Natural Attractions in Tourist’s Poem (Case Study: Al-Jawahiri)

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Abstract

Literature is considered the broadest cultural horizon and one of the most effective factors for cultural consolidation and development. In this respect, classical poetry, for being rhythmic, capability of being memorized and learned by heart and providing illustrations, mirrors historical and cultural excellence and eminence of any nation. When a poet with his/her extreme potency of thought and imagination attempts to describe an ancient and historical monument or a green location with its nice climate, an image of that place is sketched in public thoughts, its value and significance is raised and native people will protect it with a different view. Current paper discusses and analyzes some odes and poetries composed by a well-known Iraqi poet, Muhammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri, about Iran. Likewise, this paper suggest that travelling of the elite people, scholars, cultural authorities and artists might be beneficial for both the host and guest communities which considerably helps to establish of effective cultural relations.

Keyword: Tourist’s poem, Natural attraction, Muhammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri, Iran.
Introduction
Due to abundance of disciplines and subjects in humanities over recent centuries and regarding specific attitudes and perceptions of the masters of these disciplines, there are different definitions of culture. The word “culture” in English is referred to as “Saqafa” in Arabic. (Articles Collections of First International Conference on Islamic culture and civilization, 1994)

Among all living creatures, man is the only creature with culture because human being is thoughtful and speaking. According to different views, culture is defined differently. Despite common aspects in definitions, each definition conveys an aspect of human life which may not be a culture for another community or person.

Ralf Linton views culture as an integration of behaviors of schools of thought which is transferred by members of a given society from one generation to another and is common among the people of a specific society.

Michael Gilson defines culture as “a set of unknown principles and matters which are regarded as natural affairs and indeed are dependent upon non-scientific issues”. (Ibid)

Culture is a general intricate phenomenon composed of traditions, thoughts, arts and life styles formed through historical experience of different nations which can be passed to future generations. (Anvari, 2004)

Culture is a combination of customs, traditions and personal or family morals of those nations whose attachment to these affairs has distinguished them from other nations. In other words, culture is a set of individual or collective beliefs which are subjective. Therefore, culture is not an objective and concrete concept. (Velayati, 2005)

The word “culture” denoted education or learning art and science in the past centuries but in recent times, it has taken broader concepts because of changes in its perceptions in foreign languages and refers to an array of customs and traditions, religious beliefs, science, art and morality. (Muhammad, 1994)

With these descriptions, we cannot present a comprehensive definition for this word. However, we can bear in mind a concept of culture from all the above definitions altogether. Also, Tourism is a form of cultural communication. Recording of attractions have been doing by tourist constantly over the years in the form of Itinerary, painting… or poetry. This connection is more pronounced when the attractions present in the forms such as poetry. What has been less noticed about this subject is re-reading of attractions through tourists’ poetry.

This paper surveys the natural attractions of Iran through the Arab tourist’s poetry.

Persian-Arab poet
Muhammad Mahdi Al-jawahiri, a poet from the well-known family “Al-Jawahiri” was born on July 26th, 1899 in the city of Najaf, Iraq and died on July 27th, 1997 in Damascus. He, who lived in exile most of his life, lived about one century. During this time, he composed plenty of poems. Muhammad Mahdi Al-jawahiri is known as “the great Arab poet”. His father was a famous and prominent clergyman in Najaf, so he grew up in a religious family. Muhammad Mahdi Al-
Jawahiri wore a turban on his head until his thirties. However, since then he took off it and chose a different lifestyle to the end of his life. Jawahiri is considered one of the first Iraqi journalists. He was the founder and the first president of Iraq Writers Association. In 1930, he published Al-Furat newspaper so that later he chose the title “Abu-Alfurat”. Since he described Iran in his poetry, his rivals called him an Iranian-race poem (Alfakhori, 1986-1991).

He says: I remember those steps which are my proud and honor so that 50 years ago, a famous Egyptian man of letters, Ahmed Hassan Ziyat, wrote in his well-known journal (Al-Resala) to this regard: the odes Jawahiri has composed in Iran are a new transition to development and revolution of his poem (Al-Jawahiri, 2005)

Achievements of travel to Iran
Muhammad Mahdi Aljawahiri, the last surviving poet of Classical Arabic poetry travelled to Iran two times (in two summers, 1924 and 1926). The deep influence of watching the nature and trips to Iranian cities is manifested in his poems (including على حدود فارس “on the borders of Fars”, على دربن “on (the hill) Darband” and، المريض والضاحك “the smiling village”, علی کرند “on the Kerend”, علی دشت وفکر “in Tehran”). He travelled to Baghdad in 1927 and served as a teacher in Kazemiya schools. However, after publishing the ode “Courier of Estrangement” in “Alfayha” newspaper in which he praised the beauty of Iran’s nature and weather, he cited his fond of his friends as the only reason for his attachment to Iraq. Sate’e Hosra, director general of the Ministry of Education, convicted him of nationalism and dismissed him from teaching. Then, Jawahiri, through the intercession of a religious savant, Sayyed Hassan Nasr, met Malek Faisal and was recruited as an employee in the Court Formalities Bureau (Bosra, 1994; Mishal Khalil, 1999). He worked in the Royal Court for 3 years and then resigned. Despite his criticism against Iraq’s situation under the monarchy he maintained his relations with the imperial family (Beyzoon, 1993).

The first round of the poet’s trip to Iran in 1924
The ode “الذكرى المولمة painful memories” shows the poet’s homesick and concern in his first trip to Iran. The wind blowing from Iraq reminded him of versification meetings and gatherings with friends along the Euphrates River, filling him with desire to visit his companions and to return home. Even drinking sweet and pleasant wine of life tasted bitter and unpleasant to him. However, after a few days, visiting the paradise-like gardens in Fars region delighted him. Beauties of the Persian land seemed pleasant to him and rainfall out of clouds offered him elegance and attractiveness. The fruitful summer passed and the snowy winter reflects a brilliant luster over the hills and mountains (Aljawaheri, 1982) .

Also, Jawhiri, in this ode composed in 1924 and published in Al-Horriya journal, calls his friend in classical poetry style to motivate enthusiasm for Iran and its natural beauties so that he describes the spring as the most alluring season and heavenly beauties and is ever fond of its elegance and confesses to its wonderful beauty. (Goli & Rahimi Khoigani, 2012)

In the ode “الاحاديث شجون sad utterance”, the poet complains about his nostalgia and expatriation and speaks of his homeland with too much sob and grief and remembers his fellows and friends
so that he feels attached to his country forever. The rhymes of his poem come with pearly tears and sigh, moan and whimper accompany his lyrics. As well, he writes about the peace of heart and relief of mind, that Iran is like the heaven and it is not similar to prison where the gardens smile with each other with pleased faces, the rivers flow and abundant rainfall has caused the plains and hills wear a beautiful garment. He refers to the graceful and pure love of Shirin and Farhad, and strong and firm castles and fortresses built by Iranian kings in his poem as he reminds the refreshing water flowing in the Tigris River and kings of his homeland. As a result, he presents a comparison of the weather, famous people, rulers and the great men of the two neighboring countries (Aljawahi, 1982).

This ode was published in “Al-Hurriyah” and “Al-Mofid” journals in 1925.

In the ode “on the Kerend” (a rural residence in the city of Islamabad-e-gharb which is a scenic border area), Jawahiri precisely describes this area, the beauty of nature in Iran which has delighted him and the pleasant climate in the summer which has calmed him down. He describes how the snow on the mountains melts and flows downward to bestow the spring air purity and fineness on this countryside. Prosperity and freshness are smiling with all beauties and brilliance. The poet considers brief speech and quick praise of this beauty unfair and relentless. He points to the great difference between his homeland and the brilliant areas of the Persian land. He even admires the luminosity of sunrise and sunset over Iranian plains and hills. This ode was published in “Al-Erfan” journal in 1925 (Aljawahi, 1982).

He said: I composed “on the Kerend” in the city of Kerend where is a summer resort on the border of Iraq and unique in beauty and delicacy. This area is like Kurdistan in Iraq in beauty and magic, the only difference is that bullets, tanks and guns have been showering over Kurdistan in Iraq since 50 years ago. (Al-Jawahiri, 2005)

Further, the ode “the smiling village” describes the poet’s journey to summer residences and countryside in Hamedan province. He views all areas in Iran as prosperous and fruitful farms where both spring and fall are nice and tender. The blossoms of gardens fascinate the viewer and the fragrance of its flowers makes gratitude and appreciation necessary. Summer and winter quarters in Iran are so pleasant and nice that they rub off man’s gloom.

The snow laying thick on the mountains and hills has created a specific view of the area and has furthered the glory and magnificence of Fars land. For lo, Iranians: your friendship, affection and cordiality are so pleasant that they motivate the poet’s imagination and raise the delicacy and elegance of his poetry. (Al-jawaheri, 1982). The poet in this ode composed in 1924, describes Iranian cities and villages. This ode was published in Al-Erfan journal, part VI, Vol. 10, in 1925.

In the first couplet, the poet portrays Iran and its cities as the paradise which is an adaptation of Al-Dahr Surah, Verse 14. (Baha-o-Din Delshad, 2006)

In the ode “on the borders of Fars”, the poet expresses his concern for separation from friends and writes about the bitterness of being aloof from friends and fellows and while for homesick he has lost all his patience, he wished happy and delightful days and nights for his friends. He drew a bridge of love, friendship and affection between Iraq and Persian Land that summer and on the walls of this bridge, he portrays the paradise-like gardens, landscapes and layers of snow on the mountains and hills of Iran. After the winter, he describes the flowing water down from the mountains into these fertile plain so pleasantly and beautifully that as if the
pure wine is flowing into cups for the god-fearing and pious believers. (referring to a Quran verse: Surely for those who guard (against evil) is achievement, * Gardens and vineyards, * And those showing freshness of youth, equals in age, * And a pure cup.")

The poet sent this ode for his friend, Sheikh Muhammad Reza in Najaf, Iraq (Aljawaheri, 1982). In the ode “between two diagonals”, the poet groans as a result of remoteness from his wife and family and though he points to the bountiful blessings in Persian Land, he expresses his interest in the hot weather in Iraq. He pronounces his love of and dependence on his homeland in the hot graviels, bushy soil and dry plains of Iraq and next, he speaks of the scenic and spectacular Persian Land which has dazzled eyes and aroused enthusiasm as follows: pleasant breeze, the flowing streams and roaring springs pouring down from mountains into the plains, noticeable prosperity of gardens that have embroidered the nature with several designs all have excited his emotions beside his homesick and intensified the pounding rhythm of his heartbeat.

This ode was published in “Dar Al-Moalemin (House of Teachers) journal in 1925 (Ibid).

The second round of poet’s trip to Iran, 1926

In the poetic collection of Jawahiri under the title “خواطر الشعر في فارس” “poetic diaries in Iran”, there are odes such as “الخريف في فارس” “the fall in Iran” and “البادية في ايران” “the village in Iran”. The ode “الخريف في فارس” “the fall in Iran” is really favored by the poet and spring time leaves nice feelings in him. Al-Jawahiri Composed caustic and intimidating odes in a tumultuous and chaotic atmosphere and surrenders to the charming nature of Persia and writes odes rife with delicacy, peace and beauty. (Vaghef, 2008)

The interesting point is that the poet describes the fall in Iran so nicely and pleasantly and addresses those who have been impressed by the autumns in Iran and says: what would you say if you saw springs of Iran? The autumn in this area is intrinsically beautiful being ornamented by the light of space and atmosphere (Aljawaheri, 1982).

In the ode “البادية في ايران” “villages in Iran”, Al-Jawahiri, in his second round of trips, describes a village in Iran. He presents the attractive landscape of that village so nicely that he confesses: this scenic and spectacular village has caused me to forget my cozy residence in homeland. How many people sit alongside the ponds and chat under the shade of the trees! We spent many sunny days and talked at moonlit nights, there. I’m not a poet if I do not praise the beauty and elegance of wherever I go. Whether on the ground and in the gardens or in the sky! The first rain drops falling on rocks and stones! O, Earth! Thanks for all these divine graces. Give thanks to God since ungratefulness takes away the blessings of God. Remember hardness and scarcity in bountiful times and appreciate the beauty and value of rainfall.

This ode was published in “Al-Fadhilah” journal in 1926 (Aljawaheri, 1982).

The ode “In Tehran” includes the poet’s visit from Tehran in his second round of trip to the capital of Iran where different seasons bear their specific beauties; the beauties that must be seen and cannot be heard. Its spring portrays virtue and fairness on the times and revives the dead ground and bestows beauty on it. As the white snow drops cover this land in the winter, the mountains benefit from them in the summer on which the fresh water flows. The beauty is widespread there in Tehran and that much beauty is natural (Ibid).
In the ode “on Darband Hills”, the poet has gone to the recreational and touristic region of Darband, although he begins this ode by his desire for visiting his friend, Sheikh Jafar Al-Naghdi for whom the poet sent this ode. He appreciates the deaths of Iranian heroes and brave men who have set like the shiny moon. However, the delicacy and beauty of the area was so attractive for him that he prayed for this orchard and flower garden and asked God to protect this beautiful place under his divine dispensations. Delicacy, elegance and attractiveness of this region delighted him and its lost beauty made him sympathetic. The green countryside with its astonishing beauty is shining like a string of pearls or diamonds and its trees have queued up against each other as hemistiches of an ode. When he stands beside the flowing stream, he composes the first verses of his poem. This ode was published in Al-Erfan Journal in 1927 (Aljawaheri, 1982).

In the other hand, he speaks of the beauties and wonders of Darband summer resort and imagines nothing more beautiful and attractive than this magical gem and pearl necklace astonishing the viewers’ eyes and attracting their hearts so that he approaches this simile to magic perception and attractiveness of this nature. (Maruf and Etemadi, 2009)

The ode “برید الغربه فی وصف شمیرانات” Courier of estrangement in description of Shemiranat” is a controversial work because it provoked surprising reflections. As soon as this ode was published in an Iraqi journal, Al-Jawahiri was dismissed from teaching position for being accused of nationalism because he describes the climate of Iran and the attractive nature of the suburb of Tehran and considers his attachment and loyalty to his homeland as a result of his friends. The beginning verses commence with a nice breeze that awakens the poet’s memory of friends and harmonizes his heartbeat with his pulses. The climate of Iran, the blow of zephyr, the beautiful sky and plentiful branches and leaves of trees charm him so that he states his attachment to Iraq due to his friends and feels the Euphrates and Tigris are unpleasant without his friends. He praises Shemiran with its pleasant climate and nature and beautifully appreciates the blossoms and flowers in the gardens growing through the rocks and mountains with layers of snow and their enjoyable climate and the heart-stealing melody of nightingales on the small branches like the melody of the lute played by Isaac. (Aljawaheri, 1982)

I have composed another poem to describe Shemiran area, however, some of its verses raised revolts against me and my hostiles used it as an excuse so that since then my enemies’ and my life course was changed. (Aljawaheri, 2005)

This ode was published in “Al-Faiha” journal in 1927.

The poet’s lasting souvenir for the guest and host communities

Aljawahiri, this talented and tasteful poet chose a precious souvenir for his people at the end of his journey. He presents a valuable and great treasure from this trip of friendship and affection. He fills the treasury of his thoughts with golden pages of the heart-sealing and charming mystic verses and love poems of Hafez Shirazi to offer them as a gift to his friends and companions. For better comprehension and more precise translation, he put those poems into Arabic verses. This versified poetical work was published in “Al-Najaf” and “Al-Fadhilah” journals under the title of “مکنوز فارس “the Persian Treasure” in 1926 and 1927.(Aljawaheri, 1982)
A nightingale had a rose-leaf, pleasant of hue in his beak
And, on that leaf and pleasant food, bitter Lamentation held.
To him, I said:”In the very time of union wherefore is this Lament and cry?”
He said:”In this work of Lament, me the beloved’s beauty held” (Hafez Shirazi, 1891)

What kindness it was when, suddenly, the dropping of thy pen
Represented the obligation of our service according to the goodness of thee.(Hafez Shirazi, 1891)

With respect, take the goblet. For its composition
Is of skull of Jamshid, of Bahman, and of Kubad (Hafez Shirazi, 1891)

In the morning, the nightingale told a tale to the east wind,
Saying: for us what love for the face of the rose made. (Hafez Shirazi, 1891)

Conclusions
The rules of etiquette regarding hospitality culture command the host to spread a tablecloth of the best foods for his dear and honored guest and decorate it with cheerfulness and melodious sound to please the newcomer’s taste and rub off his gloom. God has bestowed a tablecloth of the most beautiful nature on Iranian people which is ornamented with biodiversity and revolution of the environment.

When a poet with his/her extreme potency of thought and imagination attempts to describe an ancient and historical monument or a green location with its nice climate, an image of that place is sketched in public thoughts, its value and significance is raised and native people will protect it with a different view. However, that place will be highly valued when a guest literary man versifies in another language so that hospitality which is among spiritual values of any nation will be evaluated and leads to unity and friendship among different people and nations and finally will promote cultural communication and globalization process.

When the guest poet from Iraq steps in this land (Iran), he faces a colorful and pleasant nature and is fascinated by its beauties. Hence, he portrays new and delightful images of rivers, palm trees, beaches and mountains viewed as a brilliant picture in Arabic poetry.
However, what seems important is the impact of the culture, customs, traditions and nature of the destination country that can attract the tourist’s attention to natural and cultural elements of the
host community. Al-jawahiri, an Iraqi teacher and poet, travelled to Iran as a tourist and began describing Iranian attractions in his poems when he returned to his homeland, Iraq and this led to his dismissal from work. He, as a poet, describes the attractions of Iran with delicacy of a tourist poet by a common language which is poem and at the end of his trip, he left two noticeable souvenirs for both the host and the guest people, including his poems about some areas of Iran to which he travelled and the translation of Hafez’s poems, the famous Iranian poet, into Arabic for his people.

We can conclude that when the elite, scientific, cultural and artistic men travel as recreation or ecotourism, both the host and the guest communities can benefit from them and they will significantly help in establishment of effective cultural relations. These people can present creative works with their new ideas to drive even two opposite cultures toward a common point and leave a deep understanding of each other. This may create another cycle of tourism including literary, scientific and artistic tourism.
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