

EXTRACTING CULTURE FROM LITERARY TEXTS SATIRICAL POETRY IN THE Umayyad PERIOD: FROM THE SOCIAL TO THE POETIC

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The core question of this research revolves around "the ancient Arabic satirical poetry", particularly in Umayyad period, the flourishing era of satirical poetry and art of Naqā'id (polemic lampoons). The problem posed by the core question deals with the magical nature of satire art of poetry, which is deep-rooted in the ancient individual and group rituals. Its main purpose is to account for the way the collective magical ritual is transformed into collective social and artistic rituals, of which some features were inherited by the satirical poetry in the dawn of Islam and during Umayyad era, and even its most ancient origins in the pre-Islamic times.

Key words: Arabic literature, Arabic culture, Arabic poetry, literary criticism, textual hermeneutic, history of Arabic literature, the Umayyad period, satire, rituals

The present study concerns a set of questions: some of which are core questions, related to the main topic, the problem and the challenges brought forward. Some other questions are secondary and related to the motives that prompted us to conduct this study. It is worthwhile to begin with the secondary questions which should reveal the nature and sources of our concerns. They are involved with the freedom of creativity and the control practised by society, particularly what it perceives as prejudicing its norms and social values, its respected conception and deferred figures, and the taboos that it enshrines. Society may see that it has the right to exercise such control, claiming to safeguard the innocence of future

generations, the social cohesion drawn from the integrity of its norms and moral values.¹

Among these issues, we were concerned with the question of the aesthetical value of artistic works. We are concerned with the literary aspect – with particular regard to the works that use obscenity, contempt, distraction, scornful, derision, grime, invective demeaning and which disclose the reality. We do not have any hesitation to unfold the concealed as a subject of art: whether it is intended to use humour, sarcasm, farce, amusement, wit, irony and ridicule, or whether it relies on distortion and defamation.² There is also the persisting question of common people's culture flourishing in a certain period accompanied with the decline of the elite culture or what we call degenerate, while the second question is determined by understanding the approach in the artistic work where its nature surpasses the interest in the subject per se to contemplate the aesthetical experience put forward by such work with its symbolic techniques that rely on equivocal ambiguity and intensity or displacement and opaque signs.³ This enriches our experiences and elaborates our core first question, we cannot find an objective criterion that incepts and visualises the surrounding world. As for the third question, I hope that this study will provide a positive answer examining the phenomena based on the study relying on contemplation and reflection, rather than presumptive explanations.

The core question revolves around "the ancient Arabic satirical poetry", particularly in the Umayyad period, the flourishing era of satirical poetry and the art of Naqā'id (polemic lampoons), being a criterion to measure a poet's mastery; if he underperforms his talent is thereby dwarfed⁴. Its subject focuses on the structure and function of such verses which contain elements of comedy, humour, irony and even parody as well as elements of cursing, threats, damnation and menace. They also draw on breaking some taboos fostered by social norms in such a daring

¹ CATLETT, S.T. Enjoining Obscenity as a Public Nuisance and Prior Restraint Doctrine. In *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 84, No. 6, pp. 1616–1629.

² HALPERT, H. Folklore and Obscenity: Definitions and Problem. In *Journal of American Folklore*, pp. 190–194.

³ KAPLAN, A. Obscenity as an Esthetic Category. In *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Obscenity and the Arts, pp. 544–559.

⁴ AL-JAYŪSĪ, S. Al-Khadrā'. "Literature in the Umayyad Period" – *History of Cambridge: Arabic Literature from Pre-Islamic to End of Umayyad Period*, Translated by: Hosna Abdel-Samie, Al-Aksun Journal for Translation, Cairo, Issue No. 5.

fashion, shamelessly and boldly to the extent of coarseness, abuse, defamation and obscenity with the intent of physical and mental destruction.

The problem posed by our core question deals with the magical nature of the satirical art of poetry, which is deep-rooted in the ancient individual and group rituals. Our main purpose is to account for the way the collective magical ritual has been transformed into collective social and artistic rituals, of which some features were inherited by the satirical poetry in the dawn of Islam, during the Umayyad era and even at its most ancient origins in pre-Islamic times.

A function of these rituals was to use laughter as a means to liberate the community from the stresses accompanying the "carnival" ritual celebrations. The silly buffoon – who wears the mask of a counterfeit face and who has a broken, flattened and mutilated nose – approaches a dangerous area of breaking taboos with confidence, daring and impertinence. From his despicable, disparagement and deficient position, he acquires the status of an "infamous opponent" who dares to defy the perfect (omnipotent) Divine Power with certain perilous yet sacrilegious powers.⁵ Hence, the mask seems disfigured.

It is not strange that the satirical poetry inherits the magical distorting power of a persona which indulges in ridiculous disdain and scorn, disrobing the soul of its serenity and depriving it of inner peace.

For example, in the Qur'an we find the Praised Lord reassuring His prophet (pbuh) and fending off such mental destruction. Allah the Almighty says: "*For sufficient are we unto thee against those who scoff*", and turns back the harm onto those who deceive Allah and themselves, those who have disease in their hearts, the fools who retire with their evil companions and take part in scoffing with the corruptive and destructive ones. Allah turns back their harm and scoffs at them, destroying their hearts and depriving them of serenity.⁶

This ritual depicts the figure of a counter hero, an antagonist, who represents chaos, unleashes frivolity and sets off, plunging into waves of agitation similar to a persona which limitlessly insinuates everywhere.⁷ These features combine trespassing and ambiguity where the words denote them in the Qur'anic verses, such as "*give them rope*", "*in their trespasses*", "*so they will wander like blind ones (To and fro)*". The verses also bear menaces of distorting and effacing faces and

⁵ DOUGLAS, M. *Purity and Danger: An Essay of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*.

⁶ AL-HIJR, Verse 95, and AL-BAQARA, Verse 15.

⁷ MAKARIUS, L. Ritual Clowns and Symbolic Behaviour, *Diogenes Quarterly Publication of the International Council, Philosophy and Humanic Studies*, pp. 44–73.

turning them hind wards: *"We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hind wards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah must be carried out"*. Such curse and harmful forces are relentless, as nobody could escape them nor ward them off since *"the decision must be carried out"*.⁸

Hence, the faces are distorted, effaced or turned hind wards. Turning the harm back to the enemies, striking them with such force that no weapon can defeat, they are destined to be with the wrongdoers, take us back to the reversed magical forces, or to the magical circle which brings about harm, paralyses and has control over the opponent, as indicated by the preposition *"upon"*. In the words of Allah, The Almighty and Praiseworthy: *"And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Polytheist men and women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil: the Wrath of Allah is on them: He has cursed them and got Hell ready for them: and evil is it for a destination"*.⁹ The curse may be brought about by means of a wrack, break or malfunctioning of the senses, as Allah The Almighty says: *"In this world We made a curse to follow them and on the Day of Judgment they will be among the loathed (and despised)"*,¹⁰ or in His words: *"Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight"*.¹¹

These features are inherited by the Umayyad satirical poetry, which conveys scenes extracted from reality, allowing us to contemplate and reflect so as to be healed from derangement. This is the role undertaken by the wizard and sorcerer who individually approaches the victim stricken by the forces of evil through curse or magic. The pre-Islamic poetry was acquainted with the curse, healing amulets and sacrifices. Our research finds this in the verse of Al-Nābigha Al-Dhubayānī who protected Al-Nu'mān by use of counter charms against the harmful curse and taking it on. He says:

وتلك التي أهتم منها وأنصب	أتاني أبيت اللعن أنك لمتني
هراسا به يعلى فراشي و يقشب ¹²	فبت كان العائدات فرشني لي

⁸ AL-NISĀ', Verse 47.

⁹ AL-FATH, Verse 6.

¹⁰ AL-QASAS, Verse 42.

¹¹ MUHAMMAD, Verse 23.

¹² POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA, Dīwān Al-'Arab, Cultural Academy, UAE, Abu Dhabi 1997-2001.

The poet used the counter charms to protect the praised one from the curse while he takes over the harm which would manifest itself in the form of abscesses, blisters, burn marks, tattoos or skin cracks and could be either physical or psychological. Prickling and stabbing also imposed harm by magic.¹³ As such, Al-Nābigha lay on prickles mixed with poison where neither amulets nor counter charms are effective. We may find crippling illness, jinni, lurking death and magical spells enchanting the patient. Al-Sulayka describes lamenting her son Al-Sulayk where the scene is overwhelmed by and charged with magical shadows, where no healing could ward them off:

أمريض لم تُعَدِّ	أم عدو ختلك
أم تولى مارد	غال في الدهر السلك
والمنايا رصد	للفتى حيث سلك ¹⁴

It is noteworthy that the contexts where the curse is mentioned in the pre-Islamic poetry tend to be accompanied by characters fuelled with harm, inducing terror in the hearts, numbing the senses of listening and smelling, mutilating noses and maiming ears, creating a "fearful place", horror and suspicion or confusion. Al-Nābigha Al-Dhubyānī also says:

أتاني أبيت اللعن أنك لمتني	وتلك التي تستك منها المسامع ¹⁵
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And 'Alqama Al-Fahl says:

إليك أبيت اللعن كان وجيفها	بمشتبهات هوطن مهيب ¹⁶
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And Hātem says:

لا تجعلني أبيت اللعن ضاحكة	كمعشر صلموا الآذان أو جدعوا ¹⁷
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¹³ ELLIOT, R.C. The Satirist and Society. In *ELH*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 237–248.

¹⁴ POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ Idem.

The curse is associated with causing harm, distortion, perdition, destruction, infertility and loss.¹⁸ The sacrifice casts away the harm by transmitting its effect onto someone else. This is what the buffoon sometimes performs when he carries the harm or throws it over to the opponent.

Salāma Al-Anmārī says:

فدى لأبي أسماء كل مقصر من القوم من ساع بوتر وواتر¹⁹

And 'Ubaid Ibn Al-Abras says:

ثم قالت فدى لنفسك نفسي وفداء مال أهلك مالي²⁰

Harm may not be manifested in the words of "curse" and "sacrifice" but rather in horrifying characteristics as if it is an ontological part of the world. We may find this without using damning words against the opponent, as in the words of Allah The Almighty: *"Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood - As fuel! A twisted rope of palm-leaf fiber round her (own) neck!"*²¹ As soon as the words are uttered in a *performative speech act* in the past tense, destruction, perish and wealth perdition and disintegration take place as the orders of the Almighty Lord are fully enforced. Abū Lahab (The Embodiment of Flame), whose name is associated with fire, witnesses his existence in the fire ontology. His wife was described handling dry plants (as a sign indicating drought and aridity) as she carries firewood, and the circle of fire is stifling her neck which is supposed to be showing off a woman's beauty. Hence, perdition is present in what is joyful as well as in what is terrifying as if the fire serves as the simplest form of her embellishment, while she is submissively pulled by her neck like a riding animal. The Arabic dictionary associates luck with fate and the neck, e.g. "His fate is fastened on his neck", so her fate is the circle of fire tied up around her neck. As such, she is captured by it.

¹⁸ HASTING, J., ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (Edinburgh, 1908-26). Cursing and Blessing. Hymns, Magic, Magical Circle, Humility, Laughter, Abusive Language, Spell.

¹⁹ POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA.

²⁰ Idem.

²¹ EL-MASSAD.

Blending the wonderful with the terrifying is a sign of satanic existence, where the community's sins are cast away to purge them in a carnival celebration moving the public audience from the state of a smile to amazement to fear. Then, laughter gushes and excessive frolics follow, liberating them from inhibited fear, suppressed and veiled by masks that we perceive in a playful mood and with disdain. Yet, every game has a rule to be observed by the buffoon who is remote from the group and close to a funny, even dangerous and sometimes disgusting, oddity so as to heal them by casting them out from the marginalized areas far from the layers of consciousness, threatening to emerge when a part of the collective psyche cracks by the effect of the conflict of contradictions. Chaos, menace and fear are displayed when the buffoon, replacing the medicine man on behalf of the group, seizes control over the situation in a purgative ritual restoring their balance and integrity [like the joker in the pack of cards which brings good luck]. He solves crises and fends off harm from the group. He punishes those who threaten it and destroys its enemies. He mends the rupture and counteracts from the situation of the opponent, the antagonist, and he restores the group's cohesion.²² How did the Umayyad satire acquire this role? How did the satirical poetry change from the social magical ritual role? And what were its mechanisms whose effects and echoes we notice in the Umayyad satirical poetry?

What did occur to the community in the Umayyad era in such a way that necessitates a community ritual to restore its integrity, mend the rupture and regain the balance of the marginal emerging through the conscious structures which are in conflict due to contradictions? The Umayyad period was an era yearning to be liberated from the styles of life, its vision towards existence, and its concepts and attitudes including classical poetic traditions, tribal structures, pagan concepts and perceptions, ethnographic composition and its confrontational demographic nature, all of which left its mark on the Arabic identity and formed its essence.

With Islam and the establishment of theocratic rule in Medina by the prophet, where the Orthodox Caliphs subsequently ruled, diverse prominent figures were working to invite others into Islam (da'wah) and spread its teachings. Various types of people were mingled as brothers and sisters under the values of Islam. With the Islamic conquests and the spread of the religion, non-Arab peoples began to embrace Islam while they carried over new cultural elements of historic entity,

²² CARROLL, L.L. Carnival Rites as Vehicle of Protest in Renaissance Venice. In *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 487-502.

levels of consciousness and multiple existential problems which juxtaposed and intermingled in the Umayyad era, while it had not yet had a chance to blend in.

The question was huge and significant and the tumult caused by this juxtaposition generated a flood of questions on ethnographic, political, military, intellectual, religious and artistic levels. They aspired to test how solid the old was and how the new was intuited, passionate in the desire to experiment and be liberated. Young energy was flowing into the veins of the nation ('Ummah) in an outburst, exploring all sources of potential at all levels to the extent of violence. The desire was extreme: the desire for power and life; for the spiritual, the emotional, the sensual, and the realistic; the desire to understand and the desire for knowledge. The desire for violence was another extreme, where bloodshed took place in the conflict of Islamic divisions – or in other words – civil wars in search of sources of power such as intellectual, emotional and military power.

The flaming zeal was ignited and the desire to live while skirmishing the tightly enclosed social structure and replacing it with new cultures and human relationships tested the social taboos in the urban love verse, which tends to affirm playful joy and quick delight in longing models desiring to assert both the passionate and the sensual.

The enthusiasm of the marginal classes with unfulfilled dreams was rekindled in a puritan lofty adolescence, prevailing over the willingness to discover any motive to live and channeling its flaming energy toward the inner-self in the "platonic" love poetry (ghazal). Dreams of power intensified with the Arab hegemony expanding to the east and west, where monies and spoils flowed in, strengthening its power and competing with neighboring great states, all of which was manifested in the eulogy (madīh) verse associated with military power and conquests glorifying in (fakhr) Arab Heroism. Furthermore, the grassroots classes and the mob burst with furious anger ignited by the oppression of the rulers, governors and states service organs to the extent of what is likely to get rid of some of this flaming energy, which reached a jeopardous stage manifested in the satire of common people's verse known to the literary markets such as Al-Mirbad Market.

Contradictions exacerbated and the systems multiplied, driven by forces ranging between desire and death, tenderness and violence, impudent amusement and eminent superiority, and centre and margin. This space was inflamed by endless clamor and passion, in the need to regulate and rebalance the community's powers, so as to gain control over the excess of threatening power and to cool off this frenzy. The price, however, could be to take part in a community cathartic ritual and to step into the circle of taboos, disgust and obscenity. The medicine may be

intoxicating and appalling, yet healing. Laughing and disdain could ease off the tension caused by stepping into the world of danger and approaching the taboo. Since the true face is masked and the game has rules to be observed, nobody would believe what it said, for everyone is both a lashed and lashing being.²³ Satire became a duel verse in which participation is made individually and collectively. The grassroots classes were passionate about it, finding in it a way to release their anger by lifting up collective violence and transforming it into an artistic form, combining beauty and ugliness, respect and contempt, bawdry and virtue. The poets game is to create and remove tension, and to engender joy, which brings about a sense of comfort and relaxation as sarcasm escalates. Stepping into the world of ridicule is like a smart witty quick flash and a swift strike where the word's effectiveness and influence are intensified, where art outweighs magic, or in other words, where new magic is brought into the word.

How is satire established at the level of technique and mechanisms? If we pose the question in a simpler way, we could say: If happiness has chemistry, and mysticism has chemistry, what is satire's chemistry? Can its nature, the raw aspect, dismember, deconstruct, and tear apart culture and the cooked (revise Strauss), destroying the mind's solemnity where the materialistic contaminates the soul's purity? Does satire restore a part of what we want to exclude so that we do not delude ourselves into believing that it is absent and intentionally nullify it? There may be a healing value in repression, yet satire could heal the diffused foolishness and raged agitation in what seems to be a healing wake-up shock or a vaccine immunizing the community from pain so that it feels in control even if it is temporary.²⁴ There are multiple mechanisms that we see manifested in the following:

- When the satire attacks an existing role model of ethics, it is a desire to overturn the authority embodied in such a model.
- When diverting the attention of social norms towards condemning outrage and scandal of a sexual nature, making of it a scapegoat to absolve the system. To approach and unleash ugly aspects, known to people as a part of their customs, is extremely risky; while the individual anarchist represents no harm to the system, so long as the rules are maintained, it does not matter if they are broken from time to time as the laws of the game safeguard its existence preventing its

²³ AL-ISFAHĀNĪ, Abū Al-Faraj *Al-Aghānī*.

²⁴ AYOUB, M.R. and BRANETT, S.A. Ritualized Verbal Insults In White High School Culture, In *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 78, No 310, pp. 337-344.

destruction. Loyalty to the community may be sacrificed for the loyalty to some social norms, where the exchange of insults becomes a kind of demonstration of the abilities and skills to ensure recognition of such loyalty.

–Permissiveness associated with sex indicates an extreme craving for life going back to a Dionysian type of male fertility celebration. Such a simple and joyful tendency leads us to go beyond all senses to the aesthetic. This type of rebellion against customs while recognizing them is embodied in the urban "ghazal" poetry which expresses its anger against traditional norms by yearning for the pleasure of aesthetic cognizance and insinuating through the social norms as if it were a safety valve.

–As regards romantic love which could be incorporated in the platonic love ('Udhri Love Poetry) verse, it does sometimes contain a few sexual connotations bearing some innocent desire to discover, denoting fervour and timidity.

–Not as simple or naïve as the Dionysian tendency, another type is libertine, sly and malevolent, carrying at the same time the contradiction of revolt and submission: such as the agitated lover to his beloved who ignores him and is being subjected to him at the same time. He is rejecting and being rejected, subject to servility and being servile, tormenting and being tormented, unhappy and unpurified, and passionate to tarnish and insult sex. He reflects a fear to have sexual motives, overwhelmed by bitterness, hate, shame, masochism, and a desire for revenge (Baudelaire in "Fleur du mal" and De Sade).²⁵ We did not find any equivalent genre. If we had types of the satire exchanged between infidel and Muslim poets in the dawn of "da'wah", such a hypothesis could have been either confirmed or denied.

We move now to the question related to ugliness: What make words ugly? What do they contradict or violate? What restrictions are governing permissiveness and violating the game in the satire?

–Within satire there features the use of a "curse" to deter whoever dares to violate social taboos or the religious sanctity. It has the function of maintaining covenants and is known by various civilizations in the form of blasphemy, such as cursing Satan, the people of Pharaoh, the infidels, and even enemies in wars and oppressive rulers.

²⁵ KAPLAN, A. *Obscenity as an Esthetic Category*, pp. 552–558.

–Al-Kumayt Ibn Zaid Al-Asadī says in his satire to Umayyad Dynasty (Banī Umayya), damning them to turn their ways around, and as such he sees that as rightful:

وأشيع من مجوركم أجيعة ²⁶	– أجاج الله من أشبعتموه
فحتى م حتى م العناء المطول	– فتللك ملوك السوء قد طال ملكهم
فقد أيتموا طورا عدااء وأنكلوا	رضوا بفعال السوء من أمر دينهم
ويحرم طلع النخلة المتهدل	تحل دماء المسلمين لديهم
ويا رب هل إلا عليك المعول	فيارب هل إلا بك النصر يرتجى
أذلوا بما أتباعهم ثم أوصلوا ²⁷	لهم كل عام بدعة يحدثونها

It is clear that he resorts to damning prayers against the opponents so as to turn the incorrect ways around and restore justice as they conspire against the Muslims' life and shed their blood. They also intend to fend off death and relieve them from the suffering associated with their presence, as these opponents turned the forbidden into permissive and forbade prosperity. Hence, such innovation was a disturbing actor to their system.

Then, the curse progresses to become public scorn, detraction from fate, and a denial of traits such as honor, virtue and good reputation. Playful scorn is intended to make Banī Tamīm look extremely humiliated, as they are powerless and their anger has no value. The associated disgrace cannot be borne by the crow which is famous for its lowliness and being tarnished by mud in the story of Noah and the flood. They turn the crow's mud and darkness into gray hair from the culmination of terror. This contradiction based on turning things upside down is where sarcasm stands and contains a tacit desire to reform the situation. Thus, their ill-doings will turn the crow's dark feather into gray. Al-'Abbās Ibn Yazīd Al-Kindī says, defending Al-Rā'ī Al-Numayrī and satirizing Jarīr:

²⁶ POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA

²⁷ Idem.

فَسَاةُ التَّمْرِ إِنْ كَانُوا غَضَابَا ²⁸	أَلَا رَغِمَتْ أَنْوْفُ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ
فَمَا نَكَاتُ بَغْضَبَتِهِمْ ذِبَابَا	لَقَدْ غَضِبْتَ عَلَيْكَ بَنُو تَمِيمٍ
وَمَا فِيهَا مِنَ السُّوءَاتِ شَابَا	لَوْ اطَّلَعَ الْغُرَابُ عَلَى تَمِيمٍ

This type of "contumely" could detract from the satirized person for moral or physical reasons, allowing us to understand the ethical and aesthetical pattern. It could also combine both the virtue and status of the satirist person and deprivation of such from the satirized. Jarīr says in his satire to Al-Rā'ī Al-Numayrī and Al-Farazdaq:

وَأَسْرَعَ مِنْ فَوَارِسِنَا اسْتِلَابَا	وَمَا وَجَدَ الْمَلُوكُ أَعَزَّ مِنَّا
وَمَا حَقَّ ابْنُ بَرُوعٍ أَنْ يَهَابَا	فَمَا هَبْتَ الْفَرَزْدَقَ لَوْ عَلِمْتُمْ
صَوَاعِقُ يَخْضَعُونَ لَهَا الرِّقَابَا	أَعَدَ اللَّهُ لِلشُّعْرَاءِ مَنِي
وَلَا سَقَيْتُ قُبُورَهُمُ السَّحَابَا	فَلَا صَلَّى إِلَـهَ عَلَى نَمِيرٍ
وَمَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَا مِلْهًا الْخُضَابَا	وَقَدْ جَلَسْتَ نِسَاءَ بَنِي نَمِيرٍ
عَلَى تَبْرَاكٍ خَبِثَتْ التُّرَابَا	إِذَا حَلَسْتَ نِسَاءَ بَنِي نَمِيرٍ
عَلَى الْمِيزَانِ مَا وَزَنْتَ ذِبَابَا	وَلَوْ وَزَنْتَ حُلُومَ بَنِي نَمِيرٍ
فَلَا كَعْبَا بَلَّغْتَ وَلَا كَلَابَا	فَغَضَّ الطَّرْفُ إِنَّكَ مِنْ نَمِيرٍ
حَسِبْتَ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمُ غَضَابَا	إِذَا غَضِبْتَ عَلَيْكَ بَنُو تَمِيمٍ
تَرَى فِي مَوْجِ جَرِيَّتِهِ عَابَا	تَنْحُ فَإِنْ بِحَمْرِي خَنْدَفِي
تَغْرَقُ ثُمَّ يَرْمُ بِكَ الْجَنَابَا	بِمَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ فَإِنْ تَرَمَهُ
كَدَارِ السُّوءِ أَشْبَعْتَ الْخُرَابَا	تَرَكْتَ مَجَاشِعَا وَبَنِي نَمِيرٍ

²⁸Idem.

In the verses we chose from a long poem, all forms of assault and violence including undermining and detraction are present based on a matrix of aesthetic, moral, religious and social values. The satirist is not only prompted by arrogance or a desire for revenge, but also by envy, which impels to tarnish the satirized persons reputation with false accusation, expose his defects and deny him of any merit. This style does not have recourse to obscene expressions or filthy words; it rather relies upon breaking the values and denying any honorable aspect associated to them. We find the curse clearly resonates although it is not explicitly uttered. Their noses are mutilated and disfigured, their homes are destroyed and wasted, their location is ill-ridden, and they desecrate any place they tread. The satirist's anger tosses them like agitated waves casting them off the shore and obstructing them everywhere (the notion of luring death in a different form). They are socially trashy, weightless, negligible and valueless, humiliated and weak. They are deprived of blessings and their women are devoid of beauty. Their graves are cursed, as opposed to the prayers known in the pre-Islamic poetry for life and water in the ruins (al-suqya), which are replaced by graves. His verses strike them like a thunderbolt, breaking their necks and humiliating their arrogance.³⁰ A metaphoric picture replaced the magical distortion embodying a sense of shame and subjugation, sometimes using synecdoche as metaphoric techniques which strongly belong to the magical practices.³¹ Furthermore, ritualizing is clear in repeating the name of Banī Numayr, which recalls the harmful forces and strongly insists on determining who would be aimed at and which part of the satirized person would be hit: Banī Numayr's graves, women, minds, homes, noses, eyes, ruins and impurity. We also notice that the rhyme is fraught with ruin, billows, enragement, tarnished soil, stamped noses (connotating fetor, scratch and notch) represented in kharāb, 'ubāb, khabīth at-turāb, unūfun 'ilāb.

No wonder that the satire that Al-Akhtal dares to address Al-Ansār was prompted by the Umayyads. As Muslim poets fear to address a satire against Al-

²⁹ Idem.

³⁰ MOHR, M. *Defining Dirt: Three Early Modern Views of Obscenity, Textual Practice*, pp. 253–275.

³¹ ELLIOT, R. *Satirist and Society*, pp. 239–244.

Ansār with their dignified status, so he insults them soiling their purity while he confirms the virtue of Quraish to which the Umayyads belong:

ذهبت قريش بالملكارم والعلل
واللؤم تحت عمائم الأنصار³²

Examples of techniques include fending off evil ghosts, enforcing social order, vehemently combating all sources of danger and protecting fertile elements from the enemies' hands. We find poison, blood, injury and destruction driven by hatred, anger and a desire for revenge.

Umayya Ibn Khalaf says in his threatening verses addressed to Hassān Ibn Thābet:

ألا من مبلغ حسان عني
مغلغلة تدب إلى عكاظ
ليس أبوك فينا كان قينا
لدى القينات فسلا في الحفاظ
يمانيا يظل يشد كيرا
وينفخ ذاتبا هب الشواظ³³

The rhymes are fast with the noise of creepage that has a fearful resonance, indicating their movements from one place to another. As we saw in the Quran and the lexicon, the curse is inevitable regardless of the time and the place as it follows the human being, infecting his mind and that of his successors. From a perspective concerning social status, the father in verses is a servile blacksmith at the bottom of the social hierarchy. He belongs to the blacksmith community, surrounded by women rather than men. He is impure and linked to the frightful fire power, as we were used to seeing in the blacksmith's trade and making weapons in the pre-Islamic period. These are dangerous and impure trades as they are related to fire and blood. Hassān replies with threatening and slashing verses:

سأنشر إن بقيت لكم كلاما
ينشر في الجامع من عكاظ
قواف كالسلام إذا استمرت
من الصم المعجرفة الغلاظ³⁴

³² ARAB POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA.

³³ ARAB POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA.

³⁴ Idem.

Jarīr uses a most fearsome gesture of the blood ritual. As he says:

وعاوى عوى من غير شيء رميته
بقارعة أنفاذها تقطر الدما
خروج بأفواه الرواة كأنها
قرا هندواين إذا هر صمما³⁵

Jarīr depicts a gothic image surrounded by howling wild wolves, running blood, the sword and particularly the Indian (Al-Hunduwānī) which bears the warrior god's forces. There is such an inner insistence, as if the sword has its own volition that misses no one or is blended with intensive poison. He might also envenom his smashing verses with deadly poison. He says:

أعددت للشعراء سما ناقعا
فسقيت آخرهم بكأس الأول
لما وضعت على الفرزدق ميسمي
وضعا البعيث جدعت أنف الأخطل³⁶

The satirical techniques include the use of language and poetic images that have dreadful magical shadows which are fearsome and linked to imprecation and destroying the forgone folk. In Jarīr's verses (naqīda), driving back the verses of Ghassān from Salīt, he says:

وما حاربتنا من معد قبيلة
فتقلع إلا وهي تدمى نخورها
والأرميناها بصدر وكلكل
من الشر حتى ما يهر عقورها³⁷

Al-Farazdaq also says in addressing his satire to Jarīr:

وكان لكم كبكر ثمود حتى
رغا ظهرا فدمرهم دمارا³⁸

Reference is made to the she-camel of Sāleh (Nāqat Sāleh) and the destruction which happened to the Thamūd people due to having slaughtered it. The verses of Al-Akhtal are also considered by commentators to be the harshest type of satire:

³⁵ Idem.

³⁶ Idem.

³⁷ Idem.

³⁸ Idem.

قوم إذا استنبح الأضياف كلبهم قالوا لأهمهم بولي على النار³⁹

In addition to the image of the mother urinating on the fire, which the commentators considered hideous as they do not want the guests noticing their whereabouts by the trace of fire, there is a sign of extreme meanness and lowliness which is contrary to the fine moral values of the Arabs. The verse is an echo of a magical ritual of Hārūt and Mārūt, where the woman who wants to bring back her husband urinates on the fire kiln.⁴⁰

Some of the techniques of magical satire were changed into an aesthetical technique depicting a funny caricature image (burlesque). It is a magical distortion that messes with the satirized person and hurts or destroys him. It is based on incongruity, contradiction and divergence, and although it is a destructive cruel mechanism, it is amusing to the public as it is sometimes coarse and sarcastic at some other times. Abū Al-Najm, the poet famous for his rajaz poems, says:

إن الظلّامة أخت شيان
يتيمة ووالداها حيان
العنق منها عطل والأذنان
والرأس قمل كله وصنّبان
وليس في الرجلين إلا خيطان
وقُصّة قد شيطتها النيران
تلك التي يضحك منها الشيطان⁴¹

Jarīr tears down Al-Faradaq's proud home while upside down, depicting him in such a contemptible state, so Al-Farazdaq says:

³⁹ Idem.

⁴⁰ 'AJĪNA, M. *Arab Myths Encyclopedia on Pre-Islamic Period*. Beirut: Dār Al-Farābī, Tunis Al-'Arabīya, Muhammad 'Alī Al-Hādī for Publishing and Distribution, 1994. The Introduction.

⁴¹ ARAB POETRY ENCYCLOPEDIA.

إن الذي سمك السماء بنى لنا	بيتا دعائمه أعز واطول
بيتا بناه لنا المليك وما بنى	حكم السماء فانه لا ينقل
بيتا زرارة محتب بفنائنه	ومجاشع وأبو الفوارس فُشِل ⁴²

Jarīr answers him:

أخزى الذي سمك السماء مجاشعا	وبنى بناءك في الحضيض الأسفل
بيت يحمم قينكم بفنائنه	دنسا مقاعده خبيث المدخل ⁴³

Al-Akhtal is depicting an extremely funny and vivid psychological image of Ibn Badr the fainthearted, evoking laughter and sarcasm as he is terrorized and pleading his she-camel to run away to save him:

فيصبح كالخفاش يدلك عينه	فقبحت من وجه لئيم ومن حجر
ونجى ابن بدر ركضه من رماحنا	ونضاحه الأعطاف ملهبة الحضر
إذا قلت نالته العوالي تقاذ	به سوحق الرجلين صائبة الصدر
كأنهما والآل ينجاب عنهما	إذا انغمسا فيه يعومان في غمر
يُسَرُّ إليها والرماح تنوشه	فدى لك أُمي إن دأبت إلى العصر ⁴⁴

Al-Akhtal talks about the daughter of Al-Mostanīr to deride them, connoting in a taunt tone their lewd nature and behavior in the fields by night:

فهيئ بنات المستنير عن الرقى	وعن مشيهن الليل بين المزارع
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⁴² Idem.

⁴³ Idem.

⁴⁴ Idem.

وما مستنير الخبث إلا فراشة هوت بين مؤتج الحريقين ساطع⁴⁵

Some other magical techniques include using words related to the human anatomy and the body's excretion in a disgusting image. Nothing is shameful, as the rituals would violate any taboo and take any risk in order to achieve the wellbeing of the community. These excreted fluids and body members either contain strange magical powers or have a strong influence of being a source of harm. Al-Akhtal says:

نساء لكم يوم إراب خلت بعولبعولتهن تبتدر الشعابا
خواق حياضهن يسيل سيلا على على الأعقاب تحسبه خضابا⁴⁶

Another technique of comic satire is to create tension and then remove it in a simple paradox. As Jarīr says:

زعم الفرزدق أن سيقتل مربعا أبشر بطول سلامة يا مربع⁴⁷

As fear recoils towards the sorcerer, restoring safety, such is the effect of anti-evil forces, rectifying the situation, as Al-Hutay'a says to Al-Zibriqān Ibn Badr:

دع المكارم لا ترحل لبغيها واقعد فإنك أنت الطاعم الكاسي⁴⁸

Some of the images with sarcastic sexual reference are found in Jarīr's satire of Al-Akhtal, as he says:

نزت أم الأخيطل وهي نشوى على الخنزير تحسبه غزالا⁴⁹

To conclude, we should let the reader answer the question: Does this vehemently leap, copulation and extreme lusts that degrade the delicate feelings to a sensual

⁴⁵ Idem.

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ Idem.

frenzy⁵⁰ make a distinction between beautiful and ugly? Is it the case of the "mother of Al-Ukhaytel", or is it a symbol of sweeping turmoil and enthusiasm that took hold of the community (behind the persona of the mother) in that time? In this transitional period, overwhelmed with explosive energy and youth, in a time of search of identity, yearning to restore its balance, or particularly maintain it, so that we know what we chose. Do we choose the dignified pure beauty? The deer, with emotional and spiritual dimension symbolizes beauty, fascinating and fascinated. Or do we choose the impure filthy sensual ugliness? The pig symbolizes ugliness. Does this mother bring to the world a little Al-Akhtal? The stem word "khatal" refers in the lexical referent to foolishness, wariness, doubts, disturbing and ill talks, bad sense, confusion and quick stabbing with the arrow tip. Does she follow her desire and get driven towards it by feverish outburst, or does she rely on her guesses and dreams, which should be taken into consideration?

Our attention was drawn to this phenomenon which was transformed from magical community ritual into, social and poetic ritual. It warns of excessive energy and risks imposed by the marginalized casts. It longs for collective healing, where the balance is restored, by tackling oddity, perversion and danger. The function of art was another point of attention, as it stands in every aspect of life. The first magical satire function in the common people culture is related to a period where the society fails to transform, in an interval trying to contemplate this helpless deficient existence, and mitigating fear, but the voice of prophecy and intuition warns us at the same time, showing us the values of our experience in all walks of life. Whatever the challenges facing the satire art, its mission is to confirm life and maintain the human value. Perhaps we are facing, according to the introduced hypothesis, what our cultures are presently going through, with deeper understanding, based upon the explanation and discussion we put forward.

⁵⁰ BENTLEY, J. Semantic Gravitation, An Essay on Satiric Reduction. In *The Sewanee Review*, Vol 27, pp. 3-19.

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