

THE AESTHETICS OF SUFI MANIFESTATION IN CONTEMPORARY ALGERIAN POETRY, THE EXAMPLE OF OTHMANE LOUCIF

Faiza BOURAS

University Mohamed Lamine Debaghine - Setif 2 Algeria

fbouras92@yahoo.com

&

Hadjer DRIF

University Mohamed Lamine Debaghine/ Setif 2/Algeria

hadjar1312@gmail.com

Abstract: This article aims to raise an important issue that touches upon contemporary poetry, which intertwines between the poet's awareness with his cognitive, intellectual, and spiritual reality. From this awareness emerge attempts to simulate emotional states characterized by questioning and interaction. At some point, the relationship between the self and these emotional states is constructed, with its multiple and diverse factors. This is evident in the poetry of "Othmane Loucif," which carried these intellectual and artistic variations in sincere attempts to express that spiritual transcendence. This artistic and intellectual depth is reflected through his precise choices of Sufi symbols and artistic imagery, embracing the values of beauty and wisdom.

Keyword: Contemporary poetry, Sufism, Sufi symbols, interpretation, Othmane Loucif

L'ESTHETIQUE DE LA MANIFESTATION SOUFIE DANS LA POESIE ALGERIENNE CONTEMPORAINE, L'EXEMPLE D'OTHMANE LOUCIF

Résumé : Cet article vise à soulever une question importante qui touche à la poésie contemporaine, qui s'entremêle entre la conscience du poète et sa réalité cognitive, intellectuelle et spirituelle. De cette prise de conscience émergent des tentatives de simulation d'états émotionnels caractérisés par le questionnement et l'interaction. À un moment donné, la relation entre soi et ces états émotionnels se construit, avec ses facteurs multiples et divers. Cela est évident dans la poésie d'Othmane Loucif, qui porte ces variations intellectuelles et artistiques dans des tentatives sincères d'exprimer cette transcendance spirituelle. Cette profondeur artistique et intellectuelle se reflète dans ses choix précis de symboles soufis et d'images artistiques, embrassant les valeurs de beauté et de sagesse.

Mots-clés : Poésie contemporaine, soufisme, symboles soufis interprétation, Othmane Loucif

المخلص

يأتي هذا المقال ليثير مسألة هامة لامست قضايا الشعر المعاصر، الذي يتداخل مع وعي الشاعر بواقعه المعرفي والفكري، وكذا الروحي ليتولد عن هذا الوعي محاولات لمحاكاة حالات شعورية قوامها التساؤل والتفاعل، حيث يُعاد في مرحلة ما بناء العلاقة بين الأنا في حالتها الشعورية تلك، مع الوجود بمعطياته المتعددة والمتباينة، وهذا ما نجد له تحقّقاً في أشعار "عثمان لوصيف" التي حملت تلك التّوحيّجات الفكرية

والفنية، في محاولات صادقة للتعبير عن ذلك التسامي الروحي، وانعكس ذلك العمق الفني والفكري من خلال اختياراته الدقيقة للرمز الصوفي، والصورة الفنية، ليعانق قيم الجمال والحكمة.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الشعر المعاصر، التصوف، الرمز الصوفي، التأويل، عثمان لوصيف

Introduction

Poetry, as a creative form, takes on the character of being opened to various intellectual, cognitive, social, and other domains that contribute to enriching the poetic and emotional experience of the poet. This is what makes literature in general, and poetry in particular, open to interaction with sciences and arts. It carries both intellectual and artistic dimensions, thereby opening the door wide for critical studies to explore the nature of the relationship between it and those fields. Additionally, it allows for the observation of the various changes that occur within it as it intersects with various philosophies and perspectives. The Sufi experience is considered as one of the phenomena that have marked contemporary poetry. Through it, poets have sought to explore a symbolic equation that allows the interpretation of the emotions and sensations they feel in their hearts. In this artistic and aesthetic experience, or let's call it the quest for the absolute essence, we can only access its world through interpretation. The importance of this study is attempting to reveal the interplay between its two parts: poetry and Sufism, especially considering that both express the human experience in its highest manifestations - spiritually, intellectually, and artistically. Furthermore, it involves investigating the Sufi symbols and manifestations of Sufism in the texts of the Algerian poet Othmane Loucif and exploring the sources of these symbols. Based on this, this paper is framed by the following questions: What are the manifestations of Sufism in contemporary poetry? To what extent does the Sufi inclination manifest itself in the Algerian poetic experience, especially in the works of Othmane Loucif? How did the poet Othmane Loucif employ Sufi symbolism in his poetry? In order to address these questions, we have put four hypotheses that we aim to examine for their validity and subsequently confirm or refute: the Sufi presence is manifested in the poetry of Othmane Loucif through the distinct use of Sufi symbolism. The appreciation of Sufi poetry and the exploration of its characteristics cannot be achieved without delving into the meanings and connotations of its symbols. The Sufi inclination has provided contemporary poetry with a rich source of symbolic imagery, contributing to the refinement of the poetic experience by reflecting a profound understanding of existence. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, and to investigate the validity of these hypotheses, this article is organized into the following sections.

1. About the concept of Sufism and its relationship with poetry

Sufism is another term among the many that fill the intellectual landscape. It, too, does not have a clear and explicit definition that encapsulates its boundaries. Its concepts have become associated with diverse perspectives and interpretations, even in its linguistic meaning, which has led scholars to divergent opinions about its specific content. Some scholars have provided definitions for this term that exceed a thousand definitions. For example, Sheikh Zarruq reached nearly a thousand definitions in his attempt to define its concept. Similarly, Hafiz Abu Nu'aim al-Isfahani included approximately eight hundred definitions in a single work titled "Hilyat al-Awliya' wa Tabaqat al-Asfiya'." Therefore, in this paper, we intend to present some of the most important of these definitions, for illustrative purposes rather than exhaustive coverage.

1.1. Linguistic definition:

The opinions of scholars have differed regarding the origin of the word; some of them suggested it is derived from 'as-saf.' Others have argued that it comes from 'as-suf.' meanwhile; some have proposed that it was taken from 'as-safa.' These meanings can be presented as follows. It was mentioned in "Al-Lisan" (a famous Arabic lexicon): "Saf (to aim), he aims precisely, and 'saf' for an arrow means when it deviates and misses the target." However, this interpretation is unlikely for various reasons, as terminological concepts typically draw from the original linguistic meanings that indicate their relevance in their respective fields and contexts. among the scholars, some attribute it to "as-suf" as a symbolic representation of their ascetic and austere way of life. Al-Kalabathi, for instance, says, "They were called Sufis because they wore 'as-suf' (woolen garments)." (Al-Kalabathi, 21, 1998). This interpretation is widely accepted to some extent, as it is associated with one aspect of Sufism characterized by modesty, detachment from worldly adornments, and reliance on what fulfills the basic needs and purposes of modesty. As for those who see it as derived from "as-safa," such as Bashar ibn al-Harith, who says, "The Sufi is the one who purifies his heart for Allah," (Al-Kalabathi, 21, 1998). Meanwhile, some Orientalists trace the term back to the Greek origin "sophia," which means wisdom.

1.2. Terminological definition of "Sufism"

In the terminological sense, Sufism is defined by Ma'ruf al-Karkhi as: "Adherence to truths and giving up hope in what is in the hands of creatures." (Aoun, n.d., 19). This definition emphasizes an important aspect, which is placing reliance solely on Allah, while distancing oneself from worldly attachments and refraining from any form of favoritism toward creation for any gain. When someone reaches this level, Sufism can be seen as a "philosophy of life" and a specific way of behavior that individuals adopt to achieve moral perfection, recognition of truth, and spiritual purification (Alta'fatazani, 1979, 03). Al-Isfahani added, "It is a name that conceals its true meaning from people except those of deep insight, and they are few." (Al-Isfahani, 1988: 22) Sufism has a significant connection with philosophy. The deep contemplation⁸ of the mystic, immersing oneself in spiritual refinement, is part of the philosophies of wisdom and beauty. Abdul Halim Mahmud states: 'Indeed, Sufism and the philosophers of illumination, from Pythagoras and Plato to our present day, all declare a specific approach that unites them and in which they have complete confidence. This is the one of the heart, the spiritual method, or the method of insight. It is a recognized method that religions have acknowledged, and ancient and modern wisdom traditions have adopted' (Abu al-Abbas, n.d., 10). However, in this generalization, there is a blurring of the distinction between Sufism and philosophy. If reason is the instrument of philosophical thinking, then the heart and the soul are the instruments of Sufi understanding. I appreciate the statement made by Abdul Mun'im Khafaji in this context, where he said: 'Philosophy is an attempt to uncover the secrets of knowledge and to understand the wisdom and mysteries of Allah in various aspects of knowledge. As for Sufism, it is an attempt to uncover the wisdom of Allah in various aspects of life. The heart and soul savor the pleasure of perception. Therefore, Sufism was a natural instinct in the human soul, just as religion was, as their origins were one, and their purposes were one, with each complementing the other' (Khafaji, n.d., 02). As for the relationship between Sufism and poetry, it must be noted that each has found itself in the other; it is a symmetrical relationship. "Poetry is an art, and art is like Sufism, it seeks to

elevate humanity from the depths to the heights, from the darkness of the physical world to the light of the souls" (Amin Awad, 153, 2008). This relationship is best summarized by Abdullah Hammad, who stated: "Many critics have affirmed the symmetrical relationship between poetic experiences and Sufi experiences, as poetic output is inseparable from the journey of spiritual experiences, where both the poet and the Sufi seek the ultimate truth" (Abdullah Hammad, 2016, article on the website of Al-Nassr newspaper).

2. Sufism in Algerian Poetry: Between Purpose and Source

Algerian poetry was not isolated from these shifts and transformations that the Arab poetic text witnessed. Algerian poets, too, attempted to emulate worlds of beauty, despite the oppression, injustice, and estrangement they experienced. Their poetic texts drew from the sources of Sufism, deriving meanings from it, where symbolism played a significant role in their diversity. This was achieved through the poet's ability to generate interpretations within the open horizon of possibilities. Algerian poetry, in turn, was influenced by the intricacies, styles, strengths, weaknesses, terminologies, themes, and symbols of Sufism. It served as a foundation for expressing the artistic thought that prevailed in the later periods of the Islamic world (Al-Rakibi, n.d: 237). Sufi experience has become one of the most prominent features that have characterized contemporary and modern Arabic poetry in the quest for absolute truth. Saber Abdel Dayem says, "The search for what lies beyond the sensory realm is one of the distinctive features of Sufism. This characteristic has then transferred to literature with the Sufi, where the search for truth, penetrating to the essence of things, and unveiling what lies beyond nature became one of the traits of Sufi literature" (Al-Qaoud, 2002:37). The Algerian Sufi experience has introduced poets to the literary scene who are worthy of commendation, such as the poet "Abdullah Al-Ashi" in his collection "Maqam Al-Bouh" (The Station of Disclosure). He understood the Sufi experience and demonstrated depth in his writings through several poems that draw inspiration from Sufi history to express the depth of the emotional experience. In one of his poems, he says:

Here she is
her beautiful face emerges from the whiteness
of the water's surface,
A saint and a goddess,
She comes from beyond the horizon,
Purer than the whiteness of the clouds,
More beautiful than her youth,
And I resist my steps, in haste,
Erasing the distance between us,
Allowing to me my beginning
In her end. (Al-Ashi, 2007, p. 12)

ها هي من ثبج المياه تُطِلّ قامتها الجميلة
قَدَيْسَة وَالْهَآ
ها هي تُقْبَلُ من وراء الأفق
أنصع من بياض الغيم
أجمل من صباها
وأنا أقاوم خطوتي، مُسْتَعْجِلا
أحو المسافة بيننا،
حتّى تحلّ بدايتي
في مُنتهاها

The poet "Yassin ben Abid" also immersed in the Sufi experience, he understood the logic of his writing, especially in his collection "Mu'allaqat Ala Astar Al-Ruh" (Suspended on the Veils of the Soul). This collection takes us to those suspended veils on the Kaaba, leading us spiritually and artistically to another world that contrasts with the pre-Islamic era steeped in selfish desires. These two honorable poets were among the few

who truly grasped the depth of this experience, not merely engaging in the symbolic representation of Sufism without an understanding of the profound experience. As Amina Belali says: "As for the few who comprehended the Sufi experience and drew from it the ability to soften hearts toward values, with a metaphorical perception of things and existence, in my opinion, they are the ones deserving to be called the poets of the soul in Algeria, such as Abdullah Al-Ghushi and Yassin ben AbId... They wrote poetry marked by refinement and realization that makes it contemporary Sufi poetry" (Amina Belali, 2015). Among the Algerian poets there is also Mustapha Al-Ghimari and the poet Othmane Loucif, we have provided below selected examples from his works.

4. The Sufi Symbol and Mechanisms of Interpretation

The term "رمز" (symbol) in a linguistic context means indication and allusion. It is mentioned in "Lisan al-Arab" as follows: "It refers to specifying with the lips using words that are not understandable in terms of their literal meanings, without vocalizing them. It is essentially a gesture made with the lips. It is also said that a symbol can involve indications and gestures made with the eyes, eyebrows, lips, and mouth" (Ibn Manzur, 1997:119). In Sufi terminology, the term "رمز" (symbol) refers to the inner hidden meaning that lies beneath the apparent words. It is a meaning that can only be grasped by those who are initiated into it (Ibrahim Muhammad Mansour, n.d., p. 55). The Al-Fan'd says:

"If they speak, their symbols perplex you, and if they fall silent, there is no way to guess the meaning"

إذا نطقوا أعجزك مرمى رموزهم وإن سكتوا هيهات منك اتصّاله

When we move to the terminological meaning of the word 'رمز' (symbol), we can reaffirm that a symbol is an indirect suggestion and expression of hidden psychological aspects, which language cannot adequately convey through its descriptive function. In the connection between human beings and things and entities, this emotional state is generated through psychological arousal rather than through naming and declaration." (Mohammed Ghoneimi Hilal, 1887:398). The poets tried to express this Sufi sentiment in their poetry, Nazik Al-Malaika, for example, expressed love in an elevated form, stripping the beloved of his human qualities and adorning him with the noblest virtues. Through the use of symbols, she elevates the beloved to the heavens, saying:

My unknown heart senses a sublime feeling,
Neither a feeling resembling human consciousness nor
awareness.

قلبي المجهول يحسّ شعورا علويًا
لا حسًا يشبه لا وعيا بشريًا

...

....

Leave me in my lofty riddles, in my secrets,
In my silence, in my soul, in the mission of my thoughts,
In my heart, there is a celestial dream that you do not
know." (Nazik Al-Malaika, 1968:100)

دعني في ألغازي العليا في أسراري
في صمتي في روعي في مهمة أفكاري
في قلبي حلم علوي لا تعلمه

The Sufi poetry has been concerned with portraying the human self in its journey towards spiritual transcendence, escaping from the mundane, materialistic reality that exalts materialism and desires. Thus, some poets have employed Sufi symbolism in constructing their poetic experiences, which carry intensified inspirational potentials,

holding the depth of connection with the divine self and spiritual purity. Thus, the selected symbolic content becomes a carrier of thought, "the symbol has an intuitive, internal nature that does not stop at the boundaries of the material world but goes beyond it to the world of visions" (Al-Yafi, 2008:230). So the horizon of interpretation opens up, indicating a deliberate depth of meaning. Sufi literature, whether in the form of poetry or prose, carries multiple contents constituting an accumulated thought. While it appears in artistic form, it represents a cultural and religious heritage that cannot be ignored. "Sufi literature is one of the richest tributaries of creative experience among Arabs, and on two levels of importance. The first is in elevating awareness of religious ideas, and the second is in the diversity of expressive styles, both explicit and subtle, from the level of consciousness. So this uniqueness harmonizes within the shades of thought and art" (Nahida Sattar, 1999). Therefore, the words of Sufis are considered as "indications of observations" (Al-Salimi, 2002:77). In this context, Ibn Arbi says:

God has glorified what I say	قد عظم الله ما أقول	في حكمة ما لها دليل
In the wisdom that has its evidence	أظهرها للأنام طراً	في جملٍ كلُّها
He has manifested it to people in various ways	فُصول	
In sentences, all of them are chapters	قيل لنا أنّها رموز	قلت لهم هذه السبيل
We have been told that they are symbols		
I said to them, "This is the way."		

Moreover, estrangement and imagination are among the most prominent features of Sufi literature, both in its poetry and prose. Abd al-Mun'im Khafaji stated, "The Sufis possess a symbolism and literature that others do not, symbolism in their doctrine, symbolism in their style, in meanings, and in expressions that cannot be reached by the splendors of metaphor, metonymy, representation, and personification, and in what baffles comprehension, reason, imagination, and fancy..." (Khafaji, n.d. p 67). In order to avoid making a sweeping generalization, it is worth noting that there is Sufi poetry that leans towards simplicity, eschewing estrangement entirely, just as in the case in the masterpiece of the poet Yasin ben 'Abid from the highlands, who says:

In the stone of Baghdad, I sought refuge and it comforted me,	في حجر بغداد، معيئٌ وهزني
And the Euphrates kept me warm for a long time.	دفاً وساهرني الفرات طويلاً
The young one from the fertile land of Hussein, a shadow,	صبي الخصب من الحسين ظلاله
Rejoiced and excelled in the siege like a date palm.	شمت ودرت في الحصار نخيلاً
And I plucked a moon that grew in my hands,	وتهدت قمراً يربت في يدي
With my hands, it adorned me with the cloak, lofty and noble. (Badran Murad and Wajudi Fawziyya, 2013/2014, 67)	بيدي ويلبسني الردى إكليلاً....

The Sufi language has distinctive characteristics that have permeated poetic texts and enhanced them. "Sufism adorned poetry with a captivating beauty through the abundance of symbols, metaphors, allusions, paradoxes, and riddles" (Hussein Jumaa, 2001:19). The true meaning of these texts is not fully grasped unless the reader is familiar with their characteristics and meanings. Interpretation only becomes accessible to those

who possess the keys to unlocking their profound symbolism. The ordinary recipient is limited at allusions that seek to explore the dimensions of existence, both its apparent and hidden aspects. Through these literary devices, poets can "immerse in the worlds of the unseen, the mystical, and the beyond, realms beyond the dominion of time and the limitations of space" (Wadhani Boudawd, 2006:27). Based on what has been presented, anyone who wants to deal with poetic texts, especially those colored with the symbols of Sufism laden with meanings, should be equipped with these cultural and religious insights. That may open up the horizon of interpretation for him. However, if he approaches these texts without any of this cultural and religious knowledge, he will undoubtedly stand at their doorstep with tied hands. Neither the door could be opened on its own, nor it beyond would be possible to be reached without unlocking the constraints and holding the keys to entry.

5. The Sufi symbols in the poetry of Othmane Loucif and constitution of meaning

The Sufis have taken divine love as medicines to their diseases, as nourishment for their souls, and as a sanctuary for their deep contemplations of divine greatness. All of this elevated connection with the divine self finds its place in the heart. Some Sufis say, "Look at your heart, kingdom of the heavens and the earth is within it" (Nicolson, 1958:78). They expressed this divine self through everything related to beauty, using symbols to carry those contrasting visions of the world. Othmane Loucif may not be one of these Sufis, but symbolism in his poetry has occupied a specific field. Through it, he leads us to that transcendent heavenly world, in an attempt to place "the reins of the body in the hands of the soul, allowing humans to realize their spiritual existence, and to experience psychological states that can be deeply embedded in their subconscious minds... Here lies the close relationship between literature and Sufism" (Nabil Ragheb, n.d.: 404). Starting from what has been mentioned, the poet had a need for Sufism, a need that resonated within his poetry. Just as the Sufi requires poetry to convey those visions, the poet Othmane Loucif needed Sufism to elevate his poetic experience and to harness that symbolic language, distancing from the materialistic, lower, and hedonistic world that imposes injustice and suffering, to the higher realms of ideals. "From this point, Sufism managed to present itself to humanity as a cognitive structure, not just as a spiritual inclination, and as an artistic and intellectual direction, in addition to being a belief system" (Husseini Jumaa, 2001:11).

1.5. *Symbol of Love*

The expression of divine love is a prominent feature in the poetry of Sufi poets, one of the first to write poetry about divine love might be Rabia al-Adawiyya (d. 185 CE). She succeeded to express her love for Allah without personifying it, saying:

I love you twice, the love of desire,
 And a love because you deserve it.
 As for the love of desire,
 it keeps me occupied With your evocation,
 from anyone else.
 But the love for which you are deserving,
 You unveiled the veils, so I can see you.
 So, there is no praise for this or that, for me
 But praise belongs to you in both this and
 that.
 (Al-Tafatazani, 1979, 86 / Ibrahim
 Mansour, n.d. 44)

أحبك حُبَّين حبَّ الهوى
 وحُبَّاً لأتَّك أهلاً لذاكا
 فأما الذي هو حبُّ الهوى
 فشغلي بذكرك عمَّن سواكا
 وأما الذي أنت أهلاً له
 فكشفتك لي الحُجب حتَّى أراكا
 فلا الحمدُ في ذا ولا ذاك لي
 ولكن لك الحمدُ في ذا وذاكا

The Algerian poet Othmane Loucif also employed symbols to express that love. He says:

This is my own Sufism ...
 To look up to the light of your face
 The secret of life
 And the secret of desires
 To immerse myself in love in the shade of your eyes
 Where the universe's praise flutters
 To dissolve into my amazement
 Through the whim of a radiant moment
 And to embrace in you the finite and the infinite
 In one single moment.

تلك صوفيَّتي ..
 أن أطلع في نور وجهك
 سرَّ الحياة
 وسرَّ الغوايات
 أن أتوضَّأ بالعشق في ظلِّ عينيك
 حيثُ تُرفرفُ تسيحة الكون
 أن أتبدد في دهشتي عبر نزوة إشراقه
 وأعانق فيك النَّهائيَّ واللَّانهائيَّ
 في لحظة واحدة.

As we read these words, we witness the use of symbolic language that transcends the mere denotation of the spoken word. The apparent sensual love that is manifested through the expression “the light of your face” and “in the shade of your eyes” is, for Othmane Loucif, a vehicle to convey spiritual concepts. The reason for this may be, as Khafaji suggests, “is the challenge faced by Sufis throughout history in finding a language for divine love that is independent of the language of sensual love in every aspect. Divine love does not conquer hearts until the traces of sensual language have been imprinted upon them. The poet thus moves into the spiritual realm, taking with him the tools and imagery from the material world, which serve as his instruments in depicting his new world. Sufis often employ words like “the eye,” “the cheek,” “the hair,” and “the face” as symbols that signify meanings beyond those commonly understood by people in the world of the senses (Khafaji, 182). Love as a Sufi symbol may necessarily required the presence of an element that generates this noble emotion. Through it, Othmane Loucif translates his experience of loving the divine self. There is no symbol in Arab culture more suitable than woman, from Othmane Loucif's perspective.

5.2. Symbol of woman

It is almost impossible to overlook the significant presence of women in Arabic literature, especially in poetry, both old and contemporary. Women were present in

romanticism, descriptions, and more. However, when mentioned by Sufi poets, women take on different meanings. From the Sufi perspective, women are seen as “the perfect symbol of divine manifestation” (Asmaa Khawaldeh, 2014, p. 59), especially in the poetry of Ibn al-Farid and Ibn Arabi. In this regard, Othmane Loucif, make it clear through his poem that the intended woman is not the known human being but rather a concept that transcends even the loftiest individuals. He says:

I remember you in every prayer,
So I bow in humility,
I close my eyes out of awe,
I glorify you with gratitude,
And I supplicate,
To your infinite eyes.
(Othmane Loucif, 2000, 34)

أَتَذْكُرُكَ فِي كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ
فَأُنْحِنِي فِي خُشُوعٍ
أَغْمِضُ عَيْنِي مِنْ رَهْبَةٍ
أَسْبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ
وَأَتَضَرَّعُ
إِلَى عَيْنَيْكَ اللَّامِتَاهِيَتَانِ

With this condensed symbolism, and through mentioning prayer, supplication, and other rituals, as well as his deep sense of modesty in her presence, he alludes to the underlying intentions of the Sufis within him. He is the Sufi who borrows the word “woman” to express, through her, the boundless love for the divine self. He does not hesitate to resort to some form of declaration to clarify that symbolism, saying:

O image of Allah,
In the sanctuary of woman,
And O monk of meanings,
From every fire,
And on every intense rhyme,
The pilgrims gather in multitudes,
Multitudes,
Proclaiming,
Magnifying,
And glorifying,
Devoutly... Bowing... Prostrating.
(Othmane Loucif, 2000, 34)

يَا صُورَةَ اللَّهِ
فِي بَهْوِ الْمَرْأَةِ
وَيَا رَاهِبَةَ الْمَعَانِي
مِنْ كُلِّ نَارٍ
وَعَلَى كُلِّ قَافِيَةٍ ضَامِرَةٌ
يَتَوَافَدُ الْحَجِيجُ أَفْوَاجًا
أَفْوَاجًا
مُتَلَبِّينَ
مُتَهَلِّلِينَ
وَمُكَبِّرِينَ
طَائِفِينَ.. عَاكِفِينَ
رُكَّعًا... سُجَّدًا

Through these unique stylistic shifts, he creates a self beyond the human example, emphasizing that he is not the only one standing at her doorstep, seeking her satisfaction and forgiveness. He gradually leads us through this imagery to make her the focal point (El-Kibla) of pilgrims who circumambulate her, worship her, and his experiential journey does not stop there. He conveys it in another form to the most sacred places of miracles with the words:

What graceful encounter brought me to you?
And what canary guided me
To your radiant gynaeceum?
I screamed, 'I found you! I found you!'
Then I immersed myself in your pure Zamzam.
(Othmane Loucif, 2000, 21-22)

أَيُّ أَلْوِي سَاقِنِي إِلَيْكَ
وَأَيُّ كَنَارِي أُرْشِدُنِي
إِلَى خَدْرِكَ اللَّأَلَاءِ
فَصَرَخْتُ: وَجَدْتُكَ! وَجَدْتُكَ!
ثُمَّ انْغَمَسْتُ فِي زَمْزَمِكَ الطَّهْوَرِ؟؟

In all of these descriptions and their ensuing consequences, he found in the beautiful human image a manifestation of the two dimensions of absolute divine beauty that he adored and sanctified, and that possessed his heart. He loved her not as a sensual, mortal woman, nor as an object of desire or passion, but rather as a symbol of that comprehensive beauty in which she appeared, in a complete and captivating form.” (Asmaa Khwaledya, 2016:120). Othmane Loucif used the symbol of woman in various contexts, making this ideal woman an abundant source of inspiration. Sometimes, she symbolizes the Arab homeland, sometimes she is the symbol of Algeria. In different instances, she represents success, victory, ecstasy, defeat, failure, positivity, negativity, moderation, and contradiction. She symbolizes the ideal woman, shaped by psychological and sociocultural factors (Rabie Muazi, 2021, 996). All of this becomes evident through the rich use of imagery selected by the poet, who sometimes intentionally employs sensuous language to express love, while at other times elevates this love to a more spiritual level. However, he consistently employs a symbolic path with womanhood that requires interpretation of the hidden meanings behind his artistic choices in his poems:

We met one rainy evening,
She greeted me with an indifferent smile,
And walked with me,
Enveloped by a cloud of silence and awe,
I asked her a thousand questions,
But she neither replied nor smiled again,
She made me feeling a strange tremor,
As strange as the enigmas of the most peculiar
seas.
I saw that the Sufi poet,
I, the adolescent philosopher,
Saw in her mysterious gaze,
What never occurred to the ancient gods.
(Othmane Loucif, 2000, 44)

والتقينا ذات مساء ممطر
حيثني بابتسامة لا مُبالية
وسارت معي
تلأفتها غمامة من الصمت والمهابة
رشقتها بألاف الأسئلة
فما ردت ولا ابتسمت ثانية
غشيتني منها رعشة غريبة
لبحرانات أغرب
ورأيتُ أن الصوفيَّ الشاعر
أنا الفيلسوف المراهق
رأيت في نظراتها المُربية
ما لم يخطر ببال الآلهة القديمة

If the meeting, in its appearance, brought this lover together with his beloved, he ultimately transcended those apparent meanings to reach what is deeper and greater. His love for the divine self-led him to depict that moment when he felt the greatness and power of God on a rainy evening. She, who did not wish not to smile at him, he asked himself in contemplation, pondering after having been overwhelmed by the awe of that greatness.

5.3. *Symbol of wine*

The Sufi poets use the symbol of “خمر” (wine) to convey deeper meanings disassociated from the material meanings related to the prohibited (Muha’ram). The wine in the context of Sufism represents the elixir of divine love and through its specific usage “worries and sorrows dissipate, it is a source of joy and happiness for its drinkers, it has its traces on their appearances, the most ancient gives life to the dead. Afterward, it becomes the secret of life and the essence of truth. (Atif Joudah, 1982, 368).

Haut du formulaire

Bas du formulaire

Based on this, wine became a source of nourishment from the divine abundance. The Algerian poet used this symbol with its new connotations several times, as example, he said:

Oh birds and clouds,	يا طيور ويا سحب
Oh breezes,	يا حمحات
Ah... shake creation so we may awaken,	آه... هزي الخليفة كي نستفيق
And pour upon the earth's longing,	وفيضني على شبق الأرض
With peace and ecstasy!	بالزاح والنشوات!
(Othmane Loucif, 2000, 44-45)	

The wine, through a Sufi perspective, becomes a source of life, renewal, and continuity.

6. Sources of Sufi symbols in the experience of Othmane Loucif

It is well known that the poet, through his creative works, conveys his visions and ideas that have diverse sources. The symbol is primarily associated with one of these sources, which we find to be diverse in the case of Othmane Loucif, ranging from religious sources to mythical ones. His texts contain many references from the Holy Quran text, as well as from myths, and we mention the following as examples, but not an exhaustive list:

6.1. *The religious source*

The poet employed intertextuality with Holy Quran in many instances. We can mention, for example, his quotation from Surah Al-Baqarah in his words:

Here you come,	ها أنت قادمة
In a procession of lights,	في هودج من الأنوار
And upon you, a shade of treasures.	وعليك ظلل من الغنائم
(Othmane Loucif, 2000:38)	

Don't you see that in his words, there is an allusion from the verse of Quran, as in the saying of Allah: "Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided And to Allah [all] matters are returned." (Quran, Al-Baqarah, 210). The symbolic references were used in another place in another poem in his words:

Ah, your eyes are gleaming
With visions... and colors

آه عيناك نضّاختان
بالرؤى... والألوان

The reference from Surat Ar-Rahman is obvious when Allah says: "In them are two gleaming water sources." (Ar-Rahman 66) And in another poem, he says: "In them, two eyes gleaming."

I saw how the earth intersects with the sky,
And the sky with the earth,
a joining, then a splitting,
a splitting, then a joining
(Othmane Loucif, 000, 64)

رأيت كيف تتقاطع الأرض بالسماء
والسماء بالأرض
رتق.. ففتق
فتق.. فرتق

These Quranic references direct us to the noble verse in which Allah, the Almighty, says: 'Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing, Then will they not believe?' (Quran, Surah Al-Anbiya, 30). This verse indicates that the heavens and the earth were once a single entity, and then they were separated. This is one of the secrets of the scientific miracles in the Holy Quran. Through these references, Othmane Loucif invokes images of majesty and greatness, reaffirming his religious identity. However, these references have taken on new meanings, serving the context and purpose of the poem. The religious source is not limited to what has been mentioned regarding the intertextuality with the Holy Quran but also appears in another form when he evokes pages from the blessed biography (the Prophet's life). He weaves his poetry beautifully within the historical context of the Prophet's life and his poetic experience. In a moment of reflection on the paths of Sufi journey, he wears the shoes of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in narrating the details of his journey to the heights of virtue, saying:

Here, your heavens open their doors,
The divine Burak carries me,
In the gentle embrace of its wings, then it soars,
Peace be upon the prophets,
I see "Sidrat al-Muntaha" sparkling,
O Eternal Green. (Othmane Loucif, 1994, 39)

ها سماؤك تفتح أبوابها
البراق الإلهي يحملني
في رفيف جناحيه ثم يطير
السلام على الأنبياء
أرى سِدرة المنتهى تتلألأ، يا الخضر الأزلية

6.2. Mythical source

Symbolist poets have often referred to myths in their poetry as a means to express past civilizations. Myth represents an innocent world embraced by people everywhere and at all times, embodying the essence of contemplation and reflection on existence (Amina Amqran, 2009:79). One of the prominent mythological figures used by the poet Loucif is the character of Venus, where he said:

From which sea does he call me
Rising upon me
As Venus once rose upon ancient Greece.

من أي بحر نداني
طلعت علي
كما طلعت فينوس على اليونان القديمة

And this mythological symbol among the Romans represents the goddess of love, beauty, desire, fertility, prosperity, growth, and victory. She was known in Greek mythology as the goddess "Aphrodite." Through this use, the poet may seek to approach that absolute beauty in an attempt to unify the ages by drawing inspiration from the spirit of mythology and pouring it into a new mold that provides a new meaning, taking your thoughts on a lapse of time to other cultures and civilizations. He also excelled in employing the character of the maritime Sinbad to infuse it with a touch of grandeur, while using the myth of Sisyphus in his saying:

We roll our rock without despair,
And Sisyphus gives us the best example...
We conquer our hunger a thousand times,
And we live with every breath and every cough
(Othmane Loucif, 1982, 19-20)

نُدحِرُجُ صَخْرَنَا مِنْ غَيْرِ يَأْسٍ
وَسِيْزِيْفٍ لَنَا خَيْرٌ مِثَالٍ...
نُغَالِبُ جُوعَنَا مِنْ أَلْفِ أَلْفٍ
وَنَحْيَا بِالشَّهِيْقِ وَبِالشُّعَالِ

By invoking this myth, he conjures the image of eternal torment suffered by this legend and projects it onto the woes endured by the Algerians from the devastations of the destroyer. So he transfers its connotations from existential absurdity to the necessity of relentless striving that will only result in success. This salvation achieved by the Algerian people reflects the value of effort and sacrifice. He employed several mythological symbols, such as "Ishtar," "Tammuz," and "Adonis," among others, whose meanings took on new interpretations through the poet Loucif's usage.

Conclusion

Moving through the gardens of Othmane Loucif reveals his Sufi inclination that marked his poetic experience. This is evident through his exploration of Sufi themes in poetry on one hand, Especially by taking the symbol of the ideal woman, love, and nature as inspiration, it conveys in-depth sentimental concepts that carry within it connotations of divine love, and reflect the Sufi's ability to enter other worlds that transcend this closed material existence that the natural human being experiences. and his mastery in employing Sufi symbolism in various forms on the other hand. He expressed a unique diversity in the sources of these symbols, drawing upon worlds from diverse cultures, Including mythical worlds, some of the sacred religious text, the Noble Qur'an and the Noble Prophet's Hadith, from Human and Islamic history, and molding them into a new framework that gave them fresh meanings. These meanings are derived after interpreting the intended allusions, which indicate a profound perspective on existence and his point of view toward it.

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