



The Psychological Dimensions in Marginal Poetry during the Fourth Century AH: An Applied Analytical Study (Ibn Sukkara and Ibn al-Hajjaj as Models)

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Abstract ;

This research seeks to examine marginal poetry in the fourth century AH from a psychological perspective that moves beyond the dominant moral judgments that have reduced Ibn al-Hajjaj's absurdity and Ibn Sukra's libertinism to merely manifestations of artistic decline. The study is founded on the premise that explicit language and colloquial imagery do not necessarily signify a deterioration of aesthetic standards; rather, they operate as mechanisms of psychological release and symbolic compensation within a pressured Buyid reality marked by crisis, deprivation, and alienation. The research adopts a psychological approach supported by artistic analysis, investigating the poetry of the two poets through the concepts of repression, compensation, catharsis, regression, and defense mechanisms, while incorporating the theoretical frameworks of parody and carnival. The study demonstrates that absurdity in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry functions as a defensive mechanism that challenges the taboos of the elite and reconstructs the fragmented self through a process of reversed sublimation; that Ibn Sukra's depictions of poverty and coldness represent direct expressions of the deprivation complex and bodily anxiety; and that the shared psychological distress experienced by both poets is manifested through their instinctive vocabulary and caricatured imagery.

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1. Introduction

The fourth century AH witnessed, under Buyid domination of Baghdad, a profound restructuring of the political and cultural landscape. The Abbasid Caliphate was reduced to a symbolic institution deprived of substantive authority, while the mechanisms of governance and decision-making were transferred to Daylamite princes distinguished by factional conflicts and political rivalry. Consequently, the public sphere became a field of competition for prestige, influence, and patronage. Within this context of declining central authority, the conditions of poetic production underwent fundamental transformations; the poet was no longer the representative voice of a victorious collective, as had characterized the early periods of the state. Instead, he became an unsettled individual positioned between the pursuit of livelihood through the patronage of influential figures and a painful awareness of his marginal status within a system that privileged conformity and allegiance over creative merit. (Metz, 1967, p. 120)

This condition became further complicated by the fact that the structure of literary patronage during the Buyid period directly connected the poet's prospects to the approval of ministers and princes. The literary experiences of both poets developed within the sphere of the Buyid court and its surrounding networks; the vizier al-Muhallabi was Ibn Sukra's most

prominent patron and the primary source of his greatest generosity, whereas Ibn al-Hajjaj maintained relations with al-Muhallabi, Adud al-Dawla, Ibn al-'Amid, and al-Sahib ibn 'Abbad (al-Tha'alibi, 1983). Within this symbolic economy, where poetic production was exchanged for material recompense, the relationship between poet and patron evolved into a humiliating dependency that intensified the creator's awareness of the precariousness of his position and the vulnerability of his livelihood to the unpredictable will of those in authority. This dynamic generated enduring psychological tension between the obligation to praise and accommodate others for the sake of survival and the repressed desire to resist those who controlled the conditions of his existence. Within this framework, absurdity and libertinism function as expressive outlets through which the poet redirects his suppressed aggression toward the very patronage system that simultaneously constrains and maintains him.

Within this psychosocial context, a distinctive poetic phenomenon emerges that literary history has long approached as a neglected or marginalized subject: the phenomenon of marginal poetry, most prominently represented by the experiences of Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Nili al-Baghdadi (d. 391 AH) and Ibn Sukkaraal-Hashimi (d. 385 AH). Classical criticism regarded these two poets as occupying a prominent position within their artistic

domain, placing them in a rank comparable to Jarir and al-Farazdaq. However, subsequent moral evaluations relegated them to the status of controversial figures, to the extent that al-Dhahabi characterized Ibn al-Hajjaj as the poet of his age, the fool of literature, and the prince of obscenity (al-Ghanimi, 2018). From this point emerges the central research question: Does absurdity and libertinism in the poetry of these two poets genuinely represent a decline in aesthetic sensibility and a deterioration of artistic value, as established within inherited critical consciousness, or do they instead constitute meaningful psychological manifestations and mechanisms of catharsis through which the distressed self-releases the accumulated weight of repression and deprivation?

The significance of this study lies precisely in this shift of interpretive perspective. Prevailing approaches have largely confined the phenomenon within the framework of moral categorization or have limited their investigations to documenting expressions of complaint and satire through thematic analyses that examine textual content without penetrating the psychological structures that produce it. This limitation is evident in studies that have focused primarily on identifying the themes of complaint in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry, such as poverty, informers, time, and old age (al-Silawi and Sha'ban, 2023). Despite the importance of this descriptive

approach, it remains confined to the manifest level of the text, as it examines what the poet complains about without addressing the deeper question of why such complaints are articulated through absurdity rather than through the conventional mode of dignified lamentation. This question consequently redirects analysis from the external thematic surface toward the underlying psychological mechanisms that shape poetic expression.

Accordingly, this research adopts the psychological approach as an interpretive framework, reinforced by the analytical artistic method as a procedural instrument for the deconstruction of poetic texts. It examines the poetry of the two poets through psychoanalytic concepts, including repression, compensation, catharsis, regression, and defense mechanisms, while employing the concepts of parody and carnival to interpret the logic of inversion and destruction that governs the discourse of absurdity. The temporal scope of the study is defined as the second half of the fourth century AH in Buyid Baghdad, the historical and cultural context in which the two poets lived and produced the majority of their poetic works.

Since the psychological approach may become susceptible to arbitrary projection when detached from its methodological instruments, this study seeks to establish its conceptual framework with precise

definitions before engaging with the poetic texts. Accordingly, it adopts the psychoanalytic framework as an interconnected system of concepts rather than as a collection of isolated theoretical terms. Repression, in its original Freudian formulation, refers to the psychological mechanism through which the psychic apparatus excludes socially unacceptable desires and impulses from conscious awareness and relegates them to the unconscious. These repressed elements do not vanish; rather, they remain active beneath the surface, exerting continuous pressure for expression and eventually resurfacing through disguised forms, a process that psychoanalysis identifies as the return of the repressed. From this theoretical foundation emerge the defense mechanisms conceptualized by Anna Freud as unconscious strategies through which the ego preserves its psychological equilibrium when confronted with anxiety and internal conflict (A. Freud, 1936). Among these mechanisms are compensation, through which the individual symbolically overcomes an actual deficiency by achieving alternative forms of accomplishment, and regression, through which the individual retreats to an earlier and psychologically safer stage when confronted with overwhelming pressures in the present.

Closely associated with this framework is the concept of catharsis, which refers to the release of accumulated emotional tension

through artistic expression, thereby restoring a measure of psychological equilibrium. Within this perspective, the satirical text becomes a space of psychological purification rather than merely a form of amusement or entertainment. Alongside these strictly psychological concepts, the study incorporates two analytical tools that strengthen the artistic dimension of the approach: parody, understood as a mode of satirical imitation that subverts elevated texts from within, and the carnivalesque vision, which Bakhtin demonstrated as a suspension of official hierarchies, a celebration of the lower bodily sphere, and an outlet for the collective repressed within a temporary ritualized space (Bakhtin, 1965). Through this integration of psychological and artistic approaches, the analysis avoids reducing the interpretation either to a purely psychological reading that disregards the textual structure or to a superficial stylistic examination that overlooks the generative forces underlying poetic expression. Instead, it seeks to combine both levels within a unified interpretive framework that traces form back to its motivating impulses and expression back to its underlying psychological complexes.

Accordingly, this study is structured into three interconnected sections: the first examines the trauma of the system and the psychological defense mechanisms in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry; the second investigates

the psychology of deprivation and bodily anxiety in Ibn Sukra's poetry; and the third analyzes the artistic formation from a psychological perspective in the poetry of both poets. The conclusion subsequently presents the principal findings of the study in an organized manner.

2. The Trauma of the System and Psychological Defense Mechanisms: The Psychology of Rebellion in Ibn al-Hajjaj

2.1. Absurdity as a Defensive Mechanism Rather than a Deviation in Taste

Understanding the discourse of absurdity in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry remains unattainable as long as the analysis is restricted to the binary opposition between seriousness and humor inherited from classical criticism. This dichotomy presupposes that the poet deliberately selected humor as an alternative to seriousness, whereas the psychological perspective reveals a deeper dimension of compulsion that exceeds the boundaries of conscious choice. When the poet states that his poetry is an absurdity from which there is no escape (al-Ghanimi, 2018), he implicitly discloses the nature of a psychological symptom rather than merely expressing an aesthetic preference. The phrase "from which there is no escape" shifts absurdity from the realm of voluntary practice to that of an internally compelled response, rendering it closer to a form of psychological discharge than to a consciously calculated artistic technique.

From a psychological perspective, this explicit declaration can be interpreted as a defense mechanism in accordance with the theory of defense mechanisms, whereby the psychic apparatus transforms repressed anxiety into an alternative mode of expression through which it achieves relief and preserves itself from psychological disintegration (A. Freud, 1936). The aggression that the poet is unable to direct openly toward the oppressive structures of authority is displaced into a concealed form: obscene laughter. The vulgar joke, as Freud demonstrated, enables prohibited impulses to emerge under the protection of humor, fulfilling both aggressive and sexual drives within the context of comic reception (Freud, 1998, p. 45). In this sense, absurdity does not constitute the antithesis of seriousness; rather, it represents seriousness concealed beneath the guise of ridicule in order to evade both external and internal censorship.

Although the early critical testimonies condemned this approach, they simultaneously reveal its psychological significance without explicitly recognizing it. Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi's statement that Ibn al-Hajjaj distanced himself from seriousness and was unparalleled in humor, to the extent that reason found no entry into his poetry, despite the soundness of his language and the ease and fluency of his expression (al-Ghanimi, 2018), reflects a significant paradox. This judgment acknowledges the absence of intellectual

seriousness at the level of content while, at the same time, affirming the mastery of artistic craftsmanship at the level of form. It is precisely this paradox that psychoanalytic analysis seeks to identify and reinterpret: the separation between refined expression and condemned meaning does not indicate an inability to produce serious poetry; rather, it represents a deliberate strategy of unconscious concealment, whereby repressed energy is embedded within an elaborate artistic structure that facilitates its circulation and reception.

It should also be emphasized in this context that the obscene joke, beyond its individual defensive function, fulfills an equally significant collective communicative role. It invokes a third participant, the recipient, who shares with the poet the pleasure of transgressing the forbidden, thereby establishing a covert symbolic alliance based on shared violation. Through this alliance, the audience releases the same repressed emotions that find expression in the poet's discourse. Consequently, the poetry of absurdity becomes a collective outlet through which an entire society articulates what it is unable to express openly: resentment toward authority and dissatisfaction with the deterioration of values. Ibn al-Hajjaj thus emerges as a voice of the collective unconscious rather than merely an expression of personal

impulses. From this perspective, his poetic phenomenon acquires a sociological dimension that transcends individual deviation and reflects the crisis of an entire historical period, which explains the extensive circulation of his poetry and its preservation among readers despite its explicit moral condemnation.

2.2. The Destruction of the Taboo and Parody: Undermining the Prestige of the Elite

The oppositional function of absurdity becomes evident in Ibn al-Hajjaj's persistent inclination toward the violation of taboos, namely, the transgression of the social and linguistic sanctities through which the elite maintained their privileged position. Within the conventions of his period, elevated language was not merely a means of expression; rather, it functioned as a marker of social identity and a symbolic boundary distinguishing the elite from ordinary people. Accordingly, the incorporation of vulgar and bodily vocabulary into the structure of metrical and rhymed poetry represents a deliberate act of dismantling this boundary, as it lowers rhetoric from its elevated sphere and relocates it within the spaces of the marketplace, the tavern, and the latrine. In this context, the concept of parody¹ becomes an essential interpretive tool; the poet does not simply introduce an

¹**Parody:** A satirical imitation that deliberately reproduces an elevated text or an established

rhetorical pattern and then undermines it from within by replacing the sublime with the vulgar.

alternative vocabulary but rather engages in a satirical imitation of elevated discourses, overturning their meanings and reversing their functions. He employs the same structures associated with praise poetry, love poetry, and wisdom literature within a vulgar framework that strips them of their symbolic prestige and reveals their vulnerability.

Perhaps the most evident manifestation of this subversion appears in his engagement with the very models of supreme poetic authority. He deliberately targets the foremost symbol of poetic masculinity in his era, Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi, transforming him from the status of a legendary figure into a physical caricature within his verse:

“O cloud of slaps, pour down upon the nape of al-Mutanabbi,

And O his nape, come forward until you become beside me.”

(Ibn Hijjah al-Hamawi, 2006, Vol. 2, p. 366)

The poet does not merely satirize al-Mutanabbi as an individual; rather, he challenges what he embodies as a sacred center of rhetorical authority. He invokes the image of striking the back of the head, an image derived from the language of direct physical humiliation, and applies it to the highest representative of poetic excellence. Thus, al-Mutanabbi, elevated through his poetry, is transformed into an

object of bodily mockery. From a psychological perspective, this parody may be interpreted as a mechanism for releasing a dual form of aggression: aggression directed toward the authority of the established literary canon, whose standards marginalize the poet, and aggression directed toward the ideal self that the poet has been unable to achieve. He therefore retaliates against this ideal by degrading the figure who symbolizes it. In this manner, the destruction of the taboo becomes an act of psychological purification that temporarily restores a sense of power to the oppressed self, granting the poet within the textual space what he lacks in reality: the ability to diminish the elevated and humiliate the revered.

However, this logic of inversion does not remain restricted to the individual level; rather, it extends to encompass the broader social order. Ibn al-Hajjaj’s poetic universe is one in which established values undergo complete reversal: the caliph is transformed into a servant, the servant into a crowned sovereign, and all elements become susceptible to transformation into their opposites (al-Ghanimi, 2018). This comprehensive process of inversion constitutes the core of the carnivalesque vision, which temporarily suspends official hierarchies within a ritualized space and liberates the collective repressed from social restraints. The social sphere is consequently transformed into a festival in which the lower bodily sphere and its

functions are celebrated in a manner that challenges the seriousness and authority of established power structures (Bakhtin, 1998, p. 89).

Although carnival originally represents a collective phenomenon, Ibn al-Hajjaj internalizes it and converts it into an individual worldview through which he articulates his anxiety toward a Buyid system that he himself perceives as characterized by inversion and corruption. His absurdity, therefore, functions as a satirical mirror reflecting the distorted hierarchy of values within his historical reality rather than as an isolated deviation detached from its social context.

2.3. The Register of Obscenity and Its Psychological Limits

The analysis of Ibn al-Hajjaj's discourse of absurdity cannot be considered complete without directly addressing the most controversial dimension of his linguistic register: the obscene and sexually explicit vocabulary that became the primary basis upon which classical critics characterized his poetry. Al-Dhahabi described him as the "prince of obscenity," and it was stated that he became a model of absurdity, playful humor, and invective satire (al-Ghanimi, 2018). The purpose here is not to reproduce or examine this register through its explicit manifestations, as such an approach is inappropriate for rigorous academic analysis and unnecessary for the present interpretive objective. Rather, the focus is

directed toward examining its psychological function: Why does the poet persistently resort to this vocabulary of nakedness and bodily waste? What psychological energies are released through this systematic violation of the sanctity associated with the body and its functions?

The psychological approach interprets this excess through the mechanism of displacement, whereby the psychic apparatus transfers the emotional charge of anxiety from its original threatening source to a substitute object that presents fewer risks. The poet, unable to confront the actual sources of his oppression—an authoritarian structure, degrading poverty, and the relentless passage of time—redirects his aggression toward the realm of the body, the domain in which he retains symbolic control. He consequently inflicts upon bodies, at the symbolic level, what he is unable to impose upon his real oppressors. Furthermore, the exposure of the body and its lower functions operates as a forceful reminder of the shared human condition that places the lowly and the elevated upon the same existential foundation.

Obscenity dismantles social disguises and reduces all individuals to their fundamental corporeal nature. Through this process, the marginalized poet expresses his resentment toward a hierarchical system that excludes him by asserting that those above him remain subject to the same bodily

necessities and desires that govern his own existence. Thus, at its deepest level, obscenity becomes a form of retaliatory equalization enacted by the powerless against those who occupy positions of superiority, rather than merely an expression of momentary impulse.

2.4. Reverse Sublimation and the Reconstruction of the Wasted Self

Psychological analysis reaches its most significant dimension when it moves from examining the external function of absurdity to exploring its effects on the configuration of the poetic self. Ibn al-Hajjaj reveals, in an exceptional moment of self-awareness, a profound recognition of the fragmentation of his own self-image. When al-Sharif al-Radi selected the finest examples of his poetry from among the works that excluded absurdity, Ibn al-Hajjaj addressed him through verses in which he presents this selection as an act of creation and salvation:

"I was a distorted form through my foolish poetry, but he restored me to a sound creation.

I contemplated him as it became, at times, sound and at other times, distorted in its very soundness"

(Shabbar, 1988, Vol. 2, p. 118)

The vocabulary through which the poet defines his own identity carries profound psychological significance. He describes his former poetic self as a "distorted form," indicating an abnormal and deformed image existing beyond the boundaries of accepted normality, whereas he portrays al-Radi's intervention as a restoration to a state of sound creation. This opposition between distortion and soundness reveals a deep-seated inferiority complex associated with the poet's perception of his wasted self. At an internal level, he recognizes that the absurdity through which he gained renown also constitutes a humiliating stigma, and that his authentic value remains dependent upon recognition from the very elite whose authority he seeks to challenge. Thus, resistance to the system paradoxically discloses its concealed counterpart: a repressed desire for integration into that same system and for the attainment of its acknowledgment. This contradiction constitutes a fundamental feature of the psychology of marginalization, as it combines rejection of the center with an intense aspiration for acceptance by it.

In response to this fragmentation, absurdity emerges as a form of reverse sublimation,² whereby the poet redirects his repressed energy not toward an elevated object, as in the traditional Freudian conception of

²**Reverse Sublimation:** A procedural term used to refer to the transformation of repressed energy not toward a higher object, as in Freudian sublimation,

but rather toward a lower object that is employed as a tool of protest and a means of disrupting the established order.

sublimation, but toward a lower sphere that he transforms into a source of symbolic power. He appropriates the very inferiority imposed upon him and converts it into an instrument of empowerment; he exposes and devalues himself before society can perform the same act, thereby depriving it of the ability to use humiliation against him. In doing so, he transforms absurdity into a distinctive identity through which he achieves an unparalleled position. Through this process, the marginalized individual regains agency within a struggle that initially appeared predetermined by defeat. He reconstructs his damaged self by transforming his wound into a symbol and his stigma into an artistic practice admired by others, to the extent that Ibn Khallikan described him as an exceptional figure of his age, unmatched by anyone in this particular artistic approach (al-Ghanimi, 2018).

This form of reverse sublimation differs fundamentally from its conventional Freudian counterpart, a distinction that requires careful attention. In its classical formulation, sublimation involves the transformation of instinctual energy into socially valued and elevated activities, such as art, scientific inquiry, or religious devotion, thereby allowing the individual to achieve social acceptance and integration within the community. Ibn al-Hajjaj, however, follows an opposing trajectory; he directs his energy toward the very domains rejected and condemned by

society, transforming the marginalized into a source of value and the prohibited into an instrument of expression. In essence, this strategy reflects an implicit recognition that the path toward legitimate sublimation and social acknowledgment has been denied to him. The excluded self therefore constructs an alternative route through which it forcibly obtains recognition by means of provocation and shock. It compels society to acknowledge its presence through rejection when it cannot compel acknowledgment through admiration. Accordingly, absurdity becomes a dual form of protest: a protest against the system that marginalized him and a protest against the self that failed to access that system through accepted means.

The conclusion of this section is that Ibn al-Hajjaj's absurdity does not represent an isolated symptom detached from its psychological and social circumstances; rather, it constitutes a comprehensive defensive system that begins with the discharge of repressed aggression through obscene humor, advances through the subversion of elite taboos via parody and the carnivalesque reversal of values, and culminates in the reconstruction of the damaged self through reverse sublimation. If these dimensions reveal the defensive mechanisms through which the self confronts the trauma of the system through resistance and rebellion, another aspect of the same crisis emerges through vulnerability, deprivation, and complaint.

This leads to an examination of the psychology of deprivation in the experience of Ibn Sukkara al-Hashimi.

3. The Psychology of Deprivation and Bodily Anxiety: A Reading of Ibn Sukkara al-Hashimi's Poetry

3.1. The Poverty Complex and the Anxiety of Bodily Survival

The name of Ibn Sukkara al-Hashimi has remained closely associated in critical memory with that of Ibn al-Hajjaj, to the extent that the two poets have almost invariably been mentioned together. They were even compared to al-Farazdaq and Jarir, and it was stated that an age capable of producing poets of their caliber must have possessed exceptional literary vitality, with sources explicitly affirming that Ibn Sukkara was an outstanding poet, particularly in the domains of libertinism and absurdity (al-Tha'alibi, 1983). Nevertheless, this critical association between the two poets should not obscure the profound differences in their psychological structures. Their classification under the single category of libertinism has concealed a fundamental distinction in their motives and expressive orientations, a distinction that becomes apparent only through a careful psychological examination.

Whereas Ibn al-Hajjaj confronted the trauma of the system through confrontation and subversion, Ibn Sukkara al-Hashimi

embodies the opposite dimension of the same experience: the self that internalizes the crisis and transforms it into a persistent discourse of complaint concerning poverty, cold, and hunger. Most of his surviving poetic corpus has been transmitted through *Yatimat al-Dahr*, which became the principal source for his poetry following the loss of his extensive collection (al-Tha'alibi, 1983). Within this corpus, a persistent preoccupation with the body's fundamental needs emerges, an obsession so continuous that it develops into a dominant thematic structure rather than a temporary poetic concern. From a psychological perspective, this persistence reflects what may be termed the deprivation complex: a psychological fixation upon material needs that develops when the inability to attain lasting satisfaction is transformed into a permanent state of existential anxiety.

This fixation appears most clearly in his two well-known verses, in which he summarizes his needs in confronting the severity of winter:

"Winter has arrived, and I have seven needs because of it, if the rain withholds from us the fulfillment of our needs. A shelter, a purse, a brazier, and a cup of wine, after the roasted meat, a tender maiden, and clothing."

(al-Tha'alibi, 1983, Vol. 3, p. 35)

This text provides a precise representation of the structure of the poet's anxiety. The seven needs he enumerates are all organized around the principle of bodily survival: shelter that provides protection from the cold (*al-kinn* and *al-kanun*)³, money that prevents deprivation (*al-kis*), food and drink (roasted meat and wine), and physical and sexual warmth (the maiden and clothing). No indication appears here of a spiritual or moral aspiration, nor of a desire that transcends the immediate removal of hardship. This reveals a psychological regression toward the most fundamental level of human needs, where the anxiety of survival dominates all other concerns. The poet does not aspire to glory or permanence; rather, he counts the necessities that will secure his existence through a single winter night. This anxious enumeration exposes an existential vulnerability that places the body and its demands at the center of his entire worldview.

One might argue that the apparent meaning of the text derives from the language of boasting rather than complaint, since the poet claims possession of these seven necessities rather than their absence. However, this very appearance invites psychoanalytic interpretation to move beyond the manifest surface of the text. The transformation of basic survival necessities into objects of pride and self-display

represents a symbolic compensation for an underlying and persistent sense of vulnerability. An individual does not boast of possessing ordinary and essential necessities unless the threat of losing them has become a fundamental reality of existence. Therefore, the boast functions not as the opposite of anxiety but as its protective mask. It reveals an acute awareness that these seven needs remain vulnerable to disappearance whenever the rain withholds their sources, that is, whenever patronage declines and this fragile equilibrium collapses. In this sense, the verses constitute an anxious celebration of a blessing whose possessor recognizes its temporary nature rather than a confident expression of a secure and stable condition.

This regressive interpretation is further reinforced when the poet's aristocratic affiliation is examined in relation to the horizon of his poetic aspirations. It would be expected that an individual bearing Abbasid lineage would aspire toward nobility and reflect in his poetry the values of ancestral pride and inherited glory. However, Ibn Sukkara lowers the entire horizon of poetic expression from the elevated sphere of lineage-based pride to the immediate concerns of shelter, brazier, and clothing, replacing inherited prestige with bread and warmth. This descent from the elevated symbolic realm to the primary material sphere constitutes the essence of

³**Al-Kinn:** That which provides protection from the cold. **Al-Ka'ib:** The young maiden. **Al-Tila:** Wine. The poet deliberately employs the seven terms with

alliteration on the letter *kaf* to emphasize the unity of bodily need.

regression in its analytical sense. Under the pressure of deprivation, the self retreats toward the earliest psychological stage in which existence revolves around immediate satisfaction. Consequently, the expansive world of poetry contracts into a narrow sphere centered on the stomach and the skin, and the poem becomes a testimony to existential anxiety rather than an expression of collective glory. It is precisely through this contraction that the tragedy of the experience and its psychological significance are simultaneously revealed.

The distinction between this approach and previous thematic studies that have examined the complaints of Ibn Sukkara and Ibn al-Hajjaj becomes evident at this point. A study that analyzed the themes of complaint in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry provided a careful and valuable classification of these themes into categories such as poverty, time, informers, and old age (al-Silawi and Sha'ban, 2023). However, it remained confined to the level of manifest content, interpreting complaint as a direct reflection of the conditions of the period without examining the psychological structure that shaped its expression. In reality, complaint is not a transparent representation that simply reproduces external reality; rather, it is a discourse constructed by the self according to its own defensive mechanisms. The poet's preference for expressing poverty through persistent bodily imagery rather

than through philosophical reflection, along with his tendency to combine complaint with self-directed mockery, demonstrates that the text presents not merely an image of reality but an image of the self as it perceives, interprets, and psychologically processes that reality. Through this shift in perspective—from questioning what the poet complains about to examining how and why the complaint assumes this particular form rather than another—the analysis moves beyond description toward the interpretation of the underlying mechanism. This constitutes the central contribution of the present research as a qualitative extension rather than a repetition of previous approaches.

3.2. Alienation and the Fragmentation of the Hashimite Self

The analysis of Ibn Sukra's experience cannot be complete without addressing its most tragic dimension: the profound contradiction between his lineage and his actual condition. He was a Hashimite descended from the Abbasid caliphs, carrying in his identity the legacy of authority and centrality, while simultaneously experiencing a reality of poverty, dependence, and libertinism that placed him at the extreme margins of society. This fragmentation between elevated symbolic belonging and degrading lived circumstances represents the fundamental source of his sense of alienation. The poet experiences

estrangement from the social class to which he is symbolically connected through lineage, while also remaining alienated from the common people with whom he is associated through circumstance. He therefore belongs fully to neither group; instead, he remains suspended within a socially liminal position that intensifies his feelings of inferiority and unrealized potential.

From a psychological perspective, this fragmentation produces a distinctive defensive mechanism manifested in immersion in libertinism and moral transgression. Unable to reconcile the distance between what he is expected to represent according to his lineage and what he actually experiences according to his circumstances, the poet turns toward the destruction of the idealized image that causes his internal suffering. He consequently exaggerates its violation through absurdity and bodily degradation until the psychological burden of this contradiction becomes less painful. In this manner, libertinism functions as a form of self-punishment through which the poet externalizes and manages his sense of shame. He anticipates society by casting his noble lineage into degradation, thereby liberating himself from the continuous anguish produced by the contrast between ancestral grandeur and personal humiliation. Thus, Ibn Sukkara converges with Ibn al-Hajjaj at the level of the underlying psychological mechanism

despite their different motivations; both transform their narcissistic wound into a weapon directed first against the self and subsequently against others.

3.3. Wine and Libertinism: Regression as an Escape Mechanism

If deprivation and alienation directed Ibn Sukkara toward complaint and regression, the sources also depict him as deeply immersed in wine and libertinism to a degree that suggests their function as a refuge through which he sought temporary relief from the pressures of his reality. He was known for frequent drinking and for the extensive presence of wine imagery in his poetry, while his erotic imagination openly reflected the cultural atmosphere of his period (al-Tha'alibi, 1983). From a psychological perspective, this immersion should not be understood merely as a transient moral deviation; rather, it represents an escape mechanism through which the distressed self temporarily suspends its confrontation with painful reality. Wine alleviates the anxiety of survival and dissolves the contradictions that afflict the self, divided between the prestige of lineage and the humiliation of lived circumstances. Intoxication thus becomes a state of psychological release that silences the internal censor, in a manner comparable to the way carnivalesque time suspends official hierarchies and social restraints.

However, this form of escape, like all defensive mechanisms, does not resolve the underlying crisis; rather, it delays its confrontation while intensifying its consequences. It draws the self into a cycle of temporary gratification that is soon followed by an even sharper awareness of deprivation, causing the desire for escape to return with renewed intensity. In this sense, immersion in wine and libertinism reveals the same regressive dimension manifested in the enumeration of bodily needs. It constitutes a retreat toward an early mode of pleasure in which existence is reduced to the cup and the body, confirming that Ibn Sukra's psychological structure is governed by the dynamics of deprivation and its compensation, whether expressed through complaint, intoxication, or libertinism. Accordingly, the image of the marginalized self in his poetry becomes fully apparent: a self-oscillating between exposing its wound and attempting to escape from it, without achieving genuine recovery through either process.

Accordingly, it becomes evident that Ibn Sukra's expressions of poverty and cold are not merely objective representations of material circumstances; rather, they constitute a complex psychological manifestation in which the deprivation complex, anxiety surrounding bodily survival, the alienation of the fragmented Hashimite self, and the impulse toward escape through wine and libertinism converge. While these dimensions have

emerged at the level of theme and meaning, the question that now arises concerns their reflection at the level of artistic formation itself: How was this shared anxiety between the two poets translated into poetic structure? In other words, how did the unconscious shape its own language and imagery? This is the question examined in the final section.

4. Artistic Formation from a Psychological Perspective: Language and Image as Psychological Symptoms

4.1. The Instinctual Vocabulary as the Return of the Repressed

This section proceeds from the premise that the linguistic structure of the text is not merely a neutral medium through which meaning is conveyed; rather, it constitutes a psychological symptom that discloses the generative structures underlying poetic expression. The selection of vocabulary and the construction of imagery are not exclusively aesthetic choices; rather, they represent involuntary manifestations of processes occurring within the depths of the self. From this perspective, the predominance of instinctual vocabulary in the poetry of the two poets is interpreted as the return of the repressed to the surface of discourse. The bodily lexicon associated with food, drink, sexuality, and bodily waste recurs throughout their texts with a frequency that exceeds the requirements of poetic purpose and approaches a pattern of compulsive repetition. This suggests that

these semantic domains are not merely consciously chosen themes but rather constitute areas of psychological fixation to which the poet repeatedly returns under the pressure of internal impulses.

Although both poets share the prevalence of this vocabulary, its function differs significantly between them, revealing the divergence of their underlying psychological structures. In Ibn Sukra's poetry, the bodily lexicon represents the language of need and deprivation, dominated by references to food, clothing, and warmth as objects of existential anxiety. In contrast, in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry, it becomes a language of aggression and desecration, characterized by references to bodily shame and waste as instruments of attack and symbolic destruction. This distinction between the instinctuality of deprivation and the instinctuality of aggression demonstrates that identical lexical fields may emerge from fundamentally different psychological impulses. Therefore, an adequate psychological interpretation requires tracing vocabulary back to the motivating forces that generate it rather than limiting analysis to its shared external appearance. This approach moves beyond thematic studies that restrict themselves to identifying expressions without examining their divergent psychological functions.

The relationship between vocabulary and psychological structure is supported by the fact that, from a psychoanalytic

perspective, linguistic selection is not entirely governed by conscious intention; rather, it may reveal underlying impulses beyond the threshold of awareness. The semantic fields that dominate a poet's texts reflect areas of tension within the psychic apparatus, as words accumulate around central sources of anxiety with a compulsive intensity that repeatedly directs the poet toward them. Accordingly, the recurrence of the vocabulary of hunger and cold in Ibn Sukra's poetry cannot be regarded merely as a rhetorical strategy for thematic variation; rather, it represents a repetitive fixation upon an unavoidable existential concern. Likewise, the recurrence of vocabulary associated with bodily shame and waste in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry does not simply indicate an aesthetic fascination with ugliness; rather, it constitutes a repeated discharge of aggressive energy that remains unresolved. In this sense, the analysis of vocabulary, when integrated with psychological interpretation, becomes a means of identifying the symptom rather than merely compiling a linguistic inventory. It provides psychological stylistic analysis with an explanatory dimension that moves beyond description toward revealing the concealed mechanisms generating the phenomenon.

4.2. The Caricatured Image and the Mechanism of Distortion

Closely connected to instinctual vocabulary is another prominent stylistic

feature: the dominance of caricatured imagery within the poetic imagination of both poets. Their imagery does not pursue beautification or idealized representation in the manner of elevated poetry; instead, it tends toward distortion and excessive exaggeration of a single feature until the subject is transformed into a comic caricature. This visual mechanism operates through amplifying the ugliness of the satirized figure or diminishing the significance of a particular situation. It isolates one characteristic from the subject and magnifies it until it conceals all other dimensions, much like the practice of caricature, in which a specific physical feature is exaggerated in order to reduce the entire figure to a single comic defect. From a psychological perspective, this imagery may be interpreted as an extension of the same mechanism of aggression manifested in the discourse of absurdity. Through it, the poet exercises symbolic dominance over his subject, reshaping it into a humiliating representation that satisfies the desire for control and compensates for the inability to achieve actual power.

This interpretation is further reinforced by the fact that caricatured distortion does not exclusively target the other; rather, it also turns toward the poetic self, as evident in Ibn al-Hajjaj's characterization of his own poetry as a distorted form and Ibn Sukra's representation of his own condition through images of begging and humiliation. Both poets employ the same

mechanism against themselves that they direct toward their opponents. This self-directed reversal grants their caricatured imagery its tragic depth, transforming the image from an instrument of external aggression into a severe mirror reflecting the fragmentation of the self and its internalized contempt. Thus, sarcastic language ultimately becomes a language of suffering concealed beneath the surface of laughter, through which the poet releases aggression toward both the external world and the self simultaneously. Catharsis and self-punishment therefore converge within a single artistic structure.

This connection between stylistic structure and psychological structure is further reinforced by the fact that rhythm itself in this poetry carries a significance comparable to that of vocabulary and imagery. The poets' preference for short, dynamic meters and familiar, accessible rhymes is not merely an incidental prosodic choice; rather, it functions as a sonic counterpart to the ironic and mocking nature of their discourse, which distances itself from grandeur and solemnity. The lightness of rhythm psychologically prepares the recipient for the reception of humorous content and contributes to a sense of familiarity that diminishes the strangeness of the vulgar while simultaneously rendering the familiar unusual, in accordance with the broader logic of carnivalesque inversion. Through this interaction among rhythmic, lexical,

and imagistic dimensions, the components of stylistic structure converge into an organic whole, whose elements collectively emerge from a single psychological impulse: the need for release and purification. Thus, no textual element exists independently of the psychological symptom that generates it.

4.3. Unity of the Symptom and Diversity of Expression

These stylistic features converge to reinforce the central argument of the study: absurdity, libertinism, and the expression of bodily needs are not independent poetic themes connected merely through decadence; rather, they represent diverse manifestations of a single psychological symptom produced by the crisis of the marginalized self in the Buyid era. The shared anxiety arising from deprivation, alienation, and the obstruction of self-realization generates a language unified in its fundamental structure: instinctual in its vocabulary, caricatured in its imagery, and cathartic in its function. Nevertheless, the direction through which this anxiety is articulated differs between a poet who externalizes it through confrontation and destruction, as Ibn al-Hajjaj does, and a poet who internalizes it through complaint and compensation, as Ibn Sukkara does. Through this distinction between the unity of the symptom and the diversity of its expression, psychological analysis moves beyond approaches that have treated the two poets as identical by subsuming them

under the general category of libertinism, thereby overlooking the nuanced differences between two distinct psychological structures beneath their shared external manifestations.

In light of the preceding analysis, it becomes evident that approaching marginal poetry from a psychological perspective does not merely restore aesthetic recognition to a body of poetry that has long been excluded from serious critical consideration; rather, it establishes a broader framework for understanding the complex relationship between social structures, psychological formations, and stylistic patterns. At the highest level of interpretation, the satirical text emerges as both a psychological and social document whose significance exceeds its immediate aesthetic function, as it reveals the ways in which individual and collective unconscious processes respond to the pressures of a troubled reality. It transforms suffering into language, deprivation into imagery, and oppression into a form of bitter laughter.

5. Conclusion:

Through its psychological investigation of marginal poetry in the fourth century AH, supported by artistic analysis, this study has reached a number of conclusions that may be summarized as follows:

- Ibn al-Hajjaj's absurdity and Ibn Sukra's libertinism do not represent a decline in

aesthetic sensibility, as asserted by inherited critical judgments; rather, they constitute meaningful psychological manifestations and mechanisms of catharsis and protest through which the distressed self-released its suppressed energies and experiences of deprivation within a pressured Buyid reality.

- Absurdity in Ibn al-Hajjaj's poetry performs three interconnected psychological functions: the discharge of repressed aggression through obscene humor, the subversion of elite taboos through parody and the carnivalesque reversal of values, and the reconstruction of the damaged self through reverse sublimation, whereby imposed inferiority is transformed into a distinctive identity worthy of recognition and admiration.

- Ibn Sukra's expressions of poverty and coldness represent direct manifestations of the deprivation complex and anxiety surrounding bodily survival. These experiences are further intensified by the alienation of the fragmented Hashimite self, suspended between elevated symbolic affiliation and humiliating lived circumstances. Consequently, libertinism becomes, for him, a form of self-punishment through which he anticipates society's judgment by degrading himself before others can do so.

- The two poets converge at the level of their deeper psychological mechanisms despite their differences in motivation and

direction. Both transform their narcissistic wound into a weapon that is first directed toward the self before being turned against their opponents. However, while Ibn al-Hajjaj externalizes his anxiety through aggression and confrontation, Ibn Sukkara internalizes it through complaint and symbolic compensation.

- The shared psychological anxiety between the two poets is reflected within their artistic formation itself, producing an instinctual vocabulary that represents the return of the repressed and a caricatured imagery grounded in the mechanism of distortion. Accordingly, sarcastic language ultimately emerges as a language of suffering concealed beneath the surface of laughter.

- The psychological approach to marginal poetry extends beyond the restoration of aesthetic recognition; it reveals the profound interrelationship between social structures, psychological formations, and stylistic structures, transforming the satirical text into a psychological and social document whose significance exceeds its immediate aesthetic function.

- Psychological interpretation does not negate aesthetic evaluation, nor does it legitimize every expression characterized by vulgarity within this poetic corpus. Rather, it shifts the analytical perspective from prior moral condemnation toward understanding and interpretation. It examines the psychological and social

conditions that generated the phenomenon before forming judgments upon it, thereby providing a means of reassessing a body of literature that has been marginalized by rapid moral classification, while maintaining a critical and informed distance toward its artistic and ethical dimensions.

In conclusion, this study recommends expanding psychological and social approaches to this marginal literary corpus beyond the two poets examined, encompassing the broader phenomenon of libertinism throughout the Buyid era. It also recommends employing the methodologies of social psychology and theories of symbolic protest to reconsider those dimensions of the poetic heritage that have long been excluded under the authority of moral judgment.

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