
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* Belief in *Futuwwa* on Her Qur'ān Translation

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| ABSTRACT

Qur'ān translations are forms of traditional or rational *tafāsīr* [exegeses]. Laleh Bakhtiar, an Iranian-American who converted from Christianity to Islam, applied a rational approach in her Qur'ān translation. Extensive research has surveyed Bakhtiar's feminist perspectives (Kidwai, 2018) and her reliance on dictionaries (Hassen, 2012). However, the investigation of the influence of her *Sufi* views on her translation has not been previously addressed. This paper is an empirical account of the impact of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa* on her translation choices. To achieve this goal, Bakhtiar's translations of the verses that include the term فَتًى *fatā* [a young man] and its derivatives are analytically compared to *Sufi* and *Shi'i* translations to analyse Bakhtiar's choices and highlight her adaptation of allegorical hermeneutics. The underpinning approach of this paper is a combination of Gerard Genette's paratexts (1997) and Hussein Abdul-Raof's criteria of the *Sufi* approach to Qur'ānic exegesis (2012). The main finding is that by adopting *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning and rejecting *az-ẓahir* [exoteric] meaning, Bakhtiar goes far away from orthodox Islamic traditions in her interpretation of the Qur'ān. Moreover, through applying the concept *futuwwa* to men and women, she deconstructs the patriarchal framework, in which the virtue of *futuwwa* exists, and expands the connotative meaning of this aspect, which results in sending radical messages completely different from those in the source text. Future researchers can broaden the scope of the analysis and examine a plethora of contemporary Qur'ān translations to explore the effect of the translators' beliefs on their interpretations of the Qur'ān.

| KEYWORDS

Esoteric meaning, Exoteric meaning, *Futuwwa*, Paratexts, *Sufism*

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1. Introduction

Qur'ān translations are forms of *tafāsīr* [exegeses], mainstream and non-mainstream. The former relies on *Sunna* and *ḥadīth*, while the latter minimises the role of *ḥadīth* and enhances the use of personal opinions. Raof (2012) classifies non-mainstream exegeses as *Sunni* (*Mu'tazilī*, *Ash'arī* & *Sufi*) and *non-Sunni* (*Shi'i*, *Isma'īlī* & *Ibāḍī*). Mainstream exegetes apply *tafsīr bi-l-ma'thūr*, *tafsīr* transmitted from Prophet Muhammad, *aṣ-ṣaḥāba* [the companions], *at-tabi'un* [the first successors], and *tabi' at-tabi'un* [the successors of the successors] (Abu Zahra, 2015). On the other hand, non-mainstream exegetes implement *tafsīr bi-r-ra'y*; they apply *ta'wil* [interpretation] of the verses of the Qur'ān.

Although *Sufi* teachings first attracted *Sunnīs*, and a large number of early Muslims lived spiritual lives out of unbounded piety, today it is common to find *Sufis* who hold *Sunni* beliefs and at the same time value *Shi'i* leaders. Several scholars consider *Sufism* as the heart of Islam, yet others perceive it as an unacceptable distortion of Islamic beliefs and way of life (Rahim, 2013). The opponents of *Sufism* defend their stance by confirming that it did not exist during the time of Prophet Muhammad and that *Sufis* apply a subjective approach in their interpretation of the Qur'ān (Musharraf, 2013). They believe that each verse in the Qur'ān has up to seven deeper meanings; they rely on the hidden meanings (Sands, 2006; Ayoub, 1984). Thus, *Sufis* invoke allegorical hermeneutics and incorporate exegetical views that are not compatible with the literal sense of the Qur'ānic verses.

This paper is based on a chapter in my PhD thesis, in which I compare four Qur'an translations to explore the impact of the translators' ideologies on their translation choices. While examining the paratexts of the selected translations (prefaces, introductions, forewords & footnotes), I realised that the preface of Laleh Bakhtiar's translation (2012) sends messages that Bakhtiar believes in *Sufism*, and she "practices spiritual integrity (*futuwwa*) or spiritual chivalry" (xix). She mentioned that she was educated in *Sufism* which comprises both *Sunni* and *Shi'i* views. This statement raises the question of whether, in her Qur'an translation, Bakhtiar utilises *az-zahir* [exoteric] meaning common in *Sunni* schools or *al-batin* [esoteric] meaning frequently applied by *Shi'i*.

In order to answer this question, I implement an eclectic approach, a combination of Genette's paratexts (1997) and Raof's criteria of the *Sufi* approach to Qur'anic exegesis (2012). First, I review articles about *Sufism* and the concept of *futuwwa* as an element of *Sufi* beliefs. According to Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri (2019), the *Sufi* path of self-transformation ends with *futuwwa*, *jihad an-nafs* to reach *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals] or spiritual enlightenment. The term relates to the characteristics of *al-fatā*, Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Therefore, I read the whole Qur'an, verse-by-verse, and select the ten verses that include the word قَتَّى *fatā* [a young man] and its derivatives. Then I analytically compare Bakhtiar's translation of these ten verses to another *Sufi* translation and a *Shi'i* translation, with the aim of exploring the impact of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa* on her translation choices for these terms.

2. Sufism and the Sufi Belief in Futuwwa

The term *Sufism* was coined in Kufa when Jabir Ibn Hayyan was described as a *sufi*, a man who seeks deeper and more intimate relation to God (Ibn Arabi, 1961; Nicholson, 1947). The *Sufi* school in Kufa was close to *Shi'a* teachings of the unification with God and the inner experience of *tawhid* [God's unity]. Linguistically, the term *Sufi* literally means "woollen," "someone wearing wool," or "practicing purification to achieve *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals]" (*Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit*, 2004, p. 529). Sulaiman Lebbe Rifai (2021) confirms that *Sufism* is a spiritual journey to purify one's heart and soul in order to find the truth of divine love and knowledge. According to Sachiko Murata (1992), the *Sufi* path comprises three stages: It begins with *muruwwa*, moral reasonableness, which leads to *futuwwa*, spiritual integrity, and then ends with *walāya*, sainthood.

Sufis value *muruwwa* and *futuwwa* and consider them significant virtues toward self-development. Cyrus Ali Zargar, (2019) states that *muruwwa* means manliness, and before Islam, Bedouin tribes linked *muruwwa* to characteristics such as "loyalty, generosity, patronage, and retaliation" (p. 6), while *futuwwa*, translated as chivalry, refers to a young man with good morals. He declares that "In Islamic ethical texts more broadly, *futuwwa* came to represent all that might be noble in a young man: courage, self-restraint, humility, modesty, and honesty" (p. 2). Lloyd Ridgeon (2010) and Erik Ohlander (2008) contend that, in Iran, *futuwwa* movements, absorbed by *Sufi* orders, relate the term *futuwwa* to the *fatā*, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the symbol of good manners and manliness. Although the two components of virtue: *futuwwa* and *muruwwa* were defined as traits of the honorable young man, *Sufis* focus on *futuwwa* since it is *al-maqsid* [the purpose], spiritual chivalry.

Sufis use the term *futuwwa* to describe young men as ideal warriors who reached *makarim al-akhlaq*. *Sufis* do not use the term for slaves nor women since, for them, women's virtue is "modesty, or *hayā*" (Zargar, 2019, p. 4). By confining this term to men, *Sufis* endow it with a patriarchal framework. However, examining Bakhtiar's translation, I found that she utilises the *Sufi* term *futuwwa* for men and women. For example, she uses it for Abraham in Q 21: 60, the *fitya* [young men] of the cave mentioned in Q 18: 13, and *fatayātikum* in Q 24: 33. Bakhtiar's choices show the changes in the usage of the term from focusing on the patriarchal theme of great men to employing it for men and women. Thus, de-gendering the term *futuwwa* in Bakhtiar's translation requires investigating the criteria of the *Sufi* approach to Qur'anic exegesis.

3. The Sufi Approach to Qur'anic Exegesis

The *Sufi tafsir* [exegesis] developed in the Islamic history because some mystic scholars attempted to understand the texts of the Qur'an and *hadith* according to mystical theories and practices. They outweighed the esoteric (allegorical) meaning of the Qur'an over the exoteric (literal) meaning. According to Raof (2012):

Allegorical hermeneutics is rational and is hinged upon the following: (a) personal opinion (*dalil zanni*), (b) discovery of meaning (*istinbat*), (c) symbolism and allusion (*ishāri*), (d) probability (*al-ihtimal*), and (e) connotative meaning (*al-ma'na al-batin*). Allegorical exegesis represents *Sufi* and *Mu'tazili* exegetical views. (p. 2)

This quote shows that the *Sufi* approach to Qur'anic exegesis is not a traditional *tafsir* [exegesis], which relies on *al-ma'na az-zahir* [exoteric] meaning. This quote illustrates that displaying *Sufi* perspectives in Qur'an translations results from applying a rational/hypothetical *tafsir* [exegesis], suggestive interpretation. According to Al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085), rational exegesis is classified as *ta'wil maqbūl* or *ghair sa'igh/ madhmum*; the former is an acceptable hypothetical interpretation of the Qur'an, while the latter is "not a permissible, unacceptable hypothetical interpretation of the Qur'an" (Al-'Akk, 1986, p. 59). Raof (2012) classifies *Sufi* theologians as non-mainstream exegetes because they reject *az-zahir* [exoteric] meaning and adopt *al-batin* [esoteric] meaning. Thus, *Sufi* translators of the Qur'an highlight the connotative meaning and ignore the denotative meaning.

The *Sufi* approach to Qur'anic exegesis minimises the role of *ḥadīth*, which is highly considered by mainstream exegetes. Based on this approach, the Qur'ān has inward meanings (Quasem, 1979). Raof (2012) confirms that the *Sufi* approach is viewed as *ta'wīl* rather than *tafsīr* [exegesis], and he sets four criteria for the notion of *ta'wīl*. These criteria are: *ad-dalīl aḥ-ḥaqqī/ ijtihād* [hypothetical opinion], *istinbāṭ* [discovery of meaning], *al-ma'na al-bāṭin* [esoteric meaning], and *iḥṭimal* [probability]. Raof adds that, unlike the traditional approach to Qur'anic exegesis, the *Sufi* approach is not necessarily based on Qur'anic intertextuality (*tafsīr al-qur'an bil-qur'an*). Thus, Qur'ān translators who apply the *Sufi* approach invoke esoteric meanings and rely on *ijtihad* to display their beliefs.

4. Bakhtiar's *Sufi* Belief in *Futuwwa* in Her Qur'ān Translation

4.1 Detecting *Sufi* Beliefs in the Paratexts of Bakhtiar's Translation

Paratexts are elements around the text; they impact the reception of the target text (TT). Paratexts comprise peritexts and epitexts (Genette, 1997, pp. 1-2). Peritexts are divided into publishers' and translators'. Examples of publishers' peritexts are the covers of the books, the visibility of the translators' names, titles, title pages, and blurbs, whereas translators' peritexts are prefaces, forewords, introductions, and footnotes. Epitexts are interviews, reviews, TV shows, self-commentaries by the translators, and the awards received by the translators (Batchelor, 2018). These tools send messages about the translated text.

The preface of Bakhtiar's translation shows that she was a *Sufi* Iranian-American psychologist. Her father was an Iranian physician from Tehran, and her mother was a Protestant American from Idaho. It also reveals that Bakhtiar married an Iranian-Muslim architect and moved to Iran when she was twenty-four years. At that age, she converted from Christianity to Islam, and, at Tehran University, she learned the teachings of Islam, Qur'anic Arabic, and *Sufism* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Furthermore, the preface of Bakhtiar's translation gives information about her methodology of Qur'ān translation. She confirms beginning with the words, preparing lists of all the nouns, verbs, and particles that appear in the Qur'ān, translating from these lists, and then creating a database. Bakhtiar states that she applied formal equivalence to produce Qur'anic translation that relates to a larger audience through using inclusive language.

Additionally, in her preface, Bakhtiar (2012) states that she neither uses footnotes nor parenthetical phrases because "the Qur'ān is not a historic text, frozen in the time period of its revelation" (xvi). She agrees with "Al-Ghazzali [who] says each person should read or recite [the Qur'ān], not as a historical document, because then it loses its eternal quality, but as it relates to the person reading or reciting it" (p. xvi). This statement sends a message that Bakhtiar's choices reflect her understanding of the Qur'ān and display her theological views.

Moreover, in her preface, Bakhtiar reveals her belief in *futuwwa*. She states that her translation "is the translation of a person who practices spiritual integrity (*futuwwa*)" (xix) and that in the *Sufi* path *muruwwa* [manliness] leads to "*futuwwa* [young manliness] or spiritual chivalry" (xx). According to Tymoczko (2003), "[T]he ideology of a translation resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator, and in its relevance to the receiving audience" (p. 183). Bakhtiar's position in her translation aligns with the beliefs of her *Sufi* teacher who states:

The guilds and different orders of chivalry (*futuwwāt*) reveal a link between Shi'ism and Sufism because on the one hand they grew in a Shi'ite climate with particular devotion to 'Alī and on the other hand many of them became attached to Sufi orders and became their extension in the form of 'craft initiations'. (Nasr, 1970, p. 238)

Nasr's quote explains that the term *futuwwa* is a *Shi'i-Sufi* expression since its core is the *Shi'i* belief in *Imām* Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and it is attached to the *Sufi* orders. Thus, the translation of the word فَتَى *fatā* [a young man] and its derivatives are analysed and compared to the *Sufi* translation by Hulusi (2013) and the *Shi'i* translation by Naqvi (2016) to explore the impact of Bakhtiar's views on her translation choices.

4.2 Analysing Bakhtiar's Translations of the Derivatives of the Word فَتَى *fatā* in Q 18

The word فَتَى *fatā* [a young man] and its derivatives are mentioned in ten verses: Q 4: 25, Q 12: 30, Q 12: 36, Q 12: 62, Q 18: 10, Q 18: 13, Q 18: 60, Q 18: 62, Q 21: 60, and Q 24: 33. Four of these verses are in *Sūrat Al-Kahf*, and in her translation of these verses, Bakhtiar adheres to the *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa* and renders the word فَتَى *fatā* as "a spiritual warrior (m)" (Bakhtiar, 2012, p. 350). Examining these verses will reveal the impact of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* beliefs on her choices. Thus, in this paper, I investigate the effect of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* beliefs on shaping the meanings and messages of the selected verses.

Q 18 opens and closes with references to the Qur'ān; it takes its name *Al-Kahf* from the story of the people of the cave (verses 9-26). This *Sūra* also deals with other two stories: the story of Mūsā and the man of knowledge (verses 60-82), and the story of Dhul-Qarnayn and his life and travels in the service of God (verses 83-99). The words الْفِتْيَانُ *al-fityā* and فِتْيَانٌ *fityā* appear in the story of the sleepers of the cave, and the word الْفِتْيَانُ appears twice in the story of Mūsā. Table 1 below shows Bakhtiar's translation of Q 18: 10, which includes the word الْفِتْيَانُ *al-fityā*:

Table 1
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 18: 10

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 18: 10	إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا	And when the spiritual warriors took shelter in the cave, then, they said: Our Lord! Give us mercy from Your Presence and furnish us with right mindedness in our affairs. (p. 274)	youths (p. 289)	youths (p. 298)

Table 1 shows that Bakhtiar renders the term *الْفِتْيَةُ* *al-fityā* as “the spiritual warriors” although the meaning of the word is “young men between adolescence and manhood” (*Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasīṭ*, 2004, p. 673). In Q 18: 10, God tells the story of the young men who fled from their people for the sake of their religion. They feared persecution, so they fled taking refuge in the cave of a mountain to hide from their people. When they entered the cave, they asked God to show mercy and kindness towards them (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Unlike Bakhtiar, both the *Sufi* Hulusi (2013) and the *Shi'i* Naqvi (2016) render the word *الْفِتْيَةُ* *al-fityā* as “youths”. Bakhtiar's unusual choice shows that she imbues her translation with an ideological colour of *Sufism*, which flourished in Iran since the Mongols-domination period in the 12th century (Lewisohn, 1998). Her choice of “the spiritual warriors” reflects her *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa*, which symbolises a series of ethical values. Hence, Bakhtiar utilises *al-ma'na al-bāṭin* [the esoteric meaning]; this choice endows the term with specific characteristics not shown in the verse. Table 2 below demonstrates that Bakhtiar adheres to the same choice in her translation of Q 18: 13:

Table 2
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 18: 13

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 18: 13	تَحْنُ نَقِصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاَهُمْ هُدًى	We relate this tidings to you with The Truth. Truly, they were male spiritual warriors who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance. (p. 274)	youths (p. 290)	youths (p. 299)

Table 2 shows that Bakhtiar renders the term *فِتْيَةٌ* *fityā* [young men] in Q 18: 13 as “male spiritual warriors” unlike the *Sufi* Hulusi (2013) and the *Shi'i* Naqvi (2016) who utilise “youths”. In Q 18: 13, God gives the story of the people of the cave in detail stating that they were young men who believed in God and that God increased them in guidance (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Similar to *Sufis* who believe that each verse in the Qur'an has seven layers of meanings, Bakhtiar transfers the deepest meaning of the verse to convey the message that these young males were more accepting of the truth and more guided than the elders who adhered to the religion of falsehood. *Sufis* who believe in *futuwwa* link the term to *makārim al-akhlāq* [good morals] which is “attained through *jihad an-nafs*” (Ali, 2020, p. 9; Al-Jader, 1999). Bakhtiar's choice reflects her *Sufi* belief in the spirituality of Prophet Mohammad and confirms that *futuwwa* is part of *al-akhlāq* represented in *al-fatā*, *Imām* Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law.

Similarly in translation the verses about the story of Mūsā, Bakhtiar transfers the word *لِفَتْنَةٍ* *lifātāh* applying *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning although the term has a different meaning than the meanings of the words *الْفِتْيَةُ* *al-fityā* and *فِتْيَةٌ* *fityā* in Q 18: 10 and Q 18: 13. Table 3 below highlights Bakhtiar's translation of Q 18: 60:

Table 3
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 18: 60

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 18: 60	وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَتْنَهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَتِلَّغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا A.	Mention when Moses said to his spiritual warrior : I will not quit until I reach the place of meeting of the two seas even if I will go on for many years. (p. 280)	the youngster in his service (p. 295)	boy [i.e. servant] (p. 305)

Table 3 shows that Bakhtiar transfers the hidden meaning of the word لِقَتْنَهُ *lifatah*, which contextually means to his male servant. In Q 18: 60, God tells the story of Mūsā who said to his boy-servant that he would keep on travelling until he reached the place where the two seas met (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). The *Sufi* Hulusi (2013) renders the term as “the youngster in his service” and the *Shi'i* Naqvi (2016) transfers it as boy [i.e. servant], whereas Bakhtiar is adamant to keep using “spiritual warrior,” which reflects her views in the concept *futuwwa*. The word لِقَتْنَهُ *lifatah* refers to Yusha' Ibn Nun, Mūsā's nephew, follower, student, **servant**, and successor. **Bakhtiar uses** *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning since Yusha' was a young man who learned knowledge from Mūsā, and for *Sufis*, who extract the deep meanings of verses, Yusha' has the characteristics of *futuwwa*. She also sticks to the same choice in Q 18: 62 as shown below:

Table 4
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 18: 62

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 18: 62	فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِقَتْنَهُ آتِنَا عَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا	Then, when they crossed, he said to his spiritual warrior : Give us our breakfast. Certainly, we met fatigue from our journey. (p. 280)	servant (p. 295)	boy (p. 305)

In Q 18: 62, God completes the story of Mūsā saying that **when Mūsā and Yusha' had passed beyond the junction between the two seas**, Mūsā **asked his servant to bring their meal as this journey** had certainly exhausted them (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Bakhtiar's consistent use of *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning of قَتَى *fatā* [young men] and its derivatives as “spiritual warrior” confirms her *Sufi* belief in the allegorical meaning of the term. For her, as a *Sufi*, Yusha' is not a mere servant; he is *al-fatā*, who has *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals].

4.3 Analysing Bakhtiar's Translations of the Derivatives of the Word قَتَى *fatā* in Q 12

Like Q 18, Q 12 opens and closes with references to the Qur'an; it deals with the story of Yūsuf, the response of people in Mecca, the punishment met by earlier disbelievers, and encouragement for the Prophet. Table 5 below shows Bakhtiar's translation of Q 12: 30, which includes the word فَتَنَهَا *fatāhā*:

Table 5
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 12: 30

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 12: 30	B. وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرْوَدُ فَتَنُهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهَا فَذَرَّتْهَا حَائِبًا لِنَزْلِهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ	And the ladies in the city said: The woman of the great one solicits her spiritual warrior , enticing him to evil. Surely, he captivated her longing. Truly, we consider her to be clearly wandering astray. (p. 219)	slave (p. 237)	slave boy (p. 239)

Table 5 shows that Bakhtiar utilises “her spiritual warrior” for the word فَتَاهَا *fatāhā*, whose *zahir* [exoteric] meaning is “slave”. It is rendered as “slave boy” by the *Shi'i* Naqvi (2016) and “slave” by the *Sufi* Hulusi (2013). In Q 12: 30, God states that the news of what happened between the wife of ‘Aziz of Misr and Yūsuf spread in the city as women of chiefs said that she was luring her servant to have sex with her, and they criticised her and considered her astray (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Based on *tafāsīr* [exegeses], *al-ma'na az-zahir* [exoteric meaning] is “slave”, while *al-ma'na al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning is *fatā*, from *futuwwa*, a spiritual warrior who reached *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals] (Bendjebbar & Jidel, 2021). Bakhtiar’s choice reflects her belief in Yūsuf’s chastity. Table 6 below shows Bakhtiar’s translation of Q 12: 36, which includes the word فَتَيَانٌ *fatayān*:

Table 6
Bakhtiar’s Translation of Q 12: 36

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (<i>Sufi</i>)	Hulusi (<i>Sufi</i>)	Naqvi (<i>Shi'i</i>)
Q 12: 36	C. وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانٌ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرْنِي آعْصِرُ خَمْراً وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرْنِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزاً تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ	And there entered with him in the prison two male spiritual warriors . One of them said: Truly, I see myself pressing grapes in season. And the other said: Truly, I see myself carrying bread over my head from which birds are eating. <i>They said</i> : Tell us the interpretation of this. Truly, we consider you among the ones who are doers of good. (p. 220)	two young men (p. 238)	two young men (p. 240)

Table 6 demonstrates that Bakhtiar employs “two male spiritual warriors” for the word فَتَيَانٌ *fatayān*. Q 12: 36 says that when Yūsuf arrived at the prison, he met two other sentenced criminals, who were also admitted there. One of them was the cup-bearer of the king, and the other was a cook. These two were accused of trying to poison the king through food or drink, and their case was under investigation; therefore, they were kept in prison. These prisoners thought Yūsuf was a man of piety, so they asked him to give an interpretation of their dreams (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Bakhtiar’s choice of *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning of *fatā* equates these prisoners to Yusha’ as a spiritual warrior who seeks *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals]; however, by this choice, she decontextualises the term and changes its meaning. She expands the connotations of the term and generalise its use. Table 7 below gives another example of ignoring the contextual meaning:

Table 7
Bakhtiar’s Translation of Q 12: 62

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (<i>Sufi</i>)	Hulusi (<i>Sufi</i>)	Naqvi (<i>Shi'i</i>)
Q 12: 62	D. وَقَالَ لِفَتَيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بَعْضُهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ	And <i>Joseph</i> said to his spiritual warriors : Lay their merchandise into their saddlebags so that perhaps they will recognize it when they turned about to their household so that perhaps they will return. (p. 223)	servants (p. 240)	young ones [servants] (p. 243)

Table 7 shows that the *Shi'i* translator Naqvi (2016, p. 243) considers the context and renders the term لِفَتَيَانِهِ as “young ones [servants]”, and the *Sufi* Hulusi (2013) transfers it as “servants”, while Bakhtiar sticks to *al-bāṭinī* [esoteric] *Sufi* meaning in all contexts. In Q 12: 62, when Yūsuf’s brothers entered on him in his court, he knew them, but they did not recognise them because they threw him away when he was a child. Yūsuf ordered فَتَيَانِهِ *fityānihi* [his servants/ slaves] to put the money or the merchandise his brothers brought with them to exchange for food into their saddlebags (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). Bakhtiar’s insistence to use *al-bāṭin* [esoteric] meaning deviates the contextual meaning since Yūsuf’s servants cannot be equated to the people of the cave, Yūsuf, or Yusha’ in their morals and purification.

4.3 Analysing Bakhtiar’s Translation of the Word فَتَى *fatā* in Q 21

Q 21 takes its name *Al-Anbiyā'* from the list of prophets mentioned from verse 48 to verse 91. It aims at reassuring Prophet Mohammad by reminding him of God’s grace and support to his prophets. Q 21 stresses the fact that Prophet Muhammad has

been sent to the whole world with the same message of the earlier prophets, and it warns the disbelievers of the Judgement Day, from which there is no escape. Table 8 below illustrates Bakhtiar's rendition of the word فَتَى *fatā* in Q21: 60:

Table 8
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 21: 60

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 21: 60	E. قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ	They said: We heard a spiritual warrior (m) mention them. It is said he is Abraham. (p. 308)	a young man (p. 324)	a young man (p. 337)

Table 8 shows Bakhtiar's choice of "a spiritual warrior" for the word فَتَى *fatā*, which means "a young man between adolescence and manhood" (*Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasīṭ*, 2004, p. 673). Her choice differs from the *Shi'i* translation by Naqvi (2016) and the *Sufi* interpretation by Hulusi (2013), who transfer this word as "a young man". Q 21: 60 reports that when people saw the idols that they were worshipping smashed, they said that they heard a young man called Ibrahim talking with inferiority about their idols, and perhaps he was the one who plotted against them (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). The verse does not imply that the reporters in the verse were praising the one who destroyed the idols. This positive connotation to Ibrahim results from Bakhtiar's opinion of him. Bakhtiar's choice of "a spiritual warrior" symbolises a series of ethical values and conveys her *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa*.

4.4 Analysing Bakhtiar's Translation of the Word فَتَاتِكُمْ *fatayatikum* in Q 4 and Q 24

Q 4 takes its title *An-Nisā'* from its focus on the rights of women (verses 3–4, 127–30). It urges justice to children and orphans and mentions inheritance (verses 5–12) and marriage laws. Q4 also focuses on the relationship between Muslims and the People of the Book (verses 44, 61); it warns Muslims against oppressing the weak and helpless (verses 71–6) and the intrigues of the hypocrites (verses 88–91, 138–46). Bakhtiar's translation of the word فَتَاتِكُمْ in Q4: 25 reveals her ideologies as it is shown in table 9:

Table 9
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 4: 25

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 4: 25	F. وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكَحِ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنَ فَتَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ	And whoever of you is not affluent to be able to marry the ones who are free, chaste females, the female believers, then, from females whom your right hands possessed, the ones who are female spiritual warriors , female believers (p. 74)	girls in their possession (p. 115)	slave girls (p. 84)

Table 9 highlights the fact that Bakhtiar violates limiting the concept of *futuwwa* and the characteristics of the *fatā*, who is religious and has *makarim al-akhlaq* [good morals] to men. She renders the word فَتَاتِكُمْ *fatayātikum* in Q 4: 25 as "female spiritual warriors" although the term means "female slaves". The verse says that whoever cannot afford to wed free believing women may marry believing girls from their slaves. This meaning is reflected by the *Shi'i* Naqvi (2016) and the *Sufi* Hulusi (2013), who utilise "slave girls" and "girls in their possession" respectively. However, Bakhtiar does not differentiate between men and women; she states "that this translation was undertaken by a woman to bring both men and women to equity" (Bakhtiar, 2012, xxi). This statement reveals Bakhtiar's intention to embrace gender balance. Table 10 below confirms Bakhtiar's use of *futuwwa* for women:

Table 10
Bakhtiar's Translation of Q 24: 33

Verse	Source Text	Bakhtiar (Sufi)	Hulusi (Sufi)	Naqvi (Shi'i)
Q 24: 33	وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ تَحَصُّنًا لِنَبِيِّكُمْ أَلَيْسَ لَكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا	Compel not your spiritual warriors (f) against their will to prostitution when they (f) wanted chastity, that you be looking for the advantage of this present life. (p. 334)	bondmaids (p. 350)	slave girls (p. 376)

Table 10 shows that Bakhtiar renders the word فَتَاتِكُمْ *fatayātikum* in Q 24: 33 as “your spiritual warriors (f)”; however, the contextual meaning is “slave girls” (Ibn Kathīr, 2002). The *Shi'i* translator Naqvi (2016) transfers the term as “slave girls”; similarly, the *Sufi* translator Hulusi (2013) utilises “bondmaids”. Bakhtiar’s different choice confirms that Iranian “Sufis were not convinced by the apparent meaning (*al-zāhir*) of the verses, but they sought to discover (*al-bātin*) the hidden meanings of the Qur’an’s phrases” (Musharraf, 2013, p. 34). Bakhtiar selects the esoteric meaning of the word, which is only understood by *Sufis* who are familiar with this hidden meaning, which is not mentioned in the ST. Furthermore, table 10 demonstrates that Bakhtiar adds the letter “f” to emphasise the feminist perspective common in America. Table 11 below summarises Bakhtiar’s translations of the word فَتَى *fatā* and its derivatives in the ten verses in the Qur’an to highlight her views:

Table 11

The Different Lexis for the Word فَتَى *Fatā* [a Young Man] and Its Derivatives

Verse	Term	Bakhtiar	Naqvi (<i>Shi'i</i>)	Hulusi (<i>Sufi</i>)
Q 4: 25	فَتَاتِكُمْ	your female spiritual warriors	slave girls	girls in their possession
Q 12: 30	فَتْنَهَا	her spiritual warrior	slave boy	slave
Q 12: 36	فَتْيَان	two male spiritual warriors	two young men	two young men
Q 12: 62	فَتْيَانِهِ	his spiritual warriors	young ones [servants]	servants
Q 18: 10	فَتْيَانُهُ	the spiritual warriors	youths	youths
Q 18: 13	فَتْيَانُهُ	male spiritual warriors	youths	youths
Q 18: 60	فَتْنَهُ	his spiritual warrior	boy [i.e. servant],	the youngster in his service
Q 18: 62	فَتْنَهُ	his spiritual warrior	boy	servant
Q 21: 60	فَتَى	a spiritual warrior (m)	a young man	a young man
Q 24: 33	فَتَاتِكُمْ	your spiritual warriors (f)	slave girls	bondmaids

Table 11 highlights Bakhtiar’s consistency in using “spiritual warrior” for the term فَتَى *fatā* and its derivatives. It also shows that Bakhtiar utilises the concept *futuwwa* to men and women, which reflects the expansion and generalisation of using the term. Thus, Bakhtiar’s translation of the word فَتَاتَاتِ *fatayāt* confirms not only her theological stance but also her sociocultural ideologies regarding gender equality since she does not confine faith, generosity, integrity, and *jihād an-naḥs* [self-improvement] to men.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I aimed to analyse Bakhtiar’s translation of the Qur’an into English to explore the influence of her belief in the *Sufi* concept *futuwwa* on her translation choices. I used Genette’s paratexts (1997) to detect Bakhtiar’s *Sufi* views in her preface and introduction along with Raof’s criteria of the *Sufi* approach to Qur’anic exegesis (2012) to investigate her translation of the ten verses that include the term فَتَى *fatā* [a young man] and its derivatives.

The main finding is that Bakhtiar relied on *al-bātin* [esoteric] meaning and ignores *aḏ-ḏāhir* [exoteric] meaning, which makes her translation different from Qur’an interpretations based on orthodox Islamic traditions. Bakhtiar was affected by living in Iran and America; her use of “spiritual warriors” for the word فَتَى *fatā* [a young man] reflects her *Sufi* stance. Adding the letter “(f)” to indicate that the word refers to the feminine gender echoes her feminist perspectives. Secondly, Bakhtiar developed the connotation of the virtue of *futuwwa*, existing in a patriarchal framework (Zargar, 2019), as she generalised the meaning of this specific term and utilised it for men and women. She interpreted the term allegorically as a symbolic term for honorable morals,

humility, chivalry, purification, faith, and-self-improvement. Finally, it is clear that the concept of *futuwwa* differs from one *Sufi* to another; this fact is revealed through the comparison between Bakhtiar's choices and those by the *Sufi* translator Hulusi, whose translation choices are not influenced by the belief in *futuwwa*.

The scope of this paper is limited to two *Sufi* translations and one *Shi'i* translation. I aimed to examine the impact of Bakhtiar's *Sufi* belief in *futuwwa* on her translation choices. The findings and limitations of this paper suggest the need for further research. First, it is recommended that in future researchers the scope of the comparison can be should broadened to cover more *Sufi* Qur'ān translations and explore more *Sufi* concepts. A potential future avenue of research could also be exploring the influence of the translators' contexts, environments on their choices. There is a need for a study that investigates the impact of the translator's theological views on shaping the meanings and messages of the Qur'ān.

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