, this word has become a word of abuse itself, in the collocation *ya bʕīd*, as in *rūḥ ya bʕīd* ("go away, damn you").

A few years ago the word *tīt* was added to the lexicon of Egyptian Arabic. It is the equivalent of the English "beep" (or "pips"), an onomatopoeic word that represents the short high-pitched sound used in electronic media to cover or to prevent the hearing of a word or a phrase that are regarded as obscene or taboo. *Tīt* now serves as a euphemism that is used to replace any word or phrase regarded as coarse, abusive, dirty, improper etc. In contemporary Egyptian Arabic this word has become a term of abuse itself and is often used in speech, and sometimes in writing, leaving the meaning to the imagination of the addressee, the listener or the spectator, as in *ya -bn-i -ṭ-tīt* ("you son-of-a-*tīt*"; see also below, section 12.3.). In some contexts, therefore, it may be regarded as vulgar and avoided by speakers; a euphemism may thus become a dysphemism.

In written texts there are also graphic techniques of creating euphemisms, by writing just one or a few letters of the coarse word, replacing letters with asterisks or other signs, or hinting at a coarse word by using a milder one (see below, sections 10.1., 10.2., 10.5.).

10. An abusive phrase originated in the Quran

The expression *ʔibn-i -l-lazīna* is a common offensive phrase that may be said in order to insult, but is often used humorously and in good spirit, also to children. It may also be said in wonder and admiration. Literally meaning "son of those who…" it may be translated as "bloody you, the hell with you", etc.

This expression originates in the Quran: وَبَشِّر الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ / *wabaššir al-laḏīna āmanū waʕamilū al-sāliḥāt* ("give the good news to those who believe and do good"; Quran 2/*al-Baqara* ("The Cow"): 25).

This abusive expression is in fact a euphemism, because in colloquial usage it means "those who do not believe (i.e. the infidels)". When an addresser wants to make sure that he does not use the Quranic words wrongly, he quotes the words that refer to the true believers: *ya -bn-i -l-laḏīna āmanū waʕamilū al-sāliḥāt*, although he obviously intends to insult or rebuke rather than praise (but the addresser may also wish to express admiration).

Another method to avoid misusing the Quranic words is to insert a change to the word *al-laḏīna*, with the following options: *al-laḏīḏa* and *al-laḏīka*. Almost always,

however, in all of the cases mentioned here the inter-dental consonant *ḏ* is pronounced *z*: *al-lazīna*, *al-lazīza*, *al-lazīka*.

Many speakers are not aware of the fact that this phrase originated in the Quran, and assume that the word *al-lazīna* is a noun in the feminine; thus they understand *ʔibn-i -l-lazīna* as "son of lazīna", without knowing what the word means. This is also reflected in the spelling الزينة(e.g. ابن اللزينة) that sometimes appears in print and on the internet.

11. Two unique curse intensifiers

Two unique curse intensifiers are in common use: *wusnīnu* and *ʔitfū* or *tfū*, each of which may also serve as an independent insult or curse.

The phrase *wusnīnu* (lit.: "and its years"), an abbreviation of *wusnīnu -s-sōda* (lit.: "and its black years"), may also appear with the feminine possessive pronoun (*wusnīnha*) and the plural (*wusnīnhum*), depending on the object's gender or number. The full version is also in use, in all three possibilities: *wusnīnu -s-sōda*, *wusnīnha -s-sōda* and *wusnīnhum is-sōda*, but the shorter version is more common.

This phrase, in all the versions mentioned above, appears in formulas that reflect strong feelings on the addresser's part and intensifies the curse by applying it not only to the object but to all possible objects of the same type or any possible object that has any relation to the cursed one. Thus, for example, the common curse *yilʕan* (or *yinʕal*) *il-ḥubb-i wusnīnu* actually means "the hell with love and everything that is connected to love", or "the hell with love and all of its troubles", etc.; thus it may be translated in short as "the hell with love etc.".

Some examples are *yilʕan in-nett-i wusnīnu* ("the hell with the internet etc."); *yilʕan id-dirāsa wusnīnha* ("the hell with studies etc."); *yilʕan il-filūs wusnīnha* ("the hell with money etc."); *yilʕan ir-rigāla wusnīnhum* ("the hell with all men"). The verb *yiʔṭaʕ* (lit.: "may [God] cut off…") sometimes replaces *yilʕan*, as in *yiʔṭaʕ il-ḥubb-i wusnīnu* ("the hell with love and all of its troubles").

The phrase *wusnīnu* may intensify any exclamation or sentence expressing anger, agony, frustration etc., as in *ʔāh min il-ḥaml wusnīnu* (lit.: "oh how I suffer from pregnancy and its [black] years", meaning "the hell with pregnancy and all of its troubles").

The onomatopoeic word *tfū* or *ʔitfū* is an imitation of the action and the sound of spitting, and often replaces the actual action of spitting. On rare occasions addressers do spit, and when they do, it is rarely in the face of the addressee but usually to the ground (cf. above, section 1.2., the quotations from Lane and Clot-Bey). This imitation of the act of spitting is regarded as very rude. It may follow an insult or a curse, thus intensifying them, as in the following example, said by actor Muḥammad Saʕd in the film *Būḥa* (2005): *yilʕan ʔabu ʔilli gābak ya ʔibn-i -l-kalb-i ya wāṭi; tfū!*" ("may [God] curse the father of whoever has brought you [to the world], you son of a dog, you despicable person; *tfū!*"); this series of curses, expressing anger, is concluded by an imitation of the act of spitting, all done after the addressee has left.

Image 2: *Būḥa*: "*ṭfū!*"

The word *ṭfū/ ʔitfū* may appear in independent sentences, where it takes the form of a curse with the preposition *ʕala* that follows it. Some examples are *ʔitfū ʕala ʔummak* ("the hell with your mother; may your mother be cursed"); *ṭfū/ ʔitfū ʕalēk rāgil ʔibn-i šarmūṭa* ("the hell with you, man, son of a prostitute").

This word is derived from the onomatopoeic verb *taff* ("to spit") which also appears in a number of expressions (that are not mentioned here).

Part 2: Curses and abuses in literature and the performing arts
12. Curses and abuses in written texts

Contemporary Arab societies are generally more conservative than their Western counterparts, a fact that is reflected in literary norms which forbid the use of obscene and taboo words in written texts, in contrast to the norms of medieval Arabic literature, in which even very obscene words such as *nāk* and *kuss* appeared in several literary and semi-literary texts. One of the most famous books in this vein is *Nawāḍir al-ʔayk fī maʕrifat al-nayk*, written by the Egyptian scholar Galāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī (died 1505), that deals freely with sexual intercourse, contains coarse terminology and quotes proverbs (65) that would have made contemporary Egyptians feel quite ill-at-ease. Some Egyptians who know about this book feel uncomfortable because its writer is one of the two co-authors of *Tafsīr al-Galālayn*, which to this day is the most popular commentary on the Quran (on Al-Suyūṭī and his daring writing see, e.g., Firanescu 2017; Hämeen-Anttila 2017).

In my above-mentioned article (2004) on coarse and taboo language I quoted some examples from modern Egyptian literature. Just fifteen years ago, there were not many writers who dared to use vulgar expressions in their works. An exception was Saad Elkhadem's *al-Ṭaʕūn* (1989) that contained many obscene words, but this may be explained by the fact that this writer emigrated to Canada and published his works there, unbound by

the prevailing literary norms in his homeland. Elkhadem later (1993) published, also in Canada, a collection of Egyptian expressions, some of them (to quote his own definition) "coarse". I also quoted many vulgar examples from Wālī's *Ḥikāyāt šāriʕ al-baḥr* (2005), published in Egypt, and some from ʕAbd al-Munʕim's *Min ḥalāwit ir-rūḥ* (2005).

The attitude towards the use of offensive language in Egyptian literature has begun to change in recent years. Curses, insults, vulgar and taboo words are slowly becoming acceptable in Egyptian literature.

The following are some typical examples that have appeared in printed literature in the last decade, arranged according to date of publication.

12.1 ʕAbd al-Raḥīm 2009

ʕAbd al-Raḥīm (2009) is quite daring in using the ancient female profession as an insult in a dialogue of over a page, (written in MSA with some CEA elements), between a driver and his assistant. The more the dialogue develops, the coarser is the vocabulary used. In the first stage, as is common in Arab writing, three dots or more (in this case) stand for the offensive words, leaving the experienced reader to guess the actual words that were in the characters' minds. Only one obscene slang word, *rikib* ("ride", i.e. "fuck") is used explicitly:

السائق: يا ولد يا ابن الـ (......) [......] يا ابن المراة ال [......].

الصبى: الـ (........) هى أمّك [...] امي كان (....) ابى فقط [...] اما امك فكانت مثل الاتوبيس،
يركبها كل من يملك ثمن التذكرة.

The driver: You! You son of a (......) […] you son of the woman who (......).

The assistant: The (……..) is your own mother […] my mother was (….) by my father only […], as for your mother she was like a bus, being ridden by anybody who could afford the ticket price (ʕAbd al-Raḥīm 2009: 170).

In the second stage, the driver uses an MSA word, *zāniya* (pronounced *zanya* in CEA: "prostitute"), and other vulgar words, hinted at by the dots:

السائق: يا ابن الزانية [...] عندى الكفاءة التى تمكننى من ان (......) افكار امك [...] يا ابن (....)

You son of a prostitute […], I have the ability to (…) the thoughts of your mother […], you son of a (…). (170).

In the third stage, the driver's assistant finally utters the taboo word *šarmūṭa*. The driver, after using some common insults such as يا ابن الكلب يا وسخ ("you filthy son of a dog "), also uses the word *šarmūṭa*:

الصبى: [...] تريد طردى لتفسح الطريق امام شقيق الشرموطة التى ترافقها [...].

السائق: اخرس ضربة تقطع لسانك، تقول عن خطيبتى شرموطة يا ابن الشرموطة؟

The assistant: […] You want to expel me in order to pave the way for the brother of the prostitute whom you escort […].

The driver: Shut up, may a blow cut your tongue, how dare you call my fiancée a prostitute, you son of a prostitute? (170).

The assistant then again uses the verb *rikib*:

<div dir="rtl">الصبى: [...] اصلحت الموتوسيكل وركبته وركبت معه البنت واختها وامها.</div>

The assistant: You had fixed the motorcycle, and you rode it, and together with it you rode the girl and her sister and her mother. (170).

The driver then responds with another coarse word for a prostitute, *ʔaḥba* (in MSA: *qaḥba*):

<div dir="rtl">كل كلامك تحت نعلي، يا ابن القحبة.</div>

I don't give a damn about what you say (lit.: "everything you say is under the sole of my shoe"), you son of a prostitute [*qaḥba/ ʔaḥba*]. (170).

ʕAbd al-Raḥīm also refers to masturbation, one of the most taboo issues in Egyptian society. The driver continues the argument by blaming his assistant for missing his prayers, and rebukes him with a reference to masturbation:

<div dir="rtl">وليكن في علمك ربنا لا يقبل صلاة الأنجاس امثالك بعد "البريزة".</div>

You should know that our Lord does not accept a prayer from impure people like you after the *barīza* ("masturbation"). (170-171).

As mentioned above (section 4.5.), the word *barīza*, meaning "ten piastres" and now also "ten pounds", is also another term for "masturbation", like *ḍarab ʕašara*. To make sure that the reader understands the vulgar meaning of this term, it is accompanied by an explanatory footnote.

12.2. Sulaymān 2010

ʕAbīr Sulaymān, a female writer, refers to the word *šarmūṭa*, but does not quote the full word:

<div dir="rtl">- لو شفتيها فى مكان تانى.. ما تسلميش عليها.
- ليه ان شاء الله؟! (بتهكم واضح).
- دى أشهر ش.... (عاهرة) فى مصر.</div>

– If you see her in another place, don't greet her.
– Why, by God?! (In clear mockery).
– She is the most famous p.... (whore) in Egypt. (Sulaymān 2010: 105).

In this dialogue, Sulaymān writes just the first letter (*š*) of the word, which is obviously *šarmūṭa*. To make her intention clear, the MSA word *ʕāhira* appears in parentheses (and also later in the text). The writer does not feel comfortable to use the colloquial word *šarmūṭa*, which is regarded as very obscene, instead using an MSA word

that is not used in actual conversation. The first letter of the taboo word, however, informs the reader that the word referred to by the speaker is the taboo one. The use of an elevated MSA word, not by the literary character but by the narrator, resembles the use of Latin in older European literature for such cases.

12.3. Ḥasan 2012

The short tale below is taken from a book on negative aspects of life in Egypt, all of which are defined by the narrator with the euphemistic onomatopoeic word *tīt* (often lengthened in the book by repeating the long vowel /ī/), that has become an abuse word in itself. A major reason why I chose to quote this tale, in addition to its use of the word *tīīīit*, is the repeated use of the formula *ʔibn-i -l-…* in order to refer to significant traits of the two main figures in this story through the traits of their mothers, in one case a positive trait and in the other a negative one.

<div dir="rtl">

فاصل كوميديييييييتي

يُحكى أن قردين أحدهما محظوظ والثاني فقري ابن (تيييت)، كل صباح يذهبان عند شجرة الموز، يتسلق القرد ابن المحظوظة الشجرة، ويقذف الموز للقرد ابن الفقرية، ويأتي صاحب الشجرة بمساعدة الفلاحين يمسكون القرد الفقري ويلقنونه (علقة سخنة)، ويفر القرد ابن المحظوظة، إلى أن جاء يوم القرد الفقري بمكر قال للمحظوظ: "اليوم سأتسلق أنا الشجرة وتنتظر أنت بالأسفل"، فأمسك الفلاحون بالقرد المحظوظ، قال لهم صاحب الشجرة: "اتركوه.. لقد عاقبناه كثيرًا، أحضروا لي ابن (التيييت) الثاني من على الشجرة.

</div>

Comīīīīīīcal Interlude

It is told that two monkeys, one lucky, and the other unlucky and a son of a *tīīīit*, go every morning to a banana tree. The lucky monkey (lit.: "son of the lucky female") climbs up the tree and throws the bananas to the unlucky monkey (lit.: "son of the unlucky female"). The tree owner comes, and with the help of the peasants, they catch the unlucky monkey and give him a good beating, while the lucky (lit.: "son of the lucky female") monkey runs away. Until one day the unlucky monkey deceitfully said to the lucky one: "Today I will climb up the tree and you wait below". The peasants then grabbed the lucky monkey. The tree owner said to them: "Leave him alone. We punished him a lot. Bring me the other son of a *tīīt* from up the tree". (Ḥasan 2012: 30).

12.4. Aḥmad Nāgī 2014

Aḥmad Nāgī uses vulgar curses in his novel *Istiḫdām al-ḥayāt* (Nāgī and al-Zarqānī 2014): *yilʕan dīn ʔummak* ("may God curse your mother's religion"; 116), an intensified curse because it mentions both the addressee's mother and his religion; *ʔibn-i -l-kalb* ("son of a dog"; 117). This novel, however, has become famous because of the obscene language used in the book's sixth chapter. Nāgī was sentenced to prison because of the language he used in this novel (although the censorship on books is nowadays not as strict as on films; the

prison sentence was later commuted to a fine). The following are typical examples from the sixth chapter:

<div dir="rtl">

ما الذي يفعله الشباب في مرحلة العشرينات في القاهرة؟

هل يلعق حدقة العين، أم يلعق الكس، أم يمص الزبر [...].

</div>

What should the youth do in their twenties in Cairo?
Should they lick the pupil of the eye, or lick the cunt, or suck the prick […]? (142).

<div dir="rtl">

غطست بلساني داخل كسها [...] ثم دخلنا إلى غرفة النوم ومارسنا الجنس ببطء وتمهل. [...]ثم وضعت إصبعي داخل كسها.

</div>

I dived with my tongue inside her cunt […] then we entered the bedroom and had sex slowly and gradually. […] Then I put my finger inside her cunt. (145).

Except for the obscene vocabulary, the text is written in MSA. It should be noted that, however, when Nāgī refers to sexual intercourse he uses the accepted non-vulgar "neutral" MSA phrase *māras al-gins*.

12.5. ʕĀṭif 2016

A literary work may be replete with curses and insults. The short story *Ḫalti Aṭaṭa* (ʕĀṭif 2016) tells about an old woman who brings her little grandson to the clinic, and continuously curses and swears at her daughter, the child, the doctor and everything around her. The doctor, who is the narrator, comments that the only thing that she has not abused was the sphygmomanometer, because she has not noticed it. At the outset of the story, the doctor makes the following comparison:

<div dir="rtl">

بجد كانت ست مـ*تضى منصــ** خالص.

</div>

Seriously, she was a woman completely [like] M*taḍā Manṣ**.

The name M*taḍā Manṣ** appears with asterisks in order to avoid writing it completely; for Egyptians, however, it is clear that the reference here is to Murtaḍā Manṣūr, the president of the al-Zamālik football club, who is well known in Egypt as a person who habitually utters curses and insults. For the reader this is a clue that offensive language will follow.

The old lady indeed starts using offensive language. She calls her daughter بنت الـ*** دى ("this daughter of ***"; ʕĀṭif 2016: 35), and adds more curses that are then followed by the following sequence of insults directed at her grandson, including his ancestors:

<div dir="rtl">

أنا عارفة إيه اللى خلانى آجى معاك يا ابن الـ*****... كانت شورة مهببة بستين نيلة... أبو أم اللى خلفوا أبو اللي جابت أبوك! عيل ابن ****.

</div>

I don't know what has made me come with you, you son of a ******, that was some lousy advice with sixty "*nīla*s"…, [the hell with] the father of the mother of those who created the father of she who gave birth to your father! You child, son of a ****. (35).

This story ends when the doctor bids the woman farewell, with the woman replying as follows:

الله يسلمك يا دكتور يا ابن الـ****.. سلامو عليكو.

Farewell to you, too, doctor, you son of a ****, good bye. (36).

12.6. Al-Ṭūḫī 2018

The following excerpts are taken from a conversation between two women:

عارفة يا طنط، انتي وسخة أوي.

You know, auntie, you are so filthy (wisḫa) (Al-Ṭūḫī 2018: 141).

أنا عمري ما شفت حد بيكره أمه زي ما ابنك كان بيكرهك. انتي كسمك يا طنط. كسمك أوي فعلا. كسمك بدرجة يستحيل تتخيليها.

I have never seen anyone who hates his mother like your son used to hate you. You *kussumik*, auntie. *Kussumik* very much indeed. *Kussumik* to a degree that it is impossible for you to imagine. (Al-Ṭūḫī 2018: 142).

I have not translated the taboo expression *kussumik*, written here as one word, since it is the equivalent of any number of insulting addresses in English, such as "you bloody…", "the hell with…", etc. This insult is the dominant element in this passage, not only because it is repeated three times, but also because of the unusual creative constructions in which it appears.

12.7. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn 2018

I am closing this survey of curses and insults in contemporary Egyptian literature with some examples from the short story collection *al-Otofīs al-ʕĀmm*, which is replete with this sort of vocabulary. The following are some typical examples:

يا ولاد المجنو..)"you children of the cra[zy] woman", i.e. "you crazy people"; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn 2018: 12) ; داهية تاخدكم)"may a disaster take you" (12); ابن التيت ده)"this son of the 'beep'"; (16); كلكم عملاء وخونة وشوية بهايم ما بتفهموش)"you all are agents and traitors and some animals that do not understand anything; (54); المنيل على عينه ده)"this bloody person"; (60); يا عرة الرجالة)"you, the most disgraceful of men"; جاتكم الهم)"may a worry befall you"; (127); نلعن سلسفيل أبو اللي جاب أبوهم)"we curse the dynasty of the father who has created their father"; (156) father"; (238).

13. Curses and insults in the performing arts
13.1. Curses and insults in the cinema and on stage

Curses and insults appear in films and on stage, but there the vilest and the most taboo expressions are avoided, which would never be approved by the strict censorship in Egypt. As mentioned above in section 12.4., censorship in Egypt on movies and plays is stronger

than censorship on published books, that now enjoy greater freedom of expression and language choice than before. The following are some examples of insults in films:

Actress Fātin Ḥamāma, in the film *al-Ḥayṭ al-rafīʕ* (1991), says to the boyfriend who abandoned her: *ya -bn-i -l-kalb* ("you son of a dog"); actor Zakī Rustum, in the film *Nahr al-Ḥubb* (1960), says: *ḥatʔūli liʔibnik ʔinn-i ʔummu kānit zanya* ("will you tell your son that his mother was a prostitute?"); actress Mari Munīb, in the film *Ḥamāti malāk* (1959), insults a taxi driver who brakes too suddenly: *ʔāy, ḥāsib, gatak ḫēba, ḥatiksar raʔabti* ("auch, be careful, you good for nothing (lit.: "may a failure befall you"), you'll break my neck"). For a chain of curses and insults said by actor Muḥammad Saʕd, in the film *Būḥa* (2005), see above, section 11.

For more examples, taken from modern Egyptian drama, see Rosenbaum 1994: 100-105.

13.2. Curses and insults in cinema and on stage: The legacy of Mari Munīb

Egyptian actress Mari Munīb (Mary Mounib; 1905-1969) quoted above (last section), was famous for her use of offensive language in plays and films in which she participated (she was born in Damascus, but came to Egypt when she was one year old, and thus was a native speaker of Egyptian Arabic). In the film *Ḥamāti malāk* (1959) she uses the formula *gak…* or *gatak…* several times: *gatak nayba* ("may a disaster befall you"); *gak kasr-i ḥaʔʔik* ("may your apology be broken"), said as a cognate response to the domestic who apologized by saying *ḥaʔʔik ʕalayya* ("it's my fault"); *gatik nīla fi ḫēbtik* ("may something bad happen to you because of your failure", i.e. "you good for nothing"); *gak ḍarba ʕala ʔalbak* ("may a blow on your heart befall you"), in addition to other abuses.

Her most famous curse, uttered in several films, was the very common *gatak nīla*, which she pronounced *katak nīīla*, with palatalized /l/ and very long vowel in the word *nīla*. To this day, her unique articulation of this curse is imitated by Egyptians of both sexes.

Image 3: Mari Munīb: *katak nīīla*

A famous dialogue in which Mari Munīb constantly insults her addressee, played by actor ʕĀdil Ḫayrī, appears in the play *Illa ḫamsa* (1963). She stands at her window and speaks to the latter, every now and then uttering an insult, to the audience's great delight, augmented by her faulty usage of Egyptian Arabic, in her role as an Egyptian of Turkish origin, who confuses the masculine with the feminine form when saying the words *zift* and *ʔaṭrān*, which are often used as words of abuse in Egyptian Arabic.

Zift ("pitch") and *ʔaṭrān* ("tar"), often in the collocation *zift-i wi-ʔaṭrān* (lit.: "pitch and tar"), are mild ways to denote something very bad, often referring to a situation or one's luck. A synonym is the collocation *zift iṭ-ṭīn* ("lit.: "pitch of mud"); *zayy-i -z-zift* (lit.: "like pitch") denotes a bad situation or an unpleasant person.

Both terms, *zift* and *ʔaṭrān*, are used by Mari Munīb in the dialogue with ʕĀdil Ḫayrī; she responds to the latter's greeting *nihārik saʕīd* (lit.: "may you have a happy day") with the phrases *nihārak zifta* and *nihārak ʔaṭrāna* (in free translation: "may you have a lousy day") while using faulty Arabic by pronouncing both words, *zift* and *ʔaṭrān*, in the non-existent feminine form (*Illa ḫamsa* 1963).

Image 4: Mari Munīb: *nihārak ʔaṭrāna; niḥarak zifta*, etc.

14. Curses and insults on the Internet

The internet and other electronic media are replete with curses, insults and taboo words that appear in chats, blogs and posts in the social media. I quote here one typical example that contains a chain of abuse words, retrieved from Facebook:

الله يحرقك... ربنا ياخدك.... الله ينتقم منك.... يا معفن يا تافه يا واطي.. رووووووووح منك لله.. حسبي الله ونعم الوكيل فيك.. إمشي من هنا غوووور ف داهيه تاخدك.

May God burn you, may God take you (i.e. let you die), may God take revenge of you [because I can't], you rotten, worthless, inferior person, go awaaaaaaaay,

may God punish you, may God take revenge on you for me, go away from here,
get loooost in a trouble that will take you. (*Facebook*. "Allāh yiḥraʔak").

One famous literary work, written decades ago but which has so far appeared on the internet only, is known as *Kuss ʔummiyāt* or, in one word *Kussummiyāt* (in free translation: "Mother's cunt matters"). Written by the well-known late poet and playwright Nagīb Surūr (1932-1978), it has so far never been published, only uploaded to the internet. Nagīb Surūr also left an audio recording of this text, in his voice, which was later uploaded to the internet too. The text is a long poem that sharply criticizes the Egypt of the poet's times. The poem makes repeated use of the coarsest taboo words in Egyptian Arabic, *nāk* and *kuss*. Surūr apparently chose this vocabulary in order to intensify his messages and to draw attention to them, even if by doing so he shocked his audiences.

Another coarse poem, much shorter than the *Kuss ʔummiyāt*, is *Aḥḥa*, also found on the internet in text and audio versions. (see above, section 8). For details of internet links to these two poems, see the bibliography.

Last but not least in this survey is a clip that went viral on the internet and evoked discussions in Egypt on the issue of vulgar insults on the grounds that it was deleterious to morality and social values. The clip, recorded by singer Layla ʕĀmir, consists of a song entitled *Buṣṣ ʔummak* ("Look at your mother"). The title, however, is not as naïve as it sounds in English.

The clip shows a man watching a woman swaying on television, then the singer appears and starts singing: *buṣṣ ʔummak*. The man seems shocked and startled, apparently because he thinks that he has heard the phrase *kuṣṣ ʔummak*. Then the singer repeats the phrase again, and the man understands, smiles and responds with the phrase *buṣṣ ʔummik ʔinti*, which is untranslatable, because he conjugates the verb *buṣṣ*, which is in the imperative, as if it were a noun and as the phrase *kuṣṣ ʔummak* should have been conjugated if said in the second person, singular feminine. A translation like "*buṣṣ ʔummak* you" hardly conveys the pun here; I assume, however, that every Egyptian would have guessed that the phrase *kuṣṣ ʔummak* is alluded to here, and if there was any doubt, then the spectator's response would have removed it.

Image 5: *Buṣṣ ʔummak*

Following the distribution of that clip, the singer was put on trial and sent to jail, although *prima facie* she had not uttered anything obscene or taboo. The members of the production team were also sent to jail, proof of just how obscene the phrase *kuss ʔummak* is perceived to be, even when it is only hinted at and not said explicitly, and that the establishment still cannot accept the presence of taboo words in performances that may be tolerated when confined to paper.

15. Conclusion

In a chapter summarizing the reasons for cursing, Jay (2000: 243) says: "We swear for several different purposes: neurological, psychological, and sociocultural", and states that "Cursing permits humans to express strong emotions verbally in a manner that noncurse words cannot achieve". These statements and others (Jay 2000: 243-244) apply to any society or group of human beings, any culture and any language in which curses and other words and expressions of that sort are created and expressed.

At the outset of this article we saw references to Egyptians as a nation that curses "a lot". Cursing, of course, is not unique to Egyptians, as people of all nationalities curse and use offensive language. Whether Egyptians indeed curse "a lot" is a question that may be answered by a comparative study of cursing among different nations.

The richness of the store of curses in Egyptian Arabic, however, cannot be denied. The large variety of curses and abuse words that have been presented here is representative of such words in Egyptian Arabic, but is very far from being exhaustive. Obviously, this vocabulary is used "for several different purposes", as quoted just a few lines above, and definitely not only to insult and hurt, as was demonstrated here, thus serving the other "different purposes" as well.

Curses and insults are common in the spoken language, and therefore most of the prevalent ones are said in CEA. Since they appeared in written Arabic literature already centuries ago, there is also vocabulary of that sort in standard Arabic. Its appearance in written literature, however, is dictated by the prevalent norms in a certain society in a certain time, and because of that up to the twentieth century only small portions of it found their way to canonical literature. In recent decades, especially since the end of the twentieth century, the norms in Egyptian literature have changed. The colloquial has become a second literary language in Egypt, in addition to standard Arabic (see, e.g., Rosenbaum 2000; 2008; 2012a; 2012b), and some writers have become more daring with both the vocabulary and the contents of their texts, which in some cases result in introducing curses and abusive language into literary texts, written in both the standard and the colloquial. The emergence and spread of social networks and other digital media has encouraged the use of this sort of language, too, and accelerated its penetration into printed literature, as we have seen in the second part of this article. Thus, knowing and understanding Egyptian curses and offensive vocabulary is now necessary for an accurate understanding of contemporary Egyptian literature, printed and digital.

Images

Image 1: *kuss* ("flatterer")
     Photo by the author
Image 2: *Būḥa*: "*tfū!*"
     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFd3IUVNzg8
Image 3: Mari Munīb: *katak nīīla*
     https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4zzf70
Image 4: Mari Munīb: *nihārak aṭrāna; niḥarak zifta*, etc.
     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP4BI5w2HOU
Image 5: *Buṣṣ ʔummak*
     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZidmsGl911Q

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CURSES AND PROFANITY IN MOROCCAN JUDEO-ARABIC AND WHAT'S LEFT OF IT IN THE HEBREW SOCIOLECT OF ISRAELIS FROM MOROCCAN ORIGINS

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Abstract. As the other Moroccan Arabic speakers, Jews from Morocco use many kinds of curses and profanities, some are very common but others are more specific. Alongside the ones they share with their Muslim neighbors, they're used to borrowing words and concepts from the Jewish texts, mostly from the Bible and the Talmud. Those Hebrew and Aramaic words, are integrated in Arabic syntax to formulate innovative and peripheral sentences. Today most of this community has left Morocco and lives in the state of Israel. Those curses and profanities are still used in this very new context, sometimes just the way they were and sometimes in the middle of Hebrew sentences and therefore now integrated into Hebrew syntax.
Keywords: *Moroccan Darija, Curse, Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew, Mizraḥi Hebrew, Peripheral Israeli Hebrew.*

Judeo-Arabic dialects are the Jewish counterparts of the Arabic "dialects". In other words, where there is a Jewish community in an Arabic speaking area, there is a Judeo-Arabic dialect. If the specificities of those dialects are mainly noticeable (actually emphasized) in the written language, the spoken language retains nevertheless particular features such as discreet Hebrew or Aramaic loanwords originating from written religious sources[1]. Other specificities are to be found in accents (Leslau 1945: 63), use of old-fashioned terms, archaic syntactic structure or preservation of other traits belonging to earlier stages of the language than in other Moroccan dialects (Vicente 2010: 148). Actually, most of those Jewish dialects present distinctive features of the Pre-Hilali dialects (Lévy 2009 : 176). All those specificities are due to the particular history of the Jewish community – mainly migrations and social isolation –, in other words, specific linguistic features for specific context.

Moroccan Jews used many kinds of curses, insults, teasing or various phrases of harsh criticism, in Moroccan Arabic (*darija*), or more specifically in their dialects within the Arabic dialects, the Jewish sociolects. A large number of those curses are actually the same one can hear from the Muslim speakers. But some contain specificities. These include the use of Hebrew words (or so-called Hebrew words) (See Sibony 2019b) or references

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[1] For more information about Hebrew elements in Moroccan Judeo-Arabic, see Brunot & Malka 1940, Leslau 1945, Bar-Asher 1978 and Sibony 2019b.

made to the Bible or the Talmud, to various Jewish concepts, to Jewish culture or Jewish life in Morocco, life in the *Mellah*[2], the organization of the cult and the condition of the Jews.

This article is not intended to be exhaustive with regard to the unlimited number of phrases existing nor to the presentation of the various formats of curses. A number of very serious studies have already dealt with the subject of North-African Arabic curses, such as Westermarck (1926, 1930), Boudot-Lamotte (1974), Steward (2014), and even specific studies on the Jewish ones: Malka & Brunot (1939), Stillman (2008) and Sibony (2019b). The object of this article will be, as a first step, to emphasize the specificities of the Moroccan Jewish curses by adding a number of linguistic comments; I'll start giving a few examples of expressions heard from Jewish speakers but without any special feature, then I will quote ones with specific references. In a second phase, I will try to examine what is left of this cultural aspect in Modern Hebrew as spoken by Israelis from Moroccan origin[3].

I. Curses and profanities in Moroccan Judeo-Arabic

The field of "curse" is extremely wide in Arabic and there seems to be an appropriate sentence for every single annoyance one can experience in life.

Common curses, profanity, criticism and teasing:

Some phrases are very humorous, others are terrible, but consistently strongly accurate in order to match very specific situations, just as for blessings or proverbs. Those expressions describe, portray, characterize and categorize everyday common situations, sometimes in a very schematic way, often represented in an exaggerated, caricatural or grotesque way. However, curses (and blessings) are supposed to have a concrete effect on the aimed person.

I'll give a few standard examples before getting into the specificities of the Jewish expressions.

Each curse is supposed to match something specific and cannot be used for the wrong purpose which anyway would be useless, as stated in this first sentence:

> *d-dăʿwa blā sbāb ma təqṭăʿ ši l-bāb* : "a curse without causes will not pass through the door" (Westermarck I 1926: 491).

"A curse without causes" not only would be useless but even dangerous. The fact that the curse wouldn't "pass through the door" is to be understood as a threat recalling the

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[2] *Məllāḥ* is the generic name for Jewish neighborhoods in Morocco.

[3] In addition to the curses I personally had in mind, the examples I give in this work are from various sources: Brunot & Malka 1939, 1940, Boudot-Lamotte 1974, Stillman 2008, Stewart 2014. Examples of curses not sourced on footnotes, for the most part, extracted from surveys, researches and investigations I've been conducting on social networks, mainly for the second part of the study, dealing with the situation in Israel nowadays. The most important resource, alongside Whatsapp and Twitter, is a ten thousand member-strong Facebook group called השפה הערבית המרוקאית, "The Moroccan Arabic language", that was created by Shlomo Perets, and in which the majority of the members are Israelis from Moroccan origins. Some were born in Morocco (from all around the country) and others are from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation immigrants. The ones born in Israel most often have parents from distinct Moroccan cities, others are half-Moroccan. Indeed, the examples are from various Moroccan (Judeo-)Arabic varieties and can therefore show variations such as /q/, /g/ and /'/ reflexes of /q/; /z/ and /ž/ reflexes of /z/ and more.

risk that the curse would return against the speaker if it was summoned for unfair reasons. Therefore, it's not just an advice, but a real curse itself. The upcoming example is even more explicit:

> *d-dă'wa blā dnūb fi rās mulā-ha ddūb* : "a curse without sins will melt on the head of its master" (Westermarck I 1926: 491).

Some general ideas are illustrated by series of similar sentences, with slight variations of vocabulary; or containing more or less details, since any speaker can remove or add elements in order to simplify the sentence or on the contrary, for instance, to highlight the comical aspect.

For example, to put in his place a difficult or pretentious kid (or even for anyone who did something wrong), people will mention the school he attended:

> *ttəḫla dīk s-skwīla fayn t'əlləmti!*: "May the school you attended be devastated!"
> *tkūn ḫālya məḫliya 'lā bū-k dīk s-skwīla fayn t'əlləmti!*: "May the school you attended be a devastated ruin on your father!"
> *tkūn ḫāliya dīk s-skwīla!*[4]: "May it be destroyed, that school!"
> *nəbkī 'la s-skwīla fīn mšīti!*[5]: "I cry on the school you attended!"

Other very simple curses are obviously ironic. At first sight very cruel, the following curses are frequently used by fathers toward their children and therefore are to be understood as terms of endearment[6]:

> *imōt mōl-ək!* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 159): "May your master (i.e. father) die!"
> *imōt l-ək bū-k!*: "May your father die!"

Sense of humor combined with vivid imagination can lead to some quite excessive images. The following is most often used by a mother sick and tired of her child refusing to eat:

> *ṭgṛēḍ l-mṣāṛn* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "May your intestines be cut into pieces!"

Another excessive expression, this time from a West-Algerian Jewish speaker:

> *'elli ma-iḥəbb-ni-š nākəl l-o rās-o nūkəf a'la na'š-o 'o nəbkā 'orā-h*[7]: "He who has no love for me, I'll eat his head, stand by his coffin and stay after him!"
> Even if this formula uses particularly brutal and cruel images, it may obviously not be understood literally. The expression *nākəl l-o rās-o*, "I'll eat his head" actually means "I'll make him pay, I'll crush him". That's a typical case of exaggerated violent image in

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[4]   From Marrakesh area.

[5]   Heard from my own grandmother and repeated from my great grandmother, born in Marrakesh.

[6]   As a notion of endearment threats, although possible to be used as "I'll die for you / instead of you, as a sacrifice"

[7]   West-Algerian "kʲal judeo-arabic dialect" (where pronunciation of /q/ oscillates between /k/ and /kʲ/) according to Chetrit 2015's classification: *nūkəf* and *nəbkā* for *nūqəf* and *nəbqā*. The curse was found in: http://www.sefarad.org/lm/034/27.html.

use in those sentences. The last part: *nəbkā 'orā-h* "I'll stay behind/after him" actually means "I'll outlive him".

Some formal categories are very common too, such as sentences beginning with *nṛā-k*[8] "May I see you", with preservation of the ancient meaning of the verb *ṛā* "to see"[9], as illustrated here:

> *nṛā-k ma-ṭḥyā-s u-ma-tskā-s ḥătta l-hād n-nhāṛ!* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 159) : "May (I see) you not live and not last until that day!"
> *nṛā-k b-ṛ-ṛdəm iṭēḥ 'ălī-k!* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "May (I see) rubble come down on you!"
> *nṛā-k b-l-'əṭṭāl!*: "May (I see) you run into a murderer!"
> *nṛā-k b-l-bāṛōḍ l-inglīzi!* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "May (I see) you run into a British gun!"
> *nṛā-k ḥzoṭ mḥazzaṭ!*[10]: "May I see you in the most awful situation / poverty!"

Finally, among those non-specifically Jewish curses are found sentences used mainly by Jews; old-fashioned sentences, referring to ancient social realities:

> *wəld ṭəṛṛāḥ!*: "baker's boy! > you're useless"

Ṭəṛṛāḥ (Premare 1999 (8): 277) initially refers to the job of boys wandering in the streets to find bread from individuals and bring it to the oven of the village. The speakers most often don't know what the sentence refers to but are still aware that it's an insult.

References to Jewish practices:

Some curses refer to the Jewish cult, or more exactly, to how it is (was) in Morocco. It can sometimes be difficult to identify, even for the speakers themselves, since the mentioned concepts or customs can originate from ancient or abandoned practices:

> *nṛā-k ṭəmsi b-s-smāya' l-mə'lōbīn!* (Brunot & Malka 1939: 159): "May (I see) you go with upturned candles!"

This non-explicit curse actually means: "may you die before getting married!". The allusion made to the "upturned candles" is not easy to understand. One has to know about an old tradition, largely forgotten even amongst the Jews themselves. According to Brunot & Malka (1939: 357), during a wedding or a circumcision, Jews used to light two big

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[8] About the *nṛā-k* category, see Stewart 2017: 710, Stillman 2008: 20 and Sibony 2019a.
[9] Nowadays, in standard Moroccan Arabic, the verb *ṛā* is mainly used with passive meaning "to be seen" and from here: "to be" as in *ṛā-ni* "I am (seen)", *ṛā-k* "you are". *ṛā* has been widely replaced by *šāf* / *išūf* for the meaning "to see".
[10] Stewart 2008: 20. The author presents *ḥzoṭ* and *mḥazzaṭ* as Berber loanwords despite the fact that /ḥ/ can never be a native Berber phoneme. In contrast, Premare (1999-3: 94) mentions Moroccan Arabic *ḥăzzōṭ* / *ḥəzzoṭē* "naked, not married, very poor, without resources".

candles – borrowed from the Synagogue – that had to be shown during procession. If a young bachelor came to die prematurely, people used to light the candles and to turn them upside-down, which would put them out almost instantly. Then they did put them in the stretcher, which meant that the young person didn't have time to know the joys of marriage. The curse referring to this custom has survived the custom itself. Most often, people using it have no idea what it refers to (Brunot & Malka 1939: 357).

Expressions using 'Hebrew' words:

The use of Hebrew or Aramaic words in the judeo-arabic dialects is limited. Actually, in Morocco, Hebrew was a cult-language for the Jews and has never been a spoken language. Consequently, loanwords are attested in a limited number and their frequency varies according to the level of education of the speaker. A series of studies[11] has focused on the matter of those loanwords. Leslau (1945: 71-76) mentions the main domains where those words appear the most frequently as follows: religious, holidays, instruction, social life and institution, family life, affective life and finally: insults and maledictions.

Even if some expressions are entirely in Hebrew and their global meaning is quite well understood, the speakers could have the hardest time trying to use the same component words in other sentences. Moreover, some of those words aren't strictly speaking Hebrew words but are still borrowed from the same sources such as the Bible, Talmud or other Jewish / Rabbinical Literature. For example, a very mean and hateful person can be called a *ṭiṭos*, literally "Titus", the name of the Roman general who destroyed the 2nd Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The word being fully integrated to the Moroccan Arabic system, gives a feminine form *ṭiṭosa*, diminutives *ṭwēṭas* and *ṭwēṭsa* and even a participle *mṭēṭas*, meaning "bad, disgusting" (Stillman 2008: 16, Leslau 1945: 74-75). The same kind of phenomenon is to be found in the mention *parʿo!*, "Pharaoh!" (Stillman 2008: 27). As well as Titus, "Pharaoh" is considered to be an historical enemy of the Jewish People, as narrated in the Book of the Exodus. Stillman (2008: 27) adds that the expression can be augmented to *parʿo d-maṣar*! "Pharaoh of Egypt!".

Apparently, Jews considered that a curse expressed in Hebrew or containing Hebrew words is more effective. That's why the amount of those words is more important in here than in other domains of the Jewish sociolect. This is also how sometimes those words

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[11] M. Cohen 1912 (*Le parler arabe des Juifs d'Alger*, Paris), Brunot & Malka 1940, Leslau 1945, D. Cohen 1964 (*Le parler arabe des Juifs de Tunis – Textes et documents linguistiques et ethnographiques I*, Paris-La Haye), Saada 1969 (*Le parler arabe des juifs de Sousse : condition humaine et terminologie des gestes*, Université de Paris, Paris), Bar-Asher 1978, 1993, Lévy 2009, J. Chétrit 2007 (*Diglossie, hybridation et diversité intra-linguistique, études socio-pragmatiques sur les langues juives, le judéo-arabe et le judéo-berbère*, Editions Peeters, Paris Louvain), Henschke 2007. *Langue hébraïque dans un parler arabe, le lexique hébreu dans l'arabe parlé des Juifs de Tunisie*, Jerusalem, Institut Bialik [in Hebrew]), Tedghi 1995 (« Les interférences de l'hébreu dans les langues judéo-arabes d'Orient et d'Occident musulmans », in *Les interférences de l'hébreu dans les langues juives*, Paris, Publications du centre de documentation et de recherches Etudes hébraïques et juives modernes et contemporaines, 41-66), Tedghi 2003 ("Evolution des recherches sur la composante hébraïque dans les parlers judéo-arabes maghrébins modernes ", Alvarez-Péreyre, Frank & Baumgarten, Jean (eds.), *Linguistique des langues juives et linguistique générale*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 157-190), Sibony 2019b.

literally don't give any new information to the sentence and simply play with semantic redundancy by using a word in Arabic, immediately followed by a Hebrew equivalent as can be seen in *bə-l-fərḥa u-s-simḥa!* (< Heb. שמחה *śimḥâ*), "with joy and joy".

Same kind of construction is to be found in curses or insults such as:

hād ən-nʿī l-abīl! (Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "That rascal bearer of bad news!"

The global meaning of the sentence differs somewhat from the lexical meanings of the components; the first word *nʿī* is related to Arabic *nāʿī*, which is "the one who announces the death of someone" (Brunot & Malka 1939: 356) and the latter is borrowed from Hebrew אבל *ʾēḇel* "grief".

ʾa l-ḥṛāmi l-mamzīr! (Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "Bastard, bastard!"

The first word *ḥṛāmi* is in Arabic and echoes the expression *wəld l-ḥṛām*, meaning "son of the sin, bastard". The latter, with the same meaning, is Hebrew ממזר, *mamzēr*. It is pronounced *mamzīr* in Morocco and has an Arabic plural form *mamzīrīn* (Leslau 1945: 75).

ḥăllūf ḥazīr! (Stillman 2008: 16): "Pig, pig!"
ḥăllūf is in Moroccan Arabic but *ḥazīr* is in Hebrew (< חזיר *ḥăzīr*). As a variant of this one, Stillman quotes: *ḥăllūf ḥanzīr*; *ḥanzīr* being the Classical Arabic cognate.
iṭēḥ săʿd-o[12] u-mzāl-o![13]: "May his fate / luck fall down!"

Mzāl-o "his fate" is from Hebrew מזל, *mazzāl* "luck, fate", originally "position of the stars". The same curse is found with a synonym verb too: *itḥăll săʿd-o!* or *itḥăll mzāl-o!*

Those bilingual curses can however be used more simply with the Arabic half: *ʾa l-ḥṛāmi*, *ḥăllūf* or with the Hebrew part *l-abīl*, *iṭēḥ mzāl-o*.

Other Hebrew words are used because they relate to various aspects of the Jewish life. They're sometimes used by Muslim speakers as well. That's the case for *meʿāra/miʿāra*. The word means "Jewish cemetery" and is very popular in Jewish dialects, where *mqəbra* is the appropriate term for "cemetery" in general[14]. Here is what one (mostly women) could say to an irritating stranger kid met in the Mellah:

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[12] References made to fate or destiny are quite common and can therefore be found in series of similar sentences throughout North-Africa, for instance in Takrouna (Tunisia) Arabic: *aḷḷa isuwwud saʿd-ak!* "May god blacken / darken your fate!" (Boulot-Lamotte 1974: 62).

[13] Surprisingly, one of my informants, Libyan and Muslim, from the social network Twitter told me he heard ومزالك سعدك طيح, *ṭayyəḥ saʿd-ək u-mazzāl-ək*, from old Tripolitan Muslim women; that is to say the exact same expression, where *mazzāl-ək* is obviously a judeo-arabic leftover. After asking the specialist of Tripoli Arabic Christophe Pereira, it appears that the sentence is indeed still in use nowadays, in Libya.

[14] However, Jews could use *meʿāra* for Muslim or Christian cemeteries as well by adding mention *də-l-msəlmīn* "of the Muslims" or *də-n-nṣāra* "of the Christians".

nṛā 'umm-ək ṭaʿṭē-k lə-l-meʿāra! (Brunot & Malka 1939: 156)[15]: "May your mother give you to the cemetery!"

Meʿāra < Hebrew מערה *məʿārâ* doesn't mean "cemetery" in Hebrew but "cave" and does etymologically correspond to Arabic *maġāra*. Such use could reflect ancient troglodyte practices. Surprisingly enough, the same Hebrew word with the same meaning is documented in Yemeni Judeo-Arabic dialects (Leslau 1945: 74).

wuld ən-nīda! (Stillman 2008: 18): "Son of monthly impurity!"

Nīda < Hebrew נידה *niddâ* is, in Judaism, the name describing a woman during menstruation and means "separated".

rasaʿ! (Stillman 2008: 18): "Bad / mean person!"

Rasaʿ < Hebrew רשע *rāšāʿ* "evil person" is a very well-known word among the Jews, being the adjective used to describe one of the famous four sons in the Haggadah (Passover). The word is used to describe Titus as well whenever mentioned in Judeo-Arabic texts as a full expression *ṭiṭōs arasaʿ* [16] < Hebrew טיטוס הרשע, *ṭīṭūs hā-rāšāʿ*, "Titus the bad".

nṛā-k b-'ilalōṭ bi-ki ṭabo! (Stillman 2008: 20): "May I see you in the '*kī ṯābō*[(')]' curses"

The expression *'ilalōṭ ki ṭabo* (< Hebrew קללות כי תבוא *qəlālōṯ kī ṯābō*[(')]) is an allusion made to the famous biblical curses from violation of the law in Deut. 28.15-58.

nṛāk f-n-ndōy! (Stillman 2008: 20, Brunot & Malka 1939: 157): "May I see you excommunicated!"
Ndōy < Hebrew נדוי *niddūy* "banishment".
əllāh iʿmī-k b-ṣ-ṣāṛa d-əl-kəlb ʿwăṛ!: "May God blind you with the plight of a one-eyed dog!"
ṣāṛa < Hebrew צרה *ṣārâ* "trouble, tragedy, bad situation"[17]
imsi kəppāṛa ʿlā l-ihūd!
"May he sacrifice himself for the Jews!"

Kəppāṛa (or *kappāṛa / kumpāṛa*) < Hebrew כפרה *kappārâ* "expiatory victim" refers to the vicarious sacrifice for sins (most often of a rooster) made on the eve of *yōm kippūr* (*kippūr / kappārâ*). In Morocco, the word was used in blessings such as *nəmsi kəppāṛa ʿlī-k!* "May I be your expiatory victim!", in other words "May I sacrifice myself for you, may

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[15] Often shortened to *nṛā 'ummək ṭaʿṭēk!*
[16] Stilmann 2008: 17 mentions the same Hebrew expression is attested in Yiddish: *tites ho-rosho.*
[17] *ṣāṛa* is very commonly used as in sentences like *ḥnā f-wāḥd ṣāṛa kbīra* "we are in a very bad situation" or *ṣārt lă-ʿṛōṣ* "the husband's preoccupations" (Bahat 2001) and thus appears in such curses too, as a distinctive, characteristic and typical word of the Jewish dialects.

I carry your sins". The blessing could be reversed and used as a curse *imsi kəppāṛa 'lā l-ihūd!* or *imsi kəppāṛa 'lī-na!* "May he sacrifice himself for our own good!" [18].

> *djī-k 'asrōt sanīm!* "May your life be abbreviated!" (Leslau 1945: 75, Brunot & Malka 1939: 157)
> *'asrōt sanīm* < Hebrew קצרות שנים *qəṣārōṯ šānīm*, "short years".

According to Leslau (1945: 73), after a malediction containing Hebrew words, women often add formulas such as *kīn ihé ṛaṣōn* (Hebrew כן יהי רצון, *kēn yəhī rāṣōn*, "May it be God's will") or *bi-sḥoṭ əṣ-ṣăddīqīm dyāl-na* "thanks to our saints" (Hebrew words בזכות *bi-zəḵūṯ* "in favor / thanks to" and צדיקים, *ṣaddīqīm* "saintly person", but article, preposition and possessive pronoun in Arabic *əṣ-* / *dyāl-na*).

Word formations:

Some of the "Hebrew" words used in Judeo-arabic are actually pure creations, resulting from clumsy morphological interpretations of borrowed set phrases. That's for instance what happened to a Hebrew word found in the Jewish blessing for the bread where God is said to be the one: *ham-mōṣī⁽'⁾ leḥem min hā-'āreṣ*: "who brings forth bread from the earth[19]". In this blessing, *mōṣī⁽'⁾* is the active participle of the verb *yāṣā⁽'⁾* "to go out", in the causative form (Hebrew *hiqṭīl* stem, equivalent to Arabic Form IV *'aqtala*) and means "the one who brings out". This emblematic verb of the Jewish blessing for the bread, doesn't mean "to bring out" in judeo-arabic but "to do the blessing for the bread" and is commonly used as if it was an Arabic verb *mṣa/imṣi* (indeed it is from here). In fact, Hebrew *mōṣī⁽'⁾* is borrowed 'as it is' in judeo-arabic and misinterpreted as extracted from a triliteral root *√mṣy while actually built on Hebrew √yṣ' (< *√wṣ' with participle prefix m- : *mōṣī⁽'⁾*).

The very ordinary aspect of this blessing is then used to refer to the triviality of something or someone, as in those expressions from the Tafilalet (Bar-Asher 1992: 81):

> *hād əb-bnādəm ma-iṣlāḥ-s təmṣī 'lī-h!*: "That man doesn't deserve that you'd do the blessing for the bread on him!" ("That man is worthless!")

Or else:

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[18]   For more explanations on the use of *kəppāṛa*, see Sibony 2019a-b. Similar to that use of *kəppāṛa* are some Judeo-arabic blessings built as reversed Muslim curses. That's for instance what happens with the common insult *ihōdi*, usually very pejorative but rather a sign of respect or admiration when used in a Jewish context. Another good example works with the very common North-African saying *l-īhūd f-s-səffūd, n-nṣāra f-ṣ-ṣənnāra u-l-msəlmīn f-l-yāsmīn!* (Boudot-Lamotte 1974 : 62), "The Jews on a spit, The Christians on a fish-hook and Muslims in jasmine!" (Westermarck 1930: 126 has *u-l-msəlmīn f-n-nuwwāṛa*), is replaced with humor in the Jewish sociolect by: *l-msəlmīn f-l-mi'āṛa, u-n-nṣāra f-ṣ-ṣĕnnāṛa, u-l-īhōd f-n-nuwwāṛa!*: "The Muslims to the cemetery, Christians on a hook and Jews on flowers!".

[19]   Translation of the blessing found in Sefaria.org: https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/36500.

ma təmma 'la mən təmṣi!: "There's no one there for whom to do the blessing on the bread!" ("no one interesting" or "no one to count on")

While in the late 40's, the Jewish population was estimated in Morocco at around 300 000; only a few thousands would remain today, mainly elderly people. The largest part of the Jewish community left Morocco in the 50's, 60's and 70's and took away this mixed culture with them.

II. Moroccan curses and profanities in Modern Hebrew

Today, the North African Jewish community has almost completely disappeared from the Maghreb and has relocated for the most part in Israel. This process did take place in two large immigration waves between 1948 and 1955. Henkin (2011: 75) adds that those "newly arrived *maghrabis*, especially the Moroccans, the largest community in Israel, were relegated to the geographical, economical, and social peripheries where, caught in a vicious circle, they remained for decades".

The special kind of Hebrew, the sociolect of Israelis from Moroccan origins is actually part of a larger sociolinguistic phenomenon. It's the dialect linguists and sociologists most often call Mizrahi Hebrew[20] or Peripheral Hebrew[21]. The specific case of the Hebrew spoken by the Moroccan community is only a part of it, but probably the most influencing one. Moroccans being the largest community that has lived in the neighborhoods of Israel's periphery; Moroccan Arabic and Judeo-Arabic did influence the Hebrew of Israelis from Moroccan origin and also the other inhabitants of those areas, although to a lesser extent[22]. Consequently, those words or expressions have experienced several levels of integration into Hebrew.

Some Moroccan curses and profanities seen above are still used in Israel's periphery's context; sometimes just the way they were and in some instances in the middle of Hebrew sentences, therefore, integrated into Hebrew syntax. That situation leads to the production of new bilingual curses and even to *darija* swearing hinged with Hebrew morphology.

The first scenario is that of real bilingual speakers of Moroccan Arabic and Israeli Hebrew, most often born in Morocco, but sons and daughters of Moroccan parents too, to

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[20] *Mizrāḥī*, מזרחי, "oriental" in Hebrew.

[21] Peripheral because, as seen above, from speakers relegated to the geographical, economical and social peripheries (Henkin 2011: 75).

[22] A number of linguistic studies have been made on the subject of this sociolect of Modern Israeli Hebrew; one should highlight in particular the research of Yehudit Henshke. Henshke discusses the influence of Judeo-Arabic on Modern Hebrew's syntax, semantics, lexicon and morphology (2013a, 2013b, 2015, 2017). She notably discusses the nature of this sociolect of Israel's periphery, dealing with the problem of its denomination; "Mizrahi Hebrew"?, "Peripheral Hebrew"? One of the points she raises is that "none of these terms accurately describes either the sociolect or its speakers" (2017: 137). For that reason, she proposes to call it "Mizraḥi Hebrew, Peripheral Israeli Hebrew ", since, with her own words: "the majority of the Israelis who speak this sociolect are traditional (*masoratiyim*) in terms of their religious identity" and of course because: "this is sociolect of native Hebrew speakers, born in Israel, whose (distant) origin is in the Jewish communities of the Arab east and west" (2017: 137).

a lesser degree. Those speakers simply use the curses exactly the way it was in Morocco, most often in the context of their own families. Here is a series (obviously non-exhaustive) of fully Moroccan curses found in an Israeli context:

ḷḷā yǝxlī dar bō-k!: "May God destroy/empty your father's house!"
džād l-ǝk ṣ-ṣāra!: "May some misery/difficulties (Hebrew ṣārâ) be added to you!"
lehla yiʾīmo!: "May God not let him get back up!"
wuld l-ḥrām!: "Bastard!"
tkūn ḫāliya d-dār di ṭlǝʾt-o!: "May be destroyed the house that released him!"
lehla ifǝkk lu ūḥla!: "May God not help him to get rid of his difficulties!"
llāh yeʿṭē-k sḫāna!: "May God give you a fever!"
idūz ʿǎlī-k ṭōnōbīl!: "May a car run over you!"
inʿǎl žǎdd bū-k!: "May your father's grandfather be cursed!"
kāynīn ši nāš di ḥabti tǝmši mʿa-hum l-bʿǎd...u-tḫǝllī-hum hnāk!: "There are some people you want to carry far away... and leave them there!"
qǝlt ṣḥa!: "As little health as possible!"[23]

The second scenario (probably the most common one) is the one of Moroccan loanwords found into Hebrew. Even if those words first appeared in Hebrew used by fluent speakers of Moroccan (Judeo-)Arabic, they are today in use among their children, grandchildren but also their neighbors, anyone who grew up in the same areas, and for some of those words, any Hebrew speaking Israeli:

mǝhbūl! mahbul! "Crazy person!, idiot!"
mǝḍṛōb! madġub! "insane person! (with the idea of being hit or damaged, from *ḍṛǝb* "to hit" in the Jewish dialects, most often *ḍǝṛb*)

Some of those words present various pronunciations. Usually, the more the speaker is close to the first scenario, the more he will pronounce it as in Moroccan. Those situations are well illustrated with words as seen here; built on the Arabic passive participle pattern **mafʿūl* but Moroccan Arabic *mǝfʿōl / mǝfʿūl*. Speakers of Moroccan Arabic will be more likely to pronounce *mǝḍṛōb* [mǝdˤrˤoːb], where other Israelis will say *madġub* [madʁub]. Besides the consonants (adapted to Israeli Hebrew's phonology ḍ > d and ṛ > ġ), the vowels seem to have reidentified to those of Palestinian Arabic, for various reasons. The first one is that some Palestinian words of this pattern have made it to Hebrew with clear vowels /a/ and /ū/, such as *masṭūl* "drugged, drunk", *maǧnūn* "insane", *maʿrūf* "famous" or even very common names such as *Maḥmūd*, so that pattern is already existing and Israelis can easily refer to it. The other reason is that sometimes the Palestinian cognate itself is widespread: *mahbūl, maḍrūb...*
mǝġbūna!: "frustrated girl!"

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[23] **qǝllt ṣǎḥḥā*, my informant writes it as a single word קלצחאה, QLṢḤA(H), with missing T since צ (/ṣ/) is pronounced ts in Modern Hebrew, thus QLṢḤA > *qǝlt ṣḥa*. Brunot & Malka 1939: 159 note for Jewish Fez: *nrā-k bʾellǝt ṣḥa!*

Unlike the last two examples, *maġbūn* doesn't seem to be used in Palestinian Arabic and is therefore more likely to be strictly Moroccan. Moreover, *mahbul* and *madġub* are widely used among Israelis whereas *maġbūn / məġbūn* mainly among the members of the Moroccan community.

b-z-zăʿṭ!: "I don't care!"

b-z-zăʿṭ is a Moroccan expression used in Morocco mainly by children or addressed to people showing off. The specific cases of its use have widened in Israel and can bear the meanings: "who cares, why not, big deal, do what you want, oh come on!"

šūfū-ni!: "Look at me!"

Said about someone showing off. In Morocco *šūfū-ni!* is usually considered as short for *šūfū-ni ya nās!*[24]

šlox! / šloḥ!: "Shabby person! Primitive!" (Henshke 2013b: 217).

The Moroccan word *šləḥ / šloḥ* is the name of the Shilha people (Berber) from South-Morocco. It was used in urban Arabic speaking Morocco with the meaning "stupid, shabby", apparently considering Berbers of the villages as 'backward' people[25]. Nowadays in Israel, the etymology is largely unknown but the insult is still in use.

Some other formulas are more difficult to identify as borrowed from Moroccan. As a matter of fact, some phrases are entirely in Hebrew but very likely to be phraseological calques as they are perfectly identical to what is found in Moroccan, although this cannot be affirmed with certainty:

yoᵗse	*ʿal-av*	<	*ḫārəž*	*fī-h*
he goes out	on-him		he goes out	on-him
"he falls on him, attacks him"				
ani	*ve-ani*	<	*āna*	*u-āna*
I	and-I		I	and-I
"Me and I"				

Moroccan Arabic *āna u-āna!* which is short for *āna u-āna u-sərsār də-l-magāna!*: "Me and I and the alarm ring!". The Moroccan Arabic sentence plays here with the various meanings of *sərsār*, namely "ringer mechanism" and "chatterbox". Usually when alongside *magāna*; *sərsār* refers to the ringing. However, that sentence uses the rime *āna / magāna*

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[24] The expression is very common in Moroccan Arabic in its short or long version. However, it is attested in various places in the Arab world. Its use in Israel could have different or even multiple origins. It is today common slang in Modern Hebrew.

[25] Henkin-Roitfarb 2011: 76. The author notes that the word could be a case of multiple origin, since Yiddish word שליאך shliokh / shlokh "sloppy" could have contributed to the formation of the Hebrew word.

but designates someone who's long on words but short on actions. That's what the Hebrew *ani ve-ani*! means, clearly modelled on the short version *āna u-āna!*

muke	*šiga'on*	<	*məḏṛōb*
PASS-hit	craziness		PASS-hit

"crazy (hit by insanity)".

One of my informants explains this relation with the popular belief that evil spirits, demons or jinns take possession of a person by a hit; in Moroccan: *ḍəṛba*. He claims that the Hebrew *muke šiga'on* "hit by madness" comes from Moroccan. Indeed, it could be a calque, and the Moroccan *məḏṛōb* could refer to jinns, but those similarities could be accidental as well[26].

The situation of bilingualism (or past bilingualism) led to the production of bilingual curses and even to Moroccan swearing hinged with Hebrew morphology. There is a series of Moroccan expressive verbs (some rude) adapted and integrated to Hebrew verbal forms:

leḵ lehitkawed!
 "Go fuck yourself!", from Moroccan *rūḥ / sīr tquwwəd*[27] "get out of here, go fuck yourself!".

Actually, this innovative verb is conjugated with uncertainty. It is sometimes conjugated with the infinitive *lehitkawed* (**ləhitqawwēḏ*) which is the 'correct' way to build that kind of phrase in Hebrew. But otherwise, it's possible to hear the following formulations too: *leḵ titkawed! leḵ tkawed!*, the first one considering that the verb is *tkawed* and the second that it is *kawed*, but those two are morphosyntacticly closer to the Moroccan *sīr tquwwəd* than the one with the infinitive verb.[28]

ata mit'awez 'al-ay?!
"Are you mocking / imitating / trying to manipulate me?"

The verbs *'iwez / hit'awez* "to bend, imitate, mock" (pi'el and hitpa'el Hebrew forms, theoretically *'iwwēz / hiṯ'awwēz*) are from Moroccan *'ăwwəž* "bend, turn, corrupt, distort, grimace" and 'reflexive' *t'ăwwəž* "turn, shift away from", with the widespread 'Jewish pronunciation': *'ăwwəz* and *t'ăwwəz*.

al titgajderi! at megajderet 'al a-xaim šelax!
"Don't bemoan your fate! You're feeling sorry about your own life"

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26 Note for example that French has a semantic parallel too: *frappé* "hit / crazy", *toqué* "hit, crazy".

27 From Arabic *qād / yaqūd* "to bring, lead". In Moroccan Arabic, two distinct forms are in use: *guwwəd* "to bring" and *quwwəd*, with the specified meaning "to bring / get someone to brothel". From here > "to have sexual intercourse" and *tquwwəd* "to be fucked, screwed".

28 It could be a more general morphosyntactic influence of Moroccan Arabic (or another variety of Arabic) on Hebrew, leading to conjugate a verb following another verb with the imperfective form, which is correct in Arabic but not in Hebrew, where the second verb is supposed to be in the infinitive.

Verbs *gijder* / *hitgajder* "to bemoan one's fate, to lament, to get hysterical" are from an old-fashioned Moroccan verb *gəždər* "grieving, mourning, to lament during someone's funeral"[29]. This Moroccan verb is actually derived from the Berber noun *Ageždur*[30] referring to the screams and tears of women during the funerals scratching their faces and tearing their clothes. In Modern Hebrew, the integrated verb is mainly used in a metaphoric way: "to lament, to get hysterical".

> *ata mitxarwed 'al-ay, ani yodea bi-diuq mi ata ve-al txarwed oti!*
> "You're trying to confuse me, I know exactly who you are, don't try to fool me!"

Verbs *xirwed* / *xirwet* "to confuse somebody" and *hitxarwed / hitxarwet* "to joke, manipulate, fool" are from Moroccan *ḥărwəd / ḥărwəṭ* "to mix, blur, confuse, sabotage".

That kind of verbs can be found in 'bilingual expressions', where the structure can be Arabic and the lexicon borrowed from Hebrew, or the opposite:

> *še yilex ikawed!*
> "May he go fuck off!".

The structure is in Standard Israeli Hebrew *še yileḵ* "May he go". But as seen above, the verb *ikawed* is from Moroccan Arabic, conjugated with the Hebrew pi'el verbal form, and irregularly not in the infinitive but in the imperfective, just as it would be in Arabic.

> *yimši l-'azazel!*
> "May he go to hell!".

The structure is in Moroccan Arabic; at least the verb and the preposition *yimši l-* "May he go to", but *'azazel* is in Hebrew. That expression is a calque from the entirely Hebrew *lex le-'azazel* "go to hell".

Last but not least, a few Hebrew words that were already used in Moroccan Judeo-Arabic - as seen above - somehow made it to Modern Hebrew without always being recognized as so by the speakers. If a word like *kəppāṛa*[31] is usually correctly identified, others are not:

> *fsara!*
> "too bad! How bad! That's disgusting"
> *eize fsara!*
> "What a bad situation!"

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[29] Actually, in most Moroccan Arabic dialects (but not in the Jewish dialects), the verb *gəždər* has lost this meaning and an important semantic shift has occurred. It is mostly used today in Morocco as "to do something useless, bad or incomprehensible".

[30] With possible variants *giždor*, *ajdur*, *ayedur*, *agedur*. Nait-Zerrad 2002: 755.

[31] *kəppāṛa* was a Hebrew loan in Moroccan Jewish Arabic used in curses as seen above, but mainly in expressions of endearment such as *nəmsī kəppāṛa 'līk* "I'll be your (*yom kippur*) expiatory sacrifice". Those specific expressions made it to Modern Hebrew in short versions like *kapara 'alexa* "kappara on you" or even simply *kapara* "my dear". For more see Henkin-Roitfarb 2011: 75, Henshke 2007: 263, Sibony 2019a-b.

The word *fsara*, most often thought by the speakers to be a single word in Moroccan Arabic, is actually built from the Arabic preposition *f- fī* "in" and the Hebrew word *ṣāra* "trouble" widely used in Judeo-Arabic. It was probably extracted from expressions like *howa f-ṣ-ṣāra* "He's in a bad situation". In Modern Hebrew, *fsara* is used alone to say that something is bad or disgusting[32].

mkuwxa!
"Assertive, stubborn woman!"

Just as for *fsara*, speakers often think it's a common Moroccan word. It was actually built into Judeo-Arabic from the Ancient Hebrew word *kōᵃḥ* "strength". *kōᵃḥ* was used then with the meaning "strength" or "vigor" and an Arabic passive participle was derived from it: *mkowoḥ* "strong, brutal". *mkowoḥ* (or feminine *mkowoḥa*) was then re-borrowed from Jewish-Arabic to Modern Hebrew, most often in the feminine form *mkəwxa* / *mkuxa* (Henshke 2013b : 221).

Conclusion

Moroccan Jews, as relevant actors, heirs and carriers of Moroccan culture, shared with their Muslim neighbors the expertise of seizing specific moments and synthetizing or categorizing them in sentences; such as with proverbs or by responding to those moments with the appropriate blessing or curse. Jews did however mix with it the specificity of their community and of their dialect(s) by putting forward specific references, Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon inserted in the sentences, by using existing proverbs, used in a specific way or modified to fit into the context. Once in Israel, this culture tends to disappear little by little, prone to new societal evolutions, and mainly to the learning of Modern Hebrew, as the only common language of every Israeli. Still, depending on the cases, it is possible to identify different levels of insertion (or retention) of Moroccan language (and culture) through the Israeli society. Some entire sentences and accompanying concepts can still be in use, although mainly from real bilingual speakers. However, some elements are still present among the second and third generation of immigrants, as some short sentences or translated formulas, or more simply as insults and insanities. The field of insanities, often connected to that of curses, is probably the best preserved, since it does not require one to be fluent in the source language to use them. Moreover, a number of words, particularly verbs, were created in that variety of Modern Hebrew, either based on very popular Moroccan insults, or on very significative images and concepts. Lastly, just as in many immigration stories, the influence of the culture of origin tends to decrease in the Israeli-Moroccan community as the source dries up - since there is no significant arrival of Moroccan immigration anymore. Ironically, the influence

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[32] I found on the internet the curse *fsara 'līk*, with *fsara* written as it is in Hebrew nowadays (פסרה instead of פצצארא in Judeo-Arabic) and the preposition in Arabic *'līk*, once even followed by the insult *ḥmār*. After asking my informants, it appears that it has good chances to be isolated initiatives.

sometimes goes beyond the scope of this community, since the areas in question; the "peripheries", are inhabited by non-Moroccans too. Those people can of course use terms and expressions that were at first used exclusively by Moroccans, whether they know where they're from or not. Actually, no more and no less than the second or maybe third generation Moroccans use terms without knowing the language strictly speaking. That's basically how Moroccan speaking elements made it to the wider category of "Oriental", "Traditional-Mizrahi" or even "Peripheral" Hebrew, actually referring to the language of a specific social environment and not exclusively the language of a community. Finally, at the country level, some elements can reach other social environments, other areas and even become regular and common aspects of standard Modern Hebrew

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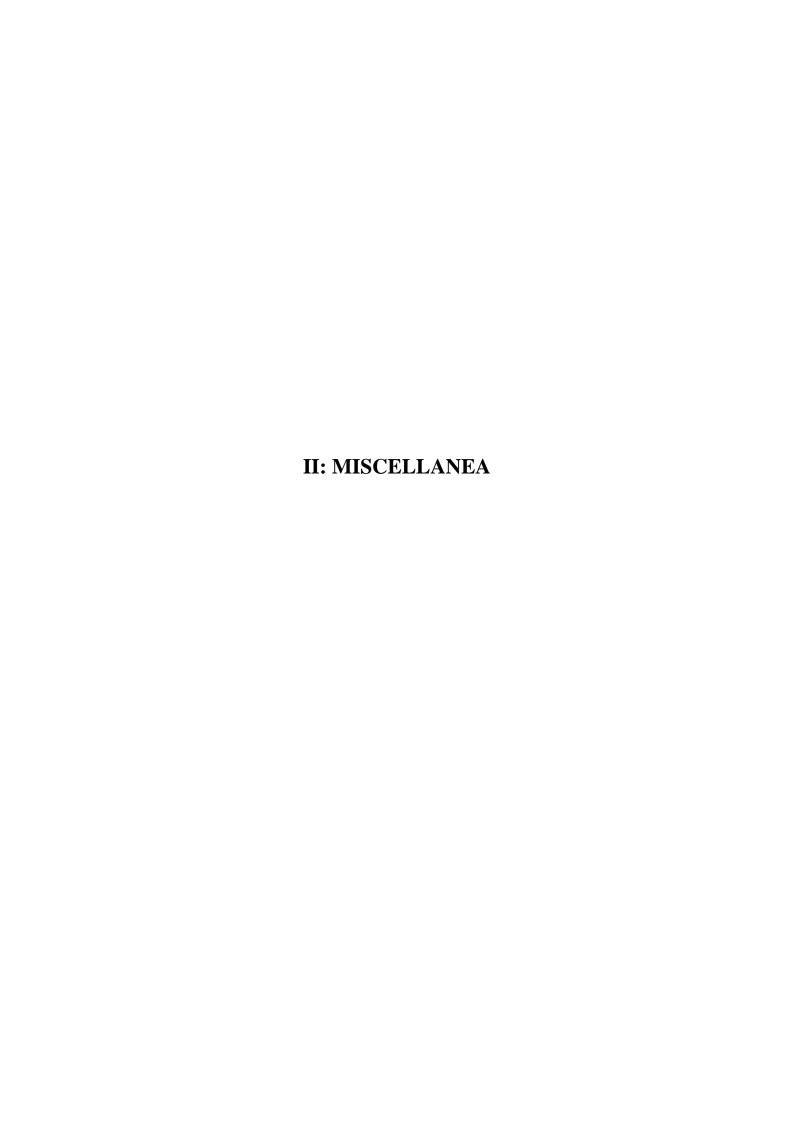
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II: MISCELLANEA

LA VARIATION LINGUISTIQUE SELON IBN ḪALDUN[1]

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Abstract. In the last sections of the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Ḥaldūn deals with some general issues related to languages, then he focuses on the Arabic language by writing a different outline from the one grammarians usually give. As a matter of fact, they are bound to a static representation of the linguistic reality, which ultimately includes only one language, that of the origins, harmonious and perfect, whose distinctive feature is the *’i‘rāb*. Anything else is considered by them just as a corrupt form, a barbarization of this one language. The attention to historical and social changes, instead, allowed Ibn Ḥaldūn to elaborate a more dynamic model which embraces the idea of variation, not only synchronically, as it is for grammarians, also diachronically. Within this model the idea of corruption is just the beginning of a process of linguistic transformation that led to the appearance of at least three independent varieties of Arabic, each one with its own features.
Keywords: *Ibn Ḥaldūn’s Muqaddima; Arabic language; linguistic variation; contact of languages; Bedouin and sedentary Arabic; linguistic habit, ’i‘rāb, corruption (fasād), lisān, luġa.*

Introduction

Dans la dernière partie de sa *Muqaddima*, c’est-à-dire dans le chapitre six, nommé, selon les éditions, *al-bāb as-sādis* ou *al-faṣl as-sādis*, Ibn Ḥaldūn (m. 1406) passe en revue les différentes sciences cultivées par l’homme, en faisant la distinction entre les sciences philosophiques et spéculatives (*al-‘ulūm al-ḥikmiyya al-falsafiyya*, également connues sous le nom de *al-‘ulūm al-‘aqliyya*) et les sciences traditionnelles et conventionnelles (*al-‘ulūm an-naqliyya al-waḍ‘iyya*). Les premières sont « naturelles » (*ṭab‘iyya*) pour les êtres humains, qui seraient en mesure, grâce à leurs perceptions et leur capacité de penser, de saisir et d’exprimer les objets, les problèmes et les méthodes d’étude et d’enseignement de telles sciences, qui comprennent la logique, la physique, les mathématiques, la médecine, l’astronomie, etc. Les secondes (les sciences traditionnelles et conventionnelles) ont leur origine dans la révélation et sont basées sur une forme d’autorité ; elles ne sont donc pas considérées comme un produit de l’intellect humain, bien que ce dernier soit utilisé, par exemple, pour relier des données et des problèmes spécifiques aux principes généraux grâce à un raisonnement analogique. Ce second groupe comprend les différentes sciences coraniques, à commencer par l’exégèse (*tafsīr*), celles relatives aux traditions prophétiques

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[1] Une partie de cet article a été présentée lors de la journée d’études sur la tradition linguistique arabe, qui s'est tenue au Département d’études humanistes de l’Université de Turin le 18/12/2014.

(*'ulūm al-ḥadīṯ*), la jurisprudence (*fiqh*), la théologie spéculative (*'ilm al-kalām*), etc., qui sont d'ailleurs les premières à être traitées dans le sixième chapitre de la *Muqaddima*[2]. Dans la section M38 / R37[3] du même chapitre, Ibn Ḫaldūn procède à une deuxième subdivision entre les sciences qui font pour elles-mêmes l'objet de la recherche humaine (*'ulūm maqṣūda bi-ḏ-ḏāt)*[4] et les sciences auxiliaires, qui sont un outil (*'āla*) au service des premières et qui, en tant que telles, doivent être étudiées seulement en fonction de leur utilité. Les exemples du premier type sont, une fois de plus, l'exégèse coranique, les sciences appliquées aux traditions prophétiques, la jurisprudence et la théologie, mais aussi la philosophie, dans ses deux branches de la physique et de la métaphysique, elles-mêmes divisées en diverses disciplines. Les sciences relatives à la *'arabiyya* et à l'arithmétique sont cependant considérées comme instrumentales par rapport à celles du juridico-religieux, tout comme la logique l'est par rapport à la philosophie. Jusque-là Ibn Ḫaldūn semble se conformer à la tradition, ce qu'on peut aussi constater – à quelques exceptions près – quand quelques pages plus loin il commence à énumérer, en les traitant un par un, les piliers de la langue arabe (*al-lisān al-'arabī*) : grammaire (*naḥw*), lexicographie (*'ilm al-luġa*), éloquence (*bayān*)[5] et littérature (*'adab*). Des réflexions plus intéressantes et parfois même novatrices sur le plan linguistique et sociolinguistique se trouvent dans certains sections du chapitre six précédant ou suivant la section M45 / R44 spécifiquement consacrée aux quatre disciplines mentionnées ci-dessus et, dans certains cas plus rares, également au sein de celle-ci. C'est notamment le cas dans les sections où l'historien Ibn Ḫaldūn présente les intentions de la composition littéraire (M35 / R33), traite de la relation entre l'étude de la science et les origines arabes ou non arabes des savants (M43 / R42), établit un lien entre l'apprentissage et la langue maternelle de l'apprenant (M44 / R43), définit la langue (*luġa*) comme une habitude (*habitus*) acquise (M46 / R45), oppose la langue des populations sédentaires et urbaines à celle des bédouins (M48 / R47), relie l'acquisition de l'habitude linguistique à la distance géographique (M52 / R51), etc. Ces pages permettent au lecteur d'avoir une idée assez précise de la façon dont Ibn Ḫaldūn, qui n'était pas linguiste, considère les langues en général et l'arabe en particulier, saisi certainement selon sa nature et ses caractéristiques fondamentales, mais surtout mis en relation avec l'histoire et la société de ses locuteurs. En d'autres termes, nous sommes en présence d'un érudit qui, à sa manière, semble prendre en compte le changement diachronique de la langue arabe. En accordant une attention particulière à l'utilisation et à

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[2] Cf. Ahmad (2003: 33ss., 74ss.)

[3] Comme la division du sixième chapitre n'est pas exactement la même dans toutes les éditions de la *Muqaddima*, les références aux différentes sections qui le composent seront désormais indiquées selon la numérotation de l'édition 1995 éditée par Darwīš al-Ǧawaydī, abrégée à cet effet en M, et selon celle de la traduction anglaise de Franz Rosenthal, abrégée en R.

[4] Rosenthal (1967 : 298) traduit « wanted *per se* ».

[5] La traduction de ce terme reste problématique au sein de la *Muqaddima*, où il recouvre plusieurs significations selon les cas. La difficulté augmente quand il se trouve en relation avec *balāġa* (rhétorique) dont il partage le domaine d'étude. Rosenthal propose sur la base du contexte : « *syntax and style* », « *stylistic precision* », « *science of style* », « *literary criticism* » (il traduit par contre *balāġa* par « rhétorique » ou « éloquence »). Cette discipline s'occupe aussi de la relation entre ce qu'on veut communiquer et la manière, plus ou moins efficace, de le communiquer, par exemple à travers l'ordre des mots. En certaine mesure le terme *bayān* se rapproche donc à ce que les linguistes modernes appellent la « pragmatique ».

la récurrence de certains termes, en particulier l'alternance entre *luġa* et *lisān*, et en reliant les réflexions sur le langage dispersées dans les sections indiquées ci-dessus, j'essaierai dans cet article de décrire ce qu'on pourrait appeler la perception, sinon la théorie, de la variation linguistique selon Ibn Ḫaldūn.

Fonction et caractère (conventionnel) des langues

Parmi les arabisants contemporains, Kees Versteegh (1997a, 1997b), Pierre Larcher (2006 ; 2007)[6] et Georges Bohas (2007) ont souligné l'intérêt suscité par certains fragments du sixième chapitre de la *Muqaddima* sur le plan historique, linguistique et sociolinguistique. En particulier Versteegh (1997a : 154 ss.) reconnaît l'importance d'Ibn Ḫaldūn comme témoin de l'attitude des Arabes envers leur propre langue, mais limite le discours à la question de la corruption de la langue d'origine et de ses conséquences, en premier lieu la naissance, ou plutôt l'invention, de la grammaire. Un deuxième point sur lequel Versteegh insiste beaucoup est le manque d'intérêt manifesté par les grammairiens pour les différences entre les langues parlées (*luġāt*) des différentes tribus arabes, une lacune qu'il relie à l'absence du concept de diachronie dans la tradition linguistique arabe (Versteegh 1997a : 158). Larcher, au contraire, met en avant la distinction faite au sein de la *Muqaddima* entre la langue originelle, ce que l'historien tunisien appelle la langue de Muḍar, les parlers bédouins de son temps et les parlers des sédentaires, auxquels il reconnaît le statut de langues autonomes et indépendantes (Larcher 2006 ; 2007 : 119-120). De ce point de vue, le passage de la langue originelle à la langue bédouine contemporaine, ainsi qu'à la langue sédentaire, ne doit pas être lu uniquement en termes de corruption de la première, accompagnée d'une incapacité des locuteurs à s'exprimer correctement dans l'idiome de leurs ancêtres. Tout en maintenant l'idée de la détérioration comme cause initiale qui a donné lieu au changement linguistique, Ibn Ḫaldūn identifie comme résultat de ce processus le remplacement d'une syntaxe basée sur la flexion désinentielle par une syntaxe basée sur la position, évidemment plus rigide, des constituants du discours (Larcher 2006 : 429 ; 2007 : 120).

En prenant comme point de départ les considérations de Versteegh et de Larcher, j'essaierai de les intégrer avec plus de détails et de réflexions, afin que la pensée linguistique d'Ibn Ḫaldūn émerge dans toute sa complexité. À cette fin, il me semble que la meilleure façon de commencer le discours est de passer en revue les différentes définitions de langue qui nous pouvons trouver dans le sixième chapitre de la *Muqaddima*. Au début de la section consacrée à la grammaire (M45, R44), nous lisons que la langue (*luġa*) est « l'expression de la part du locuteur de son intention » (*'ibāratu l-mutakallim 'an maqṣūdihi*) et que cette expression est « un acte linguistique qui trouve son origine dans la volonté de communiquer le [sens du] discours. La langue devient donc nécessairement une habitude établie dans l'organe qui la produit, à savoir [l'organe] de la langue (*lisān*) » (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 545). En plus de décrire la fonction de toute langue, c'est-à-dire celle

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6   Larcher (2006 : 425) souligne que les chapitres « linguistiques » de la *Muqaddima* ont été portés à l'attention du lecteur occidental au début du XIXe siècle, grâce à leur publication et traduction partielle dans l'*Anthologie grammaticale arabe* d'Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1829 : 408-447).

d'exprimer ce que le locuteur veut communiquer, nous rencontrons ici l'idée, développée dans d'autres sections, que les langues sont une habitude (*malaka*), à comprendre comme une aptitude ou disposition de la personne, située dans une partie spécifique du corps humain. Cette habitude, que nous verrons plus tard être comparée à l'exercice des arts, doit être bien enracinée chez l'individu, afin qu'il puisse exprimer au mieux ses idées à travers celle-ci. La relation entre ce que le locuteur entend communiquer et son expression linguistique est évoquée dans la section précédente (M 44, R43), consacrée au problème de l'apprentissage des sciences par ceux qui n'ont pas l'arabe comme langue maternelle.

> Les langues (*luġāt*) servent simplement d'interprète des idées contenues dans les esprits, des idées qui se transmettent les unes aux autres par la communication orale pendant la discussion et l'enseignement, et par la pratique de la recherche scientifique, afin d'atteindre leur habitude par la pratique continue. Les mots et les langues sont des médiateurs et des voiles entre les esprits ; ce sont des liens entre les idées et ce qui sert à les sceller. Pour saisir les idées à partir des mots qui les expriment, il est nécessaire de connaître le sens linguistique de ces mots. Celui qui étudie les idées doit avoir une excellente habitude [linguistique], sinon il lui sera difficile de les saisir, en plus des difficultés inhérentes à l'investigation que l'esprit en fait. Quand son habitude à ces significations est bien établie, de sorte que les idées viennent à l'esprit au moment même où les mots sont utilisés, d'une manière intuitive et naturelle, le voile entre les idées et la compréhension s'estompe complètement ou devient plus léger. (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 544) [1]

Que les langues doivent être comprises comme une habitude / aptitude de locuteurs est répété au début de la section (M46 / R45) qui vient après celle concernant les disciplines appliquées à l'étude de l'arabe et qui est intitulée, justement, *La langue est une habitude acquise* (*Fī 'anna al-luġa malaka ṣinā'iyya*). L'adjectif *ṣinā'iyya*, que Rosenthal traduit par *technical* et que je rends avec « acquis », a le sens de « construit », « artificiel », par opposition à « naturel », une opposition fondamentale dans la pensée linguistique d'Ibn Ḫaldūn. Comme nous le verrons plus loin, c'est l'un des points cruciaux pour comprendre l'idée de variation linguistique que notre auteur se fait à propos des différents « types d'arabe ». Cependant, dans la première partie de la section, nous trouvons un certain nombre d'affirmations générales, valables pour toutes les langues.

> Toutes les langues (*luġāt*) sont des habitudes semblables aux arts, étant des habitudes situées dans l'organe de la langue pour exprimer les idées. La bonne qualité de l'expression ou son insuffisance dépend de la perfection ou de l'imperfection de l'habitude. Cela n'est pas valable pour les mots isolés, mais seulement pour leurs combinaisons[7]... Les habitudes ne se forment que par la répétition des actions. En

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[7] Dans cette affirmation nous voyons un reflet de la théorie du discours formulée par 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Ǧurǧānī (m. 1078), en particulier de ce qu'il appelle *naẓm al-kalim*, c'est-à-dire « l'arrangement des mots ». Pour le grammairien et rhétoricien de Ǧurǧān (Gurgān), le placement des mots et leur organisation en énoncés suivent l'arrangement des idées dans l'esprit du locuteur. L'efficacité du discours, donc de la communication des idées, ne repose pas sur le choix de tel ou tel mot considéré séparément, mais sur la combinaison des mots en unités complexes, de manière que les sens de ceux-là soient harmonisés à l'intérieur de celles-ci, selon ce que l'esprit exige. Cf. Larkin 1982 et Larkin 1995 : 50 et s.

effet, l'action se fait une fois et [donc] une qualité revient à l'essence ; puis elle se répète et devient une condition, c'est-à-dire une qualité non enracinée ; après, en la répétant plusieurs fois, elle devient une habitude, c'est-à-dire une qualité bien enracinée. (Ibn Ḥaldūn 1995 : 554) [2]

Le discours se poursuit avec une description de la façon dont le locuteur arabe apprend et transmet, génération après génération, à travers l'écoute quotidienne et la répétition, sa propre langue. Il est comparé à un enfant qui, dans un environnement peuplé uniquement de locuteurs de la même langue, assimile d'abord les mots isolés, puis les combinaisons complexes. Au fur et à mesure que l'enfant grandit, il devient à tous les égards comme ces locuteurs. Il en va de même pour les non-Arabes nés et élevés dans un environnement arabophone.

> Ainsi, les langues (*'alsun)* et les parlers (*luġāt*) se sont transmis de génération en génération et ont été appris par les non-Arabes et les enfants. C'est ce que cela signifie quand les gens ordinaires disent que les Arabes ont [leur] langue par nature, c'est-à-dire par cette habitude originelle que les autres apprennent d'eux, mais qu'ils n'apprennent de personne d'autre. (Ibn Ḥaldūn 1995 : 555) [3]

Nous remarquons ici l'utilisation en couple des termes *'alsun* et *luġāt*, qui signifient dans ce contexte tous les deux « langues parlées », sans distinction entre langues et dialectes, ou encore entre variantes supra-dialectales et variantes dialectales. Nous y reviendrons plus loin. Les deux derniers passages révèlent le caractère « culturel » des langues, dont l'acquisition et l'utilisation correcte sont des processus influencés par l'environnement. Pouvoir s'exprimer dans une certaine langue, quelle que soit la langue, y compris celle des Arabes, n'est pas un fait inné ou naturel, mais une faculté qui se construit et s'apprend au fil du temps. Le cliché d'un peuple qui posséderait et serait capable de maîtriser sa propre langue « par nature » était déjà remis en question par Ibn Ḥaldūn au sein de la section M35 / R33 intitulée *Les intentions qu'il faut se fixer dans la composition [d'ouvrages] et qui seules sont considérées comme valables* (*Fī al-maqāṣid allatī yanbaġī iʿtimāduhā bi-at-taʾlīf wa-ʾilġāʾ mā sawāhā*), où il parle de la communication orale et écrite. Les deux sont rapprochées par le fait qu'elles sont le résultat d'une convention (*tawāḍuʿ*), et si quelqu'un peut les voir comme des choses naturelles, c'est dû à des causes extralinguistiques, telles que le prestige culturel ou politique, les origines anciennes, la diffusion dans l'espace ou le temps. Après avoir mentionné l'écriture de Muḍar et l'écriture ḥimyarite, l'occasion pour ces réflexions est fournie par une troisième forme d'écriture :

> Souvent, certains ignorants croient que [l'écriture syriaque], en raison de son ancienneté, est une écriture naturelle, étant [les Nabatéens et les Chaldéens] les nations les plus anciennes. C'est un fantasme et une façon grossière de penser, parce que dans tous les actes déterminés par un choix il n'y a rien de naturel. C'est seulement que [l'écriture syriaque] a continué à être utilisée dans l'antiquité au point de devenir une habitude bien enracinée, à tel point qu'elle est considérée comme naturelle par l'observateur. C'est la même opinion que beaucoup de gens abrutis ont de la langue arabe quand ils disent que les Arabes s'expriment en arabe et le parlent naturellement. C'est un fantasme. (Ibn Ḥaldūn 1995 : 529). [4]

L'acte linguistique est le résultat d'un choix, et comme ce choix ne peut être que partagé – sinon il n'y aurait pas de communication entre les locuteurs – les langues ont un caractère conventionnel. Même si Ibn Ḫaldūn ne l'affirme pas explicitement, son insistance à définir les langues comme une habitude acquise, une capacité technique similaire à celle des arts, et le fait qu'il met en parallèle la communication écrite, qui est basée sur un système de signes établi par convention, avec la communication orale, nous amène à cette conclusion.

Or, la question du caractère conventionnel des langues se rattache au débat philosophique et théologique sur l'origine divine ou humaine de la langue. Pendant une période de temps relativement courte à partir du IXe siècle, la discussion a impliqué, bien que dans une mesure limitée, des grammairiens et des philologues, surtout de formation mu'tazilite, ou provenant d'un milieu mu'tazilite, ainsi que des philosophes, théologiens, érudits du *fiqh*, commentateurs du Coran (Versteegh 1997 : 101-14). Que l'intérêt pour l'origine de la langue ait mûri au sein du mu'tazilisme est bien compréhensible, étant donné l'importance, pour sa théologie rationaliste, que le problème de la nature créée ou non créée du Coran recouvre avec ses divers corollaires. Il ne faut pas non plus oublier que, toujours à travers le mu'tazilisme, la culture arabo-musulmane a acquis, en la intégrant, la pensée philosophique grecque avec ses instruments de recherche et, en partie, aussi ses objets d'étude. L'étendue réelle de l'influence de la philosophie et de la logique grecque, ou plus généralement de la pensée grecque, dans ce domaine comme dans d'autres sciences développées par les Arabes a fait l'objet de nombreux débats, qui néanmoins n'ont pas abouti à une conclusion définitive. Les spécialistes sont divisés entre les partisans de la « thèse interne » et les partisans de la « thèse externe » : les premiers tendent à identifier dans la culture arabo-musulmane le terrain sur lequel les sciences linguistiques, la théologie, la philosophie, etc. sont nées et se sont développées, tout en admettant que la pensée grecque a fourni les outils intellectuels pour que ces disciplines soient pourvues d'une véritable épistémologie ; les partisans de la thèse externe affirment au contraire une dépendance presque totale de la science arabe à l'égard de la culture grecque, même dans les domaines les plus typiques de la pensée arabo-musulmane, ceux qui se rattachent au discours religieux[8].

Dans la célèbre étude d'Henri Loucel sur l'origine de la langue selon les grammairiens arabes (Loucel 1963-64)[9], figure au premier rang Ibn Ǧinnī (m. 1002), qui a consacré à cette question le sixième chapitre de son traité *al-Ḫaṣā'iṣ* (Ibn Ǧinnī: I, 40-47) en l'intitulant *L'origine de la langue : inspiration ou convention ?* (*'Aṣl al-luġa: 'a-'ilhām*

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[8]   Parmi les nombreuses études menées sur le sujet, nous allons signaler Rundgren 1976 ; Versteegh 1977 ; Gutas 1998 ; Rosenthal 2007, en particulier pp. 194-239.

[9]   Une critique à l'étude de Loucel a été faite en 1970 par Muhsin Mahdi (Mahdi 2007 : 137, note 6), selon lequel aucune grammairien ou philologue qui y est mentionné n'a contribué à l'étude du problème en tant qu'expert en grammaire ou philologie (quoi que cela signifie !), pas même Ibn Ǧinnī, considéré par Loucel le grammairien qui plus que tout autre, et de manière originale, a traité le problème de l'origine de la langue (Loucel 1963-64 : II, 262-63 ; cf. Versteegh 1997a : 113). La critique de Mahdi n'est que partiellement acceptable, si l'on tient compte du type de formation que les grammairiens recevaient habituellement, du but des études linguistiques et de leur rôle par rapport aux autres disciplines axées sur le texte canonique. Il est vrai que, d'un point de vue islamique, ce type de préoccupation, avant même qu'elle ne soit ressentie par les linguistes, a été ressentie par les théologiens, les philosophes et les juristes, c'est-à-dire par ceux qui ont essayé de définir la place de l'homme dans l'univers créé, son essence, ses prérogatives et ses limites face aux autres êtres et au Créateur.

hiya 'am iṣṭilāḥ), où les deux termes, *'ilhām* et *iṣṭilāḥ*, sous-tendent un contraste entre les sphères divine et humaine. Prenant comme point de départ le verset 31 de la deuxième sourate du Coran (« Et [Dieu] enseigna à Adam les noms de toutes choses »), Ibn Ǧinnī tente d'établir par l'action de qui est né le langage humain. Pour ce faire, il utilise différents arguments, aussi de type linguistique (Ibn Ǧinnī : I, 41, 44-45)[10], partageant des fois la position des partisans de l'origine par inspiration (*'ilhām*), ou mieux par révélation (*waḥy, tawqīf*), d'autres fois celle des partisans de l'origine par accord (*iṣṭilāḥ*) / convention (*waḍ', tawāḍu'*). Après avoir examiné les différentes hypothèses et avoir trouvé des éléments persuasifs dans une partie comme dans l'autre, il n'exprime finalement pas un jugement définitif, en attendant qu'une idée lui vienne à l'esprit et le fasse pencher vers l'une des deux positions (Ibn Ǧinnī : I, 47).

Le débat sur l'origine divine ou humaine de la langue n'intéresse pas Ibn Ḥaldūn et il ne le mentionne pas dans les sections où il traite de la langue arabe. En tant qu'historien intéressé par l'évolution de la société humaine et de ses différentes productions, il le sent probablement trop éloigné et stérile. Bien que l'on puisse supposer qu'il considère la langue comme le résultat d'une convention humaine, ce qui compte vraiment à ses yeux est la façon dont elle est concrétisée dans les divers idiomes, comment ceux-ci diffèrent les uns des autres, quelles stratégies ils adoptent pour parvenir à la communication, comment ils se perpétuent dans le temps et l'espace et comment ils contribuent à la transmission du savoir.

Les variétés de l'arabe

Dans le cadre de son étude de la langue arabe, Ibn Ḥaldūn se réfère à quatre types fondamentaux d'arabe : la langue originelle et pure, appelée langue de Muḍar (du nom de l'un des deux fils de Nizār b. Maʿadd b. ʿAdnān, ancêtre commun de la plupart des tribus arabes du Nord)[11] ; la langue des anciennes tribus bédouines avec une « habitude linguistique » différente de celle de Muḍar ; la langue parlée par les tribus bédouines de son temps ; la langue des sociétés sédentaires. Dans cette représentation de la variété linguistique, on trouve parfois des distinctions secondaires, tant sur le plan géographique (Maghreb *vs* Machrek) que sociologique (locuteurs sédentaires des villes *vs* locuteurs sédentaires des zones non urbanisées).

D'après la vision d'Ibn Ḥaldūn, la langue de Muḍar (*luġat Muḍar, al-lisān al-muḍarī*) n'est pas seulement un modèle linguistique abstrait, un archétype idéal, mais a eu des manifestations concrètes dont les témoignages historiques sont restés. C'est la langue de certaines tribus bédouines du passé, et pas seulement pour un fait généalogique – leur origine d'un ancêtre commun – comme nous le verrons bientôt ; c'est aussi la langue du Coran et de la tradition prophétique (*ḥadīṯ*), ainsi que celle des compositions en prose et en poésie de l'époque préislamique. Il y a deux caractéristiques principales de cette variété

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[10] Voir la note précédente.
[11] Cf. Kindermann, H., "Rabīʿa and Muḍar", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 April 2018 http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.unibg.it:2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0895. First published online: 2012. Pour ce qui concerne l'usage de cette appellation, cf. Larcher 2006: 427-8.

d'arabe : la flexion désinentielle (*'i'rāb*) et la dérivation lexicale par affixation, qui permettent d'exprimer certaines significations sans avoir à recourir à de nouveaux mots, contrairement à ce qui se passerait dans d'autres langues (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 545). La flexion désinentielle distinguerait également cette variété d'arabe de toutes les autres. De ces premières considérations, il est clair que pour Ibn Ḫaldūn la langue de Muḍar représente ce que les arabisants appellent l'arabe classique ou *al-'arabiyya al-fuṣḥā*, un nom qui, cependant, n'apparaît jamais dans la *Muqaddima*. C'est aussi la langue utilisée dans l'enseignement et la compilation des travaux scientifiques, et que tous les chercheurs doivent connaître pour pouvoir s'occuper des idées et acquérir le savoir dans n'importe quel domaine. Enfin, c'est la variété d'arabe qui, à partir d'un certain point de l'histoire, a fait l'objet d'un processus de codification, devenant ainsi l'objet d'étude de diverses disciplines linguistiques.

Dans la reconstruction « historique » que notre auteur donne, cette langue aurait été parlée par certaines tribus, de la partie centre-ouest de la péninsule arabique (Ḥiǧāz), descendantes des Arabes du Nord à travers l'ancêtre commun Muḍar et ses enfants. Mais pourquoi seulement par certaines et pas par toutes ? L'explication donnée est celle qui est traditionnellement adoptée par les grammairiens arabes du passé, c'est-à-dire la corruption (*fasād*) par contact (*muḫālaṭa*) et contamination. En raison de l'expansion islamique, les Arabes du Ḥiǧāz ont rencontré des populations d'autres langues qui, dans l'effort de parler arabe, ont mélangé leur habitude linguistique avec celle des conquérants, commettant de nombreux solécismes et donnant naissance à des formes hybrides. Avec le temps, de tels solécismes et formes hybrides seraient entrés dans l'usage des Arabes eux-mêmes, provoquant la naissance d'une nouvelle habitude linguistique différente de l'habitude d'origine (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995: 546, 555, 558)[12]. Dans une mesure variable, ce phénomène aurait touché la grande majorité des tribus arabes. Toutefois, le plus grand isolement géographique d'autres tribus, ainsi que leur mode de vie nomade, aurait en effet constitué pour certains groupes, en particulier pour les Quraychites, une barrière contre la pénétration des formes altérées et la détérioration linguistique qui en découle. C'est pourquoi toutes les anciennes tribus arabes n'ont pas conservé le même degré de pureté dans leur manière de s'exprimer et, par conséquent, elles parlaient différentes *luġāt*.

Pierre Larcher, qui s'est soucié d'identifier la source de cette reconstruction, a identifié dans le *Kitāb al-ḥurūf* d'al-Fārābī (m. 950) l'idée sous-jacente du raisonnement, et cela après avoir écarté l'hypothèse qu'Ibn Fāris (m. 1004) aurait pu influencer la pensée d'Ibn Ḫaldūn, en particulier avec son traité *Ṣāḥibī fī fiqh al-luġa al-'arabiyya* (Larcher 2007 : 428)[13]. En résumé, al-Fārābī affirme que, selon le principe que la langue la plus pure

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[12] Les sections dans lesquelles ce sujet est abordé et repris sont respectivement celles sur la grammaire (M45, R44), sur la langue comme habitude acquise (M46, R45), sur la langue des locuteurs sédentaires (M48, R47). Dans certains cas, la répétition du même concept est fonctionnelle au développement du discours, dans d'autres, elle est juste une répétition. Comme d'autres l'ont déjà remarqué, ce fait nous porte à croire que les pages qui composent la *Muqaddima* ont été écrites à différentes occasions (cours ? lectures publiques ?) et rassemblées en volume seulement plus tard.

[13] Le traité d'Ibn Fāris est mentionné par Larcher pour une question terminologique sur le nom de la langue originelle. Ibn Ḫaldūn, comme on le sait, l'appelle « *luġat Muḍar* », une expression qui dans le *Ṣāḥibī* est utilisée au pluriel (*luġāt Muḍar*), mais ne lui donne jamais la définition de « *al-luġa al-fuṣḥā* ». Cependant, il utilise une expression similaire que Larcher suppose être à l'origine de cette

est parlée par les habitants de la partie la plus à l'intérieur d'une nation donnée, et parmi eux par les habitants des zones non urbanisées, les meilleurs locuteurs de la langue arabe doivent être placés au centre de la péninsule arabique (cf. Suleyman 2011: 7 ; al-Fārābī. 1990 : 146-7 ;)[14]. Cette pensée est reprise par les mots d'Ibn Ḫaldūn, lorsqu'il déclare que « la distance par rapport à la langue [première] n'est due qu'au contact avec les non-Arabes. Plus on est en contact avec les non-Arabes, plus sa langue sera éloignée de la langue originelle » (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995: 558).

Le processus de corruption à la suite du contact avec des peuples étrangers se serait poursuivi avec l'annexion de nouveaux territoires au califat. La société islamique devint plus complexe, avec un nombre croissant de centres urbains agissant comme des pôles politiques, administratifs et culturels, et avec une structure démographique de plus en plus hétérogène. La langue ancienne de Muḍar était en danger d'extinction, et avec elle la possibilité de comprendre pleinement et correctement le texte de la révélation et de la tradition prophétique. Il était donc nécessaire de préserver cette variété linguistique en établissant, une fois pour toutes, son vocabulaire, sa structure et les règles morphologiques et syntaxiques qui régissaient son fonctionnement. En d'autres termes, il fallait lui fournir une grammaire, une science qui, selon Ibn Ḫaldūn, se développa, dans le cas des Arabes, pour répondre à ce besoin. En particulier, les premiers grammairiens se concentrèrent sur le fonctionnement de l'*i'rāb* et ses implications sémantiques [15] et, pour ainsi dire, pragmatiques ; les lexicographes se préoccupèrent plutôt de préserver l'utilisation des mots selon leurs propres significations[16]. À ce but, en plus des documents textuels, il leur fallait interroger des informateurs capables de fournir les réponses dont ils avaient besoin. Pour les raisons exposées ci-dessus, ces informateurs devaient appartenir à ces tribus, nomades ou semi-nomades, qui avaient gardé un certain degré d'isolement au fil du temps.

Il est clair qu'une telle attention accordée à cette variété d'arabe a une motivation idéologique, en raison du prestige social qui lui a été reconnu comme étant la langue des textes à la base de la civilisation arabo-musulmane. Le sentiment de sa perte ou de son changement ne se limitait pas à remettre en question la capacité de ceux qui voulaient

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dernière, à savoir « *kānat luġatu qurayšin 'afṣaḥa l-luġāti l-'arabiyyati wa-'aṣraḥahā* » (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 555). Larcher compare cette expression avec celle qui nous trouvons dans le *Ṣāḥibī* toujours à propos de la langue de Qurayš : « *'aġma'a 'ulamā'unā bi-l-kalāmi al-'arabi… 'anna qurayšan 'afṣaḥu l-'arabi 'alsinatan wa-'aṣfāhum luġatan* » (Ibn Fāris 1997 : 28).

[14] Suleyman cite un passage du traité *'Iqtirāḥ fī 'uṣūl an-naḥw* par Ġalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (m. 1505), où celui-ci se réfère à al-Fārābī et à sa liste des tribus, que les premières grammairiens n'auraient pas considérées une source fiable dans la quête de données linguistiques, à cause de leur parlers contaminés par des éléments étrangers (cf. as-Suyūṭī 2006 : 47-8).

[15] Il convient de rappeler que pour la tradition grammaticale arabe, la flexion désinentielle n'est pas un fait purement syntaxique, mais exprime des valeurs sémantiques qui, à travers les marques de cas, se manifestent lorsqu'un certain élément est inséré dans un énoncé (Bohas-Guillaume-Kouloughli 1990 : 54-5). Sur la relation entre la présence d'un opérateur grammatical, la flexion désinentielle et la variation de sens, voir Bagatin (2018 : 90-2), où le discours est abordé sur la base de certaines affirmations prises du *Kitāb al-muqtaṣid fī šarḥ al-'īḍāḥ*, le commentaire écrit par 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Ġurǧānī (m. 1078) sur le *Kitāb al-Īḍāḥ* de 'Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī (m. 987), maître d'Ibn Ǧinnī.

[16] Au tout début de la section sur la lexicographie, Ibn Ḫaldūn affirme que le processus de contamination et de corruption de l'habitude linguistique n'a pas seulement affecté le bon fonctionnement de l'*i'rāb*, mais aussi la capacité d'utiliser les mots et les phrases selon leur significations originales (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 547).

continuer à les lire et à les comprendre, mais sapait le système de valeurs qui s'y rattachait. Ibn Ḫaldūn semble être bien conscient de ce fait :

> [...] Cependant l'intérêt pour la langue de Muḍar est dû à la loi religieuse (*šarī'a*), comme nous l'avons dit. Cela a conduit [les érudits] à déduire et à étudier [ses règles] en détail. Aujourd'hui, nous n'avons rien qui nous amène et nous invite à faire de même. (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 557) [5]

L'utilisation même du terme péjoratif *fasād*, inventé par les grammairiens arabes des siècles passés pour décrire la perte progressive de la flexion désinentielle, ainsi que l'idée d'une langue qui peut mieux exprimer que d'autres l'intention du locuteur, se justifie davantage par des raisons idéologiques que linguistiques. Ibn Ḫaldūn, qui développe sa réflexion à partir de la tradition grammaticale précédente, se montre capable de la critiquer et de la surmonter, en remplaçant le concept de corruption par celui de transformation et de diversité linguistique. A ce propos, dans la section M47 / R46 intitulée *La langue des Arabes d'aujourd'hui est une langue indépendante et distincte de celle de Muḍar et Ḥimyar* (*Fī 'anna luġat al-'arab li-hāḏā al-'ahd luġat mustaqilla muġāyira li-l-luġat Muḍar wa-luġat Ḥimyar*) il déclare que l'arabe contemporain connaît, et par conséquent utilise, les mêmes moyens expressifs que la langue de Muḍar (*al-lisān al-muḍarī*), à l'exception des voyelles finales qui permettent de distinguer le sujet de l'objet, c'est-à-dire les voyelles de la flexion désinentielle. À leur place, le locuteur utilise, pour indiquer certaines significations spécifiques, la position des mots[17] dans la phrase et les relations syntaxiques (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 555).

Certaines clarifications sont immédiatement nécessaires. Tout d'abord, les « Arabes d'aujourd'hui » auxquels Ibn Ḫaldūn se réfère ne sont pas les habitants des villes, mais les membres des tribus bédouines. Cette idée devient de plus en plus claire en continuant avec la lecture, en particulier de la section suivante, consacrée expressément à la langue parlée par les populations sédentaires et urbaines. Deuxièmement, la référence à la langue de Ḥimyar, une langue de la région au sud de la péninsule arabique (Yémen) n'appartenant pas au groupe des langues sudarabiques anciennes, est justifiée par la conviction erronée qu'entre elle et la langue de Muḍar on peut voir la même relation qui lie cette dernière à l'arabe bédouin contemporain. Il serait intéressant de découvrir l'origine d'une telle conviction, mais au-delà de la comparaison malheureuse (Larcher 2006 : 431), il nous faut y reconnaître une nouvelle manière de voir les choses, à savoir l'idée d'un changement temporel qui a provoqué la formation de variétés linguistiques distinctes et indépendantes, une transformation telle qu'il ne serait pas correct, ni possible, d'appliquer les règles d'une variété à l'autre (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995: 556).

Dans la comparaison entre la langue de Muḍar et l'arabe parlé par les tribus nomades à l'époque de notre auteur, la seule différence pertinente est donc la présence ou l'absence d'*'i'rāb*. Pour le reste, les deux variétés partagent la capacité d'exprimer ce que le locuteur veut communiquer avec une exposition claire et appropriée aux besoins[18]:

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[17] Litt. « mettre avant et mettre après ». Selon toute probabilité, Ibn Ḫaldūn fait simplement allusion à l'ordre des constituants du discours qui, en l'absence de flexion des cas, devient nécessairement plus rigide, et non à la stratégie de la dislocation.

[18] Cette déclaration contredit en fait les mots d'Ibn Ḫaldūn au début de la section, lorsqu'il affirme que la clarté et l'éloquence de la langue de Muḍar sont supérieures.

Cette éloquence et cette clarté font encore aujourd'hui partie de la coutume et de la méthode arabe. Ne donnez pas d'attention à cet égard aux sornettes des grammairiens, experts d'*'i'rāb* qui sont incapables de comprendre la réalité des faits. Ils affirment que l'éloquence s'est perdue à notre époque et que la langue arabe s'est corrompue, sur la base du fait que les terminaisons de l'*'i'rāb* sont corrompues, dont ils étudient les règles. […]. [La possibilité] d'exprimer des significations selon différents degrés d'exposition est présente dans la façon dont les Arabes parlent aujourd'hui. […] De la langue codifiée, seulement les voyelles dans les désinences de l'*'i'rāb* ont été perdues.... Peut-être, si nous devions nous occuper de la langue arabe de notre temps, en étudiant ses normes, nous trouverions dans d'autres choses et d'autres façons ce que les voyelles de l'*'i'rāb*, maintenant corrompues, indiquaient ; des façons avec des règles spécifiques. Peut-être qu'elles seraient dans les désinences [des mots] de cette langue d'une manière différente de celle qui existait à l'origine dans la langue de Muḍar. Les langues et les habitudes [linguistiques] ne sont pas sans fondement. (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 556) [6]

Le ton polémique envers les grammairiens professionnels met encore plus en évidence comment la perte de la flexion désinentielle n'a pas entravé ou diminué l'éventail des possibilités expressives. La corruption progressive de l'*'i'rāb* aurait conduit à la naissance d'une nouvelle variété d'arabe pourvue de ses propres moyens pour compenser cette disparition. Ibn Ḫaldūn va même jusqu'à émettre l'hypothèse d'un autre type de flexion désinentielle pour la nouvelle variété, hypothèse qui reste cependant non vérifiée, simplement parce que les grammairiens ne s'intéressent pas à la situation linguistique de l'époque. Quoi qu'il en soit, entre les lignes de cette dernière citation, il y a un autre fait digne de mention en ce qui concerne la vision ḫaldūnienne de la variation linguistique. C'est l'utilisation des termes *luġa* et *lisān*, en particulier à propos de la « langue codifiée » (*min 'aḥwāli l-lisāni l-mudawwani*) et de la « langue arabe de notre temps » (*bi-hāḏā l-lisāni l-'arabī li-hāḏā l-'ahdi*). L'utilisation qui en est faite ici, comme dans d'autres passages du même chapitre, suggère une connotation sémantique particulière pour *lisān*, à opposer à celle de *luġa*, sur laquelle nous reviendrons dans la conclusion.

La partie finale, assez longue, de cette section concerne une prononciation particulière du phonème *q*, qu'Ibn Ḫaldūn prend comme trait commun de tout l'arabe bédouin parlé de son temps et pour lequel on se réfère à Larcher (2007 : 429-30).

La distance de l'ancienne langue de Muḍar est encore plus évidente dans la langue parlée par les Arabes sédentaires et urbanisés, comme il est bien expliqué dans la section suivante (M48 / R47), dont le titre est *La langue des gens sédentaires et urbanisés est une langue indépendante et différente de la langue de Muḍar* (*Fī 'anna luġat al-ḥaḍar wa-l-'amṣār luġat qā'ima bi-nafsihā muḫālifa li-l-luġat Muḍar*). Comme les sociétés sédentaires, surtout les sociétés urbaines, sont plus réceptives aux contaminations qui découlent de la rencontre de peuples d'origines différentes, il est logique de s'attendre à ce que la plus grande variation linguistique y soit enregistrée, résultant du mélange d'habitudes linguistiques différentes. Il s'agit d'un principe général, et la preuve en est que, contrairement à la section précédente, Ibn Ḫaldūn ne limite pas le discours à son temps. L'arabe sédentaire ne diffère pas seulement de la langue de Muḍar, mais aussi de celle des tribus nomades contemporaines, ce qui donne une variété complètement séparée. Nous

avons vu au contraire comment les deux autres variétés, au-delà des différences dues à la disparition de la flexion désinentielle, sont liées par une relation d'affinité.

Pour ce qui est de la langue sédentaire, Ibn Ḫaldūn souligne enfin un autre type de variation, qui se manifeste à l'intérieur du parler sédentaire lui-même. La langue des villes orientales est différente de celle des villes occidentales et les deux sont différentes de celle des villes andalouses. Cette différenciation dépend des peuples avec lesquels les Arabes sont entrés en contact dans les zones géographiques touchées par la conquête islamique : Perses et Turcs au Machrek, Berbères dans l'Ifrīqiyya et au Maghreb, Galiciens et Francs en Andalousie. Les résultats de la contamination linguistique seraient différents selon les régions ; dans l'Ifrīqiyya et au Maghreb, la prédominance de l'élément berbère a déterminé la variété la plus éloignée de la langue originelle de Muḍar. Malgré les différences, toutes ces variétés sont placées cependant au même niveau en ce qui concerne leur capacité à exprimer ce que le locuteur veut communiquer :

> Chacun d'entre eux est capable d'exprimer dans sa propre langue ce qu'il veut dire et d'expliquer ce qu'il ressent à l'intérieur. C'est ce que l'on entend par langue et idiome. (Ibn Ḫaldūn 1995 : 558) [7]

Conclusion

Dans les pages précédentes, j'ai essayé de décrire dans ses lignes essentielles la pensée linguistique d'Ibn Ḫaldūn, en soulignant les traits de continuité et les points de rupture par rapport à la tradition linguistique et grammaticale précédente. Partant de la question fondamentale de ce qu'est une langue et de ses fonctions, avec un bref *excursus* sur l'origine du langage humain, j'ai finalement orienté le discours sur le concept de variation linguistique, tel qu'il apparaît dans certaines sections du sixième chapitre de la *Muqaddima*. La clé pour interpréter tout ce matériel nous est offerte par Ibn Ḫaldūn lui-même : la langue étant une manifestation de la société humaine, elle est soumise aux mêmes lois du changement historique que toutes ses autres manifestations. L'arabe ne fait pas exception.

Voici, de façon schématique, la reconstruction qu'en fait Ibn Ḫaldūn, observateur attentif de l'évolution historique et sociale.

1. A l'origine, il y a la langue de Muḍar, considérée comme pure, c'est-à-dire non corrompue, parce qu'elle n'a pas encore été en contact avec des éléments étrangers.
2. Cette langue présente des caractéristiques (flexion désinentielle, dérivation par affixation) qui la rendent particulièrement claire et éloquente. On croit que ses locuteurs la maîtrisent avec une spontanéité extrême, presque comme s'ils avaient un don inné, mais aussi pour eux, il s'agit d'une habitude / aptitude acquise par une écoute et une répétition constantes.
3. La langue de Muḍar survit avec ses caractéristiques seulement parmi les locuteurs de certaines tribus nomades, en vertu de l'isolement géographique qui les distingue ; dans les zones limitrophes commence au contraire un processus de transformation (corruption de l'*'i'rāb*).
4. Dès le VIIe siècle, grâce aux Quraychites, cette langue, déjà moyen d'expression d'une importante production poétique, a été le véhicule de la révélation coranique et

de la tradition prophétique, sur lesquelles repose la nouvelle civilisation arabo-musulmane.

5. Au sein du califat, en particulier dans les zones urbaines, le processus de transformation de la langue donne naissance à de nouvelles variétés, plus ou moins éloignées de l'originelle. Les locuteurs qui peuvent comprendre la langue ancienne de Muḍar, mais surtout donner des informations sur l'interprétation correcte des textes canoniques, diminuent de plus en plus au risque d'extinction.

6. Il devient alors urgent d'étudier la structure de la langue coranique et d'établir ses règles dans une grammaire. Depuis, la tradition linguistique arabe s'est engagée à étudier et à définir tous les aspects de cette variété, en la préservant des transformations du devenir historique.

7. Les autres variétés nomades et sédentaires, même si elles ont développé leurs propres règles et possibilités expressives, n'ont jamais été prises en considération par les grammairiens pour en faire l'objet de leur étude.

Il y a une donnée qui est restée implicite dans cette reconstruction. La codification de la langue de Muḍar a lieu à un moment où ses locuteurs sont sur le point de disparaître. A un moment donné, semble nous dire Ibn Ḥaldūn, cette variété n'est plus la langue maternelle de personne ; elle ne peut s'acquérir que par l'enseignement, comme toutes les aptitudes comparables aux arts. Son apprentissage est également exigé de quiconque veut s'occuper du savoir, dans le domaine religieux comme dans d'autres, parce que la production d'œuvres littéraires se fait exclusivement dans cette langue. L'écart donc n'est pas seulement entre les locuteurs de différentes variétés linguistiques (nomades et sédentaires), mais aussi dans la même communauté de locuteurs entre langue orale et écrite.

Quelles conclusions pouvons-nous tirer de la leçon ḥaldūnienne ? On pourrait dire, avec une réponse brève et sèche, que dans la *Muqaddima*, le discours sur la langue est présenté comme la reformulation de thèses traditionnelles mélangées avec des éléments innovateurs, ces derniers étant identifiables surtout dans la manière de décrire la variété linguistique. Si d'une part Ibn Ḥaldūn utilise encore de vieux stéréotypes tels que la supériorité / infériorité linguistique et la corruption, d'autre part il les relativise et limite leur applicabilité à des aspects et phénomènes circonscrits. En dernière analyse, il voit une égalité substantielle entre les langues en termes de possibilité d'exprimer correctement ce que l'on veut communiquer. Le résultat est une réduction du principe de la soi-disant « sagesse des Arabes » (*ḥikmat al-ʿarab*), selon lequel les caractéristiques de la langue sont transférées à ses locuteurs (l'excellence linguistique expliquerait la supériorité des Arabes en tant que peuple). Bien qu'il ne soit pas explicitement énoncé (l'expression *ḥikmat al-ʿarab* ne se trouve pas dans la *Muqaddima*), ce principe est lié à l'idée de pureté et d'exactitude de la langue, dont Ibn Ḥaldūn parle abondamment. Il s'agit de notions qui ont joué un rôle fondamental dans l'idéologie à la base du processus de codification de la langue et de création de la grammaire (Suleiman 2011)[19]. Étant bien conscient des raisons extralinguistiques qui ont conduit à la codification de la langue de Muḍar, Ibn Ḥaldūn leur accorde une valeur limité dans sa vision « sociolinguistique » plus large. Il parvient à cette

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[19] Dans l'article de Suleiman, voir en particulier la section intitulée *Language standardization: the theory of causation and the wisdom of Arabs* (p. 11et s.).

réévaluation par deux voies distinctes : en déclarant que la connaissance de la *'arabiyya* et son utilisation correcte ne sont pas une prérogative des Arabes, mais sont partagées aussi par les locuteurs d'origine non arabe ; il attribue le statut de langue indépendante (*luġa mustaqilla, luġa qā'ima bi-nafsihā*) aux variétés traditionnellement considérées comme des variantes locales ou dialectales (*luġāt*).

Le statut des différentes variétés linguistiques traitées nous ramène à une question terminologique brièvement évoquée dans les pages précédentes : le sens attribué aux termes *luġa* et *lisān* selon leur récurrence dans les sections du chapitre 6. Le premier est utilisé de manière générique pour parler de la langue en tant qu'habitude / aptitude acquise et pour indiquer les langues parlées par les Arabes et les non-Arabes, la langue pure et indigène (*luġat Muḍar*), qui est toutefois aussi appelée *al-lisān al-muḍarī*, les variétés nomades et sédentaires développées à partir du contact avec les peuples étrangers, les langues du substrat (ou adstrat) avec lesquelles la langue originelle est entrée en contact ; enfin, nous le retrouvons dans l'expression *'ilm al-luġa*, que nous avons vu comme étant la lexicographie. Quant à *lisān*, il partage parfois les usages de *luġa* lors qu'on parle de la langue originelle des Arabes et des langues des non-Arabes (étant utilisé aussi au pluriel) ; parfois il s'oppose à *luġa* ; dans d'autres cas il l'accompagne ; il apparaît souvent sous la forme *lisān al-'arab / al-lisān al-'arabī*, par exemple dans *'ulūm al-lisān al-'arabī*, et dans un seul cas est suivi du qualificatif *al-mudawwan* (normalisé, codifié). Il serait évidemment utile de réaliser une enquête statistique plus précise, mais ces indications dépouillées sont déjà suffisantes pour suggérer, avec une certaine approximation, la valeur fondamentale qu'Ibn Ḫaldūn attribue aux deux termes[20]. Alors que *luġa* a à voir avec les manifestations concrètes, au niveau individuel ainsi que collectif, de la langue, saisies à la fois dans leur potentiel (l'aptitude, la disposition à parler) et leur réalisation (l'expression des significations à travers le lexique et la structure), *lisān* fait le plus souvent allusion à la langue en tant que système ou structure, ensemble de stratégies communicatives, groupement de principes et de règles ordonnés dans un modèle théorique. En l'utilisant dans cette acception, Ibn Ḫaldūn semble se rapprocher davantage du langage des philosophes que de celui des grammairiens et des érudits concernés par les langues des siècles antérieurs. Quoi qu'il en soit, si dans *lisān* le sens de *luġa* n'est pas souvent exclu, c'est tout à fait rare que ce deuxième terme soit utilisé selon l'acception du premier. Il ne serait quand même pas raisonnable de rechercher, dans les pages de la *Muqaddima*, la précision et la cohésion du linguiste ; cependant nous pouvons y trouver une réflexion originale, qui prend en compte différents points de vue et en fait une synthèse efficace au profit du lecteur.

Extraits

واللغات إنما هي ترجمان عما في الضمائر من تلك المعاني، يؤديها بعض إلى بعض بالمشافهة في المناظرة [1] والتعليم، وممارسة البحث بالعلوم لتحصيل ملكتها بطول المران على ذلك. والألفاظ واللغات وسائط وحجب بين الضمائر، وروابط وختام بين المعاني. ولا بد في اقتناص تلك المعاني من ألفاظها لمعرفة دلالاتها اللغوية عليها، وجودة

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[20] Pour les acceptions leur attribuées par la tradition grammaticale arabe, cf. les entrées *lisān* et *luġa* dans *EALL.*

الملكة لناظر فيها؛ وإلا فيعتاص عليه اقتناصها زيادة على ما يكون في مباحثها الذهنية من الاعتياص. وإذا كانت ملكته في تلك الدلالات راسخة، بحيث تتبادر المعاني إلى ذهنه من تلك الألفاظ عند استعمالها، شأن البديهي والجبلي، زال ذاك الحجاب بالجملة بين المعاني والفهم أو خف.

[2] اعلم أن اللغات كلها ملكات شبيهة بالصناعة، إذ هي ملكات في اللسان، للعبارة عن المعاني وجودتها وقصورها بحسب تمام الملكة أو نقصانها. وليس ذلك بالنظر إلى المفردات، وإنما هو بالنظر إلى التراكيب. فإذا حصلت الملكة التامة في تركيب الألفاظ المفردة، للتعبير بها عن المعاني المقصودة، ومراعاة التأليف الذي يطبق الكلام على مقتضى الحال، بلغ المتكلم حينئذ الغاية من إفادة مقصوده للسامع، وهذا هو معنى البلاغة. والملكات لا تحصل إلا بتكرار الأفعال لأن الفعل يقع أولا وتعود منه للذات صفة، ثم تتكرر فتكون حالا. ومعنى الحال أنها صفة غير راسخه، ثم يزيد التكرار فتكون ملكة أي صفة راسخة.

[3] هكذا تصيرت الألسن واللغات من جيل إلى جيل وتعلمها العجم والأطفال. وهذا هو معنى ما تقوله العامة من أن اللغة للعرب بالطبع أي بالملكة الأولى التي أخذت عنهم، ولم يأخذوها عن غيرهم.

[4] وربما يزعم بعض أهل الجهل أنه الخط الطبيعي لقدمه فإنهم كانوا أقدم الأمم، وهذا وهم، ومذهب عامي. لأن الأفعال الاختيارية كلها ليس شيء منها بالطبع، وإنما هو يستمر بالقدم والمران حتى يصير ملكة راسخة، فيظنها المشاهد طبيعية كما هو رأي كثير من البلداء في اللغة العربية؛ فيقولون: العرب كانت تعرب بالطبع وتنطق بالطبع. وهذا وهم.

[5] إلا أن العناية بلسان مضر، من أجل الشريعة كما قلناه، حمل ذلك على الاستنباط والاستقراء، وليس عندنا لهذا العهد ما يحملنا على مثل ذلك ويدعونا إليه.

[6] ما زالت هذه البلاغة والبيان ديدن العرب ومذهبهم لهذا العهد. ولا تلتفتن في ذلك إلى خرفشة النحاة أهل صناعة الإعراب القاصرة مداركهم عن التحقيق حيث يزعمون أن البلاغة لهذا العهد ذهبت، وأن اللسان العربي فسد، اعتبارا بما وقع في أواخر الكلم من فساد الإعراب الذي يتدارسون قوانينه... والتعبير عن المقاصد والتعاون فيه بتفاوت الإبانة موجود في كلامهم لهذا العهد... ولم يفقد من أحوال اللسان المدون إلا حركات الإعراب في أواخر الكلم فقط... ولعلنا لو اعتنينا بهذا اللسان العربي لهذا العهد واستقرينا أحكامه، نعتاض عن الحركات الإعرابية (التي فسدت) في دلالتها بأمور أخرى موجودة فيه؛ فتكون لها قوانين تخصها. ولعلها تكون في أواخره على غير المنهاج الأول في لغة مضر، فليست اللغات وملكاتها مجانا.

[7] وكل منهم متوصل بلغته إلى تأدية مقصوده والإبانة عما في نفسه. وهذا معنى اللسان واللغة.

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GENITIVE MARKERS IN OMANI ARABIC

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Abstract. This paper investigates the role of the particles *māl*, *ḥāl*, *ḥagg* and *ḥaqq* in the Arabic dialects of Oman. These particles have often been described as markers of possession in Omani Arabic: however, the data presented in this article seem to indicate that these elements are employed to express a wide variety of NP-internal specifications that go well beyond the realm of linguistic possession, and that they can also be used predicatively outside the boundaries of a NP. *ḥāl* and *ḥagg*, in particular, should probably not be described as genitive markers at all. The syntactic and pragmatic contexts in which the aforementioned markers can be used will be discussed, along with the range of meanings and semantic categories they can express.
Keywords: *Possession, Genitive, Oman, Arabic dialectology.*

1.Introduction

In the course of this paper, I will analyze the use that speakers of Omani Arabic (OA) make of certain lexical elements mostly connected to the expression of possession. It is important to keep in mind that OA is not a homogeneous linguistic entity, but rather, it constitutes a bundle of (more or less tightly) interrelated dialects. All these varieties, at any rate, are at present gravely under-researched. Due to space constraints it is not possible to offer here a comprehensive survey of the existing studies on OA. The reader is therefore referred to Holes (1989 and 2008) and Davey (2016) for an overview. The present article, in particular, is mostly concerned with the Arabic dialects spoken in the northern half of the Sultanate (though references to the southern varieties of Dhofar will be included as well, and integrated with the materials presented in Davey 2012 and 2016).

The article is structured as follows: in § 2 I will circumscribe the scope of my research by providing a standard definition of linguistic possession. In § 3 I will offer an overview of the existing literature on the topic of genitive markers in Arabic dialects, focusing in particular on studies dealing with genitive markers in peninsular varieties. Finally, in § 4 I will discuss the results of the analysis that I have carried out on my corpus of data.

2. What is possession?

For the present discussion I will adopt a standard definition of linguistic possession, as formulated by Basic Linguistic Theory. Dixon (2010: 262) defines possession as a loose

term «used to cover a wide range of relationships». Table 1[1] illustrates the main types of relationships that can be expressed through a possessive construction within a noun phrase across the world's languages (the first three elements of the list being the most common cross-linguistically). As can be seen, most of these relationships are quite dissimilar in nature:

Types of possessive relationships

1) Ownership or temporary possession (*John's car*)
2) Whole-part relationship (*The door of the car*)
3) Kinship relationship (affinal or consanguineal, as in *John's wife* or *John's mother*)
4) An attribute of a person, animal or thing (*John's temper*)
5) A statement of orientation or location (*The inside of the car*)
6) Association (*John's dentist*)

In many languages that make use of specific elements to mark possession, these same markers may be employed to signal other kinds of specification such as quantity/collectivity (*two cups of tea, a bunch of bananas*) or material (*a house of straw, the crown of gold*). Although these structures may, at surface level, resemble the ones described above, they are to be kept distinct, since they fall outside the boundaries of "possession", even in its widest interpretation. This is demonstrated by the fact that they cannot be rephrased using a predicative (that is, non NP-internal) possessive construction (for instance, while it is possible to rephrase *John's car* in *John has a car*[2], this cannot be done in the case of *a cup of tea*). Markers of possessive constructions can sometimes also signal the function of a noun phrase within a clause: for instance, many languages employ the same form for genitive (which marks possessive function within an NP) and dative case (which marks function within a clause)[3]. As we will see, all of the above holds true for several varieties of Arabic, including OA: this is probably the reason that lead to some inconsistencies in the descriptions of possessive relationships in the existing works on the subject, which will be examined in the following paragraphs.

3. Genitive Markers in the Arabic dialects of Arabia

In most varieties of spoken Arabic there are normally two ways of expressing an NP-internal possessive relationship: via a synthetic genitive (SG) structure (called *ʔiḍāfa* in Arabic, but often referred to as *construct* in the western literature) or by means of a periphrasis. While in the case of the *ʔiḍāfa* the possessed and possessor (henceforth PD and PR) are simply juxtaposed, the analytic structure (AG) requires an explicit marker[4] (glossed

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[1]   Adapted from Dixon (2010: 262-5), as all the examples presented in this paragraph.
[2]   Obviously, the syntactic function of the constituents changes. NP-internal possessive constructions presuppose a relationship, predicative possessive constructions are used to establish one.
[3]   This happens because «something that is 'for X' (dative) is likely soon to be 'X's' (genitive)» (Dixon 2010: 291).
[4]   Genitive markers received different labelling from different authors: Belnap (1991) refers to them as *possessive adjectives*, Ingham (1994) as *possessive particles*, Davey (2016) as *genitive linkers*, Eksell-Harning (1980) and Brustad (2000) as *genitive exponents*. I follow Holes (2008) in calling them *genitive markers*.

as GEN in the course of this work) to be inserted between PD and PR. Consider for instance examples (1) and (2), as opposed to (3) and (4):

(1) *dišdāšt-uh*
     dišdāša=PRON.3S.M
     'His *dišdāša*' (typical Omani dress)

(2) *ṣōt   al-wēlāt*
     sound   ART=wheel-PL.F
     'The sound of the wheels'

(3) *əl-gamal   māl-uh*
     ART=camel   GEN=PRON.3S.M
     'His camel'

(4) *əl-maqhā   māl   burʕī*
     ART=café   GEN   burʕī
     '*Burʕī's* café'

Eksell (2009: 35) writes that the SG is still productive in most dialects, and that the choice that speakers operate between the two alternative constructions (SG or AG) «is a complex process operative on several levels of speech, with multiple set of factors involved» (see also Brustad 2000: 74).

The most extensive study of AGs in Arabic dialects existing to date is probably that of Eksell-Harning. About the geographical area that concerns us here, she writes that «in the Eastern half of the Peninsula, including the Persian Gulf, Oman and Dhofar, the use of the AG seems to be more restricted and it is doubtful whether the AG occurs regularly except at isolated locations. There is also a variety of exponents» (Eksell-Harning, 1980: 69). As we will see, our data appear to confirm both statements.

As far as studies dealing specifically with southern and eastern Arabia are concerned, Reinhardt (1894: 79) reports the use of boht *māl* and *ḥāl* in OA. Holes (1990: 96, 170-1) notes the two particles *ḥagg* and *māl* for the dialect of the northern Gulf coast plus *ḥāl* for OA[5]. Johnstone (1967: 69, 90-1) as well reports the use of *māl* and *ḥagg* in the Gulf. Johnstone's work in particular contains a number of interesting remarks. First of all, he notes how *ḥagg* is used only with the meaning of 'for', while «it does not mean 'of' as it does in many other dialects, though the context might sometimes appear to suggest this»[6]. He also observes (as does Brustad, 2000: 72) that the "preposition" *māl* may agree in gender and number with the preceding noun, giving the two forms *mālat* (F.SG.) and *mālōt* (PL.), though such agreement is not obligatory and less common than non-agreement. Finally,

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[5] Holes (2008: 484) lists *bu* as well for OA. I will not discuss this marker in this paper, since it only rarely appeared in my data. It would seem that it was once one of the main genitive markers in northern Oman, but that it is today receding at the expenses of *māl*. I have very frequently heard it in the towns and villages of the Hajar massif, such as Bahla or Al-Hamra.

[6] Cf. as well Brustad (2000: 72-3). Also Johnstone (1982: 584), in his review of Heksell-Harning's book, refuted her claim that *ḥagg* could be employed as a genitive marker in Gulf Arabic.

Johnstone repeatedly insists on the fact that *māl* «is not used ordinarily where a construct complex [i.e. an SG] is possible». Eksell-Harning (1980: 70), commenting on examples drawn from Johnstone's materials, notes that «apparently, the *māl* phrase is used not only to express possession but also qualification».

For southern Oman (Dhofar), Davey (2012: 69) observes that both *ḥaqq* and *māl* are in use in the local dialect, and that both of them may inflect for gender and number (though, again, this appears to be an optional feature). Unlike its cognate from the northern Gulf, Dhofari *ḥaqq* would seem to fully deserve the title of genitive marker, as *māl* does, since «there does not appear to be any functional difference between these elements in everyday usage». Davey (2012: 71) also gives some interesting information about the definiteness of the PR and PD within AGs in Dhofari Arabic, commenting that, although a definite PD followed by a definite or pronominal PR represents the most common combination, indefinite PDs and/or PRs are attested as well. This appears to contradict both Eksell-Harning (1980: 74) and Ingham (1994: 58), according to whom asymmetrically definite AGs can be constituted by an indefinite PD and a definite PR, but not the other way around[7].

Both Davey and Eksell-Harning discuss the type of semantic relationships that can be expressed through an AG: this will be analyzed in more depth in § 4.2.2. One last point which is worth considering here is the motivation behind the use of AGs (rather than SGs). According to Eksell-Harning (1980: 79-81), these motivations are rarely semantic in nature (e.g. connected to the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession), but rather "stylistic" (e.g. the contrast between two or more concepts, the introduction of a new theme, or the climax in a chain of events). Brustad (2000: 76) apparently agrees with this when she writes that «the genitive exponents fulfill specific pragmatic functions that the construct phrase does not. [They place] a focus on the possessing noun (in linear terms, the second noun) not conveyed by the construct phrase».

4. Data Analysis

The analysis that I present in this paragraph is based on a heterogeneous corpus of data, which includes both original interviews that I have recorded in Oman during several fieldwork periods in the years from 2014 to 2016[8], and material drawn from popular Omani TV shows[9]. In particular, my own recordings consist of one-to-one interviews, elicited examples [10] and voice messages recorded via instant messaging applications such as

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[7] Here Eksell-Harning is referring to western Arabian dialect, while Ingham to central Arabian ones.

[8] My informants were mostly males with university-level education in their 20s or 30s. They were all from the northern towns of Muscat, Nizwa and Ibri, or their immediate surroundings.

[9] Though I have never carried out fieldwork research in Dhofar, the television material I have employed included a limited amount of Dhofari speech. Dhofari Arabic genitive markers present a number of lexical and morphological peculiarities that set them apart from those used in the north of Oman. Some examples of Dhofari AGs are discussed in the following paragraphs.

[10] Direct elicitation was only sparingly used during the data-gathering phase. It was only after careful examination of my material that I resorted to elicitation, in order to confirm or dismiss some of the hypotheses that I had formulated. I have clearly signaled the few examples that appear in this article that were obtained by means of elicitation.

WhatsApp or Viber. The latter are of particular interest because, although not dialogical in the proper sense of the term, they closely approximate the style of intimate and informal communication between friends (especially among young users)[11]. In general, I tried to include in my dataset as many text-types as possible, in order to be able to examine the use of AGs in a wide variety of communicative situations and pragmatic contexts.

    A cursory survey of this dataset reveals three fundamental facts: the first one is that, especially when compared to other dialects, AGs in OA appear to be extremely uncommon, and vastly outnumbered by SGs. This is consistent with the tentative classification provided by Eksell-Harning (1980: 158). The second fact that emerges from a preliminary analysis of the data is that *māl* is by far the most commonly employed marker, followed by *ḥāl*. *ḥagg* is almost entirely absent, with the exception of its variant *ḥaqq*, which appears to be well-estabished in Dhofari speech (again, this is consistent with Davey 2012 and 2016). Finally, it appears that the semantic scope of all these elements goes well beyond the boundaries of possession or even genitive case. In fact, some of them should probably not be classified as genitive/possessive markers at all. For this reason, in the next subsections I will analyze *ḥāl* and *ḥagg* separately from *māl* and *ḥaqq*.

4.1 The markers *ḥāl* and *ḥagg*

The particle *ḥagg* does never occur in my data, with one exception: one occurrence appears in the speech of a character from a sit-com whom my informants immediately identified as "a Bedouin from the Batinah" (Oman's north-eastern coast). As we have seen, both Johnstone (1976) and Brustad (2000) remarked how *ḥagg* is employed in the dialects of the Gulf coast as a preposition meaning 'to' or 'for'. The dialects of the Batinah bear strong similarities with those of the northern Gulf due prolonged contact, and the presence of *ḥagg* in this area is therefore unsurprising. Note how, in (5), *ḥagg* appears to mark dative case rather than genitive[12]:

(5)   *ḏā*   *agall*   *rāṭəb*   *ḥagg*   *əl-marrixiyāt*
        DEM   minimum   wage   PREP   ART=martian.PL.F
        'This is the minimum wage for the martians'

    As opposed to *ḥagg*, the particle *ḥāl* appears to be fairly common in my texts. Interestingly, it is never used in an NP-internal construction. More often than not, it is employed to introduce verbless copula complements in verbless copula clauses, as in examples from (6) to (8), or indirect objects of finite verbs or active participles (examples 9 to 11). It appears to always express a relation of benefaction, where the beneficiary is the complement it introduces:

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[11]   These voice notes were not addressed at me, but had been sent or received by some of my informants, who have later been kind enough to share them with me.

[12]   This is why, in this and the following examples, both *ḥāl* and *ḥagg* are glossed simply as PREP(osition) rather than GEN.

(6)   *əl-waẓīfa*   *lā*   *ḥāl-ak*   *u-lā*   *ḥāl-uh*
ART=job   NEG   PREP=PRON.2SG.M   CONJ=NEG   GEN=PRON.3SG.M
'Neither you nor him will get the job' (lit. 'the job [is] not for you and not for him')

(7)   *intu*   *mətakkidīn*   *əs-siyyāra*   *ḥāl-ya*
PRON.2PL.M   be certain.AP-PL.M   ART=car   PREP=PRON.1SG
'Are you sure [that] the car [is] for me?'

(8)   *əl-ʕaṣabiyya*   *mā*   *hī*   *zēn-a*   *ḥāl-ak*
ART=anger   NEG   PRON.3SG.F   good-SG.F   PREP=PRON.2SG.M
'The anger [is] not good for you'

(9)   *ʕēb*   *tgūl*   *ḥāl-brēk*   *ha-l-ḥarya*
shame   PRES.2SG.M-say   PREP=brēk   DEM=ART=speech
'Shame [on you, that] you say these things to Brēk!'

(10)   *ḥəlba*   *ḥal*   *ṯalāṯ*   *ayyām*
ḥəlba   PREP   three   day.PL
'*ḥəlba*[13] for three days' (i.e. an amount of *ḥəlba* that will last for three days)

(11)   *bāġī*   *a-ṣobb*   *ḥal-ī*   *yaʕnī*   *ṣaḥla*
want.AP   PRES.1SG-pour   PREP=PRON.1SG   INTERJ   bowl
'I want to pour myself, I mean, a cup'

Only one example of non-predicative use of *ḥāl* appears in my data. This is shown in (12):

(12)   *ǧihāz*   *ḥāl*   *sīdī*
device   PREP   CD
'CD-reader' (lit. 'a device for the CDs')

Examples such as this one are probably the reason why this particle has been repeatedly reported to be a genitive or possessive marker in OA. Even in this last example, however, it is clear that *ḥāl* expresses dative case (again expressing a relation of benefaction: the device is conceived for CD-reading), and not genitive. As already said, genitive and dative are to be kept distinct, since they mark phrasal and clausal relations respectively. I maintain, in conclusion, that both *ḥagg* and *ḥāl* are not markers of NP-internal functions in OA, but rather of clausal relations, and – as such – should not be included in a discussion of genitive markers[14].

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[13] A traditional sweet soup made of fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*).

[14] Obviously, the distinction between genitive and dative is often a tenuous one. I cannot rule out, therefore, the possibility that genuine genitive relations are sometimes expressed by this marker. No such occurrence, however, was present in my material, and the only example of *ḥāl* Holes (2008: 484) provides is again of the kind exemplified in (12): *ġašmar ḥāl ḥīwān* 'sorghum [feed] for farm animals'.

4.2 The markers *māl* and *ḥaqq*

As was the case for *ḥāl*, the particle *māl* appears to be relatively common in my corpus of texts. *ḥaqq*, on the contrary, only appears in the television material, and only in the speech of characters from Dhofar. This is consistent with all the existing literature on the subject: no study on Gulf Arabic or northern OA has ever reported the use of *ḥaqq* in these areas, while according to Davey (2012 and 2016), this marker is fairly common in southern Oman (though not as common as *māl*: again, my data would seem to confirm this).

It is also interesting to note that, while *ḥaqq* does always inflect for gender and number in my material (4 occurrences out of 4), I have found no occurrence of inflected *māl* (be it in the television material or in the other texts, neither in the speech of the Dhofari characters nor in that of the other ones, or that of my informants). This contradicts both Davey's Dhofari data and the accounts of the almost pan-peninsular *māl* discussed in § 3. One possible explanation for this fact is that the effects of the process of grammaticalization, which turned the noun *māl* into a purely syntactic linker, are becoming more evident with the passing of time, thus rendering the already infrequent inflected form less and less common (for further confirmation of this point see Rubin, 2004: 330).

Apart from this discrepancy, Dhofari *haqq* appears to be used in the same syntactical contexts and with the same functions of *māl*. Again, this is consistent with Davey's (2012: 69) findings[15].

4.2.1 Definiteness of the PR/PD and implicit PDs

As far as the definiteness of both PD and PR is concerned, the vast majority of the occurrences of *ḥaqq* and *māl* which appear in my data follow a definite PD and precede a definite PR (examples 13 to 15). Both pronominal and non-pronominal PRs appear to be very common, though the former are almost always associated with definite PDs (13 and 14; note the occurrence of inflected *ḥaqq* in the latter):

(13) *ğiddām*   *əl-maqhā*   *māl-ah*
      in front of   ART=café   GEN=PRON.3SG.M
      'In front of his café'

(14) *əṣ-ṣūra*   *ḥaqqt-uh*
      ART=picture-SG.F   GEN-SG.F=PRON.3SG.M
      'Its picture' (lit. 'The picture of it')

(15) *əl-awrāg*   *māl*   *əs-sandwikāt*
      ART=paper.PL   GEN   ART=sandwich-PL.F
      'The wraps of the sanwiches'

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15 Admittedly, Davey hints at the possibility that, among older generations of Dhofari speakers, a distinction still exists between a more specific *ḥaqq* and a more general *māl*. However, he himself notes how «given the infrequency of the AGC within C[oastal] D[hofari] A[rabic], it is difficult to advance an analysis of this contrastive use of *ḥaqq* and *māl* further» (Davey 2012: 80) and that «the collection of a much larger corpus of data would be required to further the analysis of such features».

Symmetrically indefinite PD/PR couplets appear as well, although more rarely. As can be clearly seen in examples (16) and (17), in these cases *māl* does not express possession as we have defined it in § 2, but rather a specification of quantity:

(16) *ṣaḥan*   *māl*   *tamar*
      tray   GEN   date.COLL
      'A tray of dates'

(17) *fī*   *noṣṣ*   *glāṣ*   *aqūl-l-ak*   *māl*   *šāy*
      EXS   half   glass   PRES.1SG-tell=PREP=PRON.2SG   GEN   tea
      'There's half a glass of tea, I'm telling you'

Even rarer are asymmetrical pairs. Indefinite PDs with a definite PR do sometimes occur, as in (18) and (19). Note that (inflected) *ḥaqq* in (18), as well, does not express possession, but rather a different kind of NP-internal specification:

(18) *mgall-āt*   *ḥaqq-ōt*   *əṭ-ṭabax*   *u-t-tagmīl*
      magazine-PL.F   GEN-PL   ART=cooking   CONJ=ART=make-up
      'Magazines about cooking and make-up'

(19) *qṣāym*   *māl*   *əṣ-ṣāḥəb*
      coupon.PL   GEN   ART=owner
      'Coupons from (of) the owner'

It would seem that the definiteness/indefiniteness of the PR can have important repercussions on the semantics of the whole construction. When I asked my informants to disambiguate for me the meaning of the sentence *qaṣʕa māl dxūn* (example 32 below), they translated it for me as "a box of frankincense" (as in "a boxful of frankincense"), and contrasted it with *qaṣʕa māl əd-dxūn*, with definite PR, which on the contrary would be used to refer to a box *for* frankincense (that is, a box which is used to contain frankincense). Finally, neither Ingham nor Eksell-Harning admit the possibility of an indefinite PD with a definite PR. In my data, however, this combination occurs once (example 20). My informants maintain that this use is acceptable, and provided me with another (elicited) example (21). It would seem that, at least in the context of an NP expressing quantification, this construction is possible in OA:

(20) *l-maʕāš*   *māl*   *xamsa*   *šuhūr*
      ART=salary   GEN   five   month.PL
      'Five month's worth of salary' (lit. 'The salary of five months')

(21) *ət-tamar*   *māl*   *ṯalāṯa* *nxīl*
      ART=date.COLL   GEN   three   palm.tree.PL
      'Three palm-tree's worth of dates' (lit. 'The dates of/from three palm trees')

One last structure that is worth discussing in this paragraph is not related to the definiteness/indefiniteness of the PD, but rather to its utter absence. The data show quite clearly that possessive constructions involving *māl* do sometimes feature "implicit" PDs, the PD being omitted when the speaker reckons that no ambiguity could possibly arise from this omission.

(22) *abā-k*   *t-xabbər*   *māl*   *əl-amānāt*
      PRES.1SG-want=PRON.2SG.M PRES.2SG.M-inform GEN   ART=security-PL
      'I want you to inform the security' (lit. 'I want you to inform [the people or the office] of the security')

(23) *āxrat-ha*   *ṭalaʕt*   *māl*   *əl-muxaddirāt*
      end-PRON.3SG.F   turn out-PAST.2SG.M   GEN   drug-PL.F
      'In the end you turned out to be a drug-dealer' (lit. 'In the end of it you turned out to be [a dealer] of drugs')

Note that, in these examples, *māl* cannot in any way be interpreted as a preposition introducing an indirect object (also because both *xabbər* and *ṭalaʕ* in these sentences are transitive verbs). On the contrary, an implied *maktab*, 'office', and an implied *tāgir*, 'dealer', are to be assumed preceding *māl* in the first and second example respectively. This construction is probably to be regarded as a means of speeding up the flux of words in dialogical interaction, since the genitive marker would not be there should the omitted noun be restored in its place (but a SG would rather be used, i.e. *tāgir əl-muxaddirāt*, not **tāgir māl muxaddirāt*). This construction appears to be quite common in OA, and my informants spontaneously provided more examples when I questioned them on the subject:

(24) *rūḥ*   *t-šūf*   *māl*   *barīd*
      go.IMP   PRES.2SG.M-see   GEN   post
      'Go and check at the post office!' (lit. 'Go see at [the office] of the post')

Compare, also, the following two examples (25 has been elicited), where the PD is formally mentioned without, however, being specified:

(25) *ǧīb*   *haḏāk*   *māl*   *ḥammām*
      bring.IMP   DEM.DIST   GEN   bathroom
      'Make the plumber come!' (lit. 'Bring that of the bathroom')

(26) *hāḏa*   *māl*   *maḥaṭṭat*   *əl-betrōl*
      DEM   GEN   station   ART=gas
      'The guy from the gas station' (lit. 'That of the gas station')

4.2.2 Functions and meaning of the markers

In general terms, *māl* and *ḥaqq* can be said to be most commonly used to express possession as defined in § 2. This is valid for around two thirds of the occurrences. Concrete possession is by far the most common type of possession expressed by the markers (examples 27 and 28), followed by abstract possession (29 and 14 above), association (30 and 31) and whole-part relationship (15 above)[16]:

(27) *baġā*   *yištarī*   *s-siyyāra*   *māl-ak*
      want.PAST.3SG   PRES.3SG.M-buy   ART=car   GEN=PRON.2SG.M
      'He wants to buy your car'

(28) *l-āy bād*   *māl-ī*
      ART=i-pad   GEN=PRON.1SG
      'My i-pad'

(29) *iḏa*   *ʕand-ak*   *ən-nəmra*   *ḥaqqt-uh*
      COND   PREP=PRON.2SG.M   ART=number   GEN=PRON.3SG.M
      əttṣal   *fi-h*
      call.IMP   PREP=PRON.3SG.M
      'If you have his number, call him!'

(30) *ənta*   *l-arbāb*[17]   *māl-uh*
      PRON.2SG.M   ART=employer   GEN=PRON.3SG.M
      'You are his employer'

(31) *əl-musāʕidīn*   *māl-ī*
      ART=helper-PL.M   GEN=PRON.1SG
      'My helpers'

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[16] This neatly matches Eksell-Harning's (1980: 75-6) and Davey's (2012:74-7) lists of the different semantic relationships that the AG can express, except for the fact that both these authors include human relationships among them. In my data, this specific semantic field is scarcely represented, and it never involves kinship relationships. In the rare cases where *māl* is used to denote the relationship which exists between two human beings, this is always hierarchical in nature (examples (30) and (31), see also Brustad 2000: 80), and is better described as association. Note also that both Eksell-Harning and Davey include in their lists items which cannot be considered examples of proper possession. Brustad and Davey group these under the rather vague heading of "classification" and "qualification", respectively, without however discriminating clearly between what can be considered linguistic possession and what not.

[17] *arbāb* is the (Arabic) word that Asian workers in the Gulf commonly employ to refer to their employer. Although the example in (30) comes from a conversation between two native speakers of OA, an influence of Gulf Pidgin Arabic in this context cannot be excluded (*māl* being extensively used in GPA to mark possession, see Naess 2008: 61).

As far as examples of *māl* and *ḥaqq* not expressing possession are concerned, these normally involve other kinds of NP-internal qualification, such as quantity (32)[18], material (33) or, less specifically, some category the preceding PD belongs to (see example 34, but also 18, 23 and 25 above).

(32)   *qaṣ ʕa*   *māl*   *dxūn*
        jar   GEN   frankincense
        'A jar of frankincense'

(33)   *ṯlāṯ*   *ṣḥān*   *māl*   *fuxār*
        three   dish.PL   GEN   clay
        'Three clay dishes'

(34)   *barnāmaǧ*   *māl*   *ḥawādiṯ*
        program   GEN   accident.PL
        'A TV-show about car accidents'

Very few examples of *māl* not expressing possession nor any kind of NP-internal specification appear in my corpus. These are also the only examples of *māl* being used outside of the boundaries of a NP[19]. In the next two examples we see *māl* being used to introduce a verbless copula complement:

(35)   *əntaw*   *mā*   *māl*   *əl-musābaqāt*
        PRON.2PL.M   NEG   GEN   ART=competition-PL.F
        'You're not [made] for the competitions'

(36)   *ḥəlwa*   *bas*   *mā*   *māl*   *rəḥlāt*
        beautiful   CONJ   NEG   GEN   trip-PL.F
        'Nice [car], but it's not [made] for the long trips'

As can be seen, in (35) and (36) *māl* does not express possession, but rather a relation of benefaction (which can also be interpreted as some type of partitive: an X which is made for Y, thus distinguishing it from other Xs of the same kind that, however, are not suitable for that specific purpose/activity). It seems possible, then, that also *māl* is, to an extent, used to express the dative case, as *ḥāl* and *ḥagg* are. The difference is that, while in the case of the latter this appears to be the only use of the particle, in the case of *māl* only a minority of examples of it carrying such a value were found (and all non-NP-internal).

One last remark is due on the categories of alienable and inalienable possession. All instances of *ḥaqq* and *māl* which occur in my data are examples of the former. In particular, in my material kinship relationships and ownership over a specific part of the body are always expressed through an SG. It has to be noted that, although both Davey and Eksell-Harning have reported the use of genitive markers in association with body parts, their

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[18] On example (32), see also the discussion in § 4.2.1 above.
[19] No such use of *ḥaqq* occurs in my data. Davey (2012 and 2016), however, provides several examples of it.

examples are not entirely convincing: Davey (2012: 75) specifies that a marker can be used in such a context only with reference to a limb which has been detached from the body, while Eksell-Harning (1980: 76) provides two examples of a dialect from Hadramawt, the first of which refers to the hump of a bull (a body part, then, but not of a human body), and the second to a portion of a body part (the toe of a foot). Both Davey and Eksell-Harning, on the other hand, concord on the fact that in the Dhofari and Yemeni dialects genitive markers can be used to refer to a parent-child relationship (when the reference is to an absent third party). I found no such example in my data, and my informants almost categorically rejected the possibility of such a use, with three possible exceptions: a) if the intended use is openly depreciative; b) in reference to a newborn or an infant; c) in baby-talk, to convey intimacy and affection (this last point being obviously connected to the previous one). In light of all this, while I agree with Brustad's and Eksell-Harning's view that the specific will of expressing alienable possession is not what prompts a speaker to use an AG, it seems to me that the expression of true inalienable possession is nonetheless precluded to AGs, at least as far as northern OA is concerned.

4.2.3 Motivatations for the use of the AG

Motivations for the use of the AG in OA can be formal or pragmatic. Several authors[20] have highlighted how an AG is often employed in place of a SG in order to avoid excessively cumbersome or possibly ambiguous constructions: this is often the case when more than three nouns are involved in the construct, or when the PR and/or PD are either accompanied by a modifier (example 33 above) or constituted by a chain of conjoined elements (examples 18 and 26 and above). Overall, however, these syntactically heavy constructions are often avoided in the spoken language, and it seems to me that formal reasons such as the ones just listed can rarely be held responsible for the presence of an AG in my texts[21].

A different formal factor appears to exert a stronger influence on the use of genitive markers. Brustad (2000: 74) has noted how, when the PD is either a loanword or a word ending in a long vowel, then the AG tends to be preferred over the SG. This is probably because such elements «in general cannot take pronoun suffixes and do not readily fit into Arabic morphosyntactic patterns». Eksell-Harning (1980: 70) seems to agree with this. Examples of this phenomenon abound in my material: see for instance examples (37) to (39), and also (28) and (29) above:

(37) *əl-kāfītīryā*   *māl*   *mwassasa*
      ART=cafè   GEN   company
      'The company's cafeteria'

(38) *əl-maqhā*   *māl-ah*
      ART=café   GEN=PRON.3SG.M
      'His café'

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[20] Eksell-Harning (1980: 78-9), Ingham (1994: 58), Brustad (2000: 74).
[21] Davey (2012: 71-3) as well noted how these complex constructions appeared rarely in his Dhofari data.

(39) *kaʔan-nī*   *sūpērmān*   *māl-ha*
      CONJ=PRON.1SG   superman   GEN=PRON.3SG.F
      '[It is] like [I am] her *superman*'

Pragmatic factors also seem to play an important role in determining whether or not, in a given context, a speaker will opt for using an AG. In particular, a specific DEMONSTRATIVE + PD + GEN + PR structure appears to exists in OA which closely mirrors the English "DEM + PD + of + PR" (e.g. "This house of yours", "that dog of his", etc.). As its English counterpart, this expression conveys a sense of mild contempt or sarcasm on the part of the speaker, mostly directed at the PD. Consider for instance the following examples, both drawn from an Omani sit-com. In (40), a husband is angry at his wife because she believes all the fictitious news she reads on her BlackBerry. In (41), a man has been injured by a ram he has been raising, which proved to be aggressive and dangerous on more than an occasion: his friend, then, urges him to get rid of the animal by selling it on Facebook.

(40) *kəll*   *hāḏa* *min*   *fōq*   *ha-l-bībī*   *māl-iš*
      all   DEM   PREP   over   DEM=ART=bb   GEN=PRON.2SG.F
      'All of that [comes] from that BlackBerry of yours!'

(41) *ṭhuṭṭ*   *iʕlān*   *ʕan*   *hāḏa* *t-tēs*
      PRES.2SG.M-put   advertisement   PREP   DEM   ART=ram
      māl-ak   *fi-l-fēsbūk*
      GEN=PRON.2SG.M   PREP=ART=facebook
      'Put an advertisement for that ram of yours on Facebook!'

As we have seen, among the reasons which might prompt speakers to employ an AG construction Brustad and Eksell-Harning note textual prominence and contrastive focus. This as well might be the reason that lies behind the presence of the marker in certain sentences that appear in my data. Consider yet another example drawn from the same TV show: here, an employee is puzzled by the fact that, after all the phone numbers in the company where he works have been re-assigned to the various offices and sub-sections, the director of the company ended up with the number which was once that of the cafeteria. Thus, the man exclaims: «I can understand that they changed the numbers, but they gave the director the number of the cafeteria!?». Here, the contrastive focus that the speaker wants to put on the last word (cafeteria) is evident, and the use of the AG appears clearly motivated:

(42) *yaʕṭū*   *r-rāys*   *raqm* [22] *māl* *l-kāfītīryā*
      PRES.3-give-PL.M   ART=director   number GEN   cafeteria
      'They gave the director the number of the cafeteria!?'

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[22] Note that the word *raqm* in this sentence is not preceded by a definite article, though in theory it should be. This is not an isolated example in my data, which include a number of AGs whose definite PDs are however formally indefinite. Due to space constraints it is not possible to discuss the phenomenon here, though it would clearly deserve further investigation.

Before moving on to the concluding paragraph of this paper, one last reason which can prompt the use of genitive markers in OA has to be mentioned. The particle *māl* is commonly used by speakers whenever the need to ascertain the ownership of an object arises. In such a situation, a construction is employed which involves only a deictic element followed by the marker plus a suffix pronoun, such as *hāḏa māl-ak?*, 'Is this yours?' (lit. "[is] this GEN your"; note that possessive pronouns such as "yours" or "ours" do not exist in OA). This type of structure is of extremely common use[23], although it is highly unlikely that it is ever recorded in the course of an interview (purely deictic reference being rare outside the context of dialogic interaction).

5. Concluding remarks

Summing up all that has been said in the preceding paragraphs, a number of conclusions emerge from the data presented.

Firstly, *māl* appears to be the real genitive marker in OA (along with the competing form *ḥaqq* in southern Oman). *ḥagg* and *ḥāl*, on the contrary, are to be regarded as markers of dative case. While *ḥāl* appears to be specifically Omani, *māl* and *ḥagg/ḥaqq* seem to have almost pan-Peninsular diffusion. In my data, Dhofari *ḥaqq* does always show gender and number agreement with its PD, while *māl* never does (despite the fact that several authors admit this possibility: this is probably the consequence of an ongoing process of grammaticalization). Dative *ḥagg*, finally, can only appear in a single, invariable form. Why is it that the same (or etymologically related) particles appear, in different parts of the Peninsula, with markedly different morphological and syntactical properties, is an interesting question which awaits further research, and which might help to shed light on the evolution and diffusion of the Arabic dialects of Arabia.

As we have seen, though AGs are commonly employed in OA, they remain overall much less common than SGs. Several reasons can prompt a speaker to use a genitive marker rather than a synthetic construct. Some are formal in nature, and span from the avoidance of syntactically cumbersome structures to the systematic association of genitive markers with PDs consisting of a loanword or a word ending in an etymological long vowel. Other reasons can be connected to pragmatic factors, such as the will to place a special focus on the PR, or to express a non-neutral (negative) attitude towards the PD.

In general, the markers can appear in a wide varieties of syntactic contexts. They are more commonly employed when both the PD and PR are definite, but all combinations of definite/indefinite PDs and PRs are actually possible. With a definite PD, the markers normally express actual possession, while indefinite PDs are normally connected to other NP-internal specifications such as quantity, material, or qualification. An interesting structure which has not been described in previous studies on the subject is the use of a

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23 Cf. Johnstone (1967: 90) for Kuwaiti: "*māl* is used […] in a genitival complex where the thing owned is not explicitly mentioned, having been already specified or understood», and Johnstone (1967: 106) about Bahraini: «*māl* is not frequent in occurrence in comparison with a construct phrase except where the object owned is not specified, as *hāḏa māl-ī*, 'this is mine'»" (transcription adapted).

genitive marker with an implicit (omitted) PD. This omission is only possible when the speaker presumes that the reference will be unambiguously understood by the hearer.

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FROM DOBRUDJA TO ADA-KALEH: A BRIDGE BETWEEN EMPIRES[1]

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Abstract. Romania's various historical legacies provide rich sources for the study of minority communities. While only the Transylvania region was part of the Habsburg State and only the Dobrudja region was under Ottoman rule, the Danube island of Ada-Kaleh was successively under the sovereignty of the two empires. Our study will scrutinize the legacies of Dobrudja and this island, the only territories of twentieth-century Romania with a sizable Muslim population. We will take a brief look into the historical background of Muslims in Dobrudja, as well as into their demographic dynamics. Further, a special consideration will be given to the island of Ada-Kaleh as a bridge between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires.
Keywords: *Muslims in Romania, Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Empire, Dobrudja, Ada-Kaleh, Turks, Tatars.*

The Presence of Muslims in Dobrudja: A Historical Background

The Muslim population in contemporary Romania traditionally lives together with the Romanian majority (Christian Orthodox) in Dobrudja, a region bordered to the east by the Black Sea, to the west and north by the Danube River, and to the south by Bulgaria.[2] At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Swiss anthropologist Eugène Pittard (1867–1962) described the unique mix of people in Dobrudja as an extraordinary composite picture:

> La Dobroudja est une extraordinaire mosaïque de races. Les Turcs et les Tartares y coudoient les Roumains et les Bulgares et, tous, ils sont groupés en villages ethniquement compacts. Point de rencontre de l'Asie antérieure et de l'Europe orientale, la Dobroudja pût être pour les uns une escale et pour les autres un abri. Les premiers y rencontrèrent la large vallée du Danube, qui laisse apparaître, sur la rive gauche, les terres basses de la Valachie orientale, et leurs désirs purent se donner carrière. Les seconds, après avoir passé le fleuve ou abordé par la mer, se sont arrêtés dans cette presqu'île qui assurait leur vie et ils y sont demeurés. Lazes, Kurdes, Arméniens, Tcherkesses, Tartares, colons allemands et colons russes. Roumains de

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[1] This paper is based on an earlier project idea of the year 2013.
[2] For more on the Muslim minority in Romania, see Vainovski-Mihai, Irina. 2018. "Romania", Scharbrodt, Oliver. *et al.* (eds.) *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 10. Leiden-Boston: Brill. 545-558.

Transylvanie ou du royaume, Bulgares, Serbes, Turcs, Grecs, Albanais, Tziganes nomades, et combien d'autres: ceux qui disparaissent petit à petit, comme les Arabes, les Tcherkesses et les Nègres, et ceux qui ont prospéré, ayant tous gardé leurs mœurs, leurs costumes et leurs langues, ils constituent le microcosme eurasique, le magnifique laboratoire d'ethnologie comparative dans lequel, pendant cinq années de recherches assidues, j'ai tendu mon effort anthropologique. (Pittard 1912: 207-208)

Almost half of the ethnic groups listed by Pittard made up the Muslim population in Dobrudja. Some of them died out, either as the result of assimilation, emigration, or both, while others still live in this area. Among these, the Tatars and the Turks still form the two main ethnic groups of the Muslim community in Dobrudja (compounded by the counties of Constanța and Tulcea), which is Sunni of the Hanafi school. Currently, Muslims from Dobrudja, or from foreign countries, live in all the major Romanian cities, structured in more or less stable communities. According to the official census of 2011, 90% of the Turks live in Constanța county (21,000), Tulcea county (1,900), and Bucharest (2,400), while 96.4% of the Tatars are inhabitants of Constanța county (19,700). Thus, they represent a small percentage of Romania's 19,042,936 population.[3]

The chronicler Ali Yazıcızade traced the beginning of Muslim settlement in Dobrudja to the mid thirteenth century. In his *Tevarih-i Al-i Selçük* (The Chronicles of the Seljuqid Dynasty)[4] he mentions that in 1263-1264 a group of 10-12,000 Anatolian Turkomans, known as Seljuqid Turks, led by Baba Sarı Saltık, settled in Dobrudja. They migrated there to protect the Byzantine Empire from foreign invasions at the request of the ruler of the territory, the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (reigned between 1259 and 1282). (Decei 1978: 169-192) The tomb of the legendary Baba Saltık – who passed away around the year 1300 – is alleged to be in the town of Babadag, situated in Tulcea county. The name of the town is in itself a historical reminder, as it has the meaning of "Baba [Saltık]'s Mountain".

According to archaeological evidence, mainly numismatic (Vásári 2005: 90-91; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1993) the first groups of Tatars, as part of the empire of the Golden Horde, seem to have settled here during the time of the Tatar leader Noghai (1280-1310). Noghai founded a Tatar state – independent *de facto* from the Golden Horde – with its center at Isaccea, a small town on the right bank of the Danube, 35 km north-west of the city of Tulcea. This state comprised the north of present-day Bulgaria, Dobrudja, the northern part of the Danube up to the Iron Gates, and the steppes from the north of the Black Sea to the Don River (Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2003). The name "Noghai", adopted by a part of the Dobrudjan Tatars (i.e., they call themselves "Noghai Tatars"), must have its origins in the colonization of that time.

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[3] Comisia Centrală pentru Recensământul Populației și al Locuințelor, *Comunicat de presă 2 februarie 2012 privind rezultatele provizorii ale Recensământului Populației și Locuințelor – 2011* [The Central Commission of the Population and Housing Census, *Press release on the the provisional results of the Population and Housing Census issued on 2 February 2011]*, available at http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Comunicat_DATE_PROVIZORII_RPL_2011_.pdf (accessed on 20 February 2019).

[4] The chronicle, commissioned by the Ottoman sultan Murad II Khoja (June 1404, Amasya – 3 February 1451, Edirne), was completed in 1424.

Some documents dating back to the second half of the fourteenth century indicate the presence of another Tatar state in the same region, with its center at Enisala (Turkish: *Yenisala*, meaning "New Prayer"), now one of five villages that compose the rural commune of Sarichioi (Turkish *Sarıköy*, meaning "Yellow Village") located in Tulcea County. Historians refer to this state by the name of one of its rulers, Demetrius (Tatar: *Te[y]mur*), who was mentioned in a Latin text as *Demetrius princeps Tartarorum* (Gemil 2012: 9-10).

In the second half of the fourteenth century, as the Golden Horde's supremacy waned, its role was immediately taken over by the Ottoman state, another emergent power of the same Turkic origin. (Gemil 2012: 9) The Ottoman advance into Dobrudja towards the end of the fourteenth century was facilitated by the historical tradition of these Tatar state organizations, as well as by the existence of an older Turkish-speaking Muslim community. (Decei 1978: 171) The Muslim population living in Dobrudja before the arrival of the Ottomans is considered autochthonous to this region, as opposed to the population colonized there and in the Balkans by the Ottomans. As Giuseppe Cossuto, has pointed out:

> Tra la specificità che contraddistinguono questi Turco-tatari rispetto ad altri musulmani dei Balcani vi é il dato di fatto che sia i Turchi che i Tatari dobrugiani si considerano autoctoni in Dobrugia e non parvenus arrivati dal XIV secolo in poi con gli Ottomani. (Cossuto 1996: 114)

The Ottomans conquered Dobrudja in several stages. The first one was the takeover of the strategic points of Enisala and Isaccea by Sultan Bayezid I (1389-1402), who colonized a large number of Tatars in the area of Babadag. After a short re-conquest of these territories by the voivode of Wallachia Mircea the Elder (d. 1418), most of Dobrudja was seized between 1419 and 1420 by Sultan Mehmet I. The Sultan brought Tatars and Turkomans to Dobrudja from Asia Minor. This marks the second stage in the process of the Ottoman settlement in the region. The third and last stage took place in 1484, when Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) conquered Cetatea Chilia (the "Granary Fortress") and Cetatea Albă (the "White Fortress"). He invited Volga Tatars to settle in southern Bessarabia (Budjak) and northern Dobrudja. Consequently, Dobrudja became part of the Ottoman Empire, belonging to the great *beylirbeylik* of Rumelia. (Grigore 1999: 34)

Gradually, Anatolian Turks were colonized in Dobrudja. The Crimean Tatars continually migrated to Dobrudja during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially after 1783, when entire Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire. After the Crimean Tatar emigrants established themselves in Bessarabia, as a first step of the emigration process they crossed the Danube and settled down in Dobrudja in 1812. In any case, during the entire Ottoman period the Tatars formed the majority of the population in Dobrudja and Budjak, which also explains the names "Tartar Steppe", "Tartaria", and "Terra Tartarorum" given to these regions in sixteenth-eighteenth century European sources**.** (Holban 1972: 88, 568; Holban 1980: 365; Holban 1997: 247, 274-277, 295, 299, 306, 317, 371, 513)

The Crimean War, which destroyed the economic and social infrastructure of the Crimean Peninsula, caused another wave of Crimean Tatar emigration to Dobrudja.[5] The region was under unceasing Ottoman domination until 1877, when, after the Russian-Romanian-Ottoman War, Romania obtained the independence as a state. Thus Romania gained Dobrudja the following year, as part of the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

Demographic Dynamics

As historians and anthropologists maintain, among them Eugène Pittard, the Ottomans brought people from all over the Empire with the intent of increasing the Islamic population of Dobrudja. Some of them had a sporadic existence on Dobrudjan ground, leaving their traces only in the names of some villages, as the Circassians in *Slava Cercheză*, or the Lazes in *Lazu*. Others disappeared without visible marks, such as the Arabs (who consisted of 150 Syrian families of *fellah*s brought to Dobrudja between 1831 and 1833), the Kurds, which either emigrated to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, or mingled with the Turks and Tatars, and were assimilated within a short period of time.

The Muslim Roma are another ethnic group belonging to the Muslim Dobrudjan community. They are local Roma who converted to Islam during the Ottoman domination, or Muslim Roma who emigrated from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Some of them seem to have mixed with vagrant Anatolian Turks who were present in Dobrudja, becoming an ethnic group now called *khorakhane*, or "Turkish Gypsies". Their exact number is unknown, as they generally declare themselves Turks in the census. (Grigore & Oprişan 2001: 32)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the deterioration of economic conditions, Turkish and Tatar populations massively migrated to Turkey and, therefore, many villages were left entirely abandoned. The decline in the number of worship places also illustrates the decrease of the Muslim population. Whereas in 1900 there were 260 mosques in Dobrudja, at the end of World War II there were only 151 left. And this process of decline continued, with the number of functional mosques diminishing, as well as the number of Muslim graveyards. Despite this situation, Muslims preserved their identity (the languages, Turkish and Tatar with two dialects, the folklore, the specific names, etc.).[6]

Ada-Kaleh, the Link between the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires

Until 1970, an important Turkish community lived on the island of Ada-Kaleh[7] ("The Island Fortress"). The island was located 18 km from the city of Drobeta Turnu-Severin, until it was submerged by the waters of the reservoir lake formed after a power station dam

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[5] For more details regarding the history of Turko-Tatars in Romania, see Ulküsal, Müstecib. 1966. *Dobruca ve Türkler* [Dobrudja and the Turks]. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Arastirma.

[6] For more on the demographic dynamics of the Muslims in Romania and an incursion to the history of their legal status see Vainovski-Mihai, Irina. 2017. "Romania", Račius, Egdūnas. & Zhelyazkova, Antonina. *Islamic Leadership in the European Lands of the Former Ottoman and Russian Empires*. Leiden-Boston: Brill. 162-178.

[7] In his novel *Az aranyember* [The Golden Man], first published in 1872, Hungarian writer Mór Jókai offers a thorough description of this island.

had been built on the Danube, at the Iron Gates gorge. Some of the Austrian and Turkish monuments from the island were moved to the island of Ostrovul Simian and, on governmental decision, the inhabitants were relocated to other places.[8] Still, on their own option, 70 families went to Turkey, 60 families settled in Constanţa, 10 in Orsova, 5 in Turnu Severin, and 4 in Bucharest. (Ţuţui 2010: 38).

The history of Muslim presence on Ada-Kaleh dates to the early fifteenth century, when the Ottomans occupied the island. In 1718, following the treaty of Passarowitz, the Habsburg Empire annexed Ada-Kaleh, as well as the regions of northern Serbia, Banat, and Oltenia. After the Treaty of Belgrad (1739), Austria yielded Serbia and Oltenia, along with Ada-Kaleh, to the Ottoman Empire. At the Peace Congress in Berlin (1878), the status of the island was not specifically discussed in the negotiations. According to Emil Lengyel, "the island belonged to Turkey, but the peacemakers forgot about it at the Berlin Congress in 1878". (Lengyel 1939: 303) Therefore, its future was interpreted in the light of the articles of the Berlin Treaty, which provided for the neutrality of the Danube, its demilitarization, and the management, by Austria Hungary, of unobstructed navigation.[9] The inferred understanding of the document led to an immediate Austro-Hungarian presence on Ada-Kaleh, followed soon by requests voiced in the Parliament of Hungary for legal clarification aimed at ending the island's status as a no man's land *de jure*. In December of the same year, a Hungarian MP addressed an interpellation to the Prime Minister asking, among other things: what was the legal basis for the annexation of the island and the hoisting of the monarchy flag on Hungarian territory; did the Sublime Porte consent or not to the annexation and, if so, did the Ottomans sought compensation or not; did Article 52 of the Berlin Treaty also imply the demolition of the Ada-Kaleh citadel and, if so, did the demolition begun or not; and last, but not least, to whom would the inhabitants of the island pay their oath of allegiance and taxes. (Thaly 1878) With all the occasional debates and behind-the-scenes diplomacy, an ambiguous situation lingered until the end of 1918: Ada-Kaleh had both Austrian troops and a Turkish civil administrator who represented the Turkish state. (Balla 1999: 19) As Emil Lengyel muses, the situation of an "island floating in the air" was, in a way, to the inhabitants' benefit:

> This was an ideal arrangement for the inhabitants because the tax-collectors of the river States lacked jurisdiction over them, and it did not pay the High Porte of Turkey to send a tax-collector all the way. The islanders brought in Turkish tobacco which they smuggled to their neighbors. So skillfully did they conduct their operations that for some time it was suspected that they had built a tunnel under the river bed. (Lengyel 1939: 304)

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[8] Decision 2147/1967 issued by the Council of Ministers of Romania, and Decree 1008/1967.
[9] "With the aim to reinforce the measures for ensuring the free navigation on the Danube, which is recognized to be of European interest, the high contracting powers decide that all the fortresses and fortifications found on the course of the river from the Iron Gates to its mouths shall be razed and no new ones shall be erected. No warship shall be allowed to navigate downstream the Danube from the Iron Gates (...)" Article 51. "The execution of the works aimed to remove the obstacles for navigation caused by the Iron Gates and whirlpools is entrusted to Austria-Hungary (...)." Article 57. (Brunswik 1878: 157, 159) Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the Romanian, Hungarian, and French texts quoted are by Irina Vainovski-Mihai.

Following numerous Romanian diplomatic claims "demanding the island of Ada-Kaleh, which protected the Rumanian river-port of Orsova and the Iron Gates" (Spector 1962: 220), Ada-Kaleh was formally awarded to Romania under the Treaty of Trianon. Turkey agreed to it in 1923, as part of the Treaty of Lausanne.

The technological progress of the early twentieth century significantly affected the residents of Ada-Kaleh. A motorboat shuttle to and from the mainland, launched on 26 May 1912, facilitated the transportation of locals and tourists (Balla 1999: 18) in search of an experience described by travel guides or previous travelers in Orientalist terms: a place where one is mesmerized by the berries of grapes as big as plums, a place with corridors "swayed by Egyptian darkness" ("Ada Kale" 1878: 349), with narrow streets, coffeehouses, and a *bazar* which sells "Eastern knick-knacks" ("Ada Kale" 1878: 349), an island "taken by the Austrians in 1878, with an interesting Turkish colony" to which one can embark on an "interesting expedition by boat" (Baedeker 1905: 384).

Ada-Kaleh probably inspired the imaginary geography of "The No Man's Island" in Jókai Mór's novel *The Man with a Golden Touch* (in the original: *Az Aranyember*, first published in 1872). Suddenly discovering the scenery of the island, one of the main characters in the novel stops in admiration: "What he saw before him was a paradise." (Jókai 1899: 31). Later, the island was described as "having the real distinction" of being suspended in time and having a flavor of the East:

> The village on the island consists of mud-plastered houses, such as one sees only in the Near East. At the appointed times the muezzin climbs the minaret of the mosque and his wailing voice summons the faithful to devotion as if this were the heart of the distant East. Old gates and neglected moats recall the time when this was a Turkish stronghold of the Danube. The population of about 500 wears turbans and veils, as if Mustapha Kemal [Atatürk] had never lived. (Lengyel 1939: 303)

Conclusion to the Paper and an Open End to the Story

Our study has offered a glimpse on the Muslim presence in Romania in the light of different historical legacies and of the current visibility in the public sphere. A question which intrigued us throughout writing this was whether the island of Ada-Kaleh substantially inherited from the Ottoman legacy and indistinguishably from the Habsburg one. The likely answer to come to a reader's mind is a categorical "yes." Still, we cannot conclude our study without adding another factor of visibility which will nuance the categorical "yes" with a halftone: a metanarrative of Paradise Lost.

Ada-Kaleh, the link between the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman empires, is still present in the public sphere more than four decades after its physical disappearance, submerged by the waters of a reservoir lake. Popular culture, scholarly researches, exhibitions, documentary and docufiction films keep its name, heritage, and symbolic narrative alive, dubbing it "The submerged Orient", "The Paradise lost", "The lost pearl of Banat", and "The island of the soul". The latter is the title of an exhibition and a series of events organized by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant between 3 August and 31 October 2012, which, after its launching, was depicted in one of the main journals as more

than a mere exhibition of photographs. "There were people present who lived on the island, who were born there, or at least had a brief journey through the Paradise. Because all those who attended the launching of the exhibition described the Isle of Ada-Kaleh as a paradise."[10] The article goes on to describe Ada-Kaleh as an island with roses, fig trees, and cypress, with coffee and Turkish delight, a mosque, a centuries-old fortress, and tourists strolling around.

The mosque mentioned by most of these narratives was blown up before being covered by the waters. As for the fortress, part of the structure was moved to the island of Şimian and a governmental decree of 1970 mandated its rebuilding. The project remains on the wish list of architects and in the metanarratives of Paradise Lost.

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[10] See the on-line edition: Anghel, Carmen. 2012. "Ada Kaleh. Paradisul pierdut" [Ada Kaleh. The Paradise lost], *jurnalul.ro*, 18 August, available at http://www.jurnalul.ro/special/ada-kaleh-paradisul-pierdut-621377.htm (accessed on 21 February 2019).

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III: BOOK REVIEWS

Luca D'Anna. 2017. *Italiano, siciliano e arabo in contatto. Profilo sociolinguistico della comunità tunisina di Mazara del Vallo*. Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici siciliani, Palermo. 160 p. ISBN : 978-88-96312-78-0.

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In his introduction to *Italiano, siciliano e arabo in contatto. Profilo sociolinguistico della comunità tunisina di Mazara del Vallo* (Italian, Sicilian, and Arabic in contact. A sociolinguistic profile of the Tunisian community of Mazara del Vallo), D'Anna claims that, although literature on language contact in Arab diaspora in the last decades has devoted a great deal of attention to the Arab-speaking communities in Europe and the U.S., Italy has been surprisingly neglected. The book represents a successful attempt to fill this gap as it provides an interesting case study of the Tunisians of Mazara del Vallo (Sicily), the oldest Arabic-speaking community in Italy. The main thrust is to shed light on the salient features and dynamics of this particular language contact setting, with the aim of outlining the complex sociolinguistic profile of the community involved. The author's point of departure in the analysis of data, most of which are drawn from sociolinguistic fieldwork, is the use of an approach combining issues from contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, and dialectology.

The book consists of five chapters, the first of which, "Mazara del Vallo, un città di confine" (Mazara del Vallo: a border town), has an introductory character and aims, firstly, at setting out the theoretical-methodological framework of the study, and secondly, at placing the work in the wider context of previous research. After providing a brief but precise sketch of the historical and geographical background of Mazara del Vallo, the author reviews the-state-of-the-art literature, and then goes on to outline the research design, methods and methodology. Here, one aspect is particularly notable: the use of the Libyan Arabic of Tripoli as the language of the interview, which reflects the author's background as well as his scientific interest in Arabic (socio)linguistics and dialectology. Chapter 2 "La comunità tunisina di Mazara del Vallo" (The Tunisian community of Mazara del Vallo) gives an overview of the Tunisians migration process to Mazara del Vallo, from its origins to the current trends, by drawing attention to the historical framework, the socio-economic dynamics, and the geographic and demographic context(s). In retracing the most salient steps of the "unhappy return"[1] of the Tunisians to Mazara del Vallo, the author points out the factors triggering migration between the two poles: Tunisia, on one side, in

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[1]   In Cusumano's words, see Cusumano (1976).

the midst of the decolonization process, and Sicily, on the other side, in a situation of "dramatic contradiction" (p. 23) due to the economic boom. The nature and origin of the migratory project emerge clearly: the availability of jobs in the fishing sector, coupled with the proximity between the two shores. The chapter then focuses on the role of the Tunisians within the whole community of Mazara del Vallo, describing their geographical origin and composition, the incidence on the population, and the dynamics of settlement—which revolves around the *Kasbah*, a symbol of their ethnolinguistic identity. Furthermore, D'Anna compares their specific experience with some current trends in migration. Two key points are highlighted and then addressed throughout the book: (1) the importance of considering the character of the Tunisian migration to Mazara del Vallo as 'transnational' rather than 'diasporic'[2]; and (2) the polycentric nature of the Tunisian community, which projects Mazara del Vallo into the perspective of future trajectories, both internal and international.

Chapter 3 "Profilo sociolinguistico della comunità tunisina" (A sociolinguistic profile of the Tunisian speech community) draws the sociolinguistic profile of the Tunisian community of Mazara del Vallo, beginning with the description of the multilayered and complex nature of its linguistic repertoire. For each language, the author defines the role, function and distribution within the repertoire, and highlights the speaker's competence and perception as well. Core and peripheral languages are explored through an intergenerational comparison, in addition to being approached from a language-contact perspective. Exemplary in this respect is the case of the Tunisian, of which the author describes, on one hand, the phenomena of language attrition from an intergenerational viewpoint, and, on the other hand, the phases of its evolution from an inter/intra-dialectal perspective based on Trudgill's model (Trudgill 2004). Similarly, D'Anna interestingly shows that French occupies a peculiar cross-generational place in the community in that it is regarded as a language of prestige, also employed as a bridging language by first-generation speakers, and, at the same time, it is perceived to some extent as a distinctive feature of the repertoire of the Tunisians (of Mazara del Vallo) by the younger generations. The second part of the chapter is devoted to some aspects related to the diasporic, transnational dimension of the migration experience. After discussing the strategies of intergenerational L1 transmission and the L2 acquisition models, and after touching briefly on the role that the 'dormant' Sicilian plays intergenerationally, the author dwells on some peculiarities of the community, where, for instance, the Arab school—a contradictory attempt of the first-generation immigrants to preserve their ethnic and linguistic identity driven by "the illusion of return" (p. 75)—is a case in point. Finally, the chapter analyses the current sociolinguistic situation of Tunisians in Mazara del Vallo as a whole. In this regard, by taking into account the Blommaert (2010) theory of "sociolinguistics of globalization", D'Anna stresses that, despite the community is characterized, besides a second-generation of "semi-speakers"[3], by 'truncated repertoires'[4], a striking fact emerges, becoming its distinctive feature: the maintenance of (Tunisian) Arabic beyond the second-generation speakers, in contrast with the language shift observed in most diasporic

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[2] Following Schiller et al. (1992: 1-2).
[3] Dorian (1982: 26).
[4] See Blommaert (2010).

communities (see Canagarajah 2008). In this framework, the ethnolinguistic vitality of the group plays a part.

In Chapter 4, "Italiano, siciliano e arabo in contatto" (Italian, Sicilian, and Arabic in contact), D'Anna provides an account of the linguistic outcomes resulting from the prolonged, intensive contact between Italian, Sicilian and (Tunisian) Arabic, with particular emphasis on interference, borrowing, morphological hybrids, and code-switching. The key point in describing the nature and scope of the examined phenomena is, once again, the intergenerational comparison. In fact, the difference in the degree of input exposure—in addition to the type and nature of the input itself—between the two generations of Tunisians is considered as one of the main factors affecting the direction of interference, where L1 to L2 transfer prevails in first-generation speakers, while "a two-way route" (p. 82) influence is observed mostly among young people. Interference is scrutinized at all levels of language, from phonetic attrition and loss to morphological reanalysis, including an original survey of the less investigated morphosyntactic dimension. In this regard, the author presents an interesting analysis of the impact of the fundamental typological differences between Italian-Sicilian and (Tunisian) Arabic on morphosyntactic processing, placing emphasis on those concerning the tense-aspect systems. The treatment of the transfer in subordinate clauses in first-generation speakers is particularly noteworthy. The chapter goes on to examine lexical and phraseological interference, by analyzing lexical borrowings from Italian and Sicilian, morphological hybrids reflecting the Tunisian-Sicilian contact[5], and "ad hoc calques" such as the idiosyncratic use of the adverb *šay* (< Classical Arabic *šayʔ* '(no)thing') as filler like the Italian "(e) niente" (pp. 100-101). Based on Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model[6], the chapter concludes with an in-depth study of code-switching which lays stress on both formal and functional aspects. Taking into consideration the three different levels outlined by Alfonzetti (2012: 51), D'Anna explores the distribution across generations of code-switching, and points out that inter-sentential and tag code-switching occur more frequently among first-generation speakers, while intra-sentential code-switching alongside composite Matrix Language[7] is more widespread among the young. Finally, the functional analysis dwells on the sociolinguistic motivations behind code-switching, and therefore identifies the communicative functions achieved, such as the ludic, playful one.

The last chapter "Lingue e identità" (Languages and identity) addresses some issues related to the interplay between language and identity, especially regarding the role of prestige in language choice, and the speaker's attitude towards: the ethnic language; the varieties of the repertoire; and the high and low varieties, from the perspective of both diglossia and dilalia[8]. Overall, two trends are seen. First, concerning the connection between language attitudes and language ideology, D'Anna finds that, despite its relatively high degree of preservation, the ethnic language (viz. Tunisian Arabic) is not considered

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[5]   Here, D'Anna interestingly gives an example of morpheme induction by making a parallelism between the Sicilian diminutive suffix *-ədd(r)u* attached to Arabic names used by young Tunisians, and the diminutive suffix *–él* resulting from the Romance-Arabic contact dating back to the Arab-Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula (see Corriente 2013: 60).

[6]   See Myers-Scotton (1993), and the revised version in Myers-Scotton (2002).

[7]   See Jake and Myers-Scotton (2002).

[8]   See Berruto (1987).

or at least perceived as the most important factor in shaping and preserving the Tunisian identity, which has a complex and composite nature. Second, with respect to the languages of the repertoire, he observes that a pragmatic, utilitarian attitude prevails over ideology. In fact, due to the need for greater integration in the host country, speakers tend to prefer Italian (the national language and prestige variety) and Tunisian (mostly used for intra-community communication) to Classical Arabic and Sicilian, being the former diaphasically and diamesically restricted—to formal and written domain, respectively, and the latter limited diatopically. The chapter ends with a case study on polylanguaging[9] among young speakers, with a focus on the creative use of the dialectal components of the repertoire. In particular, the author highlights the functions[10] performed by Sicilian and Tunisian in the specific context of social media.

To conclude, with this book D'Anna adds a new tile to the mosaic of studies on language contact in Arab-speaking communities of diaspora. The main strength of the work lies in the fact that the description, analysis, and interpretation of the phenomena are achieved by bringing together their local dimension with the global character of the issues, models, and perspectives considered. Also, evidences are foregrounded by a large amount of examples, which, in addition to put the speakers' viewpoint center stage, are crucial in understanding the facets and dynamics of a diasporic/transnational, multilingual, and diglossic community, such as the one in this study. Because of the richness of fieldwork data, and the combination of different approaches and methods, this book will prove of interest to scholars and researchers of contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, and dialectology, particularly to those who focus on the Arabic and broader Semitic context.

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[9]   See *Jørgensen et al. (2011).*
[10] By taking into consideration Alfonzetti's evidences from Italian (Alfonzetti 2012: 21).

Arik Sadan, Almog Kasher. 2018. *A Critical Edition of the Grammatical treatise* Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya *by Ibn al-’Anbārī (d. 577/1181)*. **Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Werlag. 116 p. ISBN: 978-3-447-11004-4.**

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The concise yet comprehensive treatise of the VIth/XIIth century grammarian Ibn al-’Anbārī titled *Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya* is presented by Arik Sadan and Almog Kasher in an edition headed by a series of introductory chapters designed to help the reader contextualize the text in different respects relevant for both an external and an internal approach and thus ranging from the life, academic affiliations and works of the author to a number of matters having to do with the method and principles he adhered to in writing the treatise. The first chapter, "Ibn al-’Anbārī and his *Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya*" (pp. 1-8), begins with a brief presentation of the main biographical data concerning the author, including the names and scientific background of his teachers and the disciplines he studied under their guidance, then it goes on to mention the works he is known for and the data about them available in pre-modern and modern sources. The manuscripts on which this edition is based (one at the British Library and the other at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya) are presented in a detailed manner, and by the end of the chapter we are already introduced to the main topic approached in the following one – the relationship between *Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya* and another treatise of Ibn al-’Anbārī, *’Asrār al- ʿarabiyya*, singled out by the similarities it shares with *Mīzān* (in this context, it is pointed to the significant fact that one copyist goes so far as to deem it a *šarḥ* of *Mīzān*, an idea refuted by the editors, who argue instead that there is an overarching explanation that can shed light on what both unites the two treatises and sets them apart, namely that, while sharing a great deal of material, *Mīzān* is mainly pedagogically oriented, while *’Asrār* has a predominantly theoretical orientation).

The chapter "*Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya* and *’Asrār al- ʿarabiyya*" (pp. 9-34), in which the contention of the editors about the two treatises is illustrated at length, is divided into nine subchapters dealing with particular aspects of the problem at hand. They adopt as a starting point in their analysis the classification of "linguistic causes" (*ʿilal*) that is to be found in *Al-Īḍāḥ fī ʿilal an-naḥw* by az-Zaǧǧāǧī (IVth/X[th] century), according to which there are three types of causes, each of them belonging to a different level of sophistication and complexity in the discourse on language: *ʿilal taʿlīmiyya* ("didactic causes"), *ʿilal qiyāsiyya* ("analogous causes"), *ʿilal ǧadaliyya naẓariyya* ("dialectic and speculative causes"). As a practical illustration of how Ibn al-’Anbārī navigates between these types of causes in his two treatises, we are presented with their respective chapters on *’inna* and its "sisters" arranged in two parallel columns (pp.10-16), followed by a commentary emphasizing the alignment of each of the two chapters with the general level of the treatise that contains it

and highlighting concrete examples of this alignment: basic information like, for example, the listing of the six particles making up the category is extant in *Mīzān* but absent from *'Asrār* (which means that such knowledge is assumed to have been previously acquired by the readership of such a treatise), where the question of why these particles work as operators is tackled from the beginning, etc. (pp. 16-17). This introductory part is followed by the aforementioned nine subchapters, each of which approaches a particular set of distinctions between the two treatises. The first subchapter, "Rules, Lists and Illustrations" (pp. 18-19), points to other situations where lists of specific words, rules governing their use and examples meant to illustrate them are more consistently and more systematically used in *Mīzān*, whereas their occurrence in *'Asrār* is dictated mainly by the necessities of discussing different theoretical aspects. In "Discussions of *ᶜamal*" (pp. 19-22), the editors bring forth cases in which matters pertaining to government are mostly avoided in *Mīzān* while featuring very prominently in *'Asrār*, where there are even some instances of confronting divergent positions embraced by different grammarians or by the Baṣran and Kūfan schools. The avoidance of this kind of topic in *Mīzān* is, in the editors' view, to be correlated with the rather modest pedagogical value of such discussions, stemming from their complexity and intricacy. The subchapter "High Order Theoretical Discussions" (pp. 22-25) further clarifies, by adducing concrete examples, how *Mīzān* favors an approach based on tackling first-level, i.e. "didactic", linguistic causes, unlike *'Asrār*, which covers the second and third levels (it is also stated that Ibn al-'Anbārī sometimes refrains from mentioning the operators in *Mīzān*, even though az-Zaǧǧāǧī treats them as legitimately approachable within a first-level discussion, which suggests he may endorse a somewhat more restrictive understanding of the area covered by first-level causes than az-Zaǧǧāǧī himself). At the same time, the subchapter presents some inroads made by *Mīzān* into the higher levels, including explanations involving the use of the method known as *taqdīr*, i.e. the reconstruction of "underlying", generally more expanded structures meant to explain the actual ones. The subchapters "Topics Dealt with in *'Asrār* but not in *Mīzān*" and "Topics Dealt with in *Mīzān* but not in *'Asrār*" (pp. 25-27), which mention, as the titles themselves clearly indicate, information that is to be found in only one treatise to the exclusion of the other, reveal that each one of such cases seems to reflect the concern, or the lack thereof, for pedagogical relevance (if, for instance, there are elements included in *Mīzān* and omitted from *'Asrār*, the apparent reason for such a choice is that they do not entail lengthy theoretical digressions). The same concern appears to be at work when it comes to dealing with definitions, which (as it is shown in the subchapter bearing the very same name – "Definitions", pp. 27-28) are generally included in *'Asrār* (where one can even find different opinions on the proper way to define a certain concept) and, while not being totally absent from *Mīzān* either, in the case of parts of speech are omitted in favor of mentioning the sets of markers by means of which they are to be identified. In "Division into Chapters" (pp. 28-31), the editors state that the two treatises divide their matter into chapters in a generally similar way, and yet there are discrepancies (on which the subchapter is understandably focused) that are again explained by the different goals that they seek to achieve: if, for example, the dual and the sound masculine plural are included in the same chapter in *'Asrār*, it is for the sake of a detailed discussion based on their common morphological features, whereas placing both the subject and the predicate of the nominal sentence in one chapter in *Mīzān* is explained by the fact that they are more easily

described and exemplified together. The subchapter "Contradictions" (pp. 31-34) lists a series of discrepancies between the two treatises, that are not ascribed by the authors to pedagogical motivations or the lack thereof (in one case, where Ibn al-'Anbārī espouses the Kūfan view about whether it is admissible for the predicate of *laysa* to be preposed to it in *'Asrār* and the Baṣran view about the same question in *Mīzān*, such a possibility is indeed mentioned, only to be refuted). Lastly, the ninth and very short subchapter "Pedagogical Tools Presented in *'Asrār* but not in *Mīzān*" (p. 34) signals two cases where *'Asrār*, and not *Mīzān*, provides the reader with practical means of learning (a test for differentiating between *hamzat al-waṣl* and *hamzat al-qaṭᶜ* and a mnemonic phrase).

These observations amply contribute to enhance the reader's awareness of the type of work he is faced with; the systematic and, at the same time, nuanced and balanced highlighting of the pedagogical and practical ends pursued by Ibn al-'Anbārī in this treatise helps one fully realize its significance as a valuable source for the study of pre-modern Arabic grammatical thought from this particular angle that the editors are focusing on.

The text of the treatise itself (pp. 37-108) is made up of relatively small chapters; as it is stated in the "Principles of the Edition" (pp. 35-36), vocalization is used for examples, Qur'anic quotations and poetic verses, and the orthography is brought closer to contemporary norms and usages. One can also add that, except for the marks used for indicating the *sūra*s and numbers of Qur'anic verses, the meters of poetic verses and conjectural additions, signaled as such in the "Principles", and the full stops used at the end of chapters, no modern punctuation is added to the text. The technical apparatus contains notes mainly signaling differences between the two manuscripts used for the edition, in addition to references provided for the poetic verses and conjectures, formulated in Arabic, about the form of the text wherever there appears to be an intervention at the hands of the copyists. The book ends with a bibliography containing primary and secondary sources, followed by two indexes of Qur'anic and, respectively, poetic verses.

Hela Ouardi. 2016. *Les derniers jours de Muhammad*.
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Une reconstitution chronologique inédite, où Hela Ouardi oppose aux mémoires idéologisées le portrait d'un homme rendu à son historicité et à sa dimension tragique est la phrase par laquelle l'éditeur français introduit ce livre surprenant par son contenu et l'approche analytique d'un sujet très délicat. Dès le début, il faut préciser que le lecteur se trouve en face d'une investigation historique poursuite avec les méthodes spécifiques du domaine et que seul le titre peut nous tromper et faire penser à une prose historique littérarisée. Les derniers jours du prophète de l'islam sur la terre réveillent une série de questions que Hela Ouardi étale devant le lecteur sur le fond des confusions et des silences de la Tradition islamique classique « si bavarde d'habitude » (p. 14) qu'elle analyse avec minutie. Un véritable « trou noir », c'est ainsi que Hela Ouardi décrit la Tradition questionnée à l'égard des derniers temps de Muḥammad.

Plusieurs idées doivent être mises en évidence pour bien comprendre la démarche de l'historienne tunisienne. Le livre s'inscrit dans le débat assez ample sur la nécessaire réforme esthétique de l'islam qui regarde en premier lieu la représentation, tous sens compris, du prophète : « Le problème des musulmans n'est-il pas que leur Prophète est devenu un homme sans ombre, un être déshumanisé, écarté de l'Histoire et de la représentation ? Et si la réforme de l'islam devait être non pas théologique mais esthétique ? » (p. 17). Ensuite, c'est la question très épineuse des sources que l'historienne met en relief : la postérité de plus d'un siècle aux évènements dont elles se font témoin et, surtout, leur variété déconcertante sur le même sujet ou situation. Le volume des sources que Hela Ouardi a consulté est vraiment impressionnant – Traditions sunnites et shiites, traités de l'historiographie de l'islam classique, mais aussi des sources appartenant à l'espace chrétien plus au moins contemporaines aux évènements. L'autrice fait, par conséquent, une option comparatiste, tout en essayant de trouver la vérité historique par la confrontation des sources différentes, même antagonistes : « Certains détails (parfois sordides), aujourd'hui passés sous silence, n'ont visiblement pas subi d'arrangement, ce qui serait la preuve de leur haut degré d'authenticité. La fiabilité de telles informations se trouve confirmée par une étonnante convergence entre les sources sunnites et shiites réputées antagonistes. C'est précisément dans ces lieux de convergence qu'on se sent être au plus près d'un noyau de vérité historique » (p. 21).

Une panoplie de personnages historiques prend vie dans les pages du livre et, de temps en temps, leur jeu est arrêté par le metteur en scène qui intervient par des didascalies élaborées destinées à faire plus de lumière dans leurs *gesta* parfois insensés. C'est la

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sensation que j'ai eue à la fin de la lecture. Les *didascalies* sont vitales pour comprendre la nébuleuse du *va et viens* des personnages de l'entourage prophétique et surtout de leurs intérêts spécifiques. L'agitation autour du prophète gravit dès le moment où il devient clair que la fin de l'homme Muḥammad approche : compagnons, commandants militaires, épouses se frottent les uns aux autres, se disputent l'amour du prophète et, sur le chemin, ils sont capables à quoi que ce soit (même à l'invention des versets coraniques qu'ils auraient retenus *en bons compagnons* du prophète). Le groupe des hypocrites (*al-munāfiqūna*) dont on ne parvient pas à en savoir la composition, mais qu'on soupçonne toujours Abū Bakr et 'Umar d'en faire partie, commence à contester plus ou moins ouvertement les décisions du prophète. L'expédition de Tabūk, le dernier fait militaire de Muḥammad, est vivement contesté par ses collaborateurs les plus proches et, selon les sources, représente un vrai échec, sinon la dimension commerciale qui a pris le dessus et a apporté une autre sorte de satisfaction aux troupes musulmanes (p. 31). L'esprit de querelle et contestation qui traverse les rangs des Compagnons se matérialise dans la conjuration d'al-'Aqaba évoquée, dans une parfaite coordination, par les sources sunnites et shiites comme « la tentative d'assassinat d'al-'Aqaba » qui vise le prophète (p. 34). Les sources sont imprécises quant aux conspirateurs, mais on soupçonne de nouveau les proches du prophète – « des hypocrites parmi les Compagnons ». Après le pèlerinage d'adieu et le discours fait à la Mecque, tout le monde comprit qu'il ne lui reste que très peu à vivre, ce qui a exacerbé les disputes et les plans de succession. Pas de surprise, donc, qu'on lui fait subir une deuxième tentative d'assassinat sur le chemin du retour à la Médine (p. 56-61). Le tableau des derniers jours du prophète dont les sources (traditions sunnites et shiites à la fois) se font l'écho est celui d'un prisonnier malade attentivement censuré par l'acerbe Aicha qui bloque l'accès à son mari de tous les ennemis, pour mieux dire, ses ennemis (p. 65). La maladie de Muḥammad est simultanée de la menace politico-religieuse représentée par les faux prophètes (Musaylima et Tulayha) qui sont incité par la gloire de Muḥammad et encouragés par son agonie (76-77). Il semble que la « recette de Muḥammad est reprise par d'autres chefs de tribus » qui espèrent le même succès. D'ailleurs, les sources retiennent la correspondance entre le prophète de l'islam et Musaylima, l'un de ses imitateurs le plus influent dans la Péninsule (p. 80-81).

D'un très fort dramatisme est la scène du testament où l'on voit le prophète boycotté par ses proches dans la tentative d'écrire ses dernières recommandations : « Je vais rédiger pour vous un document qui vous préservera de l'égarement pour l'éternité » (p. 130) et demande de lui apporter une omoplate et un encrier (*katif wa dawāt*). « Les sources sont unanimes pour affirmer que le prophète au moment où il s'apprête à dicter – ou à écrire lui-même – un testament, se heurte au refus des siens » (p. 131). Un personnage prend contour au milieu de cette scène honteuse – il s'agit de 'Umar ibn al-Ḫaṭṭāb qui fait du tout pour empêcher le prophète d'écrire ses dernières volontés : *ġalabahu l-waǧa'u* (la douleur lui a fait dessus), dit 'Umar en guise de motivation pour son refus. Le portrait de 'Umar ibn al-Ḫaṭṭāb est celui d'un homme rude, violent, très misogyne, mais aussi très craint par les autres. Il semble être l'homme fort de Médine qui impose sans difficulté la candidature de son ami Abū Bakr en successeur du prophète. Le prophète, victime d'un acte manqué, conscient des pressions faites par 'Umar, montre ouvertement son hostilité envers son Compagnon. Il ne lui permet de conduire la prière et devient furieux chaque fois que 'Umar entre dans sa chambre. Certaines sources sunnites que Hela Ouardi crédite de plus crédibles

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que d'autres notent que le prophète est, en effet, totalement désintéressé de la succession à la prière – parce qu'il considère la révélation achevée et transmise. Ainsi, Muḥammad semble-t-il plus préoccupé par la transmission du Message (*ballaġtu*) que par le succès de sa réception : il est d'ailleurs très sceptique à l'égard du futur de la communauté et surtout de son unité (p. 181).

Le livre de Hela Ouardi qui récupère aussi l'image du prophète de quelques dizaines de sources chrétiennes contemporaines aux événements analysés est un instrument précieux pour les historiens, mais surtout une démarche analytique profonde qui étudie avec les outils de l'historien moderne une période d'une importance capitale pour l'islam et de permanente inspiration pour les courants de pensée de la culture islamique.

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