

The Singing Poets – The Influence of Folksongs on Modern Arab Poets in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

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<p>Received: 29/11/2021</p> <hr/> <p>Accepted: 21/12/2021</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: folksong, transtextuality, Arabic poetry, mawwal, dialect, imitation, allusion.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abstract</i></p> <p>Twentieth-century Arab poets undertook a search for alternative means of poetic expression that went beyond experimentation at the stylistic and formal level. The result was a violent rebellion against the traditional <i>qaṣīda</i> form in the mid-1940s, an urgent striving for freedom and breaking free from accepted forms. One of the rebellion's manifestations consisted of a renewed interest in folklore, especially folksongs, as a source of inspiration. Early on, folksongs became a fundamental pillar of Arab Modernism; most of the poets of the first half of the twentieth century were, in fact, affected to differing degrees by the folksong style. Ultimately, the present study shows that folk literature in general, and folksongs in particular, are a critical source of inspiration for Arab poets, one that has enabled them to forge a link between their art and their public.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Folksongs and Poetry

Folksongs are the popular literary genre that most resembles modern Arab poetry. They are based on music, meter, a graceful rhythm, clear and delicate phrases, a fertile imagination, plain thinking, and precise depiction.¹ Of course, modern poetry also possesses these elements, which Arab poets try to implement through their texts. One of the primary concerns of Modernist poets is to be creative and innovative, to introduce novel imaginative images, and

¹ Herzog assumes that folksongs include the poetry and music of the groups, those group who eternize their literary arts not by writing but orally (G. Herzog, "Song: folk song and the music of folk song", in: Herskovits, Krappe, Leach & Voegelin (eds), *Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend*. [New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1950] vol. 3, pp. 1032-1033). It is not the place where to deal with this huge field, indeed I've studied the folksongs in general and the Palestinian folksong of Galilee in particular through my M.A. thesis: J. Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha'biyya al-Falastīniyya fī al-Jalīl* (Haifa: Haifa University, 1999 [M.A. Thesis]). See also: J. Khoury, *al-Fulklōr wal-Ghina' al-Sha'bi al-Falastīnī* (Haifa: The Academy of Arabic Language, 2013); A. Mursi, *al-Ughniyah al-Sha'biyya, Madkhal ilā Dirāsatiḥā* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1983); A. 'Akkāri, *al-Ash'ār al-Sha'biyya al-Lubnāniyya- Dirāsa wa Ba'd Namādhijihā al-Hulwa* (Tarabulus: Gros Press, 1989); M. Abū Buthayna, *al-Zajal al-Arabi* (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1973); J. Khoury, "Yā Zarīf al-Ṭūl, Ughniya Sha'biyya Falastīniyya", *al-Karmil- Abḥāth fī al-Lugha wal-Adab* 20; I. Ya'qūb, *Al-Aghāni al-Sha'biyya al-Lubnāniyya* (Tarabulus: Gros Press, 1987); T. Burns, "Ballads and Folksongs", in: E. Oring, *Folk Groups and Genres-an Introduction* (Logan, Utah: Utah University Press, 1989), pp. 245-253; D. Semah, "Modern Arabic Zajal and the Quest for Freedom", *Journal of Arabic Literature* XXVI, pp. 80-92.

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develop new poetic forms and techniques since liberation from existing models and the constant search for original formal and substantive poetic elements are the very essence of Modernism.² Folksongs have thus become an important and alluring source for Arab poets because of the many forms they take, their flexibility, and their numerous original and expressive metaphorical images, all of which can be transferred to canonical poetry and used to freshen it, enrich its structures, and broaden its expressive possibilities.

The Present Study

This study aims to elucidate the interaction between folksongs and canonical poetry by analyzing poetic texts written by the foremost modernist Arab poets to discover traces of folksong texts in the forms, contents, and modes of expression of canonical poetic texts. Our study thus aims to discover the extent to which popular culture has affected canonical poetry and demonstrate the importance of this cross-pollination to preserve folkloristic materials, on the one hand, and to enrich and stylistically revitalize canonical poetry, on the other.

Since the influence of folksongs has been widespread and songs and poetry have interacted in so many different ways, it is not easy to delineate the impact that folksongs have had and place it within well-defined boundaries. For that reason, we have restricted ourselves in the present study to cases in which this influence is clear and explicit, and can be confirmed by direct evidence. The main categories according to which we can determine the types and extent of this influence are the content, language, and artistic style.

Intellectual and Artistic Features of the First Half of the Twentieth Century

A perusal of books and articles from the period in question on literature, its nature, and its public reveals the two most important topics with which Arab intellectuals, writers, and critics were preoccupied were the state of diglossia in the Arab world and the evolution of Standard Arabic (*fushḥā*). Arab intellectuals, especially those who championed regional literature, observed that the language of Arabic literature had become distant from the life of the people. Some intellectuals called for a closer link between literature and everyday life, enlisting literature in the service of the people by writing in a language that was closer to the colloquial language, or even writing in the colloquial language rather than Standard Arabic. The most prominent of such intellectuals was the Egyptian Aḥmad Luṭfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963), who wrote two articles around 1899 in which he laid the ground for the call to “Egyptianize” the

² About modernism in general and its impact on Arabic literature, in particular, see: Y. al-Khāl, *al-Ḥadātha fī al-Shiʿr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿa lil-Ṭibāʿa wal-Nashr, 1978), pp. 95-6; J.I. Jabrā, *Yanābīʿ al-Ruʿyā* (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-ʿArabiyya lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 1979), p. 141; M. Bannīs, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi al-Ḥadīth, Bunyātuh wa-Ibdālātuha* (Casablanca: Dār Tūbqāl, 1990) vol. 3, pp. 16-9; Ch. Altieri, “Modernism and Postmodernism”, in: A. Primenger & T.V.F. Brogan (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 792-6; S. Jayyusi, “Modernist Poetry in Arabic”, in: M.M. Badawi (ed.), *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 132-179; R. Williams. “The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism”, in: P. Brooker, *Modernism/ Postmodernism* (London and New York: Longman, 1992) 82-94; J. Houry, “The Employment of Popular Proverbs in Modern Arabic Poetry 1962-1987”, *JOAS* 16, p. 138; J. Houry, “The Figure of Job (Ayyūb) in Modern Arabic Poetry”, *JAL* 38, 2, pp. 167-8; J. Houry, “Zarqāʿ al-Yamāma in the Modern Arabic Poetry, a Comparative Reading”, *JSS* LIII, 2, pp. 311-2.

language of literature.³ He was followed by another Egyptian, Salāma Mūsa (1887-1958), who treated the same topic from a Socialist perspective. In 1934, he published a book in which he explained that Arabic literature, in general, had become insincere and adhered to outmoded criteria and beliefs held by the well-to-do, disregarding the people and their interests. He compared this literature to the literature of Europe and concluded that the latter was indeed a literature of the people, written for the people in their language, whereas Arabic literature was, in fact, a literature for the upper classes only.⁴ In a second book published in 1954, *Literature for the People*, he courageously and openly attacked several leading Egyptian writers, including Tāha Ḥsēn (d. 1973), ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aqqād (d. 1964), al-Māzini (d. 1949), Aḥmad Shawqī (d. 1932), and others. He accused them of being reactionaries and belonging to the bourgeoisie, which supported King Faruq (d. 1965) and did not care about the people’s interests. In his opinion, “popular literature” is *committed literature*, which emanates from the actual life of the people and whose purpose is to serve and enlighten the people. For that reason, it strives to approach ordinary people by making the language more accessible and more straightforward through the use of elements of the colloquial language and the language of preaching.

A similar call was also heard in Lebanon, led in the 1920s by Amīn al-Rīḥāni (1876-1946) and ‘Umar al-Fākhūri (1896-1946).⁵ They were followed in the 1950s by the very prominent Ra’if Khūri (1913-1967),⁶ whose thoughts will be presented on another occasion since they were put into effect later.

The contribution of Arab poets in the West (*al-mahjar*) to this debate must also be acknowledged. These poets settled in foreign countries and thus came into close contact with the local cultures and were exposed to the new sciences and theories that were current there. Most of them were, of course, familiar with Western literature and its latest innovations. Its styles and approaches influenced them, and some also attempted to write in the colloquial. The

³ M. al-Kittāni, *al-Širā’ Bayna al-Qadīm wal-Jadīd fī al-Adab al-‘Arabi al-Ḥadīth* (al-Dār al-Bayḍā’: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1982) vol. 2, p. 691 (including note no. 50). Cf.: M.M. Ḥsēn, “Muqarrarāt al-Majami’ al-Lughawiyya”, in: *al-Musājalāt wal-Ma’ārik al-Adabiyya fī Majāl al-Fikr wal-Tārikh wal-Ḥadāra* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’rifā, 1972), p. 80. On the “Egyptianization” of language and literature, see: T. Al-Ḥakīm, “al-Khalq (min Risāla ‘ilā Taha Ḥsēn)”, in: M. Milsun & D. Semah (eds.), *Muṭāla‘āt wa ‘Ārā’ fī al-Lugha wal-Adab* (Jerusalem: al-Sharq, 1971), p. 22; cf.: Ṭ. Ḥusayn, “Ilā al-Ustāz Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm”, in: M. Milsun & D. Semah [eds.] p. 279; cf.: M.Ḥ. Haykal, “al-Adab wal-Lugha”, in: M. Milsun & D. Semah (eds.), pp. 91-100.

⁴ S. Mūsa, *al-Adab lil-Sha‘b* (Cairo: Salāma Mūsa lil-Nashr wal-Tawzī’, 1954), pp. 5-6; cf.: M.M. Badawi, *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 205.

⁵ ‘Umar al-Fākhūri published a book in which he presents his thoughts and ideologies, among them the necessity of connecting between life and literature. The book first appeared in 1941 with the title *al-Fuṣūl al-Arba‘a* (Four Seasons) (See: ‘U. Al-Fākhūri, *al-Fuṣūl al-Arba‘a* [Beirut: Dār al-‘Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1981], especially pp. 12-17).

⁶ See: S. Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977) vol. 2, pp. 574-576; al-Kittāni, vol. 2, p. 731. See also his book *al-Adab al-Mas‘ūl*: R. Khūri, *al-Adab al-Mas‘ūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 1989).

mahjar poets were the most important mediators between the West and their colleagues in the Arab Orient.⁷

In short, these various factors and trends participated in promoting the call to link literature to the lives of ordinary people, especially in the 1930s, when many Arab intellectuals adopted and fostered this approach under the influence of Salāma Mūsa and other pioneers of Arab Socialist thought.⁸

However, the people who expressed these opinions came under frequent attack and were accused of conspiring against the homeland and Islam. The opposition voices were so strong, in fact, that they succeeded in preventing elements of folk literature from seeping into canonical literature. Even the study of folk literature lagged behind, “and with it also the study of its impact on canonical works of literature. It was inevitable that the time would come and it would receive its due recognition, and would be studied as it deserved to be, before any inquiry into its relationship with canonical literature”.⁹

The Use of Folksongs in the Period in Question

Although there was much less interest in folklore in this period than in later times, we found that folksongs served as a source of inspiration even for the earliest poems written by the poets discussed in the present study. In this period, poets were inspired by various genres of folksongs, especially *mawwāl*, *zaghrūda*, *mējanā*, and others as well. Some poets imitated the style or the content of folksongs or adopted their spirit in order to provide their compositions with a more popular hue. Qabbāni stands at the head of the list of poets who used folksongs in this period. He also alluded to more types of songs than others, although his usage of such songs was relatively superficial in most cases.

Allusion¹⁰

In his poem “Waraqa ‘ilā al-Qāri’” (A Page to the Reader) from his collection: *Qālat li al-Samrā’/The Dark Girl Said to Me* (1944), “Qabbāni alluded to the art of folk singing known as

⁷ About the contribution of the *mahjar* poets to the simplicity of language, their call for using the vernacular in literature, and their commitment to popular causes, see: Sh. Moreh, *Modern Arabic Poetry 1800-1970* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 102-113; Jayyusi, *Trends*, vol. 2, pp. 530-531; M. Iṭēmish, *Dayr al-Malāk, Dirāsa Naqdiyya lil-Ḍawāhir al-Fanniyya fī al-Shi‘r al-‘Irāqī al-Mu‘āṣir* (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-‘Āmma, 1986), p. 16.

⁸ See: al-Kittāni, vol. 2, p. 739 (including note no. 28).

⁹ F. Khurshīd, *al-Judhūr al-Sha‘biyya lil-Masrah al-‘Arabi* (Cairo: al-Hay‘a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1991), p. 11.

¹⁰ According to Genette’s definition of ‘intertextuality’, allusion is one type of intertextuality. Cuddon defines it as, “an indirect reference to a literary or artistic work, or to a character or an event. This is a technique to draw the reader’s attention to share the writer. Allusion can enrich the text with associations and this gives it more depth”. (Cuddon, J.A., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998], p. 27; cf.: ‘A. Ḥaddād, *Athar al-Turāth fī al-Shi‘r al-‘Irāqī al-Ḥadīth*, (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya, 1986), pp. 86, 102; Qmēḥa 50; E. Miner, “Allusion”, in: Primenger & Borgan [eds.], p. 39; Ḥ. Abū Ḥanna, *Riḥlat al-Baḥth ‘an al-Turāth* (Haifa: al-Wādi lil-Ṭibā‘a wal-Nashr, 1994) 236-237, 242; ‘A. Ḥaddād, *Badr Shākir al-*

al-Ḥudā'.¹¹ This allusion is of the simple kind, which does not hint at anything specific. Instead, the poet uses it to compose an ancient image, tightly connected to a collection of other images that express the poet's hopes and dreams and the topics that his poetry collection addresses, as if it were a kind of introduction.¹² We found allusions to the *mawwāl* in thirteen poems written in this period, eleven of them by Qabbāni. In six of these poems, it was used in connection with feelings of sadness, as a name for a sad song, or perhaps a metaphor for sadness itself:

One-thousand butterflies carried it
 My home. so that trust did not die
 Its tiles enfolded the sad *Mawwāls*
 and were content ...¹³

Mawwāls are essentially songs of sorrow. This has been a characteristic of this genre since it first appeared in the age of Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809 A.D.). Most traditions ascribe its emergence to the defeat of the Barmakians by Hārūn. Following this disaster, the slave girls who served the Barmakians are said to have begun to sing songs formulated in a mediocre language and possessing unique characteristics. The songs were initially named *al-mawāliya* because they opened with a call to the girls' now-dead masters (*mawāli*).¹⁴ If this account is correct and the genre arose out of a painful event, it would explain the two mournful expressions with which *mawwāls* usually open, *'ōf* and *yā layl yā 'ayn*, indicative of the sad tone with which the genre has been associated since its emergence. Since then, the *mawwāl* has evolved into various types depending on the theme. The different types have been given color names. Thus, "green *mawwal*" refers to songs in which the poet describes nature, through

Sayyāb, Qirā'a Ukhra [Amman: Dār Usāma lil-Nashr wal-Tawzī', 1998] 122; I. Faḥi, *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Adabiyya* [Al-Qāhira: Dār Sharqiyyāt lil-Nashr wal-Tawzī', 2000] 51); U. Hebel, "Towards a Descriptive Poetics of Allusion", in: H.F. Plett, (ed.) *Intertextuality*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, p. 136).

¹¹ About Ḥudā' see: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha'biyya...*, pp. 49, 122-126; J. Khoury, *al-Fulklūr wal-Ghinā' al-Sha'bi al-Falastīni* (Haifa: Majma' al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya, 2013) 132-135; M. Wahība, *al-Zajal, Tārīkhuh, Adabuh, A'lāmuh Qadīman wa-Ḥadīthan* (Hirisa, Lebanon: al-Maṭba'a al-Būlīsiyya, 1952) 76; S. al-Asadi, *Aghāni min al-Jalīl* (Nazareth: [s.n.], 1976) 37.

¹² See the poem in: N. Qabbāni, *al-A'māl al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Nizār Qabbāni, 1993) vol. 1, p. 15. In another poem, Qabbāni alludes to the folksong *al-'Atāba* in the same way: *Ibid.*, p. 200. Al-Sayyāb in this period frequently uses the folkloric word "*darābik*" (earthen hand drums) as an indirect reference to folksongs. Indeed, he recalls the rhythm of this instrument as symbol of the past (see: B. al-Sayyāb, *Dīwān Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb* [Beirut: Dār al-'Awda, 1995] vol. 1, pp. 24, 344, 430).

¹³ See: Qabbāni, *ibid.*, p. 288.

¹⁴ See: M. Shihāb al-Dīn, *Safīnat al-Mulk wa-Nafīsat al-Fulk* (Cairo: [s.n.], 1891), p. 380; cf.: Wahība, p. 56; A. al-Jammāl, *al-Adab al-'Ammi fi Miṣr fi al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūki* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyya lil-Ṭibā'a wal-Nashr, 1966), pp. 134-135; Abū Buthayna, pp. 19-20; I. Hindi, *al-Mawwālāt al-Sūriyya* (Damascus: Dār Ṭlās lil-Dirāsāt wal-Tarjama wal-Nashr, 1991), pp. 34-35; P.J. Cachia. "The Egyptian Mawwāl", *JAL* 8, pp. 81-3. About *mawwāl* in general, see: J. Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha'biyya...*, pp. 130-4; J. Khoury, *al-Fulklūr...*, pp. 154-157; S. Fanjul, "The Erotic Popular *Mawwāl* in Egypt", *JAL* 8, p. 107.

which he expresses his exultation, whereas a “red *mawwāl*” is one whose theme is the pains of love and the hardships and sadness of life:

Throughout the nights of crying
Nights without sleep [...]
I pray
I call out
Come, my love
The birds are in darkness
And the jinnie of the woods
Her slumber is disturbed, oh my little prince
By your *red mawwāls* and the noria¹⁵

The expression “your red *mawwāl*” is an *allusion* to the poems of love and yearning which the poet composes during his beloved’s period of absence. The verse above contains several expressions denoting suffering and sadness (cry, without sleep, etc.).¹⁶ Allusions to *mawwāls* are in most cases associated with feelings of grief and pain. At the same time, the *mējana* and *zaghrūda* genres in the poetry of the period in question usually mark joy and happiness.¹⁷ These are songs that are traditionally sung on happy occasions and naturally evoke a spirit of merriness.¹⁸

For poets, another use and meaning of the *mawwāl* is “repetition and useless protraction of speech (or anything else)”. In fact, this was the first use to which the *mawwāl* was put by the poets discussed in the present study. This is a popular meaning, usually with negative connotations, so much so that the expression “he repeated the same *mawwāl*” is often used when a listener wants to express their boredom with the speaker’s vacuous, prolonged, and repetitive utterances. Thus, in Qabbāni’s poem “Eruption”, which appeared in his collection *The Dark Girl Said to Me*, he expresses his indomitable desire to be with his distant beloved, although he realizes that this is an impossible dream since the distance between them is one of “long boundaries [...] like the echo of *mawwāls* between the hills”.¹⁹

Colloquial Citation

¹⁵ ‘A. al-Bayāti, *Dīwān ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayāti* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Awda, 1972) vol. 1, p. 22.

¹⁶ For more examples of the same type and sense, see: Qabbāni, *ibid.*, pp. 95, 300; al-Bayāti, *ibid.*, p. 375; A. Dunqul, *al-A‘māl al-Shi‘riyya* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūli, 1995), p. 17.

¹⁷ See: T. Zayyād, *Dīwān Tawfīq Zayyād* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Awda, 1996), p. 297; al-Sayyāb, *ibid.*, p. 406, where *zaghrūda* is alluded to in the same sense. *Al-Mējana* is employed with the same sense in: Qabbāni, *ibid.*, pp. 35, 41, 96, 272.

¹⁸ On *al-zaghrūda*, see: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha‘biyya...*, pp. 154-6; Khoury, *al-Fulklōr...*, pp. 105-106. On *al-mējana*, see: *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114; ‘Akkāri, p. 118; Ya‘qūb, *al-Aghānī...*, pp. 53-57.

¹⁹ Qabbāni, *ibid.*, p. 32.

A general characteristic of folksongs is their traditional Arabic meter. As a result, it is not very difficult to integrate them linguistically and structurally into canonical poetry, especially if the poet chooses an appropriate meter for his own poem that is compatible with that of the folksong. The main obstacle a poet must surmount is the language since some poets refuse to “inject” their Standard Arabic verses with colloquial phrases. Instead, they translate the colloquial into Standard Arabic or choose songs written in Middle Arabic. Some poets, however, do succeed in overcoming this obstacle and produce poetry in which the two languages function together and enable the spirit of the folksong to affect the reader’s mind. The citations from folksongs in their original language can be done in several ways. A poet may somehow separate the song from his poetic text or integrate it entirely without any external signs. In addition, the poet may either manipulate the folksong in some way for artistic reasons of his own or leave its original text as-is.

Sa‘di Yūsuf is a poet who did not hesitate to use the colloquial language in his verses from the very beginning. In the following example, he makes use of an expression borrowed verbatim from an Iraqi folksong. The example is taken from his poem “Wanted”, which appeared in his collection *51 Poems* (1959):

The damp morning was washing the city
 The face of the streets with fog
 And lights a sad song
 With the lips of peasants whom the city’s shops chase away:
 “*Basra, don’t cry*”
 Full of ill will²⁰

This poem is in the *kāmil* meter (*mutafā‘ilun/mutafā‘ilun*), and the borrowed expression fits into it by way of exploiting a permitted modification at the end of the second hemistich (*mutfā*). However, a closer look at the sixth line shows that the meter there is defective because the poet left the colloquial word “*tabjīn*” (“cry”) unchanged, enabling the reader to read the expression as a whole, vocalized metrically together with the following line. In this way, the meter is preserved. Another possibility is to read it unvocalized, thus preserving its original sound in the colloquial:

bi-shifāhi fal / lāḥīna taṭ / ruduhum ḥawā / nī ul-madīna
 ٤٤-٤ - / - - ٤- / ٤٤-٤ - / - - ٤ - -
 “*yā baṣra lā / tibjīna*”
 - - ٤ - / - - ٤
tam / la`uhaḍ ḍaghīna

²⁰ S. Yūsuf, *al-A‘māl al-Shi‘riyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Madā lil-Thaqāfa wal-Nashr, 1995) vol. 1, p. 546.

The poet's use of the colloquial expression plays a significant role in conveying how the peasants describe their sad state through the song, some of which is quoted here. Certainly, there can be no better way than such a folksong to give direct, sincere expression to their pain and sadness. Using the song's original structure gives concrete form to the common person's pain and enables the reader to feel the tragic sadness expressed by the poet.

Standard Arabic Citation

Translating a folksong into Standard Arabic is, of course, not as simple as just putting it into the poem as is. A poet who wants to use a Standard Arabic version of a folksong must make a great effort to find the proper Standard Arabic expression while maintaining the spirit of the original song and the meanings evoked by its colloquial words. A translated version may well turn out to involve a change in meter, compelling the poet to try again and search for a more suitable alternative whose rhythm and allusions are closer to those of the original. This is indeed a challenging task, and poets often fail to find a perfect solution. Many poets find that they must sacrifice some aspects of the original text in order to turn it into Standard Arabic; some insert or delete words in order to make the phrase in the folksong fit into their poem's meter, while others give up the original folksong's spontaneity as the price of a precise translation into Standard Arabic.

In his poem "An elegy for Jaykūr" in his collection *Rain Hymn*, al-Sayyāb transmits a whole wedding folksong from vernacular to standard Arabic. However, he separates his poetic text from the folksong structurally and also keeps their meters separate:

Chorus:

Shaykh in the name of God ... Trallallā

He has grown old, tralla trakka trār ... and did not show up

Trallal... the holiday trallallā

Trallallā. "Ḥammāda" has married

trill [women] tralla trallallā

The dress from Rīz ... trallallā

And the variegation was made in Baghdad

It is the wind, oh Jaykūr, fill the wind with laughter or rose fragments

Silence frowns where your songs used to be, and where fragrance was the stink of pus²¹

²¹ Ibid., pp. 406-407. (In the footnotes on the first page, the poet declares that he is inspired by folksongs, of which he quotes some verses).

Note that the poet here has tried to separate the poetic context from the cited song by putting the latter in the chorus, shortening the lines of the song, and putting the song in a different meter than the rest of the poem. The phrases “tralla”, “trallalā”, and so on serve to mark the song’s rhythm and enable the poet to preserve the various versions of the *mutadārak* meter by playing with their forms and location in the verse. In using these phrases, the poet remains within the framework of folksong since, in folk music, there are numerous “melodies presented by way of words whose meaning is irrelevant”.²² The poet has preserved the Standard Arabic morphology of his words and yet managed also to leave intact the song’s popular fragrance through the use of the rhythmic sounds mentioned above and by retaining most of the folksong’s words in their original colloquial forms, which do not differ significantly from their Standard Arabic counterparts (*shaykh ism Allāh*, *‘arras*, *zaghradna*, etc.).

Imitation by Analogy

An appeal to well-known folk motifs usually leads to a genuine representation of folk concepts, an imitation of the gentleness and clarity of the colloquial language, and occasionally even to the use of actual colloquial phrases. An example of this type is provided by al-Sayyāb’s poem “Wafīqa’s Window” from his collection of poems *The Sunken Temple*. There he put a line from a folksong in the mouth of one of the characters: “We have become old, oh wind, leave us alone”.²³ The poem as a whole is written in the fast-paced *mutadārak* meter, in which it is permitted to turn two open syllables into a closed one; this fits with the structure of the spoken language, in which the ends of words are often vowelless. The poet was thus able to write in a language that did not differ significantly from everyday speech and to use some popular expressions to evoke the spirit of folksongs, many of which are in the *mutadārak* meter, in particular in the second foot, where both syllables end in a consonant. Anyone who reads the poem can feel the smooth flow of the text and its elegant rhythm, qualities which make it suitable for singing; furthermore, the song-like expressions which the poet puts in the character’s mouth deal with an important motif in folksongs, old age. Suppose we scrutinize this part of the poem more closely. In this case, we see that it consists of popular phrases, or at least phrases which are common in folk culture: “We have become old”, addressing forces of nature (“oh wind”), and the verb *khallāni* (“leave us alone”), which is much more common in the colloquial language than in Standard Arabic.²⁴

This kind of usage, in which the spirit of a folksong is imparted to the poem as a whole, is even more evident in one of al-Sayyāb’s other poems. This particular poem has not, in my opinion, received the critical attention it deserves despite its artistic importance, the diverse techniques employed in it, and the evidence it provides for the poet’s unique poetic abilities. The poem in question is “Wedding in the Village” (in the collection *Rain Hymn*), in which the poet presents images of a popular wedding, described in language that is between Spoken and Standard Arabic. He formulates popular ideas in canonical form and also uses some folksongs. Wedding songs, it is well-known, are the most common type of folksong among Arabs, since

²² Mursi, p. 141.

²³ Al-Sayyāb, *ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁴ For more similar examples, see: Al-Sayyāb, *ibid.*, p. 382 (the phrase “Oh God we’re thirst get us rain/quench the thirsty people quench the trees”); al-Bayāti, *ibid.*, p. 320 (the phrase “Our sweethearts moved away and left us with the tears”).

weddings are the most significant celebrations in Arab culture, which can last for many days. These celebrations consist of stages, each of which has rituals and songs of its own. Studies have shown that these rituals and songs are closely associated with ancient legends, superstitions, and beliefs, mainly having to do with fertility.²⁵ No popular wedding is without folksongs which mark the transition of the bride and the groom from one stage to another and provide some typical descriptions and pieces of advice derived from popular experience, thus constituting a kind of guide to the young couple as they enter this new stage in their lives. Al-Sayyāb was aware of this when he decided to entitle his poem “Wedding in the Village”.

The poem used this depiction of a popular wedding in order to shed light on the miserable social conditions in Iraq. The poet describes a village in which the rich live a life of wanton affluence at the expense of the poor. The rich man spends his money on gold for his bride, while poor people do not have enough food to eat. The bride in the poem, whose name is *Nawār*, appears to be a peasant girl, while her much older groom is a wealthy townsman. She sold herself to this “outsider” for his money, a fact that earns her the poet’s admonishment:

The hand-drums sounded their beating since before sunset (1)

Fell like fruit [...]

It is the wedding night after the wait

An old love has died, and the day has died

Like the wind blowing out candles (5)

Candles ... candles

Like a field of wheat in the evening

From the hollows of virgins which lap up the air

When they dance around the bride

Singing: Nuwār, enjoy oh Nuwār (10)

Sweet are you like the dew, oh bride”. [...]

The countryside became desolate when Nuwār passed

Of loves, oh bearers of jars

Go and ask her: “Nuwār

Will you give yourself to the foreign newcomer? (15)

To someone you hardly know?

²⁵ For the various stages of a Palestinian wedding and the celebrations and activities in each stage, see: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha‘biyya...*, pp. 78-104; cf.: M. al-Bakr, *al-‘Urs al-Sha‘bi* (Beirut: Bīsān lil-Nashr wal-Tawzī‘ wal-I‘lām, 1995).

Oh, daughter of the countryside, you didn't treat him fairly! [...]"

The trills of joy echoes from every home:

The palace lit his forty lights

So follow me to her with those who go (20)

Let me sing before the groom

And dance with my shadow like an imprisoned monkey [...]

Our love was a disgraceful delusion, for hearts

And loves are a dedication to the rich!

There is no blame... and if we had not been fools

We would not have been content with this, we the people²⁶

Here the poet plays a wretched lover whose poverty has foiled his love and made his beloved prefer to marry a rich man instead of him. Therefore, the wedding songs, which usually express joy, turn into sad songs, which the poet uses to lament his old love and a broken heart. Folksongs, popular sayings, and features of popular weddings are evoked in the text in the service of this idea. Thus we see the poet in lines 1-6 speaking about the death of his old love, accompanied by the sound of the hand drums, as if these announce the funeral of his heart and his love. In the same lines, he also evokes candles being extinguished. These are also a characteristic of Arab weddings, but here they express a love lost forever. The mention of the virgins' song in lines 10-11 expresses his grief at losing his beautiful sweetheart. The latter song's rhythm and structure are similar to the trills uttered by women at all stages of a wedding. It is their way of speaking directly to the groom, the bride, or one of her relatives and advising, praising, or blessing them.²⁷ In the poem, al-Sayyāb does a good imitation of the women's trills and manages to give his words a popular hue by repeating the bride's name, Nuwār, twice in the first line and then using well-known popular images of a bride such as "sweet like dew". His choice of words, too, make for a text that can be read as either colloquial or Standard Arabic ("enjoy", "sweet", "dew", "oh bride"). He also plays with the syntax, as when placing the address after the addressee, in contrast to the usual rule in Standard Arabic ("Sweet are you like the dew, oh bride", instead of the more expected "Oh bride, you are sweet like the dew"), but in keeping with the verse structure of many folksongs. The poet also exploits one of the most important motifs in folksongs – marriage with a townsman or an outsider – which allows him to express his disappointment with how she has treated him and her unfortunate choice, made in violation of tradition. Folksongs, especially marriage songs, express disapproval of girls who agree to marry an outsider. They consider such an act degrading for the girl's family and warn of the sad consequences of such a step, since an outsider will never cherish his bride

²⁶ Al-Sayyāb, *ibid.*, pp. 344-348.

²⁷ See: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha'biyya...*, pp. 154-6.

like a member of the family would, especially her cousin.²⁸ This motif is apparent in lines 14-17, where the poet asks the women to go to Nuwār and remind her that her relative has more right to her than a stranger. The popular hue of these lines can be seen in how he describes the women as “bearers of jars”. Jars and other commonly used vessels are closely associated with the lives of ordinary people and are frequently mentioned in Arab folksongs. In short, the spirit of folksongs permeates this poem; the canonical phrases used by the poet are given a form that is so close to that of popular expression that an uninformed reader would not know their origin. When the poet turns to the bearers of jars, he uses a commonly encountered style in folksongs typically directed toward a particular class of people, who he calls on to intercede with the bride, the “queen of this celebration”, on his behalf. His call constitutes an evocation of an important motif in folk literature: do not marry an outsider. Al-Sayyāb uses this popular theme, together with other popular symbols and typical expressions, and channels them in a way that turns a communal celebration into deep individual grief. The closing lines (especially lines 16-20) provide yet another example, where the poet again evokes the women’s trills, which he uses to express the last part of the wedding celebration, which is also the last part of his heart’s funeral: the bride’s entrance into her groom’s “palace”. Here, too, we see al-Sayyāb’s use of the spirit of popular folksongs formulated in canonical style, through the mention of the number “forty”, a sacred number symbolizing plenty that appears in many popular beliefs and rituals. Another popular-style expression al-Sayyāb uses is: *And follow me to it with those who go / Let me sing before the groom*. Canonical and folk elements are blended here completely, and the folk celebration mingles perfectly with the poet’s personal grief. The reader follows the course of this “sad joy” in the poem from beginning to end and perceives the increasing grief with every new stage of the celebration. The songs and other folkloristic elements constitute a clear mirror that provides a natural and accurate reflection of the poet’s mental state. In this way, he succeeds in turning a popular joyous occasion with which the reader can identify into the personal anguish of a solitary poet alone with his pain. The poet uses his grief as a starting point from which to express the pain of poverty and deprivation suffered by so many people like him. His sharp protest is especially evident at the end of the poem (lines 23-26), where his pain is turned into the pain of the entire social class.

Stylistic Imitation

Stylistic imitation is the most commonly encountered technique for the use of folksongs in modern Arabic poetry, except for allusion. The reason for this lies in the fact that folksongs are very rich in forms and artistic styles, of whose value Arab poets are quite aware. Therefore they use them for refreshing their style and for introducing variety into their writing. A poet may be influenced by the style of a folksong, its rhyme scheme, or the general structure of some songs. This way, he can enrich his poetry, expand the number of forms he uses, and employ a greater variety of means of expression. Folksongs are better known than canonical poetry; people are therefore used to the way they are constructed, relish their styles, and have internalized their expressions and forms, which have become their distinctive features. When

²⁸ See: *ibid.*, pp. 186-188; cf.: Sarḥān, pp. 11-12, 279-282; T. Kan‘ān, “Qawānīn Ghayr Maktūba Tataḥakkam bi-Makānat al-Mar’a al-Falastīniyya”, *Majallat al-Turāth wal-Mujtama‘* 2, p. 36; ‘A. ‘Awaḍ, *Ta’bīrāt al-Fuḥlūr al-Falastīni* (Damascus: Dār Kan‘ān lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 1993), pp. 92-93.

a poet imitates the structure or form of a folksong, he builds a bridge that connects the text and the reader, or rather, reaches out to the reader by announcing his desire to create a bond with the reader. One of the most important stylistic elements used in folksongs is detailed superficial descriptions, especially of feminine charms. Some folksongs describe the female body quite graphically and describe her features using the most magnificent images and exaggerating her beauty. Each verse of such a song may be devoted to a single bodily feature, depicted in metaphors to which the popular imagination has become accustomed. An excellent example of such a song is “A Syrian girl from Damascus”. This song is very popular among Palestinians; it describes a girl’s body in great detail, from head to toe. Here are some of the lines:

Her hair is like a camel-driver’s rope/ which I twist between my hands

Her lips are as delicate as a cup/ a bit more delicate than china

Her breasts are like pomegranates/ which crack in my hands.²⁹

Similar songs can be found in other parts of the Arab world. Here is an example from Egypt:

Come to me/ so come to me

Your eyes are the eyes of gazelles/ but a bit more beautiful

Come to me

Your hair is the ropes of a camel driver/ but a bit more beautiful

Come to me

Your chin is Solomon’s ring/ but a bit more beautiful³⁰

‘Abd al-Ṣabūr imitates the style of this type of folksong in his “Love Song”, which appeared in his collection *The People in My Town*. Here is how he describes his sweetheart’s charms:

My darling’s face is a tent of light

My darling’s hair is a wheat field

My darling’s cheeks are two halves of a split pomegranate

My darling’s neck is a marble quarry

My darling’s breasts are twin fluffy birds [...]³¹

The poet repeats some of these depictions in other parts of the poem; this style thus permeates it. Even the poem’s title is such that the reader knows more or less what to expect even before he begins reading. It tells the reader that the text is, in reality, that of a “song”, and that some song-like elements are to be expected. The title tells us that when the poet wrote this poem, he

²⁹ See the rest of the verses of this song in: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha‘biyya...*, pp. 349-354.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

³¹ Ṣ. ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr, *Dīwān Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Awda, 1972) vol. 1, p. 67.

had a certain folksong in mind, whose style he tried to imitate in order to give the poem a song-like character. On the other hand, this title, the poem's style, and the depictions and expressions of love it contains are reminiscent of the biblical Song of Songs, which also resounds with descriptions of a sweetheart's external charms, as well as the author's feelings of love and passion and his desire to be near her.³²

In Qabbāni's poem "September's Return", in his poetry collection *Poems*, folksongs play an even more significant role at the stylistic level. In this poem, the poet recalls the bygone days he passed in his homeland with other youths, whiling his time away dancing and with amorous adventures. He gives the impression that he yearns for those days and hopes that they will return when September comes. At the same time, he is constantly beset with longing for his homeland Syria and expresses his pride in being a Syrian. The poem is divided into eleven four-line stanzas, all in the same meter (*al-basīṭ*) but differing in theme and rhyme. In several stanzas, the poet alludes to specifically Syrian folksongs and popular customs, thus evoking in the reader the feeling that the poem was written out of the author's love for his country, which made him mention some of its unique features and led him to formulate his verses so as to convey a kind of popular atmosphere. Here are some of the poem's stanzas:

No strap and no belt

With perfumed laughter

The moons have waned

In the homeland of the *dabka*

Fetch our bottles

From the darkness of the rack

Distilled by our hands

In our summer vineyard

Neither *ah* nor *mawwāl*

Embellish the village

Color eternity

With the glory of Syria³³

³² On the impact of folksongs on this poem, see: M. al-Nuwayhi, *Qaḍāya al-Shi'r al-Jadīd* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1971), pp. 104-5.

³³ Qabbāni, *ibid.*, pp. 274-5.

Mawwāls, *‘atābas*, *mējanas*, and many other genres of folk music constitute types, but not an integral musical poem with a single motif and structure. In contrast, many women’s songs, especially those sung at celebrations, are structurally and formally complete poems.³⁴ In the present case, the poet exploited this fact to turn his poem into a collection of independent *mawwāls*, each of which constitutes a poetic unit on its own, unconnected to the other units, even though they all share the common theme of patriotic feeling and the poet’s emotional state. Thus, Qabbāni’s poem is fragmented into song units similar in meter, style, and purpose but differ in rhyme, structure, and theme. It is not a perfect imitation of a *mawwāl*; it keeps to the structure, but the meter differs somewhat in that the poem is in the *basīṭ* meter. It also has the four-line structure commonly encountered in *mawwāls* and other folksongs.³⁵ The poet took the liberty of changing the rhyme scheme inside each stanza (*abba* in some, *abab* in others). The latter rhyme scheme is similar to what Iḥsān Hindi has called the “al-mawwāl al-bahī/brilliant mawwāl”,³⁶ although this requires that the first and third line end in a perfect rhyme, as well as the second and the fourth. Another aspect of this poem that is worth pointing out is the simplicity of its phrases and the care with which aspects of popular culture were chosen (oil, a match, a lump of coal, the village square, a belt, dabka, a bottle, *mawwāls*, and more), in addition to the frank expression of emotions, which is also consistent with the poem’s general popular atmosphere.

Complete Standard Arabic Imitation

Folk singing plays a significant role in popular rituals; it accompanies the individual from childhood to adulthood, in strict conformity with every transition from one stage of development to another. This makes it possible to chronologically classify folksongs associated with specific occasions according to the person’s age or the particular life stage that the song depicts. Thus, there are birth songs, childhood songs, youth songs, marriage songs, pregnancy songs, and mourning songs. Therefore, the various types of folksong can be deemed to record a person’s biography and provide a concise natural and reliable digest of his biological, mental, and social development. The reason for this is that folksongs are intimately connected to a person’s existence and memory, so much so that they can be regarded as one of the elements that make up a personality. Arab folk music is full of this type of song that documents the evolution of the individual. An Arab poet will spontaneously feel an affinity for this kind of song, which has been imprinted on his memory and constitutes an integral part of his identity and culture. Such a spontaneous connection can be seen in several poems that deal with an individual’s developmental chronology or a well-known popular theme. Whenever a poet automatically follows in the echoes of the footsteps of such a theme, if we may be permitted to say so, it leads him to the folk literature imprinted in his memory, and it calls on him to exploit its spontaneity, honesty, and nobility in order to draw the reader to his very first roots. This

³⁴ See: N. Libbis, *al-Aghāni al-Fulklōriyya al-Nisā’iyya li-Munāsabat al-Khuṭba wal-Zawāj* (Jerusalem: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Arabiyya al-Ḥadītha, 1989), p. 13; cf.: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha‘biyya...*, p. 154; J. Rosenhouse, “A Comparative Study of Women’s Wedding Songs in Colloquial Arabic”, *Estudios de Dialectologia Norteafricana y Andalusí* (Zaragoza) 5 (2000-2001), p. 33.

³⁵ ‘A. al-Maghribi, *al-Muqataṭaf min Azāhir al-Ṭuraf* (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1983), pp. 232-3; Sh. Mājid, *al-Adab al-Sha‘bi al-‘Irāqī* (London: Dār Kūfān, 1995), p. 29.

³⁶ See: Hindi, p. 69; Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Sha‘biyya...*, p. 131.

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kind of influence can be seen in a poem by al-Bayyāti entitled “Lullaby”, which appeared in his poetry collection *Angels and Devils*. The poet apparently tried to turn this poem into a lullaby in which he addresses a baby and tells it to fall asleep:

The eyes of the star have fallen asleep/ and night has paled

Sleep, my dear, sleep/ become submerged in shade

The scent and dew

The jinnie of dreams/ has returned from the forest

Bearing to those who sleep/ sweets and a flute

The jinnie of the forest

Your friend the nightingale/ fell asleep on my longing

Why then do you yall/ when you have dreams here?

Our lives are delusions

Your father in the stream bed/ is wrestling with a sea monster

His rusty dagger/ is spattered with mud

Your father and the sea monster

The wind in the branch/ toys in sorrow

This scent is from me/ and you are a flower to me

There is a sigh on my mouth

The eyes of the star have fallen asleep ...³⁷

A reading of the poem clarifies that the poet adopted the spirit, style, and modes of expression used in lullabies. His success in giving the poem its folkloristic character³⁸ lies in the following factors:

³⁷ Al-Bayyāti, *ibid.*, pp. 130-1.

³⁸ On lullabies in general and Palestinian lullabies in particular and some examples, see: N. Libbis, *Yā Sitti w-yā Sitti- Al-Umūma wal-Ṭufūla fī al-Fulklūr al-Falasṭīni* (Haifa: al-Wādi lil-Ṭībā‘a wal-Nashr, 2002); Sarhān, vol. 1, pp. 48-52; A. Abū Sa‘d, *Aghāni Tarqīṣ al-Aṭfāl ‘Inda al-‘Arab* (Beirut:

(A) *Correlation in purpose*: the purpose of a lullaby is to put a baby to sleep, using several methods, which we shall discuss below. The purpose of this poem is the same, as can be discerned from its beginning, its ending, and, indeed, its title.

(B) *Simple language*: the poet chose popular phrases or simple phrases that are identical in colloquial and Standard Arabic (star, shade, forest, sweets, flute, etc.). The poem's language is thus quite similar to that of children's literature, which, in turn, is not very different from the language of speech.

(C) *An imaginary world*: children tend to create imaginary worlds in their own minds and to interpret the events around them in a dream-like, unrealistic way. Therefore, they often make up fictional persons or events out of things they may have heard or seen. The poet, in this case, has instilled an imaginary atmosphere on the poem, based on elements that commonly appear in the imaginary world of children, such as a jinnie, a forest, a nightingale, a sea monster, and others.

(D) *Structure*: Lullabies are usually made up of stanzas of equal length, equal rhythm, unequal rhyme and form, and often have a recurring refrain. The present poem has the same structural characteristics, with an *ababb* rhyme pattern.

E. *Meter*: the poem's meter is *basīf*, a meter frequently encountered in lullabies and mourning songs.³⁹ This meter appears to have a notable effect on children and helps them sleep.

The general features of folk music have imposed their structure, style, and contents on the poem, so that we may pose the fundamental question of whether this text is canonical or popular. In all fairness, the boundaries between the two systems, canonical and popular, have almost disappeared in this case. Therefore this type of text cannot, in truth, be explicitly assigned to one of them. Rather, they are better viewed as literary poetic texts instead of as a specific type of literature.⁴⁰ In this way, poets demonstrate that literature is not bound by other considerations and cannot be confined within narrow limits. By its very nature, literature always strives to breach boundaries, break down barriers, and do something new. Folksongs having to do with children have thus had a profound impact on al-Bayāti's poem, affecting its style and content and providing him with unique ways of expression. This enabled him to preserve the rules of meter, rhyme, imagery, and allusion, which canonical poetry is expected to follow, while at the same time giving the text a popular tint that puts it within reach of readers from every walk of life.⁴¹

Dār al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn) (a book which specializes in ancient Arabic lullabies); ʿA. al-Khalīlī, *Aghāni al-Atfāl fi Falasṭīn* (Jerusalem: Manshūrāt Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 1978).

³⁹ See: Khoury, *al-Ughniya al-Shaʿbiyya...*, p. 361 (the note).

⁴⁰ A system as here understood is a "network of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables" (I. Even-Zohar, "The Literary System", *Poetics Today* 11:1, p. 27); about literary polysystem, definition, branches and characteristics of every branch, see: J. Khoury, "Polysystems: A Theoretical Inquiry into Some General Concepts", *JAL* 37.1, pp. 109-144.

⁴¹ Sharaf asserts that folksongs and folktales are primary sources for al-Bayāti (ʿA. Sharaf, *al-Ruʿya al-Ibdāʿiyya fi Shiʿr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayāti* [Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1991], p. 97; cf.: Gh. Shukrī, *Shiʿrunā al-Ḥadīth, Ilā ayn?* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1968), p. 98; M. Jaḥā, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi al-*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the folksong played a critical role in the evolution of modern Arabic poetry from an early stage. Qabbāni, al-Sayyāb, al-Bayāti, and other poets, who later became the pioneers of the comprehensive revolution in poetry, realized that the popular literature and the folksongs could be the basis of the desired modernity, which became a trend at the end of the forties. On the one hand, folksongs are deeply rooted in the culture of their societies, and their popularity enables them to attract readers; on the other hand, folksongs contain many different forms, various techniques and styles, and unfamiliar metaphors that can renew and refresh their styles and forms. Al-Sayyāb, Qabbāni, al-Bayāti, and other poets from an early stage imitated the style of the folksongs and produced several hybrid texts that are a combination of both their private content and the popular style, form, and general atmosphere. This phenomenon rises and reaches more advanced levels in the second half of the 20th century, an issue that the author currently studies.

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