

**Narrating the Life of a Man Known as a Sufi:
An Anthropological Reflection on Narratives on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī al-Darqāwī by His
Son al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī and Others**

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of our papers, *Narrating the Narratives of Sufis*, seems to convey some awareness of the issues that anthropologists have faced since the 1980s, through reflecting on the immanent problems of writing ethnographies. In anthropology, the problems have taken shape in the form of questioning the ways of “describing,” not necessarily those of “narrating.” Although these two notions (“describing” and “narrating”) are different, I would like to consider “description” (or describing) and “narratives” (or narrating) as concepts sharing some common traits, in that both imply acts conducted to express something about someone (else). In this sense, problems of how to “describe” the “others” in an ethnography and the theme of our papers, ‘how to make a “narration” about a Sufi’, stand on the same ground.

Incidentally, in the long tradition of the Sufi hagiography, many writings on Sufi masters seem to have been compiled by their disciples. At the same time, however, there are some hagiographies written by those who are not disciples, or who are trying to establish some distance from the Sufi tradition.

In this essay, I take up the case of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī (1900–1963), one of the most prominent Moroccan religious scholars of the twentieth century, who is entangled in an ambivalent situation because of his familiarity with Sufism and his deliberate avoidance of it, to explain how he tried to write/narrate the life of a Sufi master as an “other.” His ambivalent positionality is suited for exploring our subject, *Narrating the Narratives of Sufis*.

In the following sections, I begin by outlining how the problems concerning “narratives” are treated in ethnographic writings. Then, I will elucidate the characteristics of the works of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. Next, I will explain briefly the general situation of the evaluations of the works of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī among contemporary Moroccan scholars and others, to deepen our comprehension of the current reception of his writings/narratives in the society. After that, I will shed light on a work that refers to al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī’s writings to elaborate a theoretical model concerning the Sufi master–disciple relationship. I will take up a model by Moroccan anthropologist Abdellah Hammoudi as a case. Hammoudi combined the data on a Sufi *shaykh* abstracted from the works of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, with a theoretical framework on “discipline” advocated by Michel Foucault, to refine his theoretical model on the master–disciple relationship. I will compare his model with the works of al-Mukhtār

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al-Sūsī to examine its validity and limits. Finally, I will conclude my essay by suggesting the validity of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī's works as a reference for ethnographic writings.

EXPERIMENTAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND ITS AFTERMATH

In the 1980s, there was a series of debates among anthropologists heavily criticizing the anthropological textual production of ethnographies [Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fisher 1986]. The core problems that anthropologists have focused on can be summarized in three points: power, representation, and authority.

To begin, it is quite obvious that anthropologists cannot learn about particular cultures without interviews, conversations, and interaction with the local people on whom they are focusing their fieldwork. The publication of an ethnography as an outcome of their research is based on this seemingly “natural,” “simple” fact. Some argue that in the publication of ethnographies, however, the various voices of the local people are quite often erased, omitted, edited, deformed, and constrained. Anthropologists are condemned by the claim that they gain power as authors. For critics, the act of writing an ethnography is a procedure involving the increase in the authority of the anthropologist while sacrificing the voices of the local people to a certain extent. Ethnography will bestow on anthropologists the authority as the legitimate holders of the knowledge of the cultures they have studied, and it is they who represent the people. Further, after its publication, the ethnography will circulate and become the object of consumption for general readers who are interested in learning about “other” cultures. The processes of production, circulation, and consumption reinforce not only the authority of anthropologists but also the substantiation of the representation. As Edward Said exposes and denounces in his immortal masterpiece *Orientalism*, one of the fundamental problems caused by the representation is the “essentialisation” of people as “others” [Said 1979; cf. Akahori 1995].

To overcome the predicaments posed by these important, radical criticisms of ethnographic writing and description, some anthropologists have explored “experimental ethnography” [Crapanzano 1980; Eickelman 1985; Rabinow 1977]. Thus, several methodological concepts and frameworks for ethnographic description have been advocated, such as the concentration on “ethnographic encounter” [Dwyer 1982], multivocality, seeing an ethnography as “text” [Marcus and Cushman 1982], coauthoring an ethnography with the “informant” [Fischer 2002(1980)] and so forth. Regardless of these devices and their widespread impact on the debates among anthropologists in the 1980s, experimental ethnography appears to have lost its impact later, and it seems as though it was a temporary “trend” that has already passed and become old-fashioned. This unexpected result was caused by the authors being distracted from their significant awareness of the issues by their excessive commitment and concentration on the technicalities of trying to improve their

approach to writing ethnographies.

In contrast, Japanese anthropologist Horiuchi elucidates a fundamental problem inherent in experimental ethnography. In an article entitled “Experimental Ethnography and *Ṭabaqāt*,” Horiuchi [1995] states that a core problem experienced by Western anthropologists who undertook the elaboration of experimental ethnographies is related to how Westerners actually recognized “others” when they engaged in anthropological encounters during fieldwork.¹ By referring to the argument of Orientalism, he then attempts to depict the characteristics of Western thought that Western anthropologists employed to regulate experimental ethnographies of “others.” According to Horiuchi, Said’s argument clearly explains that Western thought tends to substantiate the difference between “self” and “other” and “we, Westerners,” and “others, Arabs.” To relativize this particular tendency, Horiuchi juxtaposes experimental ethnography with works such as directories written by the Moroccan religious scholar al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī to highlight the contrast that exists between Western writings and those written by local people who were placed in the position of “the observed.” According to Horiuchi, al-Sūsī’s works may have avoided the predicament caused by distinctions between “self” and “other” by articulating various attributions and episodes related to concrete persons. Al-Sūsī’s works also provide clues on how to escape from the substantiation of society based on the abstraction of various people’s acts.

Despite his insightful suggestion on the possibility of exploring a new way for a more profound understanding beyond the distinction between “self” and “other” with reference to the works of local people, Horiuchi did not develop further arguments in the article by analyzing in detail the works written by al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī. This is one of the points that I will try to elucidate in this essay.

PERSONAL HISTORY OF AL-MUKHTĀR AL-SŪSĪ

In this section, I will present briefly some general information on the life of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī.

Al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, a legalist (*faqīh*) of Berber origin, a historian (*mu’arrikh*), and a literate (*‘adīb*), was one of the most distinguished men of knowledge (*‘ālim*) in twentieth-century Morocco. Known as *‘allāma* (prominent ‘ālim), he was a prolific writer on the religious figures from the Sūs region—the southwestern part of Morocco and his homeland—and its local history². Eventually, he succeeded in compiling many books such as *al-Ma’asūl* (the 20-volume directory of men of knowledge from the Sūs region) [al-Sūsī 1960–1963], *al-Madāris al-‘Atīqa* (a compendium work on the traditional Islamic schools in the Sūs

1 Horiuchi provides a detailed elucidation of various problems and predicaments inherent in experimental ethnography in another article entitled “Problems in the Study of the Individual” [Horiuchi 1984]. The arguments he presents in “Experimental Ethnography and *Ṭabaqāt*” are based on this article.

2 With respect to research conducted on the life, methodology, and works of al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, see [Khalīl 1985; Ittiḥād Kitāb al-Maghrib (ed.) 1986; Rachik 1997; and Shalīḥ et al. 1996].

region) [al-Sūsī 1987], *Kitāb min Afwāh al-Rijāl* [al-Sūsī 1962; 1963a; 1963b], *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* (a hagiography on a Sufī shaykh of al-Ṭarīqa Darqāwīya in the same region) [al-Sūsī 2009a(1960); 2009b(1960)], and so forth. Al-Sūsī's works have been highly evaluated by historians and anthropologists eager to learn the local history of this region.

Al-Sūsī was born in 1900 in a small village called Ilgh in the middle of the Anti-Atlas Mountains. Even though Ilgh appears to be a mountain shanty town, it used to be the religious center of the whole Sūs region and beyond, based on the activities of two religious institutions in the village: the traditional Islamic school (*madrasa 'atīqa*) *Ilghīya*³ and the religious lodge (*zāwīya*) of the Sufī order al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya. Born in this village, and owing to his father, al-Ḥājj 'Alī al-Darqāwī, a great Sufī shaykh of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya, al-Sūsī grew up with a profound sense of familiarity not only with religious sciences (*'ulūm al-dīn*) but also with Sufism.

After memorizing al-Qur'ān and starting to learn religious sciences in his region, he continued learning religious sciences in Marrakech, and then, in Fez. These wanderings in this quest for religious knowledge gave him a chance to become familiar with two trends that were prominent in twentieth-century Morocco. First, he sympathized with the nationalist movement during the period of his learning in Fez. Second, he studied under several prominent religious figures of the age, such as Abū-Shu'ayb al-Dukkālī (1878–1937), who had a profound influence on his religious thought. On his way to the pilgrimage (*al-ḥājj*), Abū-Shu'ayb al-Dukkālī had a chance to get acquainted with Salafism. After his return to Morocco, he became a strong propagator of this movement and had a profound influence on the religious thought of the people, not only men of knowledge but also ordinary people. Following his guidance, al-Sūsī started maintaining a deliberate distance from Sufism.

AL-ḤĀJJ 'ALĪ AL-DARQĀWĪ

In this section I will sketch the life of al-Ḥājj 'Alī with reference to al-Sūsī's writings, *al-Ma'asūl* [al-Sūsī 1960] and *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* [al-Sūsī 2009a; 2009b] before going through the writings of al-Sūsī on al-Ḥājj 'Alī.

Al-Ḥājj 'Alī was born in Ilgh around 1851. After memorizing al-Qur'ān, he continued his studies of religious sciences in several madrasas in the region.

From his youth, he had not only a strong desire to become a great Sufī shaykh (shaykhan šūfīyan kabīran) [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 30], but also a habit to fulfill recitation of the whole Qur'ān at saint shrines [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 32–33]. Al-Sūsī mentioned that what would be the future of this man who possessed such unusual zeal and showed extraordinary performance from his youth [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 33]. Here we can recognize that al-Sūsī represents al-Ḥājj 'Alī's religious authenticity by showing his zealous act of reciting whole

3 For a detailed description of the roles and activities of Madrasa Ilghīya, see [M. al-Sa'īdī 2006].

Qur'ān in one night. His intimacy with al-Qur'ān implies that he stands firmly on the fundamental religious canon, and that he will flourish on this “orthodox” basis in the path of Sufism.

When he was around 21 years old, he became a member of al-Ṭarīqa al-Nāṣiriyya [al-Sūsī 2009a(1960): 33–34]. However, one day he saw by chance a Sufi shaykh of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya, Sīdī Sa'īd al-Ma'dirī, on his way to a village called Tangurt [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 34]. This shaykh was one of the central figures who played an important role in the introduction of the path of al-Darqāwīya to the people from the Sūs region. It is written, both in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* and *al-Ma'asūl*, that al-Ḥājj 'Alī became his disciple just by the first eye-contact [al-Sūsī 1960: 189; 2009a (1960): 34].

After becoming a disciple, al-Ḥājj 'Alī went back to continue his studies in several madrasa-s, and acquired further knowledge of religious sciences [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 36–43]. Then he started again his “spiritual training” in earnest under the guidance of his master Sīdī Sa'īd [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 43–47]. One of the examples, al-Sūsī shows, is “Kharq al-'Āda” (breaking of the habit) [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 47–50]. After this practice, which is intended to subdue the ego, he was sent to the zāwiya of Mūlay 'Arabī al-Darqāwī (1760–1823), the founder of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 53–54]. On his journey (*al-riḥla*) to the zāwiya, he had a chance to visit Fez, Sale and other places [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 51–52]. During this period, al-Ḥājj 'Alī experienced “fath kabīr” and his shaykh knew it through his spiritual contact with him [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 54–55]. This episode shows their profound spiritual relationship. However, Sīdī Sa'īd died in 1882/ 1883 during al-Ḥājj 'Alī's journey to Fez. He was aware of this fact just by his spiritual contact with his shaykh [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 55–56].

Returning to the Sūs region, he decided to settle in his natal village, Ilgh, and started the construction of his own zāwiya, around 1884/1885 [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 68], to launch into the spiritual training of his own disciples. He accomplished the pilgrimage in 1887 [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 77–78]. After that, he continued his eager journeys in the Sūs region and beyond to disseminate the instruction of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 78–137]. It is said that his disciples reached as many as 20,000 souls in his lifetime [al-Sūsī 2009]. He died in 1910 [al-Sūsī 1960: 313; 2009b (1960): 144], at the dawn of the French protectorate that started officially in 1912.

ATTEMPTS TO DESCRIBE THE LIFE OF AL-ḤĀJJ 'ALĪ

Al-Sūsī's writings about his father, the great Sufi shaykh al-Ḥājj 'Alī al-Darqāwī, have several remarkable characteristics. First, we should note that he focuses on his father al-Ḥājj 'Alī in various writings⁴ such as *Kitāb min Afwāh al-Rijāl*, *al-Ma'asūl*, *al-Tiryāq*

4 He said that it took many years to collect information on al-Ḥājj 'Alī. This is because al-Sūsī was born

al-Mudāwī, and so forth.⁵

Al-Sūsī tried to use different methods to describe al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s life in these writings. *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl* is characterized by his conscious choice of not using a particular method [al-Sūsī 1962: 3]. To begin with, the reason he decided to compile *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl* is based on the rich experience of daily conversations with the disciples and entourages of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in his native village of Ilgh. This experience gave al-Sūsī the inspiration to collect and write down their recollections. Thus, this work echoes the actual words, episodes, and memories of the major disciples who venerated their master. To let these voices convey their own vivid narratives, al-Sūsī chose not to follow particular formal methods or specific arrangements for documentation. Consequently, this writing shows itself as just an enumeration of episodes on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī as narrated by his major disciples.

As for *al-Ma’asūl*, the voluminous directory of men of knowledge, Sufis, and notables (*ru’asā’*) of the Sūs region, al-Sūsī wrote on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī from a historian’s point of view [al-Sūsī 1960: wāw]. Following the tarjama tradition that regulates the cultural form of writing a directory, al-Sūsī uses a particular method to collect the information on these persons. He starts from the information on men of knowledge, Sufis, and notables who were born in Ilgh, and then, he proceeds to write successively on their teachers from other villages, their disciples, and their friends [al-Sūsī 1960: hā’]. This order implies that the content of *al-Ma’asūl* evolves from the geographical pole, Ilgh, and then extends its scope over various people from the Sūs region, which means that *al-Ma’asūl* is not a simple directory listing individuals’ names, but it is a directory that enables readers to understand the web connecting the people who hail from Ilgh. At the same time, being in the presence of other intellectuals, Sufis, and notables, al-Ḥājj ‘Alī is treated in this book simply as one among many.

At last, in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, a hagiography of the Sufī shaykh al-Ḥājj ‘Alī, al-Sūsī makes an effort to describe his father’s life from the Sufi’s perspective as much as he could [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 24–25]. This explanation implies that he was conscious of the difficulty for those who are not Sufis of narrating the life of a Sufi from a Sufi perspective, even though he himself had been educated in the milieu of the Sufi tradition.⁶

in 1900 when al-Ḥājj ‘Alī was around 50, and therefore, al-Sūsī did not have a long experience of sharing time with his father.

5 Al-Sūsī’s son collected poetry, letters, and personal instructions of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī from the works of al-Sūsī. He included published and unpublished texts and published them in the name of al-Sūsī. These include *‘Iqd al-Jumān li al-Murīd al-‘Irfān* [al-Sūsī 1984], *al-Nūr al-Mabghī fī Rasā’il wa Ash’ār al-Shaykh al-Ilghī* [al-Sūsī 1989], and *Dīwān al-Shaykh al-Ilghī* [al-Sūsī 2012].

6 Al-Sūsī also wrote, in his introduction to *al-Ma’asūl*, that he planned to write about miracles and spiritual things that coming generations might view with suspicion. He explained his intentions by providing the following reasons. First, as a historian, he believed that he should record as much information as he could. Second, he admitted that he grew up in a milieu in which the influence of Sufism predominated. Third, by determining that those trends toward Sufism were trends that belonged to the previous generation, he alluded to the fact that these trends might not be suitable for the current situation. Thus, he situated himself in between the older generation that was represented by the predominance of Sufism and the new generation that

He made this decision for several reasons. First, he tried to respond sincerely to the wishes of the disciples [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 24]. Second, although he had already finished writing *Kitāb min Afwāh al-Rijāl*,⁷ and *al-Ma'asūl*, he sensed that these works were not sufficient to describe the life of al-Ḥājj 'Alī [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 24]. Al-Sūsī felt that this extraordinary person should be seen from another angle, with appropriate means. For al-Sūsī, it was the Sufi perspective. He even mentions in his writings that it is impossible to deepen understanding on this exceptional man without this perspective. Third, al-Ḥājj 'Alī is his father [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 25]. Al-Sūsī tried to understand his father and compile writings on him in the most ideal way, so that what his father had sought in his life most eagerly could be depicted. As a result, he wrote about the shaykh's education, his desire to become a shaykh, his encounter with his own shaykh, his discipline (*tarbiya*) under him, his relationship with family members and villagers, his friends, his way of "educating" and disciplining his own disciples, the miracles (*karāmāt*) that he performed, lives of his children, his wife, and his poetry.

Regardless of his will to explore the life of al-Ḥājj 'Alī from a Sufi perspective, one can admit in al-Sūsī's writing some difficulties accompanied his attempt. Being a man brought up in the milieu of Sufism and later becoming a *Salafī*, he had both a deep understanding and sympathy for Sufism and a consciousness of his personal position as a *Salafī*⁸ [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 11], which obliged him to maintain a distance from Sufism. This dilemma forced him to be self-reflective on his "positionality" in his writings. One can identify his ambivalent position in his long explanation on "What is Sufism?" presented at the beginning of the work [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960): 13–21]. He explains that knowledge on Sufism (*'ilm al-taṣawwuf*) is "psychiatry" (*ṭibb al-naḥs*). This saying evokes that *'ilm al-taṣawwuf* has nothing to do with deterioration from the faith or Islam.

We have briefly reviewed the writings of al-Sūsī to grasp his general tendencies. We should take a glimpse here at some other characteristics of the tarjama way of writing. For instance, it is a well-known fact that tarjama writing, which has its roots in the Arab-Islamic tradition, forces men such as al-Sūsī, who had shaped their intellectual career as 'ulamā', to choose Arabic as the language of communication instead of choosing the language spoken in their daily lives—Tashliḥī, in al-Sūsī's case. Such preference of Arabic is sometimes

was suspicious of miracles and spiritual aspects [al-Sūsī 1960: ḥā'-zāy]. These indications overlap with the point of view he presented in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, which has a Sufi perspective. However, although al-Sūsī recorded information related to miracles in *al-Ma'asūl*, he defined himself as a historian. In contrast, as I mentioned previously, al-Sūsī attempted to discuss al-Ḥājj 'Alī with seeing himself as a so-called "fictitious" sufi, not as a historian.

7 Although the publication of *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* (1960) precedes the publication of *Kitāb min Afwāh al-Rijāl* (1962), al-Sūsī completed *Kitāb min Afwāh al-Rijāl* before he completed *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* [al-Sūsī 2009a (1960):24].

8 Rachik focuses on al-Sūsī's relationship with Sufism and Salafism [Rachik 1997: 262–265].

interpreted as making light of his own native language in his writings [‘Aṣṣīd 1999: 114–115]. Thus, although al-Ḥājj ‘Alī played an important role in disseminating the religious knowledge on jurisprudence and other religious knowledge to the common people by writing verses in tashliḥīt and by translating religious treatises written in Arabic to Tashliḥīt [Van den Boogert 1997: 72–73], these efforts seemed to be omitted from the writings of al-Sūsī.

Tarjama writing in general also has other tendencies, such as the lack of explicit allusions to women and its preference for writing in an “official” manner [Eikcleman 1985: 42]. Additionally, with regard to highly distinguished people, there is a tendency to describe only the positive aspects of the person.

Considering these indications, it can be said that al-Sūsī’s descriptions of or narratives on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī were profoundly influenced by a particular cultural bias. However, I must add some supplementary explanations for the above-mentioned points. First, it is true that al-Sūsī did not write in his native language, Tashliḥīt, as ‘Aṣṣīd indicates. This omission can be considered evidence that indicates the predominance of Arabic over Tashliḥīt. However, we must also consider the socio-historical context in which he lived. Al-Sūsī was born in 1900. He began writing *al-Ma‘asūl* during the French colonization. At that time, Arabic was the *lingua franca* employed by men of knowledge because it better served to disseminate authors’ message to the wider society. Al-Sūsī also fought against colonialism under the banner of Islam. His battle culminated in his works written in Arabic. His attributions and self-recognition as a man of knowledge and a Salafī also served as factors that influenced his preference for Arabic. Furthermore, al-Sūsī was motivated to describe local history by concentrating on the role and activities of men of knowledge [al-Sūsī 1960: hā’]. At that time, historical documents had already been written that were based on *tarjama* tradition in the Sus region [al-Ḥuḍaigī 2006; al-Tamanārtī 1999]. Al-Sūsī intended to write a history equal to these documents. His efforts ultimately inspired him follow the *tarjama* tradition and write in Arabic.

Second, as for the descriptions of women, *al-Ma‘asūl* seems not including women’s names. There is, at least, information by women in the content of *al-Ma‘asūl* [e.g. al-Sūsī 1960: 206], and there is a section included for the description of wives of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* [al-Sūsī 2009b (1960): 152–158]. These facts suggest that although al-Sūsī does not include women’s names in his works, he does not completely dismiss women’s roles and activities.

Third, in general, the components of *tarjama* include

...a genealogy, an account of formal education beginning with memorization of the Quran, specific books and subjects studied, poetry, aphorisms, and other contributions to learning, sons taught by the father, and the names of

important pupils. Specific dates are provided whenever possible, for the ability to date events itself distinguishes the traditionally educated from the unlearned [Eickelman 1985: 41].

As a result, *tarjama* usually omits some information, such as peer learning that is crucial for men of learning because it is an “unofficial” way to acquire religious knowledge in the traditional Islamic education system, or information related to politics and economic transactions [Eickelman 1985: 42]. However, we must not overlook the fact that al-Sūsī attempted to collect as many episodes as he could. In addition to the collected information mentioned above, he collected episodes that were once omitted in the *tarjama* tradition. He paid specific attention to particular events, such as economic transactions and other problems that might not have been appropriate to the construction of a sophisticated exemplary image. He indicated that he attempted to compile the most possible episodes because, as a historian, he realized that he should not solely select good episodes [al-Sūsī 1960: wāw]. He also pointed out that he did his best to describe episodes that did not match his taste, his preferences, or the tastes of intellectuals and highly cultivated people [al-Sūsī 1960: wāw]. These words mean that while he followed tradition and its style, he never lost sight of his personal goal and attempted to understand history and people from his own perspective. In this sense, *al-Ma‘asūl* and his other writings are not just the so-called traditional compendium of people from the Sūs region. Rather, keeping the official aspect of the *tarjama* tradition, al-Sūsī’s works are more concerning the “private” aspects of people’s lives.

Finally, we should take a glimpse on his way of citation. Influenced by the *tarjama* tradition, al-Sūsī always paid careful attention to refer to the people who related to him episodes on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. There are several patterns in the writings. If the informant saw or heard the news by himself, al-Sūsī would write this person’s name at the beginning of the episode. If it was somebody else such as an important disciple who narrated the story to the informant, he explained it in the following way: “Sīdī Sa‘īd heard this story from the great disciples of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī.” The writing on the episode would include multiple allusions to the additional news source and himself. In this case, he would write as follows: “I myself heard of the story several times from the Shaykh.”

Careful attention and allusion to the news source is a well-known cultural way of transmitting knowledge and legitimizing the authenticity of their knowledge and the means to acquire authority in the Islamic intellectual tradition [Messick 1993]. Including the informant’s complete names can be seen as a means of giving more authority to the writings and authors.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITINGS: *AL-MA‘ASŪL* AND *AL-TIRYĀQ AL-MUDĀWĪ*

In the previous sections, I have outlined the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī with reference to *al-Ma‘asūl*

and *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, and indicated the methodological differences of these two works. So next, what kinds of differences in detail can one point out in the narratives on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in these two works?

First, al-Sūsī consistently referred to al-Ḥājj ‘Alī as “man of the biography” (ṣāḥib al-tarjama) in *al-Ma‘asūl*. Whereas, he is called “shaykh”, or “shaykh al-Iḡhī” in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*. This simple fact implies that al-Ḥājj ‘Alī is treated in *al-Ma‘asūl* as a man who does not have exclusively the attribute of a Sufi. While in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, description is mainly concentrated on his Sufi aspect. These different namings symbolize how al-Sūsī treated al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in his works.

Second, although there are many overlapping episodes in these two works, the news sources are somewhat different. We can take up here as an example, one of the most important episodes on narrating the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī, the very moment of the encounter with his future master Sīdī Sa‘īd al-Ma‘dirī [al-Sūsī 1960: 189; 2009a (1960): 34]. In *al-Ma‘asūl*, the encounter is described based on some documents written by al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. On the other hand, al-Sūsī uses mainly what he heard from the disciples of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*. Such tendencies of preferring different sources for each work can be found throughout both writings.

Third, we should take into account whether informants are mentioned as scholars, historians or disciples. It seems that al-Sūsī prefers to use scholars’ and historians’ voices and writings as his main sources of information in *al-Ma‘asūl*, while, as I mentioned earlier, he uses many actual descriptions and narratives of disciples in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* and *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl*. Using the words and sayings of historians or men of knowledge not only enables the writer to evoke the “authenticity” of the work following the tarjama tradition, but also gives an “objective” appearance to the work. In parallel with it, selective usage of particular, concrete words and reports of disciples in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* gives an impression to the reader that the work is accomplished from the immanent point of view.

Fourth, we can admit that some information is principally mentioned in each works. For instance, in *al-Ma‘asūl*, there is some general information on the history of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya, on its naissance and diffusion in northern Morocco and subsequently in southern Morocco. This general information gives readers an impression that narratives on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī are more systematic while shedding light on the religious background of al-Ṭarīqa. At the same time, there is information not only on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s activities as a Sufi, but also as a religious scholar,⁹ and his endeavor to launch into commerce, which means that

⁹ A description of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s activities as a religious scholar is provided in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*. However, as I indicated previously, we should remain aware of the point that al-Sūsī attempts to represent al-Ḥājj ‘Alī as a Sufi who did not deviate from religious observance. In this respect, this description of his aspects as a religious scholar can be considered as its complement. Thus, although one can discover similar descriptions among two writings, their effects differ.

the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī is written from a multi-dimensional perspective in *al-Ma‘asūl*.

On the other hand, in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, there are many episodes concerning miracles, his spiritual training and work in everyday life, his education of his disciples, and so forth. This contrast between *al-Ma‘asūl* and *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* indicates al-Sūsī’s efforts to represent al-Ḥājj ‘Alī in *al-Ma‘asūl* in a more “sophisticated,” “formalized” way, whereas we can say that in *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī*, his writing explains in detail the Sufi aspect of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī.

AL-SŪSĪ’S WRITINGS IN STUDIES

Owing to voluminous works with detailed information collected over a long period including a difficult journey in the Sūs region, al-Sūsī has earned an extremely good reputation in various aspects, internationally, nationally, and locally, as a distinguished religious scholar and one of the most outstanding traditional historians in contemporary Morocco.

His works have received attention from foreign scholars, such as the French sociologist Paul Pascon [Pascon 1984: 160], American anthropologist Dale Eickelman [Eickelman 1985], Japanese anthropologist Horiuchi Masaki [Horiuchi 1995; 1998; 2002], and so forth.

On a national level, his works are studied by Moroccan historians and anthropologists who undertake research to elucidate the cultural traits of Sufism and the socio-historical roles of Sufi orders in the nineteenth and the twentieth century in Southern Morocco [Hammoudi 1997; Rachik 1997; Wizāra al-Thaqāfa al-Maghribīya 2005], and by *Amazigh* activists, or those who seek to learn more about the Amazigh identity [El-Adnani 2007; ‘Aṣīd 1998; Tozy 2006], and so forth.

However, at the same time, al-Sūsī’s works are in the limelight as first-class historical documents on the Sūs region, and are welcomed by local historians, professors, school teachers, and amateur and religious scholars who are interested in their roots and in the history of the Sūs region [al-Mutawakkil 1985; 1986; 1990a; 1990b; al-Sa‘īdī A. 2011; al-Sa‘īdī M. (ed.) 2003; al-Washkhīnī 1998]. There is widespread interest in the local history that has originated among the people from the Sūs region. This trend is primarily initiated and driven by the people who have some connection with traditional Islamic education [Horiuchi 2002; Liqā’ Āit Wāfqā 1996; Jam‘īya Adūz li al-Tanmiya wa al-Ta‘āwun 1996; al-Mutawakkil 1985; 1986; 1990a; 1990b; al-Hāshimī & Horiuchi 2001]. To reconstruct the local history, al-Sūsī’s works have come to hold an important position as authentic books. Thus, al-Sūsī’s works are used in the ongoing process of the reconfiguration of the local history.

In general, al-Sūsī gets positive evaluations among local historians. On the contrary, in the national context, although he gets a high evaluation from some scholars, other scholars look at his work in a more critical way [‘Aṣīd 1998]. In addition, there have also been attempts to use his data to deepen the understanding of some cultural traits of Moroccan society, as we will see later [Hammoudi 1997].

The influence and importance of al-Sūsī's work does not stop here. As one can easily suppose, his works are indispensable for the members of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya, especially for those who are disciples of al-Ḥājj 'Alī and who were initiated into a Sufī under the guidance of al-Ḥājj 'Alī's successors. For the actual representative (*muqaddem al-kabīr*) of al-Ḥājj 'Alī, "al-Sūsī's works are everything". At the same time, for a disciple born in Ilgh, the native village of al-Ḥājj 'Alī, and for others, al-Sūsī's writings are indispensable for knowing the life of their shaykh. However, to be a Sufī or to train oneself to be a better Sufī, works such as *al-Ma'asūl*, *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl*, and *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* do not have as much importance as *'Iqd al-Jumān*, in which one can see the messages of the shaykh on what his disciples should do for their spiritual training [al-Sūsī 1984]. Then, among those writings, *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl*, and *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* are highly evaluated because they contain various voices of major disciples of al-Ḥājj 'Alī. It is important to note that the works of al-Sūsī tend to be evaluated based on the information included in his works, rather than with complete dependence on al-Sūsī's authority. However, regardless of these indications on the precedence of *'Iqd al-Jumān*, and the voices of disciples, these Sufis also admit the importance of the works of al-Sūsī on the life of al-Ḥājj 'Alī, and approved of his reputation.

Occasions for reciting the episodes on al-Ḥājj 'Alī written in al-Sūsī's writings are various. However, one can admit that one of the important occasions is the *mūsem* (saint festival) that is held annually for three days in the *zāwiya*-s of al-Ḥājj 'Alī al-Darqāwī [Saito 2004]. During these days, when I participated in the *mūsem*, there were sermons by the actual successor of the shaykh, and throughout these discourses, the successor often referred to the life of al-Ḥājj 'Alī. The episodes on al-Ḥājj 'Alī written in the writings of al-Sūsī were also narrated in a reunion held in the house of a disciple who welcomed and accommodated disciples who had visited the *zawiya* from all over Morocco.

In this section, we learned how al-Sūsī's works have been evaluated in international, national, and local contexts. One can examine various evaluations provided by a variety of readers of al-Sūsī's works. These interpretations may have been created because al-Sūsī's works, in themselves, contain various aspects, including information that follows *tarjama* tradition and some descriptions that surpass it. Al-Sūsī's works are also characterized by the inclusion of detailed information based on quotations taken from various individuals who were not necessarily men of knowledge. These include narratives of disciples of al-Ḥājj 'Alī, friends, villagers, and even his wife. In these respects, al-Sūsī's works that aim to shed light on the diverse aspects of al-Ḥājj 'Alī are, in themselves, multidimensional works characterized by their multi-vocality. Furthermore, these multi-vocal narratives of al-Ḥājj 'Alī suggest that al-Ḥājj 'Alī's relationships with his disciples may have been varied and complex.

MASTER AND DISCIPLE

Here the brilliant work of Moroccan anthropologist Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, is worth reexamining [Hammoudi 1997]. He takes up al-Ḥājj ‘Alī as an exemplar to elaborate his argument on the cultural foundation of authoritarianism and to establish his model. He devotes many pages to describe the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. Hammoudi’s work will serve to bring the particularity of the writings of al-Sūsī on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī to light.

On exploring the cultural foundation of Moroccan authoritarianism, Hammoudi emphasizes the asymmetrical nature of the social relationship in Moroccan society in general, and juxtaposes it with the relationship between the shaykh and the murīd of the Sufī tradition in particular. Here the shaykh–murīd relationship is conceptualized as the archetype of an asymmetrical social relationship characterized by control and obedience.

The elaboration of his theoretical model, the “master–disciple relationship,” became possible with reference to (and by the combination of) the contributions of two scholars. First, it is shaped by the adaptation of Michel Foucault’s argument on “discipline.” Second, this model is composed of and given its concrete shape with reference to the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī, written by al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, as its exemplar. Although Hammoudi’s description is enriched by various episodes on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī, such as his wandering in the mountains, initiation, absolute obedience to his master, severe spiritual training, inversion of his status from disciple to master, and so forth, the fact that Hammoudi interprets al-Sūsī’s writings from the perspective of Foucault’s argument on “discipline” results in demonstrating and interpreting al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s relationship exclusively as that of control and subordination. Thus, all the descriptions of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s training, education, and his various relationships with shaykhs and murīds converge into subordination and control.

It is a fascinating understanding, however, it dismisses the multidimensional aspects of the relationship between shaykh and murīds by regulating it to an oversimplified formula. Furthermore, Hammoudi considers that the master–disciple relationship crystallized in that of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī is applicable to overall social relationships in Morocco. It results in an abstraction of their particular socio-historical contexts. In this sense, it can be said that it is a sort of static model that emphasizes this type of social relationship. Second, his model sees the relationship only from the perspective of the theory of power and discipline, which results in a narrow outlook of the relationship. Moreover, it is worth questioning the applicability of the notion of discipline that was shaped to analyze a particular socio-cultural history of discipline in Western societies, to the cases of Middle Eastern societies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have explored some characteristics of al-Sūsī’s writings on the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. To conclude this essay, I will indicate several points related to ethnographic writings and the

theme of our papers.

Concerning the arguments on experimental ethnography, I pointed out at first that fundamental problems lie in authority, power, and representation.

Although al-Sūsī reflects various voices and narratives of the people who had direct relationships with al-Ḥājj ‘Alī, we should say that he situates himself in the authoritative position as the author of those writings. In fact, as we saw, al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī has built a steadfast reputation as a prominent historian and scholar both in contemporary Morocco and internationally.

However, we should not make light of al-Sūsī’s consistent attitude in taking the narratives of the people very seriously. We saw his deep attachment to the specificity of proper names, following the tarjama tradition. Moreover, as I indicated, members of al-Ṭarīqa al-Darqāwīya admit the importance of *al-Tiryāq al-Mudāwī* and *Kitāb min Afwāḥ al-Rijāl* not because of the author but because of the narrators who were leading disciples of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. Of course, al-Sūsī’s authority and his reputation did not become the direct object of criticism in their discourses. His authority was approved without question. However, what was important for members of al-ṭarīqa (*fuqarā’*) was the very narratives of major disciples who could be seen as their exemplars. The narratives narrated in the writings can surpass the authority of the author in this case. This means that the innumerable quotations taken from various disciples, friends, and acquaintances of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī that were included in the writings provide authority to al-Sūsī. However, they also serve as clues to the eradication of his authority. Just at the point where he sincerely attempts to echo the narratives of various people in his writings, his authority becomes relativized. A solution to the problem related to the distinctions between “self” and “other,” or “observer” and “observed” was discovered by this process.

We also saw that al-Sūsī intentionally choose the ways to describe al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s life. Al-Sūsī describes al-Ḥājj ‘Alī’s life not only as a historian collecting documents and stories of religious scholars, but also as a “fictitious” Sufī by using the actual words of disciples of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī. In other words, despite his acute awareness of the fact that he was not a Sufī, al-Sūsī tried his best to describe the life of al-Ḥājj ‘Alī from the Sufī perspective. He tried to alienate himself and adopt the “other’s point of view” while remaining aware of the difficulties involved. Undoubtedly, this contradiction and ambivalent positionality enriches the narratives on al-Ḥājj ‘Alī provided in the writings of al-Sūsī.

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