The Imaginary Context in *Nahj al-Balāghah*: Theory and Practice

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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The Imaginary Context in Nahj al-Balāghah

Theory and Practice

Zainab Sayed Zahed

Abstract

Poetic language can make an epistemological contribution. It is the purpose of this thesis to argue that the poetic language employed by *Nahj al-Balāghah* makes such a contribution, through its uses of the "imaginary context". While poetic imagery is described by some schools of thought as mere ornamentation within a text, it has been recognised by philosophers of language, such as Al-Fārābī (d.339/950) and his followers, as having an effect on the soul. This idea is part of Al-Fārābī's logical system in which demonstration – intended to bring about assent – is the highest practice for the tools of logical thought, such as syllogism. Yet, *takhyīl* [the imaginary] which affects the soul is a result of the poetic syllogism; a syllogism appearing at the lowest level of logic.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d.406/1016) was a well-known poet and Shīʿī exegete in tenth-century Baghdad. He compiled *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which consists of sermons, letters and aphorisms of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d.40/661), the first imam and fourth caliph. The time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was one in which intellectual contributions in different fields reached their peak. Social gatherings, disputation and the emergence and development of different sects contributed to the enrichment of cultural and intellectual life in the Islamic world. The Muʿtazilite school was known for its rational approach, rather than reliance on the interpretation of revelation transmitted through generations; as such, the Muʿtazilī approach has had a profound and long-lasting impact on some major schools of Islamic thought. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was a scholar who followed this approach and utilised his own forms of interpretation based upon his linguistic and poetic knowledge.

Through understanding Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's poetic approach, and via a reading of Al-Fārābī's linguistic philosophy and thoughts on logic, I argue that *Nahj al-Balāghah* utilises the rational tools that were considered valid, not only to influence the soul by the power of language, but also to educate people through poetic language. This can only be proved through a recognition of the "imaginary context" present within the texts I discuss, a term I develop from Al-Fārābī's *takhyīl*. This context, as this thesis attempts to show, has its own logic, constructed by building images upon each other, and by establishing poetic relationships between elements, which depend on predicative propositions that are also, in their essence, poetic.

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Note On Translation

The translation of Paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in this thesis is based on the following website.

However, I have made my own changes.

Sharif Razi. "Nahjul Balagha Part 1, The Sermons." Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project. Accessed January 2019. https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons.

Introduction

- **Overview**
- **Significance of the Study**
- **Reasons for Studying this Topic**
- **The Structure of this Thesis**
- **The Scope and Limitations of the Study**
- **Literature Review**
- **Approaching Theory**

Introduction

1. Overview

The inimitability of the *Qurʾān* has been an inspirational topic to medievalist Muslim scholars investigating its source. Different theories on theology and aesthetics have been developed to examine and evaluate the influence of the *Qurʾān*, which has been miraculously felt by those who listened to it.[1] The argument around *lafẓ* [linguistic form] and *maʿná* [meaning] was one of the most significant contributions in the medieval age.[2] Since then, scholars of different fields had been participating in such arguments about the values and natures of "meanings" and "forms"; linguists, theologians, logicians and literary critics. Theories of rhetoric *balāghah* and clarification *bayān* that have been established in the medieval age, offer the scope through which the interaction between hermeneutics and aesthetics is investigated.[3] Since the medieval age to the modern time, attempts have been made to explore the possibility of poetic language as being a contributor to knowledge. The involvement of the *ʾudabāʾ* of the medieval age with the *Qurʾānic* exegesis encourages modern scholars to re-evaluate the link between *ʾadab* and religious text in that era.[4]

Nahj al-Balāghah [*The Path of Eloquence*] a book compiled by Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d.406/1016) is a collection of sermons, letters and aphorisms attributed to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib (d.40/ 661).[5] ʿAlī was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, the fourth caliph and the first Imam of the Shīʿī Muslims. He is seen as being qualified to engage with *Qurʾānic* hermeneutics due to his special knowledge about the *Qurʾān* and its inner meanings. Thus, the imam in Shīʿī belief is known as *al-Qurʾān al-Nāṭiq* [the speaking *Qurʾān*], which gives his speeches great value to his followers.[6] While modern studies insist on the need to search the Arabic/Muslim heritage to investigate the way literary and rhetorical language may serve to

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[1] Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 208.

[2] Alexander Key, *Language between God and the Poets: Maʿná in the Eleventh Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018). In this work Key translates *maʿná* as "mental content" in order to clarify to the English reader the difference between the usage of *maʿná* in Arabic of the Medieval scholars and "signification" and "meaning" in English. I would rather use "meaning", and when it comes to "signification" it will be mentioned throughout the thesis, 243.

[3] Avigail Noy, "The Emergence of ʿIlm al-Bayān: Classical Arabic Literary Theory in the Arabic East in the 7th/13th Century" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2016).

[4] Nuha Alshaar, *The Qurʾan and Adab: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5.

[5] *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, "al-Sharīf al-Raḍī"; Muhammad ibn al-Ḥussayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah: Min Kalām ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʾAbī al-Ḥassan ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib* (Qum: Muʾassassat ʾAnṣāriyyān lil-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 2000).

[6] *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib"; *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib".

offer new hermeneutics, *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to consist of a number of elements that can push the lines of traditional reading. Yet, literary tools need to be examined, improved and combined with other intellectual fields in order to support this mission.

The image as a manifestation of literary language has been studied by modern scholars of rhetoric and literary criticism through three perspectives. First, as a mere aesthetic element contributing to the beauty of the text, understood intellectually. Second, as the outcome of the involvement of poetics and rhetoric within the logical arts, in which an evocation of an image leads to the arousal of agitation *infiʿāl*. This image-evocation is constructed on a poetic syllogism which causes *takhyīl* in a similar but lesser way as a demonstrative syllogism causes *taṣdīq* "assent". Third, as the attempt to evaluate the image as an argumentative and epistemological tool, which has its own logic and whose usage is not intended only to expand the limit of expression, but to intellectually educate people.[7] Yet, the last notion of the image does not seem to be applicable in academic studies, which leads studies of western and Arabic rhetoric to suggest that it is not the aim of rhetoric to convey knowledge, and it thus has its own peculiar purpose to fulfil.[8] However, Muslim Aristotelian philosopher ʾAbū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d.339/950) – known as "the second teacher" – went beyond his master Aristotle "the first teacher" by including poetics and rhetoric within the *Organon*, thereby treating them as logical arts.[9] This clearly opens a door to an investigation within which connections between theory of knowledge, logical tools and poetics can be made. *Takhyīl* – translated by scholars of Arabic studies as "the imaginary", involving the evocation of an image plays a central role in these three fields.[10] Thus, this topic will be investigated through Al-Fārābī's philosophy, which had spread through the intellectual sphere of the Arab world and was learnt during the tenth century.

In this thesis, titled "The Imaginary Context in *Nahj al-Balāghah*: Theory and Practice", I intend to highlight how images that are represented through "imaginary contexts" in *Nahj al-Balāghah* contribute to epistemology. *Nahj al-Balāghah* is an educational text full of images

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[7] Ismail Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle: A Critical Study with an Annotated Translation of the Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 39; 56. Also see Muḥammad Mishbāl, *Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj: Naḥwa Muqārabah Balāghiyyah Ḥijājiyyah liTaḥlīl al-Khiṭābāt* (ʿAmmān: Dār Kunūz al-Maʿrifah, 2017), 306.

[8] See Gerard, A. Hauser, "Introduction: Philosophy and Rhetoric – Rethinking their Intersections," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 50, no. 4, (Penn State University Press, 2017), 379. Also see Noy, Avigail, *The Emergence*.

[9] Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary*, 12.

[10] Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Takhyīl Make-Believe and Image Creation in Arabic Literary Theory," in *Takhyīl: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, edited by Geert Jan Van Gelder and Marlé Hammond (Exeter: The E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008).

and stylistic elements. Examining specific examples of these images will show how they do not simply beautify the text, provoking a psychological reaction; they are educational tools, without which the reader cannot reach the same epistemological conclusion.

The main research question of this thesis is:

How does an investigation of al-Siyāq al-Takhyīlī [*the imaginary context*] *in Nahj al-Balāghah contribute to knowledge?*

In order to answer this and, in so doing, fulfil the purpose of this thesis, this central question breaks down into several other questions:

- How has the term *takhyīl* developed, and how can it be developed further?
- How does the context of the life of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī contribute to an understanding of *Nahj al-Balāghah*?
- What does the comparison of images of the same topic within different imaginary contexts teach the reader about the topic?

2. Significance of the Study

2.1. Methodological and Conceptual Contribution

The significance of poetry was always doubted by medieval philosophers dedicated to scientific study. It was not the aim of poetry to be a source of accurate information about its subject, they believed.[11] It was treated as nothing more than a way to clarify philosophical ideas that could not be grasped by the multitude, to exert psychological influence, or as an ornament to beautify language, as will be indicated later. This is always the case when we look at poetics through the eye of literal language in which the figurative language and other rhetorical elements will always be seen as enhancing and beautifying features. Yet, poetics should be taken separately and analysed in accordance to its own sphere and not to literal language. This way of reading will convey a different meaning of the text. This is especially the

[11] Deborah Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 184.

case if the text has authoritative value, such as *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In my case, I use *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* [the imaginary context] as a concept, combining philosophical theory and stylistic understanding.[12] This means I combine both; first, the creation of the image in the mind of the listener as a philosophical technique, in order to achieve *takhyīl* as something parallel to assent *taṣdīq*. Second, the stylistic understanding of *takhyīl* as "make-believe", which is built on the idea of trying to forget the simile and constructing a new image on it. This combination together leads to an argument in favour of the "logic" of the art of poetics, a logic that is different from the logic of the demonstrative discipline. This will also find its root in Ibn Sīnā's (d.428/1034) educational rhetorical poetics, which is influenced by both Al-Fārābī's poetic syllogism and Aristotle's educational poetics.[13]

Thus, the logic of poetry is built on the dramatic interaction between symbols. The inferences of the poetic statement concern the rearranging of this interaction without the need to go back to any original, "literal" meaning in order to judge the image or symbol. I choose paragraphs from *Nahj al-Balāghah* that consist of *takhyīl* and these paragraphs are chosen for containing the same themes, so the differences between images within the same topic – such as "death", "tribulations" or "this world" – can be seen. This means the premises of the poetic statement employing the image will be seen, and will easily lead to the inferences.

At the same time, as the text is a theological text, the argumentative premises in the image itself will also be available; for instance, the *Qur'ān* describes hell as being angry as in the verses (25:12) and (11:106) and then in *Nahj al-Balāghah* hell is fearful of the angel's anger as in oration 183. In such a way, both a psychological effect and an intellectual result will be achieved.[14] With Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's position and ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as a leading Imam, all these elements contribute to achieving Aristotle's three arguments mentioned in his *Rhetoric*. Moreover, the examples of the images in *Nahj al-Balāghah* seem to rely upon a universal collective consciousness that arises within the audience's consciousness, which achieves a unique rhetorical contribution that exceeds the mere personal psychological influence, as will be explained in the methodology chapter.[15]

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[12] I use "stylistic" – even though it is intellectually justified by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d.471/1078) – because I do not want to confuse the term with Ibn Sīnā's rhetorical understanding of poetry. Stylistics is concerned with understanding the style of the image and how it is created, this is without mentioning the psychological influence and the epistemological contribution.

[13] Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary*, 56.

[14] See Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 309.

[15] I use consciousness as defined by Carl Jung. This will be explained in the section on methodology.

2.2. Analytical Contribution

The literary and theological context identified with Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī argues for the perfection of language, and that human language is required for people to receive divine knowledge. Thus, there is nothing that is beyond our understanding. This gives rise to the image-evocation and symbolism which is characteristic of the language of the era. Thus, interpretation needs to take into consideration the form of symbolism that was prevalent in the tenth century when dealing with a text. And this credit, as will be shown in Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's section, is given to him as the first to work on the *Qur'ānic* metaphors and imagery of the Prophet. This leads to the idea that image-evocation is a way of analysing and interpreting the sacred text, and of understanding its teachings. It is a way of stretching the language and taking it beyond its literal function. This contributes not only to an understanding of the chosen paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, but also to the identification of themes that have their roots in Islamic theology, that are under discussion between different schools.

2.3. Literary Contribution

There are many Arabic books that look at *Nahj al-Balāghah's* literary elements. However, this is not the case in Western academia. Thus, shedding light on the images, whether manifested in figurative language or highly descriptive language, which might be considered literal, will contribute to the corpus of Western literature on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Through my work, I have found that it was only possible to reach my conclusions through reading *takhyīl* in its wider contexts. This way of reading has contributed to an understanding of poetics and Arabic literary theory in both Arab and Western academia. It seems to be that Ibn Sīnā was attempting to create a poetics that followed Aristotle's *Poetics,* combining *takhyīl* as a development of medieval philosophical understanding and Aristotle's ideas. This will show how poetics manifests in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Moreover, the details investigated through the concept "imaginary context" may contribute to literary theory in terms of the idea that the whole context is constructed on the logic of the imagination. This will be seen practically, but needs more investigation theoretically in a separate study.

2.4. Epistemological Contribution

As *Nahj al-Balāghah* is clearly an educational text, through the usage of the image as an analytical tool, different ideas and thoughts will be produced as a result of this particular method. "Death", "this world", the wonderful creatures and tribulations, will all be manifested differently and this new understanding will influence orthodox ideas. In this thesis, this new reading will cover different fields: theology, ethics, mysticism and history; as the case studies will show.

3. Reasons for Studying this Topic

The growing interest of scholars of Arabic studies regarding the connection between rhetoric and hermeneutic studies makes the search for practical examples in Arabic heritage significant. *Nahj al-Balāghah* attracts the attention because it is clearly concerned with the art of rhetoric and other intellectual fields; theology, philosophy and history. The gap of the connection between these fields in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is clear because although many Arabic studies and a few examples of Western research have examined literary elements in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the image in particular has not been examined separately even though its argumentative nature is under examination and it plays an important role in the new rhetoric with its philosophical background.

Theory of knowledge, which has been developed during the last century around the possibility of the usage of symbolism to produce knowledge, as is the case with Ernst Cassirer's symbolic forms, encourages the work on this topic. I argue that poetic language creates its own space through which it freely manifests, develops and becomes a source of knowledge production.

It was the rhetorician Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī (d.684/1285) who took the concept of *takhyīl* from philosophical studies and joined it with literary criticism, in his work *Minhāj al-Bulaghāʾ wa Sirāj al-ʾUdabāʾ* [*The Path of the Eloquent and the Lantern of the Learned*].[16] Applying it to a text like *Nahj al-Balāghah* will contribute not only to understanding the text but also to defining the concept. It is a rich concept which will yield valuable meaning if it is

[16] Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-Bulaghāʾ wa Sirāj al-ʾUdabāʾ*, edited by Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb ibn al-Khawjah, 2 vols (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-ʾIslāmī, 1986).

studied through the imaginary context. Al-Qarṭājannī's main interest in his book is to examine poetics, even though the title of the book includes *Minhāj al-Bulaghā'*; yet his way of looking at rhetoric is through poetics. And it seems that his examination of rhetoric is intended to clarify and identify poetics.[17] Al-Qarṭājannī links the two words in his title – *minhāj* [the path] and *sirāj* [the lantern] – to hermeneutics and creativity, respectively.[18] In this way he seems to be clear about the connection he makes between rhetoric and hermeneutics, and between poetics and creativeness. *Nahj al-Balāghah* shares with Al-Qarṭājannī's book part of its title: *minhāj* and *nahj*; *bulaghā'* and *balāghah*. Al-Qarṭājannī indicates that through his work, he needs to enhance the general sense of taste that seems to grow less because of the changes that occurred to the poetic ideas, nature of people and usual dedication to poetry. Thus, his teaching is to present the audience with tools for evaluating poetry.[19] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī indicates, in the introduction of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the reason for choosing this title: it will attract those who are interested in the art of rhetoric, and it will open the doors of this art to those who read it. Both the teacher and the learner will find what they need in it, and both will find their purpose, the eloquent and the disinterested.[20] It is worthy of note that both Al-Raḍī and Al-Qarṭājannī lived in an unsafe era. Thus, their eloquence and stylistic writing might also be a way of covering ideas and beliefs that would have put them at risk if stated directly.[21]

Al-Raḍī's introduction continually described *Nahj al-Balāghah* as consisting of wonderful speeches about monotheism, justice and other theological topics that represented the main debates in the age of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, as a compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, lived in a lively environment in which arguments between theological schools were built on reason and linguistic justification.[22] It is, thus, reasonable to search through *Nahj al-Balāghah* and discover its linguistic argumentative tools that may contribute to the construction of a theory of Arabic rhetoric.

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[17] Jābir 'Aṣfūr, *Al-Naqd al-'Adabī: Qirā'at al-Turāth al-Naqdī*, vol. 1 (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al- Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 2009), 163.
[18] Ibid., 164.
[19] Al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-Bulaghā'*, vol. 2, 26.
[20] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 11.
[21] 'Aṣfūr, *Al-Naqd al-'Adabī*, vol 1, 167, and vol 3, 269.
[22] More will be explained in the chapter on the historical context of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. For more see, for example, Hussein Ali Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology in Būyids Shī'ism: The Contribution of Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013), Tahseen Thaver, "Ambiguity, Hermeneutics, And the Formation of Shī'ī identity in al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's (d. 1015CE) Qur'ān commentary" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2013).
Margaret Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning: 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Theory of Discourse* (Connecticut, American Oriental Society, 1995).

Known as Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, his name was Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn, a descendant of the seventh Imam of the Shīʿite Mūasá al-Kāẓim. He was born in Baghdad in 359/969 in a religious family that held a high position in Shīʿī society. His father, known as al-Ṭāhir al-Awḥad and Dhū al-Manāqib is ʾAbū Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsá (d.400/1009), acquired a political position and religious prestige.[23] He was the *naqīb* of the Ṭālibid for five periods until he died, as well as *ʾamīr al-ḥajj* "the commander of the pilgrims". He was also responsible for *wilāyat al-maẓālim*, which was concerned with the complaints of the people in court, and he was a mediator between the rules of Mosul Ḥamdānīs and the Buyids of Baghdad.[24]

Because of the reputation of Al-Raḍī's father, ʿAḍud al-Dawlah arrested Al-Raḍī's father and sent him to Fāris, where he stayed until the death of ʿAḍud al-Dawlah.[25] Although Al-Raḍī was younger than his brother Al-Murtaḍá (d.1044), he held his father's social and political positions after his death. Yet, records show that the funeral prayer for their father was led by his brother Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá.[26] This also reflects Al-Murtaḍá's position as a religious leader. Yet, Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī gained different titles, such as *Al-Sharīf al-ʾAjall* [high-honoured], *Dhū al-Manqabatayn* [the man of the two noble qualities] and *Dhū al-Ḥasabayn* [the man of two noble genealogies].[27]

Although Al-Raḍī is mostly famous for compiling *Nahj al-Balāghah*, he contributed to different fields in the intellectual world, such as his work on the features of the Imams, the lives and characteristics of the Twelver, his own collection of poetry, three other anthologies of the best poets of his time, works on jurisprudence, Arabic linguistics, and a biography of his father.[28] Thus, Al-Raḍī clearly manifests the encyclopaedic mentality, reflected through his works.

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[23] Abdulsater, "The Climax", 17.

[24] Ibid.; ʿIz al-Dīn Ibn ʾAbī al Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol. 1, (Online source) 31. Maktabat al-Rawḍah al-Ḥaydariyyah, مكتبة الروضة الحيدرية (haydarya.com). *Niqābah* is an association involved in the consequent efforts "of the family of the prophet to define its boundaries". One of the reasons for setting these boundaries was to ensure that the family of the Prophet was given financial rewards, such as *khums* [one fifth], and was thus excluded from *zakat* [alms] and *ṣadaqah* [charity]. This establishment of the *niqābah* expresses the desire of the kinsfolk of the Prophet to be given special treatment; Ibid, 51.

[25] Teresa Bernheimer, *The 'Alids: The First Family of Islam, 750-1200* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 63; Ibn ʾAbī al Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, 32.

[26] Abdulsater, "The Climax", 19. See also: ʿIṣām ʿAbd ʿAlī, "Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī His Life and Poetry," (PhD diss., Durham University, 1974) 30.

[27] Mahmoud Ayoub, "Literary Exegesis of the Qurʾān: The Case of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī," in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qurʾān*, edited by Issa J Boullata (Surrey, Curzon press, 2000), 295.

[28] Ibid.

4. The Structure of this Thesis

To achieve its purpose, this thesis needs to go through different stages. Therefore, it is divided into two parts, in addition to the introduction, which consists of the literature review and the theory, and conclusion. The first part contains two theoretical chapters and methodology. The second part is practical and contains four chapters concerned with the analysis of paragraphs from *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Part One examines the conceptual framework, the intellectual context of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and methodology.

Chapter One is divided into three main sections. First, it presents the historical development of the term *takhyīl* in the traditions of Arabic literary criticism and Arabic rhetoricians. This leads to the exploration of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's (d.471/1078) notion of *takhyīl* as a cause of wonder. Second, it explains the imaginative syllogism as a pillar of Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī's theory of poetics, which is considered to be an application of Ibn Sīnā's and Al-Fārābī's thoughts on Arabic poetry. The third section shows elements upon which logical discourses are constructed. The concluding part attempts to reach a definition for *takhyīl* that can be applied within the second part of this thesis, devoted to examples from *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Chapter Two is initially concerned with the contexts in which *Nahj al-Balāghah* was produced. These contexts range from the social background, both historical and political, on one hand, to the literary environment, on the other. It is also about knowledge production as it was manifested through different figures. The contributions of these figures appear to have influenced the way in which *Nahj al-Balāghah* was produced. Knowledge production is reflected through different fields: philosophy, theology, and literature as an art of letters. The second part is about Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, the compiler of *Nahj al- Balāghah*. It presents Al-Raḍī as a linguist, rhetorician and exegete, and shows that all these qualifications combined together to introduce Al-Raḍī's methodology for interpreting the *Qur'anic* verses. Then, it shows Al-Raḍī as a poet and littérateur, who used his talent to claim and defend his beliefs and rights.

Chapter Three presents the methodology that is used in this thesis. It introduces stimulating literature upon which this methodology is constructed. The methodology is built on the idea

of the creativity of the Arab which has been identified by ʾAdunīs as a feature in the medieval age. The term *badīʿ* is distinguished by modern scholars of Arabic as a way of thinking which is manifested in the work of the poets and intellectuals in the tenth century. Thus, *badīʿ* is not only an ornamental tool of writing. This creative thinking is also connected with ideas about producing written works such as Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjānī's theory of construction. In this theory, he emphasises on the arrangement of the utterences and their relationship to meanings. This idea of construction can also be noticed in the work of modern scholars of hermeneutics in which the whole context is read through the individual elements and the individual element are read through the whole. Based on this reading, *takhyīl* as a philosophical and a poetic term identified by Al-Fārābī can be developed into "the imaginary context". This context has its own logic that shows the way in which the elements of imagery and poetic images is connected and built on each other. This will be explored within Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's thoughts.

Part Two presents a literary analysis of different paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, built on the notion of *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* "the imaginary context" as a key. Every chapter is concerned with a particular theme. Every theme is compared and illuminated by related *Qurʾānic* verses and verses from Arabic poems.

Chapter Four is concerned with images around "death" and "the hour", and efforts to understand the context of the images leads to an elaborated understanding of the status and roles of these two themes. This chapter contributes to a theological reading, as death will be understood different from different perspectives.

Chapter Five analyses images about *al-dunyā* [this world] and explores the different looks of *al-dunyā*. Carl Jung is of great use in this chapter, even though Jung appears in other chapters. While teachings about "this world" also relate to theological study, I would rather treat the theme as ethical in nature, because of the nature of the images involved.

Chapter Six is about creatures, based on the oration of "the bat". This chapter explains the oration through two different approaches; the creation of the image of the bat as a complementary action to the encyclopaedic production that was known in the tenth century, and as a mystical approach that reads the whole imaginary context from a Sufi point of view. The section on this chapter related to mystical understanding is constructed on mystical premises, yet the oration of "the bat" is not an allegorical text. It works as a mystical text in the

same way as the example of "death" works as a theological notion, depending on theological premises.

Chapter Seven investigates images about *fitan* [tribulations] and through the analysis, a new understanding of this topic is presented. It also examines the oration *al-shiqshiqiyyah*, which is a speech about the tribulation of the caliphate. This chapter contributes to the understanding of history, and allows the reader to evaluate and reflect on the events of our days.

The Conclusion summarizes the most important points that have resulted from the study, with recommendations for a continuation of research along the same lines.

Regarding the bibliography; the research is constructed on sources of English, Arabic and translated European works.

5. The Scope and Limitations of the Study

Although this research comes from a literary background, I am more concerned with the logic of poetics. Thus, I focus more on how logic of poetics works. This thesis does not offer a literary analysis of *Nahj al-Balāghah* according to the traditional understanding of literary analysis. What I mean by a traditional understanding is the usage of literary and rhetorical figures and investigating their presence in *Nahj al-Balāghah* such as investigating different types of metaphors, similes, metonymies, imageries and other stylistic elements. Yet, in my thesis, I focus on "the imaginary context" which I develop from the logical and rhetorical figure *takhyīl* [the imaginary]. The analysis is limited to the connection between the imaginary contexts of the same theme and the connections between elements within the imaginary context. The elements may manifest through different rhetorical figures, however, it is not my intention to show how much *Nahj al-Balāghah* succeeds in using these figures. Yet, my intention is to show how *Nahj al-Balāghah* is genius in presenting "the imaginary contexts" and how these contexts within *Nahj al-Balāghah* are able to contribute to our knowledge of the themes they present, even though they are "imaginary".

Because I construct the concept on a philosophical and rhetorical understanding of *takhyīl*, *takhyīl* in Al-Fārābī's teaching is present in the meaning and the music. In my thesis, I work on "the imaginary context" which is related to the meaning. Thus, I will not investigate

rhetorical figures that are connected to the sound of the vocables and sentences, even though they are clearly present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Yet, I believe, the examination of the music in a project like this thesis needs to be done on the basis of understanding *takhyīl* in its second wing "the music". Therefore, my thesis is limited to understanding the meaning of "the imaginary context" and not the music within this context.

During my research, several constraints were encountered: first, English sources on literary aspects of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are very limited, as most works are concerned with the issue of authenticity of the book; second, locating the study within this large context of modern academia, together with the intellectual context of the medieval age, has been a challenge. To keep it focused, many discussions around different theoretical issues have had to be set aside in order to present the main purpose of the thesis, which is the analysis of case studies within a wider scope of logical and literary studies. Thirdly, while the usage of the conceptual framework as an analytical tool is new, and the concept *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* [the imaginary context] is concerned with images and their logical connection, translating extracts from *Nahj al-Balāghah* in such a way that its literary qualities, semantic content and imaginary contexts are evident to the English reader, has proved extremely challenging. Yet, I hope that in this research I have successfully negotiated these limitations, and that this work will open doors for more intellectual interactions and productions.

6. Literature Review

In this section, I present some literature that is related to my argument in this thesis. I divide it into two main sections: the first is dedicated to *Nahj al-Balāghah*; the second is dedicated to works on Arabic poetics and rhetoric, which I think sheds light on and locates my research in this field.

6.1. *Nahj al-Balāghah*

This section has four main aspects: the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and literature concerned with its sources; the themes present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*; the third aspect sheds light on commentaries of *Nahj al-Balāghah* – examples of modern and classical

interpretations are discussed; the fourth aspect is concerned with the application of literary criticism and rhetorical figures within *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and attempts to analyse these figures. Commentaries of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are concerned with understanding the meaning of the text even though they also investigate literary and rhetorical elements within the text. However, the main purpose of the studies in the fourth section is to investigate the literary and rhetorical elements that are used in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This investigation is usually done to show the genius and superiority of *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a literary text. Yet, both the commentaries and the studies are not limited to their main purpose as overlapping between the functions of the two fields is common.

6.1.1. The Authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*

"Khuṭba: The Evolution of Early Arabic Oration", by Tahera Qutbuddin[29]

Qutbuddin discusses the authenticity of the original texts of orations that remained unchanged in the early Islamic age. She explains that their original oral transmission supports the idea of their unreliable transcription. However, there is still evidence to suggest that the Arabs made considerable effort to preserve the integrity of orations, or parts of them with literary, tribal, political, or religious significance.[30]

"A Critical Study of Nahj al-Balāgha", by Waris Hassan[31]

The idea of tracing the authenticity of the original author of orations and oral literature is especially prominent in the context of the text of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. As debates about its authenticity are still ongoing, scholars' attempts to clarify the accuracy of its reference to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib have manifested in different ways. For example, Waris Hassan in his PhD thesis *A Critical Study of Nahj al-Balāgha* is keen to prove the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* with the use of historical, documentary and literary methods.[32] He divides the people who have doubted the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* into seven categories, one of which is those who

[29] Tahera Qutbuddin, "Khuṭba: The Evolution of Early Arabic Oration," in *Classical Arabic Humenities in their Own Terms Festschrift for Wolfhart Heinrichs*, edited by Beatrice Gruendler and Michael Cooperson, (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
[30] Ibid., 188.
[31] Syed Mohammad Waris Hassan, "A Critical Study of Nahj al-Balāgha," (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1979).
[32] ʿAli Hassan Niyā, "Tawthīq Nahj al-Balāghah wa Taʾrīkhuh ʿalá Ḍawʾ al-Maʿāyīr al-ʾadabiyyah wa al-Balāghiyyah: Dirāsah taḥlīliyyah liʾawwal Baḥth Gharbī Mumanhaj Ḥawl Nahj al-Balāghah," *Taʿālīm Nahj al-Balāghah* 2, issue no. 1, (1437 AH), 21.

doubt the style of language and expression.[33] This is one of the ways Waris Hassan attempts to prove the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He presents examples of rhetorical figures appearing in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and compares them with the language of the pre-Islamic poetic environment. He explores many similarities and mutual usages between *Nahj al- Balāghah* and the language of the Arab poets. He uses the examples of metaphors, images and other literary figures which, although they reach their peak in the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, are actually known to be present in the early Islamic period. This way of viewing *Nahj al-Balāghah* strengthens our idea of a collective poetical memory which keeps evolving and developing through the centuries, and influencing newly-constructed poetical images.

***Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa ʾAsānīduh* [*The sources of Nahj al-Balāghah and its Narrative Chains*], by ʿAbd al-Zahrāʾ al-Khaṭīb[34]**

Al-Khaṭīb is famous as one of the authors who attempted to trace the origins of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. In his work, he traces the original sources of the text by finding different works that refer to these speeches before Al-Raḍī's work. In his introduction, he indicates that Al-Raḍī did not collect *Nahj al-Balāghah* in order to produce a source for Islamic law, but rather, his intention was to introduce the eloquence and rhetoric of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib.[35]

***Tamām Nahj al-Balāghah* [*The Completion of Nahj al-Balāghah*], by Ṣādīq al-Mūsawī[36]**

Al-Mūsawī, in his work, arranges the text of *Nahj al-Balāghah* into its "original" composition. Thus, he reorganizes the orations and completes the missing parts, indicating symbols that refer to particular sections of the orations. This mostly helps with the study of the context of the text itself; yet, it may lead the reader to a different point of view regarding the purpose of *Nahj al-Balāghah* – a point of view that is closer to the context of the original text.

[33] Waris Hassan, "A Critical Study", 25.
[34] ʿAbd al-Zahrāʾ al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-Balāghah wa ʾAsānīduh* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrāʾ, 1988).
[35] Ibid., vol. 1, 45.
[36] Ṣādiq al-Mūsawī, *Tamām Nahj al-Balāghah* (Bayrūt: Muʾassasat al-ʾAʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1426 AH).

"Was Imam ʿAli a Misogynist? The Portrayal of Women in *Nahj al-Balaghah* and *Kitab Sulaim ibn Qays*", by Amina Inloes[37]

Inloes challenges the authenticity of controversial passages about women in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, because women in different sections of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are attacked on account of their gender, as depicted in phrases such as "women are deficient in intellect".[38] She argues that the narrations contradict both the received text and the social practice in Islam. However, questioning the authenticity of this material has encountered strong resistance in the Shīʿī community, because of the sacredness of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.[39] Inloes, in her investigation through another Shīʿī text, challenges this portrayal of ʿAlī, and presents his view of women as distinctly reflecting equity and inclusiveness.[40]

6.1.2. Literature on the Themes of *Nahj al-Balāghah*

There is very little research in Western academia on *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The little research done is in the form of articles on different themes, usually with some concerns about its authenticity. However, there is a lot of research in Arabic – and Arabic translated from Persian – that uses different methodologies and approaches. Here, I introduce some of the works that attempt to present a variety of themes and views on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

***Al-Marʾah fī Nahj al-Balāghah* [*The Woman in Nahj al-Balāghah*], by Najwá Ṣāliḥ Al-Jawād**[41]

Al-Jawād begins with a short biography about ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib and then gives a general description of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. She then talks about the position of the woman in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, in the *Qurʾān* and in the traditions of the Prophet. She tries to understand the texts of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which concern women by referring to the *Qurʾān*. She excludes texts which contradict the Islamic view of women as ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib will not contradict the Islamic view. She also examines the different situations in which orations were delivered to

[37] Amina Inloes, "Was Imam ʿAli a Misogynist? The Portrayal of Women in *Nahj al-Balaghah* and *Kitab Sulaim ibn Qays*," *Journal of Shiʿa Islamic Studies* viii, No: 3, (The Islamic College, ICAS Press, 2015).
[38] Ibid., 325.
[39] Ibid, 326.
[40] Ibid, 357.
[41] Najwá Ṣāliḥ al-Jawād, *Al-Marʾah fī Nahj al-Balāghah* (Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyyah wa al-ʾIslāmiyyah, 1999).

highlight special cases related to these orations; for instance, the oration that was delivered in the War of the Camel (36/656), in which the Imam, pointing at ʿĀ'ishah (the widow of the Prophet), mentioned women in general. However, Inloes, in the previously-indicated article, challenges the very idea that Imam ʿAlī criticizes ʿĀ'ishah "through her femininity".[42] Through her investigation, Inloes indicates that in the same battle (the War of the Camel) when ʿĀ'ishah was criticized, criticism towards her companions Ṭalḥah and Zubayr was not linked to their gender, but to their situation in encouraging and supporting ʿĀ'ishah. It seems that this kind of criticism means that ʿAlī was concerned with the situation of these people whether the figures were men or women.[43] However, as I argue in my thesis, using the gender terms is an example of connecting and building the new intended meaning to the imaginative premises. It is linked to the way the Arab sees women in the pre-Islamic era which becomes a part of the collective unconsciousness. This will be clearer after investigating the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the second part of this thesis.

***Al-ʾIslām wa ʾUṣūl al-Ḥukum ʿind al-Imam ʿAlī raḍiya Allah ʿanh: Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl liKitābihi ilá al-ʾAshtar al-Nakhʿī ḥīnamā Wallāhu Ḥukm Miṣr* [*Islam and the Roots of Governance in the View of the Imam ʿAlī: A study and analysis of his letter to Al-ʾAshtar al-Nakhʿī when he was allocated to rule Egypt*], by ʾIbrāhīm Hilāl[44]**

Hilāl, in this work, analyses the letter that ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib sent to Mālik al-ʾAshtar, when the latter was asked by the former to rule Egypt. This letter is one of the important letters in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Hilāl explains that religion is important for governing and he sets the example of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as a leader. Thus, he tries to grasp the essential elements required for ruling people by analysing this letter. According to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, a good government should comprise three features: a wise ruler, loyal apostles or companions, and just viziers. He then begins to analyse the letter as it appears in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, based on the interpretation of Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbdu.[45]

[42] Inloes, "Was Imam Alī a Misogynist?" 352.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibrāhīm Hilāl, *Al-ʾIslām wa ʾUṣūl al-Ḥukum ʿind al-Imam ʿAlī raḍiya Allah ʿanh: Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl liKitābihi ilá al-ʾAshtar al-Nakhʿī ḥīnamā Wallāhu Ḥukm Miṣr* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1979).
[45] Ibid., 7–20.

***Fī Riḥāb Nahj al-Balāghah* [*Glimpses of Nahj al-Balāghah*], by Murtaḍá Muṭahharī**[46]

This is a collection of articles that were published in the journal *Maktab Islam*. In his introduction, Muṭahharī (d. 1979) narrates his journey with *Nahj al-Balāghah* and discusses how this study has influenced him. He mentions that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not only neglected among Sunni scholars, but also in Shīʿī studies. According to Muṭahharī, the essential issues in the study of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are a thorough understanding of its contents and of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which has been tackled by a number of scholars.[47] Thus, he introduces the first section by presenting the aesthetic value of *Nahj al-Balāghah* as it was introduced by Al-Jāḥiẓ as a specialist of theology and literature. However, he mentions that this aspect of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not part of this collection.[48] He then engages with different elements of the text in relation to different disciplines, such as philosophy and theology, and goes beyond that to conduct some comparative studies based on Western ideologies.[49]

***Al-Hādī ʾilá Mawḍūʿāt Nahj al-Balāghah* [*A Guide to the Themes of Nahj al-Balāghah*], by ʿAlī al-Mashkīnī**[50]

In this book, Al-Mashkīnī presents a variety of topics introduced in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and organises the orations according to these topics, which he categorises in alphabetic order. In the first chapter – "Allah" – he presents issues related to God, such as his attributes and oneness, and continues to place the orations that belong to every category in their positions. Then, with the chapter "*ʾalif*" he includes topics that start with the letter *"ʾalif"* (the sound of the letter A) such as *ʾarḍ* [earth], *ʾaʾimmah* [plural of Imam], *ʾiblīs* [devil] and *ʾadab* [literature]; he places in these sections orations that are related to them.[51]

[46] Murtaḍá Muṭahharī, *Fī Riḥāb Nahj al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Dār al-Tablīgh al-ʾIslāmī, 1978). This Arabic title is a translation of the Persian title "*Sayri dar Nahj al-Balāghah*".
[47] Ibid., 11.
[48] Ibid., 19
[49] Ibid., 37.
[50] Al- Mashkīnī, ʿAlī. *Al-Hādī ʾilá Mawḍūʿāt Nahj al-Balāghah* (Ṭahrān: Muʾassasat Nahj al-Balāghah, 1405 AH).
[51] Ibid., 12–128.

6.1.3. Commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*

6.1.3.1. Classical Commentaries

ʾAʿlām Nahj al-Balāghah [*The Flags of Nahj al-Balāghah*], by ʿAlī ibn Nāṣir al-Sarkhasī[52]

The oldest commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, *ʾAʿlām Nahj al-Balāghah*, is written by ʿAlī ibn Naṣīr, a contemporary of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.[53] The only two surviving copies are in the library of Tehran University, and in the private library of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ (d.1373 AH) in Baghdad.[54]

***Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* [*Commentary on Nahj al- Balāghah*], by ʿIz al-Dīn ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd**

The most famous commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah* is written by ʿIz al-Dīn ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258). He is a Muʿtazilī theologian and literary critic who gained an important position in Baghdad during the reign of the Abbasid caliphate.[55] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd begins the first volume with four sections: first, he explains his approach to illustrating *Nahj al-Balāghah*; second, he presents the argument of the Imamate; third, he dedicates a section to the virtues and lineage of the Imam ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as the author of the book; and fourth, he introduces Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's statuse and life.[56] In the first section, Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd indicates that Muʾayyad al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d.656/1258), the vizier of the caliph Al-Mustaʿṣim (d.656/1258), had asked him to interpret *Nahj al-Balāghah* and describes this demand as a privilege that was bestowed upon him.[57] He then describes his way of illustrating the text and uncovering its precious meanings. He also indicates that the only interpretation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that appeared before his work was by Saʿīd ibn Hibat Allah, known as Al-Quṭb al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1178). Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd remarks that Saʿīd was a Shīʿī jurist who dedicated his life to the science of law and thus was unable to interpret these types of arts.[58]

Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd's work is known to be the most important and thorough interpretation, and it spans twenty volumes. He illustrates every speech in *Nahj al-Balāghah*

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[52] ʿAlī ibn Nāṣir al-Sarkhasī, *ʾAʿlām Nahj al-Balāghah* (Ṭahrān: Nashr ʿUṭārid, 1415 AH).
[53] Waris Hassan, "A Critical Study" 59.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, 17.
[56] Ibid., 3–30.
[57] Ibid., 4.
[58] Ibid., 5.

from the beginning to the end, tackling every element he comes across during his explanations. These elements are linguistic, figurative, theological, or of any other type of discipline that he is able to discuss. When required, he dedicates long separate parts within his commentary to discuss historical events that are related to the part of the oration that he is explaining and explores different thoughts to clarify the subject. The style of his interpretation is clearly affected by the era that he lived in, in which different disciplines were presented with an obvious demonstration of the author's knowledge about the language – the language that he uses to explain and the language of the text that is being interpreted.

***Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* [*Commentary on Nahj al-Balāghah*], by Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham ibn ʿAli al-Baḥrānī (d.679/1299)[59]

In his introduction, Al-Baḥrānī describes *Nahj al-Balāghah* as the light that shows him the way in the darkness, and the ladder that leads him to the heavens; he describes it as the book that comes after the *Qurʾān* and the speech of the Prophet in nobility.[60] He constructs his introduction on the basis of three rules, each of which is composed of sections, consisting of chapters that are further divided into topics. These categories deal with the meaning of the *khaṭābah* [oratory] and the elements related to it, such as meanings, vocabulary, sounds, figurative language and linguistic topics.[61] Then, he begins his explanations of the meanings of the orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Al-Baḥrānī's style is very much influenced by the speculative theologians, as he depends on the logical divisions in his explanation. He is also influenced by rhetorical and literary schools. He dedicates a good part of his interpretation to explanation of the rules of rhetoric and its theory.[62]

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[59] Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham ibn ʿAli Al-Baḥrānī, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Thaqalayn, 1420/1999), 2.

[60] Ibid., 2.

[61] Ibid, 5. Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd indicated that Hibat Allah al-Rāwandī is the only one who interpreted *Nahj al-Balāghah* before him. However, according to the publisher of Ibn Maytham's commentary, there were interpretations that have been revealed as dating before him, such as those by ʿAli ibn Nāṣir, Aḥmad ibn al-Wabarī, Faḍl Allah al-Rāwandī, Al-Nayshābūrī, Hibat Allah al-Rāwandī and many others. P. wāw.

[62] Also see ʾAḥmad Baṭal Wasīj, "Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah liKamāl al-Dīn al-Baḥrānī (d.679 AH): Dirāsah Balāghiyyah" (University of Diyala. 2005), 12.

***Al-Dībāj al-Waḍī fī al-Kashf ʿan ʾAsrār Kalām al-Waṣī* (*Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*) [An Enlightening Preface of Revealing the mystery in the speech of the Guardian], by Yaḥyá ibn Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī**[63]

In this commentary, Yaḥyá ibn Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī (d. 749/1348) explains his methodology in interpreting *Nahj al-Balāghah*.[64] He divides the text into short phrases and places his explanations in order, starting from the beginning to the end of the speech, whether it is an oration, a letter, or sayings, without neglecting any part of it. He bases his knowledge on two aspects: *ʿaqliyyah* [rational] and *naqliyyah* [transmissional]. In addition to his own input about every phrase, he cites from the *Qurʾān*, the tradition of the Prophet and the lexicons to support and clarify his interpretation.[65] Yet, his presentation of the meaning of the text shows an extent of simplicity that helps the reader to trace the meanings easily.

6.1.3.2. Modern Commentaries

***Nafaḥāt al-Wilāyah: Sharḥ ʿAṣrī Jāmiʿ liNahj al-Balāghah* [*The Fragrance of the Custodianship: A Contemporary Inclusive Interpretation of Nahj al-Balāghah*], by Nāṣir Makārim al-Shīrāzī**[66]

In this commentary, Al-Shīrāzī indicates that he started to look at *Nahj al-Balāghah* closely in 1963, when he was imprisoned during the reign of the Shah in Iran. He had the opportunity to investigate the book at this time. He starts his book with a short biography of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and then talks briefly about ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as the true author of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He then introduces the different opinions of scholars about the eloquence of *Nahj al-Balāghah* as it is described to be beyond the speech of creatures and below the speech of God. Its wonder manifests through both its literal and figurative meanings.[67] Al-Shīrāzī then describes some of the features of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, such as the diversity of its topics and its allure that can be

[63] Yaḥyá ibn Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī, *Al-Dībāj al-Waḍī fi al-Kashf ʿan ʾAsrār Kalām al-Waṣī* (*Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*), edited by Khālid ibn Qāsim al-Mutawakkil, (Ṣanʿā': Muʾassasat al-Imam Zayd ibn ʿAlī al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1424/2003).

[64] Khālid ibn Qāsim al-Mutawakkil, "Introduction." In *Al-Dībāj al-Waḍī fi al-Kashf ʿan ʾAsrār Kalām al-Waṣī* (*Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*), by Yaḥyá ibn Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī, (Ṣanʿā': Muʾassasat al-Imam Zayd ibn ʿAlī al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1424/2003), 38.

[65] Ibid., 40.

[66] Nāṣir Makārim al-Shīrāzī, *Nafaḥāt al-Wilāyah: Sharḥ ʿAṣrī Jāmiʿ liNahj al-Balāghah* (Qum: Madrasat al-Imam ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, 1426 AH).

[67] Ibid., vol. 1, 20. *Wilāyah* refers to believing in ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as the true successor of the prophet Moḥammad. It "conveys a special sense of devotion for and closeness and allegiance to the *Imām*s, on the part of their followers", see *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2nd edition* "Wilāya".

felt whenever one is confronted with the text. He then turns to the issue of the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and discusses Al-Raḍī's introduction.[68] Then, Al-Shīrāzī takes sections of orations, introducing every oration briefly, before going deeply into its interpretations.

***Minhāj al-Barāʿah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* [*The Path of Creativeness in Interpreting Nahj al-Balāghah*] by Ḥabīb Allah al-Khūʾī[69]**

This is a twenty-one volume book in which Al-Khūʾī (d.1324/1906) gives very detailed interpretations of the speech in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.[70] He divides his views about every phrase in *Nahj al-Balāghah* into three sections: *al-lughah* [the language], *al-ʾiʿrāb* [the syntax] and *al-maʿná* [the meaning]. He integrates different texts, apart from *Nahj al-Balāghah*, into his exegesis. Thus, different aspects of his intellect are clearly reflected in his interpretation, as he refers to verses from the *Qurʾān* and to different publications that introduce the idea that concerns him in relation to the specific aspect of the speech in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. It is a rich interpretation that reflects a clear interest in the linguistic aspects of the text, and yet, it is influenced a lot by the way books in the Abbasid period were written. The book consists of a long introduction that is mainly concerned with issues that tackle the elements of language, such as figurative language, metaphors, the vocable and the meaning, and subjects that concern the study of Arabic rhetoric.[71]

6.1.4. Stylistic Studies of *Nahj al-Balāghah*

***Al-ʾAthar al-Qurʾānī fī Nahj al-Balāghah: Dirāsah fī al-Shakl wa al-Maḍmūn* [*The Qurʾānic Influence on Nahj al-Balāghah: A Study of the Form and Content*], by ʿAbbāss al-Faḥḥām[72]**

Al-Faḥḥām, in this work, describes *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a lively text that always contributes to the knowledge of the researchers who read it; it always has a positive linguistic influence. Al-Faḥḥām believes that *Nahj al-Balāghah* has this effect because of the influence that the *Qurʾān* had on it. Al-Faḥḥām mentions that the study of the influence of the *Qurʾān* on *Nahj al-*

[68] Ibid., 39.
[69] Ḥabīb Allah al-Khūʾī, *Minhāj al-Barāʿah fi Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Bayrūt: Dār ʾIḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1424/2003).
[70] Ibid., vol. 1, 10.
[71] Ibid. See the introduction.
[72] ʿAbbāss al-Faḥḥām, *Al-ʾAthar al-Qurʾānī fi Nahj al-Balāghah: Dirāsah fi al-Shakl wa al-Maḍmūn* (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Fajr, 2010).

Balāghah is neglected, and that although many other studies have been published, they focus on different issues.

He then points out an important note that resulted from his first attempt at this comparative study in his master's dissertation, according to which he realised that focusing on one feature of the text and constructing a comparison always opens the researcher to a wider sphere, because of the complexity of the linguistic approaches in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and the inimitable richness of the *Qur'ān*.[73] He constructs his argument on two topics; *al-shakl* [the form] and *al-maḍmūn* [the content]. A valuable aspect of this book is the connections that are made between metaphors and images of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and the *Qur'ān*. For instance, the way *Nahj al-Balāghah* describes truth and falsity, and how this seems to be built on the previous understanding of the images used in the *Qur'ān*. Metaphors of day and night and their parallel in the *Qur'ān* are also introduced. However, the book lacks a deeper analysis of the mutual images that could have added more value to it.

"Study the Stylistics of '*Ashbah*' Sermon of '*Nahjol Balaqeh*'", by Atefeh Rahmani and Ahmad Pashazanoos.[74]

This study tries to answer some questions about the relationship between the meaning and the words in the oration that is its central subject, their relationship to the content of the sermon and the effect of the sounds of the words. The research is based on the notion that the study of stylistics in general is about deviation from the linguistic rules. And all these together – the innovative and the musical qualities – will affect the psyche of the audience. The investigation of the phonetic levels of the sermon is divided into two types; the internal music, which consists of equipoise, the use of couplets and alliteration; and the *spiritual* music, consisting of examples of contradictions and parallelism and other figures. Then, in the lexical section, the study refers the choices of words made in the sermon to different reasons. These reasons are; the phonetics as in the example of the *tawrịyah*; the structure of the words and the mental concepts. Then different rhetorical figures are investigated in the sermon, such as metaphor, simile and metonymy. In the third section, the syntactical level is also investigated.

[73] Ibid., 9.

[74] Atefeh Rahmani and Pashazanoos, Ahmad, "Study the Stylistics of 'Ashbah' sermon of '*Nahjol Balaqeh*'," *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 6, no. 1, (2017).

Examples from the sermon are presented throughout the study. It seems that the usage of these figures is a need in the sermon and they participate in its unity. Although the literary figures are not always translated accurately into English, their applications in the sermon are valid. The study relies in its three sections on the classical presentation of "Arabic rhetoric" which was put into its three divisions by Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sakkākī (d.626/1229) in his book *Miftaḥ al-ʿUlūm* [*The Key of Sciences*] which was then summarised by scholars such as Al-Qazwīnī (d.739/1338) becoming the standard curriculum text for Arabic rhetoric in schools.

Al-Majāz al-Lughawī fī Kitāb Nahj al-Balāghah liʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ʿalayh al-salām [***Linguistic Imagery in the Book of Nahj al-Balāghah by the Prince of the Believers ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, Peace Be Upon Him***]**, by Zakiyyah al-Sayyid Saʿīd Jawād**[75]

The book starts from the idea that, although many studies have been conducted on *Nahj al-Balāghah's* literary elements, imagery and its different types has not been explored. It aims at concentrating on the linguistic imagery *majāz lughawī* as a unique dimension and by investigating it within *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the reading will contribute to the understanding of this literary element and expanding its types. This means the starting point of the analysis is with the rhetorical terms that are studied by rhetoricians and scholars of Arabic. The author goes back to the Arabic rhetoric books and takes these terms, trying to find their manifestations in the text of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This analysis explains the importance of the rhetorical tools to clarify the intended meaning in addition to the beauty they add to the text. Although the author connects different manifestations of the same type, the connection does not surpass the attempt to strengthen the first meaning that has been discovered. For instance, in exploring the metaphor of the garment, in every phrase it is seen as a veil, which in many cases is true. Yet, there is no attempt to explore how every particular metaphor works through its whole context, which is different from other contexts that it appears in.[76] Another example, when Jawād investigates the image of death and how it arrives, she explains that death is likened to a predatory animal with claws, and in another case, it has the same claws with people who are looking and awaiting something.[77] In this way of explanation, she refers

[75] Zakiyyah al-Sayyid Saʿīd Jawād, *Al-Majāz al-Lughawī fī Kitāb Nahj al-Balāghah li ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ʿalayh al-salām*, (Karbalāʾ al-Muqaddasah: Muʾassasat ʿUlūm Nahj al-Balāghah, 2018).
[76] Ibid., 131.
[77] Ibid., 142.

every image back to its original meaning without trying to build the whole image out of these complementary metaphors. The study indicates the notion of the "centric image" *al-ṣūrah al-markaziyyah*. An example is the one derived from the desert environment. Although the view of this environment seems to be exploited in the mind of the audience, *Nahj al-Balāghah* represents the image in creative ways that keep causing wonder in the mind of the audience.[78] Yet, this centric image is more like a "main image" and unlike my understanding of "the imaginary context" which involves logical relationships that are based on imaginative connections between different parts of the context. The study appears to fulfil its aim of showing how *Nahj al-Balāghah* consists of all the rhetorical terms examined under the notion of linguistic imagery.

***ʾAthar al-Siyāq fī Tawjīh al-Maʿná liʾAlfāẓ al-Ṭabīʿah fī Nahj al-Balāghah* [*The Effect of the Context as directing the Meaning of the Words of Nature in Nahj al-Balaghah*], by Nadá ʿAbd al-ʾAmīr al-Ṣāfī.**[79]

This book explores the theory of context, dividing it into two types; the linguistic and the non-linguistic. The first is concerned with the position of the word in the text and its relations to the other words, while the second is concerned with the status of the audience and the social environment. In the following sections, the author investigates different phrases and paragraphs that consist of words about nature. She explains the reasons for using a particular word, according to its position and its contribution to the intended meaning. In some examples, both contexts are presented to justify the usage of the word, yet, in other cases the author goes with either the linguistic context or the non-linguistic to justify the choices of words. Thus, the contribution of the book seems to go beyond what its introduction shows as to be expected. This is clear in the parts of the analysis.

[78] Ibid., 158.

[79] Nadá ʿAbd al-ʾAmīr al-Ṣāfī, *ʾAthar al-Siyāq fī Tawjīh al-Maʿná liʾAlfāẓ al-Ṭabīʿah fī Nahj al-Balāghah*, (Karbalāʾ al-Muqaddasah: Muʾassasat ʿUlūm Nahj al-Balāghah, 2017).

***Al-Khaṣā'iṣ al-'Uslūbiyyah fī Kitāb al-Imam ʿAlī 'ilá Wālih ʿalá Al-Baṣrah ʿUthmān ibn Ḥunayf* [*Stylistic Features in Imam ʿAlī's Letter to His Guardian of Al-Baṣrah ʿUthmān ibn Ḥunayf*], by ʿAmmār Ḥasan al-Khuzāʿī**[80]

Al-Khuzāʿī in this study starts with defining *al-ʿuslūbiyyah* [the stylistics] on which he builds his analysis of the text of a letter sent by ʿAlī ibn 'Abī Ṭālib to ibn Ḥunayf. He then divides the stylistics into three sections that are parallel to the three sections of the classical Arabic rhetoric; *al-badīʿ*, *al-maʿānī* and *al-bayān*; he calls them *al-mustawá al-ṣawtī* [the phonetic level], *al-mustawá al-tarkībī* [the structural level] and *al-mustawa al-dilālī* [the indicative level]. He does not only present examples from the letter that manifest these three arts, but also connects the different stylistic elements to the meaning of the phrase or paragraph it contributes to. There are always connections between the stylistic form and the meaning of its context. For instance, when considering the sound of *sajaʿ* [assonance] in one phrase, the author indicates that the sound in this particular *sajaʿ* comes to strengthen and validate the meaning of the phrase through the speciality of the sound in use.[81] Another example is how changing the order of the words in the sentence is used to focus on what is more important for the audience to receive. Thus, stylistic form works according to the importance of the content.[82]

"Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and *Nahj al-Balāghah*: Rhetoric, Dispossession, and the Lyric Sensibility", by Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych[83]

In this article Stetkevych argues that Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī as a compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* brings the teachings of ʿAlī ibn 'Abī Ṭālib, the first Imam of the Shīʿīs, to the intellectual community of the tenth century. It is through the literary language and the style of *badīʿ* – that reached its peak at the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī – that *Nahj al-Balāghah* conveys its teaching. Although this is true in terms of the influence that literary language will have on the soul as Stetkevych indicates, the poetic language at the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was not the art that reaches the

[80] ʿAmmār Ḥasan al-Khuzāʿī, *Al-Khaṣā'iṣ al-'Uslūbiyyah fī Kitab al-Imam ʿAlī 'ilá Wālih ʿalá Al-Baṣrah ʿUthmān ibn Ḥunayf*, (Karbalā' al-Muqaddasah: Mu'assasat ʿUlūm Nahj al-Balāghah, 2017).
[81] Ibid., 38-39.
[82] Ibid., 49.
[83] Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Rhetoric, Dispossession, and the Lyric Sensibility," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 50, no. 3-4, (Brill, 2019).

level of demonstrative sciences. Poetic statements were treated as the lowest of the logical arts according to the teaching of Al-Fārābī, whose ideas were already known to the intellectuals of the time. The debate between Mattá ibn Yūnis (d.940) and Al-Sīrāfī (979) about the significance of grammar and logic is recorded in the work of ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, meaning the use of logic was a necessary criterion for acquiring knowledge in the age of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. Stetkevych, in her article, mentions the idea of speculative theologians. They were known for their debates and arguments built on reasoning. In this kind of atmosphere, the significant question is: how is literary language used to educate people in a rational environment? Stetkevych argues that the power of rhetoric is key in these orations, as it makes them emotionally compelling because the morality in them is clear. My argument which is related to the significant question above is strengthened by the truth that different orations of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are found in different sources other than *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which were composed earlier. This might provoke a new reason for compiling *Nahj al-Balāghah* which could be said to possess a specific educational purpose rather than just be for the purpose of influencing the soul, as the classical understanding of rhetorical elements insists. Different examples are used in this article to locate *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the literary environment of the tenth century, by making comparison between orations of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and poems of the Arab poets. This way of comparison has already been used by Waris Hassan, but he uses the comparison in order to locate *Nahj al-Balāghah's* contents to the time of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib.

6.2. Arabic Poetics and Rhetoric

This section is divided into two parts; Arabic poetics, and "argumentation". While these two titles are very broad, my intention is to include studies that have elements relevant to my thesis in different ways. For instance, some titles will have similar approaches to text in terms of focusing on symbols and images as tools for understanding; others will especially focus on investigating orations rather than any other literary genre, in which they are clear about their interest in investigating the nature of the image and its influence.

6.2.1. Arabic Poetics

***Literary Qur'an: Narrative Ethics in the Maghreb*, by Huda El-Shakry**[84]

This book argues for disrupting boundaries between the secular and the sacred, through analysing novels from the Maghreb in line with *Qur'ānic* narratives. It offers new ways of engaging with ethics in literary studies. As an example, the novel *al-zilzal* [*the earthquake*] by Al-Tahir Wattar has been connected to the *Qur'ān* and different Islamic events. While the novel itself introduces the chapter of the *Qur'ān* that features the apocalypse, El-Shakry in her reading links some figures in the novel to those in the early Islam. She considers them as symbols of certain aspects of Muslim figures. For instance, the choice of the name ʿĀ'ishah represents the woman who takes political roles and has other qualities – derived from the Prophet Muhammad's wife – that support the character's position in the novel. The apocalypse is reflected not only through the physical, but also in the moral corruption of the inhabitants, and the psyche of the novel's central character. In this novel, the *Qur'ān* is mobilised formally and thematically to function as an exploration of the histories of Arabism and Islamism in Algeria.[85] Thus, Wattar's engagement with different ideological and philosophical debates in Islam is examined. In another chapter, mystical ideas in the novels are featured, such as the oneness of being and the fulfilment of divine destiny. Thus, the Islamic collective memory which affects the symbolic reading of the literary work is presented in this book. El-Shakry also attempts to show the educational purposes of the literary work, through the interaction between the sacred and the secular.

***Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature*, by Lara Harb**[86]

Lara Harb argues that it is the quality of "wonder" that makes poetics in language. In a detailed analysis of "wonder" and its manifestations in Arabic poetic language, Harb attempts a to clarify in more detail the theory of Arabic poetics. Wonder, while it occurs as an emotional reaction, also has a cognitive purpose. The pleasure caused by wonder can feel both "positive" and "negative". Wonder also consists of the search for explanation and a need to contemplate.

[84] Huda El-Shakry, *Literary Qur'an: Narrative Ethics in the Maghreb* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2020).
[85] Ibid., 98.
[86] Lara Harb *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Harb indicates that wonder started to be a criterion in the field of literary criticism around the turn of the fifth AH/eleventh CE century. It is an improvement to the old school which dominated the first two centuries of criticism. The old school was based on the notions of "truthfulness" and "naturalness". Yet, the old school patterns continue to be present in and after the fifth AH/eleventh CE century school of criticism. The book also discusses the Medieval philosophical school built on Aristotle's *Poetics*, on different rhetorical figures based on signs, and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's *naẓm* [theory of construction]. In her discussion around the notion of *bayān* [clarification] in Al-Jāḥiẓ, Harb argues that it raises the role of figurative language from being merely an ornamental part into taking on a communicative function. Thus, the signification of the word beyond its lexical meaning, which needs to be read through its combination with other words, is what makes *ʿilm al-Bayān* [the science of clarification]. The main point in this book regarding "wonder" is the way in which it opens up a route to discovery for the audience.

***Min al-Balāghah ʾilá al-Tadāwuliyyah: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah fī al-Bunyah wa al-Taṣawwur* [*From Rhetorics to Pragmatics: An Analytical Study of the Construction and imagination*], by Riḍwān al-Raqbī**[87]

This book refers the root of pragmatic theory to the legacy of Arabic rhetoric. Both are concerned with the context of discourse and the interaction between the speaker and the audience through the action of speech. Al-Raqbī discusses *bayān* [clarification] in relation to the features of the pragmatic context in Arabic rhetoric, and the pragmatic aspect of the construction's elements in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's thought; he examines the pragmatic influence of the linguistic features and the imagery. By using *istiʿārah* as an example of the influence of imagery, he refers to ʿAbd al-Qāhir's opinion of *iddiʿāʾ* [allegation] in which he develops the understanding of *istiʿārah* from *naql* [transference]. This means that knowing the indication of the *istiʿārah* is through reason, not through the vocable. It is through the context and the relational system that *istiʿārah* gets its power and influence. The book is concerned with theoretical work of Arabic rhetoric with examples to make things clearer; however, there is not a separate section for practice and deep analysis of discourses.

[87] Riḍwān al-Raqbī, *Min al-Balāghah ʾIlá al-Tadāwuliyyah: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah fī al-Bunyah wa al-Taṣawwur* (ʾIrbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2018).

"Allegories of Ruin: Architecture and Knowledge in Early Arabic Poetry", by Hassanaly Ladha[88]

In this article, Ladha explores how the allegories of architectural terms in the Arabic *qaṣīdah* make an epistemological contribution to understanding the architecture. Yet, the neglect in the studies in this manner is because of the critics' attitude of reading the elements of architecture as mere metaphors. Through the exploration, he makes comparisons between the verse and the idea of a "tent", as both are *bayt* [house] and every one of these terms constitutes of its elements; its inhabitants. He investigates the abandonment of the beloved and the desert journey: the first two parts of the *qaṣīdah* that allow the poet to have his own self-discovery. There is this relationship between the semantic figures of the first section of the *qaṣīdah* that are the "elegy" *nasīb* and "the ruins" of the place of the beloved, and the figures of the "departure" *raḥīl* and "the desert journey". The architectural signs from the ruins to the desert journey are revealed as the substance of history.

6.2.2. Argumentation

***'Ishkāliyyāt al-Ḥijāj fī al-Mafhūm wa al-Tawṣīf* [*Conceptual and Descriptive Paradoxes of Argumentation*], by Ṣalāḥ Ḥassan Ḥāwī**[89]

This book deals with argumentation as a "concept" which has many connections with other logical and rhetorical concepts. Ḥāwī divides his book into two chapters: the first examines *ḥijāj* [argumentation] in different systems, in relation to the *Qur'ān*, linguistics, logic and rhetorics in their Arabic and Western understandings; the second examines different possibilities regarding how *ḥijāj* could function as a methodology in discourse analysis, which gives it the ability to be used as a theory, a structure for texts, a pragmatic aspect and as the orator's tool for persuasion. The book gives clear answers to understanding *ḥijāj* as a concept, differentiating it from *khiṭāb* [discourse], *jadal* [dialectic], *sijāl* [debate] and *istidlāl* [demonstration]. It also clarifies the position of *ḥujjah* and *ḥijāj* in their relation to the other

[88] Hassanaly Ladha, "Allegories of Ruin: Architecture and Knowledge in Early Arabic Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 50, no. 2, (2019).
[89] Ṣalāḥ Ḥassan Ḥāwī, *'Ishkāliyyāt al-Ḥijāj fī al-Mafhūm wa al-Tawṣīf* (Al-Baṣrah: Dār Shahrayār, 2018).

arts, such as demonstration and rhetoric. The study is constructed on Aristotle's teaching, growing through Perelman on one side and through the understandings of the Arab philosophers and rhetoricians on the other. The book is valuable not only for specialists of the field but also for general reading. While it fulfils its own purpose of understanding *ḥijāj*, it raises questions around other concepts such as *khiṭāb* [discourse] and *khaṭābah* [rhetoric/oratory] that are connected to *ḥijāj*, and allows us to question the ability to examine them in a similar way.

***Fī Balāghaht al-Khiṭāb al-ʾIqnāʿī: Madkhal Naẓarī wa Taṭbīqī liDirāsat al-Khaṭābah al-ʿArabiyyah, al-Khaṭābah fī al-Qarn al-ʾAwwal Namūdhajan* [*The Rhetoric of Persuasive Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Introductory Approach to the Study of Arabic Rhetoric, the Paradigm of the Oratory in the First Century*], by Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī**[90]

Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī – who is considered a pioneer in the field of new Arabic rhetorics[91] – has worked on persuasive discourse long before his true contribution to the new rhetorics appeared as a project. This book, first published in 1985, presents Arabic orations of the first Islamic century, Al-ʿUmarī takes the responsibility of theorising the rhetoric of persuasion. He looks into orations as the subject of the art *khaṭābah* "Aristotle's rhetoric", presenting different types of orations and the techniques that are suggested by Aristotle to construct an oration. Al-ʿUmarī discusses *ḥujaj* [the arguments] (plural of *hujjah*) and *ʾuslūb* [style] in two different chapters, noticing that, in the Greek tradition, the focus was on argument, while in the Arab tradition style functions as a main factor. In one of his examples, he notices how the orator Al-Ḥajjāj was apparently influenced by images of Arabic poetry and Islamic traditions, such as the idea of darkness and light as symbols of falsehood and truth. This idea of light and darkness will also be present in my discussion on orations of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the second part of this thesis. And upon this image Al-Ḥajjāj says "did not I uncover the darkness of unfairness and falsehood by the light of rightness?"[92] without the need of the orator to argue the validity of what he says. Al-ʿUmarī considers this image as constituting the argument and the form at the

[90] Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī, *Fī Balāghaht al-Khiṭāb al-ʾIqnāʿī: Madkhal Naẓarī wa Taṭbīqī liDirāsat al-Khaṭābah al-ʿArabiyyah, al-Khaṭābah fi al-Qarn al-ʾAwwal Namūdhajan* (Al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: ʾAfrīqyā al-Sharq, 2002).
[91] Ḥāwī, *ʾIshkāliyyāt al-Ḥijāj*, 53.
[92] Al-ʿUmary, *Fī Balāghaht al-Khiṭāb al-ʾIqnāʿī*, 105.

same time.[93] However, it is not explained how this argument can only come in this particular figurative style, or why arguing through an image is compulsory, when a literal expression would also be valid. What appears strange is that, although Al-ʿUmarī examines early Arabic orations in the first Islamic century, no oration from ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib is included. While *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not a product of the first century, many of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib's orations are published in different books long before Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's collection. It looks like this is a clear weakness of the book. The book works to clarify the way in which the image can be an argument in itself, yet there are examples for the vocal art as to be persuasive. While this is valuable opening work, the reader expects more examples of style-as-argument.

***Al-Balāghah al-Jadīdah bayn al-Takhyīl wa al-Tadāwul* [The New Rhetoric in the Imaginary and the Pragmatic], by Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī**[94]

A more analytical work by Al-ʿUmarī, this was first published in 2005. He divides the book into three chapters. First, he explains the historical development of rhetorics and theory, where *takhyīl* interacts with pragmatics. Second, he examines the bilateral identity of rhetoric – that considers *takhyīl* and persuasion as its two wings – in relation to the literary irony of Al-Jāḥiẓ. Third, he explores imagery as a tool of both *takhyīl* and persuasion, as he looks at the concept "image" and the narrative transitioning of "metaphor". The author tries to set clear names for the concepts that interfere with each other as a result of the constant development and different translations that occur in the field of rhetoric, which also overlaps with other areas of study; however, it would be problematic to follow these new concepts, for instance the usage of the word *ʾinshāʾ* [composition] as a way to give space for the word *khiṭāb* [discourse] to take specific positions. Later in his book, the aim of Al-ʿUmarī's project is to show the argumentative nature of the image. This means he should be clearer from the beginning that *ḥijāj* is a more general concept that can occur or be represented in different fields, like *takhyīl* and persuasion, as explained, for instance, by Ḥāwī (2018). In his study on Al-Jāḥiẓ in the second chapter, Al-ʿUmarī argues that the irony in Al-Jāḥiẓ's text is used as an argument, with the influence that this humour has upon the audience. The irony, however, is not expressed

[93] Ibid.

[94] Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-Jadīdah bayn al-Takhyīl wa al-Tadāwul* (Al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: ʾAfrīqyā al-Sharq, 2012).

through imaginative language, according to Al-ʿUmarī, it only can be part of the whole idea of *khayāl* [imagination], and this does not explore the idea of the figurative language as an argument. In the third chapter, the idea of *tarākub al-ṣuwar* [constructing an image upon another one] is examined. In exploring this, the author tests the idea of the meaning and the "meaning of meaning" which was studied by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī in the comparison that was made between *lafẓ* [linguistic form] and *maʿná* [meaning]. He indicates ʿAbd al-Qāhir's suggestion of the image as a broader notion of *naẓm* [construction] as the image participates in this construction. Thus, *al-ṣūrah al-bayāniyyah* [the image] meets *al-ṣūrah al-balāghiyyah* [the form].[95]

***Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj: Naḥwa Muqārabah Balāghiyyah Ḥijājiyyah liTaḥlīl al-Khiṭābāt* [*Rhetorical Argumentation: Towards an Argumentative Rhetorical Approach in Discourse Analysis*], by Muḥammad Mishbāl**[96]

Muḥammad Mishbāl is another figure in the study of the new Arabic rhetorics, who works on both theoretical and practical aspects. He divides his book into two sections: the first is concerned with the concept of *balāghah* and *ḥijāj* and the principles of rhetorical discourse analysis; the second section is divided into four chapters concerned with Aristotle's argumentative techniques, *Logos*, *Ethos*, *Patos*, and the fourth chapter is about style. Mishbāl connects *Patos* with the image that exerts a psychological influence. He also insists on the importance of context in creating the image. However, when analysing the examples, he does not seem to examine the broader context, and his work stays with the internal context of discourse without trying to discover the areas around it. So, when he tries to examine the feelings that can be aroused by an oration, he looks at the issue expressed in the oration and connects it to the emotions it may produce, without specifically looking at the broader context of the audience or even referring to it.[97]

[95] Ibid., 208.
[96] Muḥammad Mishbāl, Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj: *Naḥwa Muqārabah Balāghiyyah Ḥijājiyyah liTaḥlīl al-Khiṭābāt* (ʿAmmān: Dār Kunūz al-Maʿrifah, 2017).
[97] See, for example, the oration of Al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī, Mishbāl, *Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj*, 291.

***Balāghat al-Ḥijāj Bayn al-Takhyīl wa al-Tadlīl* [*The Rhetoric of Argumentation Through the Imaginary and Demonstration*], by ʾAḥmad Qādim**[98]

This book explores the overlapping features of the poetical and the rhetorical. While he works theoretically and practically on argumentation to cover both *takhyīl* [the imaginary] and *Istidlāl* [demonstration], ʾAḥmad Qādim explores a debate of Ibn ʿAbbāss and a poem of Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr. This comes after theoretical chapters on poetics and rhetoric as understood and received by critics, philosophers, rhetoricians, and in relation to Aristotle's thought in particular. In his poetic analysis, Qādim constructs his rhetorical demonstration on the notion of the transference from meaning to the "meaning of meaning", as explained by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī: "The value of the rhetorical demonstration *al-istidlāl al-balāghī* is not found in the indication of the best meaning of the speaker but in the way of proving it".[99] In addition to presenting the technical aspects of rhetorical demonstration as these aspects work in the *Logos*, the author shows clarity in his understanding of the context and its influence in the creation of the image, relying on the collective imagination, as he explains it in the poem *bānat Suʿād*.[100] Thus, he focuses on the identity of the speaker and his influence on the audience as this identity will be actively seen as an expression of the *Ethos* and then the *Patos*. In his analysis, Qādim shows how *takhyīl* in poetry can be persuasive. Yet, the image is treated as singular, and Qādim does not show its connection to a wider imaginary context that makes it special and that enables one to understand how it is used, within this wider context of the image, to achieve its powerful, persuasive effect. The effect of it featuring the *Patos* is shown but what about being the logos at the same time? In his analysis of the example of dispute, he focuses on the logos, as it is the usual case with speeches and orations, and in his examination of the style, he treats it as "the dress of the argument".[101] Yet, he considers different stylistic features and presents them as argumentative tools, such as *istifhām* [inquiry], *ʾinkār* [denial] and *tawkīd* [affirmation], putting *mathal* [the example] in its two aspects: the historical and the mythical, as features of the logos.

[98] ʾAḥmad Qādim, *Balāghat al-Ḥijāj bayn al-Takhyīl wa al-Tadlīl* (ʾIrbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2019).

[99] Ibid., 164.
[100] Ibid., 168.
[101] Ibid., 142.

***Ḥijājiyyat al-Ṣūrah fī al-Khaṭābah al-Siyāsiyyah ladá al-Imam ʿAlī* [*The Argumentative Nature of the Image in Imam ʿAlī's Political Oratory*], by Kamāl al-Zamānī**[102]

In this book, the author explores the meaning of *ṣūrah* [the image], how it is formed by imagination *khayāl* and its different functions. While Al-Zamānī gives the image four functions – argumentative, epistemological, stylistic and a directing function – in the last chapter he examines the argumentative nature in its subject, in its form and in its persuasive power. He indicates that all the other functions of the image serve the argumentative role.[103] In his analysis in the last chapter he identifies the persuasive power as a different function of the image, which seems to mean the image that directs the reader towards its content. In such a perspective, it seems that argumentation in one way works through the persuasive element of the image. He explains that this argument works through an additional power in the image that allows this image to reach the parts of an audience's minds or hearts that are open to persuasion. The concepts here are confusing, as persuasion should be a result of argumentation [*ḥijāj*] if argumentation succeeds, and of course it is not the only result of argumentation. However, presenting it as a way that argumentation manifests does not seem accurate. This means the other ways that argumentation manifests, like form and the subject of the image, will not lead to persuasion. There are however, many powerful points in the analysis as the author shows how the image is built on other images that convey effective values in the religious tradition. In addition, they all are established in the worlds that are familiar to the audience, such as the world of animals and weapons. In the second section he looks at the argumentative nature of form, in which he builds syllogisms that lead the audience to be submissive to the result. The book is informative and touches the effectiveness of the image, but the images are always taken from their context and treated as a single and isolated.

[102] Kamāl al-Zamānī, *Ḥijājiyyat al-Ṣūrah fī al-Khaṭābah al-Siyāsiyyah ladá al-Imam ʿAlī* (ʾIrbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2012).
[103] Ibid., 88.

"Al-Buʿd al-Ḥijājī fī ʾUqṣūṣat 'al-Qalʿah' liJamāl al-Ghīṭānī" ["The Argumentative Dimension in the Short Story 'The Castle' by Jamāl al-Ghīṭānī"], by Muḥammad al-ʿAmāmī[104]

In this study Al-ʿAmāmī argues that argumentation is linked to the context of discourse, which means it is not presented in one type of discourse. Yet, argumentation manifests explicitly or implicitly. Thus, two terms have been distinguished: "the argumentative purpose" (the explicit); and "the argumentative dimension" (the implicit). The imaginative story has been considered as a form of the latter. In his analysis of the short story, Al ʿAmāmī explains how the different characters and elements in the story have been used as argumentative tools to support the discourse.[105]

Although different studies have indicated the importance of the "context" in understanding the image, they always refer to an intellectual or historical context. There is no attempt to create the imaginary context that has its own logic between the little images within this context. Many Arabic studies have offered a literary analysis of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by investigating Arabic rhetorical figures. However, all these studies are based on the usage of rhetorical figures; the figures that have their own definitions within the field of Arabic rhetorics. Yet, none of these studies has applied *takhyīl* as a rhetorical figure to study *Nahj al-Balāghah*; there might be indications of examples of *takhyīl* in different studies but I have not encountered studies that read paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by the usage of *takhyīl*.

Yet, my attempt is different as I try to develop *takhyīl* as a logical and rhetorical figure into "the imaginary context" in order to reach its functional purpose. This development is stimulated by reading *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Thus, *Nahj al-Balāghah* provides the Arabic rhetoric with a new figure that can be a hermeneutical tool. To my knowledge, the creation of "the imaginary context" and its application on *Nahj al-Balāghah* has not been approached before.

[104] Muḥammad al-ʿAmāmī, "Al-Buʿd al-Ḥijājī fī ʾUqṣūṣat 'al-Qalʿah' liJamāl al-Ghīṭānī." In *Al-Ḥijāj Mafhūluh wa Majālātuh: Dirāsāt Naẓariyyah wa Taṭbīqiyyah fi al-Balāghah al-Jadīdah* vol: 2, edited by Ḥāfiẓ ʾIsmāʿīl ʿAlawī (ʾIrbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2010).
[105] Ibid., 181.

7. Approaching Theory

Arguing for an epistemological conclusion from poetic elements requires a clear evaluation of the basis upon which this argument stands. Ernst Cassirer is a great contributor to this area of philosophy as he strongly validates the role of symbols in his philosophy of symbolic forms. In this section, I present an overview of theoretical ideas that support my argument in an attempt to connect rhetoric, specifically the rhetorical image which I argue that it is a logical image, to the theory of knowledge. The logic of the image will be investigated more in the following chapter. The rhetorical image which is a poetical element is supposed to orient both the psyche and the intellect of the reader. This orientation is rooted in the culture and the consciousness of the audience.

7.1. Theory of Knowledge from Kant to Ernst Cassirer

In his critique of logic, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), indicates that some modernists have distorted different aspects of the sciences by trying to include them in the science of logic in order to widen its scope. In this way, he means the psychological aspects of the imaginative faculty, and the metaphysical aspects of certitude and the origin of epistemology.[106]

Kant distinguishes a different kind of logic with a different nature and mission. Here, it is not part of pure reason or empirical reason. Instead, it is concerned with pure understanding and a priori statements. This is called "transcendental logic" through which the origin of knowledge and its objective value can be achieved.[107] To clarify this point, Kant is known for his three critiques. Starting from the first critique, the "transcendental analysis of mathematics and physics" represents the system of pure reason, the second critique of practical reason focuses on ethical freedom, and finally, the third critique, which is a critique of judgement representing "the realm of art and that of organic natural forms".[108] "Cassirer intends to add critiques of the functions of linguistic thinking, mythical and religious thinking,

[106] ʿAmānūʾīl Kanṭ, *Naqd al-ʿAql al-Maḥḍ,* translated by Mūsá Wahbah (Bayrūt: Dār al-Tanwīr lil-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 2017), 36.

[107] Fuʾād Makhūkh, *Min Naqd al-ʿAql ʾIlá Hirminuṭīqā al-Rumūz: Baḥth fī Falsafat al-Thaqāfah ʿInd ʾIrnist Kāsīrir* (Bayrūt: Al-Markaz al-ʿArabī lil-ʾAbḥāth wa Dirāsat al-Siyāsāt, 2017), 30.

[108] Donald Phillip Verene, "Cassirer's Phenomenology of Culture," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 27, no. 1. Penn State University Press, 2013), 34.

and artistic perception, and to connect these to cognitive or theoretical thinking based on developments in modern logic and the natural sciences".[109] Thus, there is a universal principle of forms in which every piece of content is not isolated from the whole, but is grounded within it.[110]

Cassirer insists on the creativity of understanding, its independence, and its value in producing objectivity.[111] The philosophy of Descartes does not allow a space for culture and history to be a part of philosophy and science.[112] Yet, in his explanation of the objectivity of the cultural sciences, Cassirer introduces the notion of the cosmos. This cosmos goes beyond specific persons. It has features that are different from those of the natural sciences and their epistemology. This cosmos is related to the phenomenon of culture and the rules of the world of humanity.[113] Cassirer presents language as the basis of this mutual world, and it is through understanding language, that an understanding of this cosmos will be possible.[114]

> What things really are is what they are within human culture. Ultimately, systematic review means that the philosopher may take up any particular element in culture and give an account of it in terms of its origin and genesis as it exists within the world of symbolic forms viewed as a whole. The unity involved is functional and not substantial or fixed.[115]

This understanding of a "thing" is built on Cassirer's combination of the transcendental method of Kant and the phenomenology of Hegel which resulted in the philosophy of symbolic forms.[116] Hegel's philosophy is divided into three parts; the logic, the philosophy of nature, and the philosophy of spirit, "where the logic had the task of depicting the dialectical conceptual structure of infinite divine Reason itself".[117] Thus, he differentiated between two expressions of the single divine infinite reason, "nature" and "spirit".[118] However, the rise of the Neo-Kantian movement has led to less investigation of Hegel's logico-metaphysical identity of nature and spirit.[119] This seems to be a result of misreading Kant by the Neo-Kantians; a view which has been rejected by Cassirer.[120] In his combination of transcendental logic and the

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Makhūkh, *Min Naqd al-ʿAql*, 85.
[112] Ibid., 127.
[113] Ibid., 192.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Verene, "Cassirer's Phenomenology of Culture," 40.
[116] Ibid., 33.
[117] *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, "Ernst Cassirer".
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid. Also see *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, "Hegelianism".
[120] Charles W. Hendel, "Introduction," in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* by Ernst Cassirer, translated by Ralph Manhein, vol: 1; Language (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1955), 5.

phenomenology of Hegel, Cassirer opens a door to a theory of knowledge. Cassirer seems to connect these through symbolic form. His use of symbols as the central element of the phenomenon being investigated through the use of transcendental logic will result not only in a cultural form, but also in a form of knowledge.

Cassirer distinguishes between "thing perception" and "expressive perception" with both being legitimate forms of perception. While the first form provides the natural sciences with evidence, expressive perception provides the cultural sciences with evidence, which can be through the cultural meanings of lived experience in a human community.[121]

> Yet we also have the capacity, in the cultural *sciences*, to extend such meanings beyond their originally local contexts. Whereas intersubjective validity in the natural sciences rests on universal laws of nature ranging over all (physical) places and times, an analogous type of intersubjective validity arises in the cultural sciences independently of such laws. Although every "cultural object" has its own individual place in (historical) time and (geographical-cultural) space, it can still continuously approach a universal cultural meaning (in history or ethnography) as it is continually *interpreted and reinterpreted* from the perspective of other times and places.[122]

These two dimensions of looking at the symbol and interpreting it offer a logical method to viewing the object under investigation. Through the relationships between the symbol and the other elements in the same culture, and then the relationship of the symbol to its own appearance in a different culture, a systematic construction can be achieved. Cassirer explains that scientific knowledge is as symbolic as other life experiences. The purpose is to bridge the gap between these different forms. Thus, being able to see myth, art, and history as sources of knowledge that lead to viewing "things" objectively stretches "the meaning of knowledge and reality".[123]

In his explanation of language as a cultural form, Cassirer indicates that language "stands on the borderline between myth and logos and also represents an intermediary between the theoretical and aesthetic approach to the world".[124] In his study on the philosophy of language, Cassirer distinguishes between two types of language representation, the relational structure and the signification of the word. In the first, it is not that words, by joining them together, create a sentence and sentences create a discourse, but instead that through

[121] *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, "Ernst Cassirer".
[122] Ibid.
[123] Hendel, "Introduction," 48.
[124] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* translated by Ralph Manhein, vol, 1; Language, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1955), 298.

the discourse, words are issued.[125] It is the scientific view which breaks language into words and rules as its elements, a view which is considered to be "a dead product' of science.[126] For Humboldt, 'language is not a work (*ergon*) but an activity (*energeia*)".[127]

> language shows itself to be an organism in which, as the old Aristotelian definition put it, the whole is prior to its parts. Language begins with a complex total expression which only gradually breaks down into its elements, into relatively independent subsidiary units. As far back as we can trace it, language confronts us as a formed whole. None of its utterances can be understood as a mere juxtaposition of separate words; in each and every one, we find provisions which serve purely to express the relation between the particular elements, and which articulate and graduate this relation in a variety of ways.[128]

Yet, there are other languages with much lesser grammatical complexity in which relations between words rely on the essence of the word and its signification.

> [The] word seems to possess that independence, that genuine "substantiality" by virtue of which it "is" in itself and must be so conceived. The separate words simply stand side by side in the sentence as material vehicles of signification, and their grammatical relation is not made explicit in any way.[129]

This type of discussion is concerned with the logic of language. Whether as the first type suggests, language is confronted as a whole, there is a negligence of specific grammatical rules. This idea is strengthened through the view presented in the second type, which is represented in the "isolating languages".[130] Although the discussion is about the act of starting to read, there is a clear bias towards logic than to grammar. In the second type, the signification of the word constructs our understanding, yet in the first type, it is the whole intellectual context from which we build our reading. In his conclusion, Cassirer indicates,

> The characteristic meaning of language is not contained in the opposition between the two extremes of the sensuous and the intellectual, because in all its achievements and in every particular phase of its progress, language shows itself to be *at once* a sensuous and an intellectual form of expression.[131]

This means that tracing the development of language and its connection to logic, which it constantly builds through the development of cultural phenomena, opens the door to an epistemological contribution on a different ontological level. One of the central questions of medieval philosophy was how to unite "existence" and "essence", while at the same time being

[125]Ibid., 303.
[126] Ibid., 160.
[127] Ibid., 161.
[128] Ibid., 304.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 319.

able to delimit them as two modalities of being.[132] "Epistemology cannot analyse the substance and form of knowledge into independent contents which are only outwardly connected with one another; the two factors can only be thought and defined in relation to one another".[133] It can be understood from Cassirer's contribution that the application of his theoretical work can be found in the rhetorical heritage.[134]

Cassirer's ideas appear to be relevant in investigating the imaginary context within *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Through the examination of the poetic images that build on each other within the imaginary context, it is possible to achieve comprehension of the relationship between essence and existence. "The hour", "this world" and other examples will be investigated in the second part of this thesis. They are intelligible things and can only be grasped through language. Thus, presenting any of these examples through different contexts will require different poetic expressions in order to give variety of meanings about the examined term. In this way, it will be clear that understanding different cases of "this world", for example, are not about connecting "this world" in every case with a specific attribute to be read in a certain way. The whole imaginary context manifests its theme, and the different elements within this context flows in a way that shows how the substance and the form are connected together and are part of this particular context.

7.2. The Art of Rhetoric and Building Bridges With the Path of Knowledge

In his article, Hauser traces the study of rhetoric of the last century. While there has always been an endeavour to convey an epistemological conclusion out of the art of rhetoric in an attempt to reach the truth, these attempts are considered to contain a bias through which rhetoric is looked at from a philosophical viewpoint. The art of rhetoric is being minimised in such a way. As an example of this, Hauser indicates that through trying to find a specific way of reading a discourse in order to reach its truth, the possibilities inherent within different readings, which is a quality of rhetoric, are being dismissed. Hauser argues for a pure art of

[132] Ibid., 316.
[133] Ibid., 306.
[134] Erik Bengtson and Mats Rosengren, "A Philosophical-Anthropological Case for Cassirer in Rhetoric," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 35, no. 3, (University of California Press, Summer 2017), 365.

rhetoric; an art which has its own techniques and purposes that are different from philosophical truth.[135]

In the book of Rhetoric, Aristotle presents three fields. The first of these, which shapes the main part of the book, is the theory of argumentation and its connection to logical demonstration and philosophy. The second is the theory which is concerned with "statements" *al-ʿibārah*. The study of rhetoric for a long time has been shortened into this theory which presents rules of stylistics. The third is the theory of the construction of discourse.[136] Aristotle has moved rhetoric from the strict and harsh view of Plato into an alternative one in which he builds bridges between philosophy (the path for knowledge) and rhetoric. "Plato regarded philosophy to be a quest for eternal truth through reasoned arguments, while Sophists and rhetors sought mere probabilities through sensory engagement structured by *phantasia* and *mimesis*".[137] Thus, Aristotle's work appears as two forms of knowledge; logical and philosophical knowledge (shown in demonstration, sophistication, and the dialectic), and critical and rhetorical knowledge (shown in his two books of poetics and rhetoric).[138]

In exploring rhetoric through its appearance in nature as it evolves, Kennedy introduces his notion of "prior" in connection with rhetoric. Although this piece is built on the study of animal societies, it leads to an understanding of an existent relationship between our nature and rhetoric. By "prior" he means "rhetoric, as energy, has to exist in the speaker before speech can take place. It is prior in biological evolution and prior psychologically in any specific instance".[139] Then he mentions a more pragmatic tendency in which he describes the receiver's interpretation as being prior to the intention of the speaker. The receiver through their understanding, which depends on their prior knowledge of rhetorical elements, interprets the message independently from the exact intent of the speaker.[140] This leads to an examination of the meaning of the signs which the speaker has in mind. In such an argument, Kennedy explains that rhetoric is prior to the particular meaning of the sign the speaker has

[135] Hauser, "Introduction," 377- 379.
[136] Ḥāwī, *ʾIshkāliyyāt al-Ḥijāj*, 44. Also see ʾArisṭūṭālīs, *Al-Khiṭābah*, (*al-Tarjamah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Qadīmah*), edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Pārīs and Jibayl: Dār wa Maktabat Bībilyūn), 2011.
[137] Hauser, "Introduction," 374.
[138] Ḥāwī, *ʾIshkāliyyāt al-Ḥijāj*, 44.
[139] George A. Kennedy, "A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25, no. 1 (Penn State University Press, 1992), 4.
[140] Ibid., 8.

in mind. We, as humans, have "an ultimate common origin".[141] There seems to be a special rhetorical characteristic related to what specific species have developed in their evolution and in relation to what nature has favoured in specific environments.[142]

7.3. Understanding the Effect and Movement of the Symbols in the Audience in Carl Jung

Looking at Carl Jung's study of archetypes, symbols, and the unconscious, we can arrive at a better view about the intended signs, the received signs, and the recipient. Jung distinguishes between two level of the unconscious; a superficial layer which is personal, and the collective unconscious which is universal. The contents of the first "constitute the personal and private side of psychic life. The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes".[143] These archetypes are pre-existent forms that are inherited as is the collective unconscious.[144] The archetypes can manifest in a direct personified form that can be experienced. In the process of this experience, there appears another class of archetypes known as the archetypes of transformation. While the former occur in dreams and fantasies as active personalities, the latter "are not personalities, but are typical situations, places, ways and means, that symbolize the kind of transformation in question".[145] When Jung explains the method in which the archetypes manifest, he indicates that in addition to the dreams, there is the active imagination, which is defined as 'a sequence of fantasies produced by deliberate concentration'.[146] As the archetypes are elements of the unconscious, bringing them into the conscious strengthens the path of individuation; a term Jung uses to express the idea of wholeness by joining the conscious and the unconscious as the two parts of the psyche together, or as he describes it, to allow the conflict between the two to take place.

> Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too-as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an "individual".[147]

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[141] Ibid., 9.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,* translated by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1991), 4.
[144] Ibid., 43.
[145] Ibid., 38.
[146] Ibid., 49.
[147] Ibid., 287- 88.

Three kinds of archetypes distinguished by Jung are the shadow, the anima, and the trickster. The shadow "coincides with the 'personal' unconscious".[148] It is described as the closest archetype to the personal conscious; "it is also the first component of personality to come up in an analysis of the unconscious".[149] It is concerned with inferior traits and the things that people hide behind what Jung calls "the persona".[150] Encountering the shadow and engaging in its process will lead to encountering the anima which is concerned with relationships.[151] The anima is understood as the feminine traits in men, and as a parallel, is the animus as the masculine traits in women.[152] The process is continuous, and through the transformation from the meaningless to the meaningful, the trickster is revealed.[153] "A collective personification like the trickster is the product of an aggregate of individuals and is welcomed by each individual as something known to him".[154]

Jung describes this process of individuation as "an irrational life-process". It is expressed in definite symbols. Because it is irrational process and involves symbols, this process needs the help of the analyst. Thus, he believes that acquiring knowledge of the symbols "is indispensable, for it is in them that the union of conscious and unconscious contents is consummated".[155] According to Jung, the appearance of the symbols of the archetypes in poetics, especially those of the anima, are not factual products of the unconscious, yet "they are spontaneous products of analogy",[156] as the collective unconscious is located in a deep level of the psyche.[157]

The different kinds of archetypes cannot be interpreted in a specific allegorical way. Every symbol needs to be seen in its context, and is developed differently from one situation to another.[158] This is clearly connected to Cassirer's idea of understanding the element as a part of the world of symbolic forms, which is explained above. However, Cassirer is more concerned with the theoretical and cultural approach and Jung's work is based on empirical studies. Yet, what is more interesting in understanding the idea of the archetypes and the way

[148] Ibid., 284.
[149] Ibid., 271.
[150] Ibid., 20.
[151] Ibid., 270.
[152] Ibid., 284.
[153] Ibid., 256.
[154] Ibid., 262.
[155] Ibid., 289.
[156] Ibid., 285.
[157] Ibid., 286.
[158] Ibid., 50.

it functions, is not to read the patient or the poet's situation, but in our case, to look at creating the possible archetypes in the audience's mind through deliberate concentration. This contributes to both raising the consciousness of the audience by allowing the encountering of the archetypes, and creating "the imaginary context" which consists of elements that have their own unique meaning in every conscious encounter that leads to epistemological contribution. This is of course connected to the ability to affect the psyche of the audience by accessing their unconscious. Various sections of *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be investigated in the second part of this thesis as examples of archetypes such as the anima and the trickster seem to be expressed in different paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. While their psychiatric influence is only a part of the investigation of the imaginary context, the universal approach of Jung in which he emphasises on the shared archetypes and symbols between all human beings is what encourages including his approach in this thesis. The work of Jung in general is centred around healing which in many cases may achieve "individuation" and "wholeness". This idea appears in *Nahj al-Balāghah* in different examples as will be investigated. Before we approach the concept "the imaginary context" at the time of *Nahj al-Balāghah* which facilitates this way of reading, it is important to investigate the field of rhetoric.

7.4. The Construction of a Theory of Rhetoric in the Modern Western and Arab Medieval Age

The investigation is ongoing for a theory of rhetoric.[159] Many thinkers who participate in the development of the theory of rhetoric do not use the sign "rhetoric" or "theory of rhetoric". "Rhetorical theory gains meanings as people think and discourse with the sign, incorporate it into social practices of inquiry, and give it material form through nodes of expression".[160] The use of the term "rhetorical theory" or "theory of rhetoric" does not seem to appear before the 20th century in Anglophone rhetorical thought, even in remarkable works on rhetoric such as *Art of Rhetorique* by Thomas Wilson (1560), *Art of Rhetoric* by Thomas Hobbes (1637), *Philosophy of Rhetoric* by George Campbell (1776), and *Elements of Rhetoric* by Richard Whately (1828). According to Simonson,

> The first usage listed in the Oxford English Dictionary is a passing reference from Roger Coke's Elements of Power and Subjection (1660). I've found no evidence of

[159] Peter Simonson, "The Short History of Rhetorical Theory," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 53, no. 1, (Penn State University Press, 2020), 75-88.
[160] Ibid., 77.

> a sustained discourse. Major twentieth-century rhetorical thinkers continued this pattern. I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Richard McKeon, and Richard Weaver rarely (or never) mentioned rhetorical theory.[161]

In the academic context, rhetorical theory has been a rather marginalised field, descending from philosophy into the sub-field of rhetoric within the English discipline.[162] Yet, the broader geopolitical context of the development of rhetorical theory was connected to the settler colonialism of the European American. "The University of Michigan, like other institutional nodes that materially advanced the discourse of rhetoric in the Americas, was built upon lands seized from indigenous peoples through systematic violence, government-sanctioned fraud, and forced relocation".[163] In such a context, rhetorical theory was connected to the traditions of European civilization in order to legitimise the educational apparatus of colonial settlement to systematically erase indigeneity.[164] Thus, preserving rights in a society that was established on the basis of conflict raises the need for a rhetorical theory. In addition, rhetorical theory consists of this intention to change society into its new form through a gradual attack on its original people.

Jābir ʿAṣfūr distinguishes between two kinds of rhetoric that were the products of the politics and environment of the period from the third AH/ninth century CEto the ninth AH/fifteenth century CE in the Arab world. These were the rhetoric of the suppressor and the rhetoric of the suppressed *balāghat al-maqmūʿīn*. While the first refers to rules and their proponents, the second is distinguished by the different minority groups who had their own belief systems, theology, and literature. Examples of these are the Shīʿī, Muʿtazilī, Sufi, and the philosopher groups. These groups detested the political authority of the state and its reliance on the transmitted conviction used to legitimise their sovereignty.[165] Although these groups had their own conflicts, their approaches to contributing to cultural development differed from those of the state's advocate poets and writers.[166] The rhetoric of the supressed is described as having features that matched their oppressed status. In different times, they had to practice *taqiyyah* [dissimulation], which is "the action of concealing one's religious convictions when divulgence would bring danger or death".[167] This led to the invention of

[161] Ibid., 78.
[162] Ibid., 79.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., 80.
[165] ʿAṣfūr, *Al-Naqd al-ʾAdabī* 3, 245.
[166] Ibid., 259.
[167] *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān,* "Dissimulation".

creative tools used to hide meaning or to present a speech or a text with a double meaning.[168] Using symbols is one of these tools through which the author aims information at a specific group that will learn the meaning of the text through their knowledge of the symbol. The first rhetorician who mentioned "symbolism" *al-ramziyyah* as a tool of speech was Ibn Wahab.[169] There is no indication of this understanding of "the symbol" in earlier rhetorical works, such as in Al-Jāḥiẓ's books. Yet, there are similarities in understanding "the symbol" between Ibn Wahab, Al-Fārābī, and the brethren of purity.[170] Although one cannot deny the fact that the different groups needed to hide their teachings from the public and the authorities, there are still many works of these groups that have been published and preserved. This history of "the oppressed" should turn our attention to the "symbol", but should not restrict our understanding of symbols with specific meanings that are known to the targeted audience. There are still other possibilities through which we can read symbols without this restriction, one being through Al-Fārābī's school of philosophy. Although ʿAṣfūr explained Al-Fārābī's "symbol" in this sense as being similar to that of Ibn Wahab, Al-Fārābī's studies opened doors to other points of view. While the symbol in the Arabic tradition appears to be an important tool of rhetoric, it also has its roots in the acquiring of knowledge. In this way, the symbol is not used in an allegorical or a hierarchical way, but instead, is a language of communication at certain levels of consciousness, as will be made clear in the second part of this thesis.

7.5. Al-Fārābī's Theory of Knowledge

Al-Fārābī's theory of knowledge is known to be derived from two schools of thought, the Aristotelian and the Neo-Platonist.[171] This means that it has been constructed on the two pillars of metaphysics and logic. Studies show that there seems to be no clear connection of these separate parts into a single source.[172] Al-Fārābī's book *ʾIḥṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm* [*Enumeration of the Sciences*] is divided into five chapters that represent the classification of knowledge: The Science of Language, The Science of Logic, The Mathematical Sciences, Physics and

[168] ʿAṣfūr, *Al-Naqd al-ʾAdabī* 3, 259.
[169] Ibid. Also see ʾIsḥāq ibn Wahab, *Al-Burhān fī Wujūh al-Bayān*, edited by Ḥifnī Sharaf (Al-Qāhirah: Al-Majlis al-ʾAʿlá lil-Shuʾūn al-ʾIslāmiyyah, 1383 AH), 113.
[170] ʿAṣfūr, *Al-Naqd al-ʾAdabī* 3, 277.
[171] *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* "Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr: Epistemology".
[172] Deborah L. Black, "Knowledge (ʿIlm) and Certitude (Yaqīn) in Al-Fārābī's epistemology," Arabic Sciences and Philosophy 16, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45.

Metaphysics, and Civil Science, Jurisprudence and Scholastic Theology.[173] Yet another important work of Al-Fārābī's epistemology is his study of intellection, which is represented by a two-dimensional theory: "it embraces the spheres of human cognition, sublunary agency and divine reason itself".[174] *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* [*The Book of Letters*] is also considered to be the third source of Al-Fārābī's epistemology.[175]

Knowledge in Al-Fārābī's thought is "grasping the essence of things".[176] For Al-Fārābī, what is sensed *al-maḥsūs* exists prior to sensing it, and what is perceived *al-mudrak* exists prior to being aware of it. "Although, on one hand, he gives priority to the particulars in the existence, on the other hand, he indicates that the universals allow for the particulars to be perceived".[177] Thus, by comprehending the universals, the individual substances *'ashkhāṣ al-jawāhir* will be comprehended, and through the existence of its individuals *'ashkhāṣhā*, the universals are comprehended.[178] This clarifies Al-Fārābī's two sides of knowledge acquisition, which is related to his theory of intellect. From the lowest level, "the potential intellect" *al-ʿaql bil-quwwah* conceiving things by its external existence, it is then by preserving this perception that it becomes actual intellect, and the intelligible becomes actual intelligible. Then, the intellect which perceives the intelligible that was not manifested through forms becomes the acquired intellect *al-ʿaql al-mustafād*. To this point, the intellect is complete as an interactive intellect as it is an actual intellect and actual intelligible.[179] While this is only one part of Al-Fārābī's theory of intellect, at this point of his thesis, we are confronted with the "active intellect". This is the intellect which provides the acquired intellect with images that are sent from the higher power that is God.[180] Therefore, we are connected with the other source of knowledge in Al-Fārābī's theory. As the first external source is the forms in the outside world, then comes different levels of the intellect that comprehend and probably legitimise the logic of knowledge, we then encounter the second source which is beyond the ability of the intellect to have power over it, until this source transfers its elements into the acquired intellect, then the human mind is able to work it out and engages with its elements.

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[173] Ian Richard Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School* (London: Routledge, 1992), 39.
[174] Ibid, 52.
[175] *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* "Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr: Epistemology".
[176] "Epistemology, Philosophy, and Science", *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*.
[177] Maḥmūd Mūsá Ziyād, *Naẓariyyat al-Maʿrifah ʿind Al-Fārābī* (Bayrūt: Muʾassasat al- Iintishār al-ʿArabī, 2016), 73.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 107. Also see *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, "Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr: Epistemology".
[180] Ibid.

In the first process of knowledge acquisition, after abstracting the form, the person becomes aware of the perceived entity. This happens when the potential intellect becomes actual.[181] In the second process, when the active intellect presents the intelligible to the acquired intellect, the person will be aware of their knowledge. This can be a way of attaining certitude, as for Al-Fārābī, "certitude is not merely a matter of how and what one knows, but that it also requires some form of knowing that one knows".[182] Although this could be a controversial statement, Ibn Sīnā after Al- Fārābī agreed with it.[183]

In his explanation of these two types, Al-Fārābī in the *Kitāb al-Burhān* [*The Book of Demonstration*] indicates that "the soul has an act in what we abstract more than our own abstraction",[184] thus, the actual effect of what is being abstracted of the form is more than what we realise we have abstracted. Yet, Al-Fārābī believes that

> we should not care how it is perceived *kayfa 'udrikat*, and whether the perception of these abstracted forms by the soul is exclusive to it (the soul) without us when sensing its particulars, and rather we acquire knowledge about it whenever we are presented to sensing its particulars. Experience on the other hand, is examining the particulars of the universal premises, to speculate about its predicate one by one and follow it in most or all of them (the particulars of the universal premises), until we achieve the necessary certitude. As this judgment is a judgment on all this subject.[185]

Although the logical form of proposition is known to start from the forms in the outside world, in this paragraph, Al-Fārābī explains that it is possible that what we perceive has more effect on our soul than what we realise we sense. Thus, when encountering the object a second time, it might be that we acquire knowledge when perceiving the form because the premises has been previously established. This paragraph comes directly before explaining "the experience", which means that Al-Fārābī attempts to make a connection between the way the logical propositions and experience works in attaining certain knowledge.

Al-Fārābī distinguishes between induction and experience as sources of knowledge. This is important for the reader as there might be a confusion when encountering the chosen examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the second part of this thesis. As the investigated examples are manifestations of experience and not induction. The induction achieves only a restricted certitude of universal judgement, while experience achieves "certitude" of universal

[181] Ibid., 106.
[182] Black, "Knowledge and certitude in Fārābī," 44.
[183] Ibid.
[184] 'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiq 'ind Al-Fārābī: Kitāb al-Burhān ma'a Kitāb Sharā'iṭ al-Yaqīn ma'a Ta'ālīq Ibn Bājah 'alá al-Burhān*, edited by Mājid Fakhrī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1987), 24.
[185] Ibid.

judgement.[186] In his division of different levels of certitude, Al-Fārābī seems to be aiming at allowing other degrees of certitude to propositions that were excluded by philosophers before him, "dialectic and rhetoric are both identified as possible sources of merely 'accidental certitude'".[187] This happens when the two arts are viewed as sources of empirical knowledge. This kind of certitude may result when a true belief is held based on testimony *shahādah* alone, "either that of all or most people" in dialectic, or that "of a special group or authority figure" in rhetoric.[188]

For Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, "it is not the logician's place to explain the mechanisms by which experience is produced, nor to enumerate the precise conditions under which it becomes certain".[189] Yet, Al-Fārābī has differentiated his school in a distinct way from Aristotle's logic when he included the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* into the *Organon*. The inclusion of *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* in the *Organon* has been called by many later scholars "the context theory".[190] However, these two logical arts are considered to be the weakest in their ability to reach the truth; demonstration is the art by which highly educated people, mainly philosophers, reach the truth. Then comes dialectics, rhetoric, sophistics, and finally, poetics. Poetics and rhetoric are meant to deliver philosophical knowledge to the multitudes who are not capable of grasping philosophical ideas. To play this role, they have to use techniques that are similar to demonstrative tools in order to lead to what is similar to certainty—that is, some kind of assent *taṣdīq*. One of the tools that is used is the syllogism, which is "a statement (*qawl*) that consists of more than one thing such that something else necessarily and not accidentally follows from these constituent things themselves".[191] While demonstrative syllogism causes certainty which leads to assent *taṣdīq*, poetic syllogism affects the imagination and leads to *takhyīl*.[192] Therefore, *takhyīl*, as a philosophical concept which is concerned with poetics, may offer a possible way through logic and experience for achieving certainty, as will be seen in this thesis. Through its relationship to image evocation, the context of the text, the construction of the text, and the collective archetypes, *takhyīl* in its escalated form will show an ability to lead to knowledge acquisition.

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[186] Ibid., 25.
[187] Black, "Knowledge and certitude in Fārābī," 37.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid., 42.
[190] Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary,* "[A division] of Aristotle's *Organon* into eight 'parts' instead of the six treatises that are considered as logic proper by scholars today", "the term is used by Hardison", 12.
[191] Ibn Sīnā, "Al-Shifā'." 24.
[192] Ibid.

Part One

- **Chapter One: Toward the Imaginary Context**
- **Chapter Two: The Context of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī**
- **Chapter Three: On Methodology**

Chapter One

Toward the Imaginary Context

Medieval Muslim philosophers and critics of Arabic literature have contributed to the understanding of the term *takhyīl*. Although different explanations have been given in the field of Arabic literary studies, it was the rhetorician Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī who developed a unique philosophical understanding, and applied it to the field of Arabic poetics. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī – long before Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī – dealt with the term, but was confronted with the issue of truthfulness. This issue affects the scope in which the application of the term within the text of the *Qurʾān* can be accepted. Yet, through the supplementation of poetics with the logical arts, an effective approach to this issue has been developed. This approach relies on the poetic statements *ʾaqāwīl shiʿriyyah* in order to build a logically-constructed poetics. However, this construction is seen by the logicians in comparison to the demonstrative construction, which leads to a kind of certainty that the use of poetics does not. Thus, this approach has led to a presentation of poetics which causes a view of *takhyīl* as a lower version in the logical arts, the highest of which causes *taṣdīq* – a term which leads to certainty. There is, however, an attempt by scholars of logic and Arabic studies to look at poetics from a different logical angle, in a way that deals with *takhyīl* as having its own logic. In order to investigate the possibility of poetics to have its own logic, examples of Arabic texts consisting of poetic language should be examined. This will be in the second part of this thesis as examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be presented. In this chapter, I present a theoretical framework on which we can build an understanding of what makes a text logical and epistemological. As it is the case of the tenth/ eleventh century in which the philosophy of the era was influenced by Al-Fārābī's school, the philosophical work of this chapter relies on Al-Fārābī's understanding. Thus, we will be able to demonstrate the possibility of poetic language to convey logical knowledge. In order to do so, in this chapter, *takhyīl* as a mutual term between logic and poetry is traced, the position of *takhyīl* within the sphere of knowledge production is presented and the construction of logical discourse is investigated. This process will allow transcending the traditional way of reading *takhyīl* of a single verse into reading a wider poetic context which I call "the imaginary context" *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī*.

1. *Takhyīl*: The History of a Critical Term

The term *takhyīl* is a result of the development of Arabic literary criticism, arriving after many efforts were made to understand the poetics of classical Arabic verse. It is also a product of medieval philosophical understanding, in terms of the attempt by the philosophers of the time to study Arabic poetics within the framework of the laws of Aristotelian logic. As the term is linked to the concept of imagery and to the theory of imitation, this section presents a historical elaboration that locates the term *takhyīl* within the movement of Arabic literary criticism.

1.1. The *Qurʾān* and the Arabic Ode: Sources for Arabic Literary Criticism

1.1.1. *Majāz al-Qurʾān*

The idea of the inimitability of the *Qurʾān* has been a major concern for scholars and has stimulated the study of poetry throughout the medieval ages.[193]

> The *Qurʾān* constituted the longest document as well as the first substantial prose text in Arabic. Because many of its features (syntax, style, and a flexible rhyme that alternated between verse groups, as opposed to the stable rhyme of poetry) were essentially new and some of its vocabulary remote, another text group, archaic poetry [...] was adduced to throw light onto the *Qurʾān*'s obscure passages and explain their grammar and lexicon.[194]

As the study of the *Qurʾān* was mainly left to scholars of the prophetic tradition, ʾAbū ʿUbaydah (d.213–828), in his work *al-Majāz*,[195] known to us as *Majāz al-Qurʾān*, dealt with the scripture through his "strictly language-based approach". Having introduced *al-majāz* state that the book addresses the word, which means "passage", referring to figurative language. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, it is "a term in rhetoric, means 'trope' and, more generally, the use of a word deviating from its original meaning and use, its oppositebeing [*ḥaqīqah*] ('veritative expression')".[196] According to Abu-Deeb, "Not only has the position of [ʾAbū ʿUbaydah's] book as the earliest work on *majāz* been a subject for

[193] G. J. Van Gelder, *Beyond the line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 5.
[194] Beatrice Gruendler, "Early Arabic Philologists: Poetry's Friends or Foes?" In *World Philology*, edited by Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman and Ku-ming Kevin Chang (London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 93.
[195] *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, "Madjāz".
[196] Gruendler, "Early Arabic Philologists," 93.

controversy, so has the nature of the book itself".[197] He explains that the word *majāz* has been interpreted in various ways; these ideas have been under discussion, most importantly, because of the different approaches to the analysis of the book by critics, in addition to the vagueness of the book itself. ʾAbū ʿUbaydah's usage of *majāz* is not entirely clear, though he has a basic understanding of the concept. He sometimes applies it to a single word and sometimes to phrases. However, what makes his book broader than a discussion of *majāz* alone is his study of different aspects of the *Qurʾān*, such as the chapter titles and the explanations of certain words that are not interpreted as *majāz*. The term *majāz*, as he uses it, is derived from the verb *jāza*, meaning "the original point from which a certain word or phrase *jāza* [crossed over] from its original or more familiar mode of formulation to the different mode in which it appears in the [*Qurʾān*]".[198] This understanding of *majāz* had not been developed, at the time of ʾAbū ʿUbaydah's work, into the form that generated the term *istiʿārah*,[199] which was put forward by later scholars.

1.1.2. Arabic Poetry

Arabic *Jāhilī* [pre-Islamic] odes have been considered to be a source for different fields of study of the Arabic language. The speech and odes of the people of the pre-Islamic era were deemed *faṣīḥ* [pure/eloquent]. In the seeking out and learning of these odes, the study of language "diversified into lexicon [(*lughah*)], syntax (*naḥw*), and morphology (*ṣarf*), with phonology (*aṣwāt*) playing a minor role".[200] The pattern of good poetry was established, and scholars assigned themselves the task of criticising and correcting mistakes:

> [To] spot mistakes became a scholarly endeavor and display of erudition, as is shown, for instance by the many cases of ancient, early Islamic, and modern poets

[197] Kamal Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz and Metaphorical Language of the Qurʾān: Abū ʿUbayda and alSharīf al-Raḍī," in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qurʾān*, edited by Issa J. Boullata, (Surrey, Curzon Press, 2000), 311.

[198] Ibid., 312.

[199] The term *istiʿārah* is commonly understood as metaphor, yet, it indicates the case in which one of the simile's originating entities is hidden. Linguistically, *istiʿārah* means "borrowing", indicating that a feature is borrowed from an entity and attributed to another. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, "Probably the first to distinguish carefully between the *tashbīh* and the [*istiʿārah*] and to formulate a closer definition of the figure is [ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī] (d.392/1001). In a passage in his *al-Wasāṭa* (Cairo 1370/1951, 41) he makes clear that the line by Abū Nuwās: 'Love is a mount and you are its rider; turn its bridle and it will obey you' is not an [*istiʿārah*], but a simile (*tashbīh*) or a proverbial saying (*ḍarb mathal*). In a proper [*istiʿārah*] the borrowed term (*al-ism al-mustaʿār*) completely replaces the proper term (*al-aṣl*). The [*istiʿārah*], according to him, is 'based on establishing a close similarity, on [the existence of] an affinity between the proper and the borrowed expression, on the blending of the [new] term with the concept [to which it is applied]', etc. (*wa-milākuhā taḳrību 'l-shabahi wa-munāsabatu 'l-mustaʿāri lahū li-'l-mustaʿāri minhu wa-' mtizādju' l-lafẓi* [*bi-' l-maʿná*]". *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, "istiʿāra".

[200] Gruendler, "Early Arabic Philologists," 94.

> taken to task by scholars, listed in al-Marzubānī's (d.994) *Embroidered* [*Book*] *on what Scholars Faulted in Poets* (*al-Muwashshaḥ fi ma'ākhidh al-ʿulamā' ʿalá* [*al-Shuʿarā'*]). In this way, the guardians of poetry's linguistic integrity and authenticity practiced the earliest form of poetic criticism.[201]

As poetry belonged to the "sciences of grammar" and lexicography, scholars in these two fields went beyond the sphere of editing and correcting poems to gather accounts of the lives of the poets into biographical dictionaries. They also

> assumed the task of commenting on the poetry's content: its catalogue of ethics, historical and genealogical references, and even anthropological, zoological, and botanic data. As the sole authorities on everything pertaining to poetry, which was the repository of Arab pre-Islamic heritage, the philologists acted by default as cultural historians.[202]

Another aspect added to the project of the philologists was ideological. Arabic literary heritage was upheld as native and supreme in the young Islamic empire, which relied mostly on the Greek and Iranian sciences.

> Dictionaries and grammars displayed the richness and perfection of the Arabic language, however foreign the content it might be used to express. More than any other factor, language embodied the self-image of Arabic-Islamic civilization. Philologists thus controlled a type of knowledge of the highest prestige and formative of cultural identity.[203]

Yet, the growth of society into one with a cosmopolitan composition and outlook, and the contributions of the Iranian and Greek customs that widened the cultural horizon, stimulated "the call for a discipline that dealt with this poetry *as* poetry and not as a manifestation of model language and a sum of linguistic rules".[204] It was by the end of the eighth century when literary criticism –taken from the hand of philologists– and the study of language parted company. [205]

A new era of poetry criticism emerged – criticism that is constructed on poetic elements– as "[instead] of the rule-based approach of philology, the new critics followed the contemporary poets in the ways they stretched or violated conventions of style and verisimilitude to reality and invented new ways to generate metaphors".[206] Thus, the critic's job was not limited to his ability to reject errors in language or comment on a lexical slip. He was expected to be able to recognise the rare and distinguishes it from the mediocre and the

[201] Ibid., 95.
[202] Ibid., 96.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 97.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid., 98.

inferior. The argument was constructed on the idea that contemporary poems are seen as unusual pieces and innovative creations, and they are not exampling linguistic rules. [207]

> Poetry had evolved in step with the more urban and cosmopolitan society of the Abbasid era. The controversy was sparked in particular by a kind of loan metaphor ([*isti'ārah*] in the parlance of philologists) in which the aspect of comparison (*wajh*) between image and reality was no longer visible, and the metaphor became imaginary.[208]

1.2. *Takhyīl* in Different Arabic Literatures

Wolfhart Heinrichs, in his essay "Takhyīl Make-Believe and Image Creation in Arabic Literary Theory", introduces a variety of usages of the term *takhyīl*.[209]

ʾAbū Hīlāl al-ʿAskarī (d.1005) in his book *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn* [*The Book of Two Arts; Poetry and Prose*], in the section of rhetorical figures in the list of *badīʿ* [creativeness], explains *takhyīl* as "giving the impression of praising while one is lampooning and vice versa".[210]

Takhyīl is also defined as "a rhetorical figure" by some scholars of grammar, Arabic literature and stylists such as Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ (d.1182), Al-Zanjānī (13thc), Al-Nuwairī (d.1332) and many who tend to be literalists; it is understood as *tawriyah* [double entendre amphiboly] and has been presented by these scholars in different disciplines at different times through variety of terms, as explaining examples of *takhyīl* in *Qurʾānic* verses as *tawriyah*, therefore they avoid splitting the meaning of the passages into an inner and outer sense.[211]

In "*Qurʾānic* exegesis", Al-Zamakhsharī (d.1144), the grammarian and exegete, defined *takhyīl* as "a visualization of an abstract notion such as God's majesty and omnipotence in a comprehensive picture, the parts of which cannot be individually connected back to the notion expressed". [212] A clear representation of this notion is verse (39, 67) "The earth altogether shall be his handful on the day of Resurrection, and the heavens shall be rolled up in his right hand". In this verse, Al-Zamakhsharī can interpret it neither literally nor figuratively, as influenced by his Muʿtazilī background, he does not accept the anthropomorphism approach. And metaphorically, the "hand" and "handful" would not be

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid., 100. Imaginary indicates the dependence on one's imagination which is different from "the imaginary" as a translation of the term *takhyīl*.
[209] Heinrichs, "Takhyīl," 2.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid., 14.
[212] Ibid., 13.

separately referred to in the notion expressed. Because, then, one may ask "what do they stand for?"

As Heinrichs indicates, this notion has no relation to Al-Jurjānī's *takhyīl* as falseness, but it has some links with Al-Fārābī's "image-evocation".[213]

1.3. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Theory of *Takhyīl*

ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d.471/1078) was the first scholar to identify *takhyīl* with a technical term in a poetic treatise, the *Mysteries of Eloquence* [*ʾAsrār al-Balāghah*].[214]

In his discussion on the transmission of the word for the creation of *istiʿārāh* "metaphor", ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī sheds light on some examples that cannot be considered to contain transmitted words. For instance, in the phrase "the hand of the north wind", the hand is *istiʿārāh;* however, as ʿAbd al-Qāhir adds, "you cannot claim that the word hand [*yad*] is transmitted from one object to another".[215] The poet wants to make the wind control things the way humans control things with their hands, and when he (the poet) attributes human actions to the wind, he loans the wind a hand.[216] Al-ʿUmarī explains that "the construction (of an image) is building a new situation upon an old or imaginary one". Therefore, *istiʿārāh* is "alleging the meaning of the substantive, and not transmitting it".[217]

> If it is assumed that *istiʿārah* is not transmitting the substantive but alleging its meaning; and if we understood from the man's expression "I saw a lion" that he intended to exaggerate his description of braveness… we did not learn this because of the usage of the word lion, but from attributing the meaning *maʿná* of the lion that he saw. It is accepted that *istiʿārāh* is like metonymy *kināyah* in which you know the meaning by intelligible concept *maʿqūl* rather than the word *lafẓ*. And what is applied via *istiʿārah* and *kināyah* is applied via the image *tamthīl,* "yet, the matter is clearer in *tamthīl*".[218]

For ʿAbd al-Qāhir, *tamthīl* plays two roles: poetical *shiʿriyy* and rhetorical *ḥijajiyy*. He is interested in the philosophical approach to the issue that "is linked to the nature of the human

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[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., 102.

[215] Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah: ʾUṣūluhā wa Imtidādātuhā*, (Al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: ʾAfrīqyā al-Sharq, 2010), 377.

[216] Ibid., 383.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid., 384. "The word remains as belonging to its true origin, and it connects to the figurative meaning through allegation which is represented by statements like *jaʿala* in *jaʿalahu ʾasadan* (he made him a lion), which means he alleged the 'lion–like' nature to him *iddaʿá lahu al-ʾasadiyyah".* So, the point is in the attribution of the meaning of the lion and not in the use of the word itself.

soul, the origin of the human and its relation to the universe".[219] *Tamthīl* has an impact on the audience because of the pleasure of knowledge *lidhdhat al-maʿrifah* and the fineness of the dissimilarity *lutf al-mufāraqah*. The first – *lidhdhat al-maʿrifah* – is connected to the desire of the human to know things clearly. This can be achieved, on the one hand, by teaching the soul new things and then taking it back to what it already knows, that is, moving from intellect to sense. On the other hand, as ʿAbd al-Qāhir believed, initially the soul was taught everything through the senses and through nature and, only later, through comprehension and analysis. Thus, taking the soul back to its original nature would be more effective. The second – *lutf al-mufāraqah* – ʿAbd al-Qāhir indicates that you find in similes *tashbīhāt* – the greater the differences between the two components, the more wonder it brings to the soul *kānat ʾilá al-nufūs ʾaʿjab.*[220]

ʿAbd al-Qāhir's theoretical contribution to *takhyīl* – built on his practical exegesis of Arabic verses – is based on his attempt to modulate images. *Tarākub al-ṣuwar* "compound images" are developed from simple ones and need to be illustrated through different cognitive levels of explanations to deliver their indicative meanings.[221]

He interprets poet Ibn Al-Rūmī's (d.896) technique of creating an image using the example of his description of the redness of shyness: "The cheeks of the roses got shy".[222] The poet inverts the two elements of the analogy, thus likening the redness of a flower to the redness of shyness. He then makes himself forget this and deceives himself in order to believe that it is in fact shyness that he is speaking of. When he subsequently feels comfortable with the image having gained its ground, he seeks a reason for the shyness of the flower by describing it as a better bloom than the narcissus, thus placing it in a position that it neither feels worthy of, nor does it feel it deserves to occupy.

In this description, Al-ʿUmarī analyses four steps of the craft of the analogy, which is now known as *takhyīl*: first, the natural organisation that exists in the intellect *mustaḥḍar fī al-dhihn,* when we liken the redness of shyness to the redness of a flower. Second, inverting the simile, and, third, forgetting the original simile, thus considering the image as reality. The

[219] Ibid., 386.

[220] Ibid., 388. Al-ʿUmarī argues that in ʿAbd al-Qāhir's explanation of *lutf al-mufāraqa*, it seems that he is contradicting what he has said about *lidhdhat al-maʿrifa* as being the first to comfort the soul as he engages more in *lutf al-mufāraqah* and its effect on the conscious hearts, 389.

[221] Ibid., 372.

[222] The roses got shy as being prefered over the narcissus, its shyness is proved by the redness of its cheeks.
خجلت خدود الورد من تفضيله خجلاً توردها عليه شاهد

final step is the search for a reason for the new invented image, that is, the shyness of the flower. The third step is one of accepting the new property as a reality, which leads to the creation of an imaginary world that is able to be developed within the whole text.[223] Thus, one may assume that this independent ability for developing the text will contribute to hermeneutics.

This development of the simile to its most sophisticated level is linked to the educational improvement of Arab society, an improvement that led ʿAbd al-Qāhir to devalue the explicit simile – the result of which was that the explicit simile became the foundation on which new images are constructed. This is much like debris that is used and reused.[224]

ʿAbd al-Qāhir believes that *takhyīl* leads the soul of the audience to a sense of ease and either "agreement" or "hatred" towards what is said. However, it is clear that he is more concerned with the technicality of *takhyīl*, which inverts the simile *qalb al-tashbīh* and omits the simile *tanāsī al-tashbīh.* The idea of rationalising the constructions of takhyīl is, therefore, introduced. Thus, in order to build *takhyīl* on an old simile, there should be a rationale which promotes the transmission. According to Al-ʿUmarī, ʿAbd al-Qāhir explains the process of structuring imaginary upon transmitting the simile as follows:

> And every one of these (poets) deceives himself about the simile, and mistakes himself, and illusively convinces (himself and the audience) that the source of the analogy is present and through its presence, truth is conveyed. And it is not limited to this creation, but the poet finds a reason for the new creation and constructs an example on it.[225]

Heinrichs, when he also builds his idea of *takhyil* upon this notion of *tanāsī*, explains the definition of *takhyīl* in ʿAbd al-Qāhir's imagery theory, as "Make-believe in the form of giving, to a fact stated in the poem, a fantastic interpretive twist which at first blush would explain and support that fact, but on closer inspection turns out to be an illusion".[226] His understanding focuses on the idea of the simultaneous truthfulness and falsehood of *takhyīl.*

For ʿAbd al-Qāhir, *takhyīl* is the essence of poetry, and the phantasmagorical poetic notion *maʿānī takhyīliyyah* is the basis that poetry is built on, while the realistic common-sense notions of *maʿānī ʿaqliyyah* can be expressed in poetry but have less aesthetic value.[227]

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[223] Ibid., 376.

[224] Ibid., 377.

[225] ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *ʾAsrār al-Balāghah fī ʿIlm al-Bayān*, edited by Muḥammad al-Iskandarānī and M. Masʿūd. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 2014), 244; Al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah,* 376.

[226] Heinrichs, "Takhyīl," 11.

[227] Ibid., 12. In *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah,* Al-ʿUmarī explains that in ʿAbd al-Qāhir's work his usage of the term *maʿānī ʿaqliyyah* does not always convey the same meaning; in one section, it acts as an opposite to the explicit sensuous meaning, and in

Both notions *maʿānī ʿaqliyyah* and *maʿānī takhyīliyyah* are connected to the intellect and to the limited, rational forms of understanding they dictate. The former is linked to achieving truthfulness and wisdom and the latter is connected to the creation of illusion and falsehood which is not a source of knowledge but a cause of wonder.[228]

1.3.1. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Concept of Truthfulness and Falsehood in Poetics

During his analytical study of poetics and the imaginary, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī appears to be embarrassed about the religious and ethical outcome of *takhyīl.*[229] "He reviewed the relationship between truthfulness and poetical innovation, disagreeing with the idea that truthful meaning is incapable of creativeness by giving only one verse by ʾAbū Firās (d.935) to prove his belief", according to Al-ʿUmarī. He also "limited the field of *takhyīl*, withdrew *istiʿārah* from it and attached it (*istiʿārah*) to the field of truthfulness".[230] The intellectual and imaginary nature of *istiʿārah* makes it difficult to comprehend his justification for this withdrawal, as ʿAbd al-Qāhir explains "the borrower does not intend to prove the meaning of the borrowed word, but rather intends to prove a similarity in there".[231] This idea can be applied to different examples of *takhyīl* as well, however.

ʿAbd al-Qāhir further illustrates his point by arguing that, in his view, there is no doubt that *istiʿārah* is not a part of *takhyīl,* given the high incidence of *istiʿārah* in the *Qurʾān*. Thus, ʿAbd al-Qāhir's view of *takhyīl* as falsehood makes him believe that the *Qurʾān* does not use it, so he gives *maʿānī ʿaqliyyah* a greater significance than *maʿānī takhyīliyyah.* In doing so, he contradicts his aesthetic attitude when he says "the best poetry is that which 'lies' the most".[232]

However, after this declaration, ʿAbd al-Qāhir returns to differentiating between the "real" and the supposed meaning, complimenting his point with examples of *takhyīl.* Later,

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another section, it acts as the explicit meaning which is the opposite of the imaginary meaning. In addition, it comes as *majāz ʿaqlī* which is introduced as opposed to the linguistic *majāz lughawī.* Al-ʿUmarī, 329.

[228] Al-Jurjānī, *ʾAsrār al-Balāghah,* 204, 207. In his discussion about the differences between *tashbīh* and *tamthīl*, ʿAbd al-Qāhir indicates that every *tamthīl* is *tashbīh* but not vice versa. The example can be *tamthīl* if the resemblance between the two entities is rational *ʿaqlī.* Yet, if the resemblance is sensuous, characteristic or instinctual, it can be described as including a simile *tashbīh* but not *tamthīl*, 188.

[229] Al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah,* 396. "Al-Jurjānī used *takhyīl* in his analytical work throughout his book *ʾAsrār al-Balāghah* in its general meaning that is parallel to the illusive exegesis that is found in the *istiʿāra* and *tamthīl*.... Etc". 397.

[230] Ibid., 397.

[231] Al-Jurjānī, *ʾAsrār al-Balāghah*, 212 and Al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah*, 397. To explain the usage of *takhyīl* in the *Qurʾānic* discourse, al-ʿUmarī indicates that the common entity between the images of the composition is the suitability of the compound to its purpose [*munāsabat al-tarākub li-l-maqāṣid*]. "It is appropriate to interpret the construction of the discourse through the purposes of the speaker", 401.

[232] Heinrichs, "Takhyīl," 12.

through his work on constructing images, ʿAbd al-Qāhir ignores the idea of truthfulness and falsehood, focusing instead on the role of poetics, which relies on illusions that evoke "wonder" *taʿajjub*. Although wonder should not be defined according to a singular experience, the term seems to be built on specific features as Lara Harb indicates.

> In the Islamic Middle Ages, wonder was largely spoken of as a positive experience triggered by the strange and mysterious, which also drove one into an intellectual search to discover the meaning behind such matters. This meaning could be religious, involving the mysteries of God's creations; or, it could be poetic.[233]

Thus, words like *waḥy* [revelation] and *hams* [whispering] appear in his discussion of the souls that go through each other in silence. Then the audience will be filled with wonder as they see the unusual, that they have not seen or heard about before. This kind of wonder will not be achieved until the poet has the courage to present the case and is not afraid of not being believed or agreed with.[234] Because the case will not be a representation of the truth. This idea of wonder is still in the sphere of rational understanding as wonder achieved through understanding the similarity. It should not be confused with the idea of poetry as a cause for the movement of the soul which is taught by Al-Fārābī's school. Yet his usage of words that are related to the soul in this context of the notion of wonder (as indicated above) brings him nearer to an understanding of the Muslim philosophers.

2. Conveying Philosophical Knowledge

In their effort to explain the relationship between religion and philosophy, philosophers often develop an interest in rhetoric and poetics. For them, these two arts are informative tools that help deliver philosophical demonstrative truths to the masses who are –in the view of the philosophers– often less able to grasp philosophical ideas. This instructive method is usually represented through religious discourse.[235]

In their discussion of religion and philosophy -as Al-Karaki indicates- Medieval Arab philosophers consider religion as a representation of philosophy; thus, the religious texts consist of the absolute truth given in a symbolic or metaphorical way.

> This meant that their construal of metaphor had to be incorporated into their philosophical system. Such incorporation made their interest in metaphor "not

[233] Harb, *Arabic Poetics*, 6.

[234] Al-Jurjānī, *ʾAsrār al-Balāghah*, 234; Al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah,* 398.

[235] Balqis al- Karaki, "Dissimilar Premises, Similar Conclusions: On the Partial Rationality of Metaphor—A Comparative Study," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies 70*, no. 1 (April 2011), 89.

> primarily aesthetic," but focused mostly on its "cognitive functions" given that it is a major constituent of rhetorical and poetic, or, as it were, of extraordinary language.[236]

For al-Fārābī, making something comprehensible (his notion of *tafhīm*) is achieved "first, by causing its essence to be perceived by the intellect [*ʾan tuʿqal dhātuh*], and second, by causing it to be imagined through the similitude that imitates it [*yutakhayyal bi-mithālih alladhī yuḥākīh*]".[237] Nassbaum, in her work on Aristotle, indicates the following:

> There is no thinking (whether practical or theoretical) that is simply abstract; I cannot think of a pure proposition. For every thought there is some episode of symbolizing and envisaging that, as it were, provides a concrete vehicle for the thought.[238]

This means any thought needs to be understood through symbols, and as we know symbols are tools of poetics. Thus, when we attempt to learn about Al-Fārābī's ideas on knowledge production, poetics and rhetoric might be capable of delivering information of their own nature and they may not be used as tools to deliver philosophical knowledge to the multitude.

2.1. Al-Fārābī's *Poetics*

Al-Fārābī's study on poetics indicates some attempt to tackle the issue of information that are delivered by poetic language. He is concerned with the indicative nature of the statement, its form and its relation to truth.

Al-Fārābī in his work on poetics introduces different categories of statements. In the beginning, before introducing these categories, he divides the vocables *ʾalfāẓ* into two categories that are either indicative *dāllah* or non-indicative *ghayr dāllah* – the former of these is either simple *mufradah* or complex *murakkabah*, and the complex is either a statement *ʾaqāwīl* or not a statement *ghayr ʾaqāwīl*.

From this perspective, we can address the three branches of Al-Fārābī's categorisation. The first main category consists of statements *ʾaqāwīl,* these are; assertive *jāzimah* and non-assertive *ghayr jāzimah* – the assertive is either true *ṣādiqah* or false *kādhibah,* and the false can either be what evokes in the audience's mind the thing that is being expressed instead of

[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 82.
[238] Ibid.; and M. C Nussbaum, *Aristotle's De Motu Animalium: Text with Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays*. (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 266.

the statement or what evokes in the audience's mind the imitation of the thing that is being imitated and these are the poetic statements and these poetic statements can either be a "better imitative statements" or "less imitative statements".

The second main category is Al-Fārābī's division of the assertive statement into a syllogism or not a syllogism. The syllogism is either by force or by action – when it is by force, it is either an induction or an analogy. The analogy is used in the art of poetics more than in any other. He then indicates that the poetic statement is an analogy.

In the third main category, Al-Fārābī divides syllogisms and statements in general into five types: 1) totally true, i.e. demonstration; 2) totally false, i.e. poetics; 3) mostly true, i.e. dialectic; 4) mostly false, i.e. sophistical; 5) equally true and false, i.e. rhetoric.[239]

In examining the notions of truthfulness and falsehood in poetics, it seems that only in the second category of the division of statements does Al-Fārābī not refer to poetics as "false" statements.[240] Yet, his understanding about poetic statements has developed. This development is connected to Al-Fārābī's ideas of *'aqāwīl mukhayyilah* "evocative statements" as he presents the purpose of poetic statements and the criteria on which poetic statements are judged which is:

> To prompt the listener into acting out the thing about which a certain matter has been evoked to him – be it an act of seeking out or escaping from, or striving for or being averse to, or any other action positive or negative – whether he assents to that [action] that has been evoked in him or not and whether the matter is, in reality, as he has been made to imagine it or not.[241]

Al-Fārābī, in this manner introduces a different purpose for poetics, through logical statements, that are not directly related to conveying knowledge. Poetics has its own role that is not devalued because of the false of its statements. Although poetics is not devalued because of its falsehood or truthful, it is not a source of knowledge and its purpose is connected to the effect it has on the soul. Yet, through his work on poetry, Al-Fārābī seems to be investigating more than this limit of poetry. Thus, an investigation needs to be made on Al-Fārābī's system of knowledge production.

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[239] 'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Farabi's Canons of Poetry*. Arabic and English translation by Arberry (Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici, 1937), 267.

[240] Ibid.

[241] 'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, "The Book of Poetry," in *Takhyīl: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, edited and translated by Geert Jan Van Gelder and Marlé Hammond (Exeter, The E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008), 18.

2.2. *Taṣawwur* "Conception" and *Taṣdīq* "Assent"

Abed introduces Al-Fārābī's thought that all that we know is learned in one of two ways; either without speculation and deduction and these are the *maqbūlah* "an accepted premise by an individual or group of individuals; a postulate", *mashhūrah* "generally accepted premise", *maḥsūsah* "empirical facts" and *maʿqūlāt ʾuwal* "innate ideasor the apriori"; or by thinking and deducing such as syllogism. The former can help one reach the latter.[242]

Further, all knowledge is either in the form of conceptions *taṣawwur* or assent *taṣdīq*.[243] Knowledge as conception occurs when the mind grasps simple terms in order to state precisely the essential nature of these terms. Knowledge as assent "is directed towards complex concepts (premises) and results in the affirmation of their truth or falsity".[244] These may or may not be perfect – the perfect assent is certitude achieved by demonstration, and the perfect conception is conceptualising the thing by its definition.

> The "perfect" assent happens when the person believes that the judgment, he has about something occurs outside his intellect in the way it is believed by his intellect. The "true" assent is when the thing occurs outside the intellect in the way it is believed by the intellect. Therefore, assent can be applied on a thing that is either true or false in reality. It is either having the certitude *yaqīn*, close to certitude *muqārib li-l-yaqīn* or the assent that is described as the calmness and satisfaction of the soul toward the thing, and this is assent that is different from the assent which achieves certitude.[245]

Further, Abed explains,

> The term knowledge [*ʿilm*] is used in general as we have mentioned, to describe either a judgment [*taṣdīq*] or a conception [*taṣawwur*]. Judgments are either certain [*yaqīn*] or not-certain [*laysa bi-yaqīn*]. "Certain" can be either necessary [*ḍarūrī*] or unnecessary [*ghayr ḍarūrī*].[246]

Yet, "knowledge" from Al-Fārābī's perspective "is applied to what is *certain by necessity* [*yaqīn ḍarūrī*] more often than it is applied to what is not certain or to what is certain but not by necessity (i.e. , the *contingent*)".[247] According to Al-Fārābī, certain knowledge *ʿilm yaqīn* is of

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[242] Shukri Abed, *Aristotelian Logic and the Arabic Language in Alfārābī*, (United States of America, The State University of New York Press, 1991), 91. And ʾAbū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiqiyyāt lil-Fārābī*, vol. 1, (Qum, Maktabat ʾĀyat Allāh al-ʿuẓmá al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1408 AH), 19.

[243] Al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiqiyyāt*, vol. 1, 266.

[244] Al-Karaki, "Dissimilar Premises," 90.

[245] Al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiqiyyāt*, vol. 1, 266.

[246] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, 92.

[247] Ibid.

three types, certainty of the being "knowledge that the thing is, certainty of the reason for the being of the thing "knowledge of why [lima] the thing is" and certainty of both.[248]

2.3. The Faculty of Imagination and Derivation of the Term *Takhyīl*

Al-Fārābī mentions *takhyīl* in his work on poetics and in his book *Kitāb al-Mūsīqá al-Kabīr* (Great Book of Music).[249] He was the first to link the discipline of poetics with the faculty of imagination, a human faculty discussed by Aristotle in his book *De Anima.* Al-Fārābī based poetics on *takhyīl* "image-evocation", in which the poet conveys an image of his own thoughts into the audience's mind, which influences the audience to the extent that makes them interact with the image; this happens through the psychological impact of the image on the audience.[250]

> Indeed, what is important in the Treatise is that [Al-Fārābī] introduced an Aristotelian psychological term into aesthetics – the concept of *mukhayyil* into artistic (sculpture and poetry) construction. In no other work did [Al-Fārābī] so carefully focus on the interaction between psychological imagination and poetic imitation.[251]

Using "imagination" in poetics makes Al-Fārābī aware of the terms related to this concept and which of them to use in poetics. Since the late ninth century, the Aristotelian term "phantasia", which appears in the *De Anima,* has been translated as *khayāl.* The terms *takhyīl* and *takhayyul* appeared in the Arabic translation of *De Anima* but not in the poetics of Aristotle, and yet both of them were linked to the concept phantasia. Thus, in Al-Fārābī's commentary on Aristotle's poetics, he did not apply these terms; however, he did use them in his own work entitled *Treatise on Poetry*: "[Al-Fārābī] departed from Aristotle and turned his attention to the role of imagination in art (sculpture) and poetics".[252] However, he omitted the usage of two terms associated with imagination – *khayāl* [fancy] and *wahm* [illusion] – because these terms were

[248] Ibid.

[249] 'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, "Kitāb al-Mūsīqá al-Kabīr [Great Book of Music]," in *Takhyīl: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, edited and translated by Geert Jan Van Gelder and Marlé Hammond (Exeter: The E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008), 19. Al-Fārābī believes that music and sounds are capable of creating an image in the mind of the audience. "Thus, it is clear that there are three types of melodies: (1) those that bring pleasure, (2) those that provoke passions, and (3) those that are image-evoking [*mukhayyilah*]".

[250] Nabil Matar, "Alfārābī on Imagination: With a Translation of His Treatise on Poetry," *College Literature 23,* no. 1 (Feb 1996), 105.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid., 101.

not entirely trusted and were associated with untruth. He clearly distinguishes between *khayāl* and *takhyīl,* preferring the latter to the former.

> [Al-Fārābī] believed there was a faculty of imagination – that which was creative/causative – that caused what was "imagined". The definition of imagination for [Al-Fārābī] was thus predicated on its function – which function was to make imaginable and, therefore, to motivate to action. That is why all the derivations from the verb *takhayyal* which [Al-Fārābī] used afterwards in the Treatise were emphatic, employing the *shadda* (the diacritical mark which doubles as a letter), underlining thereby, the element of creativity. Aiming at further philological precision, [Al-Fārābī] distinguished between the present active *takhayyal* and the past passive *khuyyil*. In so doing, he introduced an originative difference between the processes of imagination associated with these two verbs. And it was this difference that led [Al-Fārābī] to the most original concept in his discussion of imagination: [*'aqāwīl mukhayyilah*] –statements that create/cause imaginings.[253]

The derivation *mukhayyilah* alludes to the faculty of *al-quwwah al-mukhayyilah,* though the actual faculty is known as *al-quwwah al-mutakhayyilah,* which creates imagination. This means that the imagination is created by an unspecified agent, and it has an impact beyond the imaginative process. The usage of the verbal form *khuyyil* shows that Al-Fārābī is interested in the creative process of imagining as well as its causative effect, more than its reflexive nature and the agent that creates the imagination.[254] Yet, according to Heinrichs, "As shown by the syntax of the verb *khayyala*, in most technical discourses the term *takhyīl* implies the active meaning ("to create an image/impression")".[255] Here, Al-Fārābī explains a different operation related to the imagination faculty, but it exceeds its main functions of retaining and manipulating images to "create imaginings by causing them in external things".[256]

Debora Black, in her work on rhetoric and poetics of the Medieval Arab philosopher's, analyses the role of the imagination as an apprehending faculty by explaining that this faculty is responsible for making use of retained objects by imitation and by manipulating them in order to create an image.[257] This means that the object and thoughts that are preserved in the memory are used and rearranged to create a new image.

However, this is not the only role of this faculty – it also searches for the best representative object to imitate the abstract thought that has been retained to create an image

[253] Ibid., 102.
[254] Ibid., 103.
[255] Heinrichs, "Takhyīl," 2.
[256] Matar, "Alfārābī on Imagination", 103.
[257] Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 199.

of it. Before explaining this point, Black refers to the functions of the imagination (at its primarily level, representing conceptions):

> for in addition to the imaginative faculty's functions of preserving images and combining them with one another, [Al-Fārābī] lists a third activity that the imagination can perform, namely, imitation (*al-muḥākāh*). This function is closely related to the imagination's intrinsic capacity for combining and dividing the images it has stored, since the ability to manipulate images freely is a necessary precondition for imitating those things that are not themselves already apprehended imaginatively. Hence in describing the combinatory activity of the imagination, [Al-Fārābī] emphasizes the mastery of imagination over the sensible forms it has retained, a mastery that allows it not only to represent, but also to recreate, the data of sense perception.[258]

With regard to imitation, she indicates the following difference between the thoughts of Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā:

> Whereas [Al-Fārābī] seemed, in the [*al-Madīnah al-fāḍilah*], to view imitation as but one activity performed by the imagination, usually when it is confronted with an object that exceeds its capacity, [Ibn Sīnā] seems to be pushing the essentially imitative activity of the imagination to its extreme. Whenever there is no external object of sensation actually present, the object that is being imagined will have to be a copy representation of some other thing that was at one time directly sensed. And to that extent, [Ibn Sīnā] seems to be suggesting, all compositive imaginative activities are all in some way imitations of past sensations stored in the formative sense.[259]

2.4. Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī

Muslim philosophers were eager to study Aristotle's works *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. However, the ideas of these two works were not confidently applied to Arabic poetry and prose. The notable and exceptional critic was Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī (d.684/1285) who was also a poet in the thirteenth century.[260] When Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī introduced the concept of *takhyīl*, referring it back to the philosophical understanding of Ibn Sīnā (d.428/1034), he brought attention to the study of philosophy as a way of looking at Arabic poetry.[261]

The main change that he makes to the philosophical understanding of poetics is the meaning of imitation. Imitation, according to Aristotle, is the pillar, not only for poetry, but for all the arts.

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[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid., 204.

[260] Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line,* 4.

[261] Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-Bulaghā' wa Sirāj al-'Udabā'*, edited by Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb ibn al-Khawjah, 2 vols, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-'Islāmī, 1986); Sa'īd Jabbār, *Min al-Sardiyyah 'ilá al-Takhayyuliyyah: Baḥth fī ba'ḍ al-'Ansāq al-Dilāliyyah fi al-Sard al-'Arabī* (Bayrūt: Difaf Publishing, 2013), 49.

> He changes the meaning of *muḥākāt* from "figurative language" to "individually descriptive language". In other words, to "imitate" an object in poetry means to depict it through an artful enumeration of its properties and qualities. Within this general process figurative language has its place as one particularly effective way of depicting the object.[262]

Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, clearly influenced by him, referred to Ibn Sīnā in different sections of *Minhāj al-Bulaghā'*. For Ibn Sīnā, through imitation the poet constructs images out of the images of sense perceptions. "These constructions arrive at the imaginative faculty through the linguistic symbol *al-ramz al-lughawī* and cause it to feel pleasure and distress".[263]

This means that when the faculty of imagination is provoked and imitation becomes active, the status of *takhayyul* is reached; and it is present in both the creator of the imitation and the audience. The faculty of imagination is provoked in the poet when he builds his image on linguistic symbols that are rooted in this faculty. It also means that when the poet is aware of his audience's collective memory or consciousness, he or she will be able to have access to the faculty of imagination of the audience, which the poet will, in turn, provoke. This act causes the audience to reach the status of *takhayyul*, because it is built on the audience's symbols or symbols that are mutual between the audience and the poet. When the image has its root in the audience's imaginative faculty, and when the -derivation- *takhayyul* is established in the audience via the audience's internal symbols, this phenomenon is known as *takhyīl*

Therefore, the different elements of the poetic syllogism – the syllogism which will be explained later in this chapter- are in the audience's faculty of imagination. While the poet uses linguistic symbols, he calls out symbols that exist, in parallel, in the audience.

This may establish the criteria of truth for the art of image creation, as it is "true" when the linguistic symbol of the poet finds its parallel in the audience's imagination, and there *takhyīl* happens and creates its effect. This validates the position of Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī as he is unconcerned with the orthodox ideas of truthfulness and falsehood in poetry. The belief here is established by the audience's symbols and the ability of the poet to reach these symbols and to make sense of them. The original source is the inner symbols, and the only concern is to prove the validity or truth of symbols that are in their essential linguistic nature.

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[262] Heinrichs, "Takhyīl," 10.

[263] Sa'ad Maṣlūḥ, *Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī wa Naẓariyyat al-Muḥākāti wa al-Takhyīl fi al-Shi'r* (Al-Qāhirah: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2015), 147.

Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī constructs poetry on the basis of *takhyīl*, making it the prime element, which means that being "false" or "true" does not affect the quality of the poetry. A poetics' premises can be true or false, because image-evocation is capable of both. Unlike rhetoric, which is incapable of truthful utterances insofar as it is rhetoric,

> Every discourse, whether it reports and narrates or argues and makes inferences, is capable of truthfulness and falsehood. *The art of rhetoric*, through its utterances, is based on strengthening opinion rather than establishing certainty (except when the rhetorician leaves aside persuasion for the sake of assent – for the rhetorician has to resort to this occasionally in the course of his words). *The art of poetry* is based on the evocation through images of the things that are conveyed by its utterances and by the implantation of their images in the mind through the beauty of imitation. Image-evocation does not preclude certainty as opinion does because a thing may be evoked in images for what it is, or it may be evoked in images for what it is not.[264]

To this point, the discussion around truthfulness of different types of discourse has been indicated. While, there is a possibility for poetics and rhetoric to convey knowledge and truth, this possibility needs to be investigated through examples of poetic discourse - and as in the case of this thesis - within rhetorical discourse as in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Yet, there are different elements of Al-Fārābī's ideas of the construction of logical statements. These elements need to be introduced in order to examine the logicality of poetic statements in the second part of the thesis. In the following section, these elements of the logical discourse will be presented.

3. The Construction of Logical Discourse

The purpose of philosophy is to deliver the truth and knowledge about the truth, and logic is a tool used to achieve this goal. Logic is the art that is designed to prevent the mind from conceiving in error; and conception is laid bare when what is in the mind is reflected in one's speech. Thus, logic is a system which imposes its framework upon thought. [265]

As a tool, the use and application of logic, in Al-Fārābī's teaching, will lead to certitude in everything that the scientific disciplines consist of, and certain truths cannot be obtained without logic.[266] Logic *manṭiq* is derived from utterance *nuṭq,* which has three meanings: first

[264] Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, "The Path of the Eloquent and the Lantern of the Learned," in *Takhyīl: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, edited and translated by Geert Jan Van Gelder and Marlé Hammond (Exeter: The E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008), 86. See also Al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-Bulaghā',* vol. 2, 63.

[265] See Rafīq al-'Ajam, ed. *Al-Manṭiq 'ind al-Fārābī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1985), 55.

[266] Al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiqiyyāt*, vol. 1, 14. However, according to a different trend in the study of logic, logic is a part of philosophy and not only a tool of philosophy. This thesis does not address this notion.

is the rational power that grasps the sciences and the arts and distinguishes between moral and immoral actions;[267] second is the internal utterance *al-nuṭq al-dākhil,* which is the existence of the intelligible in the human soul, acquired through understanding; third is the external utterance *al-nuṭq al-khārij*, which is the expression of what is in the soul via speech. Therefore, logic *manṭiq* is so called because it provides rules for the intelligibility of the rational soul, provides universal rules for all languages in the form of external utterance, leads rational power towards the right path, and thus saves it from that which is wrong in the form of both the external and internal utterance.[268]

Al-Fārābi's attempt to harmonise the Arabic language with Aristotelian logic can be divided into two aspects – the first is his application of philosophical theories to the Arabic language, which means using Arabic terms and concepts to clarify universal philosophical theories. The second is analysing Arabic sentences to show their capability to arrive at Aristotle's logical conclusions and to agree with its rules. [269]

The first aspect leads Al-Fārābī to manipulate Arabic concepts and question particles in order to achieve conformity with philosophical theories. Thus, he defines these concepts in a way that is different from the grammarians' understanding of them. This aspect is learnt, for example, in Al-Fārābī's teaching about the essence of the thing and the way to understand this essence and this way is through question particles such as enquiring through "what is it?" *mā huwa?*[270]

The second aspect is clarified, for example, in Aristotle's idea about the need to employ a copula not only between sentences but also between parts in the same sentence. This needs for the usage of the copula leads Al-Fārābī to manipulate Arabic in order to meet this condition, such as through the usage of the terms *huwa* and *mawjūd* in their logical sense.[271]

The purpose of this section is to look into the ways through which the text is seen as logical. It is through looking at the relationship between the subject matter and predicate and the way they are connected. This relationship is extended through looking at logical

[267] This is different from the sensible power that grasps things in the external world as they are.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, 172.
[270] Ibid., 59.
[271] Ibid., 136. Yet, Al-Fārābī does not agree with the accusation made by Arabic grammarians that he is building language within language. He believes that the Arabic language is capable of being extended to a wider scope and can be understood differently.

propositions. The propositions that allow us to understand the subject matter. Although some of the ideas introduced in this section have been explored earlier, their appearance here is to investigate the construction of the statements that represent these ideas as it is the case with the syllogism. The investigation of this section helps us with reading examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the second part of this dissertation. Although the points here cannot be applied constantly in our reading to the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, they are the base upon which the reading is constructed. I will be referring to different points of these elements while presenting examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Yet, it is because of the nature of logical elements, they cannot be applied in the analysis in the same way the traditional application of grammatical elements is usually applied.

3.1. Particles

In his explanation of Aristotle's theory of knowledge, Peter Adamson indicates that the theory assumes that, having episteme is reflected through the capability of using demonstrations in giving explanations. This explanation aims at understanding both a thing is the case and the reason of the thing being the case.[272] This idea has been indicated earlier as one of Al-Fārābī's thought and this is because Al-Fārābī is clearly a follower of Aristotle. Yet, Aristotle's causes are: material; formal; efficient; and final. The material cause illustrates what a thing is made of. The formal cause gives the thing its definition or determination. The efficient is "the one that brings something about". The final is the purpose of the thing.

Adamson is not quite satisfied with Aristotle's examples and he thus tries to give his own explanation by using the example of a computer:

"The matter of a computer is whatever it is made of, like plastic and silicon. The formal cause will be the structure of the computer—roughly speaking, the way that the matter is arranged in order to yield a computer". Further, the efficient cause "is the person who built the computer", and the final cause includes things like "processing and sharing information". "Notice that the final cause is intimately related to the formal cause: the form of a computer allows it to achieve its purpose". The final cause is the purpose of the thing. Therefore, when

[272] Peter Adamson, *Classical Philosophy: A History of Philosophy Without any Gaps*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 236.

we ask why something exists, the answer will be because it is made of, it functions in such a way, it is made by someone, or it is for this purpose.[273]

This understanding of Aristotle's theory of knowledge and the four causes, that have been also adhered to by Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, helps us in knowing how to locate poetic discourse within this epistemological framework. As, we assume that poetics is capable to have its own logic and episteme, we will need to investigate the causes of the poetic entities in order to demonstrate their truth.

Aristotle's causes entails that the term "why" is meant to describe the "from what?", "in what?", "by what?" and "what for?" Applying this theory to the particle *lima* in the Arabic language, one sees that all these questions can be asked by the usage of the particles that are "combinations of the *mādhā* particle and the preposition that precedes it" (in two of the cases, as a prefix). The three particles that are used to inquire about reasons and causes are "why?" *li-mādhā*; "in what?" *bi-mādhā*; "from what?" *ʿan mādhā.*[274]

> Aristotle is thus very interested in what sorts of causal account we can give. Is there any systematic way of dividing up the kinds of explanations that can feature in demonstrations? To put this in a less technical way, Aristotle wants to know: how many different kinds of answers are there to "why" questions?[275]

In the Arabic grammarian tradition, the question particle *li-mādhā,* which means "why?", is used to get answers by the usage of the particle *li-ʾajl,* which means "in order to". However, Al-Fārābī here links the particle *li-mādhā* with *bi-mādhā,* explaining that the former asks about the essence of the thing *māhiyyat al-shayʾ,* which is what the latter asks for. For instance, when we ask, "why does it exist?" *li-mādhā huwa mawjūd?* the answer will be the same as the answer to the question, "in what does it exist?" *bi-mādhā huwa mawjūd?.* Thus, its essence is one of the reasons for its existence. In addition, *bi-mādhā huwa mawjūd* combines inquiries about the efficient cause *al-fāʿil*, the formal cause and the essence.

> The entities that are harmonized – that therefore build the essence (*dhāt*) of the thing – are the intelligible aspect of the thing in its perfect existence (combination), and the perfect way of conceiving it (*fa-ʾatammu māyuʿqal bihi*) is when its essence (*māhiyyah*) is divided. And this is one of the causes of its existence whether we conceived it or not.[276]

[273] Ibid., 238.
[274] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, 88.
[275] Adamson, *A History of Philosophy*, 236.
[276] ʾAbū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, edited by Muḥsin Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al Mashriq, 1970), 205.

So, if we understand it in this way (when its *māhiyyah* is divided), it would be to grasp the contribution of the entity to the thing itself and not to us. However, if we understand it as it is the intelligible aspect of the thing, this will be grasping its contribution to us, because it is intelligible to us. Thus, the particle *li-mādhā* is now asking about the essence *māhiyyah,* which is usually enquired about through the usage of "what is?" *mādhā?*

> "By the particle *mādhā* and *bi-mādhā*, our understandings agree to be the same things in their existence. However, *mādhā* indicates what is a contribution to us as intelligible aspects of the thing and *bi-mādhā* indicates what is a contribution to the thing in itself".[277]

"We grasp the absolute of 'what is'?" [*mādhā huwa*] when our grasping of the intelligible aspect of the thing is by things that contributed to the thing itself, they were in themselves (things) answering: "in what is the thing?" So, "what is?" [*mādhā huwa?*] in its absolute indication is a combination of *mādhā huwa,* as a contribution to us as intelligible, and *bi-mādhā huwa*, as a contribution to the thing itself and when this intelligible notion is made by things (entities) contributing to the thing itself. If we use Adamson's example of the computer, *bi-mādhā huwa* will be the structure of the computer in its details and entities; the *mādhā huwa* will be our understanding of the structure as intelligible; the absolute *mādhā huwa* is the combination of our grasping of the structure and the entities of the structure. Our grasping of the structure contributes to us, but the entities of the structure contribute to the computer itself in order to function. Thus, Al-Fārābī seems to be developing *li-mādhā* from a particle of reasons and causes into *mādhā,* a particle of the essence *māhiyyah*, not only *māhiyyah* of the entities of the formal cause, but also *māhiyyah* of the thing in its existence. And this is how Al-Fārābī starts the passage, "Its essence *māhiyyatuhu* is one of the causes of its existence which is its special cause".[278] Abed explains how the usage of particles when enquiring into the demonstrative sciences differ from its usage when enquiring into the dialectical sciences:

> The motive for using the question particles in the demonstrative sciences, [Al-Fārābī] seems to argue, is a lack of knowledge of the facts and principles on the part of the learner and inquirer, rather than a doubting of the validity of these facts and principles (as is the case in dialectics and sophistics). In the demonstrative sciences, lack of knowledge, rather than dispute and disagreement, is what initiates the use of the question particles.

In the demonstrative sciences:

> [The] use of the question particles emerges not from the need to establish principles for these sciences, but rather in order to acquire knowledge that has

[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.

> been proven and demonstrated. According to [Al-Fārābī], when we use the *mā* particle, for example, we seek to conceive and understand what is already known (to someone other than the inquirer). Similarly when we use the *hal* or *lima* particles in any of the demonstrative sciences, we seek to become acquainted with the demonstration that provides certain knowledge of a thing's existence or of the cause of its existence.[279]

3.2. The Term *Mawjūd*

In his attempt to harmonise Aristotelian logic and the Arabic language, Al-Fārābī was challenged by the structure of the logical sentence that led him to initiate the usage of the existential word *kalimah wujūdiyyah*.[280]

Abed discusses Al-Fārābī's idea of the timeless connector "copula", in which the terms *mawjūd*, *huwa* and the verb *yūjad* are used: "Viewing the copulas [as] a 'timeless connector' rather than a verb (automatically implying time reference) helps [Al-Fārābī] overcome the difficulties involved in accommodating the Arabic language to the Aristotelian theories".[281]

In his study on the *hal* particle, Al-Fārābī links it with the existence of things, as one of the applications that this particle enjoys: "The *hal* particle is attached to a statement [*qaḍiyyah*] in which the term *exists* [*mawjūd*] is a predicate [*maḥmūl*] of the subject of inquiry".[282] In such statements:

> [The] term *exists*, [Al-Fārābī] explains, means a correspondence [*muṭābaqah*] between a concept and a thing that exists outside the mind. Hence, when we ask, "does x exist?", we seek to know whether the concept we acquired through the term "x" has an external counterpart or not. In this application, therefore, the term *mawjūd* means *external existence* (the *internal existence*, i.e., the concept is not doubted since the very question assumes it exists and that we are seeking to know only whether it has an external counterpart or not.[283]

Mawjūd "exists" enjoys an important role in Al-Fārābī's linguistic philosophy.

In tackling this issue, Al-Fārābī indicates that the "existence" of a thing "is neither identical with that thing's essence, nor is it a part of its essence".[284] The argument continues, "'existence' [*wujūd, huwiyyah*] is one of the inseparable accidents of the thing [*min jumlat al-*

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[279] Abed. *Aristotelian Logic,* 110.

[280] Abed, "Caught between rigid Aristotelian principles on the one hand (such as, that a sentence must have a verb and that the copula is a necessary language element) and the Arabic language on the other hand (which, in the present time frame, allows predication without a copulative verb), [Al-Fārābī] finds himself embroiled in one of the most significant controversies in Arabic logic: the theory of the copula. It is through his work in this area, which lies somewhere between philosophy and language, that [Al-Fārābī] develops his linguistic philosophy". Abed, 121.

[281] Ibid., 136.

[282] Ibid., 111.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Ibid., 124.

ʿawāriḍ al-lāzimah]".[285] Further, "existence" "does not belong to the constituting elements of a thing [*laysa min jumlat al-muqawwimāt*], nor does it belong to the predicates implied by the essence of a thing".[286]

In the example "every man is [*mawjūd*] an animal", the term *mawjūd* is serving as an existential verb, which, through connecting the subject and predicate, forms a "predicative proposition" *qaḍiyyah ḥamliyyah*. The purpose of using the particle *hal* in combination with a predicative proposition is, according to Al-Fārābī,

> 1) To learn *whether a statement is true or false* (by means of the correspondence theory, i.e., by comparing the concept with the external world), or 2) to learn *whether the connection between the subject and the predicate of the sentence is necessary or accidental.*[287]

Through questioning whether what the subject stands for is constituted by the predicate of the statement – whether the predicate is the essence of the subject in that statement or part of its essence – we can examine the relationship between the subject and predicate. If the inquiry results in a positive answer, "then the constitution [*qiwām*] of the subject and consequently its cause or causes become known".[288] If the connection between the subject and the predicate is demonstrated as a necessary one, "then the demonstration will not only be an answer to the *hal* question, but also to the *lima* [why] question".[289]

3.3. Logical Propositions

A proposition is a statement about which it is possible to judge whether it is true or false. What makes a proposition a logical one is its construction according to specific rules. In *Kitāb al-ʿIbārah*, in his discussion about certain types of propositions (possible, necessary and absolute), Al-Fārābī indicates that in some propositions, the subject matter *mawḍūʿ* and the predicate *maḥmūl* can never be separated at any time. In some propositions, the predicate is not attributed to the subject matter at the moment of its utterance but can belong to it sometime in the future.[290]

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[285] Ibid.

[286] Ibid. The necessary predicate is part of the essence *dhātī*, and *ḍarūrī* (a property, a description and an inseparable accident) is not part of the essence.

[287] Ibid., 124.

[288] Ibid., 125.

[289] Ibid., 125. This is "on the grounds that in science every demonstration provides the cause or causes of the thing demonstrated".

[290] Al-ʿAjam, *Al-Manṭiq ʿind Al-Fārābī*, 146.

In his discussion on the predicated proposition, he indicates that when the subject matter is the same, even though it is reflected in the proposition through many synonyms, it means that the proposition is still just a single proposition. He explains the same for the predicate – if the proposition expresses one predicate, it means it is still just a single proposition, even though this predicate may be reflected through different synonyms.[291] Therefore, it is the diversity of the predicates that makes a single proposition transcend into many and not the diversity of the names of the subject matter or predicate. This diversity allows an extended poetic proposition, which is built on the same subject matter but this subject matter is predicated by different symbols, to be logical. These symbols may give the impression that they refer to different predicates if they are read in their rational linguistic system (by which I mean every symbol refers to its original source rather than reading it through the imaginative context). However, if they are connected around the centric image, they contribute to one meaning. This will be seen in the second part of this thesis, for example in my discussion of the different sections of the *shiqshiqiyyah*. The section which talks about sincerity is elaborated by symbols that contribute to the notion of sincerity even though the linguistic presence of these symbols may give a different impression.

Al-Fārābī goes on to explain that the singular meaning of the proposition is either "individual" or "universal". The universal meaning is so, either by virtue of being represented through one word *lafẓah mufradah*, or by being a compound of meanings that confine one another "delimitative" *muqayyidah* and are represented through compound words that are linked together in a delimitative way. These ties between meanings make its statement of one meaning, for example, "Zayd is a white man" and "three is an odd number".

Al-Fārābī divided meanings that confine each other into two types – the first is that which links the meanings through *al-dhāt* [essence] so that the ties of the meanings belong to the nature of the things, as in the example "an even number", as "even" is a numerical quality so the number is even because it is a number. The second is that which ties the meaning through an "accidental" *ʿaraḍ*, such as "the white author", as the whiteness is not attributed to the author in connection to his or her authorship.[292]

[291] Ibid.

[292] Ibid. Also see Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, 40.

3.4. Definition *Ḥadd*, Description *Rasm* and the Essence *Māhiyyah*

Definition, on one hand, is defined as "a delimitative phrase [*qawl tarkībuh tarkīb taqyīd*] that illustrates [*yashraḥ*] the notion [*maʿná*] signified by a certain noun [*bi-ismin-mā*] by means of the things that constitute that notion".[293] Description, on the other hand, is defined as follows:

> A delimitative phrase illustrates the notion signified by a certain noun by means of things that do not constitute that notion; rather, [it illustrates it] by means of its states [*ʾaḥwālih*] or by means of the things that are constituted by that notion [*aw bi al-ʾashyāʾ allatī qiwāmuhā bi dhālik al-maʿná*].[294]

By way of explanation, Al-Fārābī gives the example of a wall that can be illustrated in two different ways, the first of which is its definition, for instance, "an upright body, made of stone, bricks or clay in order to carry a roof". The second way to illustrate a wall is in terms of its description [*rasm*], for instance, "a body to which doors are attached and in which pegs are inserted etc". Al-Fārābī links his explanation of theterms "definition" and "description" with the understanding of the essence of the thing.[295]

According to Al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf,* a definition is not used for individuals, and when asking about the essence of a thing, we are asking about something more general than the thing itself – "individuals have no essence; only the species to which they belong have it".[296] Definition *ḥadd* "is the only thing [...] that expresses and introduces *māhiyyah* in its most perfect way to the human intellect".[297] Yet, description *rasm* "can make a thing comprehensible, but only by means of its non-essential (i.e. accidental) attributes, always external to its essence".[298]

In his explanation of essence, Al-Fārābī links *māhiyyah* with the question "what is it?". As Abed states,

> In general *māhiyyah* is applied to whatever belongs to a thing and is correctly applied in answering the question "what is it?" or in answering the question when the subject of inquiry is referred to by a different sign, for everything that is asked about by means of "what is it?" [must] be known by some sign different from its *dhāt* and *māhiyyah*, which are sought in using the particle *mā*. The answer might be provided by means of its genus, its differentia, its matter, its form or its

[293] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic,* 41.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid., 48. Al-Fārābī gives the example of "Zayd", in Abed's translation: "whenever we say the essence of 'Zayd,' we are really seeking his essence, which is more general than what Zayd, as an individual, stands for, and which is his true essence [*māhiyyatuhu fi al-ḥaqīqah*]."
[297] Ibid., 76.
[298] Ibid.

> definition. Each of these is [either] a part of its *māhiyyah* or [the whole of] its *māhiyyah*.[299]

In his investigation of how to arrive at a definition of a subject as part of his study of linguistic philosophy, Al-Fārābī needed to study the Platonic notion of division. The method of division is "[dividing] a universal concept by a series of contrary terms".[300]Abed gives, in his book, a thorough explanation of how Al-Fārābī studied the Platonic division. Yet, he indicates that "Plato's method of division is not advocated by [Al-Fārābī] as a tool for producing definitions because [Al-Fārābī] understood that division cannot produce definitions".[301] Al-Fārābī "considered it only a useful tool to render a definition easier to imagine and to understand".[302] Al-Fārābī, as Abed indicates, says:

> Among all methods used for teaching purposes, only the methods of "giving example" [*mithāl*], "induction" [*istiqrā'*], and "syllogism" [*qiyās*] are said to "bring about an assent" [*tuqi' al-taṣdīq*]. All the rest, *qismah* and *ḥadd* included, are useful in bringing about a conception [*taṣawwur*] and in facilitating the process of retention. *Qismah* is particularly helpful [...] in imagining things that are difficult to imagine due to some general attribute belonging to the thing under consideration and to other things.[303]

Al-Fārābī finds that this process of acquiring knowledge of definition seems to be infinite. Consequently, "a demonstration cannot demonstrate the essence of a thing, unless we assume that things have more than one definition, an assumption that will upset the entire Aristotelian metaphysical assumption that everything has only one essence and one definition".[304]

For instance, while you can prove that "man is an animal" or "man is rational" by means of demonstration, "you cannot prove that 'man is a rational animal' without assuming that a thing has more than one definition".[305] This means that demonstration "can prove only parts of definitions rather than the whole definition".[306]

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[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid., 97.
[301] Ibid., 99.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid., 95. The middle term of a syllogism *al-ḥadd al-'awsaṭ* is considered to be the definition of the subject matter, as per Aristotelian understanding.
[305] Ibid., 95.
[306] Ibid.

3.5. Demonstration

According to Al-Fārābī, demonstration is the result of a syllogism that consists of premises that have achieved the necessary certitude and that inform us of one of the following three things – knowledge of the existence of the thing, knowledge of the reason for its existence, and knowledge of both at the same time. These are known as the demonstration of the thing *burhān al-shayʾ*, the demonstration of why the thing is *burhān lima al-shayʾ* and the demonstration that combines both *burhān yajmaʿ al-ʾamrayn* and is the absolute demonstration. Further, every demonstration is a reason for knowledge that is gained because of the demonstration. However, not every demonstration leads to the reason of the existence of the thing.[307]

However, "[it] should be known that the reason for a thing's existence is not identical with the reason that led to our knowledge of its existence".[308] Abed explains Al-Fārābī's argument in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* as follows:

> When one asks "why is this object still alive?", the answer, "because it breathes" is *not* the reason for its being alive. Our knowledge that this object breathes indicates or leads us by implication to the knowledge that this object is alive. This implication is the conclusion [*luzūm*] of a valid syllogism composed of the following two premises [*muqaddimah*, pl. *muqaddimāt*]:
> 1. "x" breathes
> 2. Whatever breathes is alive.
>
> These two premises lead necessarily to the conclusion that "x is alive".
> Providing an answer by means of a syllogism is demonstrating the conclusion, [Al-Fārābī] claims.[309]

However, the point is that we arrive at the conclusion on the basis of our trust in the premises. Achieving knowledge of the premises, according to Al-Fārābī can occur in five ways:

> 1. Through an accepted premise by an individual or group of individuals [*maqbūlah*, a postulate];
> 2. Through generally accepted premises [*mashhūrah*];
> 3. Through empirical facts [*maḥsūsah*];
> 4. Through innate ideas or the a priori [*maʿqūlah bi-ʾl-ṭabʿ*], i.e., universal premises [*muqaddimāt kulliyyah*] that are innate in us, such as certain truths or certain knowledge [*ʿilm yaqīn*], without us being aware of how they came about (such as that "four is an even number");
> 5. Through a syllogism; the premises of certain syllogisms may be the conclusions of other syllogisms, which themselves may be known in any of these five ways.[310]

[307] Al-Fārābī, *Al-Manṭiqiyyāt,* vol. 1, 273.
[308] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic,* 90.
[309] Ibid., 91.
[310] Ibid.

However, for Ibn Sīnā, the classification is extended to consist of more kinds of premises for all five types of syllogisms that are described above, "and most importantly, articulating the rationale behind the scheme by linking it explicitly with the notion of assent".[311] As indicated by Black,

> For [Ibn Sīnā] allowed that assent itself need not always be the goal of the syllogistic process, and that not all syllogistic premises need to evoke our assent. The minimal requirement for all premises is simply that they elicit some element of acceptance in the human soul which is capable of engendering a discursive, syllogistic movement from premises to a conclusion.[312]

In her explanation of Ibn Sīnā's subdivision of the premises system, Black indicates two premises of rhetoric – received propositions *al-maqbūlāt* that are based on authority, and supposed or presumed propositions *al-maẓnūnāt*. For the art of poetics, she indicates the premises productive of the imaginative faculty *al-mukhayyilāt*.[313]

3.6. "Poetic Syllogism" *Qiyās Shiʿrī* and "Imaginative Statements" *ʾAqāwīl Mukhayyilah*

For Ibn Sīnā, "Poetry is an imaginative discourse that consists of metrical harmonic statements, and from the Arab perspective is rhymed".[314] The logician does not care about any of these elements except that it is "imaginative" *mukhayyil*. Being imaginative means causing an attitude of submission *idhʿān* in the soul *nafs*, so that it is pleased by certain things and irritated by others. This occurs without choice or intellect, and the response of the soul in this case of submission is not intellectual but psychological, regardless of whether the statement is believable or not.[315]

In this manner Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī came to be known for his theory of *takhyīl*. *ʾAqāwīl shiʿrīyyah* as an aspect of poetics is the very core of the poetic syllogism. The demonstrative syllogism always produces assent *taṣdīq*, while the poetic syllogism produces imaginary process *takhayyul*.

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[311] Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics*, 96.

[312] Ibid., 97.

[313] Ibid., 98. Black also indicates the demonstrative and sophistic premises and their subdivisions and gives a detailed explanation of Ibn Sīnā's understanding. While for the dialectic, she states the widely accepted propositions that include three subdivisions: "Primary propositions *al-ʾawwaliyyāt* not insofar as they require acceptance, but insofar as they are universally acknowledged as True *ʿumūm al-iʿtirāf*. Esteemed or Praiseworthy Propositions *al-maḥmūdāt*, or Determined Propositions *al-taqrīriyyāt*".

[314] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *ʾArisṭūṭālīs: Fann al-Shiʿr*, (Bayrūt, Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1973), 161.

[315] Ibid.

> It pretends to do so and, insofar as it is poetry, it is not acknowledged as being a lie, and it uses its premises as if they were sound. For example, if it is said, "so-and-so is a moon" because he is handsome, then the reasoning is as follows:
> So-and-so is handsome
> Every handsome person is a moon
> Therefore, so-and-so is a moon
> For if the [first two] statements are sound then [a third] one necessarily follows.[316]

For Ibn Sīnā, primarily, it is not the goal of the poet to make his listener believe in his conclusion, although the listener may believe it. The poet's aim is in fact "to evoke (*yukhayyil*) through his conclusion approval in the mind [of the listener] for the person who is praised".[317] Thus, through imagining, he intends to move the soul of the listener to experience the emotion that may continue to control the listener's attitude towards the thing being imagined.

The poet "does not wish to assert the correctness of believing in the view expressed, rather he wants the soul to feel a loathing, by way of imagining (*takhayyulan*), for the thing being spoken about".[318] In such a way, poetics acts as a tool that triggers the imagination, which is considered to be at a lower level than demonstration, as demonstration triggers assent. The problem with the poetic syllogisms is that its aim is not "assent to their conclusion, but instead only [aims] at causing an act of imaginative acceptance".[319] What seems to be invoked is illustrated as follows:

> The doctrine that poetic premises, though not actually asserted as true, do make some sort of claim upon the knower which is analogous to assent and relevant to the syllogistic process. This of course is the same principle that is expressed in [Ibn Sīnā's] more general claim that evoking of imagination (*takhyīl*) is able to play the role of substitute for assent, because assent and imaginative acceptance share with each other a common generic character, as both are forms of acquiescence.[320]

Yet, in this manner, Ibn Sīnā significantly identifies the poetic syllogism's premise as a "proposition that has been 'granted'". This term is usually used by Ibn Sīnā to describe dialectic syllogisms, "especially as they occur in a disputative context". In this regard, there is no necessary conviction presumed on the part of either disputant in granting the premise –"it is made only for the sake of the dialectical exercise itself".

> To speak of premises as "granted" does not imply any actual psychological assent to their truth or falsehood. The term merely expresses the formal character of syllogistic entailment, considered apart from the epistemic status of any particular premises that might be used. In this respect poetic premises are no different from

[316] 'Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn Sīnā, "Al-Shifā': Al-Manṭiq", In *Takhyīl: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*, edited and translated by Geert Jan Van Gelder and Marlé Hammond, 24-28, (Exeter, The E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008), 25.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics,* 210.
[320] Ibid., 211.

> the theses offered up for dialectical debate: if the knower were genuinely to give his assent to them, they too would entail the acceptance of their conclusion. Thus, while there is seldom any act of assent accorded to the premises used in poetics, the conclusion still follows formally upon them, so long as they are combined according to formal syllogistic rules. And in an analogous sense, the conclusion may even be said to follow materially, to the extent that these premises are accepted by the imaginative faculty in accordance with the requirements of its own critical functions.[321]

The problem that is raised in the creation of a poetic syllogism is in viewing its premises as universal. "Even if the metaphoric conclusion of a poetic syllogism happens to be literally true and evocative of assent, it seems unlikely that its universalized major could ever be true, not even accidentally".[322]

It is thus clear that the poetic syllogism is perceived primarily as "a means for explaining the logical structure of figurative and metaphoric speech".[323] With the exception of Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī who adds his idea of the "individually descriptive language" according to Heinrichs. However, this poetic syllogism is rarely used to explain the creativity that is involved in the process of producing an entire literary work, as this visualisation of logical structure seems to remain "on the level of the individual proposition".[324]

Poetics as a logical art can be seen as more than what is understood from Al-Fārābī's school which classifies poetics as a mere lower version of demonstration as it was defined by Al-Fārābī. Black argues that *Poetics* as a syllogistic art does not only contribute to evoking a psychological effect in the soul but also to the epistemological realm of understanding. Thus, *takhyīl* is used in Arabic philosophy to designate the epistemic character of the premises of poetics. Therefore, designating the logical goal of poetics is not the only purpose of *takhyīl*.[325]

On one hand, it is difficult to ignore the fact that Islamic philosophers have the tendency to consider the human soul as primarily, intellectual in nature; which is described by Ibn Sīnā as being temporarily saddled with a "riding animal". This riding animal will eventually become a hindrance to the human soul. The poetic syllogism grounded in the imagination belongs to the mount and not the rider. On the other hand, Black believes that this is not, conclusively,

[321] Ibid.
[322] Ibid., 213.
[323] Ibid., 211.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid., 192.

how imaginative syllogism contributes to epistemology. The presentation of the imaginative syllogism is not only limited to seeing poetic discourse through the emotive theory. The imaginative faculty has a cognitive aspect, and its cognitive act has a role in the logical functioning of poetics.[326] Black constructs her argument on the basis of the idea that human beings need to fulfil their capabilities by utilising the imaginative faculty.[327] The imaginative faculty needs to function not as a lower faculty than the other faculties, but in a way that contributes to the perfection of the human being.

Although assent can be produced only through syllogism, conception can be produced through other logical tools such as definition. Thus, an example of poetic conception is the imaginative act which is similar to definition and an example of poetic assent is the imaginative act akin to demonstration.[328] Thus, the creation of assent depends on the validity of the truth of the syllogism, which is not a product of poetics if it is seen only from the view of the hierarchy of demonstration.

After introducing the term *takhyīl* and exploring its development within the Arabic literary tradition, I presented ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's particular use of the term. Although he considered *takhyīl* a figure that creates illusion and lies, his focus was on the technique that creates it, and he was concerned with the wonder that is caused because of the image that has been created by intelligent means. He introduces the idea of *tarākub al-ṣuwar* and, as it is the way in the Arabic literary tradition to compare different images of similar entities or ideas, he explains how *takhyīl* is constructed on the idea of *tanāsī al-tashbīh*. In this way of inverting a simile and omitting it, the logicality of constructing the image of symbols is introduced via building an image on a previously known one.

Then, before introducing Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī's theory of *takhyīl*, I gave a brief explanation of Al-Fārābī's poetics and his teachings about the imaginative faculty. This faculty does not only preserve the images and the memory of sensuous experience within it, but it also recreates and combines them freely. At this point, the relationship between so-called figurative language and "reality" is established. In Al-Fārābī's understanding of the faculties of perception, one can recombine items that are not in reality combined together. This results in what the Muslim philosophers of the Medieval age may measure according to the poetic

[326] Ibid., 207.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid., 221.

syllogism. Thus, the poetic syllogism is put by Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā after him in a lower state in the logical arts, within which the highest state is "demonstration". The poetic premises, that are discussed as parts of the poetic syllogism, are always referred back to the so-called "true meaning" in order to be measured. These poetic premises and propositions are not examined, by the Muslim philosophers and literary critics who followed them, through their relation to other poetic premises. The philosophical understanding indicates that the role of the poetic syllogism is to cause *takhyīl*, which affects the soul. Therefore, for Ḥāzim al-Qarṭajannī, *takhyīl* is the key to poetry and thus poetry is not judged for its truthfulness or falsehood, but for its creative images. Ḥāzim al-Qarṭajannī – following Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā – built his idea of the creative images on Aristotle's theory of imitation. Yet, he changes the meaning of imitation from "figurative language" to individually "descriptive language" as indicated by Heinrichs. This does not change the way in which the poetic is measured. Because, even in descriptive language, it is compared to the language of demonstration and allocated into the lower syllogism.

While I agree with Ḥāzim al-Qarṭajannī's understanding of *takhyīl*, I believe that *takhyīl* is part of a different linguistic system and poetic syllogism, which aims at producing *takhyīl*, and has its own epistemological references that are different from the demonstrative truth. The truth that *takhyīl* is capable to produce belongs to the system of symbols that can be combined and constructed through logical elements that I had introduced in the construction of the logical texts. The symbolic system has been discussed in the section of theory in this thesis. *Takhyīl* is capable of teaching truth about *maʿqūlāt*. These *maʿqūlāt* can only be learnt by being compared to and measured by each other and not by comparing these *maʿqūlāt* to what reality is capable of. Death, for example, will only be understood in its different statuses -that will be presented in the second part of this thesis- by reading it through the poetic syllogism that only examines poetic statements. Thus, this syllogism will be demonstrative if it is built on premises that are approved and believed to be true even though these premises are linguistically not true.

Here, elaborating on Al-Fārābī's philosophy of language and logic helped our understanding. In doing so, we noticed how Al-Fārābī's rules can manifest through poetic language. This means the timeless connector, "the copula", like the term *mawjūd* "exists", is present in the poetic statement and connects between the parts of the sentence. It answers

the question particle, which enquires about the existence of the thing.[329] It is through the copula that different images are reproduced and thus, contribute to the understanding of the "statuses" *ʾaḥwāl* of the thing.

Logical construction of the imaginary context is presented through different statements; definitions, descriptions and demonstrations that all participate in the understanding of the logical epistemological image and its context. While we can demonstrate the truth of an image according to a previous one, we may also find in its context other descriptions or definitions that are not results of the syllogism.

This means *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* "the imaginary context" is a combination of the ideas on *takhyīl* "the imaginary" of both, "image-evocation" and "make-believe". It creates a belief not as a "lie" or "illusion", but rather, it works within a different system that needs to be read in its own context. And it is a technique of image-evocation that affects the soul and is built on its own poetic premises, not because it is compared to reality (presented via non-figurative language) but rather, because it is compared to earlier images that had already created their effects on the soul, and were memorised by the imaginative faculty. Thus, *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* is the creation of an image which consists of symbols that have their roots in the imagination of the audience, and which causes the soul to be moved, and its elements are attributed to each other in a way that elaborates on an old image epistemologically through understanding the two contexts of the old image and the new created one.

[329] This "existence" is concerned with epistemological existence rather than ontological. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam 3rd edition,* "Existence in Philosophy and Theology."

Chapter Two

The Context of *Nahj al-Balāghah* and Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī

Examining the context of *Nahj al-Balāghah* entails looking at the surrounding environment and the sources of its techniques and the shape of the text itself. The artistic and intellectual environment was full of activity, and with practices that produced a wide range, and differing forms of knowledge. It was an era when different theological sects developed their unique ideas and beliefs, engaging in debates around questions that had been developed from the *Qur'ān* and the early teaching of Islam. While these debates started in physical gatherings, the ninth century Muʿtazilī scholar Al-Jāḥiẓ raises the idea of the importance of books and learning from books, and noted that was more beneficial than learning through physical meetings.[330] Thus, it was a time when the importance of books as a source of knowledge and learning began to be recognised. Looking at the books of the ninth and tenth centuries, especially the books of Al-Jāḥiẓ, helps us to understand the way *Nahj al-Balāghah* took shape. To find diverse fields collected in one book is very common for this era. Different arts and subjects were included and studied in the same book, such as philosophy, literature, theology, ethics and zoology.

While the purpose of the previous chapter was to locate poetics and its main pillar *takhyīl* within the philosophical understanding of logic, and therefore dealing with poetics as a rational argumentative tool, this chapter aims at locating poetics within the study of theology which aims at using the available tools that are accepted by theologians in order to understand theological ideas. These tools varied, and with the rise of the Muʿtazilite speculation at Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's era, rational approaches were well founded. Since the time of Al-Jāḥiẓ, who used his literary knowledge to convey theological ideas, politics, religion and literature were combined together in a well-structured work. Linguistic elements became important tools to understand the sacred text. Although Al-Jāḥiẓ presented his books in a literary language and joined his knowledge of literature with his theological ideas, Al-Sharīf

[330] ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, edited by ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn, vol. 4 (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā, 2017), 167.

Al-Raḍī was the first to apply poetic elements, as in his works about *majāz* [imagery] in the *Qur'ān* and the prophet traditions, to understand the message of the revelation.

The text of *Nahj al-Balāghah* shows the influence of the understanding of language that was current at that time. While Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī attributed the book to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, it seems that Al-Raḍī's understanding of the core of poetics and rhetoric as built on *takhyīl* and argument respectively, had contributed to his compilation. This is reflected through his other works that are concerned with the imagery in the *Qur'ān* and the speech of the prophet. Also, his talent as a poet, and our recognition of the way he used this talent, opens the door to locating *Nahj al-Balāghah* at the centre of this environment. This of course does not mean that the language and rhetorical elements of *Nahj al-Balāghah* are a product of the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. Yet, in order to understand the text, it is important to be aware of the forces that shaped the environment of the tenth century; forces which therefore influenced its compilation and organisation.

1. A History of Knowledge at the Time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī

In this section, I will begin by introducing the historical circumstances that nurtured *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which was controlled by the Buyids in the era of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. As rulers, they had a great impact on the formation of the salons, as will be illustrated below. Thus, I will look at the intellectual context which is represented in the philosophy (*falsafah*), literature (*'adab* as the art of letters) and speculative theology (*kalām*) of the time. This is because of the intellectual nature of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in which different subjects are presented and these subjects are in harmony with the debates of the tenth century. This will help us makes connections between *Nahj al-Balāghah* and other texts of the time, in the second part of this thesis through the investigation of the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

1.1. Social Context

1.1.1. Historical and Political Background

A new political order emerged in the first half of the tenth century after the decline and fall of the Abbasid Caliphate. The Buyids are believed to have been outsiders, descendants of "Būya" who was a fisherman coming from an area which was never recognised as a significant place

in producing political figures of the Islamic world. They established their rule after taking over territories that had been significant to the Abbasid Caliphate as those in Iraq and Western Iran. Their political ideas were based on family politics, and family ties were very important to the Buyids.[331] The Abbasid caliphs survived as powerless caliphs in their palaces, with no ability to take any powerful action. However, the existence of the Abbasid as leaders had to play an important role for the Sunni community. Although Muʿiz al-Dawlah (d.976) as a Buyid chief at Baghdad kept for the Abbasid caliphs their theoretical positions and different local authority, the Abbasid empire has ceased to exist independently.[332]

The Buyid era is known as the Shīʿī century. However, this does not mean that Shīʿism had any political, social or intellectual influence on the whole Islamic state, although the Buyids were Shīʿīs and they encouraged public Shīʿī festivals and theological writings. However, it was a Shīʿī century in the sense that Shīʿī rituals, cultural activities and intellectual productivity had been suppressed in the previous period. The tenth century was the source of the creativity in religious writing; a writing which established a foundation for all that followed in the Shīʿī history.[333] This period marked the manifestation of a number of important sources in Shīʿī orthodoxy. The work of Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d.381/991) and Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifah al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067), in addition to the work of Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá and Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī were all produced in the Shīʿī century. However, it is believed that the influence of the Buyids was only of secondary importance in stimulating the Shīʿī productions.[334] The main reason as will be clear in this chapter was the ongoing debates and discussions between different schools of thoughts and the questions that were directed to the Shīʿīs, and in particular on the absence of the 12th Imam; a question that does not only contribute to understanding Shīʿism, but also could have a political influence on the Islamic state.

During the time of ʿAḍud al-Dawlah (977/83) as a chief, the power of the Buyids reached its peak. ʿAḍud al-Dawlah was the first to hold the title *shāhanshāh* (the King of Kings).[335] Baghdad as a centre of the caliphate had not yet been totally exploited in terms of the religious politics until the establishment of ʿAḍud al-Dawlah's throne. People's anger was provoked

[331] Hugh Kennedy, "The Late ʿAbbāsid Pattern, 945–1050," In *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Chase Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 364.
[332] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 1977), 495.
[333] Ibid., 36.
[334] Ibid., 37.
[335] John Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 To 403H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 84.

when they felt him exert his full force upon the region. He breached the religious laws, thus offending the Sunnis and many others; he was unafraid of displaying pride in his Iranian background, while the Sunnis were themselves proud of their Arab lineage.[336] The involvement of the ruler, whose religious identity belongs to a minor group, in such a controversary issue could also be another reason that stimulates religious and intellectual debates. It seems that it raised questions on how religiously the region had to be ruled and the right ruler of the Islamic state.

1.1.2. Social Salons *Mujālasāt* in the Tenth Century

Any description of social life in the tenth-to-eleventh centuries cannot avoid the social gatherings that are considered to be one of the most important features of the time. In *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages*, Samer Ali states:

> *Mujālasāt* emerged in ninth-century Iraq and flourished in the tenth century, spreading from Iraq to the west, to Andalusian Spain and to North Africa. These Literary Salons endured as a cultural practice well into the modern era. Particularly in an age before television, *mujālasāt* were the nightly venue for witnessing the oral performance of new poetry and narrative as well as poetry that was considered "heritage". This forum for literature offered edification, entertainment, and escape for middle- and upper-rank men and women; it also served as a means of building one's public reputation, establishing one's status, expanding one's social network, and socializing the young.[337]

The *mujālasāt* were not known only during the time of the Buyids; Ali clearly identifies them as occurring in the Abbasid age, also. Yet, the rule of the Buyid may have given more freedom for Shīʿī intellectual contribution after the suppression they faced during the Abbasid Empire. This contribution provoked different Muslims groups to develop their own religious and political views. The culture was influenced by literary production, and in turn, the literary genres were also influenced by the culture. In the ninth/tenth centuries, society was divided into fragments and competing groups revelling in different types of arts that known to convey the ideas and challenging thoughts of these groups. Some of these arts are forensic litigation *mukhāṣamah*, dialectical debate and speculative controversies.[338]

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[336] Ibid., 85.

[337] Samer Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 3.

[338] James Montgomery, *Al-Jāḥiẓ: In Praise of Books* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 259.

The *majālis* were a source of wealth to many poets, littérateurs, and linguists, who competed to compose favoured works to earn patronage. This was not always the case, and patronage was not always won, as it has been recorded that many poets and scholars who had the chance to be close to the caliphs and emirs complained about their misfortune at not being appreciated:[339]

> While the caliphal patron had an interest in preserving a public image of munificence, the poet safeguarded his privilege of verbal effectiveness as measured by favors granted. Within this rapport the poet could be expected to employ strategies wisely that might help him achieve his interests. These interests would categorically benefit society at large by providing a model of how subordinates could gain surprising leverage through oratory in the face of authority.[340]

1.1.3. The Literary Salons: Encyclopaedia and Literary Production

The term *ʾadab*, meaning "literature", possessed a different meaning in the early Islamic centuries. The term developed through a series of changes, especially with the development of the *ʾadīb* as a practitioner or teacher, and thus "*ʾadab*, elevated language, and text came to be closely associated with each other to the exclusion of other types of creativity" according to Roger Allen.[341]

However, "The original meaning of the verbal root from which the noun [*ʾadab*] is derived implied inviting someone to a meal, and from that developed the notion of enriching the mind, particularly by training in the social norms of politeness".[342] Thus, intellectual and educational ideas were important elements of the concept of *ʾadab*, and the person who was involved in such activities was called *ʾadīb*, which means littérateur in modern times. In earlier centuries, it was used to denote a scholar who was qualified in different fields that exceeded the aspects of language such as eloquence, poetry and grammar, into philosophy and history. This scholar gained a status in the intellectual community that presented them as an enthusiastic learner.[343]

This notion had an influence on the tenth century *majālis* that started to have their disputation modes in aesthetic presentations. In addition, texts that were a source of amusement and interest become more embellished and fanciful. In such works, different

[339] Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 147.
[340] Ali, Arabic Literary Salons, 123.
[341] Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*, 135.
[342] Ibid., 134.
[343] Ibid., 135.

intellectual themes were introduced in literary styles that contributed to both the field of literature and the other intellectual fields tackled by the text. The term that represents the form of writing in this intellectual context is *'amālī* (singular *'imlā'*, meaning "dictation"). This term elaborates on our understanding of the way of reading that is required from the students in dealing with the texts that are dictated by the teachers to them. This genre, which was usually reflected through compilations of the teacher's work, went through a series of transformation that was influenced by the era's ideology and tastes. The differences between compilations show, for instance, in the arrangement of the text and the categories that are included, both of these points reflect the critical position of the compiler.[344]

In addition to this, Ali sheds light on an important issue regarding the activities that were performed as part of this type of production, namely the way in which history was influenced by its representation within these artistic contexts, composed to stimulate and affect the emotions of audiences.[345] This production of a particular kind of history, presented as narrative report, includes different categories that are part of different intellectual fields, such as the genealogy of tribes, the genealogy of horses, orations, stories, prosopography, hagiography, battle history, biography, zoology, and so on. "Historical works offer a panoply of [*'adab*] materials plotted along a chronological scheme".[346] Thus, historians were expected to perform in a certain way that was in alignment with beautifying narrations and the kind of reporting that was common in the salons; the kind of "objective" or "impartial" history that accurately depicted events was not desired.[347]

This recognition of how historiographic writings were performed also helps the investigation into the true facts that were left hidden in between the artifices of literary writing, according to Ali:

> Several historians of the medieval Middle East have responded precisely to the misplaced assumptions of the source-critical method by examining the artistic character of historical narratives, which implicitly recategorizes audience expectations. This move has aptly placed historical narrative in its original context of [*'adab*], offering generations of researchers the invitation to re-examine history as an art form and to credit the medieval historian with the skill of an artist who inspires thought and behavior with the use of sophisticated literary devices.[348]

[344] Ibid., 144.
[345] Ali, Arabic Literary Salons, 35.
[346] Ibid., 36.
[347] Ibid., 37.
[348] Ibid., 58.

For different purposes, the speaker establishes his authority through artistic communication that helps to create and express his authority. This capability of performing verbal art was a source of admire and fear as it invites participations of the audience through their emotional interactions. Therefore, this capacity establishes power and privilege as new relations.[349]

1.2. The Production of Knowledge; Philosophy, Literature and Theology Arguments

While philosophy relies on knowing the truth through learning about the world, theology has been considered to be on the other side, where knowing the truth is achieved through "revelation". It is with the appearance of the Muʿtazilite and the spread of their thought that theologians from other sects adopted the idea of approaching the truth through speculative reason. In this way, accepting the idea of prophethood also had to be validated through rational means. The Muʿtazilī Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-ʾAsadābādī (d.1025) believed that prophethood was a manifestation of the justice of God – one of the Muʿtazilite Islamic pillars.[350] This idea of justice was applied by the Shīʿī theologians on their argument of Imamate as well.[351]

The maturity of the contributions of that time, among the intellectual traditions of different schools, was perceived as a feature of the era – this feature is a specific concern of this research. The dialogue and discussions between different sects and scholars from different disciplines contributed to the development of theology and philosophy. The theological arguments between Muʿtazilīs and ʾAshʿarīs exceeded this level of the Sunni discussions to that of outspoken Shīʿī–Sunni theological argumentation and to the discussion between different religions, and as speculative theology *kalām* progressed, it was confronted with more metaphysical problems as representation of *falsafah*.[352] Mutual subjects between philosophy and speculative theology will be manifested through the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in our investigation in the second part of this thesis such as "death" and the nature of "this world". And as I argue, "the imaginary context" seems to be a good tool for this kind of investigation.

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[349] Ibid., 123.
[350] Martin McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid* (*d.413/1022*), (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1978), 83.
[351] Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology," 36.
[352] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol: 2, 175.

Baghdad, therefore, had a lively intellectual atmosphere that involved critical encounters between different religious sects. Reports indicate many debates between the Shīʿī scholar Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d.1022) and Muʿtazilīs such as ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Al-Rummānī (d.994), and the Sunni ʾAshʿarī Al-Bāqillānī (d.1013).[353] An important trait to be noticed in these arguments and the resulting publications is the interpolation of literary dimensions in all these fields.

1.2.1. Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī

One of the most important figures in the philosophy of his time was Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī (d.974), a philosopher who lived in Baghdad for most of his life and who was a student of Al-Fārābī and Mattá ibn Yūnis. He was also a Christian theologian who produced many works on the subject; however, his mastering of philosophy was his greatest contribution.[354] Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī gives priority to logic over other sciences, but he is also concerned, like Al-Fārābī, with the notion of salvation in such a way that the soteriological dimension appears in his understanding of knowledge. For Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī, logic is the tool by which one can differentiate between falsehood and truth theoretically, and between good and evil practically, and the achievement of good by logic constitutes complete happiness. Thus, Ibn ʿAdī, like Al-Fārābī, believes that logic is a key to salvation.[355] Knowledge, as Ibn ʿAdī explains, can be gained by two ways – first, by imagination and perception, and second, by logic, which involves reference to prior knowledge with the use of syllogism, inferences and proof.[356] He also goes further to explain how errors happen: they are the result of damage to the imagination. Thus, logic is the tool for knowledge, which constructs reason. Reason *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* exists as one part in Plato's tripartite division of the soul, which also consists of the appetitive soul *al-nafs al-shahawiyyah*, and the passionate soul *al-nafs al-ghaḍabiyyah*. Thus, reason, which depends on logic, is the part of the soul that participates with ethics and politics to achieve salvation – perfection, or happiness. With this theme, Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī reiterates Al-Fārābī in terms of linking ethics,

[353] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid,* 50.

[354] Nicholas Rescher and Fadlou Shehadi, "Yahya ibn 'Adi's Treaties 'On the Four Scientific Questions Regarding the Art of Logic'," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 25, no. 4, (October-December 1964), 572.

[355] Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School*, 56.

[356] Rescher, and Shehadi, "Yahya ibn 'Adi's Treaties," The "four scientific questions about logic" concern (i) its existence (*hal hiya*; *anniyyah*), (ii) its general nature (*ma hiya*; *māhiyyah*), (iii) its specific character (*ayy shay' hiya*; *ayyiyyah*), and (iv) its use (*lima hiya*; *limayyah*).

politics and reason.[357] Such an understanding of logic as a source of knowledge together with imagination has been clearly put by philosophers of Al-Fārābī's school. Although these philosophers did not seem to be like the theologians in investigating the sacred texts, their goal appeared to be overlapping with those of theologians in guiding people to salvation and offering them a good way of living their lives.

1.2.2. ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī

ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d.1023) was a very active figure in different disciplines. Some of his teachers include Ibn ʿAdī, Al-Sīrāfī and Al-Rummānī.[358] His understanding of knowledge was complementary to that of Al-Fārābī and his students. In his illustrations, he differentiated between *ʿilm* [knowledge] and *ḥikmah* [wisdom] as for the former it is "the perception by the Rational Soul of things as they really are".[359] The latter is defined as "the essence of knowledge about eternal things".[360] Thus, he connects knowledge with this life and wisdom with the next life.[361] It can be put thus: knowledge is linked to what truly *appears to be* and wisdom is linked with what it truly *is*, as seen from a different level of consciousness. Like his master and his followers, Al-Tawḥīdī's understanding of knowledge is marked by the Islamic context; the Greek impact on their school is clearly apparent, though. However, he puts it very clearly that revelation is superior to reason, and that the Prophet is the one who must be followed, even by philosophers.[362] Al-Tawḥīdī is described by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī in *Muʿjam al-ʾUdabāʾ* as

> an artist in all sciences such as grammar, language, poetry, literature, jurisprudence and theology; as the Muʿtazilite, he was Jāḥiẓy (in a reference to Al-Jāḥiẓ), who uses Al-Jāḥiẓ's path in his monograph's classifications, and is keen to take after him; in his way, he is a teacher in Sufism, the philosopher of the littérateurs and the littérateur of the philosophers.[363]

He is described as being very much influenced by Al-Jāḥiẓ and was the one who carried the flag of Al-Jāḥiẓ's school in his time.[364] This is clear in his first book *Al-Baṣāʾir wa al-Dhakhāʾir*.

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[357] Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School*, 63.
[358] Khamīs Ḥassan, "Introduction," in *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah,* by ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (Al-Qāhirah: ʾĀfāq li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2018), 13.
[359] Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School*, 79.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Ibid., 81.
[363] Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-ʾUdabāʾ,* annotated by Aḥmad Rifāʿī, vol. 15 (Miṣr: Maṭbūʿāt Dār al-Maʾmūn, 1936-38), 5.
[364] Ḥassan, "Introduction," 15.

According to Bergé, he was clear about his antecedents, and about the influence of earlier writers. This is in addition to his sensitivity to contemporary opinions.[365]

One of Al-Tawḥīdī's most important works is *Al-ʾImtāʿ wa al-Muʾānasah*, which is classified as *ʾAdab* standing on philosophical and religious themes.[366] The material of this book is based on the *mujālasāt* of the vizier Ibn Saʿdān that Al-Twḥīdī attended, and was written between the years 983 and 985.[367] It is a request from ʾAbū al-Wafāʾ al-Muhandis – one of Ibn Saʿdān's friends – to Al-Tawḥīdī, asking him to narrate for him the events of the night gatherings *mujālasāt* hosted by Ibn Saʿdān. Al-ʿAjmī argues that this request, and the desire that informed it, could reflect the whole environment that surrounded the three, including the political environment, which shows the authority of Al-Muhandis over Al-Tawḥīdī. It also raises the question regarding the reason why Al-Muhandis was not able to attend these gatherings even though he was one of the vizier's friends. It also suggests that these kinds of books might have been written as a form of surveillance.[368] The gatherings presented in the book are not arranged according to specific rules, except in some cases which are determined by the vizier's enquiries or according to a specific question that leads to another.[369]

ʾAkhlāq al-Wazīrayn [*The Characters of the Two Viziers*] is considered to be a prose polemic, written after Al-Tawḥīdī left Rayy and broke ties with the vizier Al-Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād, while *Taqrīẓ al-Jāḥiẓ* [*In Praise of Al-Jāḥiẓ*] presents a kind of literary history. Many of the surviving works of Al-Tawḥīḍī present him as a distinguished intellectual.[370] His book *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah* is considered to be a book that distills the essence of his mystical experience; it is a work in which the essence of the author is manifested through his creative linguistic tools.[371] These titles display good examples of his writing approaches in the intellectual atmosphere he lived in. Although ʾAbū Ḥayyān's work is not the main theme of this research, ʾAbū Ḥayyān is an important figure whose work reflects the intellectual environment of the time. The way of his interaction with the authoritative figures such as the viziers, and the impact these figures had on the subjects of the books that are built on their

[365] M. Bergé, "Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī." In *Abbasid Belles Lettres* (The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature), edited by Julia Ashtiany, T. Johnstone, J. Latham, and R. Serjeant (Cambridge University Press, online publication, 2012), 118. The sources include the work of Al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn al-Aʿrābī, Al-Mubarrad, Ibn Qutaybah, and other scholars.
[366] Ibid., 114.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Mursil al-ʿAjamī, "Introduction," in *Al-ʾImtāʿ wa al-Muʾānasah*, by ʾAbū Ḥayyān Al-Tawḥīdī, (Kuwait: Maktabat ʾĀfāq, 2015), 30, (also See p. 26).
[369] Ibid.
[370] Bergé, "Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī," 114.
[371] Ḥassan, "Introduction," 26.

questions, represent the involvement of the ruling in the movement of knowledge production. This will also be noted in the following section about Al-Jāḥiẓ. Although Al-Sharīf al-Rāḍ, as indicated in the introduction, is an authoritative figure in the Shīʿī community of his time together with his brother Al-Murtaḍá, he was not involved in the state's issues. Yet, his compilation of the speeches of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib as the Shiʿī Imam in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, seems to be an attempt to bring a competing work with these works of ʾAbū Ḥayyān and Al-Jāḥiẓ. While these of Al-Jāḥiẓ and ʾAbū Ḥayyān represent questions of the caliphs and their viziers that need answers by the intellectuals, Al-Raḍī appears to be bringing answers by Imam ʿAlī to many questions. These themes will be clearer in the second part of this thesis when examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* will show mutual subjects with texts of Al-Jāḥiẓ and ʾAbū Ḥayyān.

1.2.3. ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ

In the ninth century in particular, prose began to spread as a literary genre among the *majālis* and their publications. Prior to this, poetic was the main tradition and the prose genres existed in the shadow of this tradition.[372] It was al-Jāḥiẓ (d.868) who is considered to be the first scholar to enrich this type of literature. In his books, particularly *Al-Ḥayawān* [*The Book of Living Beings*]*,* he exemplifies the Arabic language in terms of its eloquence and excellence, and he teaches the reader how to be an author. Al-Jāḥiẓ introduces encyclopaedic examples that consist of information which are an appeal to the culture of his time.[373]

> Among the most characteristic aspects of [Al-Jāḥiẓ's] work are their style and structure, both of which exploit to the full the morphological potential of the Arabic language. The richness of his vocabulary and the complex periods that he weaved within the boundaries of Arabic syntax combine with his pedagogical bent, predilection for debate, and ready wit, to create a style that his successors acknowledged as both masterly and inimitable.[374]

In *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, Al-Jāḥiẓ defends the authenticity of Arabic oratory, which had been attacked at that time by a different nation. He states that he has two purposes for the book: the first is "to authenticate the oratorical tradition of the Arabs" and the second is to

[372] Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature,* 133.
[373] Montgomry, *In Praise of Books*, 258.
[374] Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*, 142.

demonstrate their eloquence.[375] Yet, it is considered to be an educational book which seems to represents literary and ethical values of the era.[376] Concepts that later dominated Arabic linguistic and literary-theoretical thinking are defined and discussed in *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, which makes it a theoretical work. Montgomery states:

> [The] *Bayān* is descriptive, in that it describes the style, techniques and practices of prominent orators of [Al-Jāhiẓ's] literary heritage; and I would also urge that it is religious, in its exaltation of the divine [*ʿarabiyyah*], theological, being an exposition of a Muʿtazilī theory of language and the role of *bayān* in the cosmos; and, as such, epistemological, being an axiological engagement with Shāfiʿī's jurisprudential deontology as encoded in his hermeneutics of *bayān*.[377]

Although *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* is popularly categorised as a literary work, it has a lot in common with "politico-religious" works.[378] This leads to the idea that Al-Jāḥiẓ's purpose in writing this book was, first, to defend the Abbasids and the Arabs, and second, "to uphold and spread Muʿtazilism and to prove the existence of God by rational argument and the direct observation of nature".[379] However, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* may be considered as a "quasi-scientific" work in which the purpose is "to make the reader think, both about received knowledge and about nature and the evidence it offers of the existence of God".[380] According to Montgomery, "if the composition of the *Bayān* is to be fixed to the early period of Mutawakkil's caliphate, it may represent [Al-Jāhiẓ's] greatest Muʿtazilī work prior to the intellectual ascendancy of [ibn Qutaybah]".[381]

Although he believed the *iʿtizāl* to be a result of the influence of his teachers such as Bishr ibn Al-Muʿtamir, Al-Jāḥiẓ established his own school, which is known as *al-Jāḥiẓiyyah*.[382] He lived in the time of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and his son Al-Maʾmūn. He was asked by Al-Maʾmūn to rule the office of the letter, but he joined it for only three days and left. [383] However, he acknowledged that Al-Maʾmūn was satisfied with his books on the Imamate, indicating that when Al-Maʾmūn read his books on the Imamate and found them the way he

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[375] Wen-chin Ouyang, *Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture: The Making of a Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 103.
[376] James Montgomery, "Al-Jāḥiẓ's Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn," in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, edited by Julia Bray (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 115.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid., 133. The "politico-religious" is termed by Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, Translated by D. M. Hawke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1969).
[379] Ibid., 133.
[380] Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, 21.
[381] Montgomery, *Kitāb al-Bayān*, 133.
[382] Mehmet Bayrakdar, "Al-Jahiz and the Rise of Biological Evolution," *The Islamic Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1983), 308.
[383] Balqāsim Ghālī, *Al-Jānib al-Iʿtizālī ʿind al-Jāḥiẓ* (Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Ḥazim, 1999), 45.

ordered them to be, Al-Maʾmūn started to compliment the work. His work on the Imamate is one of his most important productions, in which he responds to Shīʿī doctrine.[384]

Al-Jāḥiẓ is the author of *Kitāb al-ʿUthmāniyyah* [*The Book of the ʿUthmanite*].[385] The title refers to a sect that showed perhaps the strongest opposition to the Shīʿīs. Its name is derived from the name of the third Muslim caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. The book justifies the beliefs of the ʿUthmānī without presenting clearly whether Al-Jāḥiẓ belongs to this sect or not. Yet, in his description, Pellat indicates that the book:

> declares the legitimacy of the first three "Orthodox" caliphs, develops [Al-Jāḥiẓ's] ideas on [Imamate], attacks the ʿAlids on the ground that ʿAlī failed to dissociate himself from the murder of ʿUthmān, by which he himself succeeded to the caliphate, and thereby justifies the accession of the [Abbasids].[386]

Kitāb al-ʿUthmāniyyah was opposed by different books written by scholars, some of them belonging to the Muʿtazilite. One of these books is called *Naqḍ al-ʿUthmaniyyah* [*Refutation of the ʿUthmanite*], in which the author ʾAbū Jaʿfar al-ʾIskāfī believes that ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib (the fourth Islamic caliph) was preferred as the Imam.[387]

Thus, Al-Jāḥiẓ's involvement in the discussion about the caliphate is clear and his opinion about it is provoking. While Al-Jāḥiẓ's ideas were influential in different fields in his time and the following centuries, It was not possible for intellectuals participating in the same discussion to neglect his thoughts. Although *Nahj al-Balāghah* does not clearly indicate any attempt of Al-Raḍī to respond to Al-Jāḥiẓ nor does it indicate any clear influence of Al-Jāḥiẓ's work on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, reading both Al-Jāḥiẓ's works and *Nahj al-Balāghah* will show obvious correspondences. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, as I indicated in the introduction of this thesis, declared his purpose of compiling *Nahj al-Balāghah* as to be a source for those who are interested in learning rhetoric *balāghah*, as the title of the book will attract them. Al-Jāḥiẓ's ideas about writing and how to be an author was already spread through his books. *Nahj al-Balāghah* manifests true examples of rhetorical writing. Different ideas of Al-Jāḥiẓ are found in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, an example is the description of the wonder of the creatures such as "the bat" and "the peacock" which will be investigated in a separate chapter in the second part of this thesis. Other examples of interactions between the work of Al-Jāḥiẓ and *Nahj al-Balāghah*

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[384] Ibid.

[385] ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn, "Introduction," in *Kitāb al-ʿUthmāniyah*, by ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (Bayrūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1991).

[386] Charles Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ." In *Abbasid Belles-letters*, edited by Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant, 78-95, (Cambridge University Press, online publication, 2012), 84.

[387] Hārūn, "Introduction," 13. According to Hārūn, these volumes *Naqḍ al-ʿUthmāniyyah,* by ʾAbū Jaʿfar al-ʾIskāfī, do not exist anymore except in some resources that mention them, such as the commentary of *Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd.

will also be indicated through the investigation of "the imaginary context" in the second part of this thesis.

1.2.4. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-ʾAsadābādī

ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī al-ʾAsadābādī, known as Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025), was first an Ashʿarī in his theological understanding, but then had become a Muʿtazilī.[388] *Al-Mughnī* [*The Enricher*] is considered to be his major theological work; yet, ʿAbd al-Jabbār's doctrine can also be found in *Sharḥ al-ʾUṣūl al-Khamsah* [*The Explanation of the Five Principles*] and *Al-Muḥīṭ bil-Taklīf* [*The Acquainted of the Order*] that are compiled by some of his students.[389]

One of the principle ideas in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's theology is that "[reason] without the help of revelation, is capable of generating certitude". Justice is made up of three implications that are the result of the imposition of moral obligation upon man: "the moral status of acts, justice on God's part, and freedom on man's". The term "God" in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's thesis comprises two main themes: first, proof of His existence, which is linked to the study of time and leads into the study of physics; and second, the attribution of qualities such as "powerful, knowing, living, Hearer, Seer, existing, and eternal". Two problems arise here: "the logical question of the meaning of attribution, and the metaphysical problem of the way God has these attributes". ʿAbd al-Jabbār's response is that God's being willing and hating, commanding and forbidding, and speaking, as His attributes of action are distinguished from God's attributes of essence and His attributes of action entail a consideration of God's Justice. "God's negative attributes are also considered. He is not a body, not an accident, not visible, and has no partner. In other words, He is unique and absolute".[390]

This discussion about God's attributes is connected to the issue of the eternal nature of the *Qurʾān*. Whether the *Qurʾān* is eternal or was created has been a subject of debate between the different theological schools. The Muʿtazilite position has held the idea that the *Qurʾan* was created and temporal, as it cannot share the attribute of eternity with God, as this affects the very first principle, which is monotheism [al-Tawḥīd].

[388] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid*, 6.
[389] Ibid., 7.
[390] Ibid., 54.

This issue of eternity and the *Qurʾān* is connected to the understanding of the relation between expressions and thoughts. Because if an understanding about the relationship between expressions and thoughts is achieved, an answer about the creation of the *Qurʾān* should be reached.

On one hand, the ʾAshʿarite theological school believes in "*kalām nafsī*" to illustrate that God's speech is an indicator of his thoughts. God's expressions may have different meanings than the ones that are already known in the minds of humans. Things such as "the hand of God" are hands, but different from the hands that are known by people. ʿAbd al-Jabbār as a Muʿtazilī, on the other hand, explains that thoughts and expressions are the same:

> [He] is constantly on guard against assigning any human characteristics – such as thought – to God, who is completely other than man. Establishing a connection between speech and thought would imply just such an attribution, since it would suggest that God, in order to be speaking, must also be thinking. That [*kalām*] is an attribute of God he readily acknowledged, but it was necessary not to connect this attribute with one, namely thinking, that could not properly be associated with God.[391]

God's speech is meant to be delivered to people in their language, which they can understand. Thus, anything in the *Qurʾān* is capable of being interpreted according to the linguistic rules of human beings and there is no need to understand the *Qurʾān* on a divine level (by humans) because it is written in human language. It is through this understanding that metaphoric and imaginary expressions find their ways into the readings of the sacred text by the Muʿtazilite school. It is also from this perspective that the inimitability of the *Qurʾān* has been perceived by Muʿtazilite scholars. If speech is something different from thought, as ʾAshʿarī scholars think, then the *Qurʾān* cannot be seen as inimitable, because people could not be challenged by something they have no ability to achieve; as they are unable to reach the divine thoughts.

In his explanation of the inimitability of the *Qurʾān*, ʿAbd al-Jabbār explains that it is the arrangement of the words in their specific order that makes the *Qurʾān* inimitable. While he originated this idea of *ḍamm* [joining together], he was criticised by the later ʾAshʿarī theologian ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī for not explaining in detail how this arrangement works. In addition, he omitted the importance of the intellectual image *ṣūrah* of the writer which is rendered into language.[392] Yet, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī discussed this issue later in his rhetorical work *Dalāʾil al-ʾIʿjāz* [*Indications of the Inimitability of the Qurʾān*]. As ʿAbd al-Qāhir

[391] Margaret Larkin, "The Inimitability of the Qurʾān: Two Perspectives," *Religion and Literature* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1988), 36.
[392] Larkin, *Theology of Meaning*, 168.

al-Jurjānī explains, the same arrangement of words can convey a different meaning if we consider the intention behind the image. Margaret Larkin refers to the example of ʾAbū Tammām in ʿAbd al-Qāhir's work:

> The deadly saliva of vipers is its saliva,
> And the harvested honey that honey-picking hands collected.[393]

Larkin explains that the image *ṣūrah* "must be understood as something separate from *ḍamm*, with which it does not necessarily correspond directly". She adds "the 'joining together' of words that [Al-Jurjānī] was interested in was the kind that related to the rendering of the writer's intellectual [*ṣūrah*] into language. Nothing that ʿAbd al-Jabbar says even approaches this kind of understanding".[394] While ʿAbd al-Jabbār did not expressively say it, it seems that this is because of the whole approach of his system, which is built on reasoning. ʿAbd al-Jabbār does not make a distinction between thoughts and expressions, and therefore does not see the intention behind the image as something separate from the way its elements joined together, yet he leaves it to the audience who – through backgrounds and contexts – can reach the meaning this image is trying to convey. The *ṣūrah* will not be missed if it is read according to the whole system of ʿAbd al-Jabbār, and not only according to his idea of *ḍamm*. As for ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the language of the *Qurʾān* delivers its message through human language and according to their understanding; it is thus, that the ability to use reason – and to employ interpretation – is the key, and this key is usually connected to signs and symbols that make this process of understanding reachable. For ʿAbd al-Jabbār the notion of *ʾiʿjāz* [inimitability] is manifested in the way language, and thus thought, is delivered. This main distinction from ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's belief in the separateness between thought and expression, is what leads ʿAbd al-Qāhir to elaborate on this idea of the intention inherent in the *ṣūrāh*. As ʿAbd al-Qāhir believes, language will be expressed in a way that is separate from thought, but which has a relation to thought; thus, the reader needs to know the relation between these two entities (expression and thought) through the intention of the author. Thus, the idea of *taʾwīl* [employing interpretation]– which is already a basic in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's system –does not match ʿAbd al-Qāhir's theological background. ʿAbd al-Qāhir had to find ways to make it

[393] لُعابُ الأَفاعي القاتلاتِ لُعابُهُ وأَريُ الجَنى اشتارتهُ أيدٍ عَواسِلُ
[394] Ibid.

matchable. Yet, the embarrassment, which is caused by his theological orthodoxy about God's thought, cannot be denied.[395]

Al-ʿUmraī in his explanation of ʿAbd al-Qāhir's work mentions that the idea of understanding figurative language is through the wholeness and context of the text itself (e.g. the *Qurʾānic* chapter). While this serves ʿAbd al-Qāhir as an ʾAshʿarī theologian who believes in the inner speech (thoughts as a separate entity from expressions), it will need the context of the audience and their emotional attitude according to their previous understanding and background, which is more connected to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's understanding. This way of attempting to read the sacred text will be investigated in this thesis through reading examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Thus, *Nahj al-Balāghah's* reading becomes matchable to the Muʿtazilite, and the text seems to deliver ideas through a tool which is appealing to the Muʿtazilite and their scholars' idea of interpretation.

1.2.5. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd

ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nuʿmān al-Ḥārithī al-Baghdādī (d.1022) was a Shīʿī theologian, and most of his written work is produced in the style of answers to questions. He was very aware of the doctrines of other sects and was distinguished as a skilled debater.[396] Al-Mufīd, as an outstanding figure of the tenth and early eleventh century, "devoted a very large part of his writing to defending the rightful succession to the Imamate of ʿAlī and his eleven descendants".[397]

Al-Mufīd was considered to be influenced by the rationalist theology of the Muʿtazilites. He played an important role in the Shīʿī intellectual history as he turned the theological approach into a more rational one.[398] He refused his teacher's rejection of *kalām* and was confident about correcting his teacher's dogma in a written work, *Taṣḥīḥ* [correction].[399] With the evolution of such works, the era of the Shīʿī traditionalists ended and the new *ʾuṣūlī* rationalism was born.[400] Thus, "[Al-Mufid] represented a half-way position

[395] Al-ʿUmarī, *Al-Balāghah al-ʿArabiyyah*, 401.
[396] Tamima Bayhom-Daou, *Shaykh Mufid* (Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2005), 28.
[397] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid,* 50.
[398] Ibid., 23. "[The] position he took on a number of questions reflects [Muʿtazilī] influence".
[399] Bayhom-Daou, *Shaykh Mufid*, 29. Al-Mufid's master is Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq; Ibn Bābuwayh was "the compiler of the second great collection of [the Imāmī Ḥadīth]".
[400] Marcinkowski, "Rapprochement and Fealty," 286.

between the traditionalist opponents of reason and the rationalist theologians who came to dominate later Imami thought".[401] Al-Mufīd was a teacher of three important figures in Shīʿī history: Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Murtaḍá and Al-Raḍī.[402]

Al-Mufīd has a central thesis that all his other themes are linked to, which is believing in the infallible Imam who is present in this world.[403] This thesis addresses several questions in relation to this issue which occupied Al-Mufīd. For him,

> Man's duty is to know the Imam of his age. According to the Imamate tradition which [Al-Mufīd] defends in its strictness, whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his age dies the death of one who lived in pre-Islamic times. Hence God's revelation through the prophet and the Imams is absolutely necessary for man if he is to enter the Garden.[404]

Al-Mufīd links the belief of the Grace of Muʿtazilites (e.g. prophet's privileges) to the Shīʿī's infallibility.[405] He also insists on the power and capability of reason for the believer as for Al-Mufīd, the faith of the believer must be based on real intellectual knowledge constructed somehow on reason even though reason *ʿaql* needs to be supported by revelation *waḥy* in order to arrive at secure conclusions and attain moral obligation's principles.[406] This was at a time when a different direction was taken within Shīʿī theology. While the miracles of the Imams had been denied in traditionalist thinking, such as that of the Nawbakhtīs, it was affirmed by Al-Mufīd: "Eccentric exaggerations aside, the supernatural stature of the Imams seems to have been steadily growing during the fourth century".[407]

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[401] Bayhom-Daou, *Shaykh Mufīd*, 83.

[402] Muhammad Marcinkowski, "Rapprochement and Fealty during the Būyids and Early Saljūqs: The Life and Times of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī," *Islamic Studies* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2001), 285. Shaykh al-Tā'ifah al-Ṭūsī has contributed to Shīʿī literature in a variety of fields. In addition to his major production of two books of the four canonical *Ḥadīth* compendia of the Shīʿite, he is renowned in the field of *'uṣūl al-fiqh* [jurisprudence], *fiqh* [law], *ʿilm al-ḥadīth* [traditions] and *ʿilm al-kalām* [speculative theology]. He was influenced by [Al-Raḍī's] writing. He lived in Baghdad after leaving Khurāsān, but the conflict at his time, between the Sunnis and the Shīʿīs, was blowing up, and his house was attacked and burnt down, while the Būyids could not deal with the situation by the end of their rule. He left Baghdād for Najaf, where he "became the founder of an eminent institution of higher learning in Najaf which was to develop into a major centre of Shiʿite learning, a position which it maintained up to the second half of the 14th/20th century".

[403] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, 50.

[404] Ibid., 51.

[405] Said Amir Arjomand, "The Consolation of Theology: Absence of the Imam and Transition from Chiliasm to Law in Shiʿism," *The Journal of Religion* 76, no. 4 (October 1996), 562. "The Prophet must be infallible because '[infallibility] is Grace vouchsafed by God Most High to the one bound in duty (*mukallaf*) to prevent the occurrence of sin and abandonment of obedience'". Also see McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, 99.

[406] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, 51.

[407] Ibid., 396. Nawbakhtīs are: the first, 'Abū Sahl Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAlī ibn Isḥāq ibn 'Abī Sahl ibn Nawbakht (d.923/924) "was the political leader of the [Imamate] party and also a theologian of Muʿtazilite tendency". The other is "his more philosophically inclined nephew", 'Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥassan ibn Mūsá al-Nawbakhtī (d. between 912- 923). See McDermott, 22-23.

1.2.6. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá

Al-Murtaḍá (d.1044) was well known for both his excellent theoretical work on language and his distinguished experience within poetry. His theoretical work is considered to be the Shīʿī work that has received the most praise from non-Shīʿī scholars.

> As a critic, his thematic anthologies of Arabic poetry and the literary comments scattered throughout his works, especially in his [*ʾAmālī*], show a vast knowledge of the poetic tradition and of both linguistic [*naḥw, ṣarf, gharīb al-lughah*] and rhetorical questions [*balāghah*].[408]

He has also been described as one of the best littérateurs, as an outstanding writer of literary prose or *ʾadīban nāthiran* [man of letters].[409] As a poet, his poetry was praised even during his lifetime, and was usually compared with the work of his brother Al-Raḍī, who was "considered by some the best Qurashī poet of all time".[410] It is also said that "al-Murtaḍá's only fault in poetry is that Al-Raḍī was his brother".[411]

In *ʾAmālī al-Murtaḍá*, Al-Murtaḍá introduces different categories, tackling issues related to religion and literature. He also interprets verses of the *Qurʾān* and the traditions of the Prophet, and presents theological topics that were important in the discussion of theology, history and poetry. The original text of this work was completed in 1022, a few years after the death of Al-Raḍī.[412]

The social position of the family offered both Al-Raḍī and Al-Murtaḍá the opportunity to be taught by well-recogniszed scholars in different disciplines, such as Al-Mufīd, who had an influence on Al-Murtaḍá's theological approach. "Although [Al-Mufīd] was more important as a scholarly authority, [al-Murtaḍá's] family connections made him the head of the community even during his master's lifetime".[413] He then became the leader of the Twelver Shīʿī community in Baghdad after the death of Al-Mufīd.[414] Although he was strongly influenced by Al-Mufīd's theology, Al-Murtaḍá developed new understandings of different theological issues. One of them was the necessity of the Imam; he based this idea on purely

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[408] Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology," 27.

[409] Muḥsin al-ʾAmīn, *ʾAʿyān al-Shīʿah*, edited by Ḥasan al-ʾAmīn, vol. 8 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Taʿāruf lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1403), 214.

[410] Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology," 26. According to Abdulsater, most of the Arabic literature on Al-Murtaḍá's work is concerned with his literary work and with him as a littérateur rather than his theological work. This might be because "his literary output can be seen as untinged by evidence of his sectarian affiliation, and thus it appealed to various religious groups more easily", 27.

[411] Al-ʾAmīn, *ʾAʿyān al-Shīʿah*, 217.

[412] Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology," 36.

[413] Ibid., 19

[414] Ibid.

rational grounds, unlike Al-Mufid, who based it on both rational and revelatory modes. For Al-Murtaḍá,

> The [Imamate] fall clearly under God's justice; being a form of grace, it is necessary that there be an [Imam] at all times. This necessity is simply a concomitant of leadership [*riʾāsah*]: it is neither affected by the leader receiving a law nor by him enforcing its observance.[415]

Al-Murtaḍá differentiates between the rational necessity of the Imamate, which is necessary under any circumstance on account of the existence of effective ethical duties, and the traditional proof of the Imamate, which is the belief that the Imam is the protector of the law and the one who validates and sustains the community's legal rules.[416] In Al-Murtaḍá's discussion on the occultation of the Imam, he represents "the infallible [Imam] as a symbol of theodicy and his occultation as a confirmation of moral responsibility (*taklīf*) of the believers".[417] According to al-Murtaḍá's system, the relation between God and human beings can be described as a grace giver (God) and a recipient (human beings) who expresses gratitude.

To benefit humans through providing all the means that facilitate their salvation (unless their freedom of choice is affected), is "the only legitimate motive for the act of creation".[418] Thus, even God as a creator "is under the obligation to observe the common dictates of morality". Because of his perfection and the unconditional binding force of this moral dictate, it is impossible for Him to break it. However, the imperfection and neediness of human beings leads them to break the moral code. Acting in such a way is considered vile and deserves punishment as a just desert.

> It is the fear of punishment that gives religious experience its justification, this against a backdrop of morality founded on gratitude as the obligatory reciprocation of benevolence. Fear is thus the deepest human motivation towards religion.[419]

As such, Imamate as a belief is constructed upon both notions; the grace of God which promotes the possibility of achieving human salvation to its maximum; and knowledge that "the moral obligation of human beings is to avoid vile acts".[420]

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[415] Ibid., 36
[416] Arjomand, "The Consolation of Theology," 563.
[417] Ibid., 564.
[418] Abdulsater, "The Climax of Speculative Theology," 488.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid., 489.

In his attempt to explain the relationship between the divine and human being; between the human being and the external world; Al-Murtaḍá believes in the ability of the human being to comprehend, judge and express every aspect of the world.[421] All the data needed to offer an explanation of the natural world is present via perceptions of the external world through the senses. It is also through the senses that speculation about God's actions is enabled, in order "to rule out attributes that cannot possibly be divine".[422] For Al-Murtaḍá, human understanding "need undergo no radical change to grasp what relates to divinity".[423]

As the dictate of moral obligation must be delivered through the medium of language, this means that any deficiency in language could jeopardise moral obligation. This leads Al-Murtaḍá to assume that language in theological affairs is – or is capable of becoming – perfect.

> Moreover, he does not mention Arabic as a language inherently superior to other languages; the most that can be inferred is its ability to meet the requirements of theological speculation. The perfection of language provides [Al-Murtaḍá's] system with an important argumentative tool, useful both for justifying his positions and for dismissing other positions.[424]

Thus, the purpose of language is to meet the need of self-expression for the human. It is therefore formed to be capable of conceiving and conveying the objects in the outside world and the concepts in the mind.

> As such, human beings are incapable to comprehend and judge that which is ineffable. When language fails in articulating a particular concept, the fault lies not with language but with the concept in question.[425]

While this goes against the ʾAshʿarī's ideas, it agrees with the Muʿtazilite. Thus, Al-Murtaḍá's doctrine seems to respond to the argument of the Muʿtazilite according to a doctrine similar to their own.

[421] Ibid., 484.
[422] Ibid., 485.
[423] Ibid.
[424] Ibid., 486. He is able to justify his positions because there is no special divine language which needs to be to learned.
[425] Ibid.

2. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: Intellectual Contribution to Arabic Language

2.1. Al-Raḍī the Rhetorician, the Linguist, the Exegete

After *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Al-Raḍī's two most important works are on the metaphors of the *Qur'ān*: *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*; and the metaphors of the *Ḥadīth* (*traditions of the Prophet*): *Majāzāt al-'Āthār al-Nabawiyyah*. He also wrote ten volumes of *Qur'ānic* interpretation, but only one of them has survived, published under the title *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*.[426]

Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān is considered to be the first and only attempt among the classical works to interpret and analyse the metaphors and other figures of speech in the *Qur'ān* chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse. According to Mahmoud Ayoub, Al-Raḍī, seeks to fulfil two purposes through the book: to introduce his theological ideas "through a sharp contrast of the real meaning behind the metaphor, or 'borrowed expression', with the apparent meaning of the metaphor itself";[427] and to display his literary acumen, which is clearly recognisable in his knowledge of Arabic poetry and proverbs, and in his literary style.

His choices of the verses that he analyzes in both *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān* and *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl* represent theological or linguistic problems. His style in interpreting and analysing the *Qur'ānic* verses is different from that of other interpreters. He explains what he thinks of the central theme, and he does not simply analyse "every word or a phrase of a verse".[428] This idea of the central theme will be investigated more in the following chapter on methodology as this idea also constitutes the methodology of this thesis.

Tahseen Thaver examines Al-Raḍī's method of interpretation by comparing his work with the work of the Muʿtazilī ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Both Al-Raḍī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār try to answer theological questions through their interpretations, *Ḥaqāiq al-Ta'wīl* and *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, respectively. She also refers to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's opinions that are already included in Al-Raḍī's own work. One of the examples that is given is the discussion around the idea of *'islām* (surrendering). She talks about the verse (3:83) as it appears to be a threat to the human beings' free will.[429] "Do they seek anything other than submission to God? Everyone in the

[426] Ayoub, "Literary Exegesis of the Qur'ān," 295.
[427] Ibid., 296.
[428] Ibid.
[429] Thaver, "Ambiguity, Hermeneutics," 125.

heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly; they will be returned to Him".[430]As the verse refers to "forced submission", Al-Raḍī resolves its ambiguity by two clarifying points:

> [Al-Raḍī's] first clarification is that [*ʾislām*] here is not used in its normative meaning of active adherence to the teachings of the [*Qurʾān*] and the prophet. Rather, it is used in the meaning of *istislām* or *sallama* – both of which imply "the surrendering of oneself over to". [Al-Raḍī's] second clarification is that, included in this linguistic meaning of "surrendering oneself over to", are both rational and non-rational beings, thus the term "unwilling surrender" in this verse refers to non-rational beings of this world.[431]

In his linguistic explanation of the case, Al-Raḍī illustrates why "the verse uses a certain form of the pronoun 'those' (*man*)".[432] This form is usually applied to rational beings. In order to support this linguistic point, Al-Raḍī provides evidence from the *Qurʾān* and from the Arabic poems of Labīd (d.661) and Al-Farazdaq (d.732). Basing his argument on linguistic views, Al-Raḍī also provides evidence from verses in the *Qurʾān* "to justify the use of the verb [*ʾaslama*] in the meaning of [*istislām*]".[433]

Al-Raḍī's selection of verses is concentrated on "their merits, their power of expression and their positive effects".[434] For Al-Raḍī, the purpose and the tool of the creation of a figure of speech is intensification which is the factor of enhancing the semantic and aesthetic effect of speech. In addition, intensification consists of the value which is gained from putting a figure of speech in a position that might have been used to a literal expression, according to Abu Deeb.[435] Al-Raḍī's familiarity with intensification underlies significant features of his analysis, which is introduced by his search for similarity; that is, the comparison of two objects or aspects of experience and the generation of an *istiʿārah* which is built on this comparison. As Abu Deeb noticed, different examples that might have been treated as literal, reveal the root of an *istiʿārah* because of the deep analysis of Al-Raḍī. [436]

An example of these features in Al-Raḍī's work can be seen in his comment on the verse "so that We can revive a dead land with it" (25: 49).[437] For Abu Deeb, Al-Raḍī's comments on

[430]Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 40.
[431] Thaver, "Ambiguity, Hermeneutics," 126.
[432] Ibid., 125.
[433] Ibid., 126.
[434] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 318.
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid., 319.
[437] Ibid. Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 229.

this verse "suggest two points of similarity, the second of which enriches the image with elements that belong to the space of human emotions".[438] As Al-Raḍī says:

> [His] description of the town as being dead may, here, be interpreted in either of two ways: first the town may have been compared to a dead [person] in view of its barrenness because it has been devastated by drought, or [it may have been said to be dead] because before there had existed in it plenty of plants and trees which then died because of the drought, and as such it has become possible to describe the land itself as being dead when its children have died, for it is like a mother for them feeding them with its milk.[439]

Another feature of Al-Raḍī's work is his analysis of the *isti'ārah* within its context. The observation that can be made here is the connection between Al-Raḍī's work and the concept of *takhyīl*. Al-Raḍī's analysis of *isti'ārah* is an aspect of *takhyīl*, which is concerned with *isti'ārah* in particular, rather than other forms of individually descriptive language. Abu Deeb presents in his work the verse (2: 16) "so their trade reaps no profit" as an example of this contextual view of figurative usage.[440] Al-Raḍī's interpretation of this verse is that the actions of the unbelievers have been called by God a trade, because at the beginning of the verse he described them as buying the "error" in exchange for guidance. Similar to way the word *shirā'* was used here, the words *rabiḥat* [profit] and *tijāratuhum* [their trade] were used later, "aiming to harmonize the jewels of the system and organization, and to intertwine and coalesce the limbs of discourse".[441]

The third feature in Al-Raḍī's analysis is his treatment of the linguistic aspects of figurative phrases in the *Qur'ān*. A good example is his interpretation of the phrase in the verse (27: 66) "they are blind to it".[442] In this phrase, the usage of the word *'amūn* [blind] is not to indicate the physical loss of sight but ignorance of the truth. Each of them, ignorance and blindness, "prevents people from recognizing something as it really is".[443] He then explains the reason for the usage of *minhā* rather than *'anhā* in "*bal hum minhā 'amūn*":

> ..because the *murād* [purpose] is that they are sceptical and doubtful, that they dispute its [the afterlife] validity and correctness, so they are *'amūna minhā*; it is not accurate here to say *'anhā*, because the *murād* is to say that they do not look at it and see it but that they are blind because they doubt it.[444]

[438] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 319.
[439] Ibid., 319.
[440] Ibid., 320; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 5.
[441] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 320.
[442] Ibid., 321; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 243.
[443] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 320.
[444] Ibid., 321.

Abu Deeb provides some remarkable comments on the analytical approach of Al-Raḍī's interpretations of *isti'ārah*. Firstly, for Abu Deeb, Al-Raḍī's work reflects originality in the sensitivity with which he reveals a metaphorical meaning from "what appears to be a normal formulation of an idea".[445] He gives the example of the verse (23: 12) "We created man from an essence of clay".[446]

> [Al-Raḍī] considers the use of [*sulālah*] to be an [*isti'ārah*], because [*sulālah*] in truth is to extricate (*yasullu*) something from another; it is as though when Adam was created out of the soil of the earth he was extricated (*insalla*) from it, and extracted out of its very essence and mysterious being.[447]

"In reality nothing has been extricated [*insalla*] from something else. The sperm may be called [*sulālah*] in this sense, and a man's offspring can be called [*sulālah*] too".[448]

Secondly, Abu Deeb comments on Al-Raḍī's reinvigoration of what we might call "dead metaphors". The verse-part (6:45) "The evildoers were wiped out" can be used as an example.[449] It consists of the Arabic word *dābir*, which is related to *dābirat al-faras*, which refers to the part of an animal's foot behind the heel; *dābir* of a bird "is the bit which is behind its leg".[45o] Therefore, this verse says that "those who come after the people who have been unjust have been severed or that their children have been destroyed and none of their offspring left".[451] Thus, the word *dābir* might have been understood as the root of people. Yet, in connecting it to birds or animals, Al-Raḍī reinvigorates the metaphor.

Thirdly, Abu Deeb comments on the concreteness and vividness that Al-Raḍī's analysis brings out of the metaphors he identifies, and the way he enlightens readers' minds in making them aware of the creativeness that enlivens the metaphorical process; "without such evocation of these concrete aspects, the metaphor is likely to be missed altogether or imagined and responded to in a much less concrete and vivid fashion".[452]

Abu Deeb's fourth comment highlights the way in which Al-Raḍī clearly introduces a multiplicity of interpretations in which he offers different types of explanations for the same verse, the metaphorical approach being only one of them. Because he was first and foremost

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[445] Ibid., p. 323.
[446] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 323; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 215.
[447] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 323.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 83.
[45o] Abu Deeb, "Studies in the Majāz," 324.
[451] Ibid.
[452] Ibid.

a poet sensitive to the grace of the language, he was able to reveal this new critical direction "which advocates a view of language as multiple, as a space of possibilities":[453]

> Only Sufism and Shīʿism were to take this path in the interpretation of texts and to some extent in their production. The principle underlying Al-Raḍī's views has been crucial not only for modern literary theories but also for modern literary production everywhere.[454]

In Abu Deeb's fifth comment, Al-Raḍī is compared to all his predecessors, with his the only work described as manifesting such complexity and sophistication.

Abu Deeb then contends that Aristotle's understanding of metaphor is insufficient for the understanding of *istiʿārah*, as Aristotle defines a metaphor as transference, or the use of a word in order to indicate a meaning different from its real meaning. "[For] the process of [*istiʿārah*] is not a product of playing around with a fixed convention of language; it is in the main a function of ideological, cultural and psychological precepts and beliefs".[455] The formation of a figurative use of Arabic expressions was invented as a result of religious and metaphysical questions and conflicts, "especially the nature of God and free will and predestination".[456] It was Al-Raḍī who elaborated on these points more than any other intellectual before ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī.[457]

Abu Deeb's explanation of the ideological, psychological and cultural influence on the *istiʿārah* is justified, as Aristotle's definition cannot be applied to the Arabic *istiʿārah* in general as the Arabic *istiʿārah* is rooted in its culture. However, Al-Raḍī's interpretative style with regard to *istiʿārah* is more likely to take the form of a description of an image that has been evoked, and which has created a more complex *istiʿārah* which needs to be interpreted in a complex way, such as that applied by Al-Raḍī. This complex *istiʿārah* in some cases is only one part of this image-evocation. Yet, it appears that Al-Raḍī did not only tackle one part of what we call *takhyīl*, but tackled also the parts that are concerned with images of other elements of figurative language. His recreation of the dead metaphor and the vividness that he brings to a metaphor in addition to the different features that I indicated from Abu Deeb's work, such as the linguistic analytical approach and the interpretation of the *istiʿārah* in its context, all reflect Al-Raḍī's understanding of the concept of *takhyīl*. This understanding seems to go

[453] Ibid., 326.
[454] Ibid.
[455] Ibid., 330.
[456] Ibid.
[457] Ibid.

beyond the definition of takhyīl as understood by Al-Qarṭājannī which is concerned with the logic of the movement of the soul. Yet, Al-Raḍī's understanding seems to combine the understanding of both ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī and Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī. In such a way, Al-Raḍī brings his definition of the rhetorical image close to what I call "the imaginary context". One of the most important aspects of Al-Raḍī's work is his application of his ideas on the imagery of the *Qur'ān* rather than restricting himself with few examples to prove any rhetorical idea as it is the case with both ʿAbd al-Qāhir and Al-Qarṭājannī.

2.2. Al-Raḍī the Poet, Al-Raḍī the Littérateur

Al-Raḍī is well known for his correspondence with his friend Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Ṣābī (d.994), which were written in both poetic and prose styles, and ended with the *qaṣīdat rithā'* written by Al-Raḍī at the time of his friend's death.[458] According to Thaver, the writings of Al-Raḍī and Al-Ṣābī proves that they were both talented in and passionate for the Arabic letters even though the two men were different in their age and religious attitudes. [459]
Moreover, Al-Ṣābī was blamed to be the one who raises Al-Raḍī's political ambition.[460] In one letter he wrote:

> O ['Abū Ḥassan]! In the matter of men I have intuitive knowledge [*'ilm al-firāsah*],
> It fails me not in speaking the truth,
> It has informed me that you are a man of nobility who will rise to the highest rank,
> So I gave you full honor before it was due, praying "may God prolong the life of Sayyid!"
> Not revealing yet a phrase which I kept secret, until I see myself free to spell it out.[461]

According to Al-Maṭrūdī, Al-Raḍī's poetry is strongly influenced by Al-Mutanabbī (d.965). His poems reflect his self-pride and the high honour of his family, which descended from the Prophet. In his life, Al-Raḍī collected his poems according to the periods in which they were written, which has helped readers understand the different stages of his life. After his death, his poems were ordered according to rhyming letters.[462]

In *Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and the Poetics of ʿAlid Legitimacy: Elegy for Al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAli on ʿĀshūrā' 391 A.H*, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych tackles Al-Raḍī's ode, a poem that is rhymed

[458] Muḥammad Najim, *Rasā'il al-Ṣābī wa Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Kuwait: Dā'irat al-Maṭbūʿāt wa al-Nashir, 1961). *Qaṣīdat rithā'* is an elegiac form, composed after the death of someone.
[459] Thaver, "Ambiguity, Hermeneutics," 57.
[460] Ibid.
[461] ʿIṣām ʿAbd ʿAlī, "Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī His Life and Poetry" (PhD diss., Durham University, 1974), 123.
[462] Muḥammad al-Maṭrūdī, *Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: Ḥayātuhu wa Shiʿruh* (Al-Riyāḍ: Al-Nādī al-Adabī, 1984), 140.

in *dāl* (the letter with the sound "d") and that opens with "These are the abodes at *al-Ghamīm*, so call to them".[463] It is "generally described as an elegy to Al Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī and dated quite precisely to the Day of ʿĀshurāʾ 391".[464] Stetkevych divides this ode into sections of different poetical genres, and indicates that the components are neither randomly put together, and not without intention. However, Al-Raḍī deliberately structured it in this way, effectively, "to create a compelling emotional and political claim for the ʿAlid legitimacy".[465] Thus, he used the power of language and his poetic talent to promote his main belief and confessions. Al-Raḍī's concern with the caliphate is explained thus:

> The air of aristocracy that [Al-Raḍī] exudes in his poetry is legitimized by the purity of his lineage. Distinct about this attitude is that unlike other theologically-grounded writings by ʿAlid scholars on the legitimacy of ʿAlid rule, such as that of his brother [Al-Murtaḍá] (d.1044 CE), [Al-Raḍī's] argument for his own candidacy for political rule does not concern itself with theological explanations.[466]

In a verse from another ode, which was dedicated to the Abbasid caliph Al-Qādir (d.1031CE), Al-Raḍī says:

> When men compete in glory there is no difference between us
> At all: each of us is of the noblest origins –
> Except for the caliphate: I am deprived of it
> While you are crowned! [467]

The Buyids as outsiders who ruled parts of the Islamic regions had to find strategies to consolidate their power. In such circumstances, a good strategy could be to allow different religious sects to spread their teachings and beliefs. Therefore, the populace may be less volatile and more accepting of differences and outsiders. In the time of Al-Raḍī, the *mujālasāt* increased popularity, and people gathered to share their intellectual ideas, have philosophical arguments and recite their poems in front of the caliph or the viziers. Knowledge production activity was not limited to oral performances; the writing of books and dictating of teachings was also popular. Students who dictated their teacher's lessons collected them in books called *ʾamālī*. Writing books was not limited to one area, even though a book may have been

[463] Stetkevych, *The Poetics of ʿAlid legitimacy*, 293. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and the Poetics of ʿAlid Legitimacy: Elegy for al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī on ʿĀshūrāʾ, 391 AH," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38, no. 3 (2007).The opening of the *qaṣīdah*: "*hādhī al- Manāzilu bil- Ghamīmi fa nādihā".*

[464] Ibid.

[465] Ibid., 323.

[466] Thaver, "Ambiguity, Hermeneutics," 56.

[467] Ibid., 55.

composed for certain purposes. Instead, they were more like encyclopaedic publications. Al-Jāḥiẓ, for example, is known to have published his books containing material covering more subjects than those relevant to his intended purpose. He was a theologian who – through his literary writing style and Muʿtazilī rationalist approach – was able to spread his teaching and theological beliefs while also insisting on teaching authors to write to a professional and rhetorical standard. Although Al-Jāḥiẓ lived in the ninth century, prior to Al-Raḍī's time, his influence had been great on the generations that followed. It is clear that most of the figures mentioned in this chapter had writing styles that were similar, in many ways, to Al-Jāḥiẓ. If these scholars did not use their literary style to convey their messages, they used their knowledge about literature and language to support their arguments as to justify theological outcome from verses by its literary or linguistic construction.

Philosophers are known for their rational approach – for reasoning and the use of logic. Yet, ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī was a philosopher and a theologian who used his literary style as a man of letters in composing his work. His books *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah* and *Al-ʾImtāʿ wa al-Muʾānasah* are good examples of this tendency. He used his books to address different disputes and arguments between scholars.

ʿAbd al-Jabbār, as a Muʿtazilī theologian who valued rational thinking and reasoning, had to justify these approaches of the other Muazilīs by making them effective in the pursuit of the understanding of theological thoughts. He disagreed with the ʾAshʿarī's notion of *kalam nafsī* [psychological speech], as in the case of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī who differentiated between the speech of God and his thought. For the ʾAshʿarite school, meaning can be something that the human mind is unable to comprehend, as in in the example of the hand of God. ʿAbd al-Jabbār argued that, if this is the case, then the *Qurʾān* is not inimitable because human beings should be challenged with something within their ability to grasp. He introduced the notion of *ḍamm*, which addressed the way in which words are joined together. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī criticised this idea, claiming that ʿAbd al-Jabbār did not explain how this joining of words works. In reply, ʿAbd al-Qāhir introduced the intellectual image, in which the author translates the *ṣurah* [image] in his mind into expression. Through knowing the intention of the author, the *ṣurah* will be clear. This means the intention of the author will only be known through the traditionalist approach of understanding revelation, and not through contemplation. Or as suggested by Al-ʿUmarī, it can be understood through the

context of the whole *Qurʾānic* chapter. Yet, this will mean its reasoning is not according to the intention of the author but according to what the reader understands from the whole context of the chapter. And this means that readers from the school of ʾAshʿarite will have to read the context to know the intention of the author rather than reading the context to understand the recipients' background. And as in the case of the *Qurʾān*, the intention of the divine will only be understood through revelation because there is always an understanding that is not reachable to human beings. This means that the position of the ʾAshʿarite does not allow speculative reading even though ʿAbd al-Qāhir was keen to allow it.

However, the idea of *ḍamm* in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's thought does not seem to be unclear if this joining will depend on the reader reasoning in accordance with their collective knowledge and previous background, in addition to their linguistic and literary knowledge. As I suggested earlier, this is not in disagreement with ʿAbd al-Jabbār's system of reasoning. And this approach supports an understanding of how *takhyīl* is presented to the audience.

Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd is considered to be the first Shīʿī scholar who displayed a Muʿtazilī tendency. He applied the Muʿtazilite reasoning to the Shīʿī teachings. For example, he explained the infallibility of the Imam as an expression of the Grace of God. However, he also insisted on the importance of revelation to aid rational thought. Al-Mufīd was a teacher of both Al-Raḍī and Al-Murtaḍá; both were influenced by him and by the Muʿtazilite. It is believed that it is Al-Murtaḍá who pushed reasoning in the Shīʿī tradition to its extreme.[468] He based the necessity of the Imamate on a rational foundation. He also argued that the language of human beings is perfectible and capable of understanding the divine message. For Al-Murtaḍá, it is through the senses that speculation about God's actions starts.

In addition to being a well-known poet, Al-Murtaḍá's knowledge of literature is manifested in his arguments and explanations of *Qurʾānic* verses. As a Shīʿī rationalist, he followed Al-Mufīd and seems to be going beyond Al-Mufīd's approach. Al-Murtaḍá by using his linguistic knowledge was able to prove the capability of the Shīʿī doctrine to move from its traditional approach which depends completely on revelation and its understanding through the speeches of the Imams, into approaching theology through understanding the revelation logically and linguistically in a way that facilitate understanding the revelation. In his *ʾAmālī*, for example, he takes a verse and explains it according to the linguistic approach, then

[468] McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid,* 395. "In regard to the theological method, [Al- Mufid] holds a position between the Imamate traditionists and the full Muʿtazilite stance adopted by [Al-Murtaḍá]".

presents another verse which conveys a similar example for the previous verse and keeps supporting his methodology by verses with similar meaning. He sometimes gives examples from Arabic poetry that are connected to the context of his chapter, or *majlis* as they are called.[469] This was not a common methodology in the Shīʿiī intellectual community as what was common is to understand the *Qurʾānic* verses according to the interpretations of the Imams; the idea of *samʿ* [hearing; and is used to indicate revelation as an approach against reasoning] as indicated earlier.[47o]

Al-Raḍī, in his *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qurʾān*, puts *istiʿārah* in its context which means that he expands the singular istiʿārah into the broader image that consists of this *istiʿārah*. And as indicated above in the section of Al-Raḍi, he represented in his way of examining *istiʿārah* a method which is similar and stimulating to what I explained as "the imaginary context". This will also be clarified in the following chapter on methodology.

The way in which Al-Raḍī is concerned with *istiʿārah*, makes it clear how *istiʿārāt* (plural of *istiʿārah*) when put together is capable produce. He joins the *istiʿārāt* of every chapter of the *Qurʾān* together in a way that leads the reader to connect their meanings and link these *istiʿārāt* to the title of the chapter. Al-Raḍī, strongly influenced by his brother, used the linguistic approach and went beyond the grammatical and lexicon understanding of the verses into reading the verses through the imagery in an attempt to construct his understanding of the *Qurʾānic* verses on a poetic foundation. In such a way, he located and justified his theology within the environment of ʾAdab. This environment seemed to be enforcing intellectuals to validate their arguments through the notion of ʾAdab.

Al-Raḍī, also used his own poems to convey his belief in the Shīʿī Imams as true successors of prophet Muḥammad. This leads him to claim his right as a descendant of the Imams. Thus, Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was not only spreading the teaching of the Imams through his work as many Shīʿī intellectuals seemed to be doing, but he was arguing about the rights of the Imams to be the true leaders of Islam and within the occultation of the twelfth Imam, Al-Raḍī seemed to be suggesting a caliph from the Shīʿī intellectual community of his time and that was Al-Raḍī himself, as different sources indicated above suggest.

All these points make it possible to understand *Nahj al-Balāghah* more clearly, through the contexts that are revealed, and validates the approach that I will be taking as will

[469] See *ʾAmālī Al-Murtaḍá*.

[47o] See McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid,* 51.

be clarified in the following chapter. My approach is not incompatible with Al-Raḍī's methodology and intention with regard to knowledge production. *Isti'ārah* in its context is insisted on in Al-Raḍī's approach and this means it also has its purpose in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The perfectibility of the language is not something Al-Raḍī is unaware of. And Al-Murtaḍá's notion that speculation about God starts with senses can also be said to be present in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Chapter Three

On Methodology

The growing interest in evaluating the intellectual heritage that has been received from the Arab and Islamic culture has inspired this research methodology. To discover new areas of this heritage requires new tools and perspectives. Literary reading has been one of these neglected tools, not because of the lack of awareness of its possibility to play this role, but because of the restricted rules that are politically put on ways of interpreting Islamic text in particular.[471] In this section, the background that helped to establish the methodology of this research will be outlined, relying on both the ideas of modern scholars and of Arab Medievalist speculations that were known in the 10th century in order to validate its application in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

1. Creativity of the Arab as a Way of Approaching Texts

Moden Arabic poetry, which is constructed on the notions of creativity and its liberation from the rules of the Arabic *qaṣīdah*, should not be solely evaluated through the western poetic experience. The modernism of Arabic poetics has its reference in the poetic experience of the Abbasid Age of the third AH/ ninth DC to the fourth AH/ tenth century DC.[472] ʾAdunīs, in his project on the creativity of the Arab, argues for a space to re-read this heritage for a wider understanding. This understanding transcends the culture and knowledge that are gained from the previous, and probably only, reading of the Islamic Arab culture; a reading which is based on early Islamic fundamentals. Through his work, ʾAdunīs investigates the Abbasid era when this innovation has manifested in different fields. Examples appeared in poetic writing which started to deviate from the rules of the classical *qaṣīdah* of the pre-Islamic age. The term *badīʿ* is used to describe this desire of transcendence from the past into the new in the field of poetics.[473] Yet, the term is rooted in religious and theological practice that is usually

[471] See Nasr Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma of the Literary Approach to the Qur'an," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 23, Literature and the Sacred (Department of English and Comparative Literature, American University in Cairo Press, 2003).
[472] Huda J. Fakhreddine, "Two Projects of Modernism in Arabic Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 48, no. 1, (Brill, 2017), 49.
[473] Ibid., 50.

revolutionary.[474] ʾAdunīs, in examining the term *badīʿ*, explains its relationship to the term *bidʿah*. *Bidʿah* is linked to bringing something about with no valid reference. While this usually appears as a deviating religious practice, it is considered to be a misleading act, but it can also appear as a good practice if it results in good consequences. Yet, the term has more negative than positive influence, especially in the religious environment. It is understood as a cause of *fitan* "tribulations" and division.[475] Although the notion of *badīʿ* has usually been applied to poetical and theological environments as a set of innovative tools and a way of describing things, ʾAdunīs's project appears as a broader reading of conceptualisation. Although his work is pioneering in all aspects of the manifestation of *badīʿ*, in western scholarship, the contribution of *badīʿ* has been directed towards the literary field and innovations in rhetorical tools.[476] However, in his examination of figures such as Al-Fārābī as a philosopher and ʿAbd al-Jabbār as a Muʿtazilī of the 10th and 11th centuries, and modern thinkers such as Rashīd Riḍā and Al-Kawākibī, ʾAdunīs is keen to unveil a way of thinking and a methodology of approaching the intellectual life. After encountering the ways of thinking that manifest through the metaphysical and the ideological, he acknowledged that, "the thinking which we called 'new' is just as a water which we drink from the same old bowl and through the same 'old' method. And it is a water 'coloured by the bowl's colour'".[477] He indicates his view on being innovative as to have "new" questions and not by asking the "old" questions. It is about having a "new" start which is especially created for and by the innovator. The only way the new generation can have their own new questions and their own new answers is by "modulating the dominant questions and answers, analysing them, grasping them epistemologically and going beyond them".[478] Yet, this requires a space for free and critical thinking directed towards the sources that have formed the Islamic culture and its intellectual life.[479]

It is through his studies on different thinkers, that he recognises how the notion of the "new" is applied. It is used at different times when changes are actually made in order to return to the fundamental understanding of the source.[480] However, in other cases such as his

[474] Ibid.
[475] ʾAdunīs, *Al-Thābit wa al-Mutaḥawwil: Baḥth fi al- Ibdāʿ wa al- Ittibāʿ ʿind al-ʿArab*, vol: 2 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Sāqī, 2019), 162.
[476] See Suzanne Stetkevych, "Toward a Redefinition of 'Badīʿ' Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12, (Brill, 1981).
[477] ʾAdunīs, *Al-Thābit wa al-Mutaḥawwil*, vol 3, 211.
[478] Ibid., 212.
[479] Ibid., 215.
[480] See for example ʾAdunīs's discussion on Muḥammad ʿAbdū and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in *Al-Thābit wa al-Mutaḥawwil*, vol: 3, 106; 121.

investigation of Al-Fārābī's thought, it appears that there are some limitations in encountering Al-Fārābī, especially in knowing that Al-Fārābī as a philosopher of the ninth century has a complex approach that needs to be evaluated by referring to different sources of his philosophy. Yet, what ʾAdunīs seems to explain in particular, is Al-Fārābī's establishment of philosophy as an identity; an opposition to other types of doctrine.[481]

2. Hermeneutics

In an attempt to investigate not only the literary text but also the sacred text in a new way through the Arab heritage, Naṣr Ḥāmid ʾAbū Zayd examines hermeneutics relying on western understandings of the concept. Hermeneutics as an art of understanding has been developed by different thinkers. While it starts with an existential hermeneutic which does not rely on a specific methodology, and focuses on the exegete as is the case with Gadamer and Heidegger, it evolves into a more methodological work which depends on both the text and the exegete. In this way, the relationship between the subjective and the objective will act as a combined tool in reading a text. Yet, this does not mean that the particularity of a text is as valuable as the universal text.[482] It is this interaction between the particular and universal that brings the text into its universal values. Thus, relying on what I explained earlier in the theory section, when the particularity of a text encounters the collective universal, it contributes to the expansion of this universal.

In Schleiermacher's explanation of the hermeneutic circle, he indicates that the "individual" will only be understood through its relationship to the "whole", as is the case with the "whole" which is understood through its relationship to the "individual".[483] Yet, in the process of formulating a hypothesis, there might be a problem raised between the elements and the meaningful whole. In this case, when linguistic expression or other signs are not understood immediately, or are automatically presenting the hermeneutic circle as an empirical phenomenon, "It is then necessary to create interpretative hypotheses, and it is during this activity that one gets confronted with the problem of the meaningful whole and

[481] Ibid., 66.
[482] Naṣr Ḥāmid ʾAbū Zayd, *ʾIshkāliyyāt al-Qirāʾah wa ʾĀliyyāt al-Taʾwīl* (Al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-ʿArabī, 2008), 43; 49.
[483] *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Hermeneutics".

its elements".[484] This is a logical problem that appears in the basis upon which expressions are understood.

After gaining a considerable amount of experience in understanding expressions phonologically, semantically, syntactically, and pragmatically, the cognitive system of the expert will be able to classify not only sounds, words, and sentences, but also entire texts automatically. Therefore, "language processing takes place largely unconsciously under standard conditions".[485] It is then that an interpretive hypothesis is generated through the activation of cognitive resources in the form of attention, after the process of facing difficulties in one's immediate understanding of linguistic expressions. It is generally agreed that the capability of understanding a sentence and its values depends on an understanding of its semantic constituents and their values. However, it is not the same with understanding a text at the macro level.

> Whereas a sentence may express a thought which is a plausible mental correlate, a text expresses a *sequence* of thoughts which cannot be grasped directly: the meaning of a sentence can be grasped, memorized and processed; the meaning of a text as a whole on the macro-level requires for its comprehension a more complex cognitive process.[486]

This idea of a more "complex cognitive process" might be found in the "imaginary context". As this context provides links between the elements within the imaginary context. These links are manifested through rational relationships between images that create the whole context. Thus, it makes the text as a whole easier to be grasped and remembered. In addition, "the imaginary" as an element involves a psychological influence that connects the different parts of the imaginary context through the effect it produces on the soul.

Yet, there is a clear difference between the interpretation of a text and textual criticism. The first is directed at the text's meaning and what the author means by their usage of the signs in a particular sequence. The second reflects, with respect to different values, the significance of a text. The significance "always implies a relationship" between the meaning and "a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable".[487]

It might be understood that the significance of a text opens a greater possibility for understanding, as it might be linked to the notion of "deconstruction", which depends on

[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.

evaluating a text from the reader's point of view without taking into consideration the intention of the author and the cultural and historical context of the text. However, the term "intention" involves a more complex process that interacts with the social and natural environment of the author "and involves both the conscious and unconscious use of symbols".[488] Thus, incorporating grammatical elements and other elements of the text along with a consideration of the intention of the author will be a possible attempt to produce an adequate construction of understanding the text.[489] Although it might be called a "reconstruction", as parallel to "deconstruction", I prefer to use the word construction, as it preserves the difference between the text and its reading. However, applying the word "reconstruction" assumes that we attempt to rebuild the text, an idea that is probably more connected to one side of the reading's elements than to the combination of them. Reconstruction may entail ignoring other important elements, with the text still contributing through them to other understandings that are not in the hands of the reader. It is therefore an attempt to limit other available possibilities. Thus, the aim of our reading is to offer an understanding of the text, with this understanding being constructed with tools that are already available to the author and their cultural background.

3. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Theory of Construction *Naẓariyyat al-Naẓm*

ʿAbd al-Qāir al-Jurjānī was first known as a grammarian, especially in his own time. It is later that he was recognised as a rhetorician who largely contributed to poetic theory.[490] His presentation in different parts of his works indicates his association with the grammarians rather than with literary critics.[491] Yet, his strong grammatical skills were incorporated into his literary and rhetorical thoughts. Thus, his contribution to both Arabic language and poetic language played an important role in the understanding of the *Qur'ānic* inimitability and Islamic hermeneutics.[492] From this perspective, his theory of construction can be approached.

Through his explanation of his idea of *naẓm*, "the Theory of Construction", ʿAbd al-Qāhir clarifies the importance of the relationship between the utterance and the meaning. He

[488] Ibid.
[489] Ibid.
[490] Avigail Noy, "The Legacy of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī in the Arabic East before al-Qazwīnī's Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 5 (2018), 15.
[491] Ibid., 20.
[492] Ibid., 46.

strengthens his view by referring to Al-Jāḥiẓ's thought of the importance of the formulation as a response to the opinion, which appreciates meanings as the manifestation of wisdom and speculation over utterance.[493] In his explanation of the meaning of *balāghah* [rhetoric], Al-Jāḥiẓ clarifies that in claiming that rhetoric is about the listener's understanding of the speaker's meaning, there will be confusion between what is *faṣīḥ* [eloquent], *ṣawāb* [right], *khaṭā'* [wrong], and *'ibānah* [clarifying]; they will all be considered to be part of *bayān* [clarification].[494] If meaning is the valuable part of speech, then all that has been said in relation to the specific structure and construction will have no value.[495]

I have already introduced different parts of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's ideas on language and thoughts in the chapter on *takhyīl* and the chapter on the context of Al-Raḍī. As I have stated previously, ʿAbd al-Qāhir's theological background was a barrier for more improvement on his thoughts. As for the Muʿtazīlī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the notion of *ṣūrah* is understood as the construction through which the image, and therefore the thoughts connected to it, are presented. This understanding is based on his belief about the connection between expressions and thoughts as one thing in his investigation of the *'Iʿjāz al-Qur'ān*.[496] Yet, ʿAbd al-Qāhir's thoughts on this issue can be approached better through his idea of *naẓm*, as our purpose here is to find the relationship between the creation of the image and its intended meaning.

"A statement will not be more valuable than another one until its meaning has an influence on the listener which the other statement will not have".[497] ʿAbd al-Qāhir continues "yet, if you say: if the first signifies something which the second does not signify, then they are not two statements of one meaning, but they are two statements for different meanings".[498] ʿAbd al-Qāhir responds that what is meant by "meaning" here is the "purpose" of the speaker. He gives the example of likening a man to a lion through two statements: "Zayd is like a lion" Zayd *ka-l-'asad*, and "it seems that Zayd is the lion" *ka'anna zaydan al-'asad*. These two statements signify the similarity between Zayd and the lion, yet the second statement, according to ʿAbd al-Qāhir, creates more connection between the lion and Zayd as to have more similarities than the first statement, as Zayd will be imagined as a lion in a form of a

[493] Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-'Iʿjāz*, 255.
[494] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn,* 81.
[495] Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-'Iʿjāz*, 257.
[496] See the section on ʿAbd al-Jabbār in the "context" chapter in this thesis.
[497] Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-'Iʿjāz*, 258.
[498] Ibid.

man. The differences between the two statements have been obvious because of the arrangement of the utterance as it is the case in introducing the letter *kāf* and joining it with *ʾanna.*[499] ʿAbd al-Qāhir extends this idea into the whole context as he explains that if we encounter two statements or images that are written by different people and look exactly the same, this should not be read through its appearance. Instead, there is a story and a context behind this that is connected to the statement, and the statement itself is arranged through a context of different arrangements of utterances. It is about what is understood through a collection of speech and a collection of another speech.[500]

4.The Debate Between Logicians and Grammarians in the Tenth Century

In addition to this, the famous debate that spread in 320 AH/932 CE between logicians and grammarians around the value of logic and grammar seems to be clearly present in Al-Raḍī's approach.[501] Al-Fārābī is keen to explain that the two sides of logic, the mathematical and the expressive, depend on each other. Although he gives more value to logic, he insists that logicians need to learn from grammarians, as thoughts "must be expressed by means of a particular language".[502] The attempt to manipulate a particular language in order to fit universal logic is known as linguistic philosophy. Al-Fārābī has contributed greatly to this field for the Arabic language. In order to be capable of delivering universal thoughts, some Arabic terms have had to be amended. Thus, the reading for a text will not only rely on what the grammatical relationship between utterances is, but will also depend on the logical relations that have been presented through copulas and other logical terms.

While the debate about logic and grammar is reported in the eighth night of *Al-ʾImtāʿ wa al-Muʾānasah*, in the seventeenth night, the relationship between philosophy and religion (reason and revelation) is tackled. It can be seen as a complement to the methodology.[503] The debate between grammar and logic is about questioning which of them is capable of reaching the truth. Logic is concerned with universality, while grammar is concerned with particulars.

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[499] Ibid.

[500] Ibid., 260-261.

[501] *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* "Sirāfi, Abu Saʿid Hasan".

[502] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, 169.

[503] ʿAlī al-Madan, "ʾIshkāliyyat al-falsafah wa al-Sharīʿah fī al-Tafkīr al-Dīnī wa al-ʾIslāmī," in *ʿIlm al-Kalām al-Jadīd: Madkhal li Dirāsat al-lāhūt al-Jadīd wa Jadal al-ʿIlm wa al-Dīn*, edited by ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Rifāʿī, (Baghdād: Markaz Dirāsāt Falsafat al-Dīn 2016), 430.

Similar is the debate between reason and revelation. While revelation relies on religious truth which has been delivered through prophets, reasoning is about knowing religion, God, and thus truth through the intellect.[504]

5. The New Rhetoric and the Argumentative Image

The new rhetoric has been developed around the theory of argumentation. Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca construct *The New Rhetoric* on Aristotle's understanding.[505] In tackling the images, they do not examine them as part of the stylistic technique which affects the listener through its beauty,[506] but it is clear in their book that they are investigating the rationality of expressions.[507] And this rationality is what I argue with in my investigation through images of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. "It is safe to say that the argumentative viewpoint will yield, in questions which are usually regarded as pertaining exclusively to expression, insights that reveal their hidden rationality".[508] They investigate the rationality of the metaphors. Yet, the role of metaphors as "a means of overcoming the poverty of language", "would seem to be a very secondary role".[509]

> The influence of a metaphor is not felt only in the argument for which it was created. It can also contribute to the confusion of concepts. Once use has been made of the notion of slave in such metaphors as "slave of the employer" and "slave of passions", the need is felt to investigate what are the elements common to the term "slave" in all its various uses which have a reaction on each other.[510]

He then makes use of the "dormant" metaphor which, in his opinion has great value in argument. It is through the use of specific techniques that this kind of metaphor is reactivated, after which it exerts great persuasive force. "This strength is due to the fact that it obtains its effect by drawing on a stock of analogical material that gains ready acceptance because it is not merely known, but is integrated by language into the cultural tradition".[511]

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[504] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-'Imtāʿ wa al-Mu'ānasah*, 236.
[505] Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, translated by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 5.
[506] Mishbāl, *Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj*, 306.
[507] Perelman and Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 8.
[508] Ibid., 508.
[509] Ibid.,404.
[510] Ibid.
[511] Ibid., 405.

This idea of the relationship between the thoughts and the arrangement may be most manifested through images, as in the usages of ʿAbd al-Qāhir's examples of imagery. They are the best examples to investigate the particular relations of the entities in their arrangement. In Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qurʾān* [*The Summary of the Clarification in The Imageries of the Qurān*], he presents the imageries in every *Qurʾānic* chapter, one follows the other. In this way, he prepares the reader to automatically make connections between the images and their relationship to the whole chapter. This should be understood as part of the genius of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, which has been noted in the chapter on the context of Al-Raḍī, in which Abu Deeb explains how Al-Raḍī has preceded ʿAbd al-Qāhir in his thoughts about *istʿārah*. Although in *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, he only introduces imageries that are taken from their particular context, he connects them to other imageries in the same whole context which is the chapter. Al-Raḍī indicates in his introduction of *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān* that the usages of the figurative expressions in the *Qurʾān* is not because of the limitation of the words or that God has felt confined in using literal expressions, but because using figurative expressions *ʾalfāẓ al-majāzāt* make the speech clearer and in harmony with the language of the audience.[512]

There are few points that can be made here in order to understand more about Al-Raḍī's mentality. While usually he calls the chapter by its *Qurʾānic* name, for example "Muḥammad", he may just say "in which Muḥammad is indicated".[513] In some chapters, he gives along with the title another indication, such as for instance the chapter "Fāṭir", where he says, "in which the angels are indicated".[514] Although it is true that the angels are mentioned in the first verse of the chapter, in many other chapters he will just mention the title. Yet, it can be noted in his investigation of the imagery in the chapter "Fāṭir", that he mentions three verses which all somehow relate to the angels through an imaginary relationship. Another point to be mentioned which is indicated by Al-Raḍī himself, is that in some chapters, he may exclude some imageries and present them in another chapter where there is a similar image. In this way, he is putting similar images together and, as is the case with other publication of his age, he supports his arguments with poetic imageries that are similar to the verses. Thus, Al-Raḍī is clearly introducing his new methodology in reading *Qurʾānic* imagery. In his introduction to the book, he indicates the uniqueness of his work and that no-one before him

[512] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥussayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qurʾān*, edited by Makkī al-Sayyid Jāsim (Bayrūt: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 2011), 11.
[513] Ibid., 208.
[514] Ibid., 180.

had done the same.[515] He also insists on describing his work as pioneering in his other book *Al-Majāzāt al-Nabawiyyah* [*The Prophetic Imageries*]. He points in the introduction about the previous work and its uniqueness, which has provoked some readers to ask him to write another book on the imagery of the speech of the prophet.[516] It is worth noting that this method of Al-Raḍī is a fruitful result of a context of a writing culture. The speculation which is needed in this type of understanding and connecting becomes more obvious when contexts of images are presented in books rather than oral sermons. Yet, it is also a way of indirect teaching which aims at provoking the reader, evoking images and building them one on the other.

However, the topic is crucial, and approaching the *Qur'ān* in a literary way is not a welcome methodology in the field of Islamic theology. This is an issue which "has been politically closed since the ninth century".[517] Dissimulation, as indicated above, is a way of interacting "in all necessary matters".[518] When Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī comes across a verse in the chapter "Ṭāhā", in which Moses asks God to free his tongue in order for him to speak, "Moses said, Lord, lift up my heart and ease my task for me. Untie my tongue, so that they may understand my words".[519] Al-Raḍī explains that his tongue was heavy, then he adds that "and it is possible that the purpose is to eliminate the dissimulation and abstain Pharon's power".[520] Thus, he will be free to talk about God without fearing the enemy.[521] In this sense, Al-Raḍī's thoughts about dissimulation is present, even in his reading of the story of Moses. This can be taken as an indication of his own inability to speak freely.

Al-Raḍī's approach has been very stimulating in reading *Nahj al-Balāghah* through the collection of images. As investigated earlier, *Takhyīl* plays a significant role in the interaction between language, logic, and revelation. It is worth noting that Al-Fārābī's theory of revelation relies on *takhyīl*. Yet, this is to be investigated in a different place. *Takhyīl*, as manifested through poetic statements *'aqāwīl shi'riyyah*, is an obvious participant in argumentation. Yet, the notion of *'aqāwīl* "statement" may be a barrier for an extended *takhyīl*.

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[515] Ibid., 11.
[516] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥussayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Al-Majāzāt al-Nabawiyyah*, edited by Mahdī Hooshmand (Qum: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1422 AH), 27.
[517] Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma of the Literary Approach of the Qur'an," 40.
[518] Enc*yclopaedia Iranica*, "Taqiya".
[519] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 197.
[520] Al-Raḍī, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, 126.
[521] Ibid.

6. Poetics With Ethical and Rhetorical Purpose, A way to Extend *Takhyīl* into "the Imaginary Context" *al-Siyāq al-Takhyīlī*

The purpose of this section lies in the need to have an extended *takhyīl* which consists of its own logic that is connected to dramatic images. While this is clearly an Aristotelian notion, as will be clarified, Ibn Sīnā constructs his idea of poetics and literary writing on both Aristotelian principles and Muslim philosophers. The need for this extension is that images will only make an epistemological contribution when they are part of a whole context.[522] Yet, if they are taken individually, the comparisons made between them will only result in aesthetics and wonder; the stylistic contribution and logic of a lower version of demonstration which arose *infiʿāl* [agitation]. Although I have discussed the construction of the logical discourse in "the Imaginary context" chapter, the purpose was to show how logical discourse works in order to be able to construct the imaginary context. Yet, the purpose in this section is to present elements that construct the imaginary context. These elements will be examined in the second part of this thesis, in the same way the elements of the logical discourse are.

While Ibn Sīnā insists on the imaginative nature as the most important aspect of poetry, this nature is not synonymous with the Romantic and post-Romantic application of imagination known in the 19th century. Neither does it mean "of imagination", and yet,

> it is a derivative of the word *takhyīl* which has two aspects of meaning—the first is image making and the second, psychological effect. The word "imaginative" means both "mimetic" and "emotive"—it points to the image in its relation to reality and to its effect on an audience.[523]

Although in his early studies of Aristotle's poetics, Ibn Sīnā adheres to the idea that poetics is a syllogistic art, which emphasises the wonder and pleasure found in linguistic forms, later when he develops a greater understanding of Al-Fārābī's statements on poetics, he appears to go back to a more Aristotelian understanding of the art of poetics; "the 'rhetorical' or epideictic joins the aesthetic purpose of poetry with "civil purposes'".[524] Thus, this poetry of the ethical epideictic content and emotions is, for Ibn Sīnā, "distinctive and implicitly superior to the poetry that aims at the mere pleasure of imitation".[525]

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[522] Mishbāl, *Fī Balāghat al-Ḥijāj*, 307. In the context of Mishbāl's work, the argumentative nature of the image arose when there are conflicting situations, while this is not always the case, the context of the image is important to activate its argumentative nature as will be clear in the section of the case study.

[523] Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary,* 33.

[524] Ibid., 56.

[525] Ibid.

Being influenced by Aristotle on the one hand and the Arabic poetic tradition on the other, Ibn Sīnā differentiates between lyrical poetry and the tenets of poetics, the latter of which "are based on dramatic literature".[526] Ibn Sīnā's use of "imitation" is audience-oriented. The term is used alone or together with "imaginative representation".

> "Imaginative representation" is used to characterize more often the poetic act of image-making as well as the interrelations among the parts of the linguistic medium and their effect on the soul. In most cases the two terms are used to explain and modify each other. In combination or separately they are usually juxtaposed to the logical presentation of thought in a manner indicating that images which are stored up in the imagination are reproduced and combined as "devices" which make poetic speech vivid, concrete and psychologically moving. Furthermore, the "imaginative" aspect of poetry does not only lie in the use of "images" but also in the utilization of syntactic devices as well as sound effect and rhythm.[527]

In investigating the possibility of a better western poetic theory, Seamon explains the meaning of the plot and its components in Aristotle's poetics. He starts with the identification of what Aristotle considered to be the main characteristic of poetry—fictional representation.[528] He distinguishes between the three elements of the plot; character, reasoning, and style, and discusses them separately.[529]

While "thought should serve character as character serves the plot", character is supposed to reveal decisions. And it is according to their reasoning and character that people are of a certain sort.[530] This means having a character will entail making decisions, and thus, action is here involved. This idea of making a decision and taking action can be manifested in Aristotle's example of painting. A portrait made using many colours without any kind of organisation will not give the pleasure that a simple black and white sketch would. We need a motive to get from action to action, and this recognition of the image is what matters.[531] One action "is what you get if you cut a person's doings into the smallest still meaningful parts. One action is the unit of meaningful activity".[532] However, a person may experience many events

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[526] Ibid., 33.

[527] Ibid., 40. In this sense the difference between Aristotle and Al-Fārābī appears in their explanation of the comparison between poetry and pictures. Al-Fārābī believes that the connecter "copula" is the base for every distinction between different types of art. However, for Aristotle, it is not only the connector, but also the subject matter and the way it is produced.

[528] Roger Seamon, "The Price of the Plot in Aristotle's 'Poetics'," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 64* no.2, (Spring, 2006), 251.

[529] Ibid., 252. Seamon indicates that "the unsatisfactory theoretical consequences of the primacy of plot are, to repeat, making character (*ethos*), reasoning (*dianoia*), and style (*lexis*) mere means to an end and the prejudice against narrative and lyric". These are three of the five elements of drama that according to Aristotle are mere means and whose primacy Seamon argues against.

[530] Ibid.

[531] Ibid., 253.

[532] Ibid.

with no unity, just like the many actions of one person. Yet, "the unity is the logic of the events that follow from a single purpose undiverted by mere accidents such as a brick falling on a runner's head".[533]

The role of drama appears in structuring, condensing what it presents, and revealing the inner logic with the "causal organization of an apparently disconnected series of events".[534] What makes literature an important source of knowledge about human behaviour is that the probabilities that rule the relationship between the incidents are not invented, even though the incidents are.[535] Aristotle's preference for drama over narrative is due to its protection of the plot from the interference of the author. "Drama is thus more rational than narrative, for the audience is an eyewitness to the events: in watching a drama unfold we do not have to trust a narrator who tells us what motivates characters, moves events around, and introduces elements that distract and entertain".[536] Thus, it is the logic of the sequence which we attend to in drama, then by referring to our intuitions, we judge it, and thus we may arrive at appropriate inferences.[537] When we attend to speech in drama, we allow ourself to follow the mind's movements, and without the context of the actions, we will not be able to understand these movements.[538] As I argue in this thesis, the dramatic movement is an important feature of the term *takhyīl* which is upgraded into "the imaginary context". These movements will be explored in the second part of this thesis.

If we combine Aristotle's understanding of poetics with Muslim philosophers' ideas, as Ibn Sīnā did, we reach the conclusion that the epistemology that results from poetics is not only about human behaviour, as with Aristotle's, but also it is knowledge that is conveyed through *takhyīl*, which is constructed logically through linguistic tools. These tools represent the coherence and the interdependency of the elements in the logical construction. While action as a core of *takhyīl* is insisted upon, the psychological affect *idhʿān* is also present as a result of the logicality.

[533] Ibid.
[534] Ibid.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid., 255.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid., 257.

7. The Methodology of this Thesis

To put it in a straightforward manner, after having presented my thoughts in this first part of the thesis, the methodology of reading *Nahj al-Balāghah* is stimulated first by Al-Raḍī's approach of collecting similar metaphors together, then by his concealed attempt to connect them to one "subject". Thus, in four case study chapters, I divide them into images of "death and the hour", images of "this world", images of "the creatures" centred on the image of the bat, and images of "tribulations". Every theme is presented through a context which I call "the imaginary context". It is an extended *takhyīl* [the imaginary] in which there seems to appear a little story in which symbols are connected to each other freely, without a specific prepared meaning to every element, as in examples of the allegory where meanings of the symbols are previously known. Every symbol here is read according to what the whole context seems to convey. It is also through comparisons between different contexts, that symbols, elements and the subject matter take their particular positions. For instance, examples of this world will be compared to each other; therefore, "this world" will appear differently and will appear with different attributions according to its context, not only the historical context, but also the imaginary context of the text.

Throughout my analysis, I also encounter the archetypes of Carl Jung; images that appear to be universals and also contribute to the escalation of the consciousness, a task that shows the real influence of the orator or rhetorician. All the case studies appear as a part of the context of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and his intellectual environment. Examples of verses from the *Qur'ān* and the Arabic poetics will form parts of the investigation and of the premises upon which poetic statements are constructed. In some examples, it will be noted that even the arrangement of the images in *Nahj al-Balāghah* are reflections to other authors, such as Al-Jāḥiẓ. This leads to the evocation not only to particular images, but to a whole systematic connection between thoughts that will allow the reader to have their logical premises. This does not mean that Al-Jāḥiẓ has a particular influence on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, but rather in order to put the reader in the same environment of Al-Jāḥiẓ's work, *Nahj al-Balāghah* will be making these connections between topics in a particular way. This will allow responses to Al-Jāḥiẓ's thoughts to be clearer to the reader of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. And of course, in reading texts, details

are shown through the analysis that differ from one context to another and one chapter to another, because of the particularity of every case.

The themes of “death”, “the hour”, “this world”, “the creatures” and “the tribulations that are chosen to be investigated in this thesis are very dominant in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. It seems that there is an emphasis on them and in my opinion, they all manifest in some way the idea of the perfect human being. It is the idea of salvation that does not only occupied the theologians of the tenth century who are concerned with the arrival of the hidden Imam, but also concerned philosophers such as Ibn ʿAdī and Al-Fārābī whose aims were also to help people achieve their happiness. This means that the imaginary contexts of every chapter share thoughts and images with contexts of the other chapters.

In order to clarify the idea of this thesis which argues about the capability of poetic language to convey knowledge, it was important to choose examples that manifest different attributes for every case study. In the second part of this thesis, the examples of every case study will show that the change of the predicate in poetic images within the imaginary context is not to present a more powerful ornamental tool. This change is actually to present a different idea about the theme.

Part Two

- **Chapter Four: “Death” and “the Hour”: Apocalyptic Elements Within the Imaginary Contexts in *Nahj al-Balāghah***
- **Chapter Five: Understanding the Relationship With “this World” Through Investigating the Imaginary Context**
- **Chapter Six “the Bat”: a Mystical Journey**
- **Chapter Seven “Tribulations”**

Chapter Four

"Death" and "the Hour": Apocalyptic Elements Within the Imaginary Contexts in *Nahj al-Balāghah*

In this chapter, I will discuss two main topics; "the hour" and "death" as they appear in *Nahj al-Balāghah.* Because these two intelligible concepts represent abstract notions, they are only approached through poetical language. They cannot be understood literally. Thus, they are usually read philosophically, which means comparing them to the original thing that is usually linked to the predicate which is connected to these terms. For example, when death is described as a walking creature, we usually go back to the subject matter that is known to be walking, like the human being. Then, we decide that death in this case is given an attribute of a human being. A walking human being does not need to be understood poetically, but a walking death need this kind of reading. However, in investigating "the hour" and "death" in different contexts, different descriptions for each case will be shown. The term *rasm* [description] implies a different logical aim from achieving *ḥadd* [definition], according to Al-Fārābī, as indicated in the chapter of the imaginary context.[539] This contributes to a broader theological understanding of issues that were important in the tenth century, and which still occupy the attention of scholars of Islamic Studies of the present time. To learn about different statuses or descriptions of these intelligible concepts, a wider poetical context is necessary – by which I mean, a context in which an awareness of *takhyīl* is present. Through *takhyīl* the poetic content is plotted, by means of the connection of imaginary elements which consequently builds the imaginary context. When this becomes clear, concepts such as "the hour" and "death" become clear in their true significance and power. This will make it easier to examine each concept in other contexts, and to investigate the differences and similarities of its roles. *Takhyīl*, as indicated in the chapter of the imaginary context, is constructed on the symbols that are evoked in the mind of the audience. This means that the poetic context has its roots in the audience and is evoked to achieve the intended aim of affecting the soul. This is not the only aim of my investigation in this chapter which will also cover the rational dimensions of the subjects studied. This rational understanding is also a result of the pre-

[539] See (3.4) in the Imaginary Context Chapter.

existing symbols in the audience's mind. It is through my understanding of the imaginary context, the rational and emotional dimensions are examined.

"The hour" and "death" are both related to the apocalypse, as it is conceived and represented in Islamic texts. There are different elements that are connected to them in the orations, such as *ṣayḥah* [the call]. The apocalypse in Muslim traditions is also connected to the fight between good and evil. According to Shīʿī belief, Al-Mahdī (the twelfth Imam) is the one who will lead the fight against evil.[540] This issue around the twelfth Imam has been one of the most important issues, that was discussed in the age of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. It stands as a complementary subject to the justice of God as pillar for all Muslims traditions. In this regard, the Shīʿī scholars through their argument with Muʿtazilī scholars relied clearly on this point of the twelfth Imam and his occultation, as indicated clearly in my chapter on Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. Justice is therefore connected to the apocalypse and in all Muslim traditions it is a thing that will be achieved in this world.[541] While most apocalyptic subjects in Muslim belief are concerned about the outside world, I believe that in different orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, there is an indication of inside change that happens to the human being. Although it uses words and phrases that are usually used to describe phenomena in the outside world, the connection between its elements and the different predicate-subject matter relations reflect these different stages of movement in both the outside and inside world. This understanding has its root in Jungian psychology, which also describes the self as having its own day of judgment. In N*ahj al-Balāghah*, many apocalyptic contexts introduce varieties of ways and looks that take on elements of the apocalypse.

The two main orations examined in this chapter focus on "the hour" and "death". The image evoked is in the context of a journey. The journey in the Arab poetical tradition is connected to the second section of the *qaṣīdah* [the Arabic ode] in which the poet, after leaving the ruins of his beloved, journeys into the desert to get to his final stage, to the patron which is his new beginning which is the section of the panegyric. The desert-journey as an element of the Arabic *qaṣīdah* signifies the poet's courage during different challenges that he encounters, such as his loneliness and his travel through fearful spots where he is under threat of losing his way. The map of the journey is not given, nor the destination. [542]

[540] David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2021), 195.
[541] Ibid., 137.
[542] Renate Jacobi, "The Camel Section of the Panegyrical Ode," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 13, no. 1 (Jan 1982), 5.

1. Investigating "the Hour"

1.1. Poetic Expressions of "the Hour" in the *Qurʾān*

Before investigating the "the hour" in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, it is worth exploring it in the *Qurʾān*, because the *Qurʾānic* verses represent the main source for theological ideas such as "the hour". Thus, it seems that reading "the hour" in any other Islamic source always invokes the *Qurʾānic* verses related to it. In *Al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras* of the *Qurʾān*, the word *al-sāʿah* [the hour] appears many times and so is described variously.[543] It comes in different predicate-subject relationships. However, a selection of these images is discussed in this section; the specific verses chosen rely mostly on developed uses of "the hour" – these uses can be seen to exceed the level of literal language. Thus, "the hour" is not described as merely "happening", its predicate, usually enforces a metaphorical meaning.

Verse (12:107) presents "the hour" as follows "Are they so sure that an overwhelming punishment from God will not fall on them, or that the last Hour will not come upon them suddenly when they least expect it?"[544] The predicate is *taʾtī baghtah* [comes suddenly]. "The hour" is described as appearing suddenly, yet, *taqūm* [arises] is the predicate in the verse (30:12): "On the Day the Hour arrives, the guilty will despair"[545]; and in (30:14): "When the Hour arrives, on that Day people will be separated".[546] Although it is translated by Abdel Haleem as "arrives", which gives the meaning of the occurrence of this significant event and also signifies a movement of "the hour", the word *taqūm* can also be translated into "arises", and thus "the hour" is likened to something that rises, or arises. Both of the verses (30:12) and (30:14) present the idea of "the hour" as having a purpose of its movement and power over people. These verses describe the impact of the arrival of "the hour". It will cause "despair" and "separation". Thus, the usage of the word "arises" is a more meaningful translation which consists of the idea that "the hour" initiates its movement as a battle is initiated.

"The hour" is also described as being almost instantaneous, in the verse (16:77): "All that is hidden from view in the heavens and earth belongs to God. The coming of the Hour of Judgment is like the blink of an eye, or even quicker: God has power over everything".[547] In this

[543] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Bāqī, *Al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras liʾAlfāẓ al-Qurʾān al- Karīm* (Miṣr: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1945), 370-371.
[544] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 152.
[545] Ibid., 257.
[546] Ibid., 258.
[547] Ibid., 171.

verse, "the hour" is connected to the word *ʾamr* [the issue], after describing its belonging to God as it is one of the hidden things. Yet, in this verse, what is described to be so quick is not "the hour" itself, but *ʾamr al-sāʿah* which is God's order to "the hour" or "the issue of the hour" in its relation to God. It is a manifestation of the power of God to do things whenever He wants. However, Abdel Haleem translates it as "the coming of the hour" which is more about the arrival of "the hour" than its belonging to God.

The translation of the predicate of "the hour" as "arrive" appears again in the verse (79:42-43): "They ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, saying, 'When will it arrive?', but how can you tell [them that]?"[548] Yet, the Arabic phrase enquiring about "the hour" is *ʾayyāna mursāhā*. The word *mursá* means "anchorage" which gives the impression of an end of a journey, like a ship in the sea settling at last off the shore. This word *mursá* is introduced in a context where people enquire about "the hour" and its arrival. As this enquiring is connected to uncertainty and to the need for achieving knowledge about this unknown idea, the "hour" is presented as to be in a journey in the sea. This journey can be seen as a symbol of uncertain travel which is full of unpredicted events. Thus, the word *mursá* seems to be a perfect match for this image of "the hour". Therefore, the usage of the word "arrive" as a translation to the predicate of "the hour" in this verse does not have the same effect of the original Arabic word. A discussion around the time of the hour's arrival is also presented in some verses, such as verse (7:187):

> They ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, "When will it happen?" Say, "My Lord alone has knowledge of it: He alone will reveal when its time will come, a time that is momentous in both the heavens and earth. All too suddenly it will come upon you." They ask you about it as if you were eager [to find out]. Say, "God alone has knowledge of [when it will come], though most people do not realize it.[549]

In this verse, as in the previous one, enquiring about "the hour" is indicated by the phrase *ʾayyāna mursāhā*. Yet, the answer of their question is that, it will not come in any way except in a sudden way *lā taʾtīkum ʾillā baghtah*. This verse combines both, their enquiry and the belonging of "the hour" to God. In this verse, it is indicated that knowledge about "the hour" belongs to God and even the Prophet is not entitled to know about it. As in verse (12:107) when "the hour" is described in a context of the unbelievers, it seems to be coming suddenly. However, when "the hour" comes in a context of believers, or directly following a verse that describes believers such as verse (79:42-43), "the hour" is described as "to your lord is its

[548] Ibid., 408.
[549] Ibid., *107*.

destination". Another verse which enforces the meaning is (20:15): "The Hour is coming – though I choose to keep it hidden – for each soul to be rewarded for its labour".[550] The Arabic phrase in this verse is *'akādu 'ukhfīhā*, which is interpreted in different commentaries as "it is as if it will be hidden forever", because the word *'akādu* (which means "almost" or "about to") conveys the meaning that there is a possibility for it to be known as God was about to keep it hidden forever. It is understood from the commentaries that this possibility is about its actual arrival. Thus, it could have been completely hidden, but because it has to arrive one day, knowing it has become possible.[551]

Yet, when "the hour" is described as being near, it is connected to the moon and this moon becomes two, as in the verse (54:1): "The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two".[552] This split in the moon may reflect the duality that the person may experience before encountering their own truth. When "the hour" gets closer, the person seems to be in between two identities that split them into their dark side and their light. Therefore, the moon seems to be a perfect match as it reflects these two identities. Yet, when "the hour" arrives, the person's two identities are integrated. The moon is also known to get its light from the sun, and shine because it is connected to the sun. Therefore, it might be understood that the person will shine when it connects to the source of light and this source seems to be manifested in encountering "the hour". "The hour" is also connected with frightening events, as in the verse (22:1-2):

> People, be mindful of your Lord, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will be a mighty thing: on the Day you see it, every nursing mother will think no more of her baby, every pregnant female will miscarry, you will think people are drunk when they are not, so severe will be God's torment.[553]

It is likened to an earthquake, with all that follows of fright, uncertainty and loss. It seems that "the hour" cause a physical movement and has an effect on the continuity of growth of human beings. The examples given in the verse are the pregnant who will miscarry, the mother who will abandon her child and drunk people. All of these examples are linked to the person's identity. And, once the earthquake of "the hour" starts, these identities might start to be shaken by this earthquake. This does not mean that it is the moment of encountering "the

[550] Ibid., 196.
[551] Muḥammad Ḥussayn al-Ṭabṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol 14 (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt Mu'assasat al-'A'lamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 2002), 141.
[552] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 350.
[553] Ibid., 209.

hour". However, it could be that it is the time of preparing people to experience "the hour". Yet, the promise of the nature of "the hour" is enforced in the verse (54:46) "But the Hour is their appointed time – the Hour is more severe and bitter".[554]

It is clear that the context is significant in understanding "the hour". Yet, as "the hour" is always connected to the predicate through poetic meaning, reading "the imaginary context" might be more valuable. As I have noted above, "the hour", in some cases, is described as to be rising which support the role it plays within this particular context. In other cases, it is linked to a predicate such as "comes in a sudden". Different predicates create different metaphors and within a whole imaginary context, "the hour" conveys its significant meaning. In this way, the image is capable to be an argumentative tool according to Perlman as I explained earlier in the section on theory.

The importance of this section on "the hour" in the *Qur'ān* relies on presenting the premises of poetic syllogisms that are concerned with "the hour". These premises prepare the readers of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to engage with more elaborated poetic syllogisms. Then, with poetic connections between different elements an imaginary context may present new ideas about "the hour". This is how, as I believe, we can apply Cassirer's theories in reading *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Cassirer indicated his ideas on symbolic forms and the values of independent reading of these forms. He explained that language stands in the middle of myth and logos, and in our case of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, language bridges metaphor of religious ideas with logic. Thus, the logical connection between words is not found by joining words to create a sentence. Yet, it is within the context that words take their roles. This seems to be clear in the verses of the *Qur'ān* and within a longer context as in the case of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, this idea will be clarified more.

[554] Ibid., 352.

1.2. Exploring the Imaginary Context of "the Hour" in Oration 157 "Urging People to Piety"[555]

> Praise to Allah who has made praise a Key to invoke His remembrance, a means for more of His favour and a sign of His grace and magnificence.
>
> O creatures of God! Time is running, and it drives forward those who endure, just as it drove forward those now gone.
>
> The time that has passed will not return, and that which exists in time will not last forever. The end of its actions is the same as its beginning. Its troubles are competing in a race. Its different troops, rising their flags, are cooperating with each other.
>
> It is as though you are driven by the hour as the dry, weak she-camels are driven by the shouting shepherd. Whoever preoccupies himself with things not his own becomes perplexed in darkness and perturbed in ruins. His demons immerse him deep in his own tyranny and embellish his wrongful deeds so that they appear good to him. Paradise is the fate of those who complete their journey, and Hell is the end of those who fall behind.
>
> Know, O creatures of God, that piety is a strong fort of protection while impiety is a frail fort which does not protect its people, and does not secure those who take refuge therein. Know that through piety the sting of sins is removed and through certainty the final aim is achieved.
>
> O creatures of God! Remember God in dealing with those souls that are the dearest to you, as God has clarified to you the path of truthfulness and lightened its routes. So, this path is either ever-present misfortune or everlasting happiness. You should therefore provide for yourself in these mortal days for the eternal days. You have been directed to the way to make provision, ordered to march and urged to move on. You are like hesitant riders who do not know when they will be ordered to go. Beware, what will he, who has been created for the next world, do with this world? What will a person do with wealth that he will shortly be deprived of while only its ill effects and reckoning will be left behind for him?

1.2.1. Image-evocation in the Desert Journey Motif

This oration takes place in a desert environment; different phrases demonstrate this. The word "sign" in the first paragraph introduces this context. Yet, the most obvious indication is the image in the third paragraph where "the hour" *al-sāʿah* drives people like a shepherd driving his herd. It is then followed by an image of people who are "perplexed in darkness", "perturbed

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[555] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 253.
الْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْحَمْدَ مِفْتَاحاً لِذِكْرِه، وَسَبَباً لِلْمَزِيدِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ، وَدَلِيلاً عَلَى آلاَئِهِ وَعَظَمَتِهِ. عِبَادَ اللهِ، إِنَّ الدَّهْرَ يَجْرِي بِالْبَاقِينَ كَجَرْيِهِ بِالْمَاضِينَ، لاَ يَعُودُ مَا قَدْ وَلَّى مِنْهُ، وَلاَ يَبْقَى سَرْمَداً مَا فِيهِ. آخِرُ فَعَالِهِ كَأَوَّلِهِ، مُتَشابِهَةٌ [مُتَسَابِقَةٌ] أُمُورُهُ، مُتَظَاهِرَةٌ أَعْلاَمُهُ. فَكَأَنَّكُمْ بِالسَّاعَةِ تَحْدُوكُمْ حَدْوَ الزَّاجِرِ بِشَوْلِهِ، فَمَنْ شَغَلَ نَفْسَهُ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسِهِ تَحَيَّرَ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ، وَارْتَبَكَ فِي الهَلَكَاتِ، وَمَدَّتْ بِهِ شَيَاطِينُهُ فِي طُغْيَانِهِ، وَزَيَّنَتْ لَهُ سَيِّئَ أَعْمَالِهِ. فَالْجَنَّةُ غَايَةُ السَّابِقِينَ، وَالنَّارُ غَايَةُ الْمُفَرِّطِينَ. اعْلَمُوا عِبَادَ اللهِ، أَنَّ التَّقْوَى دَارُ حِصْنٍ عَزِيزٍ، وَالْفُجُورَ دَارُ حِصْنٍ ذَلِيلٍ، لاَ يَمْنَعُ أَهْلَهُ، وَلاَ يُحْرِزُ مَنْ لَجَأَ إِلَيْهِ. أَلاَ وَبِالتَّقْوَى تُقْطَعُ حُمَةُ الْخَطَايَا، وَبِالْيَقِينِ تُدْرَكُ الْغَايَةُ الْقُصْوَى. عِبَادَ اللهِ، اللهَ اللهَ فِي أَعَزِّ الأَنْفُسِ عَلَيْكُم، وَأَحَبِّهَا إِلَيْكُمْ؛ فَإِنَّ اللهَ قَدْ أَوْضَحَ لكم سَبِيلَ الْحَقِّ وَأَنَارَ طُرُقَهُ، فَشِقْوَةٌ لاَزِمَةٌ، أَوْ سَعَادَةٌ دَائِمَةٌ! فَتَزَوَّدُوا فِي أَيَّامِ الْفَنَاءِ لأَيَّامِ الْبَقَاءِ. قَدْ دُلِلْتُمْ عَلَى الزَّادِ، وَأُمِرْتُمْ بِالظَّعْنِ، وَحُثِثْتُمْ عَلَى الْمَسِيرِ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ كَرَكْبٍ وُقُوفٍ، لاَ يَدْرُونَ مَتَى يُؤْمَرُونَ بَالسَّيْرِ[المسير]. أَلاَ فَمَا يَصْنَعُ بِالدُّنْيَا مَنْ خُلِقَ لِلآخِرَةِ! وَمَا يَصْنَعُ بِالْمَالِ مَنْ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ يُسْلَبُهُ، وَتَبْقَى عَلَيْهِ تَبِعَتُهُ وَحِسَابُه!

in ruins", and all these phrases create the atmosphere of the desert, that is usually present in Arabic verses that describe ruins where the poet's beloved used to live. The description of those who "complete their journey" and those who "fall behind" manifest both kinds of travellers; the arrivals and those who are behind. While in the desert, one may find a shelter to rest or to save oneself; this is presented in the oration through the simile that connects "a fort" with the level of piety, and this "fort" can be protective or it can fail in its duty, depending on the travellers' piety. Piety is what removes "the sting" *ḥummah*; this evokes the image of poisonous creatures in the desert, such as the scorpion. Yet, the desired end, which literally appear to be "paradise", is reached by "certainty" which ensures arrival at the utmost destination.

In the fifth paragraph, there is also the image of the "path of truthfulness" and its illumination by God. Moreover, those who are repeatedly addressed as "the creatures of God" are advised to prepare for the journey and to provide themselves with what provisions will help them along the way that has been already pointed out. And thus, while the lights have been lit and the provision has been identified, they are then encouraged to move. It is also pointed out that their wealth will be taken from them; a feature of the desert journey that evokes fear as it is the case with the poet's journey.

1.2.2. Movement of Time "*al-dahr*"

After praising God in the opening paragraph, the main text after the call "O creatures of God", starts with the phrase "time is running" *al-dahr yajrī,* bringing to mind an image that is instantly in motion. Time *al-dahr* here is not running alone; it carries people who are still alive, in the same way as it did with those of the past. The nature of this movement is in one direction. It is indicated by the phrase "will not return" *lā yaʿūd* and "passed" *wallá* as they both denote this movement that transports people. Yet, in this motion there is no eternity as the phrase "does not last forever" reflects. It adds to this motion a quick and active nature. Although the word *yajrī* [is running] when combined with time can be considered a dead metaphor, because the word *yajrī* expresses the idea of happening. And as indicated in the section on Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in chapter two according to Abu Deeb, there are techniques that are used to revive dead metaphors. In this example of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, what brings this

metaphor to life is the description that follows; the different parts of the whole imaginary context, such as "will not return" and "the end of its actions", giving it a human identity, of one who runs, goes and performs actions.

The quick movement that is described by running is then clarified by an image of a race of competing troubles and demonstration of that which time brings through its different misfortunes. Time moves in circles, or cycles, and what it causes in the beginning, it keeps causing until the end. The misfortunes are similar to each other in terms of that they have similar consequences on people and humanity. The only thing different is that they arrive at different "parts of times" as the idea of "the troubles" described as being in a race may convey. It is by using the image "Its different troops, rising their flags, are cooperating with each other" that the sign of a demonstration is introduced. This is the point when time takes the lead and starts a specific journey with people.

It is worth noticing that the usage of the word *al-dahr* in this first part of the oration indicates a general meaning of "time". According to *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras* of the *Qurʾan*, the word *al-dahr* appears twice in the *Qurʾan*;[556] in verse (76: 1), time is described using its longer term *al-dahr* but combined with the word *ḥīn* [a period] – "Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of?".[557] In verse (45: 24), *al-dahr* is introduced as a cause of death, in the phrase "nothing but time destroys us".[558] The verb connected to the word *al-dahr* is *yuhlikunā* which, although it can be read as a dead metaphor expressing the idea that time eventually will cause death – time being the effective cause of death – in this oration from *Nahj al-Balaghah*, *al-dahr* is actively taking action, which is an elevation of the *Qurānic* meaning. This establishment of the movement of time *al-dahr* allows a more specific use of time as an active quality, meaning that "the hour" *al-sāʿāh* is kinetic, and in restless motion.

1.2.3. A Journey of Self-discovery

The word "key" in the beginning of the oration is a sign of opening and discovering; it thus enforces the idea of self-discovery. While ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib created this intensive environment in his description of time with the pain of the inevitable end, chaos and ultimate defeat time

[556] ʿAbd al-Bāqī, *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras*, 264.
[557] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 401.
[558] Ibid., 325.

brings, he slows down when he starts to describe people; the "herd". This second section of the Oration introduces the shepherd and the herd that are directed to their destiny. There is a sense of submissiveness with regard to the path of life that people are thrown onto. The word *shawl* is used to describe a camel when it has been long since last it gave birth and suckled its children. It is an indication of the loss of the vividness of life and loss of the continuity of giving birth. These weak she-camels *shawl* are being encouraged by the "hour", bringing to the image a more specific view, conveying focused moments. The "hour", as it is usually learned from the *Qur'ān*, is the day of judgment. In the context of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, it follows people as a "shepherd" *ḥādī* when they are at their weakest, finding themselves in a hopeless situation, which applies to a particular stage of life. This stage can be understood as the beginning of self-discovery.

The desert journey as a significant part of the Arabic *qaṣīdah* has been connected in other studies to the second stage of the rite of passage.[559] Although elements in the *qaṣīdah* may differ from those in the oration, the use of elements of the *qaṣīdah*, which are recognisable to the reader when they are encountered, gives the motif of the desert journey more significance and more impact. In other words, when the desert journey is connected to the stage of the rite of passage in which the poet travels and wanders alone after leaving his beloved, this allows the desert episode in the oration to have the same significance. The journey in this oration is one of deep self-discovery, one which I think can be understood through the twentieth century psychiatrist Carl Jung's theories.

In this stage, as ʿAlī indicates in his oration, the faithful person should concentrate on oneself without distracting himself with others. Otherwise, he will be wandering in darkness and destruction. This darkness is the chaos and the uncertainty and the ruins are the destructive behaviour. These two states seem to be invoked by the realisation that "the hour" has taken the lead. It is a moment when the person is put into the path of self-realisation by, probably, *al-dahr* and started to be led by "the hour". This can be seen in Jung's words "a man who is possessed by his shadow is always standing in his own light and falling into his own traps. Whenever possible, he prefers to make an unfavourable impression on others".[560] At this stage, people are unconsciously controlled by their unresolved problems which cause them to

[559] See Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Delhi: Words Worth India, 2013). Also see Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, translated by Monica B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, With a New Introduction by David Kertzer (University of Chicago Press, 2019).
[560] Jung, *The Archetypes,* 123.

harm themselves and those around them. The words that are used in this oration as predicates for the subject matter "darkness" and "ruins" in this part of the imaginary context in *Nahj al-Balāghah* are *taḥayyara* [perplexed] and *irtabaka* [perturbed] respectively. These are not social states, but they are mental states that do not really seem to be a consequence of being occupied with other people's lives. These states are reflections of one's own uncertainty, even though being around people appears to be offering some kind of approval and certainty. This means that this occupation could be with people, material things and other experiences that distract from examination of the self. Thus, the purpose of the image is not purely ethical that aims at managing people's priorities, it is also psychological in terms of that unconscious destructive behaviour is strengthened by being occupied by things other than one's own motivations and truth. The chaos that results from avoiding one's own truth, enforces one's demons which may increase one's own tyranny. The image is transcending the physical environment of walking through ruins in darkness into experiencing mental states that reflect confusion. The words "perplexed" and "perturbed" could have been replaced with "losing the way" or "took the wrong direction" as consequences of being involved with other people's lives. However, these later phrases do not convey the meaning of chaos. Although the chosen words in the oration convey this idea of chaos, they also convey a meaning of a possible arrival which is an important feature of this particular stage of the journey. This image of darkness ends by pointing at "hell" and "paradise" as two possible destinations.

Interestingly, after mentioning hell and paradise, the journey does not end, and ʿAlī continues to talk about what is helpful on the path. This may lead to the idea that hell and heaven, here, are states of mind or a level of consciousness that can be reached depending on the fight involving the person's demons.

While I have indicated the elements of the journey in the fourth paragraph, such as "forts" and the "sting of sins", these are complementary to the path of self-discovery. This part of the oration focuses on piety; by evoking the image of a shelter, it reflects a status which not only keeps the believer safe from demons and darkness, but also – as I noted in the following image – removes the "sting of sins". The destination of this level of the spiritual journey is *yaqīn* [certainty].[561]

[561] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd in his commentary indicates that the certainty mentioned here is the highest level of *ʿirfān* (mystical knowledge) even though in his interpretation to this oration he does not mention the mystical path. See Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 9.

In the fifth paragraph people are advised about their beloved ones; to keep guiding them toward the path, which the successful travellers have experienced and discovered for themselves after reaching certainty. ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib mentions that the path has been now shown and made visible – illuminated – to them using the word "clarified" ʾawḍaḥa for the main path of righteousness, and "enlightened" *ʾanāra* for what seems to be secondary paths. *ʾAwḍaḥa* shares the root of *waḍāḥ* which describes daylight's white light, while the word *ʾanāra* is associated with light in its different intensities of illumination. It connects the general path with the type of clarity that can be seen in a shared clear day, and connects everyone's singular path to light in a more abstract sense, closer to the heart, light which comes from within. The choice then is left to the individual: either unending pain or eternal happiness. And only at this stage does ʿAlī start talking about "ever-present" and "ever-lasting". It is valuable to notice the difference between "ever-present" and "everlasting". As the word *lāzimah* [ever-present] gives the sense of concrete closeness, happiness is *dāʾimah* [everlasting] which is something that is more felt, not like the pain or misfortune which is described as a fellow traveller in the journey by the word *lāzimah*.

The spiritual acolytes, after leading their beloved ones and being integrated with them, are now ordered to provide themselves with what is needed. ʿAlī uses the words *fanāʾ* [mortal] and *baqāʾ* [eternal], linking them to "days" which thereby divide time into two stages. The question which is raised at this point is whether that these souls are going to experience both *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*. And whether this same subject is able to take stuff with it from the mortal to the immortal. This means that, at this stage in particular, people should concentrate on doing the good deeds; this is the stage where the one who has the potential to experience both the immortal and mortal is being asked to work and to take the initiative. It seems that only the ones who have reached recognition of their true selves after facing their own demons and directing their beloved ones to the path, are capable of taking action.

There are still two outcomes, and although the person may have already achieved "certainty", they can still fall. ʿAlī reminds them that their need to "make provision" has been identified, and they are ordered to walk. However, they are like a standing people, until the call comes to them.

While this "call" which will lead the people usually needs sacrifice in what is dear to them, ʿAlī reminds them that they are the people of the afterlife and thus, this life is not what

they ultimately need. It can also be noted that there is a clear difference between the beginning of the oration when they are driven by "the hour" and this section, when they wait until they are called to their duty. Jung gives examples of the kinds of people who are called to lead others and to educate, and he allocates to them a different level of existence – "Christ himself is the perfect symbol of the hidden immortal within the mortal man".[562] He also gives the example of Moses and Khiḍr from the Islamic tradition.[563] Yet, in modern societies, and different religious traditions, people do not seem to dedicate themselves to face their own demons before directing others to the path. As ʿAlī mentions "certainty", it involves a firm understanding that will support the faithful person in helping his beloved. After this, when the believer starts to engage with others, their souls might integrate together, then they are encouraged to make provisions.

This understanding of the "imaginary context" has been provoked by the elements of the desert journey and enforced by the depiction of "the hour" as a shepherd guiding people. These different elements that are presented via different metaphors and similes construct the logical imaginary text that started with an image of people driven by time, then led by the hour until they have become or waited to become true leaders. Without identifying the different symbols of this context, this logical construction would not be achieved. The oration is longer than the parts I have quoted and the journey seems to end in the grave at its conclusion. What is significant is that "the hour" is invoked again in the last paragraph, after describing the grave:

> And it is as the scream has come to you, the hour has covered you and you have appeared to the course of judgment. All falseness has been released from you, all your flaws have faded away, and through you the truths have become certain.[564]

Here, "the hour" is connected clearly to the day of judgment; it falls down on people and covers them, while earlier in the oration it was driving them toward a certain destiny. In the last appearance of "the hour" everything becomes clear not only to people, but through them. It is as if they are a manifestation of these truths. It introduces a different level of consciousness. Therefore, "the hour" seems to have different effects on people at different moments or stages. This is can also be learned via Jung's idea:

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[562] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 121.

[563] Ibid., 122.

[564] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 255.
وَكَأَنَّ الصَّيْحَةَ قَدْ أَتَتْكُمْ وَالسَّاعَةَ قَدْ غَشِيَتْكُمْ وَبَرَزْتُمْ لِفَصْلِ الْقَضَاءِ قَدْ زَاحَتْ عَنْكُمُ الأَبَاطِيلُ واضْمَحَلَّتْ عَنْكُمُ الْعِلَلُ وَاسْتَحَقَّتْ بِكُمُ الْحَقَائِق.

> When a summit of life is reached, when the bud unfolds and from the lesser the greater emerges, then as Nietzsche says, "One becomes Two," and the greater figure, which one always was but which remained invisible, appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation. He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgment for his littleness has dawned. But the man who is inwardly great will know that the long-expected friend of his soul, the immortal one, has now really come, "to lead captivity captive"; that is to seize hold of him by whom this immortal had always been confined and held prisoner, and to make his life flow into that greater life – a moment of deadliest peril![565]

Jung uses the term "the day of judgment" as something to be encountered during one's lifetime. This is what seems to appear in the imaginary context in this oration in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. The imaginary context manifests through the notion of the "little story" which indicated earlier in the methodology chapter. This little story is not constructed on the narration of events but rather on the dramatic connection between different parts of the context. What makes this context logical is that it consists of the elements that is needed to construct a logical text, but they seem to appear according to a different linguistic category. While "the hour" as a subject matter is connected to the verb *taḥdū* [drives] as a predicate, it constructs a predicated proposition *qaḍiyyah ḥimaliyyah*. It seems that any predicated proposition consists of "the hour" as a subject matter will be read as poetic. This is because of the nature of "the hour" as an intelligible term. The only way of reading it which will not be poetic is probably through dead metaphors or being predicated by the idea of "happening". However, presenting "the hour" through describing it as "happening" will only teach us about its existence. Thus, more elaboration on "the hour" requires more predicative propositions. This is what *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to present about "the hour". Although the *Qurʾān* includes different verses that consist of "the hour" connected to different predicates, *Nahj al-Balāghah* elaborates more by locating "the hour" through a wider poetic context. This facilitates our understanding of "the hour" by recognising its relationships with other elements in the context. For instance, we might be able to answer questions about the four causes of "the hour". Within this oration, "the hour" as a specific moment was put into the path of people by the movement of *al-dahr* which is a general term of time and this could be understood as the formal cause. The efficient cause might be the ability of "the hour" to direct people towards a specific end which is encountering the truth. "The hour" chases people which means it consists of a longer time than the word "moment" means, so it is not one moment according

[565] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 121.

to this specific context and we might understand this as the matter cause. However, in other examples, "the hour" seems to arrive suddenly, but this is because of the type of people that are described. This means we are able to gain knowledge about "the hour" in answering the "what?" and "why?" questions as we learned in chapter one (3.1). While "the hour" is not an event that one can talk about as something which has already happened, Al-Fārābī still validates this type of proposition as the connection between its predicate and subject matter can happen sometime in the future as indicated in chapter one (3.3). Yet, to learn more about "the hour", it is significant to investigate how it interacts within other images.

1.3. "The Hour" in Different Predicated Propositions in *Nahj al-Balāghah*

In oration 157 in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the image of "the hour" is elaborated more, even though the metaphors in the *Qurʾān* have established the imaginary base. This imaginary base gave "the hour" its standard way of interaction with the surrounding elements that are presented in the context, such as its belonging to God and the way in which it is expected to arrive. These are presented by the usages of metaphoric connections between the predicate and "the hour". In oration 157, "the hour" is depicted as a shepherd who guides and directs people in their weakest states. This not only introduces a different kind of interaction between people and "the hour", but also presents a different form of timing, as if people were walking and it is at the same time walking after them, following them, guiding them and forcing them to go in a specific direction. This timing is different from the sudden appearance of "the hour", its general effect of shaking everyone at the same time, or its arrival at the shore. There is a more focused relationship between the shepherd and its *shawl* [the weak she-camels]. Every she-camel seems to have its own journey and might be caught individually by "the hour", even though the she-camels appear to be in one group. My aim in this section, is not to present other examples of the imaginary context, but rather to explore different predicate-subject relationships in images of "the hour". This will give a clearer understanding of the logic of poetics.

The term *al-sāʿah* [the hour] in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, when it appears as the promised time of death or judgment, manifests in different expressions. In oration 21, it appears thus: "The purposeful end is in front of you, and 'the hour' is behind you; following you like a

shepherd. So, lighten yourself and thus you will reach your destination, it is through those of you who arrived first, the path was paved for those who arrives latter".[566]

"The hour" appears as a shepherd following people from behind, and the intended goal is in front of them. Oration 21 is a short oration in which people are encouraged to be "light" (in the sense of carrying a light load or few possessions) in order to reach those who have reached their goal faster and are waiting for those who are still on the journey to arrive. Yet, they are the ones who will help the later arrivals to reach their destination. It refers to the idea of the immortals that are called to help their beloved ones, as discussed earlier in oration 157. Although the Arabic text does not state this idea of arrivals in this way, it presents the first arrivals as a "thing" which is used to "await" the latter arrivals. This could mean that the first arrivals are a cause for the others to arrive. This can also be linked to the idea of the occultation of the twelfth Imam in the Shīʿī belief. On one hand, while the believers are waiting for their absent Imam, the way is already paved for them by him, and by his disciples. Yet, the Imam on the other hand, is awaiting for the believers to pass early stages of the journey and reach their destination. It might be that, after joining the Imam, their duty will start as the stages in oration 157 has shown. In oration 93 – which will be discussed in detail in the chapter on tribulations – "the hour" is indicated thus:

> By Allah who owns my life, whatever you ask me about in your current moment until the hour arrives; a group who guides a hundred people and misguides another hundred, I would inform you who its herdsman is, the one who calls for it to move, who guides and who drives; I would also inform you about its resting place and its final destination, and about those among its people who would be killed and those who would die.[567]

"The hour" is mentioned when referring to the ʻAlī's knowledge about everything between the people and "the hour", as everything in this space is known by him, as he declares. The possibility here is open; whether "the hour" is right in front of the people and they will reach it, or whether it is following them from behind. One of the things he mentions is death; whether in this space someone will be killed or will die. This also can be understood according to the path of self-discovery; as in lower levels of awareness, people are forced (or guided) toward a higher level which is depicted through the idea of being killed, or at a least part of

[566] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 45.
فإنَّ الغاية أَمَامكُم، وإنّ وراءَكُمُ السَّاعةَ تَحْدوكُم. تَخَفَّفوا، تَلْحَقوا، فإنما يُنتظر بأولكُم آخِرُكُم.

[567] Ibid., 155.
فَوَ الَّذِي نَفْسِى بِيَدِهِ لاَ تَسْأَلُونِى عَنْ شَىْء فِيَما بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ السَّاعَةِ، وَلاَ عَنْ فِئَة تَهْدِي مئةً وَتُضِلُّ مئةً إِلاَّ أَنْبَأْتُكُم بِنَاعِقِهَا وَقَائِدِهَا وَسَائِقِهَا، وَمُنَاخِ رِكَابِهَا، وَمَحَط رِحَالِهَا، وَمَنْ يُقْتَلُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا قَتْلاً، وَمَنْ يَمُوتُ مِنْهُمْ مَوْتاً.

them is killed; namely, their identity or beliefs. Yet, they are the ones who have already achieved some level of awareness and thus it is they who make the decision to allow parts of them that (as they see is necessary) need to die. There is also an indication of a journey, in the mention of different roles of people, places of rest and arrivals.

Consider oration 104:[568]

> He [the prophet] drives them toward their salvation, and takes the initiative before the hour falls upon them; he supports the tired and stands up with the broken, stays with him [the broken] until he overtakes his destination. An exception is the doomed from whom no goodness is expected. Until he shows them their salvation and arrives with them at their home. Then their hand-mill has started to turn, and their lance has stood straight. And by God, I was one of its drivers until it [the leadership] completely turned away from me, and was managed by the others which directs its movement. Neither did I weaken, frighten, betray, nor did I lose my energy. And by God I will split the falsehood until I get the truth out of it.

ʿAlī describes the Prophet Muḥammad as the one who guides people to their salvation; he uses the word *yasūquhum* [drives]. The prophet is not only providing protection from the hour, but also leading away from it. And according to Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, the destination which he intends to lead his people to is the state of truth, settlement and the finding of peace in Islam.[569] This means that the destination described here is not yet the treasure of the afterlife. ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib indicates that he, also, was one of the guides in this journey. In looking at this oration and oration 157, the Prophet and ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib are being equated, interchangeably, with the phrase "the hour". It is as if people will either be followed by and guided by "the hour" or by the Prophet, or ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib. Both, "the hour" and the Prophet are leading them toward their purposeful end, *al-ghāyah*. The image of the journey and driven camels is evoked in both orations.

In Oration 128, when the subject of "the unknown" is raised, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib says "the prescience is the knowledge of the hour" and this is followed by a verse from the *Qurʾān*: "It is God who has knowledge of the Hour".[570] At the end of the oration, he mentions that in addition to this knowledge is the science that God has taught to his Prophet and the Prophet has taught to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib.

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[568] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 171.

يَسُوقُهُمْ إِلَى مَنْجَاتِهِمْ، ويُبَادِرُ بِهِمُ اَلسَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَنْزِلَ بِهِمْ، يَحْسِرُ اَلْحَسِيرُ، وَيَقِفُ اَلْكَسِير، فَيُقِيمُ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يُلْحِقَهُ غَايَتَهُ، إِلاَّ هَالِكاً لا خَيْرَ فِيهِ، حَتَّى أَرَاهُمْ مَنْجَاتَهُمْ وَبَوَّأَهُمْ مَحَلَّتَهُمْ، فَاسْتَدَارَتْ رَحَاهُمْ، وَاسْتَقَامَتْ قَنَاتُهُمْ. وَأَيْمُ اَللَّهِ، لَقَدْ كُنْتُ مِنْ سَاقَتِهَا حَتَّى تَوَلَّتْ بِحَذَافِيرِهَا، وَاسْتَوْسَقَتْ فِي قِيَادِهَا؛ مَا ضَعُفْتُ، وَلاَ جَبُنْتُ، وَلاَ خُنْتُ، وَلا وَهَنْتُ، وأيمُ اَللَّهِ، لَأَبْقُرَنَّ اَلْبَاطِلَ حَتَّى أَخْرِجَ اَلْحَقَّ مِنْ خَاصِرَتِه!

[569] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol 7.

[570] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al- Balāghah*, 213. وإنما عِلم الغيبِ علم الساعة.

In Oration 160, the prophet is described as a flag for the "hour": "God has made Muḥammad – peace be upon him and his family – a flag for the hour, a herald of heaven, and a harbinger of hell".[571] The flag is also an element of the journey, which is usually held by the leading traveller. Although it is presented as if he is the last prophet and thus the sign for the ending of this world, it can be understood that he is the sign of the hour; what is met in the moment when a summit has been achieved and the spiritual experience has attained to a very high level.[572] This is followed by heaven and hell, that were also introduced in Oration 157 as the end of a spiritual stage when people were followed by "the hour".

Now, consider Oration 182:

> I have disciplined you with my whip but you could not be straightened. I have driven you with admonition but you have never gathered together.[573]

ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib describes himself as *ḥādī*, "a shepherd". He seems to be introducing a connection between him and the hour. Especially with his usage of the word *zawājir* [admonition] and *sawṭ* [whip], he is again invoking the theme of the desert journey, but this time, he is the one who guides people, not the hour. The word *zawājir* is the plural of *zājir* which can also be understood as the conscience, as it is the main deterrent against wrong deeds. Thus, through his disciplining he uses *zawājir*; it might be that their own conscience is one of the tools that are used as *zawājir*. This description is followed in the same oration by the question "are you expecting another Imam different from me to walk the path with you and guide you onto the right way?"[574] The phrase "walk the path with you" is translated from *yaṭaʾu bikum* and this is like stepping onto the path by forcing you to experience it, and this kind of interaction, between the mortal and the immortal, was noted earlier and indicated as one of Carl Jung's notions.[575]

He makes this connection between himself and "the hour", which is the agent that uncovers the true self. It is usually through the journey of self-discovery that people may achieve "unity of their souls"; thus, when ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib uses "you have never gathered" this is also complementary to the image of the herd – in contrast, the people here are walking separately – and to the souls who have not achieved the level of being "one". He makes this

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[571] Ibid, 262. فإنّ الله جعلَ محمداً- صلى الله عليه وآله- علماً للساعة.

[572] Ibid.

[573] Ibid., 305. وَأَدَّبْتُكُمْ بِسَوْطِي فَلَمْ تَسْتَقِيمُوا، وَحَدَوْتُكُمْ بِالزَّوَاجِرِ فَلَمْ تَسْتَوْسِقُوا.

[574] Ibid., 306. أتتوقعون إماماً غيري يطأ بكم الطريق، ويُرشِدُكُمُ السبيل؟

[575] The word *yaṭaʾu* also conveys the meaning of "prepares and makes it easier".

connection between "discipline" and "straightness"; these signify the earlier stage that comes before *ḥadw* [following]. The result of *ḥadw* is unity and joining together.

Here is oration 190:

> O creature of God, this world is showing you the way. And you and the hour are like two camels roped together. It is as though, the hour has come and its signs are to be seen, its flags have approached, the hour has stopped you on its path. All can see its quakes approach, revealing that which is inside. This world has left with its people and has taken them out of her lap.

"The hour" is described as being connected to people through a "rope" *qaran* which connects two camels together. So, "the hour" is described not as a destination or a shepherd, but as an agent or personified companion that shares with people their walk through this world. The first two descriptions of signs and flags are followed by the description of "the hour" as stopping people on its path. So, there is a stopping point that is enforced by "the hour". This strengthens the idea of "the hour" as being the driver who leads people and direct their ways. This is followed by another term of comparison by the word *ka'annahā* "all can see". This introduces another stage of "the hour", described as the arrival of earthquakes and revealing that which is inside. It is a manifestation of the stage in which people face their demons and experience what is in their "unconscious" as it is defined by Jung, and their deep emotions as the word *kalākil* [chests] may indicate. However, in my translation I use the word "inside" which also convey a similar meaning. This stage evokes the image of the chapter "The Earthquake" in the *Qur'ān*. In this chapter, the earth is depicted as shaking and throwing out its burdens: "(1) When the earth is shaken violently in its [last] quaking, (2) when the earth throws out its burdens, (3) when man cries, 'What is happening to it?'; (4) on that Day, it will tell all".[576]

This description of "the hour" in oration 190 is followed by this world leaving its people. After the hard experience people had, they seem to arrive at a stage where this world like a mother who changes her way in treating her kids and becomes harsh on them as to prevent them from staying in her lap. It seems that, after encountering one's own demons which leads to escalating the consciousness, this world will be perceived differently as a separate thing. This world will not be a space where people with a higher level of consciousness live inside it. This part of oration 190 is also connected to the *Qur'ānic* verse (22:1-2) in which "the hour" is described as an earthquake as I explained earlier in this chapter.

[576] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 431.

Interestingly, this verse also indicates the image of the mother who abandons her child and the pregnant who miscarries. Yet, these two images are presented within the time of the earthquake. However, in oration 190, the image is a personification of this world and it follows the earthquake. This is part of what I believe relying on the audience's minds to evoke metaphoric expressions that the audience already have. Then, the speaker uses these premises to construct on them his new poetic syllogism that becomes very effective rationally and psychologically. While the audience links "the hour" with an earthquake and what follows, especially these two images of mothers. In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the earthquake of "the hour" is evoked and then "this world" is described as a mother who leaves her children, those children are people who survive the earthquake.

2. Investigating Death

2.1. Poetic Expressions of *Mawt* [Death] in the *Qur'ān*

Looking at the term *mawt* as it appears in *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* of the *Qur'ān*[577] we notice that it is sometimes connected to "being present"; the notion of *ḥuḍūr* [presence], which reflects a more general attitude of death, occurs in these verses (2:133): "Were you [the Jews] there to see when death came upon Jacob? When he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after I am gone?'"; (2:180): "When death approaches one of you who leaves wealth behind, it is prescribed that he should make a proper bequest to parents and close relatives".[578] With the word *ḥaḍara* in both "came upon Jacob" and "when death approaches one of you", death is given the quality of being present, but the way in which it appears is not specified. This is unlike other verses when death is more specific and is given the quality of taking the action of being there – as when it is described by the word *jā'a* in the verse (6:61): "He is the Supreme Master over His subjects. He sends out recorders to watch over you until, when death overtakes any of you, those sent by Us take his soul – they never fail in their duty".[579]

In verse (14:17) death is getting more powerful in the context of describing a tyrant "which he [the obstinate tyrant] will try to gulp but scarcely be able to swallow; death will

[577] 'Abd al-Bāqī, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*, 678- 680.
[578] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 15; 20.
[579] Ibid., 84.

encroach on him from every side, but he will not die; more intense suffering will lie ahead of him".[580] Death here is coming from everywhere and surrounding the individual.

Death also is something that can be tasted: (29:57) "Every soul will taste death, then it is to Us that you will be returned".[581] In verses (8:5-6) death can also be plainly seen while people are driven to it: "For it was your Lord who made you [Prophet] venture from your home for a true purpose — though a group of the believers disliked it, and argued with you about the truth after it had been made clear, as if they were being driven towards a death they could see with their own eyes".[582] This idea of walking towards death will also be explained in the following section on death in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

In verse (33:16), people are depicted as fleeing from death: "[Prophet], say, 'Running away will not benefit you. If you manage to escape death or slaughter, you will only be permitted to enjoy [life] for a short while".[583] In verse (62:8) death is described as confronting people (the wrong doers) even though they try to flee from it: "so say, the death you run away from will come to meet you and you will be returned to the One who knows the unseen as well as the seen: He will tell you everything you have done".[584]

Death also appears as *yudrik*, which translates as "overtakes" according to Shakir, Pickthall and Abdel Haleem. In verse (4:78): "Death will overtake you no matter where you may be, even inside high towers"[585] – but the word *yudrik* can also indicate a more rational perspective of death having the ability to conceive, as if the word "overtakes" were substituted by "perceives". The environment created in the verse looks like a space in which death will always find people even if they are in high towers. However, if the word *burūj* – "towers" – is traced in the *Qur'ān*, it can be seen that, although it means "towers", it appears three more times, and in each appearance, *burūj* are structures connected to the sun, moon and the planets.[586] They are understood to signify the levels and degrees that the sun and the moon arrive at. They are also understood to be illusionary levels (imagined reference points) that help to study the movements of the stars, moon and planets. Therefore, this combination of the word *burūj* and *yudrikkum* as an attribution of death may contribute to our understanding

[580] Ibid., 160.
[581] Ibid., 255.
[582] Ibid., 110.
[583] Ibid., 267.
[584] Ibid., 372.
[585] Ibid., 58.
[586] Ibid., 117.

of death as a rational creature. It "conceives" people wherever they are, and in doing so conceives their different levels of awareness. Although the word *burūj* means "towers", the word connected is *yudrik* – "perceives" – while it is not, for example, the Arabic synonym for "reaches, arrives, comes or climbed". This particular attribution gives death a different role.

In the same chapter, verse (4:100) is as follows: "and if anyone leaves home as a migrant towards God and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, his reward from God is sure. God is most forgiving and most merciful".[587] Where the idea of migrating to God is introduced, the concrete place that is expressed in the Arabic word *baytihi* [home] is introduced. Yet, "he" goes to God and His messenger, which is a more abstract way of going. There is not anywhere in the actual world outside one's house to meet God and His messenger. This exact usage of *hijrah* [migration] also carries with it the transference of one's soul. So, if the traveller leaves the materialistic world looking – through the migration of the soul – for a higher type of meeting, and it happens that death "perceive[s] him", he will be rewarded by God. Thus, Death perceives where he is in his journey of "migration to God"; what level his soul has achieved. This idea makes death more capable of meeting people wherever they are according to their awareness and knowledge of God. It gives death an additional feature, a rational trait. The difference between the word "perceive" and the word "overtake" is that the latter can indicate the meaning of sudden arrival and the sudden effect on the feelings. However, the word "perceive" consists of both the rational and physical awareness of the object described, which makes it a better option for the translated verse in this case.[588]

2.2. Exploring The Imaginary Context of "Death" in Oration 64 "The Initiation of the Good Deeds"[589]

> O creatures of God! Fear God and take the initiative in acting well against the moments of your death. Purchase the everlasting joy in exchange for transitory things. Get ready for the journey, for you are being urged to move, and prepare yourselves for death, since it casts a shadow over you. Be the people who have been called and thus have awakened; the ones who knew that this world is not a house for them, and so they have had it changed.

[587] Ibid., 60.

[588] See online Oxford Lexicon.

[589] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al- Balāghah*, 92.
فاتَّقُوا اللهَ عِبَادَ اللهِ، وَبَادِرُوا آجَالَكُمْ بِأَعْمَالِكُمْ، وَابْتَاعُوا مَا يَبْقَى لَكُمْ بِمَا يَزُولُ عَنْكُمْ، وَتَرَحَّلُوا فَقَدْ جُدَّ بِكُمْ، وَاسْتَعِدّوا لِلْمَوْتِ فَقَدْ أَظَلَّكُمْ، وَكُونُوا قَوْماً صِيحَ بِهِمْ فَانْتَبَهُوا، وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الدُّنْيَا لَيْسَتْ لَهُمْ بِدَارٍ فَاسْتَبْدَلُوا؛ فَإِنَّ اللهَ سُبْحَانَهُ لَمْ يَخْلُقْكُمْ عَبَثاً، وَلَمْ يَتْرُكْكُمْ سُدىً، وَمَا بَيْنَ أَحَدِكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ أَوِ النَّارِ إِلاَّ الْمَوْتُ أَنْ يَنْزِلَ بِهِ. وَإِنَّ غَايَةً تَنْقُصُهَا اللَّحْظَة، وَتَهْدِمُهَا السَّاعةُ، لَجَدِيرَةٌ بِقِصَرِ الْمُدَّةِ، وَإِنَّ غَائِباً يَحْدُوهُ الْجَدِيدَانِ - اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ- لَحَرِيٌّ بِسُرْعَةِ الأَوْبَةِ. وَإِنَّ قَادِماً يَقْدُمُ بِالفَوْزِ أَوِ الشَّقْوَةِ لَمُسْتَحِقٌّ لِأَفْضَلِ الْعُدَّةِ. فَتَزَوَّدُوا فِي الدُّنيَا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا، مَا تَحْرُزُونَ [تجوزون] بِهِ أَنْفُسَكُم غَداً.

> Certainly, God has not created you aimlessly nor left you without purpose. There is nothing between any one of you and paradise or hell, except death that must bring him down. The purposeful end that lacks the moment and is being subverted by the hour must be regarded as very short. The absent one who is being driven by the new two, the day and the night, is certainly quick to return. He who is arriving with success or failure deserves all that he requires. So, while you are here in this world, acquire such provision from this world to guard yourselves against the day to come.

2.2.1. A journey of Trading

Different phrases and words contribute to the imaginary context of a trading journey. "Take the initiative" as trading involves entering into a venture. The words "purchase" and "exchange" belong to the vocabulary of business. As trading has a clear purpose and traders do not enter into it aimlessly, it is also indicated in this oration as "not created aimlessly" and "nor left you without purpose". There are also the elements of "success" and "failure". In addition to this, the theme of a journey in this oration, seems to be expressed through elements like "get ready", "the absent", "the purposeful end", "the arrival" and "acquire such provision".

2.2.2. Death: A Journey of Self-discovery

In the phrase "it casts a shadow over you", death – introduced by the word *mawt* – is connected to the shadow – "becomes a shadow to you" – and the shadow of the self can be understood as the neglected parts of the true self that have not been acknowledged. This means the person is taken too far by the force of the unconscious from the true self, which is the wholeness of the human being. These neglected parts are "dead" in relation to his actual life and practice – which is to say that they remain unconscious – so they become a kind of "death" that makes a shadow over the conscious part. Here people should be prepared for "death" who is overshadowing them. The shadow is not something that needs to come down, it is already the expression of the thing that spreads around things. When the shadow is integrated with the conscious self, it is time for accepting every part of the true self to recreate "the wholeness", according to Jung as I explained it earlier in the section on theory. This means causing death to the persona or the false self. So, when death is presented as a shadow it can, in the

interpretation that I am proposing, be seen as an invitation to prepare for the death of the false self.

The way it comes down to be integrated in order to be a whole is described in the oration as *yanzil bihi*, as the person is taken down by this kind of death and forced to meet his or her devils and evil parts. Thus, the shadow is coming down to be integrated with the self and after this point heaven and hell are met. Because the only thing which is standing between the human being and heaven or hell is this moment of integration when the unconscious and the conscious are connected, in the reading I offer here. This idea of achieving happiness in this world is insisted on in the philosophical school of Al-Fārābī. This is indicated in chapter two in the section on Ibn ʿAdī who agreed with Al-Farābī. To them, true happiness is achieved by avoiding wrong deeds. This can be expressed within this context in *Nahj al-Balāghah* as avoiding the destructive behaviour that affects the self and other people. Thus, it is through walking the path of self-discovery, this happiness it becomes possible to achieve true happiness. This means that this philosophical idea was already known in the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, even though many other theological sects may concentrate on achieving happiness in the afterlife.

Thus, in this oration, when death casts its shadow, people are encouraged to be prepared; the people addressed are, at this stage, not aware of the shadow, and they need to be prepared for the screaming that might awake them as in the phrase "has been called". All the previous orders were given with actions, yet at this stage ʿAlī asks them – in the same phrase when they are being called – to "become" *kūnū qawman*, where he could have said "pay attention" [*intabiḥū lilṣayḥah fa qad ʾatatkum*] in which they are asked to use one of their senses. Yet, he calls the "being" inside them to manifest when they are called to the truth. The results of this call will be the knowledge that the very limited life they have been living is not theirs, so they have to exchange it.

While the ʿAlī tries to make them aware of what is going to happen, it seems that the usage of the word *mawt* comes only when he talks about the transition between different levels of awareness. So, when he talks about *mawt* as a shadow, this transition is happening to those at a lower level, where people are covered with their shadow. Thus, they have to be prepared for the idea of "transition" because it will transfer them, they will need a scream to awaken them.

ʾĀjāl – understood as "death" in the beginning of the oration – is presented as a competitor to people, who should take action and start trading in response. This particular order makes the two sides of transition with regard to "death" more convenient to our understanding; so, if people take action and participate they will avoid being shaded by death, they will exchange their lower life for their best life, and then the only thing between them and heaven or hell is a welcoming of the transition of their awareness of "death", which comes after God has declared that He has not left them without guidance. The journey here is a journey of trading and the orders that are directed to them have conditions attached; buy what lasts, not what vanishes, start your journey, because you have been taken away from the right side which seems to be the true self, and prepare yourself for death because it is casting a shadow on you while you have lost the way. Therefore, when the call comes which is a kind of cry or command, you have to "become" the beings who give their attention; the call that will bring you back to the right direction and thus you will know what to choose to possess. God did not create people for no purpose, as they will have a journey which starts after realising these basics and, through the journey, He did not leave them without purpose and thus the death that transitions them to a better awareness will open hell and heaven to them, they will have to choose in that true journey which starts after awakening to the true self.

Then, when he discusses "a purposeful end" *ghāyah*, the speaker explains this journey in which the true self is still absent, "the purposeful end" is thus an outcome that "lacks the moment" because the moment is only lived by the true self and it is the part that makes provisions and does good deeds. He also mentions "the hour" which destroys this "purposeful end". Here he explains that this "purposeful end" is made up of a very short span of time, and this is an encouragement to reach it very quickly, in order for "the absent one" to come back as in the following phrase *wa ʾinna ghāʾiban*. The absent one is the result of the newly-discovered integrity which arises to take control as wholeness. It is described as "absent" because it was already there originally but has been replaced by a false identity. In different commentaries of *Nahj al-Balaghah* (see ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd for example), the absent is understood as "death" so the phrase is explained as "when death comes back".[59०] Yet, I find it a more convincing interpretation to read this as death actually causing something to come back; something originally has been there but was obscured.

[59०] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.5. (In the commentary of Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, the number of this oration is 63).

ʿAlī then describes how this absent soul is coming back followed by "the new two; night and day" and this phenomenon is different from being followed by "the hour", as "the hour" in Oration 157 drives people who are still running with a primary level of awareness, yet in this driving – reflected by the word *yaḥdū* – the absent meets the person through the chasing of the night and day. This may mean that living in this world and being under the power of time offers an opportunity for people to meet their true selves.

It is notable that the spiritual element "the soul" is being chased by the day and the night phenomena; a phenomenon which can be clearly sensed by the appearance of the day light and the darkness of the night, while it is "the hour" that chases people in their personal materialistic form. It seems as if the combination between the physical and the metaphysical brings the true life into being. If the soul was not chased by the phenomena of day and night, it might not be connected to this world. I would argue that it is also the case that this notion of day and night is a reflection of the opposing elements which are necessary to bring out the wholeness in the lives of people. As Caroline Humphrey in "Shadows along the Spiritual Pathway" observes, "eventually, we can grow to a higher level of consciousness, beyond the psychic battlefield, where we can at least appreciate the *necessity* for the coexistence of the opposites and endure them with greater equanimity".[591] At this level of being driven by the opposites, the absent is described as being quick to arrive, and this means that entering the phase of duality and opposition is an indication of the nearness of reaching wholeness. This is because the conscious and the unconscious are being integrated and the mortal parts of the person is being accepted and by accepting their earthly nature, people become aware of themselves as "worshipers" to God and only then, they are whole.

Then ʿAlī describes the one who is arriving as carrying either success or failure. It is not clear whether this one who is arriving is the same as "the absent" or if it is another element related to the development of the self. Different commentaries including Ibn ʾAbī al-Hadīd's deal with both terms, the absent and the one who is arriving, as "death". It could be that this one who is arriving is the moment when the soul leaves the body. Therefore, this kind of meeting needs to be prepared for from this world, as he insists on the word "this world" – as in the phrase *fī al-dunyā min al-dunyā,* which conveys the necessity of providing for and

[591] Caroline Humphrey, "Shadows Along the Spiritual Pathway," *Journal of Religion and Health 54*, no.6 (December 2015), 2384.

supporting yourself with whatever protects your "selves" from the consequences of what will be encountered. The point here is that the self is encouraged to make use of the facilities of this world; he did not say "acquire provisions in this world from 'religion'". This might not look religious enough, but it is beneficial for the development of the self and will make the transition easier between different levels of consciousness. Therefore, if the people do not achieve wholeness by gradually encountering the shadow and its different elements, at least they may walk the path in this world to make it easier to achieve it in the afterlife. The speaker uses the word *taḥruzūn* [guard against], as the self needs to be psychologically protected from being confused when the whole truth is encountered at once. This encountering of the truth at once might be the case when the soul leaves the body. This may happen to those who do not spend their lives in this world in discovering their true selves. He also uses the word *tajūzūn* as an alternative to *tahruzūn*. *Tajūzūn* – which means "to pass" – indicates this idea of passing from one level of awareness into another.

Through the imaginary context in this oration, I have been able to distinguish between different moving elements. Death explicitly takes two positions as casting a shadow and literally "coming down" in the earlier stages. Yet, later, it seems that it is described as "arriving" when it is probably understood within the notion of the soul leaving the human body. Although this is not included in the oration, it is through the different stages of the dramatic little story, I suggest this reading. Yet, this arrival is distinguished from the absent one who could be the true self that is returning to the one who succeeds to encounter his unconscious issues.

2.3. Death in Different Orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah*

In oration 123, death is depicted thus: "Death is an eager seeker, the one who stays does not slip from him and the runaway does not render him powerless. The most generous way of experiencing death, is by being killed".[592] In the battle environment, *mawt* [death] is seeking people, and the word used is *ṭālib* – 'a seeker' – which gives a superiority to people over death. It is death who is waiting for a response from people, yet it is described as eager [*ḥathīth*] which indicates an insistence or an urgency to take their lives. This gives the battle

[592] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al- Balāghah*, 207. إن المَوتَ طالِبٌ حثيثٌ لا يفوتُهُ المُقيم، ولا يُعجِزُهُ الهارب.

environment its power over death in which people are the ones who offer their lives willingly to death. They respond to "death" which seeks them. However, in this oration he differentiates between those who may flee and those who have the courage to stay and, in both cases, meeting death is inevitable.

This is also seen in Oration 66: "Settle yourself with its departure [the departure of the self] and walk tenderly towards death".[593] When the ʿAlī advises them to walk to death by using the phrase *mashyan sujuḥan* – "an easy, tender walk" – this is the way the givers of their lives should walk towards the death the seeker. It also presents a sense of confidence in the manner of walking, as opposed to the hesitancy described in Oration 123. While death in these two examples is described in the context of leaving this world, they frame death differently. It is now presented as equivalent to people, and they have some superiority over it. There is a confrontation that does not appear when death is shown as coming down and casting a shadow over people. In Oration 123, death in battle is described to be the best kind of death, however the word used to describe it is *ʾakram*: "noblest" or "most generous". If we take "noblest", this insists on the notion of confrontation in which death comes face-to-face with people which shows high moral principles. And if we take "most generous", this refers to the rewards that will result from it. This equal confrontation may also mean that people who have already achieved the level of awareness that will help them to walk towards death, will be able to meet it face-to-face, rather than to merely allow to it catch them suddenly. This way of depicting death might be elaborating on the *Qurʾānic* verses that described above about walking to meet death.

In oration 99, death is indicated in the phrase "death, the eager seeker, drives him [the individual]".[594] The context of the oration is built around "this world" *al-dunyā*. While this will be investigated later, in the chapter on "this world", it is useful to indicate how the word *mawt* appears in this context. It is similar to oration 123 – "an eager seeker", yet this time the seeker "drives" in which there is a combination of seeking and driving; expecting a response and being in control is present. While this is not a battle environment, the symbol of "this world" reflects a lower desire rather than a courageous act to face death as in the previous example of death a "an eager seeker". Unlike the battle in which people respond to death willingly, in oration 99 they respond because they are desirous and because of this desire, people are being

[593] Ibid., 96.
وطيبوا عن أنفسكم نفساً، وامشوا إلى الموتِ مشياً سُجُحاً.

[594] Ibid., 164.
وطالبٌ حثيثٌ من الموت يحدوه.

controlled and driven by that death, which is indicated as a death which is "an eager seeker". Here, the interaction between people and death is in the same level; however, it does not mean that it is the same level as in a battle, it is possible that death has a lower level than people, which is why death needs to seek people. This might be because death which earlier was described as to "cast its shadow". This means, the dead parts that need recognition seek to be encountered which leads the individual to go through the transitions, and with different transitions other forms of death happen, one of them might be when the soul leaves the body.

Then, in this oration, it is depicted as a driver and this is more betraying for people to experience than the normal "hour" which drives the weak people. In oration 99, people are engaging with the fake joy of this world and thus this deceit is dressed in both "seeking" and "driving". According to this understanding, we can divide the levels of death as *mawt* as I argue into three: the highest is when people willingly meet death; the second when they are guided and submissive; and the third, when they have active interaction, so they are sought but also driven. Later in oration 99 an indication of the third kind of interaction is also present: "a seeker of this world who is sought by death at the same time". [595]

These different levels may also explain why ʿAlī asks believers in Oration 66 to walk towards death easily when they are in a battle. The type of interaction is not like the interaction of someone who is seeking "this world", but rather someone who is walking independently. In Oration 123, as indicated earlier, in a battle context death is also described as an eager seeker which is put on the same level of interaction as people. Yet, in this context and after describing death, ʿAlī mentions two types of people: the resident (i.e. one who stays) and the runaway. These two types are examples of people who find comfort in this world and have been attached to it, even though they have not engaged with it in the same way as the people in Oration 99. Therefore, the interaction in Oration 123 is described as being on the same level; without death having superiority over people, nor people having superiority over death.

In oration 52, "through death it drives its neighbours", death comes also in combination with "this world".[596] Death is the tool that is being used to drive people. Here, "this world" is the driver which uses death to chase people. This will be discussed in my section on "this world". Oration 55 states: "By God, I do not care whether I come to death or it comes

[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid.,84.

وطالبٌ للدنيا والمَوْتُ يطلبه.
وتحدو بالموتِ جيرانها.

out to me".[597] Death is introduced as an equivalent to ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib. A similar interaction in oration 100 describes how the Prophet has received death. "Death has come to him [the Prophet], and taken the Prophet with him".[598] It indicates the easiness and smooth way that death comes in, like a visitor or a friend who visit and takes his friend with him.

Oration 182 contains the phrase "the bows of decay shot him with arrows of death".[599] In this image he describes the death of Sulaymān. The word "arrows" is attributed to death, and the word "bows" is attributed to "decay", or "that which perishes". Decay draws the bow and launches the arrows of death. This particular image is vividly appropriate to a description of the death of a king who is surrounded by guards and walls. The image enforces the idea that death will always finds its way in. This happens through "decay" *fanāʾ* which is a wider concept of being "absent". Decay comes about through the arrival of death. Death does not happen only once, here, as ʿAlī uses the plural *nibāl* [arrows] which allows the possibility of death being encountered many times, and thus the changes that the soul needs to go through keep happening until the idea of *fanāʾ* is able to be encountered. It might be possible that *fanāʾ* is more related to the end of the journey and beyond, while death is every transition the soul needs to go through.

2.4. *Maniyyah* as an Expression of "Death"

The word *maniyyah,* as a synonym of *mawt*, is synonymous with a form of death which always comes in the context of being an enemy or an expected opponent. This is different from the death that casts a shadow, that comes down, confronts or waits for arrivals. *Maniyyah* is usually lurking, attacking and acting as a cause of fatigue.

Consider Oration 204:

> Prepare yourselves – May God have mercy on you! as you have been called for departure. Minimize your inclination towards this world and return with the best provisions before you. Because, surely, in front of you lies a barrier that is difficult to climb, before you lie fearful and dangerous houses that you must pass through and stop within. And know that death sees you in the corner of his eye, and pursues you. It is as though death's claws are stuck in you. Difficult affairs and terrible dangers have crushed you into death. You should therefore cut away all the

[597] Ibid., 87. فوالله ما أبالي؛ دَخلتُ إلى الموتِ أو خَرَجَ الموتُ إلي.
[598] Ibid., 165. جاءَهُ الموْتُ فَذَهَبَ بِهِ.
[599] Ibid., 305. رَمَتْهُ قِسِيُّ الْفَنَاءِ بِنِبَالِ المَوْتِ.

attachments of this world and assist yourselves with the provision of the fear of God.[600]

The focus of the imaginary context here is a fearful journey. Phrases like "minimize your inclination", "barrier which is difficult to climb" and "fearful and dangerous houses" all evoke the theme in the mind. Death is presented as *maniyyah* which contains the element *malāḥiẓ*, which literally means "the side eyes" but can be translated as "looking" or "seeing" from "the corner of the eye". Thus, the image of a beast is created in the mind and this beast has eyes that follow or "pursue" people. Its claws stick into people's bodies.

In oration 217, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib declares: "I stinted in presenting them to death".[601] He complains to God about Quraysh and their conflict against him. Although in the context of battle his advice to his followers is to walk confidently towards death, in the context of this oration, it is more about his dispute with people, so when he describes his search for supporters, the only ones he found were his family members. Here he uses the word *maniyyah* [death] as something he does not want to sacrifice his family for. It seems that the form of death expected to appear in this situation is not *mawt* but rather *maniyyah*.

In his Epistle 35 to ʿAbdullah ibn al-ʿAbbāss, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib talks about the disappointment caused by the supporters. *Maniyyah* appears as something ʿAlī has accustomed himself to face, yet it comes as a condition of a context he found himself in. Thus, after he prays to God in order for him to be relieved from those disappointing believers, he declares that, "Had it not been for my willingness to martyrdom when I meet my enemy and for being accustomed to death myself, I would have loved to not be with these ones for another day, nor ever meet them".[602] So, he had it in mind and was prepared for martyrdom, and here he uses the word *shahādah* [martyrdom] but also adds that he contented himself with being prepared for *maniyyah*. Thus, there are two reasons preventing him from leaving these people now: first, his hope for martyrdom; and second, his resilience with regard to *maniyyah* which can be understood as facing death with disappointment and being betrayed by death. These two reasons forced him to continue being with those believers.

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[600] Ibid., 372.
تَجَهَّزُوا رَحِمَكُمُ اللهُ! فَقَدْ نُودِيَ فِيكُم بِالرَّحِيلِ، وَأَقِلّوا الْعُرْجَةَ عَلَى الدّنْيَا، وَانْقَلِبُوا بِصَالِحِ مَا بِحَضْرَتِكُمْ مِنَ الزَّادِ، فإنَّ أَمَامَكُمْ عَقَبَةً كَؤُوداً، وَمَنَازِلَ مَخُوفَةً مَهُولَةً، لابُدَّ مِنَ الْوُرُودِ عَلَيْهَا، وَالْوُقُوفِ عِنْدَهَا. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ مَلاَحِظَ الْمَنِيَّةِ نَحْوَكُمْ دَانِيَةٌ [دائية]، وَكَأَنَّكُم بِمَخَالِبِهَا وَقَدْ نَشِبَتْ فِيكُم، وَقَدْ دَهَمَتْكُمْ فِيهَا مُفْظِعَاتُ الأُمُور، وَمُعْضِلاَتُ [مضلعات] الْمَحْذورِ. فَقَطِّعُوا عَلاَئِقَ الدّنْيَا، وَاسْتَظْهِرُوا بِزَادِ التَّقْوَى.

[601] Ibid., 389. فَضَنَنتُ بهم عن المنيَّة.

[602] Ibid., 475.
فوالله لولولا طمعي عند لقائي عدوي في الشهادة، وتوطيني نفسي على المنيَّةِ، لَأَحْبَبتُ أَلاَّ أَبْقى مع هؤلاءِ يوماً واحداً، ولا أَلْتَقِيَ بِهِم أبداً.

In oration 51, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib describes how Muʿāwiyah has exposed his people to *maniyyah*: "Muʿāwiyah has led people astray and has made the situation too dark for them to see, so that they have made their necks as targets for death".[603] This has been caused by not being faithful to them and not showing them the truth. Therefore, *maniyyah* appears as a result of being misguided. He particularly attributes the idea of the "target" to *maniyyah,* introducing it as having a purpose, which is to reach the heads of these people. In the same oration he uses the word *mawt* twice when he describes to his people the difference between being alive but defeated – which is the real death as people may live with shame – and being dead while achieving victory – and this is the real life. In both cases death is a result of facing the enemy in battle.

Oration 85 contains the line, "It is as if the claws of death are stuck in you".[604] *Maniyyah* is described as having claws which catch and get stuck in people which is the same as oration 204 above. This is introduced after people are advised to be aware of all the signs and lessons that are there to teach them; the signs that are there to be seen. Thus, it is a description of a path that encourages looking, and noticing all the clear signs in order to avoid the attack of *maniyyah*. It is as if ʿAlī is asking the addressee to stay alert, because if not, it looks like that the attack of *maniyyah* is inevitable. So again, it is connected to being able to see clearly and to avoid any kind of betrayal. Although death is inevitable, it seems that there are different ways in which people could be prepared for death and avoid being betrayed by it in its particular form *maniyyah*.

In his Epistle 9, ʿAlī talks about himself as wishing to achieve martyrdom, like others of his family while fighting against the enemies of God; yet he describes it as "[His relatives'] ends have become nearer, but his death has been postponed".[605] Here ʿAlī uses the words *ʾājāl* as a synonym of death, when speaking of his relatives, and *maniyyah* when speaking of himself. There is also an indication of the way in which he will eventually meet death, here.

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[603] Ibid., 83.
فالموتُ في حياتكم مقهورين، والحياةُ في موتكم قاهرين. أَلا وَإنَّ معاويةَ قادَ لُمَةً مِنَ الغُواةِ وَعَمَّسَ عَلَيْهِمُ الخَبَر، حتَّى جَعَلُوا نُحُورهم أغراضَ المَنِيّة.

[604] Ibid., 125.
فاتَّعظوا عبادَ الله بالعِبَرِ النَّوافِع، واعتبروا بالآي السّواطِعِ، وازدجروا بالنُّذُرِ البَوالغ، وانتَفِعوا بالذّكرِ والمواعِظ، فَكَأَنْ قد عَلِقَتكُم مَخالِبُ المَنِيَّة، وانقَطَعَت منكم علائِقُ الأُمنية، وَدَهِمَتْكُم مُفظِعات الأُمور، والسِّياقَة إلى الوِردِ المَورود.

[605] Ibid., 430.
ولكنّ آجالهم عُجّلت، ومَنِيّتَهُ أُجِّلَت.

ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib did not die in battle facing his enemies, but rather was betrayed in the mosque while praying.[606]

In oration 64, which is indicated at the beginning of my section (2.2.) on death as *mawt*, *maniyyah* appears in the last paragraph.[607] It comes as an attacker in the context of negligence, when the person is indifferent to his deed, and the devil takes control. Although this is at the end of the oration, its purpose is to evoke the image of carelessness and procrastination, so *maniyyah* appears as an element of this.

In oration 28, *maniyyah* is presented as part of the demand that people repent their sins before they are caught by *maniyyah*: "Anyone repenting his sins before his death".[608] Although nothing here is predicated clearly to *maniyyah* except the indication of *maniyyah* as being present, predicative proposition of maniyyah comes in the question which can be understood as an explanation of the phrase "And the end is Hell". Thus, the image of being caught while still committing sins is evoked.

In oration 182, *maniyyah* appears as something friends of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib has cooperated against: "Those who stood together against death". [609] Although the ones he mentions were all killed in battle, he describes their attitude toward *maniyyah*, before their death. It shows that because of the atmosphere surrounding them at that time, they were prepared for *maniyyah* arriving in a moment of betrayal; a moment which may arrive at any time. However, they achieved martydom. Yet, he describes them as "their heads have been sent to the tyrants"; a describtion which entails a notion of betrayal. He uses the word *ʾubrida* [to send by mail]. This image is also presented in the context in which ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib is calling for his dead friends, feeling disappointed for the attitude of his people.

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[606] *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib", "A Khāridjite. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muldjam al-Murādī [...], in revenge for the men slain at al-Nahrawān, struck ʿAlī with a poisoned sword before the door of the mosque of Kūfa. He died about two days later, being then 62 or 63 years of age".

[607] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 93.
إذا هَجَمَت مَنِيَّتُهُ عليهِ أَغْفَلَ ما يَكون عَنها.
أَفَلا تائِبٌ من خَطِيئَتِهِ قَبْلَ مَنِيَّتِه!

[608] Ibid., 58.

[609] Ibid., 306.
وأَيْنَ نُظَراؤُهُم مِن إِخوانِهِم الذين تعاقَدوا على المَنِيّة، وَأَبْرِدَ بِرُؤوسِهِم إلى الفَجَرة

The description of any apocalyptic elements in poetic contexts has the purpose to affect the soul so that the audience will react accordingly, so they usually feel scared, worried and take the advice that is given to them in the described context. Yet, in addition to this purpose, *Nahj al-Balāghah* sets out to educate its readers, within the imaginary context, about the apocalypse.

By looking at the *Qurʾānic* images of "the hour" and "death", it can be noticed that they construct the premises on which *Nahj al-Balāghah* builds its poetic syllogisms which is then, extended into a whole context. Thus, *Nahj al-Balāghah's* imaginary contexts seem to be more developed than the examples of the *Qurʾān*. And the role the apocalyptic elements take is more varied, which suggests that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is elaborating on the appearances of these elements in the *Qurʾān*. Yet, this cannot be firmly stated as long as I have not investigated "the imaginary context" of "the hour" and "death" in the *Qurʾān*. However, images in the *Qurʾān* show clear relationships between the apocalyptic element and its predicates. Through our understanding of Al-Jurjānī's notion of *tarākub al-ṣuwar* [compound images] as indicated in chapter one (1.3), we can recognise ʿAlī's development of this images into his own new ones that may in different ways interact with the original images that are already present in the mind of the addressees.

Thus, it seems that using poetics to learn about "the hour" and "death" is inevitable. "The hour" in one context comes as a shepherd driving people and directing them towards a specific end. This same image, of being followed in a similar way to reach a specific end, is also evoked when the driver is ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib himself. This same role makes a connection between ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib and "the hour". This may mean that ʿAlī and "the hour" are causes for truth to be encountered by people. ʿAlī and "the hour" drive and direct people in a specific way in order to help them becoming "whole".

This idea of leading people towards their salvation seems to be linked to the obligation of the believers. While in our days, religious communities appear to be taking responsibilities for this mission, *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to introduce some conditions for this duty. According to my reading through the imaginary context, it might be that people who direct others and help them to achieve their salvation, need first to face their own demons and work on their unresolved issues. Otherwise, they will be "perplexed in darkness" and projecting their own issues on those who they wish to help.

In different commentaries of the *Qurʾān* and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, "the hour" is understood as "the day of judgment", and "death" as "the departure of the soul from this world". Yet, through the imaginary context, we can notice the interaction between the role of "death", the role of "the hour" and the role of the Prophet and ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib. I would argue that this was an idea which Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was probably keen to present.

While philosophy aims at teaching the truth and, through poetic syllogisms, it delivers knowledge that people are otherwise unable to achieve, in the case of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, what is taught in my extended definition of *takhyīl* "the imaginary context" is the different statuses of that truth; different "descriptions" of "death" and "the hour". Therefore, it is extending our theological knowledge rather than informing us about new philosophical truths. Although in different orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah* subjects are indicated clearly and are often described literally, as in the orations about historical events, the only way the intelligible "things" can be allocated to take their specific roles is through "the imaginary context".

In addition to this, reviving old images that have been previously created in the mind of the audience through poetic motifs and *Qurʾānic* verses seems to be bringing the elements of the unconscious into the conscious. Carl Jung as he works on the archetypes, seems to be working on "codes" that are present in the collective unconscious of the mind such as "the shadow". Although, he is a modern psychiatric, these codes as I argue, seem to be present as elements that construct and participate in different imaginary contexts in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Chapter Five

Understanding the Relationship With "this World" Through Investigating the Imaginary Context

Nahj al-Balāghah is filled with guidance about *dunyā* – "this world". Some orations consist of a few paragraphs or sentences about this world, yet, there are also orations – like no. 111 – that are dedicated as a whole to warning people about this world. These orations talk about the true nature of this world, how people can survive it or win its battles, and the effect of this world on people who live in it or those who departed long ago. In order to have an effective influence on the audience, the images used to describe "this world" draw upon previous images and symbols that are shared in Arab and Islamic culture. These symbols are usually provoked in the mind and then developed into the intended meaning which the orator is keen to convey about the subject matter being presented in the imaginary context; in the case of this chapter, it is "this world".

Teaching about this world in *Nahj al-Balāghah* aims to help people to live a virtuous life, preparing them for the hereafter and encouraging them to make the most of opportunities to commit good deeds, an opportunity that is only provided for during their existence in this world. In her analysis of orations on the subject of this world, Qutbuddin insists on maintaining awareness of the oratorial context. She indicates that descriptions about this world by ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib are connected to the context of the speech.[610] For instance, in oration 3 when he explains his right to the caliphate and that the three caliphs were aware of it, the context is the attempt to claim authority. While he is not fighting for his own right but for the benefit of Islam, he ends the oration by describing this world as *ʿafṭat ʿanz* – "a sneeze of a goat" – so as to explain that this world does not mean anything to him. Qutbuddin also indicates that ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, in contrast, has a conventional point of view about this world, in which people can live happily and enjoy its pleasures without being attached to it.[611]

While I insist on the importance of understanding the context in order to understand the conveyed meaning, my focus is on the imaginary context in which "this world" functions

[610] Tahera Qutbuddin, "'Alī's Contemplations on this World and the Hereafter in the Context of His Life and Times," in *Essays in Islamic Philology, History, and Philosophy*, edited by Alireza Korangy, Wheeler M. Thackston, Roy P. Mottahedeh and William Granara (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2016), 339.
[611] Ibid., 347.

in *Nahj al-Balāghah*; this context is central to the techniques through which the logic of poetic is constructed. It is through *takhyīl* that the audience is educated, when only the technique of *takhyīl* can communicate the desired meaning. In ordinary circumstances, single metaphors and similes give power to speech; when they are used in the imaginary contexts I am exploring in this thesis, they become capable of conveying truths that could not be communicated except through them. Yet, they are sources of knowledge when there is no other way to describe the purpose except through them. For instance, the simile describing this world as a sneeze of a goat could be replaced by a literal description of the world, but it will lose the power the simile gives to it. The phrase "sneeze of a goat" is meant to disparage this world; it could be replaced by "this world has no value to me" and the audience will understand it as the same. In a different historical context, when ʿAlī was requested by his brother to help him with money at the time when ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib was caliph and responsible for distributing the money fairly, ʿAlī refused to support his brother. When ʿAlī recounted this incident, he described this world as being less to him than "a leaf being chomped in the mouth of a locust". Qutbuddin indicates that these harsh criticisms come in the context of ʿAlī's personality, and when the subjects of money and power are discussed. His language is not the same when "this world" is praised in other contexts.[612] While this understanding is valuable, it puts both similes on one side, against instances when ʿAlī praises this world.

Yet, my argument here is that these different similes come in different imaginary contexts; they appear as complementary to the imaginary context *al-siyāq al-takhyīlī* that consists of them. This means, the "sneeze of a goat" cannot replace "a leaf being chomped in the mouth of a locust". This is because the goat and its sneeze fits the use of the imaginary context in oration 3 "*shiqshiqiyyah*", which will be discussed in the chapter about tribulations. Yet, the locust and the chomped leaf suits exactly ration 224, as the description of this world is connected to a context of the indigent desert environment.[613] Other phrases and words are clearly taken from the experience of this environment: *ḥasak al-saʿdān* [thistle], *musahhadan* [wakeful], *ʾujarr* [being pulled], *ʾaghlāl* [hand cuffs], *muṣaffadan* [being fettered], and *ḥuṭām* [wreckage] in the beginning of the oration; in addition, there is ʿAlī's description of ʿAqīl as *ʾmlaqa* [become very poor], his reference to his children as *shuʿtha al-shuʿūr* [with dirty hair], and other terms such as *ghubra al-ʾalwān* [pale], *suwwidat wujūhuhum* [their faces have been

[612] Ibid., 350.
[613] See Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 29; 402.

darkened], *rīqi ḥayyah* [spittle of a snake] and others. Interestingly, in describing this world before the phrase "a leaf being chomped in the mouth of a locust" his usage of the word *ʾahwan* [humbler than] differs from his usage when he describes this world in *shishiqiyyah* – there he uses *ʾazhad* [cheaper] before the "sneeze of a goat" phrase. The difference between the two words – *ʾahwan* and *ʾazhad* – is clear, as the former "humbler than" consists of the notion of being less in regards to the human being and the lived atmosphere, and this is complementary to an imaginary context where the description is all about a poor environment. This is different from the insignificance of objects which the word "cheaper" conveys. "The leaf being chomped in the mouth of a locust" also expresses a needy atmosphere where the main element is a description of the need for food and the parallel evocation in the second section of the oration, which is about a gift of food. The relation of the locust to the desert environment is clear, as many kinds of locusts live and breed there, and it also evokes the image of simple food because locusts are eaten by people.[614] The locust is also known to be solitary, which evokes the theme of loneliness and helplessness, especially when related to a creature which, in some circumstances, joins a group as if in migration. ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib uses the singular form of "locust" when he describes this world, emphasising this idea. He adds to it the action of *taqḍamuhā* – literally: "breaks the leaf with the tip of its teeth" – which brings the image to life. In oration 185, ʿAlī describes the locust; when he mentions its way of eating, he uses the word *taqriḍu* which, although it literally means "to break", comes from the same root as *qawāriḍ*, which refers to animals belonging to the rodent order of animals. Although the locust does not belong to this classification, in his usage of the word *taqriḍu*, he focuses on the way of the creation and forms of the locust, and this suits the context of oration 185. However, in his usage of the word *taqḍamuhā*, employed within the imaginary context of the neediness of people and the way they experience this neediness, therefore the word *taqḍamuhā* as a predicate participates in the connections between elements in the imaginary context as in its connection to the leaf. According to *Lisān al-ʿArab*, the word *taqḍamuhā* conveys the notion of breaking dry food, in particular. Thus, it informs the audience more about the situation related to them than the locust itself; it shifts the focus from the nature of the locust to the subject of poverty – the vivid sound of a dry leaf being eaten becomes a

[614] See ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, edited by ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2015), vol: 5, 383.

signifier of poverty. In this manner, the question "what is?" which contributes to our knowledge about "this world" is introduced into the oration's logic of the imaginary context.

In this chapter, I introduce examples of images employing "this world" and investigate the elements that constitute the imaginary contexts they occur in. Images of "this world" vary widely: a beautiful woman who appears to be a prostitute, betraying and catching her prey; a she-camel that may be the source of power and life, yet turns out to be unsafe; sometimes it is a journey or a place that, although expected to be safe, becomes insecure and unsettling.

1. Portrait of a Woman

The poet Al-ʾAḥnaf al-ʿUkburī describes this world as,

> In my dream, I have seen our ornamented world as a bride appeared in her compartments. "Bestow upon us," I said to her, and she instantly responded, "when I get rid of the pigs' hands".[615]

Al-Sharif al-Radi describes this world:

> This world [made a marriage proposal] to me, I replied "go back", as I see you have many spouses.[616]

These verses show this world as a prospective bride, yet not a faithful one. In the first example, "this world" is described as a bride who is in relationships with pigs. The word "pigs" symbolises the unfaithful men and this bride seems to be stuck in their hands. In the second example, Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī describes himself as to be the one who refuses to marry "this world" who already has many spouses. This theme is reflected in oration 111.[617] More details about how unfaithful this beautiful woman can be are introduced in oration 111. This develops the "bride" into a more sophisticated symbol, involving attributes of betrayal:

> So now, certainly I caution you about this world, as it is sweet and green, surrounded by the lustful, and displays love only for its immediate pleasures. It is

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[615] ʾAdunīs, *Diwān al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Sāqī, 2010), vol: 3, 215.

رأيتُ في النومِ دُنيانا مُزخرفةً مثل العروس تراءت في المقاصير
فقلتُ جودي، فقالت لي على عجلٍ إذا تخلصتُ من أيدي الخنازير

[616] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥussayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Dīwān al-Sharīf al-Raḍī*, ed. ʾIḥsān ʿAbbāss (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 2019), vol: 1, 239.
خطبتنيَ الدنيا فقلتُ لها ارجعي إني أراكِ كثيرة الأزواج

[617] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 188.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنِّي أُحَذِّرُكُمُ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّهَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ، حُفَّتْ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ، وَتَحَبَّبَتْ بِالْعَاجِلَةِ، وَرَاقَتْ بِالْقَلِيلِ، وَتَحَلَّتْ بِالآمَالِ، وَتَزَيَّنَتْ بِالْغُرُورِ، لاَ تَدُومُ حَبْرَتُهَا، وَلاَ تُؤْمَنُ فَجْعَتُهَا، غَرَّارَةٌ ضَرَّارَةٌ، حَائِلَةٌ زَائِلَةٌ، نَافِدَةٌ بَائِدَةٌ، أَكَّالَةٌ غَوَّالَة. لاَ تَعْدُو-إِذَا تَنَاهَتْ إِلَى أُمْنِيَّةِ أَهْلِ الرَّغْبَةِ فِيهَا والرِّضاء[الرضى] بِهَا- أَنْ تَكُونَ كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تعالى سُبْحَانَهُ: (كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الأَرض فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيماً تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ وَكَانَ اللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْء مُقْتَدِراً).
لَمْ يَكُنِ امْرُؤٌ مِنْهَا فِي حَبْرَةٍ، إِلاَّ أَعْقَبَتْهُ بَعْدَهَا عَبْرَةً، وَلَمْ يَلْقَ فِي سَرَّائِهَا بَطْناً، إِلاَّ مَنَحَتْهُ مِنْ ضَرَّائِهَا ظَهْراً، وَلَمْ تُطِلَّهُ فِيهَا دِيمَةُ رَخَاءٍ، إِلاَّ هَتَنَتْ عَلَيهِ مُزْنَةُ بَلاَءٍ! وَحَرِيٌّ إِذَا أَصْبَحَتْ لَهُ مُنْتَصِرَةً أَنْ تُمْسِيَ لَهُ مُتَنَكِّرَةً، وَإِنْ جَانِبٌ مِنْهَا اعْذَوْذَبَ وَاحْلَوْلَى، أَمَرَّ مِنْهَا جَانِبٌ فَأَوْبَى! لاَ يَنَالُ امْرُؤٌ مِنْ غَضَارَتِهَا رَغَباً، إِلاَّ أَرْهَقَتْهُ مِنْ نَوَائِبِهَا تَعَباً! وَلاَ يُمْسِي مِنْهَا فِي جَنَاحِ أَمْنٍ، إِلاَّ أَصْبَحَ عَلَى قَوَادِمِ خَوْفٍ! غَرَّارَةٌ، غُرُورٌ مَا فِيهَا، فَانِيَةٌ، فَانٍ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا، لاَ خَيْرَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَزْوَادِهَا إِلاَّ التَّقْوَى.

> pleased with a few of joys, it has adorned itself with hopes, and has been embellished with deception. Its happiness does not last and its suffering cannot be avoided. It is deceitful, harmful, inconstant, evanescent, perishable, dead, gluttonous and destructive. For those who are inclined toward the world, and those who reach toward the extremity of their desires, it is as God, the Glorified, says:
>
> "We send water down from the skies and the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon the plants turn to dry stubble scattered about by the wind: God has power over everything".[618]
>
> Pain and stifled tears will follow the one who enjoys the bliss of this world. One who has known joyful embraces will meet the sorrow of rejection. One who feels the unabating light rain of ease, will know the heavy rain of disaster.
>
> The one who is fortified in the morning will know rejection in the night. That is the worth of this world. If one part becomes sweet and delicious, its other part becomes bitter and poisonous. Whoever yields to desire of its fresh flesh, is exhausted and struck by misfortune. Whoever passes the night, safe under its wing, finds themselves exposed on the fearful feathers in the morning. It is deceitful, and all that is within in it is deception. It is perishable, and all that is in it is to perish. There is nothing good in its provisions except in piety.

ʿAlī starts the oration with a warning that begins by describing this world as sweet and green. Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, in his commentary, quotes a speech by the Prophet Muḥammad: "This life is sweet and God is leaving you to see what you can do with it".[619] Yet, this description of being "green", especially when connected to the word "sweet", evokes in the mind another speech by the Prophet, in which "green" is a feature of some types of vegetables that grow without an acknowledged root; to be without roots is not to be one of the good plants, even though it has a good look, and this feature is used to describe the "bad" woman: "Beware of the green plant *khaḍrāʾ al-dimn"*, which describes the woman that looks beautiful but has a "bad origin" [*manbat al-sūʾ*]. The beginning of this oration evokes the image of a "bad woman". However, oration 111 is not interpreted in this way by Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd.[620] Different studies of *Nahj al-Balāghah* make the connection between "this world" and the "bad woman", yet they present these connections in relation to single images when they investigate the rhetorical elements of *Nahj al- Balāghah*.[621] Different metaphors and similes are identified, yet what I offer here is an analysis of the imaginary contexts within which tropes appear, and to which they belong.

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[618] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 186.

[619] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol: 7, oration 110.

[620] Ibid.

[621] See Qutbuddin, "'Alī's Contemplation," 346. Also see Al-Faḥḥām, *Al-ʾAthar al-Qurʾānī*, 240. And ʿAbd al-Hādī Khuḍayr, *Al-Miṣbāḥ wa al-Safīnah: Dirāsah fī al-Tashbīh al-Balīgh fī Kitāb Nahj al-Balāghah li al-ʾImām ʿAlī ʿalaih al-salām* (Karbalāʾ: Muʾassasat ʿUlūm Nahj al-Balāghah fī al-ʿAtabah al-Ḥussayniyyah al-Muqaddasah, 2018), 38.

In this thesis, I will argue that the imaginary context consists of features that reinforce and complement one another, in ways that create a unified complex of meaning.

In oration 111, five features are introduced in sequence, ranging from the outer appearance to essential qualities, to describe "this world" as a woman. "Surrounded by the lustful" describes sexual arousal which evokes in the mind the appearance of a woman. This woman "has showed love for its immediate enjoyments" which reflects her attraction to men and the instant appetite to make herself loveable. Then "It is pleased with a few of joys" as a humble lover who will accept whatever is given to her and will be content without putting pressure on her beloved. Yet, this world which is depicted as a woman builds hopes for the future, as in the phrase "it has adorned itself with hopes" as if, after becoming confident in the relationship, it gets arrogant and this arrogance is attributed to it through the word "adorned" as the last stage of what appears to be a process in the relationship of the beloveds, in which she will be the one sought by men. I should emphasise that this is the kind of the little story, which I believe, creates the imaginary context. Although every phrase can be read independently and might convey its own metaphorical meaning, there are elements in these phrases that maintain the main theme of the imaginary context.

Then, when "this world" as a woman reaches this stage in this oration, and men are now more attracted to her, her changing behaviour will start to show, illustrated by two phrases: "its happiness does not last"; and "its suffering cannot be avoided". Thus, it is not only about her leaving her companion, but she causes him a painful experience.

"This world" is then described through a simile constructed upon a *Qur'ānic* verse, which is particularly linked to those who have more interest in this world; people in this world are just like the rain that comes from heaven down to earth and is mixed with plants, in the section of the *Qur'ān* that is quoted. In this oration, the plant is the "green" which as interacts with the surrounding environment, changes over time into a dry state which will be gone with the wind. While the relationship with "this world" looks like a joyful experience upon its arrival – and it may really cause some joy – it will finally end as dry as dead plants, according to the imagery employed.

While rain waters the plant in order to make it grow, the verse describes an eventual state of dryness and scattering to the winds; the imagery implies that, in the same way, intimate relationships, although they should be the cause of new generations, will actually

end as barren and dry as the dead plant. The verse employing this simile ends with the word *moqtadiran* [powerful] as an attribute of God. This is derived from *qudrah* – "power and capability" – and also from *taqdīr*, connected to *al-qaḍā'* – "destiny" – which signifies the outcomes God plans and decides. It is thus this attribute that fits this understanding; while a new generation might be expected to arrive, in this specific situation it is not the case. And this is how God shows His power, by breaking the normal order of things, showing that he is *moqtadir* "all powerful".[622]

Then the experience of bliss will be followed by pain, the verse declares. A sense of the intimacy of the relationships in question is manifested through the phrase "One who has known joyful embraces will meet the sorrow of rejection". The Arabic words used – *baṭnan* [front of the body] and *ṭahran* [back] – link the former to happiness in the "joyful embraces", as life is approaching the man, and the latter with sorrow in the "sorrow of rejection", as life is turning away from him. The usage of the two words in their specific forms contributes to the whole image. In addition to this, Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd comments that when using the shield in the battle, the back of the shield faces the enemy and the front faces the combatant. So, Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd introduces a different reading to explain the shield-related description of this world.[623] However, Al-Jāḥiẓ, in his *Rasā'il*, has a letter on the preference for the abdomen, not the back. While he gives different examples of how the interior part of a thing is better than its surface, he also indicates the beauty of the woman residing in her front, not her back. He argues that the abdomen is preferred over the back by God as He allows the intimate relationship with women to take place through the abdomen, through which growth and the arrival of children is enabled.[624] Although Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd has a different explanation which is a possible one, Al-Jāḥiẓ highlights on the topic "*bāṭin*" and "*ṭāhir*". His different explanations included the idea of the woman body, the birth and growth. These explanations and the elements included in the oration facilitate such a free reading of this oration. This is the kind of reading that might be valid according to Cassirer, as I argue. This is because this kind of reading relies on symbols, not in their known allegoric forms, but as evolving symbols that are created by the context.

[622] See Al-'Allāmah Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2015), vol: 3, 56.
[623] Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 7, oration 110.
[624] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il*, vol. 4, 90.

Next, the imagery of rain is employed. Life is manifested through light rain, without storms, and this brings happy moments, but these will always be followed by a cloud bringing heavy rain. The word *muznah* [cloud] is accompanied by the word *balāʾ* [disaster] which shows how ordeals will be thrown over people.

In the beginning of the oration, I explained how this world (envisaged as a woman) behaved meekly until it became confident and started to be chased by men, according to my reading. The description of intimate relations is located between two images of rain; one of them is drawn from the *Qurʾān* and the other one is a description of an ordeal likened to heavy rain. The first image of rain is introduced as water from heaven that has mixed with green plants, and is like people's approach to "this world". The second is about how "this world" approaches people after intimate relations. In both, water is a feature of life. While the first image promises an end in dryness, the second entails an end in heavy rain. In both cases there is damage. The first, when people arrive at their own will when they probably were trying to survive and procreate on their own, there seems to be death and loss, and the second shows that what they seek ultimately gains control over them. Where joy is to be had in parts of it, "this world" heaps misfortune and disaster upon them. This could be a reflection of boundaries in relationships. When a relationship established on the base of fear and neediness, it might change dramatically. While this can happen in every relationship including friendship, the intimacy between the man and the woman reflects the collective need of human beings for surviving.

This image of light and, then, heavy rain functions as an image within an image which supports my notion of the imaginary context. It is no longer necessary to find the original literal meaning in every introduced image, rather, relationships between images continue to build on each other within the imaginary context. The images chosen are selected because they have connections with each other, and then contribute to the imaginary context, and in this way the system or the structure of the context is developed in a deliberate and intentional way.

In Arab poetry, it is very common to connect between the description of the departure of the beloved and an image of the rain. Thus, there is this connection between the change in the relationship between the poet and their beloved and the image of rain.[625]

[625] See for instance, Zuhayr ibn ʾAbī Sulmá, Dīwān Zuhayr ibn ʾAbī Sulmá, edited by Muḥammad Naʿīm Barbar (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2009), 98; 115; 126.

Thus, instead of saying that the ordeals of this world are likened to heavy rain, it is actually this world as "the woman" that is breaking boundaries and exploiting the relationship. Through this interaction between the person and "this world" which is now "the woman", we learn about the strategy regarding the relationship with "this world". It is not that having little joy will certainly lead to the heavy rain of ordeal, but it is because of the intimate relationship that caused by desire and fear, causes the breaking of boundaries that this ordeal happens.

Then we encounter the conditional phrases that describe this world as a woman who possesses power, in Oration 111. There are four phrases; the first and last deal with this life as a queen or a powerful woman, and this power could be gained through domination. The first phrase explains that if "this world/the woman" supports a person in the morning, she is going to disown him in the night; yet, the last phrase inverts the situation, saying that, if the person feels safe at night, he will wake up scared in the morning. This idea is reflected through a specific image constructed on a description of bird's wings. When her companion sleeps he is safe and protected – quite literally under the wing, in the image – but when he wakes in the morning he will find himself "exposed on the fearful feathers" that lets him face all his difficulties. These two phrases are connected to the image of a powerful woman which seems to be an elaboration of the personal features of the woman described earlier in the oration. Here also, instead of explaining this world by likening it to a bird (because of the attribution of wings) the image is merely developed from the previous one, and the woman continues to have more power and starts to extort and threaten. The lines evoke the image of safety and fear, and their instability during both night and day, which connects the readers to their first relationship, i.e. their mothers. Although this changeable behaviour of woman is introduced from the beginning of this oration, it seems that it reaches its peak in this image, as clearly manifesting unstable psychological traits. It is therefore a space to encounter one's anima as an unconscious archetype that reflects the unconscious feminine side of a man, according to Carl Jung which I introduced in the methodology chapter.[626]

Yet again, the two phrases in the middle of the fourth paragraph describe life as a prostitute; if part of it is tasty and sweet, the other part will be bitter and cause sickness. The motif combines taste and connects it to sickness, as things go inside the body through the mouth – this is a materialistic reflection on intimate relationships. The other phrase is also

[626] "Animus" is the Jungian term that is used to describe the unconscious masculine side of a woman.

connected to the senses, but this time with the sense of touch, which affects the body from the outside. While the word *ghaḍārah* in the phrase "whoever yields to desire of its fresh flesh" may be understood as *niʿmah* – "blessing" and "grace" – it can also mean "argil" or "clay" which provokes the sense of touch in the mind. Thus, when someone feels desire for this flesh, they will certainly be exhausted as a consequence.

This specific paragraph seems to use phrases connected to safety and security (associated with the powerful woman) as it could be linked to the borders of a kingdom, and usually when these borders are established the joyful will be described as being inside these borders. Yet, in the case of "this world" *dunyā* nothing, neither safety nor joy, is real or lasting. What ends this paragraph is a sentence which is already indicated after the very first paragraph, which starts with *gharrārah* [deceitful] as a feature of the woman who tricks people, then it indicates the word *fāniyah* [perishable] which is a good description for the queen of a kingdom, bringing to mind the idea of immortality. This is because the power of a kingdom seems to be lasting, in the view of those who are impressed by it. And between the two ways that this life is manifested – a bride and a queen – the best provision is piety.

Oration 111 continues:[627]

> Whoever is content with little earns themselves safety and security. The one who takes too much risks destruction, and will soon be left with nothing. How much trust men have placed in this world that was repaid with calamity; how much peace they have known that turned to anguish; many were prestigious but were laid low, and many were proud but were humbled.
>
> Its authority is inconstant. Its life is turbid. What is sweet in it is salty. What is pleasant tasting in it is bitter. Its foods are poisons. Its means are like worn ropes. He who is living in this world is exposed to death; he who is healthy is exposed to disease. The reign of this world is one that will be plundered. The invulnerable will be defeated and the rich will be afflicted with misfortune. The one who is close will fall victim to robbery.

This section develops the description of this life as a powerful woman; a queen and her kingdom, which is noted by the word *sulṭānuhā* [her authority]. It is represented first through six conditional propositions which connect words in a specific way.

[627]Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 188.
مَنْ أَقَلَّ مِنْهَا اسْتَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يُؤْمِنُهُ! وَمَن اسْتَكْثَرَ مِنْهَا اسْتَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يُوبِقُهُ، وَزَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ عَنْهُ. كَمْ مِنْ وَاثِقٍ بِهَا قَدْ فَجَعَتْهُ، وَذِي طُمَأْنِينَةٍ إِلَيْهَا قَدْ صَرَعَتْهُ، وَذِي أُبَّهَةٍ قَدْ جَعَلَتْهُ حَقِيراً، وَذِي نَخْوَة قَدْ رَدَّتْهُ ذَلِيلاً! سُلْطَانُهَا دُوَّلٌ، وَعَيْشُهَا رَنِقٌ وَعَذْبُهَا أُجَاجٌ، وَحُلْوُهَا صَبِرٌ، وَغِذَاؤُهَا سِمَامٌ، وَأَسْبَابُهَا رِمَامٌ! حَيُّهَا بِعَرَضِ مَوْتٍ، وَصَحِيحُهَا بَعَرَضِ سُقْمٍ! مُلْكُهَا مَسْلُوبٌ، وَعَزِيزُهَا مَغْلُوبٌ، وَمَوْفُورُهَا مَنْكُوبٌ، وَجَارُهَا مَحْرُوبٌ [مجروب].

The less of this life leads to more safety. The more of it leads to more loss; the phrase uses the Arabic word *yūbiq*, which means "to be wrecked" as in "risks destruction", which also connotes the idea of "barriers", because it is derived from *mawbiq*. This means that the phrase in the text can be understood as such "as more is taken from this life, the more barriers are erected against salvation". The image evokes the idea of being a prisoner to this queen.

Then, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib links the idea of trust to the word "calamity" as a consequence of this trust. The Arabic word *fajīʿah* [calamity] conveys the meaning of a sad incident in which beloved ones or things that are very dear to someone is lost. Trusting conveys a sense of strength which lies with the person who trusts, as it refers to relying on someone or something else and thus the phrase describing the result uses the word *fajaʿathu*, which is connected to entities other than the person himself. In the following phrase the word *ṭumaʾnīnah* [peace] conveys a sense of calmness and stability, and here the consequence – the verb *ṣaraʿathu* [to knock him out] – is connected to the person. Similar connections are then made between *dhī ʾubbaha* [prestigious] and *ḥaqīr* [laid low], and *nakhwah* [proud] and *dhalīl* [humble], which continue to build on the imaginary context of subjugation to this world which makes use of these opposite attributions to convey the effect of this world on the human being who becomes a prisoner to it. While this paragraph introduces the relationship between people and this world as a conditional one, in the following paragraph it presents a similar view through attributions to life itself as something that "owns" them; and these features affect people. This paragraph contributes to understanding our relationship to life, while the following contributes to an understanding of its nature. While the following paragraph starts with the word *sulṭānuhā* [its authority] and describes this as "inconstant", it goes on to describe things inside the authority of the queen as her way of life; her drink, her food; and then ʿAlī concludes by indicating that the "ropes" connecting this world to people as "worn". It evokes the *Qurʾānic* verse (3:103)

> Hold fast to God's rope all together; do not split into factions. Remember God's favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace; you were about to fall into a pit of Fire and He saved you from it— in this way God makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be rightly guided.[628]

Thus, as the verse introduces God's rope, the image in the oration describes the ropes of "this world" which is represented as "the queen" with all that she seems to have. While, it is

[628] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 42.

expected that people may want to hold her ropes, ʿAlī indicates that these are worn ropes that are incapable to be held. Interestingly, the *Qur'ānic* verse after stating the image of God's rope, starts to describe God's grace on people as He transmits them from a state to another. In the oration also, this image transmits the description of this world's own things to this world's own people who, in contrast to the *Qur'ānic* verse, are transmitted from good to low states. As after this image, ʿAlī starts to talk about different people who seem to have different relationship with "this world" which is "the queen", while before this phrase, he explains its objects (i. e. its authority and its food). Thus, it is as he presents worn ropes that connect people of this world to the objects. This is also part of the way the images within the imaginary context are arranged. The imaginary context includes, at the end of this passage, the inevitable loss that this world and its inhabitants are going to face.

2. "This World" as a Horse

Nahj al-Balāghah is filled with warnings about "this world" and its effect on people. A similar notion is presented in the third section of Oration 83.[629] Although elements in the image could be confused as references to this world as a prostitute, as in "appearance" described as "attractive" and "essence" described as "destructive", the imaginary context as a whole evokes the idea of a horse and its companion:

> Certainly, this world drinks muddy water from a dirty watering place. Its appearance is attractive and its essence is destructive. It is a transitory impostor, a fading light, a vanishing shadow and a bent pillar.
>
> When its despiser turns and grows to like it; when the stranger begins to feel reassured, then it rears up and stamps its feet, entraps him in ropes, targets him with its arrows and fetters him with the rope of death, driving him to the low, narrow place, the fearful place where he resides and whence he shall return as recompense for his deeds

The horse in Arab culture has is considered to be valuable. It is considered to have attributes that are the closest to those of human beings, in regard to its qualities, such as generosity, nobility and dignity. Also, the horse has a close relationship to its human companions. It is

[629] Al Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 111.
فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا رَنِقٌ مَشْرَبُهَا، رَدِغٌ مَشْرَعُهَا، يُونِقُ مَنْظَرُهَا، وَيُوبِقُ مَخْبَرُهَا، غُرُورٌ حَائِلٌ، وَضَوْءٌ آفِلٌ، وَظِلٌّ زَائِلٌ، وَسِنَادٌ مَائِلٌ، حَتَّى إِذَا أَنِسَ نَافِرُهَا، وَاطْمَأَنَّ نَاكِرُهَا، قَمَصَتْ بِأَرْجُلِهَا، وَقَنَصَتْ بِأَحْبُلِهَا، وَأَقْصَدَتْ بِأَسْهُمِهَا، وَأَعْلَقَتِ الْمَرْءَ أَوْهَاقَ الْمَنِيَّةِ قَائِدَةً لَهُ إِلى ضَنْكِ الْمَضْجَعِ، وَوَحْشَةِ الْمَرْجِعِ، ومُعَايَنَةِ الْمَحَلِّ، وَثَوَابِ الْعَمَلِ.

reported that when a horse knows its companion, it will not allow other people to ride it.[630] It is a general idea, not exclusive to Arab culture, that the rider thinks of his horse as trustworthy and reliable in difficult situations. Horses enabled their riders to escape from the battlefield. They took their riders away from the deadly arrows in a battle.[631] The Arab poet Zayd al-Khayl (d.631), encountering ʿAlqamah al-ʿĀmirī (d.640) in a battle where the latter fled on his speedy horse, describes the situation in verse: "O ʿAlqamah do not dishonour your horse, it has protected you from present death".[632] While the poet is impressed by the speed of the horse, he does not care to describe the horseman who has run away from battle. It might also be that he would not acknowledge his failure to capture or kill his opponent so he shows his admiration to the horse of his enemy.[633] Another description of the bravery of horses in battle is by the poet Al-Nābighah al-Jaʿdī (d.684): "we are a people who do not accustom our horses to recoil or deviate when confronted in battle".[634] This verse reflects the trust that people put in their horses because of their training. This is also evident in the feelings of satisfaction and safety with regard to the horse. As the poet Zuhayr ibn ʾAbī Sulmá (d.609) says, "we spent the uncovered night near the head of our horse, seeing him being prepared to protect us while we prepare him and his bridle".[635] The verse reflects a close relationship between the horse and the horseman. This relationship, described in a number of Arab verses, seems to be gradually built through different experiences and occasions, one of them being this sense of unity in the uncovered night described in Zuhayr's verse.

Arabs care about horses in every detail: appearance, colour, origin, and the way they interact in different situations, as their interactions reflect their excellence and quality.[636] In Oration 83, the description of the horse starts with the kind of water it drinks. It focuses the attention on the element which cultivates the growth of the horse; water is the basic element upon which bodies are built. The water is described as dirty and from a muddy place. This leads to the description of the horse as beautiful, but in its essence, destructive. And here in

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[630] Kamāl al-Dīn al-Dumayrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrá*, ed. Muḥammad al-Fāḍilī, vol: 4 (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2004), 254.

[631] Deborah O' Daniel Cantrell, ""Some Trust in Horses": Horses as Symbols of Power in Rhetoric and Reality," in *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanata: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 131.

[632] ʾAḥmad ʾIsmāʿīl ʾAbū Yaḥyá, *Dīwān al-Khayl fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī min al-ʿAṣr al-Jāhilī ʾilá Nihāyat al-ʿAṣr al-ʾUmawī* (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2013), 319. أَعَلْقَمُ لا تَكْفُر جَوادَكَ بَعدما نَجا بِكَ من بَيْنِ المَنايا الحَواضِرِ

[633] Ibid., 320.

[634] Ibid., 321. وَإِنّا لَقَوْمٌ ما نُعَوِّدُ خَيْلَنا إذا ما الْتَقَيْنا أن تَجِيدَ وَتَنْفِرا

[635] Ibid., 213. فَبِتْنا عُراةً عِنْدَ رأْسِ جَوادِنا يُزاوِلُنا عَن نَفْسِهِ وَنُزاوِلُه

[636] See Ibn Qutaybah, *The Excellence of the Arab*, translated by Sarah Bowen Savant and Peter Webb, Forward by Jack Weatherford, and ed. Michael Cooperson (New York: NYU Press, 2019), 102. And See ʾAbū Yaḥyá, *Dīwān al-Khayl*, 114.

the usage of "destructive" ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib sheds lights on the negative effect of the inner nature of the horse. It is not only a dreadful inner nature, but it is also affected by the dirty water which continues to affect it. The appearance of the horse is problematic as usually there is a connection between how the different parts of the body of the horse look and the behaviour of the horse. This horse's appearance is deceitful and is also described as "transitory" because it lacks the attributes that make it stay with its companion. Then the three phrases "a fading light", "a vanishing shadow" and "a bent pillar" are all images that contradict the previously-indicated qualities of horses in Arabic verse. While the horse usually spends the night with his companion, who feels safe as a result, this is a type of "vanishing" light that leaves the horseman feeling unsafe during the night. Similarly, in the daytime the horse soothes the pain of loneliness, but also its body makes a real shadow protecting his companion from the sun. The pillar – which is a common symbol of reliability, in this case the reliability of the horse – in this image it is bent, meaning that its reliability is compromised or damaged. All three of these single images can be misinterpreted – can be viewed outside of the context – if the reader does not pay attention to the imaginary context. They are different metaphorical images that draw a parallel between their elements and "this world". The difference between understanding these images in isolation, or through the imaginary context, is connected to our understanding to the horse. In isolation, each metaphor simply describes the nature of "this world"; but when interpreted as part of a coherent imaginary framework, they take on far greater meaning.

Because the horse is a symbol of trustworthiness and reliability, this imaginary context evokes these elements but contradicts them. Thus, our understanding of "this world" in this imaginary context is built on ideas and experiences related to comfort and security, rather than experiences of lust towards women. The reader has in mind the image of the horse, and just as they rely on their horse, they rely on "this world". However, this world shows itself to be so unreliable that it will betray them even when they believe it is as trustworthy as a horse. This imaginary context describes people with better intentions than those in the imaginary context of this world as a woman who satisfy their lust. Although there are mutual features shared by the two contexts, such as betrayal and fake appearance, the way these details appear in each context is designed to teach different things. In oration 83 the same tool which people use to drive through their difficulties – the rope – is the thing that will lead people to their

death. The second paragraph of oration 83 which continues to display the imaginary context introduces the processes within which death occurs as a sequence. It starts when the horseman begins to have positive feelings towards his horse, as in "When its despiser turns and grows to like it; when the stranger begins to feel reassured". In oration 111 it is indicated that it is this world that initiates the attraction and displays love in order to get from its company immediate pleasures. Yet, in oration 83, the different elements of a good horse are introduced, such as light, shadow and pillar, but as contradictory attributes. The horseman does not see these misleading features and thus feels reassured and the descriptions that are presented in the beginning of the imaginary context do not present "this world" as acting in certain ways as it is the case in oration 111. While in oration 111 "this world" is predicated by verbs such as *taḥbbabat* [displays love] and *taḥallat bil'āmāl* [it has adorned itself with hopes] in oration 83, "this world" starts to take aggressive actions when the horseman starts to feel reassured. The description of the horse as having an attractive appearance does not mean that this horse has acted in a specific way to look attractive.

Thus, the feeling is initiated by the horseman. As soon as the horseman starts to rely on his horse, the latter will use the same tools that should be a source of trust and assurance to kill the horseman. The focus in this imaginary context is on the idea of reliance; as soon as the horseman relies on this world for any reason, this world will betray him. It should be noted that this imaginary context is constructed around the imagery and common meanings of horses, and this means the company is a horseman. The horseman is not a frivolous figure who seeks the immediate joy of this world. He has his own particular ideas about the ways of this world. Yet, he can at the same time be a lover, but this is a different aspect of his personality. This means different imaginary contexts about this world can be intended for the same audience, but every context addresses a different part of the personality.

In Oration 83 the word used to describe death is *maniyyah* and as indicated in the previous chapter, *maniyyah* is always used within a context of betrayal. This world that fetters the horseman's neck with "the rope of death" shows how "this world" as a horse uses death. The horse may use the rope which is used to drive it in a way that causes death to the horseman. This follows the image in which the horse stamps aggressively and this means it might trap the horseman by its movement. This also means that the horse may expose the horseman to be a target for the arrows as the following image indicates, especially in the case

of battle. Although the word *ʾaqṣadat* in "targets him with its arrows" means that it reaches the target, it can also be used as "stabbed" and to kill instantly. Thus, for a description of a trained horse, this image will not be excluded from the context of the horse. Then, as the horseman is entrapped while he is on his horse, the horse drives him to the low place.

In oration 111, the rope is used as a way of holding "the queen" and while the queen should own high quality objects, her ropes are worn. The word used is *ʾasbāb* (plural of *sabab*) [reasons]. While the word *sabab* conveys the meaning of *ḥabl* [rope], *ḥabl* is known for joining things together. Thus, choosing the word *ʾasbāb* in this context strengthens the imaginary context of "the queen". It seems to convey that, things that are the reasons of the authority of this queen are weak; worn ropes. Yet, in oration 83 the rope appears as a tool twice; first in the phrase "entraps him in ropes" and second in "fetters him with the rope of death". Both of them reflect the aggression of the horse and the difficult situation the horseman faces. The word used in the first phrase is *ʾaḥbul* "ropes" which is linked to the verb *qanaṣat*, yet in the second phrase the word is *ʾawhāq* (plural of *wahaq*) and this kind of ropes is usually used to fasten the animal's neck in order to drive it. This means that the two images are arranged within the imaginary context in a way that makes the context logical. While both images employ the rope, the first uses the word *ʾaḥbul* within the idea of entrapping, and the second uses *ʾawhāq* within the last stage in the interaction between the horseman and the horse. After this stage, the horse drives the horseman to his narrow place.

As discussed in the last chapter, "death" may indicate different notions than the death of the body, and this imaginary context may also introduce this idea. The death of the old personality starts when reliance on the horse begins.

In his study of the unconscious, Jung divided it into the "personal unconscious" and "collective unconscious". While the former has existed in the conscious mind at some point, the latter has not, and it is only through the archetypes that it can be brought into consciousness.[637] One of the archetypes is the "trickster".

> The trickster is a collective shadow figure, a summation of all the inferior traits of character in individuals. And since the individual shadow is never absent as a component of personality, the collective figure can construct itself out of it continually. Not always of course as a mythological figure, but, in consequence of the increasing repression and neglect of the original mythologems, as a corresponding projection on other social groups and nations.[638]

[637] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 42.
[638] Ibid., 270.

By the transformation of the meaningless into the meaningful, the "trickster" is revealed in a compensatory relationship to the "saint".[639] Yet, "the trickster is represented by counter-tendencies in the unconscious, and in certain cases by a sort of second personality, of a puerile and inferior character".[640] In the relationship between the horse and horseman, the horseman finds in the horse the traits that one may find in a preferred human being. There seems to be a longing for perfection that is projected onto the horse. In oration 83 the warning is clearly declared about a figure that can be compared to the trickster archetype. In Arab culture, whether it is the first Islamic century of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, or the fourth/tenth century at the time of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, horsemen are always connected to the historical Arab horsemen who have been known for their braveness, strength and the high qualities that manifest as manliness. An example of this is the poet ʿAntarah ibn Shaddād.[641] According to Jung,

> Anyone who belongs to a sphere of culture that seeks the perfect state somewhere in the past must feel very queerly indeed when confronted by the figure of the trickster. He is a forerunner of the saviour, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness.[642]

Interestingly, the horse in oration 83 has qualities of the Jungian trickster. The horse is an animal, yet shows human attributes and abilities (i. e. generosity, nobility and dignity), and is also a spiritual presence. In ancient Greek mythology, stories about supernatural horses were common. Horses travelled into different worlds, and also led their companions into the afterlife.[643] In the imaginary context of oration 83, the confrontation of the horse evokes the perfectionist tendencies in the horseman, yet the description in the oration is a warning about its nature as a trickster. The images of "light", "shadow" and "pillar" are all elements of this reading of the imaginary context. The horseman meets the horse, appears to benefit from the meeting, and appears to be elevated as a human being. But then, inevitably, the nature of this horse is revealed as the trickster: "The conflict between the two dimensions of consciousness is simply an expression of the polaristic structure of the psyche, which like any other energic system is dependent on the tension of opposites".[644] Whether the myth of the trickster is

[639] Ibid., 256.
[640] Ibid., 262.
[641] See James E Montgomery and Richard Sieburth (translators), *War Songs: ʿAntarah ibn Shaddad*, edited by Tahera Qutbuddin and forwarded by Peter Cole (New York: NYU Press, 2018).
[642] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 263.
[643] Jarrett A. Lobell and Eric A. Powell, "The Story of the Horse," *Archaeology* 68, no 4 (July-August 2015), 30.
[644] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 269.

understood or not, it will affect the unconscious directly because of the numinosity of the myth.[645]

As the imaginary context in oration 83 is concerned with "this world", it reveals a different angle of understanding. Unlike the previously-discussed oration 111, in which "this world" appeared as a woman and the theme was lust and the longing for pleasure, in this Oration, the imaginary context, which is constructed on a relationship between a horse and a horseman seems to be connected to the longing for perfection as this relationship may symbolise. Although this perfection appears to be good, it seems that it is also the result of desire – but a desire to find reliability in this world, to achieve perfection. Thus, the trickster as an archetype of the collective unconscious is invoked in order for it to be transferred, from unconscious experience into consciousness.[646] While this imaginary context is clearly educating the reader about a different aspect of this world, it also works as a way of elevating the human being by moving unconscious content into the conscious, which is a step towards wholeness and allowing the conscious and unconscious to meet. This part of the oration ends by describing the places that will be shown to the horseman – this is also a function of the imaginary context. This reflects the stage of being confronted with previously unavailable elements of the soul that now have been newly explored and visited.

Al-Baḥrānī (d. 1299) in his explanation of this part of oration 83, links the dirty drinking place and the muddy water source to the way in which people use this world; according to him, it is the pleasure of this world that is dirty. It is the trodden path of this world which is muddy, which puts people at risk of slipping, and which may lead to hell.[647] While this is a valid reading, the imaginary context allows for a different reading, as I have indicated above, in which it is "this world", personified, who drinks from dirty water, and this water becomes a part of its nature, while it is not originally a part of it. It is also the continuous action of this world as a horse walking through the mud that supports the idea that it has become unstable, and that it fails to meet the expectations of the horseman, and lets him fall which also mean that it lets him down. This different understanding will, of course, affect the translation of the paragraph. In *Nafaḥāt al-Wilāyah*, Al-Shīrāzī presents three images in the second paragraph of this section of oration 83. However, none of them clearly identify a horse.

[645] Ibid., 268.
[646] Ibid., 5.
[647] Al-Baḥrānī, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol: 2, 243.

He first prefers to use the word *markab*, which is a general word for anything that is ridden, in the sea or on land. Yet, in the footnote of Al-Shīrāzī's commentary the horse is mentioned in its relation to the attributed word *qamaṣa* [stamped]. In the second and the third images he likens this world to a hunter who prepares his trap or stays awake and watches for his prey.[648] Of course, he indicates the treacherous nature of this world, but this nature does not follow from the explicit images. In order to strengthen his view about betrayal in his explanation of the first paragraph, Al-Shīrāzī quotes another phrase of a different oration by ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib: "this world is like a snake; its touch is soft, and its poison is fatal".[649] However, in applying my notion of the imaginary context to this image of the snake, the differences between the two will become clear. This because the elements that construct every imaginary context are employed to construct this specific context. These elements include the different images within the imaginary context and the ways these images present their own elements and the ways these images are connected together. This may include the "copula" which connects the subject and the predicate as indicated in the chapter of the imaginary context. This copula, according to Al-Fārābī, can be introduced in different ways whether as a verb or as a noun. In the imaginary context, the chosen copula will distinguish an imaginary context from another imaginary context. This has been shown in the distinction between "this world" as a "woman" who "displays love" and this world as a "horse" which is connected to the predicate by the usage of "is" as a copula in order to be understood as existing in this attractive appearance.

When describing the snake, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib uses the phrase "this world is like a snake", which means the comparison is stated clearly rather than being implied, as in the case of the horse. It is a description rather than a dramatization of the image, especially when he continues by describing its touch and its poison. Although this description evokes the senses of touch and taste, it does not constitute the contradiction brought up by the qualities of the horse and its actions that run counter to these. The snake is known for being deceitful. Therefore, the audience is expecting danger. And this is different from the way the horse is seen by the horseman. Yet, the description of the snake has mutual elements with the earlier evocation of "this world" as a woman, and Al-Shīrazī mentions the example of "this world" as a woman in his discussion. Like the woman, the snake is soft to the touch. The metaphor of poison is also shared. While it is explicit in the image of the snake, it is implicit in the image

[648] Al-Shīrāzī, *Nafaḥāt al-Wilāyah*, vol: 3, 213.

[649] Ibid., 212; Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 538. فإنّما مَثَلُ الدُّنيا مَثَلُ الحَيّة: لَيّنٌ مَسُّها، قاتِلٌ سُمُّها.

of the woman, because the intimate relations they have with others are clearly described as poisonous in their deceitful, destructive nature. Al-Jāḥīẓ reports that when the devil talked to Eve in heaven to encourage her to eat from the tree, he dressed like a snake, as the snake harboured him. He deceived Adam and Eve through the snake's tongue.[650] The snake thus deserved punishment from God, and so its nakedness and its movement on its belly are a few of these punishments.[651] Yet, al-Jāḥiẓ also indicates that there is nothing like the skin of the snake as it is softer and lighter than anything else.[652] In addition to this, the snake is known for the way it catches prey. It stands on the sand without movement so birds and insects will think it is a branch to rest on, and when it has lured them close it catches them.[653] The deceitful woman is similar in the way she catches her prey. While she looks like a resting place, she actually betrays those who trust her, as explained in Oration 111.

The horse as an illustration of "this world" is also present in *Nahj al-Balāghah* when the word *miḍmār* is introduced in Oration 28, in the phrase "today is the racecourse and tomorrow is the race" – here, the imagery of horse racing emphasizes the hope of winning.[654] It evokes the notion of preparation and challenge to people to win the race. Unlike Oration 83, where reliance on the horse leads to betrayal, here the horse needs to be trained, and it is the responsibility of the horseman to train his horse; the horseman can only rely on himself. It is interesting how these images build on each other, as the horse in the previous image plays the role of the trickster with two personalities, which was evoked by the longing manifested by the horseman. The horse is actually under the control of the horseman, after the horseman has passed the two stages of relying on the horse and then being betrayed. Thus, the actual nature of the horse is manifested as being for use and to be relied on, after having gained control of it. Also, as indicated earlier by Jung, the trickster is an archetype manifested by the collective unconscious, and so in the second image it seems that this encountering with the trickster, having been resolved, has established a certain stability within "this world". It is as if the instability, which was inside the horseman, is transformed after encountering the trickster as a horse. The trickster represents his inner attitude, and the encounter enables the instability to move from the unconscious to the conscious, and as a result "this world" becomes a

[650] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol: 4, 92.
[651] Ibid., 112.
[652] Ibid., 99.
[653] Ibid., 61.
[654] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 58. ألا وإنَّ اليَوْمَ المِضمارَ، وَغَداً السّباقَ، والسَّبَقَةُ الجَنَّة، والغايَةُ النّار.

racecourse in which the horseman has gained control of his wayward inner nature, his horse. He will still face the difficulty of what to do with "this world" and how to make the best use of it. The end will be either heaven or hell. With heaven, ʿAlī uses the word *al-sabaqah* in the phrase "heaven is the desired destination"; and with hell he uses *al-ghāyah* in the phrase "hell is the end". Thus, heaven is something that is prepared for and reached by clear intention as those who win seem to create their destination, yet hell is inevitable for those who had no plan and no preparation for the race.

3. "This World" as a She-camel

"This world" is also evoked in an imaginary context constructed around the image of a she-camel. In oration 52, the she-camel drives people; it is the driver *ḥādī*.[655]

> This world has departed and has announced its ending. It disguised its face and quickly fled. Thus, decay, as a tool of this world, compels those who are at home in this world, just as death drives those who partake less of this world. What was sweet in it has become bitter, and what was pure has become turbid. And so, what remains is no more than the little water left in a purifying vessel, a mouthful no more than is measured by the pebble. If a thirsty person slowly sips, his thirst is not quenched. O creatures of God, make your decision to leave this place, as it is the destiny of its people to cross over. Do not be defeated by your hopes, nor allow yourself to stay any longer.
>
> By God, if you yearn like a distracted she-camel which has lost its young, or call out like pigeons cooing; if you raise your voice in supplication like devoted monks, or turn to God leaving your wealth and children as a mean to secure His nearness; in achieving a higher status, or attaining forgiveness of a sin which has been counted by His books and recorded by His messengers, this would be less according to my wish for you of His reward and my concern for you about His retribution.

Although the reader here may get the impression that the imaginary context is constructed around the imagery of the desert journey, it is the she-camel that is the focus for its construction. When "this world" as a she-camel has announced the time of her end, and begins to depart, she becomes the one who drives people, impelling them toward their destiny. The motif of people being driven was also discussed in the previous chapter, where "the hour" acted as *ḥādī*, a "shepherd". Here in Oration 52, the she-camel is the shepherd, which is a

[655]Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 83.
أَلاَ وَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا قَدْ تَصَرَّمَتْ، وَآذَنَتْ بِانْقِضَاء، وَتَنَكَّرَ مَعْرُوفُها، وَأَدْبَرَتْ حَذَّاءَ، فَهِيَ تَحْفِزُ بِالْفَنَاءِ سُكَّانَهَا[ساكنيها]، وَتَحْدُو بِالْمَوْتِ جِيرَانَهَا، وَقَدْ أَمَرّ فِيها مَا كَانَ حُلْواً، وَكَدِرَ مِنْهَا ما كَانَ صَفْواً، فَلَمْ يَبْقَ [تبق] مِنْهَا إِلاَّ سَمَلَةٌ كَسَمَلَةِ الإداوَةِ، أَوْ جُرْعَةٌ كَجُرْعَةِ الْمَقْلَةِ، لَوْ تَمَزَّزَهَا الصَّدْيَانُ لَمْ يَنْقَعْ. فَأَزْمِعُوا عِبَادَ اللهِ الرَّحِيلَ عَنْ هذِهِ الدَّارِ المَقْدُورِ عَلى أَهْلِهَا الزَّوال، وَلاَ يَغْلِبَنَّكُمْ فِيهَا الأَمَلُ، وَلاَ يَطولَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فيها الأَمَدُ. فَوَاللهِ لَوْ حَنَنْتُمْ حَنِينَ الْوُلَّهِ الْعِجَالِ، وَدَعَوْتُمْ بِهَدِيلِ الْحَمَامِ، وَجَأَرْتُمْ جُؤَارَ مُتَبَتِّلِي الرُّهْبَانِ، وَخَرَجْتُمْ إِلى اللهِ مِنَ الأَمْوَالِ والأَوْلاَدِ، الْتمَاسَ الْقُرْبَةِ إِلَيْهِ فِي ازْتِفَاعِ دَرَجَةٍ عِنْدَهُ، أوغُفْرَانِ سَيِّئَةٍ أَحْصَتْهَا كُتُبُهُ، وَحَفِظَتْهَا رُسُلهُ، لَكَانَ قَلِيلاً فَيَما أَرْجُو لَكُم مِنْ ثَوَابِهِ، وَأَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ عِقَابِهِ.

reversal – the animal that is usually herded and cared for is now the driver. Words like "departed", "announced", "disguised", "fled", "compels" and "drives" bring the imagery to life, and creates a moving, active figure.

The notion of being controlled and guided by this world is emphasized here, and the tools of control are decay and death. This means that people are in a lower state than this world and this presents death and decay as a threat to them and their existence. Death, as discussed in the previous chapter, may be faced courageously. In this oration, people are not longing to stay in this world; there seems to be little interest left as this world has already started to change and the effect of this change has appeared in elements such as the taste and the amount of the drink. In addition to this, there is no reliance on this world, as was the case in Oration 83. However, the exact situation is explained in the difference between the word *sukkānahā* [its inhabitants] in the phrase "those who are at home" and the word *jīrānahā* [its neighbours] in the phrase "those who partake less", as I argue. The inhabitants are being compelled by the threat of decay, which means those who are most attached to this world are going to face this decay.

The term "death" presents less of a threat, because it might represent a transference from one level of consciousness to another. Death in this imaginary context is used to drive "the neighbours" which gives the impression that these people do not live inside the place rather, they live nearby, they are a little less attached. Anyone less attached possesses some mutually shared attributes between their true self and their persona, or old self. The word "death" may consist of a less nihilistic or pejorative notion of disappearance, as it contains the possible meaning of transmission into the next life. This makes death the right tool to elevate them from one level to another.

However, decay can be described as the result of attachment to this world, and thus the change that the old self or persona might undergo can be seen as a complete change through which it is the old personality that decays and dies. This she-camel is dealing with two groups: those "who are at home in this world", who rely on it for the basics of life; and those "who partake", but who are less reliant on it but still live in the same place and enjoy similar pleasures. The word *sukkān* [inhabitants] is derived from the root *sa-ka-na,* and its singular form is *sākin* – "inhabitant", "still" and "calm".[656] Thus, those who are at peace with

[656] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol: 7, 159.

"this world" are described as being *sukkān*. The word *jīrān* [neighbours] is derived from the root *ja-wa-ra*; the singular form is *jār* [neighbour] which also means "a sharer".[657] Those who take some share from the she-camel are those who partake, though to a lesser degree than those "at home" in this world. This is elaborated in the following phrases within the imaginary context: "what was sweet in it has become bitter, and what was pure has become turbid". What people share with the she-camel, and what they rely on the she-camel for (e.g. its milk), have deteriorated into their worst states. This world, in the allegorical form of a she-camel, who was once a source of life, is exhausted and has nothing left that is good – and very little is left, even of the corrupted resources, as the imagery drawn from the techniques and tools by which people share water in the desert shows.

Then, when there seems to be no hope of nourishment, people are encouraged to leave; although the word describing that which people need to leave is *dār* in "make your decision to leave this place", which usually conveys the meaning of "a place", in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Ibn Manẓūr indicates that it also means *mawḍiʿ* – "a position".[658] This means that the people are encouraged to leave their current position in relation to this she-camel. A similar expression is present in *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah*, as ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī says as he introduces his speech, "O you; who are riding the hump of this world".[659] "This world" is depicted as a she-camel, and the person is riding its hump, which conveys the idea of taking a position on the she-camel. Although people in Oration 52 are described as being driven by the she-camel, and are not riding her, the word "position" allows more space for understanding people's relation to the she-camel. By describing their location, their level of consciousness is also reflected – because then ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib describes "this position" as "it is the destiny of its people to cross over". Although the word *ʾahl* [its people] can also convey the meaning of people who inhabit a place, it also highlights their close relationship to the place. *ʾAhl* is also the family and relatives and it also conveys the meaning of "being worthy".[660] Thus, in this phrase, they are not only *sukkān* – "at home; people who settled" or "those who are at peace with it" – but they are relatives and they are worthy of this she-camel, deserving of it. The predetermined consequence for these relatives is expressed by the word *zawāl* which,

[657] Ibid., vol. 2, 509.
[658] Ibid., vol. 2, 618.
[659] ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah,* edited by Khamīs Ḥassan (Miṣr: Al-Qāhirah: ʾĀfāq lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2018), 298.
[660] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol: 6, 22. The example given in *Lisān al-ʿArab* to explain this meaning is the *Qurʾānic* verse (74: 56): "He is worthy to be feared and worthy to forgive."

although it conveys the meaning of "vanishing", it also means *taḥawwul* and *intiqāl*: "crossing over". This combination of the meanings of the word *'ahl* as "relatives" and "being worthy" give it a sense of ownership. The notion of having the right to this she-camel may be connected to owning it. Yet, the type of transition in this phrase is less defined than the changes which happen to "those at home" and "those who partake less". They are defined by "decay" and "death" that will face the old self, but the "crossing over" of its people might come as a consequence of being in this world and that, there might be a change of the way in the manifestations of the souls.

In the second paragraph ʿAlī addresses his audience directly. He compares them to she-camels. In this image he equates them with "this world" the she-camel, which drives them, except that now they are seen as other she-camels who have lost their young. He presents people at their worldly level, which is the first level from which they start their journey toward transcendence. Thus, after his description of this world/the she-camel, pointing out that it has already deserted its people, he encourages the people themselves to leave the world behind in the phrase "make your decision to leave this place, as it is the destiny of its people to cross over". They will receive no help or mercy if they yearn as she-camels. Then he likens them to pigeons who coo, to continue into the second level in which pigeons are a freer symbol than a distressed she-camel. It is as if the reflection of the weakest state is the yearning she-camel who has lost its young. The word *wullah* [distracted] indicates that they have lost their minds.[661] This strengthens the idea of starting to move between two mental levels. Pigeons are flying birds and the bird has been known to symbolise the soul and its journey towards freedom, as in Ibn Sīnā's poem "The Soul" which will be discussed more in this thesis in the following chapter about the bat. The third simile is of crying monks, which might be a representation of the third level in which they have known their true self as true human beings. This is not a literal reference to living monks, but to monks as symbols of the human being that reaches enlightenment. Yet, ʿAlī adds after this stage another level; that of taking the initiative towards God, taking a path in which the person leaves their belongings behind in order to serve God. After all these three images, whether they yearn like she-camels, coo like pigeons or cry like monks, ʿAlī is still worried about their salvation, in terms of rewards and escape from punishment. The four levels introduced are not exclusive to this oration, they

[661] Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol: 3.

are levels of transcendence of the human, and these were discussed in the previous chapter on "death" and "the hour". All the images presented in the second paragraph are elements of the desert: the she-camel, the pigeon and the monk.

This imaginary context in Oration 52 starts with an evocation of a she-camel as a shepherd but then in the second paragraph it turns into an evocation of a desert. However, the second image evocation is not introduced independently from the first. It is built on the previous notion that this world is a she-camel. In the beginning the she-camel was introduced as driving people without mentioning any exact description of people except in terms of their relationship to it as "those who are at home" or "those who partake less". Yet, in the second evocation, people are introduced and likened to she-camels. This has presented the level on which the nature of people stands. Then the imaginary context continues as explained.

Interestingly, both paragraphs contain the added implication of a journey. In the second paragraph, the phrase "or turn to God leaving your wealth and children as a mean to secure His nearness" including the words "turning", "leaving" and "securing His nearness" convey this idea of a journey. Both paragraphs have elements that are drawn from the second section of the *qaṣīdah* [the Arabic ode] which follows the introductory section, called the *nasīb*, which is concerned with the departure of the beloved.

However, the Arabic *qaṣīdah* has undergone various changes, one of them being that, in its early form as the pre-Islamic tribal ode, the second section was devoted to a depiction of a she-camel, while in the courtly ode of medieval Islam this second section was concerned with the desert journey of the poet.[662] These changes mean that the priority of the poet in the pre-Islamic era was the attempt to cope with lost love, and to find with a friend a source of safety after the beloved's departure. However, in the medieval age, the poet started to speculate more about his own journey; a journey that might lead to self-discovery. Both types are found in the imaginary context of Oration 52 in *Nahj al-Balāghah* which was compiled by Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī after these changes in the *qaṣīdah* had occured. The feeling of leaving a loved one is thus evoked, and the imaginary context of "this world" is constructed on the premises of the she-camel and the desert. This leads to understanding "this world" as an expected source of safety, yet it is not a lasting one, though it does offer the chance to transcendence. This idea

[662] Jacobi, "The Camel Section," 1.

is conveyed by its relevance to the *qaṣīdah* and is evoked by the two motifs that are included in the oration and that are connected to the development of the second section of the *qaṣīdah*.

While usually people should act as shepherd to the she-camel, this imaginary context shows that the opposite is true which means people have been controlled by their basic and natural needs. The needs that have been offered to them in order to help them to transcend their souls have started to control them and direct their path. The word "death" may consist of a less negative notion of disappearance as it contains the meaning of transmission into the other life. Although the she-camel should be the source of relief for its companion, especially after being abandoned by his beloved, the imaginary context in this oration shows how the she-camel starts to change and this change starts with its departure and intention to abandon people as it drives them towards another place. Then the change starts to affect its nature and not only its attitude, as indicated by the words "sweet", "bitter", "pure" and "turbid". These changes in the attitude of the she-camel and its nature introduce the first stages of letting go of materialistic pleasure; the attachment and the sweet pure taste which denotes pleasure beyond the basic need of food and drink. It then becomes a harsher level when even the drink is no longer fulfilling the thirst of the companions, as in the phrase, "And so, what remains is no more than the little water left in a purifying vessel, a mouthful no more than is measured by the pebble. If a thirsty person slowly sips, his thirst is not quenched". These lines reflect upon attempts to get the very last drop of water, but even if this happens this will not fulfil the thirst. This "thirst" is also allegorical, it is about desire for all kinds of sustenance, including desire for experiences, power, and all other worldly forms of pleasure. The harshest part starts, then, when the image of the she-camel losing its young is presented. In this stage the element introduced is *ḥanīn*, which refers to the sound of the camel, but also means "longing" and "yearning". In this stage, the situation to be faced is as difficult as losing a child. It can also mean that, after having lost the normal way of living – the sweetness and basic needs – there is this feeling of longing for it. At this point, after this yearning, the transcendence starts to manifest as the she-camel is described as a pigeon, and then the pigeon as a monk who then devotes all his life to God. The combination between the feelings evoked by the camels and the pigeons is present in Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's verse "the yearning of the mounts taught my heart its longing, so how could cooing pigeons amuse it?"[663] The feeling of longing that was felt once,

[663] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Dīwān* vol: 1, 611. حَنينُ المَطايا عَلَّمَ الشوقَ مُهجَتي، فكيف تُسلّيها الحَمامُ السَّواجِعُ؟

and is linked to the way she-camels yearn, is described as so overwhelming that a pigeon will not be able to cause any kind of pleasure or amusement. This verse represents an experience of being unable to let go of a momentous feeling caused by the loss of those who are dearest. These kinds of changes in emotional experience are those that lead to spiritual transcendence.

Some orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah* mention different groups by name. One of these are the Sons of Umayyah (661 to 750), who took the Islamic caliphate after the death of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib. In Oration 87, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib talks about how the Umayyads are viewed from the perspective of the Umayyads' era, and how this relates to the true nature of "this world". [664] The oration presents this world as a she-camel, but this time it is owned by the Sons of Umayyah.

> The time will come when people will think that this world is bonded to the Sons of Umayyah, that it bestows upon them its milk, confers upon them its purity, and that their usage of the lash and the sword will not be stopped. Whoever thinks so is lying. For they only know a few drops of joy, upon which they will suck for a while before they vomit all of it out again.

This world is a she-camel that has been owned by the Umayyads, who are the only ones that get her pure milk. This is followed by a description of the Umayyads as tyrants to the Islamic community, using "lash" and "sword". Although the she-camel is introduced here, it does not present a journey, but the notion of authority. The overall picture may be concentrated around the idea of "drink". While it may appear to be this, and while the milk may appear to be flowing, this is not actually the case, as the *majjah* [ejection] on offer is only a little drink, that may be drunk for a short time before being vomited out all at once. So, in parallel to the image of a giving she-camel, the image of this world as a "leftover" is introduced. What is actually possessed is only a bowl containing a few last drops. This particular image strengthens the broader view of the desert environment, because although it appears that people have more than they need, they are actually in the difficult situation of having very little. In this imaginary context, the words "sword" and "lash" are presented alongside the image of the she-camel. In Oration 52, the she-camel was introduced as a source of life by the pure sweet milk it provides. It drives people, but there is no indication in that imaginary context of the exact cause of death of people as in Oration 83, when the horse is introduced. Yet, here in Oration 87 two words are presented; the "lash" and the "sword". It is as if people will face the fate of

[664] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 131.
حَتَّى يَظُنَّ الظَّانّ أَنَّ الدّنْيَا مَعْقُولَةٌ عَلَى بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ؛ تَمْنَحُهُمْ دَرَّهَا، وَتُورِدُهُمْ صَفْوَهَا، وَلاَ يُرْفَعُ عَنْ هذِهِ الأُمَّةِ سَوْطُهَا وَلاَ سَيْفُهَا، وَكَذَبَ الظَّانُّ لِذلِكَ.
بَلْ هِيَ مَجَّةٌ مِنْ لَذِيذِ الْعَيْشِ يَتَطَعَّمُونَهَا بُرْهَةً، ثُمَّ يَلْفِظُونَهَا جُمْلَةً!

being in conflict, even though there is no battle. The weapons are used in everyday life in execution, punishment or torture by the people who own the main source of life; the she-camel. Yet, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib responds to the way the Sons of Umayyah are perceived by the people of their era, as not being true.

He describes the "the supposer" *al-ẓānn* as lying, even though they only suppose that this is the case and do not speak about it. ʿAlī uses the word *al-ẓānn* which is a participle derived from the same root of *maẓnūnāt* [supposed propositions].[665] These propositions are used in rhetoric and put in a lower logical state than the demonstrative propositions, according to Al-Fārābī's school. These propositions are capable of being true or false. On one hand, what is usually described to be false *kādhib* in logical terms is not the person but the proposition. On the other hand, in other terms (i. e. theology and jurisprudence), lying is not connected to thoughts but to speech. As a leader of his community and Imam of his followers, ʿAlī will not describe a person as lying when they are only mistaken in their thoughts. This is because, this will entail other jurisprudence consequences for the one who is described as lying by the Imam. If ʿAlī's intention is to present that this is a false supposed proposition as an example of propositions with lower logical state than demonstration, he could describe the thought or the idea as to be false rather than the person who thinks of them. However, ʿAlī clearly describes the one who "supposes" as lying.[666] Thus, he introduces another logical state within the imagination.[667] It might prove that within the imaginary context which has its own logic, falsehood occurs in an alteration of this construction such as within the poetic syllogism. In oration 87, this alteration appears in the unreasonable depiction of the she-camel.[668] He describes this world which is a she-camel as described above to be owned by the Sons of Umayyah.

This "she-camel" is constructed on a previous imaginary context in which "this world" is a she-camel but seems to be in a different state (i. e. the imaginary context in oration 52).

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[665] See (3.5) in Chapter One "The Imaginary Context".

[666] In *Lisan al-ʿArab* vol: 1, Ibn Manẓūr indicates that what is not spoken is not a lie. He validates this view by a speech of the prophet, 497. Yet, he also indicates that the word *ẓann* [supposition] can also be expressed as *kadhab al-ẓann* [literally: the supposition has lied], 499.

[667] One cannot deny the fact that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is compiled by Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and that the authenticity of *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a whole remains argumentative. It is possible that Al-Raḍī rearranged and edited some orations which means that the terms and the collocations might be influenced by his thought. Yet, I have clarified in my thesis that I am concerned with the atmosphere that shaped *Nahj al-Balāghah*. However, I still introduce the orations as ʿAlī's speech because it is presented by Al-Raḍī in this way.

[668] Interestingly, this oration is divided into different sections in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and this section in particular is titled "*ẓann khāṭi'*" [Wrong Supposition] which seems to be an attempt to draw the attention to this point.

Here, this development in the she-camel, which I usually read it as an extension to a previous image; which means building a new premises from a previously indicated inference, is false. Describing the she-camel as "bonded" entails a way of relationship with the Umayyads that is different from the relationship of this she-camel with other. This is exactly what this imaginary context seems to be focused on which is a special relationship. This is understood as false because of the nature of the she-camel which cannot establish this kind of relationship with anyone. Thus, in this depiction of the she-camel, the perceiver is considered lying rather than the supposition is false as to differentiate between the false within the demonstration and the false within the imagination. This may mean that the one who attempts to alter the true imagination or to affect the imagination of others with false images within an imaginary context, will be considered as lying. This idea may have its spiritual implications that are connected to the theory of knowledge, according to Al-Fārābī's understanding. It might be that this idea is linked to having episteme which is achieved within the active intellect *al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*. "This is the intellect which provides the acquired intellect with images that are sent from the higher power that is God".[669]

Three main imaginary contexts present in *Nahj al-Balāghah* have been introduced and explored in this chapter. They are all concerned with describing "this world" in different ways that convey different understandings. While there are two general view points – the first criticizes and shows the unsettling nature of this world, the second views it as an opportunity to achieve rewards in the hereafter – in different commentaries on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the imagery in each oration is treated in the same way, with each image merely expressing an aspect of "this world". In every oration the image is referred back to its historical context and put and read again in its literal manner. Qutbuddin indicates that this world is harshly criticised by being likened to an unfaithful woman as an example in some orations by predicating to this world the attribution of an unfaithful woman even though the word "woman" is not introduced. In other examples, this world is likened to a she-camel.[670] Yet, there is no recognition by the different commentaries of the connection between the different images about "this world", which means that the reading leads usually to the same general

[669] See (7.5) in the section on theory in the first part of this thesis.
[670] See Qutbuddin, "'Alī's Contemplations."

understanding about this world. When the imaginary context is constructed, different elements interact with each other in a way that presents "this world" in a specific arrangement. Through this arrangement it will be understood how this world interacts with people, depending on the way they initiate the interaction and according to the way they view this world. This, as I argue, cannot be understood without the imaginary context. The strength of this imaginary context manifests through the logical movement of its elements, not according to the logic of the so-called literal context but according to the logic of the evoked image. This world as an unfaithful woman is presented in an imaginary context in which people are painfully attached to it. Yet, the way the interaction between the woman and her target is not the same as when this world is presented in the imaginary context of a horse.

As indicated in the first chapter on the imaginary context, Al-Fārābī introduces the difference between "definition" – *ḥadd* – which is a strict way of understanding the essence of a thing; and "description" – *rasm* – in which different cases of a thing can be introduced. In addition, Al-Fārābī has indicated that we acquire knowledge either through conception [*taṣawwur*] or assent [*taṣdīq*].[671] "This world" as a conception appears in the *Qur'ān* in addition to its presence in Arabic poetry. From different premises that have been previously known to the audience of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the text conveys new inferences through imaginative syllogism. Yet, this syllogism is not merely concerned with its effect on the soul, but also with education. "This world", as an example of an intelligible thing that has been previously introduced to Muslims, has been elaborated through the use of the imaginary context in order to reveal to people new knowledge about this world. Three cases of "this world" have been explored in this chapter, that reflect three different attitudes and interactions with people. In all three, this world is presented as unsettling and ephemeral. The imaginary context of the a she-camel reflects a view in which people see this world as a source of basic needs, such as drink and safety. When the context of this world as a woman is present, people seem to be so much attached to its pleasure and lust. The context of the horse introduces a different point of view in which this world has qualities that invite noble people to rely on it, yet even if their intention is honourable, relying on this horse will lead to a similar betrayal to that found in the context of the she-camel and the unfaithful woman. However, the details are different. The horse will use the same tools that should be protective to immediately kill the individual,

[671] See Chapter One on the Imaginary Context.

yet, this kind of "death" might indicate the transcendence of the soul. This means that people may rely on good sources in order to achieve noble results, and this reliance will be the beginning of an experience which will stimulate spiritual growth. Being killed is an obvious element that was introduced in the imaginary context of the horse which tramples on its companion. This exact way of killing was not present in the context of the she-camel. In the context of the she-camel – as a source of life – people are merely concerned with meeting their basic needs and, therefore, they are driven by "this world" the she-camel. They have no higher intention or purpose in their life, but at the same time they are not distracted by other attachments and desires as it is the case in the context of a woman. Yet their basic needs are their only focus; and then, this world begins to depart from them. When this begins, a transferral to a different level of consciousness causes their spiritual experience to begin. This experience has been introduced through the elements of she-camels, pigeons and monks. This beginning of the spiritual experience with the idea of being driven by a shepherd can be linked to "the hour" in the previous chapter, when at a certain moment the description of time changes from *al-dahr* time into "the hour" *al-sāʿah* as the journey starts. It seems that this world at a certain point throws people into the path of self-discovery. However, it seems that when "the hour" is the driver, the main aspects of the journey are different from the aspects when the driver is "this world" as a she-camel. One example could be that, when "the hour" is the driver, the main aspect is encountering one's own demon. Yet, when the driver is "this world", the main aspect is the change in the basic needs as the word "bitter" indicates.

All these representations of this world seem to show that this world "exists" as a betrayal. This obviously an answer to the usage of the particle *hal*? which can be translated as the interrogate phrase "does it?" According to Al-Fārābī – and as discussed in my chapter on the imaginary context – the existence of a thing is not a part of its essence, nor can it be equated with its essence. Essence can only be achieved by definition. Yet, by identification of its the non-essential attributes, "description" [*ḥadd*] can make a thing comprehensible. The different descriptions of "this world" found in the orations explored here function in this way: to make "this world" comprehensible. The point is that even with the help of demonstration, one cannot attain definition of a thing; demonstration can only provide a partial definition. Thus, this means imaginative syllogism is at the same level as demonstrative syllogism, but they work through different contexts. The point about demonstration is that it results from a

syllogism and achieves knowledge about the existence of a thing, knowledge of the reason for its existence, and knowledge of both, and this last form of knowledge is the absolute demonstration.

If we look at the imaginative syllogism through the imaginary context and observe the development of its inferences that are built on continuously constructed premises, we can learn about this world through the different contexts. The unfaithful woman is presented and results in acts of betrayal. Committing acts of betrayal is the essential part of being unfaithful. However, the horse and the she-camel, with regard to their betrayal, are manifesting an accidental attribute that is not a part of their essence. Thus, the definition of the unfaithful woman includes her initiation of the action of betrayal. Yet, if we want to define the horse, we will not say that it is the one that initiates an act of betrayal. We have the opportunity to learn about this world through the different imaginary contexts when, in fact, we forget "this world" in a literal sense and focus on the contexts alone. It should be clear here that the knowledge we seek is not the existence of this world, in itself, but knowledge about its existence, because the audience has already been acquainted with its existence.[672]

A question might be raised about why it has been decided that the woman is an unfaithful woman and therefore her acts of betrayal are considered to be a part of her essence, while the horse is just a horse and its betrayal is considered to be accidental. The answer relates to the poetic premises that lead to these inferences. In the Arabic poetic tradition, the abandoning beloved comprises the first section of the *qaṣīdah*. Thus, unfaithfulness becomes the main attribute of the figure of the woman that has preoccupied poetic tradition. This is the poetical context and not a context of demonstration; it is thus the premise of an imaginative syllogism. At the same time, the figure of the she-camel in Arabic poetics does not appear as unfaithful or abandoning; it is described with love and is treated as praise-worthy, as is the case with horses. This means when the premise of the horse or the she-camel is introduced in the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* studied in this chapter, it is developed into a new, unexpected conclusion. This allows us to see these two cases of betrayal as accidental. What exactly is accidental here? Is it the horse being unfaithful and the she-camel continuously changing? or actually the existing horse or she-camel? These two images are brought to life in the imagination of the audience because it is the audience that sees the horse

[672] See section (3.2) in the Imaginary ontext Chapter.

and the she-camel. When we look at every imaginary context separately, the answer will be the first, but when we look at the imaginary contexts in comparison to each other, the latter answer will be true. "This world" is accidently a source of life (this is the symbolic function of the she-camel) and is accidently a source of strength (the symbolic function of the horse). But, betrayal is the essential quality of this world that the unfaithful woman symbolises. As indicated in the imaginary context chapter, when the connection between the predicate and the subject is a necessary one, then we are supposed to have an answer to both "*lima?*" and "*hal?*" questions.

We had to go through these imaginary contexts to see how the attribute is predicated to the subject. It is through the dramatic imaginary contexts that we are able to evaluate the relationship between people and "this world" in different contexts. Through the details of every context the elements play roles that cannot be understood if the context was abbreviated into a single image. Without the imaginary context, the main single image could have been confused and thus would not allow this differentiation between the three contexts.

In addition to the contribution to knowledge about this world, what seems to be happening is that, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib constructs his images on previously existing images in the mind of the addressees. He recreates these images within an imaginary context that supports his ideas. In this way, he reminds them of what they already have in their unconscious and by bringing it to the conscious, he elevates their level of consciousness. Thus, he syllogistically, teaches them through their own nature. Although, different examples appear to be constructed on images from the Arabic poetic tradition, these images are understood to be universal archetypes according to Jung. Thus, while it seems that ʿAlī in *Nahj al-Balāghah* teaches the Arab through their collective memory, the truth as I argue, is that he speaks to a wider audience; to all people who have their share of the collective unconscious that Jung introduces to us.

Chapter Six

"The Bat": a Mystical Journey

The creation of an image in the audience's mind can be achieved by the usage of both, the figurative language and the literally descriptive language, as indicated in the chapter on the imaginary context. One of the most common examples of creating an image can be seen when animals are described for the purpose of education. This method of education is very popular in the encyclopaedic style of book, as mentioned in the first section of Chapter Two. Yet, the differences in the use of language are remarkable when comparing different authors. Al-Jāḥiẓ is an important figure in this field. His book *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* – "The Book of the Living Being" – describes, but is not exclusive to, animals, their natures, features and characteristics. It also includes poems about the creatures described.[673] Although Al-Jāḥiẓ's language is considered to be of a high literary level,[674] in comparing his language about animals to the language of *Nahj al-Balāghah* on the same animal, our understanding of the role of poetics in preserving the logic of the image will become clear. Examples in the previous chapters in which I investigated the themes of the hour, death and this world all manifested the idea of self-discovery and this is a central issue in the Sufi traditions. The main discussion in this chapter is about Oration 155, in which ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib describes a bat *al-khuffāsh*. Through exploring this oration, it will be seen that the author seems to have different intentions; one is to educate people about the bat, and the other conveys knowledge about the mystical path. While the former is obvious to the reader, the latter, although is not based on firm evidence, it is perceived through the language and usages of specific words that are built on mystical premises and seem to consist of more than describing a bat, as will be clarified in the discussion.

[673]See Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb Al-Ḥayawān*. This translation of the book title is based on Montogomery's book, see Chapter Two of this thesis.

[674] See section (1.2) in Chapter Two of this thesis.

1. The Bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and Other Arabic Sources

Oration 155[675]

> Praise to God for whom the attributes of knowing His essence have been withdrawn. His greatness has confounded those of intellect, so that they could not gain access to the utmost of His realm.
>
> He is God, the Truth, the Clarifier. He is truer and more manifest than the eye can see. He has not been comprehended through the intellect with any certainty; He cannot be likened to things. He cannot be captured by illusions; He cannot be represented. He created all creatures without an exemplar, without the counsel of a counsellor, nor the assistance of an assistant. His creation was completed by His command, and it bowed in obedience. And so, it responded (to Him) without delay, and obeyed without resistance.
>
> One of His subtle acts and wonders of his creation is the mysterious wisdom He has shown us in the bats that are gripped by the light within which everything unfolds, unfolding in the darkness that grips every living being; and how their eyes are dazzled, and they cannot use the light, see or find their ways in the bright sun or find acquaintances though things under the sun are clearly seen. God, by the sparkling of their eyes, has prevented them from moving through the different degrees of illumination. They are concealed in their shelters and do not travel in the glittering, clear sunlight. And so, their eyelids are closed in the day and they treat night as a lamp to go in search of sustenance. The darkness of night does not repel their sight nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from passing through it. As soon as the sun casts away its veil and the light of morning appears, and the rays of its light encroach upon the lizards in the ribs of the mountain, the bats pull down their eyelids and rest, content with their spoils gathered in the darkness of night.
>
> Glorified is He who has made the night as day for them; a time to seek their livelihood; Glorified is He who has made the day for peace and constancy. He has given them wings of flesh upon which they rise upwards, at their time of need; they look like the ends of ears without feathers or bones. However, you can see the veins quite distinctly. They have two wings which are neither too thin, so that they would tear in flying, nor too thick, so that they become too heavy. When they fly, their young ones clasp to them and seek refuge there, sinking down when they sink down and rising up when they rise. The infant does not leave them until its limbs become strong, its wing can support it, and it begins to recognise its ways of living and its own needs. Therefore, glorified is He, the maker of everything without any antecedent.

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[675] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 249.

الْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِي انْحَسَرَتِ الأَوْصَافُ عَنْ كُنْهِ مَعْرِفَتِهِ، وَرَدَعَتْ عَظَمَتُهُ العُقُولَ، فَلَمْ تَجِدْ مَسَاغاً إِلَى بُلُوغِ غَايَةِ مَلَكُوتِهِ!
هوَ اللهُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ، أَحَقُّ وَأَبْيَنُ مِمَّا تَرَى العُيُونُ، لَمْ تَبْلُغْهُ الْعُقُولُ بِتَحْدِيدٍ فَيَكُونَ مُشَبَّهاً، وَلَمْ تَقَعْ عَلَيْهِ الأَوْهَامُ بِتَقْدِيرٍ فَيَكُونَ مُمَثَّلاً. خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ عَلَى غَيْرِ تَمْثِيلٍ، وَلاَ مَشُورَةِ مُشِيرٍ، وَلاَ مَعُونَةِ مُعِينٍ، فَتَمَّ خَلْقُهُ بِأَمْرِه، وَأَذْعَنَ لِطَاعَتِهِ، فَأَجَابَ وَلَمْ يُدَافِعْ، وَانْقَادَ وَلَمْ يُنَازِعْ.
وَمِنْ لَطَائِفِ صَنْعَتِهِ، وَعَجَائِبِ خِلْقَتِهِ، مَا أَرَانَا مِنْ غَوَامِضِ الْحِكْمَةِ فِي هذِهِ الْخَفَافِيشِ الَّتِي يَقْبِضُهَا الضِّيَاءُ الْبَاسِطُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَيَبْسُطُهَا الظَّلاَمُ الْقَابِضُ لِكُلِّ حَيٍّ؛ وَكَيْفَ عَشِيَتْ أَعْيُنُهَا عَنْ أَنْ تَسْتَمِدَّ مِنَ الشَّمْسِ الْمُضِيئَةِ نوراً تَهْتَدِي بِهِ فِي مَذَاهِبِهَا، وَتَتَّصِلُ بِعَلاَنِيَةِ بُرْهَانِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى مَعَارِفِهَا. وَرَدَعَهَا بِتَلاَلُؤِ ضِيَائِهَا عَنِ الْمُضِيِّ فِي سُبُحَاتِ إِشْرَاقِهَا، وَأَكَنَّهَا فِي مَكَامِنِهَا عَنِ الذَّهَابِ فِي بُلَجِ اثْتِلاَقِهَا، فَهِيَ مُسْدَلَةُ الْجُفُونِ بِالنَّهَارِ عَلَى حِدَاقِهَا، وَجَاعِلَةُ اللَّيْلِ سِرَاجاً تَسْتَدِلُّ بِهِ فِي الْتِمَاسِ أَرْزَاقِهَا؛ فَلاَ يَرُدُّ أَبْصَارَهَا إِسْدَافُ ظُلَمَتِهِ، وَلاَ تَمْتَنِعُ مِنَ الْمُضِيِّ فِيهِ لِغَسَقِ دُجُنَّتِهِ؛ فَإِذَا أَلْقَتِ الشَّمْسُ قِنَاعَهَا، وَبَدَتْ أَوْضَاحُ نَهَارِهَا، وَدَخَلَ مِنْ إِشْرَاقِ نُورِهَا عَلَى الضِّبَابِ [الضلوع] فِي وِجَارِهَا، أَطْبَقَتِ الأَجْفَانَ عَلَى مَآقِيهَا، وَتَبَلَّغَتْ بِمَا اكْتَسَبَتْهُ مِنَ الْمَعَاشِ فِي ظُلَمِ لَيَالِيهَا. فَسُبْحَانَ مَنْ جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ لَهَا نَهَاراً وَمَعَاشاً، وَالنَّهَارَ لَهَا سَكَناً وَقَرَاراً! وَجَعَلَ لَهَا أَجْنِحَةً مِنْ لَحْمِهَا تَعْرُجُ بِهَا عِنْدَ الْحَاجَةِ إِلَى الطَّيَرَانِ، كَأَنَّهَا شَظَايَا الآذَانِ، غَيْرَ ذَوَاتِ رِيشٍ وَلاَ قَصَبٍ، إِلاَّ أَنَّكَ تَرَى مَوَاضِعَ الْعُرُوقِ بَيِّنَةً أَعْلاَماً، لَهَا جَنَاحَانِ لَمَّا يَرِقَّا فَيَنْشَقَّا، وَلَمْ يَغْلُظَا فَيَثْقُلاَ. تَطِيرُ وَوَلَدُهَا لاَصِقٌ بِهَا لاَجِئٌ إِلَيْهَا، يَقَعُ إِذَا وَقَعَتْ، وَيَرْتَفِعُ إِذَا ارْتَفَعَتْ، لاَ يُفَارِقُهَا حَتَّى تَشْتَدَّ أَرْكَانُهُ، وَيَحْمِلَهُ لِلنُّهُوضِ جَنَاحُهُ، وَيَعْرِفَ مَذَاهِبَ عَيْشِهِ، وَمَصَالِحَ نَفْسِهِ. فَسُبْحَانَ البَارِئِ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ، عَلَى غَيْرِ مِثَالٍ خَلاَ مِن غَيْرِهِ.

1.1. Description of the Bat

In comparing the description of the bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* with other sources that describe the bat, several differences can be clearly noted. First, the description in *Nahj al -Balāghah* reads as a vivid scenario. It draws the bat as a creature which chases knowledge about its own way of life, and in order to achieve this knowledge, the bat needs to learn certain qualities and skills. However, in other sources, the qualities of the bat are described in a scientific way, by which I mean they are stated in sequence without creating a visual, sensory and aesthetic appreciation of the bat and its natural surroundings. Second, *Nahj al- Balāghah* uses phrases and words that appeal to an audience interested in philosophy and poetry. For instance, in describing how that bat does not see in the light of day it states, "and how their eyes are dazzled so that they cannot see or find their ways in the bright sun". ʿAlī attributes a defect to the eyes, and because of this defect, the eyes are unable to "derive" light; the focus is put on the nature of the eye, in an attempt to answer a question about its condition. ʿAlī elaborates on this description by indicating that the bat is unable to find its companions, despite the obvious evidence available in the sunlight. ʿAlī establishes the method of connecting with acquaintances, whether the acquaintance is with knowledge or peers. This method of connection is normally via the clear light of the sun. Yet, as this is not the case with bats, the oration uses images to clarify this exceptional case. The bats "treat night as a lamp to go in search of sustenance". The night is likened to a lamp as it lights the way for the bat. A mastery over night is described, here.

In contrast, in *Kitāb ʿUyūn al-ʾAkhbār*, Ibn Qutaybah (d.276/889), in a paragraph titled *khaṣāʾiṣ al-Khuffāsh* [the qualities of the bat], describes the eyesight of the bat directly with this phrase: "They said: the wonder of the bat is that it does not see in the intense light nor in the intense darkness".[676] Although there is a difference between this information and that given in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, more important is the writing style, which in ibn Qutaybah is merely informative. Al-Jāḥiẓ in *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* describes the bat thus:

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[676] ʿAbdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb ʿUyūn al-ʾAkhbār*, vol: 2, edited by Al-Dānī ibn Munīr ʾĀl Zahwī (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah), 81. قالوا: عَجائبُ الخُفّاشِ أَنَّهُ لا يُبصِرُ في الضّوء الشّديد ولا في الظّلمة الشديدة.

> One of its wonders is that it neither flies in light nor in darkness. It is a bird with weak sight, with little rays coming out of its eye. Therefore, it does not appear in the darkness as this overwhelms the light of its sight, and defeats the rays of its eyes. And it does not appear in the day because the weakness of its eye causes its sight to sparkle in the intense whiteness of the day.[677]

Al-Jāḥiẓ's language is neither direct nor literal, like Ibn Qutaybah's. However, comparing it to *Nahj al-Balāghah*, we may notice, for example, how the latter starts to describe bats as "gripped by the light within which everything unfolds, unfolding in the darkness that grips every living being". ʿAlī puts the bats under the power of light and darkness; they are in the hands of this natural phenomenon. Yet, Al-Jāḥiẓ says the bat "does not appear in the darkness" and later "does not appear in the day" – this is a much more conventional observation. The dramatic image in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is thus clear, and the influences of light and darkness convey a movement that affects the bat and its particular movement. The details and sequence of Al-Jāḥiẓ's explanation is conveyed in beautiful language, as it presents reasons for this aspect of the bat. In describing it as beautiful I mean the diction used to describe a creature like the bat; for instance, when he describes the darkness as overwhelming the "light" of the bat's sight. Yet, what I intend to show is that *Nahj al-Balāghah* contains an imaginary context that continues to develop around the description of the bat, unlike other texts that just state their information in isolation; for these, no developmental accumulation or imaginative matrix can be found. Another example is when Al-Jāḥiẓ says "the sparkling thing is dangerous for the eyes of those who are known for their sharp sight".[678] Compare this with a similar phrase in *Nahj al-Balāghah*: "The sparkling of their eyes prevents them from moving through the different degrees of illumination". Thus, because of the sparkling of their eyes, that is overwhelmed by the sun, the bats are prevented from moving. Both use the words *tala'lu'* [sparkle] and *rādiʿ* [prevent] in different conjugations. While Al-Jāḥiẓ describes the sparkling thing as "dangerous", *Nahj al-Balāghah* puts this danger into action as the bat is not able to move through "different degrees of illumination". Yet, Al-Jāḥiẓ later continues to describe how the rays of the sun affect the bat, as the sun "prevents the ray of its eye" and so "therefore, it neither sees in the night nor in the day". He describes the nature of the bat, attempting to give reasons, but then puts the consequent action in a direct expression like

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[677] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān,* vol. 3, 295.
وَمِن أعاجيبِهِ أَنَّهُ لا يَطيرُ في ضوءٍ ولا في ظلمة. وهو طائرٌ ضَعيفُ قُوى البَصر، قَليل شُعاعِ العَين الفاصِلِ من النّاظر. ولذلك لا يَظْهَرُ في الظّلمة؛ لأنها تكون غامرة لضِياءِ بَصَرِهِ، غالِبة لِمقدار قوى شُعاع ناظِرِه. ولا يَظهرُ نهاراً؛ لأَنَّ بَصَرَهُ لِضَعفِ ناظِرِه يلتمع في شدَّةِ بياضِ النّهار.

[678] Ibid. ولأَنَّ الشّيءَ المُتَلألِئ ضارٌّ لِعُيون الموصوفين بِحِدّةِ البَصَر.

"therefore, it does not appear in the darkness". *Nahj al-Balāghah* constructs one image after and upon another, and as it does the scene is elaborated and the central wonder of the bat is explored. Starting with the eyes, then reaching the wings and on to the way it carries its infants, the scenario is meticulously constructed.

1.2. Mystical Reading of Oration 155

Specific words in the oration provoke a different, more interesting reading. These suggest philosophical and mystical meanings, leading to an interpretation of the oration as an account of the journey of the mystic. This kind of reading is not uncommon in the eleventh century, especially with regard to Ibn Sīnā's different projects. Ibn Sīnā's works present examples of symbolic stories. An example is the story about Salāmān and ʾAbsāl. This story manifests Ibn Sīnā's idea of the different forces of the self and the struggle the self undergoes in order for the soul to achieve salvation. Interpreters differ in their understanding; Badawī, for instance, disagrees with Al-Ṭūsī in his understanding of the symbols, while the latter does not refer the story to Ibn Sīnā.[679] In his analysis of the story, Mayer indicates:

> The allegory's stock philosophical interpretation reads Salāmān's wife as the animal soul with its drives which are by turns desirous and aggressive, and the hero [ʾAbsāl] as the acquired intellect. [ʾAbsāl's] intended, rightful bride signifies the practical intellect, which the animal soul strives to usurp. Escaping her, [ʾAbsāl] masters the West (the ream of sensibilia) and the East (the realm of intelligibilia), and brings their booty back to his brother Salāmān, symbol of the rational soul.[680]

Another example of Ibn Sīnā's writing is the poem on the soul, *Al-ʿAyniyyah* – "The Poem That Rhymes With the Letter *ʿAyn*" – in which he describes the journey of the soul back to its original ideal world from which it descended. Ibn Sīnā's *Risālat al-Ṭayr* – "Epistle of the Bird" – depicts the elements of the bird and the mountain as images of the soul and the setting for the struggle of the soul, respectively.

> The Epistle starts with this originally free bird joining a flock, only to be caught with the other birds by hunters. They all begin trying to flee but, finding they cannot, they give up hope of their erstwhile freedom and even wholly forget it. The bird's earlier freedom and forgetting of it, with the core message that a process of *anamnesis*, or recollection, is the prerequisite for the bird's (i.e., the soul's) salvation, is strikingly shared with the *Qaṣidat al-nafs*, as is the premise that the

[679] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Mawsūʿat al-Falsafah*, vol: 1 (Bayrūt: Al-Muassasah al-ʿArabiyyah lil-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr, 1984), 61.
[680] Toby Mayor (translator), *Avicenna's Allegory on the Soul: An Ismaili Interpretation* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016), 26

> soul pre-exists its state of embodiment. 'Recollection' could, at a stretch, be a trope for awakening to some new-fledged understanding of the higher, intelligible realm, but the outward sense of both texts is more in step with platonic, not Aristotelian, noetics.
>
> In the *Risālat al-ṭayr* deliverance only begins when the avian narrator notices escapees from the nets and cages, so 'they made me remember what I had been made to forget (*fa-dhakkaratnī mā kuntu unsītuhu*), and made loathsome that to which I had grown accustomed.' The escapees fly along with their snares still visible, clinging to their legs – referring to the on-going trammels of material existence, even for those awakened to philosophical contemplation of the higher intelligible world, and thereby *already*, in principle, freed: 'these [snares] did not burden them, for deliverance filled them with determination (*fatuʿaṣṣibuhā al-najāt*). Nor did the birds feel them, for life had become clear for them (*fa-taṣfū la-hā al-ḥayāt*). The escapees now in turn help the narrator free himself from his cage, and he flies up the mountain with them, only to be confronted by greater and greater peaks beyond them – eight in all. If we recall that the birds have already mounted a first peak from the lowest level where they were entrapped, we reach the tally of ten - that is, the ten nested spheres which form the architecture of Ibn Sīnā's Ptolemaic cosmos.[681]

Although it is not my intention to offer a detailed analysis of Ibn Sīnā's text, presenting some general ideas will help the reader understand my thought about the bat as representative of the mystic. It has also been indicated earlier in this thesis that, in the Christian tradition, the bird is viewed as a symbol of the spirit. Yet, in traditional interpretations of Muslim dream "a pigeon is a beautiful omen" – "from as early as the 3rd/9th century trained carrier-pigeons also had a serious military and intelligence role in Muslim lands by conveying long distance messages".[682] The soul itself in Medieval Arabic texts "is presented as a 'homing pigeon' par excellence descending here from an impossibly remote heavenly abode and then navigating all the way back to it".[683]

I will divide my analysis of the mystical dimension of Oration 155 into three sections. The first will discuss the introductory paragraph, which I believe is constructed in such a way that it supports a mystical reading. In order to support my argument, I will need to make some comparison with the introductory paragraphs of other orations. By close, word-by-word analysis, I will show how the words in question are joined together to achieve the intended meaning. The second section will discuss the main part of the oration. Paragraphs will be explained line-by-line, as every sentence has an internal meaning different from any superficial reading. The third will introduce some elements that construct the imaginary

[681] Ibid., 16.
[682] Ibid., 1.
[683] Ibid., 2.

context, and will show how these elements reflect the main action. These elements will be taken from different positions in the oration.

1.2.1. The Introductory Paragraph

This oration starts by praising God. Most of the phrases in the opening sentence are connected to the concept of knowledge; knowing God that is neither achieved through description nor through intellects. Yet, the word *ʾawṣāf* – "attributes" – is combined with the word *kunh* – "essence" – to mean all the attributes are insufficient for the human mind to comprehend the essence of God, the word attribute can also be linked to the world of attributions *ʿālam al-ṣifāt*. The word *ʿuqūl* [intellects] is connected to the word *malakūt* [His realm] as the purpose of the intellect. It shows the struggle of the mind to achieve mystic or gnostic knowledge, as the word *malakūt* is a reflection of the mystical side of the world.

In the second paragraph the concepts *ḥaqq* [truth] and *mubīn* [clarifier] are used. In their adjectival form as "truer" and "more manifest" they emphasise the clarity of the presence of God, which is of a quality higher than the ordinary human eye is capable of perceiving. The same notion continues to be elaborated in the next lines, which express the inability to see God even though He is the clearest and the truest in nature. Minds are not able to comprehend Him through definition [*taḥdīd*], as it is the job of minds to create relations between things in order to represent them in the logical syllogism, discussed earlier. Delusions also fail to evaluate Him, or to give any representation of Him, as the mind tries but fails to represent His truth. ʿAlī uses the word *ʾawhām* [delusions], and the phrase *taqaʿ ʿalayhi* which conveys the intensity of the grasping which then leads to the creation of the representation. This is different from the idea of *bulūgh* that occurs in the mind which attempts to achieve knowledge gradually, and which leads to the perception of similarity that, in turn, puts two entities – two similes – in front of the perceiver. It is notable that the text uses *ʾawhām* [delusion] and not *khayāl* [imagination] – this is justified by al-Fārābī's perspective, who claims that the imaginative faculty can be extended to reach a level that raises it to the highest of the cognitive faculties.[684] Thus, the oration indicates that God cannot be conceived of

[684] Ziyād, *Naẓariyyat al-Maʿrifah*, 200.

through the eyes, or by the cognitive faculties of the mind that, through analysis, comparison and representation, create only delusions that fail to achieve any knowledge about Him.

God's creation of living things is described as (1) without "paradigm" which is connected to "delusions" that may occur in the perceiver, (2) without "counsel" which is linked to the mind and (3) without "assistance" [*maʿūnah*] that may be linked to a physical support. The paragraph starts with its three dimensions of perception in a certain order: with the proof that God cannot be understood by physical perception, by the mind's functions, or by the delusions it produces; it then reverses the order of these dimensions when describing God's creation: from "delusions" it proceeds to the "mind" and then to "physical help". We can also understand this in relation to the idea that, when we talk about God, it is the human being that is searching; we start from the physical, the most materialistic human dimension, escalating gradually to the idea of analogy or simile [*tashbīh*], which is less materialistic, and then on to representation [*tamthīl*]. Then, when talking from the perspective of God, we notice first the idea of representation [*tamthīl*], then the level of the mind, as in the word *mashūrah* [counsel], and finally the physical dimension, in the word *maʿūnah* as physical support.

In the line "His creation was completed by His command", the verb is *tamma* [completed], not *ʾatamma,* which would translate as "God completed His creation"; this puts God into a different relationship with His creation, because His creation becomes the subject, and the act of creation is expressed in the passive voice. The word *biʾamrihi* [by His command] gives a more instant action as when God gives his order, things are done. This could be one of the indications which support the mystical idea I am attempting to present in this oration; as mystical knowledge might be represented beyond the notion of time. Then the phrases that follow explain the way in which God's creation responded, through the words *ʾadhʿana liṭāʿatih* [bowed in obedience], *ʾajāba wa lam yudāfiʿ* [responded (to Him) without delay], and *inqād wa lam yunāziʿ* [obeyed without resistance]. These verbs are reflections on the path of Sufism, which I believe are expressed in the section on the bat, and which I will return to. However, I would like first to introduce some other opening sentences in other orations of *Nahj al-Balāghah* to see how the way of praising God differs.

In Oration 35, which talks about some ordeals, the sentence praising God consists of a reflection on the pain people face.[685] This is shown through the phrases *al-khaṭb al-fādiḥ* and *al-ḥadath al-jalīl*: "Praise to God, even though time has arrived with the burdensome incident and the important event". This opening clearly represents what follows in the same Oration.

In Oration 45, which praises God while denigrating "this world", the opening sentence praises God whose mercy is never hopeless and blessing is never lacking; other phrases follow about His forgiveness and the need to obey him.[686] This is then followed by a description of "this world" in which the beginning suits the main text. Although I do not intend here to judge whether this text has a mystical meaning, its beginning is in harmony with the main subject in that they both reflect the materialism that "this world" manifests. Words such as *maqnūṭ* [hopeless], *makhluw* [lacking], *niʿmah* [blessing], *maghfirah* [forgiveness] and *ʿibādah* [worship] are all abstract expressions that convey a tangible way of interacting with God.

1.2.2. A Mystical Text

In the section of Oration 155 that introduces the bat, the first sentence combines two phrases *laṭāʾif ṣanʿatihi* [subtle acts] and *ʿajāʾib khilqatihi* [wonders of His creation]. The word *ʿajāʾib* [wonders], according to *Lisān al-ʿArab*, is used to describe new situations which might be denied or disbelieved, because of the shock they generate.[687] According to Al-Ṭūsī in his book *Al-Lumaʿ*, the concept *al-laṭīfah* [subtle] is defined as a gesture which appears to the understanding; it looms in the intellect but, because of its subtlety an precision, it is not comprehended. This is a concept common in the Sufi tradition: "through this gesture of His own, He wants you to grasp what He wants you to".[688]

The combination of "subtle" and "wonder" prepares us for a view that, although it reflects kindness, also stimulates a reaction connected to denial. Thus, it could be linked to the mystical experience within which, despite encountering compassion, the signs and

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[685] Al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 70. الحَمدُ للهِ وإن أتى الدّهْرُ بالخَطْبِ الفادِحِ، والحَدَثِ الجليل.

[686] Ibid., 78. الحمدُ للهِ غيرَ مقْنوطٍ من رَحمَتِه، ولا مَخْلُوٍّ من نِعْمَتِهِ، ولا مَأيوسٍ من مَغْفِرَتِه، ولا مُسْتَنْكَفٍ عَن عِبادَتِه.

[687] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab,* vol: 1, 406.

[688] ʾAbū Naṣr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Lumaʿ*, edited by ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Ṭāha ʿAbd al-Bāqī Surūr (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthaná, 1960), 448.

understandings thrown into the heart provoke moments of avoidance and denial. In both ways of reading this paragraph – whether literal or mystical – the imaginary context is vividly present.

ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib uses the phrase *ghawāmiḍ al-ḥikmah* – "mysterious wisdom" – as something revealed to us through knowledge of these bats. Wisdom is always connected to the Sufi experience, which is also mysterious. The connection of the two words in the phrase reflects a questioning attitude towards the following experience expressed through the way of life of the bats. In *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrá,* Al-Dumayrī (d.808/1405) when mentioning the bat, indicates that the bat *al-khuffāsh* (plural form *al-khafāfish*) flies in the night. The bat has a strange shape and attributes. The word *al-ʾakhfash* which is derived from the same root, describes the person who has small eye and weak sight.[689] According to some exegetes, the bat was created by Jesus, with God's permission. Thus, it is different from other creatures and this is why all other birds oppose and hate it; this is also why it only flies during the night. Other narratives indicate that people asked Jesus to create a new creature with special attributes.[690] What is important here is the idea that the bat is strange and solitary. This is how the mystic starts his journey to wisdom and truth. The mystic notion of "expatriate" fits the bat, as a 'bird' in exile represents the mystic in his path. Bedayr explains the terminology in different cultures and times. He indicates that "expatriate" [*al-ightirāb*] indicates the disconnection the human being feels towards God; it is – according to Ibn ʿArabī – exemplified by the figure of Adam, descended to earth from heaven. He explains that the Sufi continues to be an expatriate, lonely and longing for God. Thus, to satisfy his longing, the seeker looks for a specific experience which empowers the soul with the features that enable him or her to reach the kingdom of God [*al-ḥaḍrah al-ʾilāhiyyah*]. In preparation the Sufi needs guidance and the whole experience of the Sufi is called *ṭarīq* – "the path".[691] Bedayr adds that the idea of "migration from home" [*al-ightirāb ʿan al-waṭan*] that the Sufi embarks upon is not because of his anger towards his people and society, but is a result of his longing soul towards the truth that is found in the kingdom of God.[692] Thus it is not about the external world but rather, it is the inner nature of the mystic. In *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah*, Al-Tawḥīdī describes the path of

[689] Kamāl al-Dīn Al-Dumayrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrá*, edited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Fāḍilī, vol: 2 (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah), 375.
[690] Ibid., 376.
[691] Shaʿbān ʾAḥmad Bedayr, *Qaḍāyā al-Shiʿr al-Ṣūfi bayn al-Fikr wa al-Fan: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah* (ʾIrbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2019), 63.
[692] Ibid., 83.

the Sufi, thus: "the knower is inwardly filled with light, his ocean glows fiery, his passion is of those who dive deep in the kingdom of God".[693] He then adds, "Oh God, we take these difficult paths, stay patient towards the hunger, poverty and loneliness we encounter there, aiming to escape towards your light, which enlightens your world; through which the invisible becomes visible".[694]

In Epistle no. 23 – according to Hassan's edition – after expressing his feelings towards his situation, Al-Tawḥīdī says: "this is the tongue of Sufism, and Sufism's meaning is bigger than its name, its truth is more honourable than its form".[695] Many of his epistles are reflections on his Sufi passion; in the paragraphs quoted he is clear in his expression about this path.

In *Dawwāmāt al-Tadayyun* [Whirlpool of Beliefs] Zaydān indicates that the beginnings of Sufism go back to the sixth century. All the different paths of Sufism share the same quality of the "chain"; this is the connection between the *mashāyikh* (plural of *shaykh*), and everyone is connected by means of the *ʿahd* [the testament]. All the paths agree that the links maintain a connection to their origin, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, who got the mystical knowledge from the Prophet Muḥammad and taught them to his companion Kumayl ibn Ziyād, who then taught the other *mashāyikh*.[696] The Sufis have been known for their disagreement with the *Mutakallimīn* – the "speculative theologians". They did not bother themselves with responding to them or engaging with their arguments, yet some of the Sufi leaders have been known for declaring their own theology. They also have been known for their notion about the implicit and explicit reading of religious texts. They believe in the spiritual connection with God – or what they called *ittiṣāl* – which is achieved through dreams, *ʾishrāqāt* [enlightenment] or *al-kashf* [the uncovering of high truth]. The Sufis are also well known for their extremism in understanding texts according to their own reading of the terms.[697]

It is usually the figure of a bird that is used to represent the soul.[698] However, in Oration 155 it is a specific type of a flying animal – "the bat" – that represents a certain stage of the soul's path. As I mentioned above, in the Sufi tradition, the image of the bird represents the

[693] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-ʾIshārāt al-ʾIlāhiyyah*, 170.
[694] Ibid.
[695] Ibid., 174.
[696] Yūsuf Zaydān, *Dawwāmāt al-Tadayyun* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2018), 189.
[697] Ibid., 193.
[698] Bedayr, *Qaḍāyā al-Shiʿr al-Ṣufi*, 228.

soul's remembrance of, and longing for, its ideal world *ʿālamahā al-mithālī*. This view is seen in Ibn Sīnā's poem *al-ʿAyniyyah*.[699]

The first description of the bats employs the words *qabḍ* – "grip" – and *basṭ* – "unfolding". These two terms are used in the Sufi tradition to describe the emotional states of the Sufi. In their connection to the heart, these words signify states like fear and hope in relation to the self *nafs*.[700] Because of the weakness of its eyes which is indicated by the word *ʿashiyat* [dazzled], the bat is not able to get from the sun the light that will lead its way. This is a representation of what can be called "the materialistic state" in which, although there is the physical light of the sun, the soul does not feel able to reach its level of satisfaction. This happens when it feels that it misses the way back to its ideal world.

The sentence which starts with the verb *tattaṣil* [find their acquaintances] is the third of the three sentences that describe the bats and starts with the meanings of: *qabḍ* [grip], *basṭ* [unfolding] and *ittiṣāl* [connection, which I translate as "find" as a way of connecting to others or knowledge]. In this paragraph the sun is mentioned twice: the first time it is linked with the word *muḍīʾah* [light] – the physical expression of the sunlight, and this phrase is a continuation of the previous phrase that discusses the notion of *basṭ*; the second time it is linked with the words *burhān* [evidence whic translates "clearly seen"] and *maʿārif* [knowledge and translates as "acquaintances"]. As I mentioned, this idea of *ittiṣāl* [connecting or finding] is the third quality of these bats, or souls (after the two qualities of *qabḍ* and *basṭ* that consist of explained by the idea of the dazzled eyes). This can be understood by seeing the difference between the two verbs *tastamidda* [derives and is translated as "use the light"] and *tattaṣilu* [find] as the latter is not a conjoined noun.

Thus, after the *basṭ*, now it is able to connect – through this enlightening evidence that has been provided – to its own knowledge. Thus, we can notice the effect of the predicative statements in the particular connection between the subject and the predicate in all the above features. After discovering the first syllogism which connects the bat and the soul of a mystic, we are then able to develop ongoing poetic statements that support both the image of the bat and the image of the mystic. These indications appear in predicating the *qabḍ* [grip] and *basṭ* [unfolding] to the *ḍiyāʾ* [light] and *ẓalām* [darkness] and in predicating *ittiṣāl*

[699] Ibid.

[700] ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, edited by ʿAbd al-ʿĀl Shāhīn (Al- Qāhirah: Dār al-Manār, 1992), 64.

[connection or finding] to the bat and sun – also, in connecting the sun with the word *burhān* [evidence].

The following section starts with *wa radaʿahā* [God has prevented] in which the verb *radaʿa* is used in its past tense following the verb *ʾarānā* [has shown us]. This refers to a stage in which the connection between the bats and deeper levels of acquaintance is not fully achieved, as the word *radaʿa* conveys, yet the mystical experience has been encountered. Although the soul is now touched by the light of truth, it is prevented from going deeper into the different levels. Its eyelid is dropped and the night is used as a lamp. This can be understood as the little light which, when it comes into the soul, helps the Sufi to go deeper into the darkness, and what *ʾarzāq* [sustenance] means here is that which is achieved through the journey. However, his elevation into the level of light is not yet permitted. The word *ʾabṣār*, plural of *baṣar* [sight] derives from the verb *ʾabṣara* or *baṣura*, which is the conscious action of seeing; it comes with perceiving, while *naẓara* [to look] is the functioning of the physical eye to copy the picture into the intellect. Thus, although darkness is intense, the mystic is still able to go within it. Then when the sun uncovers its mask and becomes clear to the perceiver "the sun casts away its veil and the light of morning appears" – its lights come into the burrows to affect the surrounding areas. The sunlight in this phrase is represented by the word *ʾishrāq* which reflects the abstract notion of light *nūr* as an opposite to the word *ḍiyāʾ* – "the physical aspect of the light". When ʿAlī describes where this light has entered, the words *ḍibāb* [lizards] and *wijār* [the ribs] are used in reference to the animals that live under the earth. Yet, in brackets the word *ḍulūʿ* [ribs] is also used, which may mean the small or weak mountain, and may also mean the part of the body that covers the heart. Therefore, the light is now allowed to enter into the heart. When the enlightenment has happened, by which I mean the experience of encountering and seeing the truth, the ability to act starts. By using the word *ʾaṭbaqat* "the bats pull down", the peaceful status is now in. Comparing with a similar phrase which is previously stated when the light had slightly touched the soul, the word *musdalah* [being pulled down, which is translated as "are closed"] is used to describe the eyelid. The difference between *musdalatu al-jufūn* and *ʾaṭbaqat al-ʾajfān* in the different phrases contributes to our understanding. The noun *musdalatu* is *ism mafʿūl* [participle] derived from the form *ʾafʿala; ʾasdala*. Being as participle conveys the notion of being acted on; the action in the verb *ʾasdala* has been performed on *al-jufūn* [the eyelids]. The Sufi or the bat is not the

one who chooses to let down his eyelids, preventing himself from seeing what he seeks at that stage. The word *al-Jufūn* is a plural built on several changes to the original word *jamʿ taksīr* and it is a plural for the many *jamʿ kathrah* which – in contrast to *ʾajfān*; a plural for the few in the other phrase – reflects the possible amount of Sufis who may reach these different levels. As for the second phrase, the plural for the few; *ʾajfān* is linked to the verb *ʾaṭbaqat*. The phrase conveys a chosen action by the Sufi in which he closes his eyelids and it is connected to a few numbers which means that not all the mystics who experience the first way in which their eyes are closed will experience the second way when they pull down their eyelids. A chosen act reflects a level of satisfaction that allows the Sufi to close his eyes and stay with what has come into his heart to use it for the daytime. The verb *taballaghat* – "to be content with" – is derived from the same root of the word *bulūgh* which conveys that the goal has been reached.

At this stage of the journey, the daytime is described as calm and settled: *sakanan wa qarāran*. None of these words constrains the view of the day, in relation to the bat, to that of a sleeping orientation; they are just reflections of the calmness and serenity that the Sufi at this stage is in. They are then provided with wings that come from their own flesh; things maybe grow from the inside and are not added to the body. ʿAlī uses the word *taʿruju*; this is connected to *miʿrāj*, which is – according to *Lisān al-ʿarab* – a kind of stairs that souls climb when they are held or gripped.[701] The wings are likened to human ears; although this is a description of bats' wings, it can also refer to one of the ways that the soul flies; it is through hearing that the mystic can discover specific knowledge. The wings are not like those of normal birds; they are without feathers. This shows another reason for choosing this animal in particular to represent the journey of the soul of the Sufi: the quality of flying is not connected to feathers, which means it is not a normal kind of flying. It is probably one in which the soul leaves the body temporarily. Without the feathers, they are not going to be known as flying beings. However, their veins are clear; the word *ʾaʿlām* [flags which is translated as distinctly] is used here, to indicate that there will be enough marks on them to be noticed. While this paragraph talks about the quality of the wings of the bat and how they work, the following phrases talk about how these wings are now prepared to carry a young bat, or a Sufi. The wings are not too heavy and not too light to carry both the adult and the infant. The young

[701] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol: 1, 793.

Sufi is influenced by his teacher and learns from him, until he has acquired the spiritual knowledge and strength to "fly" and to find his own way.

At the end of this oration, ʿAlī praises God using the word *Al-Bāriʾ* "the maker", which is derived from the root ba-ra-ʾa and contains the meanings of being healed and distant. In the *Qurʾānic* verse (59:24) this particular name of God appears between two others: *Khāliq* and *Muṣawwir* – "He is God: the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful".[702] Both of these two names could have been used to end this oration. Yet, *Al-Bāriʾ* is more connected to the creation of animals, rather than other elements in the universe such as the sky and the earth.[703] The word *khalq* [creating] is considered to mean the planning and evaluation, before creation itself,[704] while the word *Bāriʾ* is connected to the real action of creation. Yet, the word *Muṣawwir* is linked to the "image" *ṣūrah* which is the shape of every creation, while *Bāriʾ* conveys the meaning of creating the essence and the accidental features.[705] While *Bāriʾ* is not "to plan" but "to create in reality", which consists of the process, not the presentation of form, though it is also connected to the idea of "essence". The word *Bāriʾ* is the most appropriate word to end this oration in its description of the details of the bat's creation, and in its description of the essence and the process of the journey of the mystic. Finally, he uses the word *mithāl* to indicate that there was no precedent or model upon which God based His creation.

The word *mithāl* can be linked to the beginning of this oration, when the "essence" of knowing God and the mystical side of the world were introduced in the phrases *kunh maʿrifatih* [knowing His essence] and *ghāyati malakūtihi* [the utmost of His realm]. The word *mithāl* is a result of *Al-Bāriʾ*, which is connected to the creation of essence.

We encounter in the second paragraph the phrase "He created all creatures without an exemplar" using the word *tamthīl* [representation which is translated as exemplar]. Thus, with the idea of creating – *khalq,* "the planning of creation" – there was no *tamthīl*. According to *The Dictionary of Arabic Rhetoric Terms & Their Development*, the term *tamthīl* is used to refer to the simile *tashbīh* even though some later theorists differentiate between the two

[702] Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 1998), 576.
هو الله الخالِقُ البارئُ المُصَوّرُ، لَهُ الأسماءُ الحُسنى

[703] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol: 1, 19.

[704] Ibid., vol: 5, 318.

[705] Ibid., vol: 1, 19.

terms.[706] While the oration refuses to describe God in terms of human features, by denying them it actually makes connections between different elements. When the intellectual aspect of creation is represented by the word *khalq*, it is connected to the idea of simile *tashbīh* by using the word *tamthīl*. The practical aspect of the creation conveyed by the word *al-Bāriʾ* is connected to the term *mithāl*. Thus, *tamthīl* is the abstract notion of *mithāl* which is the concrete manifestation of the thing.

1.2.3. Dramatic Elements

As the imaginary context is constructed via the image of the bat, the elements within the context are not connected together through different images and tools of imagery. In the cases of death, the hour and this world which were investigated in the previous chapters, the links between the elements manifest, for example, through different metaphors or similes that build on each other. For instance, "the hour drives" which is an implicit metaphor *istiʿārah makniyyah*, then "people are perplexed in darkness" which indicates a development in the imaginary context and then, for example, the description of piety as a fort which is a simile. These are different metaphors and similes when they come in sequence, the dramatic context is created and is vividly seen. Yet, in the case of the mystic, all the images are parts of the bat. From the bat and its features, it becomes possible to illuminate on the journey of the mystic. It is the kind of the descriptive language that is capable to create a scenario of the imaginary context. Although this might be very similar to any Sufi reading that is built on allegorical representation, the syllogism which starts the imaginary context is different. The allegory which is understood within the Sufi tradition is usually constructed on symbols that are known to the Sufis and are present in their dictionaries or within their circles of gatherings. For example, the bird is a symbol of the soul, romantic expressions are representations of the Sufi's love and longing for God. These are known from the works of different Sufi poets, intellectuals and teachers. Yet, the imaginary context of the bat is bult on the inference of a previous poetic syllogism which is known to the Sufis "the souls is a flying bird". This inference is then connected to a more specific idea which is "expatriation" as a feature of the Sufi's

[706] ʾAḥmad Maṭlūb, *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Balāghiyyah wa taṭawwurihā* (Bayrūt: 2000), 415. In *Lisān al-ʿArab,* vol: 6, p.441: *maththaltuhu* "I represented it" if I pictured it through writing and other ways. *Tamthīl* – representing something through something else – is to liken one thing to another.

feeling. This idea with other ideas that feature the Sufi's experience such as encountering the darkness and chaos of the self are distinctly obvious in the bat which is capable to see through darkness and look in it for sustenance. This syllogism illuminates on a new symbol which is "the bat". This symbol has been understood because of the way the whole imaginary context is created and developed upon the nature and features of the bat that find its parallel understanding in the mystical journey. This way of elaborating on a symbol is what Cassirer is concerned with, as I argue.[707] It is the ability to read symbols within the given context and these symbols are built syllogistically according to knowledge that have been previously introduced according to Al-Fārābī's understanding of syllogism.[708] All these thoughts present *Nahj al-Balāghah* as an appealing text for readers in Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's age. Both mystical ideas and syllogistic understanding were dominant at the tenth century as I indicated in the first part of this thesis. It is as Nahj al-Balāghah starts evokes an image that is known to them as "the soul is a flying bird" not by expressing it, but by stating a more elaborated phrase. When this phrase is combined with words that sound familiar to the image of the mystical path which they experience, they will gradually make connections and build the imaginary context in their minds. By these words I mean, expressions like *maʿārif* [knowledge or acquaintance], *ʾIshrāq* [enlightenment] and other words that are not really needed in a description of a bat, as can be seen in Al-Jāḥiẓ's paragraph about the bat, for example. Thus, the unity of the imaginary context of the bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is clear; I would like to shed more light on some of the elements, however. I believe these are the elements that construct the scenario and their movements create the drama. It can be noted that these elements are the ones on which the author focused his writing about the bat, even though there was more knowledge about bats to be presented if it was a merely scientific text. Yet, the eyes, light and darkness, the wings and the way the bats interact through moving verbs are what the description of the bat is focused upon.

Although the fact that they are only able to see at night gives the eye more importance, and the bat being a flying mammal would be a priority in any description of the bat, there are other things that could have been included in such a description. Things like the exact way that bats look for their food is very unique scientifically, and the fact that bats, although they fly, are mammals and, therefore, give birth rather than lay eggs, could be important aspects to

[707] See the section on theory in this thesis.
[708] See Chapter One "the Imaginary Context".

present. These can be noted when looking at the oration that describes the peacock, where from the beginning the intimate relationship of the peacock with its mate is introduced. The point is that what connects these elements in the bat's description is their connection to the journey of the soul, rather than their just being particular aspects of the bat's natural features or behaviour.

Movements

In this section I focus on the movements that are introduced in the oration on the bat, where relationships and connections are built through the action of movement. This action is represented through three levels of movements.

The first type of movements is seen in the following terms: *qabḍ* [grip]; *basṭ* [unfolding] which conveys the meaning of stretching; *tastamidda* [to derive from which is translated as "use"], but this derivation is meant to expand the bats' ability and therefore the notion of "expansion" is introduced; *tattaṣilu* [to connect which is translated as "find"]; *radaʿahā* [prevented], *ʾakannahā* [are concealed]; *yaruddu* [repels], which can also be translated as "obstruct" – *yaruddu* can denote a reaction, and so can refer not only to an obstacle but also a responding action that affects the attempt already initiated by the bat, and so if the repelling is just about prevention or obstruction it conveys the idea that this obstacle is there even though the bat has not started the attempt to see in the darkness; and *tamtaniʿu* [to prevent]. These all are movements that can be introduced through the movement of the hand; movements between two elements that are at the same level and are interacting. These all are introduced in the paragraph in which the soul is not able to use the light of the sun. It is important to go through the darkness in order to be able then to gain clear knowledge.

Then when the sun starts to get into the soul through its light, there is a kind of independency that appears in the actions, such as *ʾalqat* [cast or threw], *badat* [appeared] and *dakhalat* [encroached]; there is no wait for the other entity to interact or accept what is received. While the first group of verbs reflects the stage in which the *murīd* attempts to achieve something, the second group shows how the light makes a powerful move into the life of the mystic. This results in the introduction of the verbs *ʾaṭbaqat* [pulled down] and *taballaghat* [contented], reflecting the acceptance and surrender to the experience which can

be described as a silent or subtle kind of movement. To clarify further, in the first group of verbs, *istamaddat* and *tattaṣilu* could have been (in terms of the meaning) replaced by verbs such as *ta'khudh* [to take] or *taltaqiṭ* [to pick], however, these verbs give the power to one party over the other; presenting the action as happening forcibly. Then, after the group of verbs that reflect acceptance, the third section presents the movement of flying from low to high, enacted with the free will to sink and rise.

Thus, the movement in this imaginary context can be summarized in three points. Firstly, at the same level of interaction it is like a "pull and push" motion. Second, from up – "the sun" – to down – "the bat/mystic"; this continues to its maximum points when acceptance and surrender has occurred. Then, the third is from down – "the bat/ the mystic" – to up – "to the universe". The movements as such are reflections of the levels of knowledge in the path of the mystic. In "The Sufi Path of Love in 'Aṭṭār's: Conference of the Birds", Lobel studies a poem by the Sufi poet 'Aṭṭār (627/1230) who is considered the greatest Sufi poet after Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī. As Lobel investigates the allegory of birds, she explains that "the King Solomon is a key figure in the poem's background".[709] As in the *Qur'ānic* verse (27:17) Solomon declares, "People, we have been taught the speech of birds" *manṭiq al-ṭayr* which could be interpreted as the conversation or language of the birds[710]. Yet, what they have been taught has also been interpreted as "the secret, intimate knowledge of God held within the soul".[711] The syllogism that combines the soul with its knowledge about God, and the bird is established. Thus, knowledge within the soul is *manṭiq al-ṭayr* [the speech of the birds]. Therefore, the soul is the bird. While I am not here presenting 'Aṭṭār as part of the context of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, his poetry is a part of the Sufi tradition. The image in this poem shares similar elements with the image of the bat:

> Like Moses you have seen the flames burn high
> On Sinai's slopes and there you long to fly ....
> There you will understand unspoken words
> Too subtle for the ears of mortal birds[712]

While it reflects the way of salvation and receiving the knowledge of God, this also sheds light on some elements, such as the ability to fly and the ears of the mortal birds. While in my view

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[709] Diana Lobel, "The Sufi Path of Love in 'Aṭṭār's: Conference of the Birds," in *Philosophies of Happiness: A Comparative Introduction to the Flourishing Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 187.

[710] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 240. وقالَ يا أَيُّها النّاسُ عُلّمنا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْر

[711] Lobel, "The Sufi Path of Love," 187.

[712] Ibid., 188.

they convey a similar meaning, addressing birds as "mortal" insists on the idea of an ending stage for the soul represented as a bird. This notion is also found in the *Ṭawāsīn* of the tenth century Sufi poet Al-Ḥallāj (d.309/922) when he says

> 8 - I have seen one of the Sufi birds, who has two wings, and he denied me when he kept flying.
> 9 - He asked me about the purity, so I said to him: cut your wings with the tool of decay *miqrāḍ al-fanāʾ* otherwise, do not follow me *lā tabghinī*.
> 10 - He then said: with my two wings I fly to my beloved friend *ʾilfī*, then I said: woe to you "There is nothing like Him: He is the All Hearing, the All Seeing"[713], he thus fell in the sea of understanding and sank.[714]

It is clear that these two examples share the idea of the bird as a stage. Although wings are needed to reach God's knowledge, it will also need to get rid of these wings to go deeper in knowledge of the divine. As we talk about movements, they are expressed through the elements that interact together and produce these movements.

Light and Darkness; Day and Night

Light and darkness are given the active capabilities *qabḍ* and *basṭ* not only in relation to the bats, but in relation to everything, and every living being. According to Lisān al-ʿArab, one of the meanings of the word *yabsiṭu* [to unfold] is to "give life" or "to imbue the body with the spirit".[715] The word *yaqbiḍu* [to grip] may convey the meaning of to "take life from".[716] The bat is presented as an exception as darkness does not harm it; normally, light *ḍiyāʾ* gives life to everything *kul shayʾ* while darkness takes life from every living being *kul ḥayy*.

Using the words "everything" and "every living being" may indicate that "everything" is given the opportunity to be alive when the light spreads, and everything that "is living" will be taken in the dark of the night. However, there is no need for the life of everything to be taken during the darkness of night, which is the darkness of "sleep". This means that those things that are considered non-living, they actually have life and this life is not taken from them during the night, as they are opposite to the living beings.

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[713] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 312. لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (42:11)

[714] Al-Ḥussayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, edited by Saʿdī Ḍannāwī (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 2006), 152.

[715] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* vol: 4, 187.

[716] Ibid., 155.

Thus, night is a time that only "living beings" are affected by. The light [*ḍiyāʾ*] gives life to everything daily, without these things being affected by the night, as their spirits need to be existing throughout the whole day. This also can be linked to the notion in the *Qurʾānic* verse (17: 44): "The seven heavens and the earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise, though you do not understand their praise: He is most forbearing, most forgiving".[717] This presents everything as praising God but people are not aware of these things. Light and darkness control souls in the life of things. However, when it comes to the bat, light is the thing that causes the separation between the bat and its "living" and night is what causes its rebirth as the Sufi. In the *Qurʾānic* verse (24:35), God is described as the light: "God is the Light of the heavens and earth".[718] This may mean that during the initial stages of light when the Sufi is introduced to knowledge, he is given the quality to be "a living being" which means someone who "truly lives" or "lives by truth". This leads to the idea that the old self is being taken away in the darkness and the Sufi begins to find sustenance during the night. This means the Sufi tries to discover what the true life looks like and things that are needed in order to live a true life. Yet, in Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd's commentary, this *qabḍ* and *basṭ* is meant to affect the eyes of the bats.[719]

Eyes

Another element of the imaginary context is the eyes of the bats. ʿAlī by indicating that they are unable to get light from the sun, he presents what actually should have been the case. The light should guide them along their paths *madhāhibihā*. The bats also are expected to be able to utilise the clarity the sun provides to reach knowledge *maʿārifihā*. However, this is not the case because of the sickness of the eyes which is reflected through the word *ʿashiyat*. This limitation prevents the bats from accessing the different levels of knowledge the light contains. This is pictured as the sun spreads its rays toward the eyes but the eyes are not able to engage with the light. This makes the bats turn toward dwelling in the night, using it as a "lamp" to look for sustenance. While in the light of the sun, the bats should have been able to go deeper into different levels and paths of knowledge, but the light of darkness offers the only

[717] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 177.
[718] Ibid., 223.
[719] Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol: 9, 183.

possibility of a livelihood. Thus, we are introduced to a flying animal which has lost its ability to gain its own knowledge and to choose from different paths because of the sickness of its eyes, and then left only with one way of seeking its everyday sustenance. This is reflected in the path of a Sufi, in which life in its normality will not encourage the Sufi to see the way and the truth. Yet, it is through darkness, which is usually a description of a painful experience, that the Sufi can turn this darkness into a lamp that leads to the path of true living where sustenance is reached. For the bat, although darkness is not described as painful, it is presented as a result of the bat being unable to achieve knowledge.

Wings

The word "wings" is introduced three times in the last paragraph, with three words: *ʾajniḥah* [wings], *janāḥān* [two wings] and *janāḥuhu* [his wing]. The plural term is linked to the state in which the bats are prepared to fly. It is also connected to the description of its shape, the material of its flesh and its appearance. The "two wings" are connected to the idea of weight in terms of its lightness and heaviness. The one wing is introduced with the bat's young. While the word *janāḥ* may also mean "the arm", the "two wings" may mean the bat's arms, from which the wings spread. The plural *ʾajniḥah* denotes the flying wings, and these are likened to pieces of the ears which do not have feathers and are divided into sections (or levels) because of the veins which may make them look like many wings. "Its wing" is introduced when describing the infant; when he gets his own strength and his only wing helps him to meet his own needs. It might not be the time to fly yet, but it is the time to leave the parent as the phrase *yaḥmilahu lil-nuhūḍi janāḥuhu* indicates. This singular form can also mean that the wing of the bat in his early times is constructed of one layer instead of many.

The description of the bat focuses on these three elements illustrated above. It does not mention other elements that would contribute to our understanding of bats; things like what kind of food it eats, how it gives birth and grows and so on, which is usually mentioned when describing animals. This concentration on the three elements validates the reflection of the imaginary context on the mystic journey which is built on these elements; eyes, wings, light and darkness and movements.

As I mentioned when introducing the section on the bats, I suggest the path of the mystic in his journey to the truth as a way of looking at the imaginary context in this oration. I build my argument on the words that are used in this oration; the chosen parts of the bats that are discussed, the beginning of the oration and its end, all work together to manifest a systematic construction. To clarify my point further, I would like to shed light on some aspects of another oration in which the peacock is described. I will argue that this description may also convey an implicit meaning which presents the peacock as a symbol.

2. The Peacock

Oration 165[720]

> God has created all the different kinds of wonderful creatures; the living, the lifeless, the still, and the moving. He has established clear proof of His subtle creative power and His great might, before which minds bow down to Him in acknowledgement and submission; evidence of His Oneness caws in our ears; birds created in various shapes, living in burrows in the earth, in the openings of high passes and on the peaks of mountains. They possess different kinds of wings, and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of (God's) authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and open air.

This oration starts with a section on the creation of birds in general. The phrase "has created all the different kinds of wonderful creatures" and the introduction to the section on the bat in Oration 155 –"wonders of his creation" – focuses on the same notion of creativeness. While in Oration 165 the word *khalqan* denotes the creation, in Oration 155 *khilqatihi* conveys both the creation and the meaning of intuition, of "knowing God". The introduction of Oration 165 continues with words describing the physical world, such as "the living", "the lifeless", "the still" and "the moving". All these words turn the mind toward the physical world. This physicality is also connected to the notion of concrete evidence, presented through the word *shawāhid*, which leads the intellect to acknowledge the greatness of God. While oration 155 reflects on the mystical path, it concentrated on the spiritual and abstract aspects of the journey, oration 165 can be understood as reflecting on the recognition of the physical aspects of the journey. Both orations are concerned with liberating the soul which is represented through a flying creature.

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[720] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 270.
ابْتَدَعَهُمْ خَلْقاً عَجِيباً مِنْ حَيَوَان وَمَوَات، وَسَاكِن وَذِي حَرَكَات؛ وَأَقَامَ مِنْ شَوَاهِدِ الْبَيِّنَاتِ عَلَى لَطِيفِ صَنْعَتِهِ، وَعَظِيمِ قُدْرَتِهِ، مَا انْقَادَتْ لَهُ الْعُقُولُ مُعْتَرِفَةً بِهِ، وَمُسْلِّمَةً لَهُ، وَنَعَقَتْ فِي أَسْمَاعِنَا دَلاَئِلُهُ عَلَى وَحْدَانِيَّتِهِ، وَمَا ذَرَأَ مِنْ مُخْتَلِفِ صُوَرِ الأَطْيَارِ الَّتِي أَسْكَنَهَا أَخَادِيدَ الأَرْض، وَخُرُوقَ فِجَاجِهَا، وَرَوَاسِي أَعْلاَمِهَا، مِنْ ذَاتِ أَجْنِحَة مُخْتَلِفَة، وَهَيْئَات مُتَبَايِنَة، مُصَرَّفَة فِي زِمَامِ التَّسْخِيرِ، وَمُرَفْرِفَة بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا فِي مَخَارِقِ الْجَوِّ الْمُنفَسِحِ، وَالْفَضَاءِ الْمُنفَرِجِ.

The evidence introduced in this section of oration 165 is connected to the physical senses, such as the ears which hear the calling of His signs. Yet, in Oration 155, a loud voice or evidential sign was implicitly introduced in the word *ʿalāniyah* [obviousness]. In the description of the bats the words *bāriʾ* [maker] and *khalaqa* [created] were used as reflections of the creator; in Oration 165 the verb *dharaʾa* is presented. *Khalaqa* is linked to the plan of creation, *baraʾa* is linked to action and practical creation, the word *dharaʾa* is connected to all of creation and to the notion of *dhuriyyah* [offspring] which indicates the idea of continuity of life and time that we do not encounter in the combination of the words *bāriʾ* and *mithāl* in the phrase "the maker of everything without any antecedent" which constitutes of the idea of the instant creation.

After this introduction, a section about the peacock is presented. It is not my aim here to go through this section in detail. Although it could be understood as a merely beautiful scientific description of the peacock, it could also be seen as a reflection on ideal being and on pleasure. It represents the pleasure of life, in ways unlike any other oration when it describes "this world" *al-dunyā*; this oration makes it desirable without the usual associations with corruption, decay and death.

The section on the peacock can be divided into three sections: the first describes the intimate relationships of the peacock, with a representation of its offspring and the continuity of the generations;[721] the second section describes its beauty, colourful feathers and features;[722] the third section describes the way its feathers are renewed over time, when this happens and the process of moulting.[723] While the first section reflects upon the idea of continuity and the blessings of children, in addition to intimate pleasure, the second may reflect on different aspects of grace through the metaphor of colour and beauty in its colourful representation, and the last is a reflection on the inevitability of change that needs to be encountered in order to achieve growth. Although the feathers are described as exactly arranged, they are able to reflect different colours at the same time. This may also reflect the idea that different aspects

[721] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 272.
إِذَا دَرَجَ إِلَى الأُنْثَى نَشَرَهُ مِنْ طَيِّهِ، وَسَمَا بِهِ مُطِلاً عَلَى رَأْسِهِ كَأَنَّهُ قِلْعُ دَارِيّ عَنَجَهُ نُوتِيُّهُ. يَخْتَالُ بِأَلْوَانِهِ، وَيَمِيسُ بِزَيَفَانِهِ. يُفْضِي كِإِفْضَاءِ الدِّيَكَةِ، وَيَزُرُّ بِمَلاَقِحِهِ أَزَّ الْفُحُولِ الْمُغْتَلِمَةِ لِلضِّرَابِ.

[722] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 273.
تَخَالُ قَصَبَهُ مَدَارِيَ مِنْ فِضَّة، وَمَا أَنْبتَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ عَجِيب دَارَاتِهِ، وَشُمُوسِهِ خَالِصَ الْعِقْيَانِ، وَفِلَذَ الزَّبَرْجَدِ. فَإِنْ شَبَّهْتَهُ بِمَا أَنْبَتَتِ الأَرْضُ قُلْتَ: جَنِيَّ جُنِيَ مِنْ زَهْرَةِ كُلِّ رَبِيع. وَإِنْ ضَاهَيْتَهُ بالملابِس فَهُوَ كَمَوْشِيِّ الْحُلَلِ، أَوْ كَمُونِقِ عَصْبِ الَيمَنِ، وَإِنْ شَاكَلْتَهُ بِالْحُلِيِّ فَهُوَ كَفُصُوصٍ ذَاتِ أَلْوَان، قَدْ نُطِّقَتْ بِاللُّجَيْنِ الْمُكَلَّلِ.

[723] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 275.
وَقَدْ يَنْحَسِرُ مِنْ رِيشِهِ، وَيَعْرَى مِنْ لِبَاسِهِ، فَيَسْقُطُ تَتْرَى، وَيَنْبُتُ تِبَاعاً، فَيَنْحَتُّ مِنْ قَصبِهِ انْحِتَاتَ أَوْرَاقِ الأغْصَانِ، ثُمَّ يَتَلاَحَقُ نَامِياً حَتَّى يَعُودَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ قَبْلَ سُقُوطِهِ، لاَ يُخَالِفُ سَالِفَ [سائر] أَلْوَانِهِ، وَلاَ يَقَعُ لَوْنٌ فِي غَيْرِ مَكَانِهِ.

of truth can be perceived, even though outward appearance remains unchanged. The overall image of the peacock can be interpreted as a representation of the beauty and pleasure of "this world"; a pleasure that, although it is associated with mortal existence, is part of the nature of life. This arises as a necessary part of the journey of the human soul. It is form of representation of the physical and material parts of the human journey that were not described in the oration on the bat. And here we are introduced to the idea that differentiates *'ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* – "the Brethren of Purity" – from the traditional gnostics in other religions. While it is common to the mystical path to focus on mystical knowledge of the self, the Brethren of Purity believe that this will not be achieved without knowing the universe and the body of the human being, because it is the house of the soul *maskan al-nafs* and a tool for its liberation.[724] Although the wing as an element of the imaginary context is mutually shared by the two orations, in relation to the bat it is described in a way that supports its ability to fly. However, in the section on the peacock, the wing is described in terms of its colourful, beautiful appearance.

The last few sentences of this section reflect the inability of the mind and tongue to perceive and describe this creature; the mind and tongue are logical elements, yet they are not able to express the qualities of the bird, even though it should be within their capabilities. The inability to count and describe the blessings of God is also declared.

> Glorified is God who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He has placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and given colour. He has also disabled tongues from easily describing its qualities and also from elaborating in praise.[725]

The image in *Nahj al-Balāghah* which describes the changing of the peacock's feathers resembles a description in Al-Jāḥiẓ. *Nahj al-Balāghah* presents it thus:

> It can divest itself of its feathers and take off its clothes, so that they fall gradually and grow constantly, they fall off their own shafts the way the leaves of the branches do. Then it proceeds to grow until it restores its old shape, and its colours are no different, nor is any colour in the wrong position.[726]

Al-Jāḥiẓ's similar image is, "the peacock throws off its feathers in the time of fall, when the first leaves begin to fall; and when trees start to wear leaves, the peacock starts to wear feathers".[727]

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[724] Firās al-Sawwāḥ, *Ṭarīq 'Ikhwān al-Ṣafā': Al-Madkhal 'ilá al-Ghunūṣiyyah al-'Islāmiyyah* (Dimashq: Dār al-Takwīn, 2016), 41.

[725] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 275.
فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بَهَرَ الْعُقُولَ عَنْ وَصْفِ خَلْقِ جَلاَّهُ لِلْعُيُونِ، فَأَدْرَكَتْهُ مَحْدُوداً مُكَوَّناً، وَمُؤَلَّفاً مُلَوَّناً، وَأَعْجَزَ الأَلْسُنَ عَنْ تَلْخِيصِ صِفَتِهِ، وَقَعَدَ بِهَا عَنْ تَأْدِيَةِ نَعْتِهِ.

[726] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah,* 275.

[727] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān,* vol: 3, 103.

While both statements describe the same aspect of the peacock's nature, al-Jāḥiẓ uses the words *yulqī* [to throw], *yasqūṭ* [to fall] and *yaktasī* [to wear]. The other elements that are used for this image are feathers and tree leaves, which provides the comparison in both cases. In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the view is moving constantly, and gradually, from losing to regaining. The words *yanḥasir* [divest], *yaʿrá* [take off] and *fayasquṭ* [fall] introduce the stage of losing feathers. Then ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib indicates that they will grow again; this will happen in the second stage when they fall off their own shafts. The feathers are also coloured by the way the previous colourful feathers were organised, and are rearranged. While this is only one example, I do not intend to make judgments on the quality of the writing of Al-Jāḥiẓ in comparison with *Nahj al-Balāghah*; however, it is interesting to view how *Nahj al-Balāghah* in some cases may reflect a response to the work of Al-Jāḥiẓ. This response is evident in the way some words contribute to its specific imaginary contexts, and to the vividness of this context, which consists of the dramatic movement and a creation of a scenario, even in this specific part of the whole context.

After finishing this section about the peacock, Oration 165 describes "ants and flies" – small creations – yet, the biggest creations, such as crocodiles and elephants, are then also introduced. This leads us to Al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (The Book of the Living Being). In volume seven, after the section on birds, he includes a section on elephants.[728] Yet, in volume three, Al-Jāḥiẓ introduces the peacock in another section on birds, after which he introduces small creatures, such as flies.[729] In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, these small creatures are kept and protected by the bigger. Their legs are kept inside the elephants and whales, and this section comes after the section of the peacock. *Nahj al-Balāghah* ends this brief section by describing death as the inevitable end, and then it turns to describing life in heaven.[730] This arrangement of different sections in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* contributes to our understanding of these creatures and their symbolic representations. These symbols are obvious in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which shows how the beauty of this world – represented by the peacock – will end in death, and within this world, every creature, big or small, lives within another. This description obliterates the differences between appearances – between what

[728] Ibid., vol: 7, 45.
[729] Ibid., vol: 3, 162.
[730] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah,* 276.

looks "big" and what looks "small" – in this world. It makes them one, and their one end is death.

This understanding of a small section of Oration 165 gains its importance from its relation to Al-Jāḥiẓ's work on big and small creatures, and how both of them appears before or after sections on birds. Al-Jāḥiẓ's sections are much longer and he clarifies his intentions with regard to elephants when he indicates in the beginning that his aim is to explain how elephants are used by kings, how they are used in wars, how they are seen and how great they are in peoples' view.[731] It might be that Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī intends to show that all these big and small creatures that Al-Jāḥiẓ spends a long time describing are summarised in the two lines by ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, and are ended by death.

3. The Prophet as Healer

The arrangement of sections and the connections that can be made between works of different authors contribute to an understanding of the symbolic forms and the role these forms play in the imaginary context. This way of reading allows an easier evolving between different symbols and validates the meaning of the symbol according to its context.

As the two images of the bat and the peacock can be read symbolically, as explorations of the evolution of the soul, we also encounter in *Nahj al-Balāghah* a description of the prophet as a doctor or healer who works to heal people in order to allow their soul to evolve. Here we notice the comparison that the Brethren of Purity make between religion and philosophy: religion is medicine for sick people and philosophy is medicine for the healthy. "Prophets heal the sick so that their number will not increase and the sickness will be cured, but philosophers protect the healthy people from getting sick".[732] In the introduction to oration 108, the usage of words leads to the understanding that this oration is connected with gnosticism.[733]

> Praise belongs to God, who is Manifest before His creation through His creation, who is apparent to their hearts through His clear proof; who created without

[731] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol: 7, 47.

[732] ʾAbū Ḥayyān al- Tawḥīdī, *Al-Muqābasāt*, edited by Ḥassan al-Sandūbī (Al-Qāhirah: ʾAfāq lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2016), 43.

[733] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 178.
الحَمْدُ للهِ الْمُتَجَلِّي لِخَلْقِهِ بِخَلْقِهِ، وَالظَّاهِرِ لِقُلُوبِهِمْ بِحُجَّتِهِ. خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ مِنْ غَيْرِ رَوِيَّة، إِذْ كَانَتِ الرَّوِيَّاتُ لاَ تَلِيقُ إِلاَّ بِذَوِي الضَّمائِرِ وَلَيْسَ بِذِي ضَمِيرٍ فِي نَفْسِهِ. خَرَقَ عِلْمُهُ بَاطِنَ غَيْبِ السُّتُرَاتِ، وَأَحَاطَ بِغُمُوض عَقَائِدِ السَّرِيرَاتِ.
اخْتَارَهُ مِنْ شَجَرَة الأَنبِيَاءِ، وَمِشْكَاةِ الضِّيَاءِ، وَذُؤَابَةِ الْعَلْيَاءِ، وَسُرَّةِ الْبَطْحَاءِ، وَمَصَابِيحِ الظُّلْمَةِ، وَيَنَابِيعِ الْحِكْمَةِ.

> contemplation, since contemplation does not befit except those who have consciences while He has no conscience in Himself. His knowledge has penetrated the interior of the invisible veils and encompassed the mysterious hidden beliefs.
>
> God chose Him from the tree of prophets, from the flame of light, from the forehead of greatness, from the best part of the valley of Baṭḥā',[734] from the lamps of darkness, and from the sources of wisdom.

From the first sentence he declares that God has manifested Himself to his creations through them, and appeared to their hearts through His evidence. The phrase "without contemplation" presents the notion of instant creation that is out of the worldly time frame and it is explained clearly in the following sentence. Then he uses the words "the interior", "invisible", "the veil", "mysterious" and "hidden beliefs". As introduced earlier, the words used in the introductory section of this oration helps to determine the way the oration is read as a whole. The words here reflect upon inner states of being, allowing for a gnostic reading. Yet, this reading has its validation from this section of the oration as will be clear.

After the introduction, the oration describes the places from which the Prophet has descended. It refers to specific Beduin and Ḥijāzī places, but these have also been considered as gnostic indicators in the Sufi tradition, connected to the kingdom of God – *al-ḥaḍrah al-'ilāhiyyah*. Thus, these symbolic places are known to convey gnostic knowledge, kept within the heart of the mystic.[735] The name introduced here is Surrat al-Baṭḥā', a place where some of the people of Quraysh lived. According to Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd, it is the middle of the spacious earth.[736] With the exception of the phrase about the tree of prophets, this name comes in the middle of four phrases. The two phrases before this symbol talk about light and height and the following phrases talk about light and the deep sources of wisdom. Although it is the name of the place the Prophet comes from, it is surrounded by phrases that convey the idea of lighting. It does not only describe a physical place, but also the spiritual origin of the Prophet. In the following paragraph, one of the roles of the Prophet is described:[737]

> The Prophet is a roaming physician. He has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. His medicines seek out the spots of negligence and places of perplexity. The light of wisdom has not enlightened them, nor have they struck

[734] *Baṭḥā'* is the name of a place in Mecca, and it means, literally, the spacious earth where sands and rocks are left after the stream comes through.

[735] Bedayr, *Qaḍāyā al-Sh'r al-Ṣūfi*, 236.

[736] Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol: 7.

[737] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 178.
طَبِيبٌ دَوَّارٌ بِطِبِّهِ، قَدْ أَحْكَمَ مَرَاهِمَهُ، وَأَحْمى [أمضى] مَوَاسِمَهُ، يَضَعُ ذلِكَ حَيْثُ الْحَاجَةُ إِلَيْهِ، مِنْ قُلُوب عُمْيٍ، وَآذَانٍ صُمٍّ، وَأَلْسِنَة بُكْمٍ؛ مُتَتَبِّعٌ بِدَوَائِهِ مَوَاضِعَ الْغَفْلَةِ، وَمَوَاطِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ؛ لَمْ يَسْتَضِيئُوا بِأَضْوَاءِ الْحِكْمَةِ؛ وَلَمْ يَقْدَحُوا بِزِنَادِ الْعُلُومِ الثَّاقِبَةِ؛ فَهُمْ فِي ذلِكَ كَالأَنْعَامِ السَّائِمَةِ، وَالصُّخُورِ الْقَاسِيَةِ.

> the flame from the flint of knowledge. So, in this matter they are like grazing cattle and hard stones.

This section introduces the idea of "walking" by the word *dawwār* [roaming]. It brings to mind the atmosphere of the philosophical school which was known as *mashshā'iyyah* [peripateticism].[738] They were known for wandering around while teaching, as different from the traditional way of teaching in a specific place.

This section of the oration in Nahj al-Balāghah is presented under the subtitle "the tribulations of the Sons of Umayyah". This indicates that the prophet, here, is the healer of the "sick"; those who are affected by tribulations. His medicines and equipment are introduced as ones that heal the physical body – "ointments" and "instruments". Yet, when mentioning the organs that need to be healed, these are: "blind hearts", "deaf ears" and "dumb tongues". They indicate the spiritual parts of the human being. Starting with the medicines, then the organs, 'Alī then focuses on what exactly causes the pain in these organs, as he mentions "negligence" and "perplexity". This kind of suffering is related to not receiving "the light of wisdom" and not creating "the flame" of knowledge. Thus, the unilluminated are likened to animals and harsh rocks. If we trace this image back from the end to the beginning of the paragraph, we find that these animals and rocks have been in such states because of their ignorance, which leads to negligence and perplexity; in turn, these lead to spiritual blindness, deafness and voicelessness, for which the Prophet has to go around healing these people. Yet, in the following section healing has taken effect:[739]

> Nevertheless, hidden things have been revealed for those who perceive; the right path has become clear for the wanderer; the hour has unveiled its face and the sign has appeared for those who search for it.
>
> What is the matter with me? I see you, shadows without spirits and spirits without shadows, devotees without righteousness, traders without profits, wakeful but sleeping, present but unseen, a blind eye, a deaf ear and a dumb tongue. I see a banner of confusion has been raised, standing on its axis and has been divided into branches. It takes you to destruction, like a measure which weighs, and hits you by the hands.

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[738] Harald Haarmann, *Myth as Source of Knowledge in Early Western Thought: The Quest for Historiography, Science and Philosophy in Greek Antiquity* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 238.

[739] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 178.
قَدِ انْجَابَتِ السَّرَائِرُ لأَهْلِ الْبَصَائِرِ، وَوَضَحَتْ مَحَجَّةُ الْحَقِّ لِخَابِطِهَا [لأهلها]، وَأَسْفَرَتِ السَّاعَةُ عَنْ وَجْهِهَا، وَظَهَرَتِ الْعَلاَمَةُ لِمتَوَسِّمِهَا.
مَا لِي أَرَاكُمْ أَشْبَاحاً بِلاَ أَرْوَاحٍ، وَأَرْوَاحاً بِلاَ أَشْبَاحٍ، وَنُسَّاكاً بِلاَ صَلاَحٍ، وَتُجَّاراً بِلاَ أَرْبَاحٍ، وَأَيْقَاظاً نُوَّماً، وَشُهُوداً غُيَّباً، وَنَاظِرَةً عَمْيَاء، وسَامِعَةً صمَّاء، وَنَاطِقَةً بِكْماء! رَايَةُ ضَلاَلَة قَدْ قَامَتْ عَلَى قُطْبِهَا، وَتَفَرَّقَتْ بِشُعَبِهَا، تَكِيلُكُمْ بِصَاعِهَا، وَتَخْبِطُكُمْ بِبَاعِهَا.

"The hour" appears, here, in parallel to the appearance of the truth. "The hour" has uncovered its face which means it has become known and then the sign has appeared to the seeker. In this oration, "the hour" did not come down on people nor did it follow them as it is described in the chapter on "the hour". Yet, in this paragraph, it is displayed when people have been cared for by the Prophet.

In the two previous chapters, "the hour" and "this world" played a role in revealing the truth to people, through paths of hardship, journeys and difficult experiences. The hour appears to be following people in order to provoke moments of revelation. The Prophet is described as *ḥādī*: this equates him with "the hour". He is described as protecting them from the moment "the hour" descends. In Oration 108, this notion seems to be confirmed, as after healing people, "the hour" unveils its face in a calm way, unlike the actions of chasing or falling down that have been presented in Chapter Three of this thesis. ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, in oration 108, explains the effect of the prophet on the "sick", and how they have been healed and are now able to see the truth. He then turns to talk to people of his own time, who are shallow and lacking a soul that seeks to evolve. They have been led by the banner of confusion which is described to be settled on its axis. This image, as will be seen in the following chapter, is usually connected with the caliphate and the leadership of the state. This oration ends with the phrase "Islam has been dressed with the fur inside out" using the word *farw* as the term for clothing fabric. This is another reference to mystical tradition, as clothing of fur is known to be worn by the gnostic who claims to seek the path of God. The word *mutaṣawwifah* is derived from "wearing the *ṣūf* [woollen clothes]".[740] Thus, through the banner of confusion the truth has been wrongly clothed. More elaboration on the tribulations of this misguidance will be presented in the following chapter.

Image creation is not only about using figurative language, the image can also be literally expressed. What is important is the dramatic elements that connect between the different parts of the context. In oration 155, this has been manifested through the description of the bat. The details about the bat does not only seek to merely give knowledge about the bat in an arbitrary way, but also to create an extended vivid image of the bat. This oration clarifies the

[740] *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition,* "Taṣawwuf".

way in which the creation of images is an educational tool. This can be seen by comparing the description of the bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* to descriptions of the bat by other authors. The scenario which appears in relation to the bat of *Nahj al-Balāghah* is presented as a collection of the dramatic elements, rather than a sequence of narrative events. As these elements build up, events appear on the surface, and this makes the bat of *Nahj al-Balāghah* different from that of other authors. The dramatic action does not only affect the soul, but also it makes the whole complex of images vivid and easier to remember. One event leads to another because of the natural progression of the action. The elements that are chosen to create the image of the bat contribute to the educational purpose, which is the significance of the bat that makes it different from other creatures. These elements are also concentrated on by other authors. What makes the image evocation educational in a different way might be the values and the details that are connected to the actions. For instance, describing the wings of the bat scientifically will only need to indicate the nature of the wing. Yet, when this is shown through a dramatic action it will be stated as "when the need arises", or through conditional statements such as, "As soon as the sun casts away its veil and the light of morning appears, [....] the bats pull down their eyelids and rest, content with their spoils gathered in the darkness of night". These kinds of details only emerge through actions and interactions between different elements in the scenario that is constructed around logical sequences.

Another importance of the creation of the image can be seen through a comparison of this particular imaginary context (of the bat) with a similar context, such as that of the peacock. The kinds of motions that are introduced in the description of the bat, and the main elements that construct the image, brings the focus onto important features that should be seen in the bat, in comparison to what is seen in the peacock. This leads to an evocation of the symbolic forms of the two creatures. While the peacock may show the beauty of "this world" as a part of the journey of the soul, the bat reflects a mystical part of the journey through which the soul reaches its salvation. The symbols are understood because of the interactions of the elements and the usages of the words in the imaginary context.

There is a connection between the oration on the bat and Ibn Sīnā's use of allegory. In his stories, Ibn Sīnā created characters and connected them through plot and action. They can be read by general readers, as they are stories about the characters he mentions. Yet, they can also be read as illustrations, reflections and indications of other abstract notions, such as the

different faculties of the soul. The two orations in *Nahj al-Balāghah* can be read in similar ways. However, Ibn Sīnā's stories are made up of his own imagination constructed via imaginative characters, while the two orations are built on animals from the natural, external world. The way the elements of every oration connect together represents the intelligence of the image, which depends upon the exact elements, and their exact organisation. As I explained earlier, more aspects of the bat could have been introduced, yet the way its elements are chosen and linked supports the creation of the imaginary context.

Introducing creatures from the world to be symbols upon which the imaginary context is built can be linked to fables such as those of *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*.[741] Yet, *Kalīlah wa Dimnah* introduces animals, gives them voices and presents conversations between them, which makes it clear that these are not realistic scenarios. However, in Ibn Sīnā's story, constructed around human characters, it is possible to find the story in the outside world. Yet, it is constructed on elements and characters that are created by the author's imagination. What makes the bat different is that it is introduced as a bat, and all its elements are realistically those of a bat. Unlike *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, the bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* will not be seen as a representation of anything other than "the bat" except through the construction of the text and the linguistic elements that build the imaginary context. In *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, the audience will immediately think of a counterpart for every animal introduced as having a human nature. The bat in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is constructed on the linguistic and poetic context through which other kinds of reading become possible. Yet, the aim of the stories in *Kalīlah wa Dimnah* is achieved through previous knowledge of the meaning of every symbols.

What leads to the mystical reading of the bat is the predicative propositions and the attributions that are made to the bat, that evoke images that look higher than a mere description of the bat, such as the knowledge of the bat and its enlightenment. In addition, it is built on a previously known syllogism which compares the soul to a bird. This differentiates the imaginary context from the mystical stories of Ibn Sīnā. Ibn Sīnā's stories were recorded as having different levels of reading by Ibn Sīnā's students as introduced earlier in this chapter, and it is not the language itself that led to this different reading, rather, their previous knowledge about the mystical symbols that lead them to their understanding.

[741] 'Abdullah ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kalilah wa Dimnah* (Bayrūt, Mu'assassat 'Iz al-Dīn lil-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1996).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the symbol of a bird as a soul is introduced in Ibn Sīnā's poem on the soul. This symbol is known in the Sufi tradition. Sufism was a part of Islamic society in the tenth century, and their teachings and ideas were known. It is possible that *Nahj al-Balāghah* may not exclude the ideas of Sufism. There might be a consideration for the language they use and their ideas about the path of the mystic. Thus, one purpose behind the orations may be to teach the Sufis about their own ideas by elaborating more on them and providing details. An example of this is the presentation of the soul which is known to be lost in this world as it is the case with the bat; a specific kind of "bird" with unique qualities unlike any other bird and these qualities may help him to find his way back. In addition, there are the details about the path of the mystic in the same oration. This opens up different connections with other orations containing similar ideas, through similar symbols. One of these ideas is the Prophet as a healer, whose healing will allow "the hour" to be unveiled to the people.

Although the oration on the bat introduces the journey of the bat, the mystic and the teachers, the healing skill of the Prophet holds the promise of unveiling "the hour" in an easy way. The Prophet is likened to a philosopher who teaches the truth, yet it is the Prophet who shows the truth.

This idea about the Prophet is not only directed to the reader of mystical knowledge. It can also be connected to the role of the Prophet or of the leader, and thus of the caliph of the Islamic state. In teaching about the leader and his qualities by the use of symbols and the imaginary contexts, *Nahj al-Balāghah* distinguishes between the right and wrong. It tries in many orations to clarify the tribulations that Muslims encounter, and will continue to encounter. While many tribulations are introduced clearly, through the imaginary context they appear to be on different levels. I will elaborate on this in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

"Tribulations"

In this chapter, I will investigate images evoked by the idea of *fitnah* [tribulation]. As the analysis will show, *fitnah* seems to take on different meanings according to the context of its presentation. For instance, we can differentiate between two kinds of tribulations: one that is inherited by successive tyrants and it can be a reflection of the rulers who persist in their oppression; and another is caused by revolutionary action that usually aims at resisting, or overthrowing, a ruler and any associated oppression. Many of these revolutions bring with them a great deal of confusion, therefore they are in many cases a source of tribulation. Between these two types, we can notice how images of *fitnah* develop and manifest in different orations. The first two orations that I will analyse are numbers 151 and 93, that clearly talk about tribulations and introduce its images. I then look at the oration called *al-shiqshiqiyyah* (Oration 3) which, although it does not mention the word *fitnah* explicitly, discusses the first *fitnah* in Islam and the events following it. For my argument, what makes *al-shiqshiqiyyah* relevant to this theme is the image that is connected to the tribulation of the tyrants, as I will show in this chapter. Then, the movement of images will be clear and they will connect with the oration which immediately follows *al-shiqshiqiyyah.*

1. Tribulations: Stages in Life (Oration: 151)[742]

The first section praises God and asks for support against Satan. It then turns to a description of the Prophet Muḥammad who has brought light into the darkness of people's lives. The introduction fits the rest of the sermon, as it describes a tribulation.

> O people of Arabia, you are the targets of ordeals that are close at hand. Avoid the stupefaction caused by wealth, beware the disasters caused by indignation, keep steadfast when things are uncertain in the dusty darkness, in the crookedness of

[742] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 241.
ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ مَعْشَرَ الْعَرَبِ أَغْرَاضُ بَلاَيَا قَدِ اقْتَرَبَتْ، فَاتَّقُوا سَكَرَاتِ النِّعْمَةِ، وَاحْذَرُوا بَوَائِقَ النِّقْمَةِ، وَتَثَبَّتُوا فِي قَتَامِ الْعِشْوَةِ، وَاعْوِجَاجِ الْفِتْنَةِ عِنْدَ طُلُوعِ جَنِينِهَا، وَظُهُورِ كَمِينِهَا، وَانْتِصَابِ قُطْبِهَا، وَمَدَارِ رَحَاهَا. تَبْدَأُ فِي مَدَارِجَ خَفِيَّةٍ، وَتَؤُولُ إِلَى فَظَاعَةٍ جَلِيَّةٍ. شِبَابُهَا كَشِبَابِ الْغُلاَمِ، وَآثَارُهَا كَآثَارِ السَّلاَمِ، يتَوَارَثُهَا الظَّلَمَةُ بِالْعُهُودِ! أَوَّلُهُمْ قَائِدٌ لآخِرِهِمْ، وَآخِرُهُمْ مُقْتَدٍ بِأَوَّلِهِمْ؛ يَتَنَافَسُونَ فِي دُنْيا دَنِيَّةٍ، وَيَتَكَالَبُونَ [يتكالمون] عَلى جِيفَةٍ مُرِيحَة. وَعَنْ قَلِيل يَتَبَرَّأُ التَّابِعُ مِنَ الْمَتْبُوعِ، وَالْقَائِدُ مِنَ الْمَقُودِ، فَيَتَزَايَلُونَ بِالْبِغْضَاءِ، وَيَتَلاَعَنُونَ عِنْدَ اللِّقَاءِ [البقاء]. ثُمَّ يَأْتِي بَعْدَ ذلِكَ طَالِعُ الْفِتْنَةِ الزَّجُوفِ، وَالْقَاصِمَةِ الزَّحُوفِ [الزجوف]، فَتَزِيغُ قُلُوبٌ بَعْدَ اسْتِقَامَة، وَتَضِلُّ رِجَالٌ بَعْدَ سَلاَمَة؛ وَتَخْتَلِفُ الأَهْوَاءُ عِنْدَ هُجُومِهَا، وَتَلْتَبِسُ الآرَاءُ عِنْدَ نُجُومِهَا. مَنْ أَشْرَفَ لَهَا قَصَمَتْهُ، وَمَنْ سَعَى فِيهَا حَطَمَتْهُ؛ يَتَكَادَمُونَ فِيهَا تَكَادُمَ الْحُمُرِ فِي الْعَانَةِ! قَدِ اضْطَرَبَ مَعْقُودُ الْحَبْلِ، وَعَمِيَ وَجْهُ الأَمْرِ. تَغِيضُ فِيهَا الْحِكْمَةُ، وَتَنْطِقُ فِيهَا الظَّلَمَةُ، وَتَدُقُّ أَهْلَ الْبَدْوِ بِمِسْحَلِهَا، وَتَرُضُّهُمْ بِكَلْكَلِهَا! يَضِيعُ فِي غُبَارِهَا الْوُحْدَانُ، وَيَهْلِكُ فِي طَرِيقِهَا الرُّكْبَانُ، تَرِدُ بِمُرِّ الْقَضَاءِ، وَتَحْلُبُ عَبِيطَ الدِّمَاءِ، وَتَثْلِمُ مَنَارَ الدِّينِ، وَتَنْقُضُ عَقْدَ الْيَقِينِ. يَهْرُبُ مِنْهَا الأَكْيَاسُ، وَيُدَبِّرُهَا الأَرْجَاسُ. مِرْعَادٌ مِبْرَاقٌ، كَاشِفَةٌ عَنْ سَاق! تُقْطَعُ فِيهَا الأَرْحَامُ، وَيُفَارَقُ عَلَيْهَا الإِسْلاَمُ! بَرِيُّهَا سَقِيمٌ، وَظَاعِنُهَا مُقِيمٌ!

> tribulation, during the emergence of its invisible foetus; the manifestation of its ambush; the rising of its pole and the rotation of the millstones. In the beginning, its obstructions are hidden, and then develops into obvious hideousness. Its early stages are like the youthful vigour of an adolescent, and its marks are like the bruises of beating stones.
>
> Oppressors inherit it [tribulation] through their successive reigns. The first is a leader for the latter and the latter follows the antecedent. They vie with each other for this lowly world, leaping over each other to win this stinking carcass. Ere long, the follower will disown his leader, and the leader will disown his follower. They will break apart in hatred and curse one another whenever they meet. Thereafter, there will arise the fake dawn of trembling tribulation; an annihilating creeping tribulation. Hearts that were straight will become crooked, men who were safe will stray, warring desires will scatter the minds and views will be confused when they are arisen.
>
> Whoever approaches this tribulation will be annihilated, and whoever moves through it will be shattered. People will bite each other as the wild asses in the herd. The knotted rope has been shaken and affairs appear distorted. Wisdom will collapse, and oppressors will dare to speak. This tribulation will smash the Bedouins with the side of its beard and crush them with its chest. Those marching alone will be lost in its [tribulation's] dusty field, and horsemen will perish in its path. It carries with it the bitter destiny and milks pure blood. It notches the beacon of faith and unties the ties of certainty. The wise flee from it while the wicked are in charge of it. It is thunder and lightning, uncovering the disaster. Kinship [wombs] is forsaken during it and Islam [submission] will be abandoned. He who looks healthy is sick, and the traveller away from it will be a resident in it.

In this oration the tribulation is described in three different stages, constructed on two main images: one depicts a settled life of giving birth, operating the mills and growth from infancy into adolescence; the second depicts the period of activity, using images of movement, revolution and war, which appear in adulthood. As I argue, the first is the tribulation of the oppressor's existence, the second is the fight that starts between oppressors, the last is the time of revolution, as will be illustrated more in the oration.

The first stage is first personified as a pregnant woman with a crooked body who is about to give birth, as the word *janīn* [foetus] indicates; and then its baby has arrived and what was inside has appeared *ṭuhūr kamīnhā*. The word *ṭulūʿ* [emergence] is attributed to the "foetus" which indicates the stages of late pregnancy, while the word *kamīn* [ambush] is connected to the word "manifestation" which indicates the stage of the birth. Using the word *kamīn* takes the image to the notion of uncovering a hidden trap.

Then ʿAlī mentions the words *al-quṭb* and *al-raḥá*, as this tribulation will pretend to find its place and move on with its work. There is a relation between the birth of new life – and this time it is a life of tribulation – and the work of the mills. They are both indications of

the movement of the circle of life. When the "pole" has risen, this signals the strength that tribulation has gained after its new birth. It also expresses the position that it has started the work which, after being born, is connected to "feeding it"; a notion indicated by the usages of the movement of the millstones. While this tribulation starts lightly, it leads to a clear "hideousness". Then, the stage of youth is introduced in the description of activeness or restlessness. Yet, its effect – by the usage of the stones – will follow as harsh and agitated; a youth of suffering. Tribulations have no end, as they are inherited through oppressors – one after another – which reflects the continuity of *fitnah* as life itself from birth to death; so with every death a new life begins.

After describing the leaders and their way of life, ʿAlī then introduces the tribulations associated with more mature stage in life: *rajūf* [trembling], *qāṣimah* [annihilating], *zaḥūf* [creeping] While the description of the first tribulation was associated with youth, and the wounding effect of the stones, now a harder one starts. It is connected to the shaking of the whole land, which indicates the unsettling of the earth beneath and its frightening movement. It is described as *qāṣimah* [annihilating] which draws the picture of breaking from above; and *zaḥūf* [creeping] which fills the earth with crawling creatures, and it is as if this force controls the entire earth; above, beneath and on the surface. This description of the dimensions of space affects four other elements: hearts, men, inclinations and views. Two are affected in their manner of walking, which evokes the image of a path as a result of the earth's movement. Hearts are made to deviate, and men stray, and this happens after having been straight and secure. The word *tazīgh* [to deviate which is translated as crooked] is used to describe the state of the "hearts", and in its context it brings to the mind the *Qurʾānic* verse (33:10), "They massed against you from above and below; your eyes rolled [with fear], your hearts rose into your throats, and you thought [ill] thoughts of God. There the believers were sorely tested and deeply shaken".[743]

Interestingly, this verse also evokes the dimensions of the earth and then describes the deviation of the eyes *ʾabṣār*. As it is suggested that this verse describes the battle of *al-khandaq* [the trench] (627 CE), it is an indication of a war. Going back to the image in this oration, the tribulation that is described in this situation comes after the oppressors have disagreed and fought with each other, described with the word *ṭāliʿ*, meaning "fake dawn".

[743] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 267.

Thus, there is here an illusory beginning of the day, after the first tribulation of being born. What looks like a new beginning will come as a movement of the earth and will affect the elements introduced above. In the *Qur'ānic* verse, it is the eyes that deviate; this is caused by fear and can also indicate a lack of clear vision. However, in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, it is hearts that deviate, and while in the *Qur'ān* they reach the throat, trying to leave the body, in *Nahj al-Balaghah* they deviate in ways that mean they move away from being "straight". Thus, it is clear that this is not about fear, it is about the change that happens because of tribulation. Unlike the verse which describes the earthquake in the end, in *Nahj al-Balaghah* it is the beginning and this leads to these movements of the hearts.

Men who have been walking their path safely, and have then strayed, were probably not affected by the new-born tribulation that was already inherited by the oppressors, but this *fitnah* has affected their path. Then we move to the other elements; the "desires" and the "views", as they appear in this tribulation. These desires are described as "to scatter" after attacking – as they come out of the hearts, they carry with them an emotional reaction. The "views" will arise, as in the word *nujūmihā* which conveys the meaning of a sudden appearance; a description that suits the appearance of views that lead to confusion. In this tribulation, the opinions and feelings are described as disagreeing, not like the first tribulation with its regular process to go through. And this confusion is caused by a tribulation that causes movement and shaking to the normal status of the earth or ground.

Then he describes how interacting in this tribulation will badly affect people. The words used are derived from *ḥaṭama* [shattered] and *qaṣama* [annihilated], as a consequence of the arrival of this tribulation, and as much as views and inclinations are distorted and confused, the effect on people is such confusion that they will be biting each other like wild asses in a herd do. So, the consequence of this tribulation is connected to its nature. While introducing the image of the herd, ʿAlī then adds details connected to this evocation. He describes the knotted rope as being shaken. In the Arabic lexicon, when the rope is described as agitated it conveys the meaning that people are disagreeing. Thus, after describing people's desires and views, the image of wild asses is evoked, which is then connected to the shaken rope. This rope has been described as already having been knotted. So, while it was tightened and held, it started to agitate.

It is the oppressors who will present themselves and speak. Thus, although the image of the herd is part of the whole and describes a particular situation, it consists of elements that gradually build metaphorically upon each other. Although the expression of the knotted rope has its known meaning, it is connected to the herd in order to add another detail to the image. The rope and the herd can be understood separately, but they can also be connected together to complete an image of herds that are tied well but then are left. Then, ʿAlī describes the situation as being distorted, yet he uses the word *ʾamr* [affair] and describes it as having a face (which I translate as appearance) that has been blinded. There is this embodiment that is brought into the image as the "face" is introduced, even though I translate it as "the appearance". Wisdom is presented next, and described as collapsing. This wisdom is about the "deep" understanding; what has been blinded is the "face", or the "appearance". These are features of human beings. Consequently, people are brought again into the imaginary context as "tyrants" and "Bedouins".

While the herd is introduced as a consequence of this *fitnah*, and the path is described as unclear, what follows is also caused by this tribulation. And the herd is going to use their chest and face to attack the Bedouins in particular, as they are a symbol of naive people who will not be saved, because of their naivety, and may be the ones who suffer most. People who walk individually without joining a group are going to be lost in the dust, which is caused by the chaos of the herd; however, those who ride and utilise its path will also perish, which is an indication of the consequences for those who try to fight upon it. After the action this tribulation takes on the Bedouins, the description of the battle arises. The two following phrases brings to the mind the notion of drink which cannot be avoided in a description of herds and paths. The word *taridu* – which I translate as "it carries" – is originally connected to the source of water when people go to drink. In this phrase, the water is described as being bitter, and this bitterness is attributed to destiny. As mentioned in the oration, wisdom was described as water that decreased in its source as the word *taghīḍ* indicates; here, only "bitterness" is found, the opposite to what should have been found at the source. The expression may convey the meaning that the source which this tribulation drinks from is "bitterness" and, therefore, whoever experiences the tribulation will be affected. The second phrase indicates the idea of milking, but what is actually "milked" is the pure blood that is lost in the fight. And when blood is milked, people are pushed into battle.

The other consequences mentioned bring the imaginary context into more general territory. Back to the path which has been distorted, the beacon of faith is notched and the "tie" of certainty that guides the heart – that faith usually ensures – will be untied. The notion of being tied is also connected to the shared community of faith, and thus this tribulation affects this unity to its core. Thus, while this tribulation comes in a battle that offers a path and a choice whether to go through this path or not, the wise are those who avoid it and flee from it. Yet, those who are in charge of it, are described as *ʾarjās*; and while this word means "wicked" it also conveys the meaning of infidelity or atheism. Then *fitnah* is described as to be *mirʿād* [thunder] and *mibrāq* [lightning], derived from the roots *ra-ʿa-da* and *ba-ra-qa* respectively, using the conjugation *mifʿāl* which is used for exaggeration. It is an indication of the constant occurrence of lightning and thunder, and here the evocation of the aural aspects of the imaginary context is vivid, and gives the context a complete sense of the chaotic battle environment, the fear and noise it spreads. This lightning and thunder are going to uncover the hardship that has been hidden until this point. This is indicated in the Arabic phrase "baring the leg" which is connected to the *Qurʾānic* verse containing the phrase "and bared her legs", which is a part of the story of Bilqīs the Queen of Sabaʾ in verse (27:44).

> Then it was said to her, "Enter the hall," but when she saw it, she thought it was a deep pool of water, and bared her legs. Solomon explained, "It is just a hall paved with glass," and she said, "My Lord, I have wronged myself: I devote myself, with Solomon, to God, the Lord of the Worlds."[744]

This phrase is usually connected to depictions of war, and it is derived from the idea of the she-camel whose infant dies before giving birth. In this circumstance, it has to be pulled out of her body by the legs, and thus it is an expression used for every hardship. Yet, there is still an indication for healing in both examples, as Bilqīs has been shown the truth and then submitted to what she has seen. And the she-camel is being healed of the dead inside her.[745] In this oration, the phrase is followed by two others: "Kinship is forsaken during this tribulation" and "Islam will be abandoned". While I use the word kinship as a translation for the word *ʾarḥām*, it is literally "the womb" that is forsaken, or cut out while taking the dead body out of the she-camel. And while Bilqīs submitted to the new religion, in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, her previous submission to her previous belief is being abandoned; and here the

[744] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 241.

[745] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Kamāl Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Dur al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr al-Maʾthūr*, vol: 6 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr lil-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2011), 367.

word “Islam” is used, which can refer to what has already been submitted to, not the real religion but the idea of submitting, they no longer believe, as it is the case with Bilqīs. Thus, these two phrases can be an indication of the idea of letting go. Both religion and kinship are the dearest things to people, and are very difficult to leave behind, and so war will cause this changed relationship to them. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, in his book on *Qur’ānic* imagery, interprets verse (68: 42) – “On the day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented”.[746] This is poetically translated by Arberry into “Upon the day when the leg shall be bared, and they shall be summoned to bow themselves, but they cannot”.[747] Al-Raḍī explains that it is a metaphor indicating the hardness and difficulty of a situation that makes people bare their legs in order to participate.[748] It is worth noting that the metonymy of the uncovered leg is followed in this verse by the idea of being asked to prostrate or bow down, but being unable to do so; Abdel Haleem translates it as they “will be prevented”. This means that, after facing calamity, there is a chance to submit but it will not be taken. With the image in *Nahj al-Balāghah* and the two images of the *Qur’ān*, the tribulation appears to offer a good opportunity to submit and this submission might be against what one has learned to believe, yet not everyone will be capable. The expression in *Nahj al-Balāghah* uses the word “Islam” which also conveys the meaning of “submission”. Thus, it might also mean that after hardship, people may not be able to bear this hardship and will not be able to submit.

2. Tribulations: Creatures (Oration 93)[749]

> Praise and veneration be to God! O people, I have torn out the eye of tribulation. And no one but me dared face it when its gloom spread and its rabies took hold. So, ask me before you miss me. By God who owns my life, whatever you ask me in

[746] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur’an*, 385.

[747] Arberry, *The Koran*, 601.

[748] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, 242.

[749] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 155.

أَمَّا بَعْد حمد الله، و الثناء عليه، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَإِنِّي فَقَأْتُ عَيْنَ الْفِتْنَةِ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَجْتَرِئَ عَلَيْهَا أَحَدٌ غَيْرِي بَعْدَ أَنْ مَاجَ غَيْهَبُهَا [ظلمتها]، وَاشْتَدَّ كَلَبُهَا فَاسْأَلُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ تَفْقِدُونِي، فَوَ الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لاَ تَسْأَلُونِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ فِيمَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ السَّاعَةِ، وَلاَ عَنْ فِئَةٍ تَهْدِي مائَةً وَتُضِلُّ مائَةً إِلاَّ أَنْبَأْتُكُمْ بِنَاعِقِهَا وَقَائِدِهَا وَسَائِقِهَا، وَمَنَاخِ رِكَابِهَا، وَمَحَطِّ رِحَالِهَا، وَمَنْ يُقْتَلُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا قَتْلاً، وَمَنْ يَمُوتُ مِنْهُمْ مَوْتاً. وَلَوْ قَدْ فَقَدْتُمُونِي وَنَزَلَتْ بِكُم كَرَائِهُ الأُمُورِ، وَحَوَازِبُ الْخُطُوبِ، لأَطْرَقَ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ السَّائِلِينَ، وَفَشِلَ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ المَسْؤُولِينَ، وَذلِكَ إِذَا قَلَّصَتْ حَرْبُكُم، وَشَمَّرَتْ عَنْ سَاق، وَضَاقَتِ [كانت] الدُّنْيَا عَلَيْكُمْ ضِيقاً، تَسْتَطِيلُونَ معه أَيَّامَ الْبَلاَءِ عَلَيْكم، حَتَّى يَفْتَحَ اللهُ لِبَقِيَّةِ الأَبْرَارِ مِنْكُمْ.

إِنَّ الْفِتَنَ إِذَا أَقْبَلَتْ شَبَّهَتْ، وَإِذَا أَدْبَرَتْ نَبَّهَتْ؛ يُنْكَرْنَ مُقْبِلاَت، وَيُعْرَفْنَ مُدْبِرَات، يَحُمْنَ حَوْمَ الرِّيَاح، يُصِبْنَ بَلَداً وَيُخْطِئْنَ بَلَداً.

أَلاَ وَإِنَّ أَخْوَفَ الْفِتَنِ عِنْدِي عَلَيْكُمْ فِتْنَةُ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ، فإِنَّهَا فِتْنَةٌ عَمْيَاءُ مُظْلِمَةٌ [وظلمة]: عَمَّتْ خُطَّتُهَا، وَخَصَّتْ بَلِيَّتُهَا، وَأَصَابَ الْبَلاَءُ مَنْ أَبْصَرَ فِيهَا، وَأَخْطَأَ الْبَلاَءُ مَنْ عَمِيَ عَنْهَا. وَأَيْمُ اللهِ لَتَجِدُنَّ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ لَكُمْ أَرْبَابَ سُوْءٍ بَعْدِي، كَالنَّابِ الضَّرُوسِ: تَعْذِمُ بِفِيهَا، وَتَخْبِطُ بِيَدِهَا، وتَرْبِنُ بِرِجْلِهَا، وَتَمْنَعُ دَرَّهَا، لاَ يَزَالُونَ بِكُمْ حَتَّى لاَ يَتْرُكُوا [لا يكون] مَنْكُمْ إِلاَّ نَافِعاً لَهُمْ، أَوْ غَيْرَ ضَائِرٍ بِهِمْ، وَلاَ يَزَالُ بَلاَؤُهُمْ عنكم حَتَّى لاَ يَكُونَ انْتِصَارُ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْهُمْ إِلاَّ كَانْتِصَارِ الْعَبْدِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ، وَالصَّاحِبِ مِنْ مُسْتَصْحِبِهِ، تَرِدُ عَلَيْكُمْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ شَوْهَاءَ مَخْشَيَّةً، وَقِطَعاً جَاهِلِيَّةً، لَيْسَ فِيهَا مَنَارُ هُدىً، وَلاَ عَلَمٌ يُرَى.

نَحْنُ أَهْل الْبَيْتِ مِنْهَا بمنجاة [نجاة]، وَلَسْنَا فِيهَا بدُعَاةٍ، ثُمَّ يُفَرِّجُهَا اللهُ عَنْكُمْ كَتَفْرِيجِ الأَدِيم، بِمَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ خَسْفاً، وَيَسُوقُهُمْ عُنْفاً، وَيَسْقِيهِمْ بِكَأْس مُصَبَّرَة. لاَ يُعْطِيهِمْ إِلاَّ السَّيْفَ، وَلاَ يُحْلِسُهُمْ إِلاَّ الْخَوْفَ، فَعِنْدَ ذلِكَ تَوَدُّ قُرَيْشٌ -بِالدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا- لَوْ يَرَوْنَنِي مَقَاماً وَاحِداً، وَلَوْ قَدْرَ جَزْرِ جَزور، لأَقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ مَا أَطْلُبُ الْيَوْمَ بَعْضَهُ فَلاَ يُعْطُونِيه!

> your current moment, until the hour, about a group who guides a hundred people and misguides another hundred, I would be informing you about the one who calls for the movement of the group; the one who guides and the one who drives. It is I who names the resting place and the final destination, and who can tell who among its people will be killed and who will die.
>
> And if you have lost me, and hard times and disasters have struck, many who would have asked questions will be disappointed, and those being questioned will fail. The time will be when your battle continues, when garments [of a warrior] are restlessly rearranged, when the times are straitened and your days are too long an ordeal to bear. The time will be until God releases those among you who have remained pious.
>
> When tribulations come, one thing is mistaken for another, and when they depart, they give warning. They cannot be known at the time of their arrival but are recognized at the time of their departure. They hover like the winds, striking some lands and failing others. I worry for you most about the tribulation of the Sons of Umayyah, as it is a tribulation of darkness and blindness. Its scheme has spread; its misfortune pertains to particular people. One whose sight remains clear through it [the tribulation] will suffer, but one who blindly passes through it will not.
>
> By God, you will see the Sons of Umayyah – after I leave you – as lords of evil. They are like the old fierce she-camel who bites with its mouth, beats with its forelegs, kicks with its hind legs and refuses to be milked. They will remain over you until they let only those among you who benefit them or those who do not cause them harm survive.
>
> Their calamity will not be stopped until your neediness for them becomes like the slave seeking help from his master, or the companion from his fellow. Their tribulation – ugly and fearful – commences for you, like fragments of the time before Islam, wherein there was neither a beacon to guide you, nor any flag to be seen.
>
> We – the Household of the Prophet – are saved from this tribulation and not among its proselytisers. Thereafter, God will bring you relief from tribulations, this relief is like flaying the skin from the flesh, as those who humble the herds flay them, drive them harshly, and water them with full cups of hardship – nothing is extended to them but the sword and the only cloth covering their back is fear. At that time Quraysh will wish – at the cost of the world and all its contents – to meet me, if only once or during the time of a camel's slaughter, in order to accept from them what I – today – ask for in part, and they do not respond.

The image of battle is also utilised in this oration, yet, *fitnah* appears more like a creature who participates in the battle, rather than just an atmosphere of war. This oration starts with ʿAlī's victory over the tribulation, as he has torn out its eye, introducing the first character who is associated with eyes in the oration, that is the tribulation. It seems that it is this tribulation that is inherited between tyrants, as it possesses "eyes", which means it takes the form of a creature, and therefore reflects the continuity of life that was mentioned earlier.[75º] No one before ʿAlī was able to stop it. He is the one who stopped this inherited tribulation from being

[75º] See the first oration in this chapter: tribulations in their different stages as infancy, youth and adulthood.

passed on. This is also an indication that, after him, this particular *fitnah* may manifest blindly, as will be expressed later.

He tore its eye out after its darkness started to spread, it became disordered, and its sickness began to peak. This sickness *kalab* reflects the tribulation's features – of a creature which bites and causes death as a consequence. This combination of "having an eye" and "spreading its darkness and illness" seems to take the *fitnah* from one level to another; from something inherited into a movement about to become active; but ʿAlī is the one who has stopped this *fitnah*. It is as if there is a kind of consistency in the process of the tribulation, but then there appears to be a sort of intensified movement of it. Thus, ʿAlī's role is a critical one, even though *fitnah* will continue after him, as he explains. The image of *fitnah* provokes in the mind the well-known image of death as a wild creature, which is indicated in the chapter on death. There is a connection between death and *fitnah*, as this oration attempts to show. Although death is not mentioned here, the word *kalab* implies it, and following this description ʿAlī's knowledge about the consequence of this tribulation is introduced. He uses "the hour" as a destination, and while this could be understood as the day of judgment or the moment in which the soul leaves the body, it can also consist of the notion of ego's submission and the appearance of truth, as illustrated earlier in the chapter on death, and as the earlier example of tribulation presents. To reach that destination, there will be the one who calls, the leader and the driver. ʿAlī indicates that he knows who will be killed, which refers to those who will be part of this *fitnah* and engage in its battle. He also knows those who will die in it, which is an indication of those who will submit to the truth when it is revealed.

ʿAlī is introducing his knowledge about those who will reach their destination. Those who will provide themselves with what they need from this stage are the ones who, probably, will face the death of their old beliefs as a result of *fitnah* and who will reach their destination. We can infer the consequence of each circumstance in the oration: those who will ride and rest in the tribulation will be killed; and those who reach the final destination will also die, as it is declared, "It is I who names the resting place and the final destination, and who can tell who among its people will be killed and who will die".

In the third paragraph, when ʿAlī describes tribulations in general, they are accompanied by two predicates, "come" as indicated by the word *ʾaqbalat* and "departed" *ʾadbarat*, connecting the arrival of these tribulations to a sense of vagueness or obscurity, and

its departure to a given warning. This is a necessary connection between the subject and the predicate. The recognition of their existence involves the answer to both the particle *hal* ["is this?"] and the cause. Because this connection between tribulations as a subject and their arrival as predicate results in the constitution of the subject and its cause that are the formal and final causes of tribulations.[751] They are tribulations because they have been received in a vague manner. This vagueness is in the essence of tribulation even though they may be represented or acted out differently. In this way the timeless copula is also reflected through the verbs *yunkarna muqbilāt "*they cannot be known at the time of their arrival" and *yuʿrafna mudbirāt "*but are recognized at the time of their departure". Although people are previously described as having different attitudes in their engagement with tribulations, in the recognition of the tribulation, it is the same as long as they are experiencing it as *fitnah*. ʿAlī changes a little when he describes the beginning of the movement; he does not attribute the driver, the one who calls and the leader to the tribulation. They are attributed to the word *fi'ah* [a group] as the initiator. Later, he describes those who will die or be killed. This means he clearly differentiates between those who experience tribulation and those who initiate it. Thus, for those who initiate it, it is not called *fitnah*; it is their plan, movement or action. Yet, for other people it will be in the nature of the tribulation to mistaken one thing for another, to then give warning, yet, cannot be known at the time of their arrival, but which are recognized at the time of their departure.

The description of arriving and leaving brings to the mind the movement of disguised women who later become revealed, and this may also evoke the idea of women as *fitan*, as in the verse of Qays ibn Dhurayḥ: "They say: Lubná is glamour, you were good before her [arrival], so without regret divorce her".[752] While the word "glamour" is translated from the word *fitnah*, describing how enchanted his beloved is, her effect seems to be as a tribulation; another translation of *fitnah*. Because being glamourous should not be a cause for a lover's bad status; yet, tribulation makes the change. The verse ends with the idea of divorce, translated from the word *ṭalliq*, which presents the idea of freeing oneself. Thus, as a result of *fitnah* the poet is encouraged to free himself.

Then, in this oration, after tribulations have evoked an image of women who were disguised and then recognised, they are described as being free as the wind which moves

[751] See section (3.1) in the Imaginary Context Chapter.
[752] ʾAdunīs, *Dīwān al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī,* vol: 1, 392.

everywhere. The point here is about the transition from one image to another in a logical imaginary process, which has its root in the audience's mind.

This wind will eventually lead to a dusty atmosphere, which provokes an atmosphere of battle. This is followed by ʿAlī's worry about the most frightening tribulation: the Son of Umayyah. He describes the Son of Umayyah's tribulation as *ʿamyāʾ muẓlimah* – this can be understood as the same tribulation that formerly possessed an eye but, now ʿAlī has torn it out, it has taken on its second character, as "blind". It combines the features of something inherited, appearing to come naturally, and then turns into a form of war, and in the middle of these two statuses ʿAlī has torn out its eye. This means it cannot see its way and, thus, the oration indicates that it spreads everywhere as it does not have a specific way to go.

Those who are able to see clearly, and so know the danger of the Sons of Umayyah, will be attacked by its sorrow and misfortunes, and those who do not recognise it and do not see the danger, will not feel the ordeal. This time the idea of engaging with *fitnah* is linked to the notion of "seeing and blindness". Although it may have the same implications as the previous image of those being affected badly who engage, ride and see; in this particular *fitnah* of the Sons of Umayyah ʿAlī uses this notion of seeing and blindness in a way that shows the value of recognition and of seeing clearly. Those who will be out of it, although they are safe, they are actually blind; an indication of the blindness of hearts. Thus, this clarifies who will be the target of the Sons of Umayyah.

The Sons of Umayyah are described as an aggressive old she-camel who bites whoever milks her. It also kicks and prevents anyone from getting her milk. A similar image was introduced in the chapter on "this world", when people thought that "this world" is like a she-camel owned by the Sons of Umayyah and they are the only ones who benefit from it. Although the she-camel, here, is attributed to the Sons of Umayyah themselves, it as an indication of the life which is ruled by them, after ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib. In this context of *fitnah* it shows the other side of this she-camel that not only gives the Sons of Umayyah its milk and joy but also fights those who do not support them.

Oration 93 previously described tribulations in general, coming and departing as vague, then becoming known. Yet, this tribulation of Banī Umayyah, when it comes, is *muẓlimah* [dark], which conveys the meaning of "viciousness" and "fear". It comes as *shawhāʾ* [ugly], an image that builds on the earlier one describing tribulations as women in disguise

which keeps the form of a character. This disguise is an ugly one which causes fear, and it arrives as "fragments of pre-Islamic era". The word *qiṭaʿan* is used, which means "portions", yet it also indicates the notion of broken pieces and the chopped-off organ, especially the hand. This usage evokes in the mind the image of the appearance of *fitnah* in the form of the body, consisting of broken pieces that come from the pre-Islamic era, with a torn eye. This is also connected to the fanaticism which contradicts tolerance and openness. Unlike in oration 151, when the beacon is notched and the ties of certainty are untied, in this tribulation there is no beacon and no flag for guidance to be seen anywhere.

ʿAlī declares "We – the Household of the Prophet – are saved from this tribulation" and are not taking any part in it. Yet, those who were affected will be relieved – though painfully – through another image of a camel. The relief is likened to flaying – removing the skin – so this ordeal will be uprooted as something which is closely stuck in the people's skin. The way people – like the herds– are treated is thus described as being humiliated and driven harshly. They have been threatened by swords and covered with fear throughout their journey. Interestingly, the she-camel is again presented as a way of life, this time the life of people who do not support the Sons of Umayyah. Thus, those who were part of other tribulations will hope to see ʿAlī for "only once or during the time of a camel's slaughter". Again, he introduces the event of slaughtering a she-camel with the word *maqām* which, although it conveys the meaning of "once" and of "a time", also means "context". Thus, it may not only mean a very short time, but they hope to see him in a context of slaughtering a she-camel, which is the she-camel of the Sons of Umayyah as a way of life.

In oration 151, a description of *raḥá* [the millstones] and *quṭb* [pole] is indicated as part of the first form of tribulation, described as a new born, then taking action, indicated by the work of the mills and its stones and pole. As I explained that this *fitnah* is inherited and that the pole arises after a description of *fitnah* as crooked, it seems that this description of *fitnah* appears when the matter is related to ruling. Thus, in the beginning of the *shiqshiqiyyah*, when he describes himself as the one who deserves the caliphate, here ʿAlī evokes the same image, which looks like a response to the first form of tribulation.

3. *Al-Shiqshiqiyyah* (Oration 3)[753]

By God, the son of ʾAbī Quḥāfah dressed himself with it [the caliphate] and he certainly knows that my true relationship to it is like the pole in its relation to the millstone. The water of the flood flows down out of me and the flying bird cannot ascend unto me. I veiled it [the caliphate] with a garment and kept myself away from it. Then I began to think whether I should face it with a broken hand or endure in the blind darkness of tribulations wherein the adult becomes feeble, the young grows old and the true believer toils until he meets God.

I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So, I tolerated it with a pricking in the eye and suffocation in the throat. I see that my inheritance has been plundered. And when the first of them passed into his destiny, he handed over the caliphate to the second after himself.

(Then [ʿAlī] quotes Al-ʾAʿshá's verse:)

How different is my difficult day on the camel's back to that day of Jabir's brother Hayyan.

It is strange that during his lifetime he [the first man] wished to be released from it [the caliphate], but he confirmed it for the other [to take it] after his death. No doubt these two split its [the caliphate's] udders strictly among themselves. This one [the second man] put it in a rough enclosure that risks serious injury; and its [the rough enclosure's] touch is harsh. At that time, slips are common and so also are the excuses, therefore. Its [the caliphate's] possessor is like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, yet, if he let it loose he would be thrown. Consequently, by God people got involved in wickedness, recklessness, unsteadiness and crookedness.

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite the length of the period and the arduousness of the ordeal. And when he [the second man] passed into his destiny he granted it [the caliphate] to a group of people claiming that I am one of them. But good Heavens! What do I have to do with this "consultation"? When was there any doubt about me with regard to the first of them, in order for me now to be compared to these rivals? But I sank down when they did, and flew high when they flew. One of them inclined to his hatred against me and the other turned to his in-law for support, and for other things.

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[753] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 25.

أَمَا وَاللهِ لَقَدْ تَقَمَّصَها فُلانٌ [ابن أبي قُحافة] وَإِنَّهُ لَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَحَلِّي مِنهَا مَحَلُّ القُطْبِ مِنَ الرَّحَا. يَنْحَدرُ عَنِّي السَّيْلُ، وَلا يَرْقَى إِلَيَّ الطَّيْرُ؛ فَسَدَلْتُ دُونَهَا ثَوْباً، وَطَوَيْتُ عَنْهَا كَشْحاً؛ وَطَفِقْتُ أَرْتَئِي بَيْنَ أَنْ أَصُولَ بِيَدٍ جَذَّاءَ [جدّا] ، أَوْ أَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَخْيَةٍ [ظلمة] عَمْيَاءَ، يَهْرَمُ فيهَا الكَبيرُ، وَيَشِيبُ فِيهَا الصَّغِيرُ، وَيَكْدَحُ فِيهَا مُؤْمِنٌ حَتَّى يَلْقَى رَبَّهُ.

فَرَأَيْتُ أَنَّ الصَّبْرَ عَلَى هَاتَا أَحْجَى، فَصَبَرتُ وَفِي العَيْنِ قَذىً، وَفِي الحَلْقِ شَجاً، أرى تُرَاثِي نَهْباً، حَتَّى مَضَى الأَوَّلُ لِسَبِيلِهِ، فَأَدْلَى بِهَا إِلَى فلانٍ بَعْدَهُ. ثمّ تمثل بقول الأعشى إلى ابن الخطاب:

شَتَّانَ ما يَوْمي عَلَى كُورِها * و يَوْمُ حَيَّانَ أخي جابِرِ

فَيَا عَجَباً! بَيْنَا هُوَ يَسْتَقِيلُها فِي حَيَاتِهِ إِذْ عَقَدَهَا لآخَرَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ -لَشَدَّ مَا تَشَطَّرَا ضَرْعَيْهَا!- فَصَيَّرَهَا فِي حَوْزَةِ خَشْنَاءَ يَغْلُظُ كَلْمُهَا [كلامها]، وَيَخْشُنُ مَسُّهَا، وَيَكْثُرُ العِثَارُ فِيهَا، وَالاعْتِذَارُ مِنْهَا، فَصَاحِبُهَا كَرَاكِبِ الصَّعْبَةِ إِنْ أَشْنَقَ لَهَا خَرَمَ، وَإِنْ أَسْلَسَ لَهَا تَقَحَّمَ، فَمُنِيَ النَّاسُ -لَعَمْرُ اللهِ- بِخَبْطٍ وَشِمَاس، وَتَلَوُّنٍ وَاعْتِرَاض، فَصَبَرْتُ عَلَى طُولِ الْمُدَّةِ، وَشِدَّةِ الْمِحْنَةِ، حَتَّى إِذا مَضَى لِسَبِيلِهِ جَعَلَهَا فِي جَمَاعَةَ زَعَمَ أَنِّي أَحَدُهُمْ.

فَيَا لَلّهِ وَلِلشُّورَى! مَتَى اعْتَرَضَ الرَّيْبُ فِيَّ مَعَ الأَوَّلِ مِنْهُمْ، حَتَّى صِرْتُ أُقْرَنُ إِلَى هذِهِ النَّظَائِرِ! لكِنِّي أَسِفْتُ إِذْ أَسِفُوا، وَطِرْتُ إِذْ طَارُوا؛ فَصَغَا رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ لِضِغْنِهِ، وَمَالَ الآخَرُ لِصِهْرِه، مَعَ هَنٍ وَهَنٍ إِلَى أَنْ قَامَ ثَالِثُ القَوْمِ نَافِجاً حِضْنَيْهِ، بَيْنَ نَثِيلِهِ وَمُعْتَلَفِهِ، وَقَامَ مَعَهُ بَنُو أَبِيهِ يَخْضَمُونَ مَالَ اللهِ خِضْمَةَ الْإِبِلِ نِبْتَةَ الرَّبِيعِ، إِلَى أَنِ انْتَكَثَ عَلَيْهِ فَتْلُهُ، وَأَجْهَزَ عَلَيْهِ عَمَلُهُ، وَكَبَتْ بِهِ بِطْنَتُهُ .

فَمَا رَاعَنِي إِلاَّ وَالنَّاسُ كَعُرْفِ الضَّبُعِ إِلَيَّ، يَنْثَالُونَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِب، حَتَّى لَقَدْ وُطِئَ الحَسَنَانِ، وَشُقَّ عِطْفَايَ [عطافي] مُجْتَمِعِينَ حَوْلِي كَرَبِيضَةِ الغَنَمِ. فَلَمَّا نَهَضْتُ بِالْأَمْرِ نَكَثَتْ طَائِفَةٌ، وَمَرَقَتْ أُخْرَى، وَقَسَطَ [فسق] آخَرُونَ، كَأَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَسْمَعُوا اللهَ سُبْحَانَهُ يَقُولُ: ﴿تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوّاً فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فَسَاداً وَالعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾! بَلَى، وَاللهِ لَقَدْ سَمِعُوهَا وَوَعَوْهَا، وَلَكِنَّهُمْ حَلِيَتِ الدُّنْيَا فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ، وَرَاقَهُمْ زِبْرِجُهَا!

أَمَا وَالَّذِي فَلَقَ الْحَبَّةَ، وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ، لَوْلاَ حُضُورُ الْحَاضِرِ، وَقِيَامُ الْحُجَّةِ بِوُجُودِ النَّاصِرِ، وَمَا أَخَذَ اللهُ عَلَى الْعُلَمَاءِ أَلاَّ يُقَارُّوا عَلَى كِظَّةِ ظَالِمٍ، وَلا سَغَبِ مَظْلُومٍ، لأَلْقَيْتُ حَبْلَهَا عَلَى غَارِبِهَا، وَلَسَقَيْتُ آخِرَهَا بِكَأْسِ أَوَّلِهَا، وَلأَلْفَيْتُمْ دُنْيَاكُمْ هذِهِ أَزْهَدَ عِنْدِي مِنْ عَفْطَةِ عَنْزٍ!

> Then the third of these people rose while stretching his breasts, surrounded by his dung and crib. People of his father's family also stood up for him, swallowing up God's wealth like a camel devouring spring foliage, until his trick decayed [failed]; he has perished by his action and been brought low by his gluttony. At that moment, the only thing that worried me is when the crowd of people headed towards me, rushing from every side, like the mane of the hyena. So much so that Al-Ḥassan and Al-Ḥussayn were trampled down and both sides of my garment were torn. They gathered around me like a herd of goats. And when I had taken hold of the reins of the matter, one party had reneged and another broken through, while the rest began acting wrongfully, as if they had not heard the word of Allah, saying:
>
> *That is the Last Abode; We appoint it for those who desire not exorbitance in the earth, nor corruption. The issue ultimate is to the godfearing.*[754]
>
> Yes, by God, they had heard it and grasped it but the world sparkled in their eyes and its embellishments appealed to them. Behold, by Him who split the grain [to grow] and created souls, if people had not come to me, and that which is evident had not been proved in the presence of supporters, and if there had been no pledge of God with those who have knowledge that obliges them not to accept the gluttony of the oppressor nor the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope that ties the Caliphate on its back [giving rein to it], and would have irrigated the last of it using the same cup of the first one. Then you would have seen that this world of yours is to me no better than the sneezing of a goat.

There are three imaginary contexts in play for this oration; each one is connected to a characteristic feature. In the first paragraph, the context is constructed around the idea of purification, or the perfect human manifested through different and contradictory symbols. Starting with the word *taqammaṣa* – which indicates the meanings "dressed", "imitated" and "transmigrated" – the word reflects upon the different possibilities of trying to be something other than the true self. However, the first understanding – "dressed" – is related to the "shirt" *qamīṣ* or the cloth that is worn on the top of the body, including the chest, abdomen and back, which brings to mind the idea of covering oneself forcefully *takalluf al-shay'* as the conjugated verb *tafa"ala* denotes. The word *qamīṣ* is also connected in Islamic teaching with the story of the prophet Yūsuf [Josef]. In this story, the shirt comes as a symbol with a triple status: a trick; evidence of truth; and a good omen which opens the eyes of Yūsuf's father after he had lost his sight. In such a story, while the shirt symbolises the good and bad omen, it also releases the truth. It reflects the two sides of the event, just as the back and abdomen do. Yet, it is the shirt that covers the chest which contains all the good and bad feelings towards oneself and others. The other meaning of the word *taqammāṣa* is "imitated", which can mean to copy someone else's behaviour or character and, thus, to be away from oneself or the truth, which is already

[754] Arberry, *The Koran*, 401.

implied by "dressing". This also leads to the third meaning, "transmigrated", which is connected to the idea of reincarnation; the soul "migrates" from one body to another after death. Whether this belief is based in fact or not, it still brings to mind the spiritual path that leads the soul to its destination; it indicates that the essence can manifest through different physical bodies, and that bodies can receive this essence – or that the human soul can inhabit the body of another being, and manifest itself through it, as the caliphate manifests itself through successive bodies. This means the caliphate will be a reflection of the essential soul that has transmigrated into it.

The second symbol in this section is that of the pole and the millstones; the stones grind the grain to make flour and, thereby, the most basic food necessary for life, while the pole is the thing that leads and moves this process. The pole is embedded in the lower millstone and connected to its centre. The difference between transmigrating oneself into another body – to be reflected through this body – and being the force (the pole) that was originally built into that body, leading its movement, is the difference between "falsity" and "truth", between being in someone else's body or clothes and being the originator. It is the difference between a stone and a cloth in its solidity. ʿAlī by this usage of the representational simile *tashbīh tamthīlī* compares his relationship with the caliphate to the pole of the millstone.[755]

The following images, in which ʿAlī describes himself as "the water of the flood" which "flows down out of me and the flying bird cannot ascend unto me", shows him giving the impression of his high position. Yet, it can also be interpreted as the completion of the entire theme of purification and centrality. The water is described in verse (21: 30) of the *Qur'ān* thus: "Have not the unbelievers then beheld that the heavens and the earth were a mass all sewn up, and then We unstitched them and of water fashioned every living thing? Will they not believe?"[756] In this verse water is not described as falling from heaven like rain. It talks exactly about "unstitching" the heavens and the earth as they were joined together and then they had been parted. This is followed by indicating the water as the source of life. In the image in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, ʿAlī describes himself as being in a high position with water coming out of him – and not just a small amount of water; it comes in a flood, a bursting flow of life. It is as he

[755] This term (*tashbīh tamthīlī*) is used according to ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, yet, other rhetoricians have different definitions. See Maṭlūb, *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Balāghiyyah*, 332.

[756] Arberry, *The Koran*, 325.

describes the moment he parted from the other (the below). Both examples in the *Qur'ān* and *Nahj al-Balāghah* seem to indicate the origin of life and the relationship between the above and below. In his description of the psyche and its relation to the archetypal figures, Carl Jung indicates:

> The unity of our psychic nature lies in the middle, just as the living unity of the waterfall appears in the dynamic connection between above and below. Thus, the living effect of the myth is experienced when a higher consciousness, rejoicing in its freedom and independence, is confronted by the autonomy of a mythological figure and yet cannot flee from its fascination, but must pay tribute to the overwhelming impression.[757]

I would argue that the image of *Nahj al-Balāghah* introduces this connection between the higher consciousness and the experienced myth which is represented by the symbols. It does this in such way that it allows the expansion of consciousness and its unity with other beings. Thus, ʿAlī is a source of life in its most purified nature, but then, the bird (which functions here as a symbol of the perfect human being or the free soul that tries to find its original home) does not reach the level that he has already reached.[758] The flow of water is connected to the pole as the centre that governs everyday life, and the level of purification in the image of the bird is the other side to the idea of dressing in a shirt. While the bird is the free soul, the idea of "transmigration" and "dressing in a shirt" is what prevents it from freedom.

After the image of the waterfall, and parallel to the idea of the "chest" which appears in the word "dressed", the other bodily organs, that relate to the worldly level, are now introduced, such as *kashḥan* [the part of the body between the waist and the ribs]. This is why ʿAlī's response comes in "I veiled it (the caliphate) with a garment and kept myself away from it" using the word *thawb* [garment] to face *taqammaṣahā*. Thus, this caliphate that has been used as a dressing, a shirt – ʿAlī has separated himself from it with a garment.[759] Then, he uses the word *kashḥan* which gives the meaning of turning away, and also the pain that is kept in that position, as well as the beginning of concealed enmity; these are different meanings signalled by the word *kashḥan*. So, he did not only show his back and turn away, but there was some sort of disagreement and painful experience. The word *Ṭawayt* [bended or folded] strengthens this understanding as it consists of the idea of "being hidden". The other element of bodily imagery is the broken hand, an indication of the absence of support.

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[757] Jung. *The Archetypes*, 270.

[758] See *ʿAyniyyat* Ibn Sina, and in this thesis, the chapter on "the Bat".

[759] The word *dūn* comes to mean *taḥt*: "underneath" in the phrase which is translated as "I veiled it with a garment".

ʿAlī then describes the situation in which he may want to endure in "blind darkness", using the word *ṭakhyah* which, in addition to the meaning of darkness, is also connected to sorrow in the heart and to speech that is not understandable. The word "blind" gives all these connotations: darkness, sorrow and unknown speech, which elaborates the feature of having no clear direction. In addition, the word "blind" connects the phrase to the image of the body as the meaning is likened to the blind eye. Thus, he had to choose either to try to control the situation with a broken hand or to surrender to the darkness. While the broken hand is not connected to "sight" but to the ability to fight, the word "blind" indicates the inability to see things, and yet he decided to go with this latter option which seems to lead to the unknown – this is indicated by the line "I found endurance thereon was wiser". However, he knew that its effect would include both the young and the old. Both descriptions of the hand being broken and blindness convey the meaning of lack of transparency, which is connected to the imaginary context as a whole in this paragraph, which considers the purification of the self. It is also an indication that he treats his opponents according to their level of consciousness, because their level seems to be a low worldly level which will later be insisted on when he describes his sinking down. This explains that the source, or the higher consciousness, does not have its effect without the interference of the worldly; and this can be found in Jung's archetypal and mythical figures.

In the second section of the oration, the imaginary context is about "deviation". It is reflected in a picture of a she-camel. Starting with the word *turāth* [inheritance], the camel is part of the wealth that one may have during a lifetime. However, ʿAlī's wealth is described as a booty for someone else, as the word *nahban* [has been plundered] indicates. The words *turāth* and *mīrāth* [inheritance], according to Lisān al-ʿArab give the same meaning, but we can notice that the word *turāth* appears in the *Qurʾānic* verse (89:19) "and you devour the inheritance greedily".[760] While the word *mīrāth* comes twice in the *Qurʾān*, connected to heaven and the earth as owned by God, as in verse (57:10) "How is it with you, that you expend not in the way of God, and to God belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth?"[761] and in verse (3:180) "and to God belongs the inheritance of the heavens and earth; and God is

[760] Arberry, *The Koran*, 643.
[761] Ibid., 565.

aware of the things you do".[762] Thus, the word *turāth*, unlike *mīrāth*, is connected to greediness and it evokes in the mind the idea of "eating", as the word *ta'kulūn* in the verse means.

It is then followed by the word *'adlá* [handed over] which may invoke the idea of seeking water and lowering a bucket into a well. The word *nahb* [plunder or spoil] brings to mind the posture of searching on the ground, so there is this movement of the body as it curves or bends down, which is the same movement that using the bucket can lead to. Here again the words "inheritance" and "bucket" become vivid symbols of the source of life, yet they are both reflected through words that contribute to an image of a camel. In this paragraph the word *turāth* can also be linked to the idea of wealth as a source of life, and to support the picture of a camel.

When the first man (the first holder of the caliphate) has died, or "passed into his own destiny", he has sent down the caliphate like a bucket to his fellow. Here, the caliphate is imagined as a bucket that needs to be sent down, filled with water, unlike in the first paragraph when ʿAlī describes himself as the source of water; water comes down out of him. The caliphate, with the second man, needs to be filled with water by hand and with effort; it does not flow naturally.

The idea of transferring the caliphate from one to another continues to be linked to the she-camel. The word *yastaqīluhā* means asking to be freed from it as in "wished to be released from", however it is conjugated from *'aqaltu* and *qayyaltu*, coming from the root *qa-ya-la*, which consists of the meaning of watering or milking the she-camel at noon. The conjugating verb *yastaf'il*; *yastaqil* conveys the meaning of the change that happens to the thing; exploiting the thing.

Moving on to the third paragraph (setting aside the quoted al-'Aʿshá's verse), it can be seen that he does not use, for instance, words like *iʿtadhara* [asking to be excused] which can give a direct meaning of wanting to leave the caliphate, but he continues to evoke the image of a she-camel which had been "tied" to the second man, as the word *ʿaqadahā* means which implies "confirmed it for the other". While he asked during his lifetime to be freed from it and its responsibility, he actually fastened it to his friend after him. The way they have exploited the caliphate is like milking it half by half and here is again an indication of the symbol of "drinking" of its milk which has already been dried.

[762] Ibid., 68.

We can compare the symbols of the source of life in the two sections (on the first man and the second man). In the first, water falls out of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib in the phrase *yanḥadiru ʿanni al-sayl* [The water of the flood flows down out of me], so if water as a source of life also represents the core of the caliphate, it is imagined that this core comes out of ʿAlī – he contains the secret of the caliphate. In the second paragraph, the source of life is represented first in the symbol *ʾadlá* which conveys the idea of trying to fill the bucket with water. Second, it is represented by the milk contained in the she-camel. It is noticed that the pure falling water has gone through a change to be represented as a resource that needs to be contained in a bucket, and then is represented as the milk of the she-camel, which in itself evokes the idea of authority and owning things. The core of the caliphate, at this stage, has dried up and kept in a harsh part inside the she-camel, as the word *ḥawzah* [enclosure] conveys the meaning of an organ. The word *ḥawzah* also means "enclosure", which may imply taking a thing to one side rather than the other side. It also evokes the meaning of "watering" the camels, because the word *ḥawz* is connected to the tradition of the first night in which the herd are driven to find drink, and it is said that they are driven gently "*al-sawq al-ḥawz*".

Thus, the usage of the word *ḥawzah* rather than any synonym could be understood for this evocation. Words like *nāḥiyah* or *jihah* – which mean "side" or "direction" – can contribute to the explicit meaning that the caliphate has been taken in the wrong direction, yet it does not contribute to the image of the she-camel.

Whether the caliphate is taken to this particular side or organ of the camel, or it is as a she-camel taken to the place to drink, in both cases it is described as being *khashnāʾ* [rough]. The word *khashnāʾ* is also connected to the land – "a harsh land" – meaning that the land is full of stones, which opposes the idea of a gentle drive for the herd. The image evokes the dryness inside the caliphate, and around it, as if it has been taken far from the source. The land that it walks on is very rough and causes injuries. And because of its harshness, it leads to slips and falls. Thus, this caliphate has been changed into a non-submissive camel and becomes a threat that challenges both its driver and the people. The end of this paragraph clearly explains how misleading and disordered the situation is.

In the third imaginary context of this oration, a third man is described. The scenario has moved from the path of the camel (which ended up being misleading) to one in which the main focus is the "appetite" and materialistic desire. This desire is connected to arrogance, in

the phrase *nāfijan ḥiḍnayh* [stretching his breasts], which is linked to the torso that featured in the first section of the oration as "dressed himself with it". Yet, the word *nāfij* is also used as a description for the voice that calls out for the herd to disperse rather than stay together [*ṣawt nāfij*]. This is more connected to what follows, as he is surrounded by "dung" and the "crib"; these two words are connected to the pronoun referring to the man himself, not the caliphate. Thus, at this stage the description is about him, and the image continues by drawing members of his family that rise with him and eat like the herd. The end of this stage results in dying as a result of gluttony and satiety.

The stages in this oration descend from a high spiritual perspective to the lowest. The first section argues about the different states of purity between ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib and the "first man" and how *taqammuṣ* [dressing] is the beginning of this change. The second section takes the reader into the journey which – in a leadership role like caliphate – should lead toward "right" and should clearly differentiate between "right" and "wrong"; however, it ends by misleading people and causing them to deviate from the righteous path. After practically losing the way – a lesser manifestation of pureness – the context is drawn around a very mundane activity and scenario of mere eating, and not ordinary eating, but that which takes place in the midst of "dung" within a "crib". And this is a good preparation to start the fourth section in which people are described as goats surrounding ʿAlī.

In the transition between one section and another, the symbols I have been discussing are raised once again. In Al-ʾAʿshá's verse after the first section:

> *How different it is my difficult day on the camel's back to that day of Jabir's brother Hayyan*

ʿAlī describes himself on the she-camel, expressing the difficulty of riding it, and brings himself into the imaginary context of the she-camel. Hayyan's day is a day of joy and ease, and therefore the comparison is quoted here. After the second section, he declares that he goes up and down according to the situation: "But I sank down when they did, and flew high when they flew". In this phrase he brings to mind the image of the bird, which was established in the first section, in which he placed himself in a position of high authority. And the evocation of the bird flying upward and then down entails the extreme difference between the "source" and the earthly elements. In both transitions between sections, he uses an image which suits the text that follows.

Before starting with the third section, the description given to the two men suits the imaginary contexts of the first two sections. The first man is described as "inclined to his hatred against me", a phrase that insists on the status of the heart which opposes the purification of the self, and the second man is described as being partial towards his in-law, which enforces the imaginary context of deviation from rightness.

At the end of the oration, he again brings back the three main images. First, of the she-camel, when describing the caliphate as having been left to lead itself and be free in his explanation of having no personal desire to take the role: "I would have cast the rope that ties the Caliphate on its back". Second, he brings the image of "watering" or drink that – as he states it – he could have interacted in all its stages in the same way by leaving it; giving the same cup "and would have irrigated the last of it using the same cup of the first one". While this cup is used to water the she-camel, and the situation is repeated after every man, he looks like he is dealing with the herd. So, he will use the same cup with all of them, opposing in such a description the idea of exploiting the she-camel, as the others who shared it together did. Third, the image of "the sneezing of a goat" is connected to the third section and it seems to be a response to it. It is a description of "this world" and, as indicated in the chapter on "this world", it suits the other elements in the imaginary context of this section.

After he finishes this oration, he was asked to repeat it again as Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī indicates. and there he described it as *shiqshiqah*, which conveys the meaning of what comes out of a camel's mouth when it gets agitated.[763] It makes a sound that is described as "a roar" – *hadarat*. And then, it settles and calms down. It may also convey the stages of the issue of the caliphate that started with anger and agitation and then settled at last. Thus, the different imaginary contexts presented in this oration and the connections between their elements are clarified.

[763] Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol: 1, 205.

4. Guiding People Who Have Deviated Back to the Path (Oration 4)[764]

> Through us you have found your way in the darkness and have surmounted the hump of highest altitude, and through us you have emerged from the gloomy night into the dawn. The ears that do not hear the outcry may become deaf. How can one who remains deaf to loud cries hear the faint voice? The heart that has ever palpitated may know peace.
>
> I always knew the consequences of your treachery and I saw through you, that sees only the jewels of the deceitful. The garment of religion had kept me hidden from you, but my sincere intentions gave me sight of you.
>
> I stood for you on the path of truth among misleading avenues where you would meet each other; but there is no guide and, though you dug, you found no water.
>
> Today I am making this eloquent brute speak to you. The opinions of the person who abandons me may go astray. I have never doubted the truth since it has been shown to me. Mūsá [Moses] did not harbour fear for himself. Rather he understood the dominance of the ignorant and their waywardness. Today we stand on the crossroads of truth and untruth. Whoever is sure of receiving water feels no thirst.

This oration immediately follows the *shiqshiqiyyah* in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, and it is a kind of response to it. In the *shiqshiqiyyah*, ʿAlī mentions in the first section that he may have chosen to fight with a broken hand in the darkness, but did not. And here, he starts with "through us you have found your way in the darkness". So, the time described in the *shiqshiqiyyah* has created the darkness but through them, as in this oration, people have passed through darkness. The second statement also responds to the second section in the *shiqshiqiyyah* in which the non-submissive she-camel, while walking the path, had misled people. Here, people are described as "have surmounted the hump of highest altitude", which evokes strength, confidence and success. It is clear that the word *tasannama* [surmounted the hump] – in the phrase – means riding the hump of the camel. Thus, the first two clauses lead to a third, which is also a continuation of the process of leaving darkness completely and being able to enter into the time of dawn.

The second section of this oration – from "The ears that do not hear the outcry may become deaf" to "my sincere intentions gave me sight of you" – is a reflection on the *shiqshiqiyyah*. Those who were busy with the crowd will not be able to listen to the quiet sound

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[764] Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 30.
بِنَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ فِي الظَّلْمَاءِ، وَتَسَنَّمْتُم ذُرْوَةَ العلْيَاءِ، وبِنَا أَفْجَرْتُم [انْفَجَرْتُم] عَن السِّرَارِ. وُقِرَ سَمْعٌ لَمْ يَفْقَهِ [يسمع] الوَاعِيَةَ، وكَيْفَ يُرَاعِي النَّبْأَةَ مَنْ أَصَمَّتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ؟! رُبِطَ جَنَانٌ لَمْ يُفَارِقْهُ الخَفَقَان. مازِلتُ أَنْتَظِرُ بِكُمْ عَوَاقِبَ الغَدْرِ، وَأَتَوَسَّمُكُمْ بِحِلْيَةِ المُغْتَرِّين، حتى سَتَرَنِي عَنْكُمْ جِلْبَابُ الدِّينِ، وَبَصَّرَنِيكُمْ صِدْقُ النِّيَّةِ. أَقَمْتُ لَكُمْ عَلَى سَنَنِ الحَقِّ فِي جَوَادِّ المَضَلَّةِ، حيْثُ تَلْتَقُونَ وَلا دَلِيلَ، وَتَحْتَفِرُونَ وَلا تُميهُونَ. اليَوْمَ أَنْطِقُ لَكُمُ العَجْمَاءَ ذاتَ البَيَانِ! عَرَبَ [غرب] رَأْيُ امْرئٍ تَخَلَّفَ عَنِّي. مَا شَكَكْتُ فِي الحَقِّ مُذْ أُرِيتُهُ! لَمْ يُوجِسْ مُوسَى عليه السلام خِيفَةً عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، بَلْ أَشْفَقَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الجُهَّالِ وَدُوَلِ الضَّلالِ! اليَوْمَ تَوَاقَفْنَا عَلَى سَبِيلِ الحَقِّ وَالباطِلِ. مَنْ وَثِقَ بِمَاءٍ لَمْ يَظْمَأْ!

of the true caliph. Yet, the true believer's heart is strong and at peace, as they are attached to the truth. Another notable point is the phrase "the garment of religion had kept me hidden from you", which might be understood as "their look as religious people prevented him from being recognised by them". We find the word *jilbāb* – the clothing that covers the whole body – connected to "religion". While it is usually explained as a way to pretend to be religious, the word *sataranī* [kept me hidden] means ʿAlī is the one who has been veiled to them. It might be that the clothing *thawb* that he decided to use to get away from the caliphate – as indicated in the *shiqshiqiyyah* – is the thing that prevents them from knowing him and his true position; because in other cases he was able to fight those who were wearing the clothes of Islam. Here, this covering – according to Ibn ʾAbī al-Ḥadīd – is preventing them from seeing who he really is and what he can do.[765] Yet this is not reciprocal, as he is able to see them clearly, because of his sincerity.

In the middle of this oration, ʿAlī describes himself as leading the people through the misleading paths, where they meet but have no guides, and where they do not find water even though they dig for it. While he gains control over things, ʿAlī also describes himself as being able to make the camel speak. Although this could be understood as a representation of his speech, meaning that he explains what the people do not understand, the usage of the word *al-ʿajmāʾ* [foreigner or brute] brings to mind the notion of controlling the animal and the path, especially as it follows the phrase describing the inability to find water. Thus, through enabling his camel to speak, the people will be led toward the right path. It is described as "eloquent" even though it is "brute" – or *ʿajmāʾ* – it is equivocal, ambiguous just like the meaning of the symbols in speech which will be revealed by ʿAlī.This idea of clarifying conveys both, clarification of the path and the signs. While the signs can be understood as the signs of the path, they can also mean his own signs, with which he leads people to the truth.[766] The image of the path of the camel is evoked, that camel which strayed in the *shiqshiqiyyah*, and was described as being in a harsh enclosure, or had walked into and was watered in a harsh land – this being a reflection of the nature and character of the second man – the she-camel is now able to show its features eloquently and clearly, raising in the mind ʿAlī's qualities. This idea is followed by two phrases: one concerns the view of those who do not follow ʿAlī in which the word *ʿazaba* conveys the meaning of "going far away" and "being invisible", and both meanings

[765] Ibn ʾAbi al-Hadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol: 1, 210.
[766] Ibid., 211.

are connected to the idea of the she-camel, in walking the path and uncovering its eloquence; the other concerns the absence of doubt, since he has seen the truth and all traces of doubt have been wiped away. This also indicates ʿAlī's previous encounter with truth; as it has been clearly seen, one has no doubt about walking its path. This idea of showing the eloquence of his signs is presented in this oration, positioned after the *shiqshiqiyyah*, as an indication of ʿAlī taking the lead now, and in the following pages of *Nahj al-Balaghah* he is going to make things clear and show the path.

The idea of recognising the right path prompts an example of the story of Moses in which ʿAlī explains that Moses was not concerned for himself, he was concerned about others, that they might be led astray because of the sorcerers. His primary worry is that people will be misled. Then, when it becomes inevitable, he says "today we stand on the crossroads of truth and untruth". This phrase, which indicates the role of roads in stories of Moses, and also brings to mind other stories linked to the staff of Moses, and to crossing the road of truth. In the *Qurʾānic* verse (20: 77) Moses was asked to strike the sea so it would reveal a clear path to his followers: "We revealed to Moses, Go out at night with My servants and strike a dry path for them across the sea".[767]

The inclusion of Moses also brings to mind stories related to finding water, as in verse (2: 60) of the *Qurʾān*: "Remember when Moses prayed for water for his people and We said to him, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Twelve springs gushed out, and each group knew its drinking place".[768] The oration, after presenting this idea of the path, ends with "Whoever is sure of receiving water feels no thirst", connecting water found in the ground as the "source" of truth, that is only found through ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, and this is also linked to the beginning of the *shiqshiqiyyah* when he describes himself as the source of water.

Two other elements are indicated in this oration, in addition to the idea of false appearance and ornament; the "heart" and "ears". Both are connected to the notion of finding the way; the ear is linked negatively to the ability to know and hear, while the heart is connected to stability and strength as it continues to be faithful: "The heart that has ever palpitated may know peace". The main issue regarding the images of this oration is their direct response to and reflection upon the *shiqshiqiyyah*, and how the images gradually build on each other from the beginning, with the she-camel until reaching the water; the source.

[767] Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan*, 199.
[768] Ibid., 9.

The word *fitan* and its derivations appear many times in the *Qur'ān*. It shows in different contexts that do not always appear in relation to "bad" occurrences, such as (21:35): "Every soul is certain to taste death: We test you all through the bad and the good, and to Us you will all return". *Fitan* is about "testing" here. What concerns us in this chapter is how it is expressed and predicated. It is usually presented as to "appear" or "come" and sometimes it is like a hole or trap that people may fall into, like verse (4:91): "You will find others who wish to be safe from you, and from their own people, but whenever they are back in a situation where they are tempted [to fight you], they succumb to it".[769] Similarly, verse (9:49): "Some of them said, 'Give me permission to stay at home: do not trouble me'. They are already in trouble: Hell will engulf the disbelievers".[770]

In the *Qur'ān* the description of the tribulation in itself is not extended, and *fitan* is only shown as being present. However, in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, images of *fitan* have more extended descriptions. It is developed in higher imaginary levels or, as they are called in the studies of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, "the compound images" as its look, its nature and its way of interaction are introduced earlier. This is present in *Nahj al-Balāghah* in addition to the little images that are combined to present the imaginary context within its own logic. Al-Fārābī differentiates between "definition" *ḥadd* and "description" *rasm*, the imaginary context of tribulations in *Nahj al-Balāghah* provide knowledge about the "description". The imaginary contexts that I have explored sheds light on specific tribulations, such as the one of the Sons of Umayyah. Yet, all *fitan* seem to have the same characteristic of being unrecognised when they begin. In this way, there seems to be no way to describe the details of tribulations without employing the logic of the imaginary context. As "tribulation" is an abstract notion, *maʿqūl* (singular of *maʿqūlāt*), it will certainly need its own logic to be understood.

As noted earlier, the images of tribulations often evoke an atmosphere of battle, and in some cases a hero is involved, such as the one who tore out the eye of tribulations. This evokes the Jungian symbol of the hero as a symbol of transformation: "All these figures irrupt autonomously into consciousness as soon as it gets into a pathological state".[771] Achieving wholeness is to harmonise the data of the conscious and the unconscious. This "cannot be

[769] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 59.
[770] Ibid., 120.
[771] Jung, *The Archetypes*, 285.

indicated in the form of a recipe".[772] Yet, knowing the symbols is significant for transforming the personality into a unified whole.[773] The symbol of the hero is described as god-like, the symbolic source of strength for the personal ego:

> The essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness – his awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses – in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him".[774]

In the examples indicated in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, it seems that ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib is not only teaching people about what they are going to face, but is also preparing them by bringing into their awareness their strengths and weaknesses by his usage of the heroic symbol. The symbol can be seen in the *shiqshiqiyyah* and oration 4, as the hero who is the source. Yet, in the *shiqshiqiyyah*, the hero is combined with other elements of the hero cycle, such as that of betrayal and disappointment.[775] While the hero figure is known to prevail against the monster in most cases, in other cases the hero "gives in to the monster".[776]

Understanding "tribulations", its nature, its connections to events and its different types, allows one to read the current political and social circumstances accordingly. While the inherited tribulation might be easily applied to these days, reading *Nahj al-Balāghah's* description of tribulations portrayed as wars in which the earth is described as shaking, and in particular the description of the Sons of Umayyah's blind tribulation, appearing as fragments of the pre-Islamic era, facilitates an understanding of different revolutionary movements.

[772] Ibid., 289.
[773] Ibid.
[774] Joseph L. Henderson. "Ancient Myth and Modern Man", in *Man and His Symbols*, edited by Carl G. Jung. (Canada: Dell Publishing, 1968) 101.
[775] Ibid.
[776] Ibid., 111.

Conclusion

In tenth-century Baghdad, the literary salons were predominant places where intellectuals gathered, shared their ideas and engaged in disputation. It was the time when different theological sects started to develop their arguments based upon rational foundations *ʿaqlī* as a different way of presenting evidence previously based upon revelation *waḥy*/*naqlī*. It was the age when the Buyids ruled different parts of the Islamic territories. Although the Buyids were Shīʿīs, their power did not seem to reach a level which allowed Shīʿī intellectuals to spread knowledge freely. The Sunni doctrine under the Abbasid caliphs was still dominant and strict. Yet, Shīʿī were free to perform their rituals and participate in disputation with different theological schools.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī held an important position in the Shīʿī community, succeeding his father after his death. Al-Raḍī, who belonged to an important family, together with his brother Al-Murtaḍá were taught by important Shīʿī figures, such as Al-Mufīd. They were influenced by Al-Mufīd's rational approach, which was dominant at that time as a result of the development of the Muʿtazilī school. The Muʿtazilī school differed from the ʾAshʿarī Sunni orthodoxy which depended for its understanding of revelation on the idea of "transmission". Followers of the ʾAshʿarī school believed that the *Qurʾānic* verses express ideas the human mind is unable to understand, because the ʾAshʿarīs made divisions between the thought of God and the language used to express this thought. This means God may have an idea about "the hand of God", for example, but human beings are incapable of understanding what this "hand" is.[777] Thus, human language is not a subtle enough tool to understand the *Qurʾānic* expressions. Therefore, these verses are understood through the "transmission" of their meaning between generations, which is based on the prophet and his fellows' speech. However, the Muʿtazilī school looked at thought and language as identical, as was the case with ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Therefore, they applied and extended the usage of *majāz* [imagery] in their reading of the *Qurʾān*. As they were influenced by the Muʿtazilite, then, and by the approach they had to engage with in their disputation with them, Shīʿī scholars developed their rational approach. This rationality reached its peak with Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, who engaged thoroughly with the linguistic elements of the *Qurʾān* and examples of poetic traditions in his discussion around

[777] See section (1.2.4) in Chapter Two of this thesis.

different theological issues. Al-Raḍī was a distinguished poet who used his talent to claim the rights of the ʿAlid to the caliphate. In his works, he appears to be using his knowledge of poetic construction to reveal a different reading of the *Qurʾānic* verses. This can be noticed in his two important works, *Talkhīs al-Bayān fī Majāzat al-Qurʾān* and *Ḥaqāʾiq al-Taʾwīl*. While in *Ḥaqāʾiq al-Taʾwīl*, Al-Raḍī relied heavily on his linguistic approach, he also established his path through "imagery" toward an understanding of the *Qurʾānic* verses. Yet, in *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān*, he indicated that he was dedicated entirely to the approach utilising imagery, which he had established in his former book. It is clear in *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān* that he connects metaphors together, linking them to the context of the chapter. Although he does not go into detailed analysis, he presents his unique methodology with which he constructs understanding of the verses on his interpretation of metaphors. Modern studies of Al-Raḍī's work have clarified different points regarding the way Al-Raḍī engaged with imagery in the *Qurʾān*. Abu Deeb argues that Al-Raḍī's understanding of metaphor preceded ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's work.

Within this context of the increased importance of imagery, which in itself was controversial, the study of philosophy was already widespread, and Al-Fārābī's thought was dominant within philosophical studies. The discussion around logic and grammar as ways to achieve truth stimulated the grammarians such as Al-Sīrāfī to value grammar over logic. They prioritised the unique attributes of the specific language (the Arabic language, in this case) over universal logic, which they thought was actually built on the language of the Greeks. However, Al-Fārābī clarified that both mathematical logic and expressive logic – thus, grammar – are dependent on each other. Logic is understood as a philosophical tool which protects the mind from deviation. The grammarians, on one hand, looked at the construction of the sentence and relations between its elements (e.g., the verb *fiʿl* and the subject *fāʿil*) and stated that, through this construction, the right understanding is achieved. Logic, on the other hand, looked at the way the proposition, which is concerned with the relation between the predicate *maḥmūl* and the subject *mawḍūʿ,* is built. The difference is between a focus on the particular and the universal. For instance, in the phrase "*Zayd yamshī*" [Zayd walks], the concern in its grammatical sense will be with who walks; and what does Zayd do? The same phrase in its logical sense will be concerned with, what does the existence of Zayd look like? Or who performs the act of walking? Which may also mean, who is capable of this action? In logic, there is this universal interest regarding attributes and existence. However, grammar is

concerned with this particular case of "Zayd, who walks". For this reason of universality, Al-Fārābī had to manipulate Arabic language to fit universal logic. This manifests in his usage of the copula and the question particles, as examples.

While the particularity of grammar confines us to the duality of the literal and non-literal (imagery), the universality of logic facilitates investigation through a wider context. For instance, in describing "day" and "night" in *Nahj al-Balāghah* as "drivers" in the phrase, "The absent one who is being driven by the new two, the day and the night, is certainly quick to return", what grammar perceives is that day and night are the subject *fā'il* and the verb is "drive". Yet, because they do not in reality "drive", the reader will perceive this phrase as an image and more specifically *isti'ārah makniyyah* [implicit metaphor]. Yet, because logic is concerned with answering questions regarding the essence of things and their existence, it is concerned with things like the "why?" and "what?" questions. This helps us to go beyond the grammar into questioning the nature of the day and night that allow them to "drive". This investigation is also stimulated by our knowledge of different *Qur'ānic* verses, such as (24:44) which speaks about day and night: "God alternates night and day – there truly is a lesson in [all] this for those who have eyes to see".[778] Another example is in verse (31:29): "do you not see that God causes the night to merge into day and the day to merge into night?"[779] In these two verses, day and night interact with each other, being under the power of God who controls them; yet, in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, they become the ones who take action, they "drive" and direct. This means that we are able to build our understanding from a previous example of imagery and upon it we construct our new understanding of the imaginary context in *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Al-Fārābī identified different logical tools with the aim of acquiring knowledge. One of these is the syllogism, which has its own hierarchy, starting with demonstrative syllogism and ending with poetic syllogism. The poetic syllogism is constructed on the poetic proposition. The poetic propositions are established in the alteration from literal usage to the non-literal, or creative descriptive language. Both techniques, when developed within their own contexts, lead to the little dramatic story that can often be found in metaphors. The term *takhyīl* is understood as caused by the poetic syllogism in the same way *taṣdīq* is caused by the demonstrative syllogism. *Takhyīl* was transferred from the philosophical tradition of Al-Fārābī

[778] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 224.
[779] Ibid, 263.

into Arabic literary studies by Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī. Examples manifesting the term in Arabic poetry do not seem to exceed a line or a few lines, and the application of the term was confined to the effect that it produces in the soul of the audience. Yet, Ibn Sīnā, as an Aristotelian philosopher who agreed with Al-Fārābī's ideas on *takhyīl*, turned later in his life to a more Aristotelian educational poetic, as Dahiyat has argued. Yet, Ibn Sīnā seems to join both the poetics of *takhyīl* and educational poetics.

In his theory of knowledge, Al-Fārābī describes how the senses are the first faculties to possess cognition. It is from the outside world that one can acquire knowledge about the world. He explains the notion regarding different levels of perceiving the thing. While perception starts in the interaction of the senses with external objects, the mental activity creates a mental counterpart of the object. Yet, at the same time, Al-Fārābī introduces his theory on the "intellects". He argues that the human being has several intellects that arrive, in the end, at the "active intellect" – *al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl* – which acquires knowledge directly from God. In this way, Al-Fārābī introduces two main sources of knowledge: that which originates in the outside world and goes within to the intellect; and that which, via the active intellect, comes from God and pervades the different levels of the intellect, allowing knowledge to be produced in response to the outside world or independently of the outside world. This means that there should be tools that support this transformation of knowledge from the active mind of the human being in order for the individual to understand them, even if they are unable to express them.

Cassirer, as a modern philosopher presenting his theory of symbolic forms, argues that both maths and language are representational systems defined by their use of symbols. Language has its own symbolic forms, and these are capable of being understood freely within a world of symbolic forms. This contradicts Carl Jung's approach, who as a psychiatrist dedicated a substantial part of his work to investigating his patients' unconscious minds. Although Jung's works are the result of experience, and what Cassirer argues for is a kind of mathematical philosophy concerning language and other symbolic forms, Jung appears to identify elements that seem to be shared universally. Cassirer appears to shed light on elements that are represented by symbols expressed within the context of language. The main idea is that there seem to be codes within the human intellect that can be understood when introduced within a suitable context, whether this context is psychologically or mentally

activating these codes. In this way, knowledge received by the active intellect can be understood through effective symbols that need to be supported by a context.

In this thesis, I have argued that different "imaginary contexts" in *Nahj al-Balāghah* function in such a way that they stimulate elements that are in the intellect, and to introduce them within the contexts that clarify them and depend on them for further teaching. This has been clarified by the examples of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that appeared to be constructed on examples of the *Qur'ān* and on Arabic poetic motifs. Thus, the imaginary context as I define it is a context that consists of a central image that has been extended into a little dramatic story. The extension is made through logical sequences of images that contribute to the main motif. The logic in this context is built on "the imaginary", which means an image or a symbol may motivate the creation of another image linked to it or to part of it, previously. As history is known to be sequences of events connected in time, stories are connected through the logic of the events presented within them. Yet, the images of the imaginary context are connected through the links between their symbols. Through my understanding of the imaginary context, I was able to offer readings of different paragraphs of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that seem to be stimulating ideas that have existed previously in the mind of the audience. I argue that through this reading, *Nahj al-Balāghah* has contributed to both helping people achieve their wholeness by bringing elements from the unconscious to the conscious mind, and teaching people about ideas they know or might have forgotten by bringing them into consciousness and elaborating on them.

This teaching combines both the literary and the philosophical aspects in addition to the theological contribution of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This way of teaching has a significant value in the context of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī as a compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the tenth to the eleventh century. Al-Jāhiẓ, whose work was dominant at the time of Al-Raḍī, is considered to be the first scholar who joined his theology with his rhetorical style, producing the unique art of his prose in an atmosphere that was dominated by poetry. Al-Jāḥiẓ, as a Muʿtazilī known for his two works on the ʻUthmanite and the Shīʿite, presented his ideas on the controversial issue of the caliphate. This could be stimulating to the Shīʿī scholars as they responded to these thoughts. Al-Raḍī in different places in *Nahj al-Balāghah* seems to be responding to Al-Jāḥiẓ by provoking images from Al-Jāḥiẓ's work in the audience's mind and elaborating on them, as explained in the chapter on the bat.

What Al-Rāḍī seems to do is produce knowledge through stimulating and influencing knowledge that is already in the audience. Thus, his effect goes beyond the psychological effect and the intellectual effect, which are based on the syllogism based on the outside world, whether the demonstrative syllogism which produces *taṣdīq* or the poetic syllogism which produces *takhyīl*. By this method, Al-Raḍī seems to produce a poetic syllogism that has its own logic. This syllogism, as it appears in different case studies in this thesis, has its own levels of being "true" or "false"; levels that are either demonstrational or suppositional.[780] *Taṣdīq* [assent] may happen in the meeting of the heard elements with the elements of the unconscious which moves the individual gradually towards wholeness.

As indicated earlier, modern studies have discerned that theories of rhetoric, arose to meet the need to establish a new state within an original community. Such a case requires the rhetorical tools to achieve persuasion and to exert influence over the people. Yet, in medieval Islam, two kinds of rhetoric have been distinguished: the rhetoric of authority; and the rhetoric of minorities. Thus, there is always the need to enforce the identity of the group and, to do so, one needs to strongly influence others and plant one's own belief in the minds of the audience. Yet, this is not easily obtainable when the group is made up of minorities who might be opposed to the rules. It has been suggested that symbols were one of the tools used to conceal messages, and as a way of practicing *taqiyyah*. Although this might be true in some cases, in my opinion, the usage of symbols in *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not to protect the author and conceal the message, but to activate the intellectual and psychological process which operates within a context of symbolic form. In such a way, *Nahj al-Balāghah* as I argue, uses poetic symbols to educate people and to plant the ideas of the author into the audience's minds.

In this thesis, I have investigated examples of "the hour", "death", "this world", wonderful creatures and "tribulations". Each theme proved its relationship to images in the *Qur'ān* or Arabic poetry. It was clear that these examples were elaborating on the theme in hand and manifesting the imaginary context consisting of dramatic movement. The hour and death were built within a context that showed them as they were already understood, as the day of judgment and the moment when the soul leaves the body, respectively. However, when we looked at the imaginary contexts they appeared within, they seemed to play different roles in the individual's life. The hour and death are also concerned with the individual's

[780] See the last section of "this World" chapter for more explanation.

achievement of individuation and wholeness, in my view. Although the orthodox understanding is that they represent a particular "moment", in different examples they are more than this; the hour at some point in the life of the individual drives that individual, takes control and acts as a tool directing the individual, as the shepherd does. One of these tools might be "this world", investigated in a separate chapter, which seems to be enforcing this process of individuation. As the examples show, this world interacts with the individual according to the way the individual approaches it. This is not taught in the *Qur'ān*, even though the obligation of not being attached to this world is stated in different verses. The wonderful creatures that are studied reflect an understanding of the Sufi tradition, belonging to the tenth century. The evocation of the bird image can be connected to the "soul" that is keen to achieve freedom. Although the detailed description of the bat is a teaching in itself – encouraging people to believe in God through intimate knowledge of His creatures – the imaginary context of the bat creates a scenario around the relationship between the disciples and their spiritual teachers, *murīdūn* and *shuyūkh*. It explains a path that may help these disciples discover its subtleties. This context is built on the premise of the bird that is elaborated through poetic syllogism into the uniqueness of the bat. This, then, is developed into the whole imaginary context. "Tribulations", in the last case study chapter, expresses one of the most important issues Al-Raḍī was concerned with. It discusses the issue of the caliphate and how, when the right was taken from the ʿAlid, oppression spread within the Islamic state, and this badly affected the believers. As I have argued, two types of "tribulations" were distinguished: one is connected to the issue of inherited authority; the other is connected to revolutionary actions. Oration 3 – known as *shiqshiqiyyah* – presents three contexts, each of them linked with each of the caliphs who held the caliphate before ʿAlī. All the case study chapters in this thesis presented examples that reflect the idea of individuation, in which the human being is encouraged to achieve wholeness, which might be understood in Islamic belief as perfection. As the chapter on tribulation discusses, the issue around who is the right person to lead the Muslims is a factor, and in this regard the possibility arises that the achievement of perfection and wholeness may lead the individual to recognise "right" and "wrong", and may thus lead to clarity about the right rule. While one of the main issues in the time of Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was the anticipated arrival of the twelfth Imam, who was hidden, and people were encouraged to be prepared for his arrival, it seemed that this uncovering would

require such intense self-discovery work. The arrival of the Imam can also be connected to the meeting of the true self, which was described in the chapter on death as "arriving". While Al-Raḍī appears to be claiming the right of the ʿAlīd to the caliphate, in presenting *Nahj al-Balāghah*, he is also concerned with preparing the community for the arrival of the Imam.

The project of this thesis can be taken further by investigating more examples and connecting and comparing them to the theology of different sects. In addition to this, different techniques within the imaginary contexts can be explored and more "supposing" or "false" poetic syllogisms can be discovered. An important issue which I will be investigating in a complementary project is the music of *Nahj al-Balāghah* in the imaginary context. As *Nahj al-Balāghah* is full of acoustical rhetorical elements, I prefer to investigate this theme separately, because it can also be linked with *takhyīl* in Al-Fārābī's work, rather than depending on the traditional rhetorical elements inherited from Al-Sakkākī. I will, in that study, continue my argument that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is not only making use of rhetorical elements that are known to the reader, but it teaches us a new form of rhetoric.

Exploring the imaginary context within the *Qurʾān* can be an independent project. In his lecture "*Qālū Balá*" ["They said 'yes'"], Khaled Faraj (known as al-Shaykh Murtaḍá Faraj) identifies reason *ʿaql* and nature *fiṭrah* as the two common ways by which knowledge of God is approached. He insists on the idea that the human mind is not capable of knowing God by itself, and needs time to mature and develop in order to be able to use syllogistic methods and reasoning. Yet, knowledge of God is in the nature of the human being since it was born.[781] This is what the *Qurʾānic* verse (7:172) states

> when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, "Am I not your Lord?" and they replied, "Yes, we bear witness." So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were not aware of this".[782]

Thus, working on the imaginary contexts in the *Qurʾān* will allow an investigation into the poetic syllogisms that work on human beings' nature. Thus, poetic images will continue to prove itself to be an epistemological tool, rather than only being a phenomenon possessing a psychological influence.

[781] Murtaḍá Faraj, ٨ ١٤٤٣ - محرم - "قَالُوا بَلَىٰ " - الشيخ د.مرتضى فرج - YouTube.
[782] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 106.

Different studies have investigated rhetorical elements within *Nahj al-Balāghah*. These elements are understood according to theories of Arabic rhetoric scholars in the medieval age and the development of their ideas. However, this thesis shows a recognition of "the imaginary context" which has manifested in *Nahj al-Balāghah* as a new rhetorical theory, that influences both the psyche and the intellect via poetic language. Thus, investigating the imaginary context within *Nahj al-Balāghah* has contributed to a new reading of the text. In this way, when the poetic contributes to the rational, *Nahj al-Balāghah* is truly "The Path of Eloquence".

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