

A Multidisciplinary Investigation of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī’s Literary Heritage (d. 395- 400 AH-1005 CE), Insights from Lexicography, Linguistics, and Literary Criticism

Submitted by Mohammed Sanad, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arab & Islamic Studies, December 2021.

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Abstract:

This thesis is a comprehensive study of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī. It attempts to achieve two main objectives: Reintroducing Abū Hilāl’s biography and re-evaluating his opinion on two major literary critical issues, namely “wording and meaning” (*al-laḥẓ wa-l-ma‘nā*), and synonyms (*al-mutarādifāt*). The study includes the complete works of Abū Hilāl in order to achieve a precise and integrated view of his literary tradition. Materials from multiple disciplines, such as morphology, syntax, lexicography, and literary criticism, have been employed throughout the thesis and subjected to deep readings so as to produce complete analyses of Abū Hilāl’s opinions on these literary issues. This approach leads to a more genuine and qualitative description of both the personal and literary aspects of Abū Hilāl and his works. These aspects were not clearly identified in prior studies that took a less comprehensive approach. This thesis benefits from two main streams in terms of methodology: the methodology of taste by Shākir, and the “death of the author” by Barthes, which are discussed in Chapter One.

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Chapter One

1- Introduction:

Literature on 4th AH century literary criticism is diverse and has been studied by a number of contemporary scholars.¹ Several influential figures from the 4th AH century received more attention than others which necessitates different scholastic efforts that bring some of the less renowned figures to the surface. In this way we may gain a more rounded understanding of the intellectual life that flourished in the 4th AH century. This thesis aims to present one of the key figures of the 4th AH century, i.e. Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī, and to study his complete works from a multidisciplinary perspective in order to achieve two main objectives:

- a) Presenting Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī - one of the most influential scholars and critics of the 4th/ 11th century - to western academia as there seems to be a lack of comprehensive research concerning his works.
- b) Uncovering unknown and unstudied areas of the different opuses he wrote and discussing topics in his books that have been neglected by most sources.

In doing so, this research focuses on the style of criticism, ideas, intellect, and literary output of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī and how these are employed in the field of rhetoric and literary criticism, especially in his book *al-Şinā`atayn* and his other opuses, that have an essential standing in the fields of criticism and literature. Also, this study aims to analyse al-‘Askarī’s character as a critic, scholar, rhetorician, linguist, lexicographer, and philologist. It aims to highlight his influence and contributions in literature and criticism by attempting to discover the theoretical framework he established and rewrite it from a new perspective. This involves approaching Abū Hilāl’s books coherently in order to make generalisations on his views of the different literary issues, as well as to reconstruct his biography and personality by analysing his biography which seems inadequate and does not provide us with a clear image of him.

¹ Such as Shawqū Ḍayf in his books: *al-‘Aşr al-‘Abbasī and al-Naqd*. Also, Ihsān ‘Abbas in his book: *Tārīkh al-Naqd al-Arabī ‘Ind al-‘Arab*. Another critic is G. J. H. Van Gelder in his book: *Beyond the Line* (1982: 1). Mubārak, Z. (2013). *al-Nathr al-Fannī fī al-Qarn al-Rābi‘*.

Most of al-‘Askarī’s books are important works of the 4th AH century that fill different gaps in the existing canon of criticism and primarily constitute a discussion on what is sophisticated or poor poetry and prose, and what literary processes constitute a considerable and meaningful text. Abū Hilāl also has other books that contribute to different fields of Arabic literary legacy in history, literary criticism, literature, lexicography, paroemiography², and rhetoric. This research analyses the linguistic, rhetorical, and literary aspects that are main elements of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī’s books in order to identify the influence and essential contribution of these books on the realm of criticism and literature relying on the concept of literary taste, as further explained in detail in the Methodology Section. In his books, Abū Hilāl demonstrates high linguistic competence and dexterity, and his ability to structure his texts is evident in their logical sequence and didactical sense. Therefore, exposing his literary style and literacy to an elaborate analysis will hopefully result in a new understanding of this figure and his literary production which will add to and enrich the fields of language, rhetoric, and literature.

In the next section, key debates that characterised the literary environment in which Abū Hilāl was working are outlined, and then Abū Hilāl’s literary critical position is outlined in order to identify his role and contribution in that literary environment.

2- Overview of Literary Criticism in the 4th AH Century:

The three most influential characters in the field of literary criticism in the 4th AH century during the Abbasid period, include ‘Abū Tammām (d. 231 AH/ 846), Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d. 354 AH/ 965), and Aristotle. ‘Abbās, in his book: *Tārīkh al-Naqd al-‘Arabī* (1981, 127), discusses that in the 4th AH century, literary criticism comprised three main topics: the debate that revolved around Abū Tammām’s poetry, criticism and its relationship with Greek culture, and the debate around al-Mutanabbī. Regarding the debates surrounding Abū Tammām’s poetry, critics were divided into two groups. On the one hand, some, such as al-Quṭrubbulī (d. 314 AH)³, were against his style and the approach he used in his poetry. In this regard, al-Āmidī (d. 370 AH/ 987) (1979, 128), in his epistle, discusses errors in Abū Tammām’s poetry, and quotes

² *The old and productive genre of Arabic literature dealing with Amthāl* (Rosenthal, 1989).

³ ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Ubaydillah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ammār Abū al-‘Abbās. See his biography in al-Ḥamawī (1936, Vol. 3: 232).

of al-Quṭrubbulī in several parts of his book, *al-Muwāzanah*. On the other hand, the other school of thought can be illustrated by al-Ṣūlī (d. 335 AH) who advocates for Abū Tammām's poetry (196, 28), in his book *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, and accuses those in disagreement with the poet's opinions of lacking knowledge and of attempting to expand their reputations by criticising his work. Al-Ṣūlī's assertion was that criticism must acknowledge what is appealing in a poem and should not be limited to identifying errors and defects.

Al-Mutanabbī is another among the most influential characters in the 4th AH century. His approach to poetry is discussed by Ashtiany (1990, 302), who focuses on al-Mutanabbī's ability to combine classical structure with the prevailing ideas of his time. Critics at the time criticised al-Mutanabbī's new style of poetry, but unlike Abū Tammām, he took a courageous approach by covering a range of themes that included eulogy, elegy, and satire. In addition, in his attempt to address philosophical topics, he introduced his personal points of view. Likewise, his confidence enabled him to infuse his poetry with new linguistic expressions in a way that seemed to elevate him above simple language, and above poetry itself, as expressed by 'Abbās (1981, 252). Sharp conflicts arose between al-Mutanabbī's supporters and his detractors regarding both his personality and poetry. Yet, critics were still unable to deny the superiority of his expressive power. Al-Mutanabbī gained significant status among critics, which can be attested to in works only dedicated to discussing issues that pertained to his poetry such as *Kitāb al-Wasāṭah bayn al-Mutanabbī wa khuṣūmihi* (Book of mediation between al-Mutanabbī and his antagonists) by al-Qāḍī 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jurjānī (d. 392 AH/ 1002). Al-Jurjānī, acting as a critic and a critic of critics, attempts to offer a fair judgment, arguing for a balance between attacks made against al-Mutanabbī by his antagonists and the exaggerated admiration of his supporters (Ashtiany, 376). On the other hand, as pointed out by Allen (2005, 377), al-Mutanabbī's plagiarism, faulty poetry, and personal shortcomings seem to have become the subject of increased debate. This phenomenon is also noted in the epistles, *al-Risālah al-Mūḍiḥah fī Dhikr Sariqāt Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī wa Sāqiṭi Shi'rihi* (The explicit epistle describing plagiarisms and faulty poetry of Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī), by al-Ḥātimī (d. 388 AH/ 998), and *al-Risālah fī al-Kashf 'an Masāwī' al-Mutanabbī* (Epistle revealing the shortcomings of al-Mutanabbī), by al-Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād (d. 385 AH/ 995) (Abbās, 1981, 263).

Finally, the influence of Aristotle in the development of Arabic literary criticism is considerable. His book, *Poetics*, was translated and studied by several Arab critics of the 4th AH century. The first translator of Aristotle's work was Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (328 AH/ 940). As stated by Abbās (1981, 187), attempts at the application of Greek poetic concepts in Arabic literature are imprecise, and clearly noticeable as in the concept of eulogy (madīḥ) used to represent the Greek concept of tragedy. The great philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/ 950) evokes Aristotelian perspectives in his *Resālah fī Qawānīn Ṣinā'at al-Shu'arā'* (Epistle on the canons of poets' craft). For example, the theory of emulation or imagery in poetry, which stipulates that poetry is either an emulation of otherworldly aspects or things that exist in various forms that display either their beauty or loathsomeness. In his epistle, al-Fārābī classifies poets into three types (Allen, 385): "Those that possess a natural gift [...], those that set out to master craft, and those that do neither and are to be considered incompetent."⁴ However, al-Fārābī shows a distinct preference for the conservative poets and their adherence to Arabic poetic tradition, which stressed the virtues of organic creation against practiced craft (ibid, 385). Another renowned Arabic philosopher, ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 427 AH/ 1037), was influenced by Aristotle's book and his views on literary criticism, and composed a commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, entitled *Fann al-Shi'r* (The art of poetry). Like al-Fārābī, ibn Sīnā invoked the concept of imagery as a main poetic feature, along with the fundamental features of rhyme and metre, which implies that poetry can be defined "by the way in which it invokes the imagination" (ibid, 386). This indicates the magnitude of the influence that Aristotle's book had on Arabic poetic tradition in the 4th AH century during the Abbasid period. Since this research mainly focuses on Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī, the next point approaches his literary critical position in the 4th AH century.

Abū Hilāl was influenced by these key debates, especially the one regarding al-Mutanabbī, and attempted to contribute his own perspective on some of them, as it seems that those debates occupied an essential space of each critic's legacy at that time.

⁴ Al-Fārābī perhaps benefited from the Greeks' classification of the different kinds of poets although the first two kinds could be found identified by pre-Islamic poets.

3- Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī’s (d. 400 AH- 1009) Literary Critical Position:

Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī was a prominent critic and rhetorician of medieval Arabic literature with broad knowledge of *Adab* and other branches of knowledge in the 4th AH century, which is evident in his diverse books and vast literary output as stated in (Kanazi, 1975, 61; Kanazi, 2011, 29). In the literary field, Abū Hilāl’s fame is based mainly on two of his books, *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* and *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*, in which his literary taste is clearly shown. *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* includes quotations from poetry and prose which, as he argues in the introduction (1989, Vol 1: 18), represents a high level of rhetoric and well-crafted speech, and as stated by Gruendler (2005, 60): “Abū Hilāl presents a purely literary selection and evaluation of the motifs”. On the other hand, his book *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* which literally means “the two arts” (prose and poetry), is directed to those who practice the art of writing by showing them how to avoid uncouth language and produce valuable literature through a set of rules for sophisticated literary works which can be applied in prose and poetry alike. Hence, *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* is basically a book of anthology that consists of examples of sophisticated and admired literary works from poetry and prose, while *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* is rhetorical work which discusses rhetorical devices with examples that can be employed in the production of literary work (*al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, 1971).

However, ‘Abbās (1981, 355-357) argued that *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* did not contribute significantly to literary criticism as Abū Hilāl did not really add ideas of his own to the works of his predecessors and thus could not be regarded as a great mind, as also stated by Kanazi (as cited in Ashtiany, 1994). However, what he produced was a rearrangement of the material from previous books of criticism from the Third and Fourth AH centuries, such as *Naqd al-Shi‘r*, *‘Iyār al-Shi‘r*, *al-Muwazanah*, and *al-Waṣāṭah*. By contrast, al-Baghdādī (d. 1093 AH) in his book: *Khizānat al-Adab* stated that the two books by Abū Hilāl: (*al-Furūq fī al-Lughah* and *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*) indicated his abundant knowledge, as quoted in (al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d., 794):

"وله عندي كتاب الفروق في اللغة وكتاب ديوان المعاني، وهما دالان على غزارة علمه"

“And for him (Abū Hilāl) I have his books: *al-Furūq fī al-Lughah* in linguistics and *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* which indicate his copious knowledge”.

‘Abbās’s and Kanazi’s arguments could possibly be refuted by al-Baghdādī’s statement, as well as by saying that Abū Hilāl adds many of his personal insights and comments on quotations he drew from poetry and prose. They can provide hints of his methodology for evaluating sophisticated and poor literature via thorough analysis.

Moreover, rearranging the material of criticism is a complex work that could only be performed by a knowledgeable critic such as Abū Hilāl since it requires high linguistic and literary proficiency to preserve its content. Similarly, in his book: *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1965, 1, 2) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih affirmed that compiling examples of the speech act is more difficult than composing it.⁵ A similar idea was expressed by Selove (2016, 12), who stated that *Hikāyāt Abī al-Qāsim* “deserves its own analyses” since it constitutes a microcosm in itself. This could also be applied to Abū Hilāl’s works.

Another point is that Abū Hilāl’s position regarding the issue of *al-Lafz wa al-Ma‘nā* (wording and meaning) is very clear in his book *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*, particularly when he criticises the poetry of Abū Nuwās who used long expressions with no justification - which is considered to be a failure in organising the relationship between words and meanings (al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d). In this regard, Orfali (2012, 32) argued that “modern scholars have begun to recognise the originality of a particular anthology consists precisely in the choice and arrangement of the produced text, which reveals in turn the individual interests of the compiler”. Finally, *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* is of particular importance because it consists of a summary of the most important books of criticism and may be considered a gateway of sorts in the field of literary criticism of the Third and Fourth AH centuries. This is to say, novice writers and poets could find valuable materials in it that could significantly improve their literary skills and taste.

As far as his critical position is concerned, based on his books: *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* and *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, Abū Hilāl expressed noticeable antagonism towards al-Mutanabbī (al-Ṭanāḥī, 158-9; Muḥārib, 2010 104-5). Abū Hilāl tended not to mention al-Mutanabbī’s name when he discussed his poetry and said only: *Wa qāla ba‘duhum* (some of them said) or *wa qāla ba‘du al-muta‘akhhirīn* (some of the latest poets said) (*al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, 384), despite knowing that al-Mutanabbī was the composer of that poetry. Abū Hilāl, in fact, mentioned al-Mutanabbī’s name being linked to the same poetry in his book (*Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*, Vol. 1: 316). Similarly, Muḥārib (2010, 105) claimed that most of al-Mutanabbī’s poetry mentioned in Abū Hilāl’s books was criticised and described as discarded poetry without any justifications being provided. It is not unusual to find a critic or poet who disapproves of al-Mutanabbī’s poetry as such criticism is part of the debate surrounding him at that time and in the following centuries. The reason for the antagonism shown towards al-Mutanabbī in the Fourth

⁵ The Arabic text is: اختيارُ الكلامِ أصعبُ من تأليفِهِ

AH century could be attributed to peer jealousy; however, liking or disliking certain poetry is a matter of taste, which should depend on a critic's literary knowledge and not on personality or first impressions.

Abū Hilāl's essential role in the Fourth AH century is evident through the myriad of his books whereby he contributed to different areas of Arabic sciences. In *al-Furūq fī al-Lughā*, for example, he addressed linguistic issues and explained differences in words or expressions that appeared synonymous, although they have different meanings according to their context in a given discourse. In addition, Abū Hilāl has a commentary on and explanation of Abū Mihjan's⁶ poetry, thus attempting to collect the poetry of minor poets. This indicates Abū Hilāl's awareness of the importance of preserving Arabic literary heritage by paying attention to various poets from different tiers, as each poet represents a certain level of language and artistic literary talent. Another book by Abū Hilāl is *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'Ilm*, in which he discusses several important requirements for gaining literary knowledge. In addition, Abū Hilāl compiled a book of Arabic proverbs, *Jamharat al-Amthāl*, which consists of 2000 classical Arabic proverbs divided into twenty-nine chapters, i.e. the number of letters in the Arabic alphabet (Kanazi, 2011, 32; Gruenler, 2010, 1). These books indicate the active role that Abū Hilāl played in the Fourth AH century in the fields of rhetoric, proverbs, literary criticism, linguistics, and lexicography, although Kanazi (ibid, 33) stated that almost half of his books did not survive. However, Abū Hilāl's surviving works constitute a basis for a comprehensive study in order to reveal some of the unknown aspects of his intellectual and literary works.

4- Methodology:

This research will rely mainly on analysing and examining the literary content, linguistic style, use of rhetoric, literary opinion and comments on the available works of Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī. This is conducted in light of two theoretical frameworks: Shākir's⁷ methodology of taste and Barthes' theory of the death of the author. Shākir's

⁶ Lived in the first decades of Islam. He was a wine drinker but expressed repentance and joined the early conquests of Islam (Kanazi, 2011, 31).

⁷ The biography of this figure is provided in the appendices section in order to gain more knowledge about him which assists in understanding his methodology.

methodology considers the broad nature of Arabic heritage, while Barthes' theory⁸ is concerned with how a recipient perceives literary texts, discarding the author. In other words, Shakir's methodology encourages you to use the text's style to reconstruct the author's biography, with which the present thesis is mainly concerned, and which opposes Azarnoosh's statement that information about Abū Hilāl, derived from his work, is insufficient and does not aid in the construction of his biography (2015, 1). This means that it does not use Abū Hilāl's biography to interpret his text. Barthes' "Death of the Author" posed a famous challenge to using the author's biography to analyse a text. Therefore, Shakir's methodology is considered in terms of linguistic analyses with all its dimensions in the present thesis, while Barthes' theory is applied in terms of the personal interpretations that are built according to the present author's personal impressions on different texts throughout the present thesis, especially in Chapter Five where Abū Hilāl's poetry is studied. Both approaches are essential when studying literary texts since the first is interested in the structure and linguistic elements thereof, while the second focuses on how a reader interprets texts from their point of view regardless of the text's author. Shākir's books in general will be approached applying 'the methodology of taste', as discussed below. Additionally, the use of primary sources from the 2nd and 3rd AH centuries is an essential aspect of this thesis in order to trace the critics' similarities, individuality, and originality.

5- Discussion of the Methodology:

The methodology of literary taste was first developed by Maḥmūd Shākir in his book *al-Mutanabbī*, as he stated in his work *Risālah fi al-Ṭarīq Ilā Thaqāfatīnā (Epistle in the way of our culture)* (2006, 15, 16. 20).⁹

⁸ This theory is discussed in the coming sections of this chapter.

⁹ He presented his methodology as follows:

"فمنهجي في تذوق الكلام معني كل العناية باستنباط هذه الدفائن، وباستدراجها من مكانها، ومعالجة نظم الكلام ولفظه معالجة تُتيح لي أن أنفض الظلام عن مصونها، وأميط اللثام عن أخفى أسرارها وأغصن سرائرها. وهذا أمر لا يُستطاع ولا تكون له ثمرة إلا بالأناة والصبر، وإلا باستقصاء الجهد في التنبُّب من معاني ألفاظ اللغة، ومن مجاري دلالاتها الظاهرة والخفية، بلا استكراه ولا عجلة، وبلا ذهاب مع خاطر الأول، وبلا توهم مُستبَدَّ تُخضع له نظم الكلام ولفظه"

"فهذا الذي يُسمى منهجاً ينقسم إلى شطرين: شطرٍ في تناول المادة، وشرطٍ في معالجة التطبيق.

Since language is the main tool whereby literary legacies have been transmitted and expressed, it is the most appropriate tool for analysing literary texts. This means using language as a gateway that leads to a deep understanding of literary works through literary taste, which involves deciphering words' meanings and their in-depth connotations. This reveals how literary sentences are phrased, as well as analyses the culture underlying different ideas and why certain words among several alternatives are chosen to express specific ideas. This is because words and phrases, which are the constituent elements of language, are the essence of any literary work. Therefore, subjecting them to such literary analyses can produce new perspectives on literary texts in terms of semantics, and can lead to an in-depth interpretation of a text's elements. This idea was also supported by al-Tawḥīdī in his book *Risāla fī al-'Ilm* (*Epistle in knowledge*). As cited by al-Najjār (2002, 356), Abū Ḥayyān stated that the more language one assimilates, the more prowess in speech one will possess, and the more one's awareness of human worth will increase.

"فَكُلُّ مَنْ تَكَامَلَ جِطُّهُ مِنَ اللَّعَةِ... كَانَ بِالْكَلامِ أَمَّهْر... وَأَزْدَادَ بَصِيرَةً بِقِيَمَةِ الْإِنْسَانِ"

It is worth noting here that Shākir's use of the term "literary method" (2006, 23) refers to the wider sense of the word 'literary', which refers to a close examination of

poetry and all the other literary genres, history, theology in all its branches, philosophy with its conflicting schools and any expression of the person which embodies his own feelings or the collective feelings of the group to which he belongs. In other words, he must treat of the integrated culture which has come down to him through the ages and from generation to generation. All this can only be contained in a single vessel, that of language. Beware of ever forgetting this; and remember also that what I say to you here about 'Method' is intimately connected with the very life-springs of a nation. This can also be found in every culture or language whatever the race

فشطر (المادة) يتطلب قبل كل شيء جمعها من مظانها على وجه الاستيعاب المتيسر، ثم تصنيف هذا المجموع، ثم تمحيص مفرداته تمحيصاً دقيقاً، وذلك بتحليل أجزائه بدقة متناهية، وبمهارة وجدقٍ وحذرٍ، حتى يتيسر للدارس أن يرى ما هو زيفٌ جليلاً واضحاً، وما هو صحيحٌ مستبيناً ظاهراً، بلا غفلةٍ، وبلا هوى، وبل تسرعٍ.

وأما شطر (التطبيق) فيقتضي ترتيب المادة بعد نفي زيفها وتمحيص جديها باستيعابٍ أيضاً لكل احتمالٍ للخطأ أو الهوى أو التسرع. ثم على الدارس أن يتحرى لكل حقيقة من الحقائق موضعاً هو حقّ موضعها، لأنّ أخفى إساءةٍ في وضع إحدى الحقائق في غير موقعها خليقٌ أن يُشوّه عمود الصورة تشويهاً بالغ القبح والشناعة"

or linguistic group or homeland [of the speaker of a certain language].¹⁰

This method, as expressed by Shākir, consists of two stages: collecting texts (data), and applying critical judgment to them. This “holds true, according to Shākir, in every branch of knowledge from the pure sciences to what he calls ‘the literature of the tongue’, that is to say the writings which present the intellectual and emotional heritage of a given language” (Wahba, 1989, 193).

Furthermore, Shākir’s methodology of taste is based primarily on the notion that literary taste can be applied to every speech and to every branch of knowledge regardless of subject (Shākir, 2006, 9). Shākir’s methodology is based on al-Jurjānī’s (d. 474 AH) book *al-Risālah al-Shāfiyah*, as he applied literary taste to a linguistic text from *The Book* by Sībawayh (d. 179 AH)¹¹ and compared it to another linguistic text by Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377 AH)¹² (ibid., 13), which was less successful in terms of phraseology. Shākir quoted al-Jurjānī’s comparison and commented on these grammarians’ texts to further elucidate his method of evaluating the linguistic competence of these grammarians and how they imparted knowledge (ibid., 10)¹³.

¹⁰ The Arabic text is:

"فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ حَدِيثِي هُنَا هُوَ عَنِ الَّذِي يُسَمَّى "الْمَنْهَجَ الْأَدْبِيَّ" عَلَى وَجْهِ التَّحْدِيدِ = أَي: عَنِ الْمَنْهَجِ الَّذِي يَتَنَاوَلُ الشَّعْرَ وَالْأَدَبَ بِجَمِيعِ أَنْوَاعِهِ، وَالتَّارِيخَ، وَعِلْمَ أَصُولِ الدِّينِ بِفُرُوعِهِ الْمُخْتَلِفَةِ، وَالْفَلَسَفَةَ بِمَذَاهِبِهَا الْمُتَضَارِبَةِ، وَكُلَّ مَا هُوَ صَادِرٌ عَنِ الْإِنْسَانِ إِبَانَةً عَنِ نَفْسِهِ وَجَمَاعَتِهِ = أَي يَتَنَاوَلُ تَقَافَتَهُ الْمُتَكَامِلَةَ الْمُتَحَدِّرَةَ إِلَيْهِ فِي تَيَّارِ الْقُرُونِ الْمُتَطَوِّلَةِ وَالْأَجْيَالِ الْمُتَعَاقِبَةِ. وَوَعَاءُ ذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ وَمُسْتَقَرَّرُهُ هُوَ اللُّغَةُ وَاللِّسَانُ لَا غَيْرَ. فَيَايَاكَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَنْسَى ذَلِكَ، وَاجْعَلْهُ عَلَى ذِكْرٍ مِنْكَ أَوَّلًا. وَادْكُرْ أَيْضًا أَنَّ هَذَا الَّذِي أَقُولُهُ لَكَ عَنِ "الْمَنْهَجِ" إِنَّمَا هُوَ أَصْلٌ أَصِيلٌ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ، وَفِي كُلِّ لِسَانٍ، وَفِي كُلِّ تَقَافَةٍ حَازَهَا الْبَشَرُ عَلَى اخْتِلَافِ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَأَلْوَانِهِمْ وَمَلَلِهِمْ وَمَوَاطِنِهِمْ"

¹¹ See his biography in al-Qifṭī (1952, Vol. 2: 246).

¹² Al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Abd al-Ghaffār (al-Qifṭī, Vol. 1: 273)

¹³ The text by al-Jurjānī to which Shākir refers is:

"قد سبقوا في فصول منها إلى ضرب من النظم واللفظ أعيا من بعدهم أن يطلبوا مثله، أو يجبنوا بشبيهه له،... وذلك مثل قول سيبويه: وأما الفعل فأمثلة أُجِدَّتْ من لفظ أحداث الأسماء، وبُيِّنَتْ لما مضى، وما يكون ولم يقع، وما هو كائن لا ينقطع.
ثم قال بعد ذلك: لا نعلم أحداً أتى في معنى هذا الكلام بما يوازئُه أو يدانيه، ولا يقع في الوهم أيضاً أن ذلك يُستطاع، ألا ترى أنه إنما جاء في معناه قولهم: (والفعل ينقسم بأقسام الزمان، ماضٍ وحاضرٌ ومستقبلٌ)، وليس يخفى ضعفُ هذا في جنِّه وقصوره عنه."

By applying this methodology to al-Mutanabbī's poetry, Shākir was able to draw certain conclusions about al-Mutanabbī's life that nobody had presumably done before. Shākir introduced each section of his book with verses taken from al-Mutanabbī's poetry to imply that the analyses and discussions were all deduced from al-Mutanabbī's poetry, not from external sources, except for that which was presented as evidence of a fact, as stated by al-Ṭanaḥī in *fi al-Lughāh wa al-Adab* (n.d., 213). Shākir traced stories about al-Mutanabbī's prophecy claim and attempted to prove their falsity and fabrication, arguing they were probably created after his death. In addition, by investigating this issue, Shākir sought to prove that al-Mutanabbī was in fact a title given to him by people in Kūfa, as related by al-Mutanabbī's friend al-Rabīʿ (ibid., 219), who reported that al-Mutanabbī expressed difficulty in accepting this title. This indicates that Shākir's methodology has the potential to reveal essential facts related to literary texts, which would potentially be of considerable benefit to literary studies.

This methodology may have several similarities to and overlaps with particular aspects and concepts in western literary theories. One example is the notion of 'art for art's sake' attributed to French philosopher Victor Cousin (1792-1867) who first used it in 1818 (Upstone, 2017. 4). The phrase 'art for art's sake' is discussed in aesthetic and new aesthetic criticism, which posit that the social or political importance of literature should not be the main consideration in the analyses of texts, but that the focus should be on an "intense scrutiny of the form and language of a text, rather than the kind of thematic interests" (ibid., 10). However, the present study considers particular themes related to literary texts (linguistic and rhetorical themes associated with the text in study) and how the text was crafted. Similarly, it is noted that the new critics and formalists focused on 'what was on the page', arguing that "it is only textual detail that should be of interest" (ibid., 16). In fact, through deep analysis, textual detail can provide a wider view of the text that allows readers to understand its external dimensions, such as its social and political importance. That is to say, to avoid paradoxical readings, analysing a text through 'the methodology of literary taste' should precede any other analyses outside of the linguistic and rhetorical context of a text. This could also function as a lens to other dimensions pertaining to social, psychological, and epistemological elements.

In a sociological context, Bourdieu (2010) discussed the concept of taste in several parts of his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. For

Bourdieu, the various meanings of 'taste' are determined according to the nature of one's cultural inheritance resulting from one's early education and experiences gained from one's family. He argued that "tastes are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference" (2010, 49) and vary according to cultural capital. The notion of *cultural capital* was first used by Bourdieu in his 1977 essay *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction*, as cited by Upstone (2017, 48). Cultural capital can refer to different elements, including "education, intelligence, knowledge of particular art forms, modes of dress, and speech or physical appearance" (ibid., 49). This might be an extremely general application of Bourdieu's concept of 'taste' compared to the way the term is used in the present study; however, the common factor in Bourdieu's statement and application in this study is that only certain knowledge combined with other elements, mentioned previously, can contribute to having 'good taste'. Thus, according to Upstone (ibid., 50), Bourdieu argued that "it is only those with cultural capital who determine what constitutes 'taste'". Therefore, this suggests that cultural capital contributes to creating 'good' taste', which - as far as literature is concerned - ensures the delivery and production of privileged cultural texts that enrich the field of literary and cultural studies.

With regard to the concept of 'taste', in his book *Abāṭil wa Asmār*, Shākir (2005, 109) asserts that taste is the foundation and essence of a civilisation because it is the foundation of intellectual and aware humans on whom civilisation is based.¹⁴ Therefore, the power of any civilisation is determined by its ability to exhibit good taste. Upstone (2017, 51) discussed Bourdieu's concept of taste which partially resembles Shākir's view of this concept to some extent; she stated:

By having good taste and cultural capital, individuals are able to associate themselves with the social capital that allows for association with others in position of power... Taste ensures that power stays in the hands of those who already have it, and that those

¹⁴ His statement is as follows:

"كُلَّ حَضَارَةٍ بِالْعَمَلِ تَفْقِدُ دِقَّةَ التَّنْذُوقِ، تَفْقَدُ مَعَهَا أَسْبَابَ بَقَائِهَا. وَالتَّنْذُوقُ لَيْسَ قِوَامًا لِلآدَابِ وَالْفَنُونِ وَحَدَّاهَا، بَلْ هُوَ أَيْضًا قِوَامٌ لِكُلِّ عِلْمٍ وَصِنَاعَةٍ، عَلَى اخْتِلَافِ بَابَاتِ ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ وَتَبَايُنِ أَنْوَاعِهِ وَضُرُوبِهِ. وَكُلُّ حَضَارَةٍ نَامِيَّةٍ تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَفْرُضَ وُجُودَهَا، وَتَبْلُغَ تَمَامَ تَكْوِينِهَا، إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَقِلَّ بِتَكْوِينِ حَادٍ نَافِذٍ تَخْتَصُّ بِهِ وَتَتَفَرَّدُ، لَمْ يَكُنْ لِإِرَادَتِهَا فِي فَرْضِ وُجُودِهَا مَعْنَى يُعْقَلُ، بَلْ تَكَادُ هَذِهِ الْإِرَادَةُ أَنْ تَكُونَ ضَرْبًا مِنَ التَّوَهُّمِ وَالْأَحْلَامِ لَا خَيْرَ فِيهِ. فَحَسُنُ التَّنْذُوقِ يَعْنِي سَلَامَةَ الْعَقْلِ وَالنَّفْسِ وَالْقَلْبِ مِنَ الْآفَاتِ، فَهُوَ لُبُّ الْحَضَارَةِ وَقِوَامُهَا، لِأَنَّهُ أَيْضًا قِوَامُ الْإِنْسَانِ الْعَاقِلِ الْمُدْرِكِ الَّذِي تَقُومُ بِهِ الْحَضَارَةُ"

from outside these networks of power have only limited opportunities to acquire it, through a slow process of education and assimilation. The opportunity to acquire power outside of this, by changing the rules of taste, seems almost impossible.

Accordingly, taste is an essential constituent of culture and a dominant feature of a civilisation that controls the level of cultural power since it leads to a deep understanding of the cultural legacy of any nation.

With regard to literary taste, Winchester (1899) discussed taste in its narrow sense as, for him, it is the power that is needed in order to appreciate works of art. Winchester based his discussion on individual taste. He believed that its standards are diverse and differ from age to age according to race and individuals. For this reason, he believed that arguing about personal taste with an individual was useless. Although it could be argued that it is useless to disagree on personal taste, it can be oriented, improved, and corrected as long as one is constantly exposed to literature of a high quality. On the other hand, Winchester asserted that agreement in taste among individuals was much more common than differences; he stated that if this were not the case, “there could be no permanent literature” (ibid., 21). This is because Winchester perceived literary taste as an individual preference and as a personal impression of literary works; thus, it could hardly be agreed upon by individuals. However, Shākir’s perspective was to consider literary taste as being based on broad literary knowledge; therefore, it can be measured, evaluated, and developed since knowledge has clear principles that one can apply. In other words, Shākir considered taste to be a way of treating a text using certain linguistic tools rather than a method of appreciating it. Therefore, in this study, taste is not considered to be a matter of liking or disliking a given discourse; instead, it relates to being equipped with specific tools that allow individuals to extract meaning from a literary text. This, it can be argued, is the point of division between Shākir’s perspective and modern literary theories, discussed previously, in relation to literary taste.

This leads to the explicit clarification of the advantages of Shākir’s application of literary taste in comparison to other methodologies. Most classical Arabic literary texts are characterised by being connected to several branches of knowledge. In other words, a literary text in criticism could lend towards theological discussions, particularly when issues of rhetoric are invoked; following this, one might encounter a digression that includes topics pertaining to Islamic law. This can be attributed to the broad and diverse types of knowledge of the critics themselves, as well as to the

interrelated nature of subjects in Arabic literary heritage. This is the case for Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī whose books include discussions that pertain to different branches of knowledge, as shown in Chapter Two, and as Abū Hilāl mentioned in his book *al-Furūq fī al-Lughah* (1977, 9):

"وجعلتُ كلامي فيه على ما يعرضُ منه في كتاب الله وما يجري في ألفاظ الفقهاء والمُتكلِّمين وسائر مُحاورات الناس."
"I have limited the discussion in my book to what occurs in God's Book (the Qur'ān) and to what is frequently used by scholars of Fiqh and theology and some people's debates."

Therefore, since Shākir's methodology of literary taste considers the intertwined nature of Arabic literary texts, it could be the most appropriate methodology to benefit from in this study.

By the same token, the function of literary taste is not necessarily limited to the process of identifying aesthetic or well-crafted points in a given literary text, nor is it to highlight points that deviate from literary conventions. Literary taste could involve investigating traces of efforts, methods, principles, language, expressions, and techniques that have been employed and implemented in the action of producing a certain literary text. Therefore, the process of evaluating or appreciating a given text or discourse would rely on a combination of these elements in order to achieve an intelligent comprehension of a literary work, separate from personal impressions and individual likes or dislikes of the text. This is because relying on the individual personal appreciation of a given text is restricted by psychological and ideological conditions and situations of the individual critic. Therefore, the application of dispassionate and measurable principles and rules of literary taste may lead to more accurate findings. Furthermore, when examining Shākir's methodology of literary taste, it can be seen that the issue of subjectivity is absent to a large extent because this methodology is based on science (linguistic sciences); therefore, the type and level of knowledge that an individual possesses would be reflected in their analysis of a given discourse.

To differentiate clearly between Shākir's perception of literary taste and the notion of taste as expressed in other literary theories, it should be mentioned that literary taste, as described in various literary theories, is essentially based on three elements:

- 1) One's literary talent,
- 2) One's literary and emotional experience, and
- 3) One's broad acquaintance with various literary works.

In other words, literary taste is the influence of a particular text on a reader. Shākir's view of literary taste is that it is based primarily on one's knowledge of the language in which a given text is written and how this knowledge is employed to decipher and comprehend a specific text. This means that every action that is performed in order to achieve a certain level of understanding of a text is considered to be an aspect of practising literary taste. Therefore, for Shākir, taste is a practice employed by a reader or researcher when engaging with a particular text, while literary theorists consider the influence of the text on the reader. In this regard, it is essential to differentiate between the idea of literary taste and its methodology. The idea involves a stream of thoughts that lead to the explanation and clarification of the elements that create the effect of a given text, such as eloquence, and highly effective language that considers the pragmatic function of rhetorical features. By contrast, the methodology of literary taste involves the application of a specific approach that one follows to obtain a certain level of understanding of the relationships amongst the various elements in a text. Accordingly, the present study focuses on the methodology of literary taste by applying it to examine al-'Askarī's heritage and intellectual life.

Finally, this discussion of the methodology of 'taste' has been provided here because, after Shākir's book, almost no studies have attempted to develop it further. Therefore, using Shākir's methodology of 'taste' is an opportunity to contribute to the existing literary studies with a new study of a different figure in medieval Arabic literature, namely Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī. It is important to note that Shākir (2006, 8)¹⁵ did not claim to have invented this methodology by himself; instead, it was developed via a general understanding of the complete picture of Arabic literary legacy, with all its branches and disciplines, by analysing and engaging in close readings of Arab classical scholars' speeches, dialogues and debates, as well as their approaches to the different issues related to this legacy. Shākir then distilled his understanding of this

¹⁵ The Arabic text is:

"ولا أزعم، معاذ الله، أنني ابتدعت هذا المنهج ابتداءً بلا سابقة ولا تمهيد، فهذا حَظٌّ وتبجح، بل كل ما أزعجه أنني بالجهد والتعب، وبمُعانة التفتيش في هذا الركام من الكلام، جمعت شتات هذا المنهج بقلبي، وأصلت لنفسي أصوله، مع طول التنقيب عنه في مطاوي العبارات التي سبق بها الأئمة الأعلام من أصحاب هذه اللغة، وهذا العلم، في مباحثهم ومساجلاتهم ومناقضاتهم وما يتضمّنه كلامهم من النقد والاحتجاج للرأي، وكل ما وقف عليه من ذلك كان حَقِيحاً فاستشَفُّقُهُ، ودفينا فاستنبطُهُ، ومُشَنَّنًا فجمعُهُ، ومُفَكِّكاً فلاءمُهُ بين أوصاله، حتى استطعت بعد لأي أن أمهد لفكري طريقاً لاحقاً مستتبباً يسير فيه، أي صيرته (منهجاً) التزمته به فيما أقرأ وأكتب"

legacy into clear principles and rules that he came to through what he read, wrote, and edited.

Nonetheless, in his critiques of Shākir's *Risāla*, Maşlūḥ (1988, 48) assumed that Shākir's methodology had not been applied appropriately because Shākir focused on his personal experience of pre-Islamic poetry.¹⁶ This caused scholars to avoid Shākir's methodology as it was difficult to transform it into a general methodology and incorporate it in designs for education and research. However, although this might be true of Shākir's methodology, it is not valid justification for avoiding it entirely since each methodology was developed in particular circumstances that may render it inapplicable to or incompatible with other contexts. Thus, it is the role of the scholar to rigidly adhere to a methodology or adjust it according to the purpose of their study; a methodology could also be combined with other methodologies in order to make it applicable to a wider variety of contexts.

Since the term *Adab* is evoked here, the definition of this term is discussed in detail in the appendices in order to clarify the variety of meanings that could be conveyed by it and the attitudes toward it. This should provide a broad understanding of the nature of the methodology of taste that has been applied in this study.

6- Discussion of the Theory of Death of the Author and its Connection to this Study:

Knowing an author's biography can, in theory, help clarify any ambiguities that a researcher is faced with when studying that author. It is also questionable to isolate an author from what came before and after their text or book, as s/he is part of certain social, psychological and literal circumstances that influence him/her. It has, however, been argued that one should instead "look above all at the organisation of its language, not to read it as the expression of its author's psyche or as the reflection of the society that produced it" (Culler, 1997, 30). However, this can be countered by arguing that a given text's meaning is subservient to the existence of its author; this is to say that without the author, the text would not exist. Similarly, the author cannot be isolated from his/her output, as discussed by Green and Beuve (1804- 1869) as in Badr al-Dīn Muşţafā (2017). In other words, the language in any text is, by and large, a consequence of the author's culture, linguistic background, and thoughts. These are

¹⁶ See the brief section providing a biography of Shākir in the Appendix.

the product of their environment, be it literary, social, or psychological as, to some extent, “no text is fully isolated from the circumstances of its production” (Logie, 2013, 511). This notion is discussed by Bourdieu in his book *The Rules of Art* (1996, 239) and by Mukarovsky (1977, 195) in his book of selected essays entitled *Structure, Sign and Function*, and by White (2012, 120).

The main idea behind Barthes’ call for isolating or eliminating the aspect of the author from consideration through the analytical approach to a given text (Badr al-Dīn Muṣṭafā, 2017, 91) was to free texts from their mono-meaning and to allow multiple and diverse meanings. This means that there is no specific essence or core meaning of a text, and that the reader has a larger space to interpret, free from assumptions about the given text. This idea, which Barthes called “The Death of the Author”, resulted in “the birth of the reader”, which grants the reader a wide and unlimited space in which to interpret a given text from their perspective, even if it leads them to go beyond the clear semantic structure of the given text (ibid., 99). This is because, for Barthes, “the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted” (Barthes, 1977, 148). On the other hand, in another discourse, Barthes (ibid., 100) emphasises the role of the author in making the process of reading fruitful by presenting an open text. By this, he is referring to an ambiguous and indefinite text that suggests meaning without any specifications. In other words, Barthes encourages producing texts that are open to various interpretations. His idea of “The Death of the Author” was probably intended to prevent any distracting or controlling background information that might influence a reader’s perception of a text. However, Barthes required the reader to eliminate the author from the analysis, and then required the author to write in such a way as to make the process of reading fruitful. As a result, it seems that Barthes controls these two processes, i.e. writing and reading, and places them in a highly specific frame and direction. Similarly, White (2012, 117) raises an important question related to this issue when he asks, “Mallarme, Valery, Proust, the surrealist - weren’t these all *authors* pushing their own versions of language? Didn’t their suppression of authorship depend on an authorial decision?” The answer would possibly be that the authorial voice in these theorists’ writings cannot be banished (Watkin, 2015, 32). It is almost impossible for an author to consider all types of readers while writing a text; therefore, what is ambiguous to one group of readers could be

clear to another if the author means to make his/her text suggestive. Another point is that the ability of authors to generate a text at a certain linguistic level varies according to their linguistic and literary knowledge, as well as to their genuine talent. This is in addition to the presumption that writing a literary text with the strong intention to control the use of language would lead to artificiality. Nonetheless, it could most likely be argued that Barthes was criticising the tendency to think that someone could solve the puzzle of a text or discover its true meaning by understanding the author's biography.

Furthermore, the claim to study a text in isolation from its author might not be compatible with the literary language as language is divided into two main categories, namely: literary language and logic, and philosophical language. As a lexical item in literary language usually embodies the emotional and psychological dimensions and experiences of the author, apart from its pure or direct signification (denotation), a large gap could occur as a result of isolating the author (with all his/her dimensions) from the analysis, as s/he would be an essential constituent of the literary text. Therefore, adherence to an author could be referred to as a fixed parameter of interpretation. This is in contrast to the language of logic and philosophy, or even the language of law where a writer deliberately frees a lexical item from its emotional dimensions and attachments to guarantee the purity of semantics and signification. In this context, a text can be studied by examining the organisation of its language and not as an expression of its author or the society that produced it. At this point, the two directions, one that removes the author and the other that enhances his/her role in texts' literary analysis can be reconciled, as both directions are significant in the literary realm. Reconciliation can be accomplished by studying a literary text at two levels; the first of which entails the study of linguistic and semantic relations among its linguistic elements, and the second which involves the study of a literary text as an authorial production with all the emotional, psychological, sociological, and epistemological dimensions related to this concept. Also, as regards reconciliation between the two approaches, the genres in which Abū Hilāl was composing involved a great deal of citation - literally creating "tissue of citations" (as Barthes' defines the text). Abū Hilāl was himself a reader as well as an author - a point at which strands of a web of citations gathered. This reconciliatory approach would result in the understanding of most dimensions of a given literary text and an almost comprehensive view of it, as one direction or approach cannot be neglected at the cost of the other.

In this respect, a brief comparison could be made between Shākir's and Barthes' approaches to a text according to the aforementioned understanding in order to clarify their views. Shākir incorporated the time, environment, and context of the author of a given text. In other words, he considered all possible relevant dimensions related to the concept of the author. Accordingly, he understood, interpreted and explained lexical items, sentences, and thoughts presented in the given text according to what is linguistically possible and that which the time or period of the author necessitated. The division between Shākir and Barthes is evident from the point at which Barthes removes the author from the literary analysis via his idea of "The Death of the Author"; on the other hand, he gives the reader "their birth", which means that the reader would have a wider space in which to understand, analyse, and interpret a text without being influenced by any external restrictions and factors. The essence of this debate is that, when the reader banishes the authorial voice, the social and psychological features of the author are inevitably banished. As a result, the context of time is disregarded since the social and psychological context and the time context cannot be separated. The consequence of banishing the authorial voice is that the interpretation or the analysis of a given text would necessarily be affected by the reader's chronological, epistemological, and psychological impacts. This means that the text would be transferred from the restricted circle of the author to that of the reader, contrary to Barthes' belief that the removal of the author would result in taking the reader out of the author's limited circle and into a wider space with various meanings and interpretations.

Furthermore, Shākir's approach to a text involved a close investigation of the language and biography of its author in order to locate the important features that would nourish the literary field whereby the creative progression requires, to a large extent, finding psychological and epistemological connections among the author, the text, and the reader. In other words, for Shākir, "the author nourishes the book", as cited in White (2012, 118). Barthes objected to this idea as he refused to restrict the text to certain paths that determine the outcomes of literary analyses. For Barthes, a text is "a space of many dimensions" and "it is language which speaks, not the author" (Logie, 2013, 507). Similarly, in his book *Sā'āt bayn al-Kutub*, al-'Aqqād (2014, 594) clearly opposes the idea of "The Death of the Author" by asserting "I cannot fully understand a speech act unless I know its author/speaker with some of his/her history

and personal attributes”; he added, “The meaning of a word differs according to the person who says it... and if you wish to understand a speech act, then, understand the speaker”:

"ولا أستطيع أن أفهم كلاماً حقَّ فهمه إلا إذا عرفتُ صاحبه ووقفتُ على شيءٍ من تاريخه وصفاته..." "فالكلمة تختلف معانيها باختلاف قائلها... وإذا أردت أن تفهم الكلمة فافهم المتكلم".

Therefore, awareness of the ideological, social, and psychological positions of the speaker/author is an essential requirement to achieve a meticulous interpretation. In his book *al-Madkhal ilā Manhaj al-Tadhawwuq 'ind Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir*, al-‘Amrī (2018, 119) states that the interpretation of any text should be connected to its author and his/her use of language on word and syntax levels, and not to a reader who could interpret meanings in the text according to his/her views, and irrelatively to the author.

The following columns shows a comparative view of different processes and approaches to literary texts by Shākir and Barthes:

1. Shākir	2. Barthes (Foucault, Derrida, Paul DeMan, Mallarme, Valery Proust)
The reader should be: equipped with a certain level of language and acquainted with knowledge that qualifies him/her to achieve considerable read.	The Text is a tissue of citations resulting from the thousand sources of culture (Textuality).
The Text: considering linguistic relations on lexical items, grammar, and semantic level.	Scriptor: Barthes introduced an alternative concept to describe the writer, the

<p>- Critical knowledge of the author and the relevant dimensions of his/her environment.</p>	<p>“scriptor”, one who inscribes language on the page: (the death of the author) (White, 2012, 118).</p>
<p>Close reading/ Analysis: the reader would be incorporated into the text and its author.</p>	<p>The Approach: the space of writing is to be traversed, not penetrated, to be distinguished, nothing to be deciphered.</p>
<p>The conclusion: would include findings that involve: -examining thoughts and ideas of the text and the language employed to express them. -producing critiques regarding the text based on language examining. -verifying facts related to the text and the author. -Evaluation.</p>	<p>The Birth of the Reader: the view of the reader with no limitations of external elements. -Readers find their own possible parallels among the temporally and spatially disparate parts. -The abandonment of the author gives the reader a wider space for interpretation.</p>

It can be noted that for Shākir, the critical process begins with the reader and the way they approach a given text. These ways vary from one reader to another according to their literacy level in a language. This also extends to the extent of their

knowledge outside the domain of language. On the other hand, for Barthes, the literal process begins with the text by isolating the author in order to avoid any previous judgments; the reader would then treat texts from his/her own perspective, even if this would be at the expense of clear semantics of discourse in a given text.

The previous discussions about the idea of 'the death of the author' amongst critics and scholars is not presented as a justification for writing a biography of the figure being studied in the present thesis, but is intended to indicate that part of the personal and social life of the figure could be employed or evoked whenever it is found relevant and necessary to the discourse. A detailed biography of Abū Hilāl is not provided here because it can be found in biographical dictionaries. Chapter Two, however, discusses the nature of the representation of Abū Hilāl's biography and his literary production, and the extent of its presence in biographical works.

7- Literature Review:

Existing literature about Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī is scarce. Most of the works approach him from highly specific angles and only briefly, without providing any further analyses of his writing style and criticism, how his knowledge was constituted, or what theory he was attempting to formulate. In other words, it is unlikely that there is a comprehensive study that provides a deep insight into Abū Hilāl as a critic, litterateur, and scholar. Therefore, it can be argued that the existing literature on Abū Hilāl might lack generalisation and is relatively outdated, as most of the studies were conducted in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. This is in contrast to the aims of the present thesis, which attempts to provide a comprehensive study of Abū Hilāl and his works, as well as an extensive analysis of his style, thoughts, and contributions to the literary field. This is in addition to the critical biography that this thesis presents in order to provide a high standard of understanding of this figure and his literary direction and intellect. It is worth noting that George Kanazi appeared to have been interested in Abū Hilāl as he dedicated about five studies to different aspects or themes in Abū Hilāl's works, which outnumber the combined studies by other scholars. One of these studies describes manuscripts of Abū Hilāl's books and mentions whether they were published, as well as where they were published. Kanazi's (1975) study is important because it provides scholars with a clear impression of the richness of Abū Hilāl's literary legacy and how he should be approached. Kanazi also wrote a biography about Abū Hilāl in DeYoung and Germain (2011) in which he listed only the published

works of Abū Hilāl. This section, however, does not discuss biographies written about Abū Hilāl as these are addressed in Chapter Two of this thesis. This section approaches the studies that are concerned with the themes, thoughts, and critiques that are included in Abū Hilāl's works.

Kanazi (2011, 61) also explains that Abū Hilāl's list of literary productions is quite long, thus indicating the wide range of knowledge that Abū Hilāl possessed. This knowledge ranged from "poetry and criticism to Koran interpretation, philology, history and the like." Abū Hilāl was called *al-Adīb* (l'homme de belles lettres, or the litterateur/man of letters) "because of this variety of fields of interest". This would be in line with the general sense of the term *Adab* that is adopted in this thesis as discussed in the section entitled *The Definition of Adab*.¹⁷ The study by Kanazi (1975) includes essential information regarding Abū Hilāl's death, his surviving works, or those which have been lost, and some very short comments describing the content of some of those works. Kanazi (2011, 70) argued that Abū Hilāl "does not consider prose and poetry as two separate arts, but rather as two branches of the same art which have much in common". Since Abū Hilāl's main purpose in his book: *al-Şinā'atayn* (*The Two Arts*) was to differentiate between bad and good speeches using Arabic rhetoric as a measure, he considered prose and poetry to be two categories of one kind which is Speech (*al-kalām*). This was supported by Abū Hilāl himself when he referred to this book as *Şinā'at al-Kalām*, by which he meant *al-Şinā'atayn*¹⁸. Otherwise, which kinds of arts does Abū Hilāl consider prose and poetry as two branches of it, as Kanazi claims? Perhaps Kanazi meant to say that prose and poetry are two branches of the art of rhetoric, given that Abū Hilāl considered it an essential aspect to recognise good and bad compositions. However, poetry and prose are two general modes of Arabic speech and cannot be considered branches of Arabic rhetoric that is based on rules and laws that govern Arabic speech in order to add, clarify, or embellish meanings (*al-ma'ānī*) and wordings (*al-alfāz*) in certain contexts.

¹⁷ See the last paragraph of the section Definition of *Adab*, specifically definition number 5. This can be found in the appendices.

¹⁸ This can be seen in the book *al-Şinā'atayn* itself in which phrases such as *şinā'at al-kalām* or *idhā' aradta 'an taşna'a kalām-an* (speech craft) are used several times; see, for example (1971, 8, 29, 139, 160). Another equivalent of this phrase, *şā'igh al-kalām* (phrasist), is also used.

Another article by Kanazi (1975) discusses Abū Hilāl's attitude towards poetry and poets, particularly in regard to the topics considered relevant by classical and modern poets (*al-shu'arā' al-mutaqaddimūn wa al-muḥdathūn*). This article includes several statements that reflect the findings of Kanazi's study of Abū Hilāl's works, and *al-Ṣinā'atayn* in particular. For example, Kanazi states that classical poets had several points of weakness in their poetry due to the lack of sufficient criticism that guides them to improve their verses. This implies that Abū Hilāl believed modern poetry to be superior to classical poetry and might contradict another statement by Kanazi (*ibid.*, 74), in which he stated that Abū Hilāl "treats classical and modern poets equally, by providing successful and unsuccessful examples of both." The latter suggests that Abū Hilāl considered the possibility of finding good and bad poetry in the two groups without suggesting an advantage for one over the other. Even if classical poets did not receive sufficient criticism,¹⁹ they had the advantage of possessing a pure language that was devoid of major defects. Moreover, Abū Hilāl would not imply such an idea as temporal and spatial factors differed between classical and modern poets when taking the semantic and literary development of the poetic language into account. In other words, comparison between classical and modern poets in terms of superiority might not be accurate due to these temporal and spatial differences. However, if defects or misrepresentations of some meanings are hinted at, the discussion would take another turn, as certain meanings could be misrepresented due to various factors by almost all poets regardless of the timeframe, as discussed by Taymūr (1950, 3-4) in his book *Awhām Shu'arā' al-'Arab fī al-Ma'ānī (Delusions of Arab poets in meanings)*.²⁰ With regard to Kanazi's statement that Abū Hilāl treated classical and modern poets equally, this can be refuted by even a slight acquaintance with his critical

¹⁹ This statement is probably not completely true as it is known in *Adab* sources that poets in the classical era would gather in order to discuss their poetry with other poets known for their superiority therein, such as al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī, as mentioned in 'Abbās (1981). In addition, Hadāra (1985, 428) stated that, in *al-Aghānī* by al-Aṣbahānī and in *Khizānat al-Adab* by al-Baghdādī, the people of Quraysh were known as the most linguistically eloquent, and poets from other tribes would benefit from the season of *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage) to present their poetry to critics from Quraysh, who would approve or reject these efforts.

²⁰ This point is discussed in Chapter Two.

position regarding al Mutanabbī's poetry²¹ (which is cited by Abū Hilāl as an example of bad, corrupt or poor poetry), while his admiration of Abū Tammām's poetry is clear as discussed by Mubārak (2013, 445) and Muḥārib (2010). Finally, Kanazi stated that, like his predecessor ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296), Abū Hilāl was of the opinion that *al-Badī'* (embellishments) was known to classical poets and was not invented by modern ones. Abdul-Raof (2006, 20, 241) added that Abū Hilāl recognised the independent status of *'ilm al-badī'* as a branch of Arabic rhetoric like Qudāma (d. 337) and was the first critic to differentiate between *al-Balāgha* (rhetoric) and *al-Faṣāḥa* (eloquence) (ibid., 94; al-'Ammārī, 1999, 313).²² Abū Hilāl's ideas indicate his vital contribution and influence in the field of criticism.

In her review of Kanazi's studies of *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, Ashtiany (1994, 179) alluded to an essential point, namely that *al-Ṣinā'atayn* "suffer[s] from being assessed in terms of a category into which [it] does not really fit". What probably prompted Ashtiany to make such a statement is Kanazi's and Abbās's beliefs that Abū Hilāl did not possess a great mind, and that his book *al-Ṣinā'atayn* was nothing but a mere summary of books of criticism²³ of his predecessors, such as Qudāma and al-Āmidī. Ashtiany's argument that Kanazi "makes no attempt to inflate al-'Askarī's importance" may have been based on the aforementioned reason. However, for Ashtiany, although *al-Ṣinā'atayn* includes quotations and borrowings from previous works, it belongs to a different stream in that it puts the theoretical account of criticism into practice and provides readers with practical advice that could be applied to composition. This then, makes *al-Ṣinā'atayn* a "more diverse source than Kanazi allows" (Ashtiany, 180), and provides an "interesting source of information about its author's mental process". The latter refers to the point in Abū Hilāl's critical position of this thesis in which al-Baghdādī's quotation in praise of Abū Hilāl's knowledge is mentioned.

²¹ This idea is discussed previously in the present thesis in point 2: Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī and his Literary Critical Position.

²² Abubakre (1989, 3) briefly discussed Abū Hilāl's perspective on eloquence and rhetoric in his book *Bayān in Arabic Rhetoric*.

²³ The same perspective was held by Allen (2005, 388). Moreover, in his research on literary criticism in the book edited by Ashtiany et al. (1990), K. Abū Deeb (1990, 356) touched on the same idea; however, he considered that *al-Ṣinā'atayn* "may have played a role in the development of *Balāghah*, but its role in the development of literary criticism is negligible."

There are other historical and literary reasons for the importance of *al-Ṣināʿatayn*. Firstly, it provides quotes from lost books, which “contributes to our knowledge of the first stages of the development of Arabic stylistics” (Bonebakker, 1960/ 1961, 176). Considering this point, *al-Ṣināʿatayn* could be referred to as an essential historical document that records and preserves missing or lost literary texts from several books, and even from some of Abū Hilāl’s own missing or lost works. It is a measure of good fortune for scholars that the phenomenon of finding ‘missing’ texts in some books that are available today has occurred in several books in the Arabic literary heritage, such as *al-Aghanī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣḥāhānī (d. 356 AH) and *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* by al-Subkī (d. 771 AH). This phenomenon, although it was part of the normal practice when compiling books, provides modern scholars with valuable materials that help complete some missing parts of the whole picture of Arabic heritage.

In the same context, Orfali (2012) provided an analytical framework for the study of this genre of Arabic literature in his article on Arabic poetry anthologies. He emphasised the same idea about *al-Ṣināʿatayn* that was discussed previously, which is that anthologies (ibid., 36) “stood out as exercises in practical criticism with many disclosing the knowledge, taste, and care of their compilers”. *Dīwan al-Maʿānī* by Abū Hilāl, which is mentioned in Orfali’s study, is not excluded from this consideration; instead, it could be deemed a “gatekeeper to the realm of admired literature” (ibid., 37). This is because the redactors of such anthologies meant to include examples of good poetry and prose that fulfil most of the requirements of rhetoric and eloquence. Had this not been the case, they would have provided examples of poor literary productions accompanied by some critical thoughts advising how to remedy the weakness in order to improve the reader’s skills and taste, and the style of Arabic literary composition. Orfali’s article then makes valuable observations about the varied structures, categories and organisation of different anthologies. However, his article might be more descriptive and suggestive than analytical except for the discussion about the meta-meaning of the second word of the title, *al-maʿānī*.²⁴ Moreover, in Orfali’s article, no discussions or analysis pertaining to Abū Hilāl’s thoughts or literary

²⁴ This refers to verses that require one to ask about their meaning and which are not comprehended on first consideration. See footnote number 71 in Orfali’s article (2012, 45; al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d., 155). For further reflection on how Abū Hilāl used the word *maʿānī*, see Gruendler (2005, 60).

character could be found, although these would provide readers with a deep understanding of how he structured his book *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*, and the poetic themes or genres included in this book. This is unlike Gruendler’s article: *Motifs vs. Genre: Reflections on the Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī* (2005), where Gruendler presents a critical analysis of the motifs, organisation, and the poetic-critical arrangement of *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*. Also, she could discern Abū Hilāl’s concept of his choice of verses and passages of different themes in general and love verses in particular, and how Abū Hilāl could identify different levels of love in pre-Islamic poetry and poetry of his era.

Similarly, al-Ṭanāḥī’s article (n.d., 155) about *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* presents an analytical approach to this anthology, particularly with regard to the prosody of the verses and how indexers should classify them. Al-Ṭanāḥī (ibid., 185) observed that this book is devoid of verses of some types of prosody, such as *al-muqtaḍab*, *al-muḍārī* and *al-mutadārak*. He referred to the idea of *al-qawāfī al-hādiya* (guiding rhymes), which means that indexers might encounter a single verse or pairs of verses composed by unknown poets; however, indexers can find other verses with the same prosody and rhyme where the poet is known; it is often the case that they form part of the same poem. In this way, one can authenticate a large number of verses by unknown composers. This process cannot be accomplished without conducting an analysis of the prosody of the various verses in the book.

Another issue discussed by al-Ṭanāḥī (ibid., 175) that can be found in *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* is *riwāyat sakhīf al-shi‘r* (the transmission of indecent or obscene poetry) or, to use the modern term, *al-Adab al-makshūf* (the exposed literature). Some Muslim scholars adopt a sensitive approach towards indecent verses because they conflict with their faith and religion in which indecent and obscene matters are discouraged or prohibited; consequently, Abū Hilāl was obliged to provide justification for the inclusion of these verses. He probably believed that had the transmitters not narrated indecent poetry, many benefits relating to philology and anthropology would have been lost. This implies that Abū Hilāl might have considered poetry to form an essential historical and linguistic archive that provides insight into different periods of human tradition and social life, as well as indicating the type and nature of certain knowledge that humans had in different periods.

Al-Tanāḥī (ibid., 165) argued that literary critical judgments prevail in *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*; nonetheless, scholars have focused most of their studies on *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*. It

is clear that *al-Şināʿatayn* occupies a large space in studies of Abū Hilāl on account of *Dīwān al-Maʿānī*; the reason could be the nature of the two books' structure, as *al-Şināʿatayn* provides clear theoretical discussions along with their applications for poetry. On the other hand, *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* provides more applications and examples of prose and poetry that Abū Hilāl evoked with his critiques on them, which makes understanding *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* conditional on understanding *al-Şināʿatayn*.

As mentioned previously,²⁵ Abū Hilāl composed the book *al-Furūq fī al-Lughā*, in which he included different Arabic words and expressions that have different denotations according to their context, although they would seem to have similar meanings at first glance or with limited knowledge of the Arabic language. In this book, he addressed the issue of whether synonyms exist in the Arabic language. Based on this, Chaudhary's (1987) short article *Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's Views on Synonyms* discusses how Abū Hilāl perceived and addressed this literary issue. The article explains Abū Hilāl's position and thoughts regarding synonyms in Arabic, and how they occur in different forms and contexts, substantiated by quotes from Abū Hilāl's words. In general, Abū Hilāl denied the occurrence of synonyms in Arabic if the two words in question belonged to the same dialect because, for him, one tribe or group would not ascribe one meaning to two or more words, as this would constitute a multiplication of the language with no linguistic utility (Abū Hilāl, 1977, 15). On the other hand, it is possible to find two different words in different dialects or groups that have the same meaning; the examples presented by Abū Hilāl were the words *şifa* and *naʿt*. Both words mean 'adjective', but the first is said by *al-Başriyyūn* while the other is used by *al-Kūfiyyūn*. Chaudhary (1987, 250) was surprised by the six names of the Arab scholars who "placed Abū Hilāl among those linguists who deny the occurrence of synonyms in Arabic even if the synonym words come from different dialects", although Abū Hilāl clearly explained his position concerning this issue in the first chapter of his book. Apart from this discussion, Chaudhary's article is probably little more than a summary, or an English translation of the first chapter²⁶ of Abū Hilāl's

²⁵ In point 2: Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī and his literary critical position.

²⁶ Which is: *fī al-Ibāna ʿan kawwān Ikhtilāf al-Ibārāt wa al-Asmāʾ mūjib-an li-Ikhtilāf al-Maʿānī fī kul Lughā. Wa al-Qawl fī al-Dalāla ʿalā al-Furūq Baynahumā*.

book in which he explained how he perceived the issue of synonyms and the various forms that these could take.

In a different context, in his article *The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry*, Schoeler (2010 - 2011) provided an analysis and explanations of the ways in which pre-modern critics and redactors of *dīwāns* classified the themes and aims of Arabic poetry. As Schoeler (*ibid.*, 2) stated, “Classical Arabic poetry was able to entice scholars to treat it systematically”, by which he meant that literary critics and theorists could infer the thematic diversity and the multipart nature of Arabic poems that can be seen in their opuses. Amongst the theorists and redactors of *dīwāns*, Schoeler referred to Abū Hilāl and his classification of the themes and aims of poetry throughout two of his books, *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* and *al-Şinā‘atayn*. Following his analysis of Abū Hilāl’s books, Schoeler made three main observations. Firstly, the use of the term (aim), the selection of the relevant aims, and the explanations provided by Abū Hilāl are proof that Abū Hilāl was influenced by his predecessors Qudāma²⁷ and al-Rummānī. Secondly, Abū Hilāl “shows that praise, dirge, and self-praise [poetry] have the same ‘deep structure’” (*ibid.*, 15), which is an idea that Abū Hilāl based on Qudāma’s discussions. Lastly, Schoeler referred to Abū Hilāl’s observation about the list of poetic themes that he included in his book *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī*. This observation indicates that Abū Hilāl deals with, in this list, poetry of congratulation (*al-tahānī*) and explains that congratulatory poetry did not exist in pre-Islamic poetry as there were only five categories at that time. Accordingly, Schoeler noted Abū Hilāl’s awareness that new themes had emerged in the course of the development of poetry and described it as an approach “to a historical view of the genesis and development of themes that had previously been completely absent” (*ibid.*, 15).

These above mentioned discussions by Schoeler and other scholars provide this study with hints on the role and importance of Abū Hilāl in the field of Arabic literature, and his contribution to both theoretical and practical spheres of Arabic literary legacy. Moreover, Abū Hilāl’s name can be seen mentioned in different contexts, particularly

²⁷ Schoeler presumed that this influenced Abū Hilāl via Qudāma’s book *Naqd al-Shi‘r* (*The Assaying of Poetry*), while al-Ṭanāḥī (2013, 146, 669; n.d., 501) mentioned that Qudāma wrote another book called *Naqd al-Nathr*. However, it has been proved that the book was originally *al-Burhān fī Wujūh al-Bayān* (*proof of the way of exposition*) by ibn Wahb, who was a contemporary of Qudāma and whom Schoeler mentioned just after Qudāma.

in terms of the chronological presentation of historical developments in Arabic poetic and prosaic themes and genres. However, as discussed at the beginning of this section, although Abū Hilāl's name is often mentioned in different contexts, no comprehensive picture can be inferred regarding his intellect, culture, literary personality, or theories. For example, in Rosenthal's (1989) article *The History of an Arabic Proverb*, Abū Hilāl is rarely mentioned despite his important work *Jamharat al-Amthāl*.

A comprehensive acquaintance with Abū Hilāl as a literary theorist, critic, philologist, and anthologist cannot be achieved unless he and his literary production are approached in an exhaustive manner. Literary production allows one to gain a full understanding of the ideas, patterns and the background knowledge that dominated his views and critiques of different linguistic and literary topics and issues, while referring to some modern literary theories in order to make this study more prolific.

The value of this study lies in gaining deep insight into an essential figure in Arabic classical literary theory and scholarship. It aims to fully comprehend his real influence and contribution to the literary field. It will necessarily reveal some unknown factors regarding how Abū Hilāl's literary character was formed in order to understand his motives and the impulses behind some of his ideas and critiques.

In Mubārak's book *al-Nathr al-Fannī fī al-Qarn al-Rābi` (artistic prose in the 4th century AH)*, a relatively brief section discusses Abū Hilāl as a litterateur and philologist. Mubārak also emphasises the essential role and influence of Abū Hilāl on Arabic sciences and asserts that *al-Şinā`atayn* alone could be adequate as evidence of Abū Hilāl's great intellect and virtuosity. In the last part of the section on Abū Hilāl, Mubārak discusses the main literary features of *al-Şinā`atayn* and some important issues related to literary criticism such as Abū Hilāl's position on al-Mutanabbī's poetry - Abū Hilāl presents it only as an example of a poor and defective composition. This topic, as mentioned previously, was discussed in a study by Muḥārib (2010). As mentioned above, similar to most scholarly approaches to Abū Hilāl, Mubārak focuses his discussion on *al-Şinā`atayn* without any attempt to reveal Abū Hilāl through his other works. However, Mubārak raises a crucial point, which is that, in addition to Abū Hilāl being an influential character in the field of literary criticism, he was a great bard and prose writer as ambiguous meanings, redundant words, and confusing ideas are extremely rare in his different discourses, and his literary production could be classified as high-class literature. Hence, Mubārak considers *al-Şinā`atayn* to be more a book

of literature than a book of literary criticism. Mubārak raises another crucial point that could refute the claims by ‘Abbās, Kanazi and Abū Deeb, namely that Abū Hilāl did not contribute significant ideas to literary criticism and that his book is only a summary of other books. However, Abū Hilāl’s statement in the third chapter of *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* (1971, 60, 243) could be presented as a rebuttal of these claims as, after he explains the different types of *al-Balāghah*, he asserts that no one before him has explained and interpreted these types as accurately as he has. Accordingly, Abū Hilāl states that other books that shared similar content with *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* could be replaced by *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, as it covers their topics in addition to new issues and discussions that he had presented for the first time. Thus, it is unlikely that *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* can be studied in isolation from previous and contemporary books on literature and criticism if one wishes to measure the extent of its originality.

One might consider these statements by Abū Hilāl regarding the originality of his *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* to be the kind of expected exaggeration that most scholars would make, and should be disregarded. However, the value of such statements varies according to the author and his/her literary position. Therefore, for a critic and litterateur such as Abū Hilāl, who wrote about twenty opuses in different branches of knowledge and who was well acquainted with the knowledge and books of his time, his statements about his book should be treated with considerable attention.

In *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, Abū Hilāl intended to avoid imperfect arrangements and digressions in his predecessors’ books, as mentioned by Abū ‘Alī (1993), and as Abū Hilāl (1971, 10, 11) himself stated in his book when he called out *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* by al-Jāhiz. Although he admitted that al-Jāhiz’s book was valuable, the definitions and types of rhetoric and eloquence are hard to detect through the book, which makes it difficult to understand without careful reading. Therefore, Abū Hilāl divided his book into ten clear chapters that provide different discussions of *ṣinā‘at al-kalām* (composing speeches). Abū ‘Alī (1993) stated that the clear classification of the chapters in *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* indicated that Abū Hilāl probably aimed to base his book on didactic foundations to make it accessible to those less acquainted with the work. Abū ‘Alī only discussed prose criticism in *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* since his book *Naqd al-Nathr fī al-Turāth al-‘Arabī al-Naqdī* only concerns books that critique prose, which makes his discussions of different books of literary criticism brief, and he only introduces the main features of each book.

Similar to Mubārak, in his book: *Qaḍīyyat al-Lafẓ wa al-Ma'nā* (the issue of wording and meaning), al-'Ammārī allocated an entire section to studying Abū Hilāl. However, he also only focused on *al-Ṣinā'atayn* - as did most of the above-mentioned scholars - in an attempt to explain Abū Hilāl's critical position regarding the literary issues of wording, meaning and features of that position. Al-'Ammārī asserted that Abū Hilāl was one of the most important critics to approach the issue of wording and meaning after al-Jāhīẓ, and that *al-Ṣinā'atayn* could be considered a mediator between al-Jāhīẓ and al-Jurjānī.

In addition, al-'Ammārī (1999, 299) stated that Abū Hilāl emphasised the essential role of *al-lafẓ* (wording) in delivering a lofty meaning. Abū Hilāl could be considered the first to use evidence to prove that Arabic rhetoric revolved around 'good' and sophisticated words. As mentioned previously, several modern scholars have accused Abū Hilāl of copying or duplicating the literary discussions of his predecessors; while al-'Ammārī says that Abū Hilāl stated, in *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, that the discourses and discussions he borrowed and included in his book had not been presented without being refined, explained thoroughly, or adjusted in order to increase their value. This was in addition to new discussions, notices and elaborate differentiations among various speech peculiarities²⁸ supported by intensive examples that proved Abū Hilāl's opinion. On the other hand, al-'Azzāwī (1978) discussed several topics pertaining to classic literature and criticism, such as *al-l'jāz*, a measure of right and wrong meanings in poetry, poetry transmission, and sophisticated and poor poetry. Throughout these discussions, he included Abū Hilāl in various groups of critics, as each group represents a different stream. Similarly, *al-Ṣinā'atayn* is the only book al-'Azzāwī referred to as being representative of Abū Hilāl's perspective on different issues in literary criticism.

Thus, it appears that Abū Hilāl is studied via an extremely general approach with other critics, or is studied in brief sections as the scribe and composer of *al-Ṣinā'atayn* without any mention of his other books. This means that Abū Hilāl's other books are still in need of further study and investigation in order to identify other dimensions of his literary career, as well as to provide the scholastic field with credible justification regarding the value of his contribution to the literary realm.

²⁸ See, for example, *al-Ṣinā'atayn* (1971, 360, 364).

In the same year that Kanazi (1975) published an article in which he listed Abū Hilāl's works, Ghayyāḍ (1975) published his book *Shi'r Abī Hilāl al-'Askarī*. It seems that Abū Hilāl had a *dīwān* (anthology) of his own poetry that Kanazi did not mention and which has been lost; however, his poetry can be found scattered across his works, and in other sources of rhetoric and *Adab*. Ghayyāḍ took the initiative to collect and redact Abū Hilāl's scattered poetry into one book in the hope that this work, to some extent, would compensate the list of Abū Hilāl's work for the lost *dīwān*. As in most edited books about Abū Hilāl, Ghayyāḍ (1975, 48) began his book with a brief biography of Abū Hilāl and claimed to present a comprehensive study of his poetry. However, since poetry is a rich field that can be supplied as an essential material to study a poet, Ghayyāḍ's study was not as promising as it seemed; as he explained, he was able to collect about 1578 verses of Abū Hilāl's poetry, yet his study might be limited as it is only fifteen pages of a descriptive approach to some phenomena that Ghayyāḍ could detect in Abū Hilāl's poetry. Moreover, when he attempted to analyse or comment on some verses, he quoted Abū Hilāl himself in order to illustrate his ideas regarding rhetoric and literary issues that might occur in literary works. Thus, it appears that Ghayyāḍ made no effort to contribute to a deep analysis of Abū Hilāl's poetry that would serve as insight into the psychological or social dimensions of Abū Hilāl's life as - for example - Shākir did with al-Mutanabbī's poetry in his book *al-Mutanabbī*. Instead, Ghayyāḍ attempted to strike a balance between the literary issues that Abū Hilāl discussed in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* and the extent to which he represented or reflected on them in his poetry. Nonetheless, Ghayyāḍ's book is important since it provides a shortcut to Abū Hilāl's poetry and paves the way for further studies. However, he advised that several verses were considered to be from Abū Hilāl's works although they were actually composed by other poets.

Dubiously, four years later, Qanāzi²⁹ (1979) published *Dīwān al-'Askarī* in which he almost repeated Ghayyāḍ's work, although he stated (*ibid.*, 33) that he collected close to 1600 verses by Abū Hilāl, which was twenty-two verses more than Ghayyāḍ's collection of 1578 verses. However, Qanāzi²⁹ did not even acknowledge Ghayyāḍ's work implicitly, which invokes the suspicion that he might have copied Ghayyāḍ's work. In this regard, it can be argued that Qanāzi²⁹ could have published a short article including the extra verses that he appended to Ghayyāḍ's work rather than reiterating

²⁹ Qanāzi²⁹, G and Kanazi, G are two different spellings of the same author's name.

his work; however, a physical count of verses in Qanāzi's work shows that it includes 1567 verses apart from one missed verse that was listed as being included, but is not, which means that there are twelve verses less than there are in Ghayyāḍ's collection. As Abū Hilāl's dīwān has been lost, the title that Qanāzi chose for his book, *Dīwān al-ʿAskarī*, could be misleading since he merely collected scattered verses by Abū Hilāl from different books on literature and criticism, which does not allow this collection to be treated as a dīwān although it could provide hints on the form and content of Abū Hilāl's poetry. Thus, a more accurate title might be the one of Ghayyāḍ's book *Shi'r Abī Hilāl al-ʿAskarī*.

Turning to a study of Abū Hilāl, Ṭabāna (1981) discussed several aspects and topics pertaining to Abū Hilāl as a rhetorician and a critic in six chapters of his book, including Abū Hilāl's biography, literary criticism before and after Abū Hilāl, Abū Hilāl's resources, methodology, criticism criteria, and his influence on his successors. Ṭabāna argued that books of biographies do not provide adequate material about Abū Hilāl; however, it is possible to comprehend the nature and limits of his knowledge via his teacher Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī's knowledge as biography dictionaries contain a significant amount of information about him. On the other hand, Ṭabāna emphasised that Abū Hilāl's books were the best indication of his wide and rich literacy and great intellect. The most important chapters in Ṭabāna's book could be the two in which he discusses Abū Hilāl's methodology in Arabic literature and rhetoric, and another that mentions the books that influenced Abū Hilāl.

Ṭabāna attempts to add his personal reflections and critiques to some of Abū Hilāl's, which is only partially successful. An example of this can be seen in his comment about Abū Hilāl expressing his approval of the use of similes in one of *Imru'u al-Qays's*³⁰ verses in which he included four different similes (ibid., 119). Ṭabāna deduced that Abū Hilāl's measure of the good use of similes in verses was that a verse that included a greater number of similes would be met with more approval than if with fewer similes. Ṭabāna's opinion may not represent Abū Hilāl's thoughts about the *Imru'u al-Qays's* verse, as it is not only the number of similes that distinguishes this verse, but also the accuracy of each of them in addition to their elaborate order in the composition, which enables them to deliver the meaning efficiently.

³⁰ A pre-Islamic poet known for his love and licentious verses, and one of the seven poets whose poems are known as *al-Mu'allaqāt*.

In his book, Ṭabāna included various discussions concerning the originality of some of Abū Hilāl's thoughts, such as his awareness of the influence of agitation (*al-infi'āl*) in the invention of new meanings (ibid., 151), as well as in other discussions of different topics and branches of Arabic rhetoric such as meaning and wording, metaphors, figures of speech, and similes. In all these discussions, Ṭabāna compares Abū Hilāl to other contemporary critics who influenced him, and also considers his influence on other critics. However, and as noted previously, the author based his discussions solely on *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, which means that the book is essentially a review of *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, particularly due to the endless quotations that the author borrows from Abū Hilāl's book, annotated with comments or summaries by Ṭabāna himself. Therefore, Ṭabāna's book might be considered as a study of Abū Hilāl as a rhetorician and critic based solely on *al-Ṣinā'atayn* without any mention of other books. It is lacking in its attempts to focus on the diversity of Abū Hilāl's persona as a critic, litterateur, philologist, and lexicographer.

Therefore, the present thesis builds on some of Ṭabāna's findings in an attempt to investigate them in depth in order to examine their accuracy, as well as to discern Abū Hilāl's thoughts, ideas and discourses through his available opuses in order to contribute to a deep understanding of this literary character and the extent of his literary statements' importance.

No doubt there are still vast uncovered areas pertaining to Abū Hilāl, particularly with regard to his lexicographical mindset that can be seen in his books *al-Furūq fī al-Lugha*, *al-Talkīṣ fī al-Lugha* and *Mu'jam Baqīyyat al-Ashyā'*. These books include rich material concerning Arabic lexical items that could be linked to his discussions about wording and meaning, and to the value that he allocated to wording and its function in the representation of meanings. The reasons for scholars' avoidance of the study of Abū Hilāl's lexical works remain unclear and unjustified, particularly when considering the originality of his dictionaries' content, which could not be possibly found in other books.

Another study of Abū Hilāl as a rhetorician and critic was conducted by al-Mashāyikh (2001), who focused on the five main issues in literary criticism discussed by Abū Hilāl in *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, namely wording and meaning, literary plagiarism, the knowledge of a poet, secretary and critic, and *al-Badī'* (the marvel). Al-Mashāyikh stated that there were two other M.A. dissertations that studied Abū Hilāl. The first dissertation (1980) is an evaluation of Abū Hilāl's thoughts in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* throughout

modern stylistics, while the other (1990) pertains to rhetorical terms used by Abū Hilāl (al-Mashāyikh, 2001, 8). In the conclusion section of al-Mashāyikh's (ibid., 294) study, there are three findings discussed previously by Ṭabāna, which are:

- 1) In *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, Abū Hilāl did not rely only on his literary taste, as he employed some logical discourses.
- 2) Abū Hilāl considered the role of the environment in the similarities of thoughts or expressions amongst poets.
- 3) Abū Hilāl identified seven types of *al-Badr* that had never been previously discussed.

Again, as noted above, studies of Abū Hilāl with regard to *al-Ṣinā'atayn* dominate the majority of studies of Abū Hilāl, with noticeable repetition of the issues of Arabic rhetoric and criticism that constitute the content of *al-Ṣinā'atayn*. On the other hand, studies that approached other dimensions of Abū Hilāl's character and literary production are scarce, if not absent from the scholastic domain, which necessitates the development of a study that fills the gap that has been left regarding Abū Hilāl and his books.

However, although most of the literature discussed above has focused on *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, there are still topics in this book apart from Abū Hilāl's thoughts that could be studied, such as the richness of his linguistic usage, the linguistic and literary style of his critiques, the order of his books' content, the employment of morphological and syntactical rules in refinements and improvements to literary works, and the semantics of the chapters' titles in *al-Ṣinā'atayn*.

For all these discussions, the present thesis attempts to reread Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī by taking a comprehensive approach and considering the diversity of his works in several branches of *Adab* sciences since other aspects of his literary character, such as the lexical, linguistic and poetic factors have been neglected in academic research. This thesis attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What can be known about Abū Hilāl's intellect and knowledge by subjecting his combined works to a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach?
2. In the absence of biographical material, can the shape of Abū Hilāl still be discerned in the impact he had on later readers, who copied and talked about him?

3. What is the connection between Abū Hilāl's theoretical discussion of the issues of wording and meaning and synonyms, and his works in the field of lexicography?
4. How did Abū Hilāl employ his knowledge of morphology and syntax in his literary critical discussions, and how did his linguistic insight affect his literary judgment?
5. Does Abū Hilāl's poetry reflect personal and literary aspects of his life? And what is the literal and poetic status of his poetry?

The present thesis dedicates a chapter to answering each of these points.

Chapter Two

Abū Hilāl's Biography: A Critical and Analytical Approach:

The present account aims to analyse Abū Hilāl's biography by attempting to reveal several aspects of his personal and literary life through his literary heritage. This means that this chapter uses Abū Hilāl's texts in order to gain a deeper understanding of his character and then reconstruct his personality and his biography. The following is addressed:

*Brief background information on Abū Hilāl.

*How Abū Hilāl's biography is represented in biographical dictionaries.

*The educational and didactical discourse and sense that Abū Hilāl conveyed in his books, particularly in *al-Şinā'atayn*, *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'Ilm*, *Faḍl-u al-'Aṭā'i 'alā al-'Uṣr*, and *Mā'ḥtakama bihi al-Khulafā' ilā al-Quḍāh*.

*The nature of the sarcastic expressions that Abū Hilāl used in his critiques and how he employed them.

1- Background on Abū Hilāl:

The essence of the present thesis lies in the presumption that an author's biography can be reconstructed by a thorough study of his/her texts which can provide insight into his/her intellect, literacy, social life, and psychological condition. For this reason, the present thesis avoids writing a long biography on Abū Hilāl. However, the present chapter provides a critical biography of Abū Hilāl which means introducing him through his works and his role in the realm of *Adab* by measuring his influence and the critical value of his works to his successors. It also means attempting to identify some major peculiarities that characterised his style of writing, which is provided in the sections that follow. In other words, the critical biography would allow one to know Abū Hilāl closely rather than knowing only some information about him. Yet, it would possibly be beneficial to provide some brief information about Abū Hilāl, not as a way to understand his texts, but as a complementary approach to the present thesis's topics. Such information might be useful to support some of the findings and analyses in Chapter Five of the present thesis, as it is dedicated to studying Abū Hilāl's poetry.

Abū Hilāl's full name is al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdillāh b. Sahl b. Sa'īd b. Yaḥyā b. Mahrān al-'Askarī. He was born in a city in al-Aḥwāz called 'Askar-Mukarram. His main teacher was Abū Aḥmad al-'Askarī (Gruendler, 2005, 60) who was a very famous scholar of *Hadīth* transmission and *Adab*. Many knowledge seekers from different

Islamic territories travelled for the purpose of studying with Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī, and Abū Hilāl was one of his famous students. Regarding Abū Aḥmad, Azarnossh emphasised that he “was the sole undisputed master in ‘Askar-Mukarram and possibly the entire *Khūzistān* province” (2015, 2). Despite his Persian genealogy, Abū Hilāl was so proud of himself being Muslim that he said - as in Ghayyāḍ (1975, 10):

-وَفَخْرِي إِسْلَامِي وَدُخْرِي أَمَانَتِي / وَجُنْدِي أَشْعَارِي وَسَيْفِي لِسَانِيَا

“My Islam is my pride and my trustworthiness is my reserve,
And my poems are my soldiers and my tongue is my sword.”

This feeling of belonging that Abū Hilāl declared was the main motive that prompted him to dedicate his life to serving Arabic, the language of the *Qur’ān*, according to Ghayyāḍ (ibid., 10). This idea was clearly expressed by Abū Hilāl in his book: *al-Ṣina‘atayn* in which he discussed that the best way to understand the *Qur’ān* was by studying the language through which it was written.

Abū Hilāl did not receive a level of appreciation from the caliph’s court that he expected for an *Adīb* and scholar like himself - a situation that he often complained about as is evident in some of his poems discussed in Chapter Five. Due in part to the aforementioned, Abū Hilāl started his own business by selling clothes as a way to spare his dignity and to avoid begging or asking people for money (1930, 101; 1936-8, Vol: 8, 259; Gruendler, 2010).

Finally, regarding Abū Hilāl’s theological creed, Gayyāḍ (1975, 21) and Azarnoosh (2015, 4) stated that there is no evidence that would reveal Abū Hilāl’s theological creed in his works, which makes this facet of his life ambiguous. However, I consider that Abū Hilāl’s works include much evidence of his *Mu‘tazilī* creed.³¹ As Carter (2004, 7) states: “we can thus learn as much about a scholar’s importance from portraits in the biographies as from the contents of their works.” In his study *Manāhij al-Lughawīyyīn fī Taqrīr al-‘Aqīda* (1427 AH, 643- 649), Muḥammad al-Shaykh proved

³¹ Al-Mu‘tazila is an Islamic theological creed that appeared at the beginning of the 2nd century AH and was founded by Abū Ḥudhayfa Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’ al-Baṣrī. Their theological method is based fundamentally on reason. They were called *Mu‘tazila* (isolationists) because, when the founder Wāṣil withdrew from his teacher’s, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, session following having had a conflict with him, his teacher said: “*i‘tazalanā Waṣil*” (Waṣil had isolated himself from us) (al-Murtaḍā, 2; al-Ḥafzī, 13).

that Abū Hilāl was a *Mu‘tazilī* himself based on several texts from his books such as: *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, *al-‘Awā‘il*, and *al-Furūq*, in which he emphasised on several aspects of *al-Mu‘tazila*’s principles such as *al-‘adl wa al-tawḥid*, the interpretation of God’s attributes, and the negation of seeing God in the Hereafter. In addition, Abū Hilāl referred to masters of *al-Mu‘tazila* in theological issues such as: Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, al-Rummānī, Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī, and Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’ the founder of this creed. In addition to this evidence, the region where Abū Hilāl was born and lived (*‘Askar-Mukarram*) was known for the dominance of *al-Mu‘tazila*, and their creed was the official one of that region.

The following discussions are an attempt to detect the influence and representation of Abū Hilāl in his successors’ books, and an investigation of his style and methods of writing in order to identify his personality as clearly as possible.

2- Discussion of How Abū Hilāl is Represented in Biographical Dictionaries and an Examination of his Influence on his Successors:

The current account is not merely an attempt to survey or to trace the context in which Abū Hilāl was influenced by his predecessors or in which his repertoire was a source of inspiration for his successors. However, this section is an account of how this mutual influence is used to improve the critical discourse and the kinds of contexts in which Abū Hilāl’s name is evoked in order to clarify or justify certain literal or linguistic issues that scholars encounter. Modern scholars such as ‘Abbās (1981, 355), Ṭabāna (1981, 74) and Mashāyikh (2001) have restricted their discussions to tracing the topics that were discussed by Abū Hilāl and which they argue were influenced by critics dating from the Second and Third AH centuries. While Mashāyikh added to ‘Abbās’ and Ṭabāna’s opinions that Abū Hilāl surpassed his predecessors in the use of appropriate examples and presentation of further discussions regarding literary issues.

An investigation of books that were written after Abū Hilāl shows the dominance of his name and works on different topics, which indicates the essential role of his work in the realm of *Adab* and linguistics; a matter that refutes Azarnoosh’s claim that Abū Hilāl “was ignored by the early authors who came after him” (2015, 1). Ṭabāna (1981, 28) stated that, since biographies of Abū Hilāl are scarce and inadequate, different dimensions concerning Abū Hilāl’s knowledge can be acquired by reading his teacher, Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī’s biography, as it is often present in biographical dictionaries.

However, Abū Hilāl's knowledge can be precisely pinpointed not only by reading his teacher's biography, but also by tracing the various topics and contexts in which his successors quoted him and employed his statements as evidence to support their theses. Therefore, the upcoming discussion includes books, ideas and topics that were constructed with the aid of Abū Hilāl's books and which reflect his influence on, and contribution to, different fields.

By surveying books of Arabic legacy, it can be seen that Abū Hilāl is evoked and quoted in more than eighty books in about eleven disciplines. These disciplines include:

1. literature, such as *Akhhbār al-Ḥamqā wa al-Mughaffalīn* by ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH) (1990, 41),
2. prophetic tradition (al-ḥadīth) such as *Fath al-Bārī* by ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 AH) (1993, 2/ 48, 11/ 418, 13/ 196),
3. Arabic language, such as *Asrār al-Balāghā* by al-Jurjānī (d. 471 AH; edited by Maḥmūd Shākir (1991, 286),
4. lexicography, such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* by ibn Manẓūr (d. 711 AH) in the chapter on al-Shīn, and in *Tāj al-ʿArūs* by al-Zabīdī (d. 1205 AH) in ʿAawada, Karara, Khalā, Dhabā, and Dhamā,
5. biographies such as *Wafayāt al-ʿAʿyān* by ibn Khillikān (d. 681 AH) in the biography of Ṭuways al-Mughannī (d. 92 AH),
6. Qurʾān commentaries such as *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* by ʿIsmāʿīl Ḥaqqī (1985, 4/ 364),
7. Prophet Muhammad's companions' tradition such as *al-ʿIṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba* by al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 AH) (1995, 5/ 254),
8. genealogies, such as *Nihāyat al-ʿArab fī Maʿrifat ʿAnsāb al-ʿArab* by al-Qalqashandī (d. 821 AH) (n.d., 1/ 96),
9. jurisprudence, such as *al-ʿInṣāf fī Maʿrifat al-Rājiḥ min al-Khilāf* of al-Mardāwī (d. 885 AH) (1999, 1/ 177),
10. the principle of jurisprudence, as in *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* by al-Zarkashī (d. 797 AH) (n.d., 1/ 284), and
11. histories and historiographies, as in *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Akhhbār Miṣr wa al-Qāhira* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) (n.d., 3/ 253).

However, Abū Hilāl is not referred to as the main scholar in each of these disciplines; instead, he is referenced as a reliable source of information and knowledge with regard to specific contexts and topics. The contexts and areas in which Abū Hilāl is referenced also vary and indicate his essential role in the literary realm. Abū Hilāl is quoted as a source in the following areas and disciplines: language and lexicography, rhetoric and criticism, poetry, literature, proverbs and wisdom, historiography, culture, and the verification of well-known figures' names and nicknames (*dabṭ al-'asmā' wa al-kunā*). This means that Abū Hilāl was a distinguished and reliable scholar in these fields and could provide the scholastic medium with sufficient and reliable material that served as an essential source for scholars to employ in their research.

On the other hand, in his book *al-Mathal al-Sā'ir* (1998, 2/ 293) in the *Badī'* section, device number twenty-eight: *al-'Irṣād*³², ibn al-Athīr (d. 630 AH) stated that he disagreed with Abū Hilāl who called this device *al-Tawshīḥ* (1971, 397), and emphasised that it should be called *al-'Irṣād*. However, ibn al-Athīr later excused him and clarified that scholars of this craft (*al-Badī'*) had no consensus concerning the most appropriate name for this rhetorical device. In fact, Abū Hilāl did not call this section of *al-Badī'* device *al-Tawshīḥ*; instead, he expressed it in the passive form by saying that (this kind has been named *al-Tawshīḥ*, and this naming is not suitable for this meaning. If it was named: *Tabyīn*, it would have been closer) (ibid., 397).

"سُمِّيَ هذا النوعُ التَّوْشِيحَ، وَهذِهِ التَّسْمِيَةُ غَيْرُ لَائِقَةٍ بِهَذَا الْمَعْنَى، وَلَوْ سُمِّيَ تَبْيِينًا لَكَانَ أَقْرَبَ."

It is evident that Abū Hilāl did not approve of *al-Tawshīḥ* as a term for this rhetorical device, as he preferred to call it *Tabyīn*. Accordingly, Ibn al-Athīr's terminological argument in this regard does not seem to be completely successful, particularly as his excuse for Abū Hilāl was that one kind of *al-Badī'* could be given two different names by people practising this craft (*arbāb hāthihi al-ṣinā'a*). Considering this argument from a different angle, it can be suggested that ibn al-Athīr's disagreement with Abū Hilāl indicates Abū Hilāl's high status in Arabic rhetoric, as ibn al-Athīr could have presented his opinion without mentioning Abū Hilāl. Nonetheless, it appears that he was aware of Abū Hilāl's prominence in this field, which prompted him to approach Abū Hilāl

³² This means to express a specific meaning at the beginning of a sentence as an indication of what is at the end of it in order for the addressee to expect the concept before it is stated.

cautiously.³³ Similarly, Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamza al-ʿAlawī (d. 749 AH), in his book: *al-Ṭirāz* (cited by Ṭabāna, 1981, 187), considered Abū Hilāl to be an advanced scholar of Arabic rhetoric (*wa kāna mutaqaḍdim-an fī ʿilm al-Balāgha ʿalā ghayrihī*).

With regard to biographies of Abū Hilāl and their scarcity, Ṭabāna stated that the inadequacy of such biographies would prevent scholars from having deep insight into his literacy and knowledge. This point could be refuted by the previous discussion of how Abū Hilāl's successors quoted him, referred to his works, resorted to his texts in various disciplines and Arabic sciences, and praised him on several occasions. It is apparent that prominent figures in Arabic language and literature began referencing Abū Hilāl shortly after his death. An example of this can be seen in *al-Tadhkira al-Ḥamdūniyya* by ibn Ḥamdūn (d. 455 AH), in which Abū Hilāl is referred to as a poetry transmitter (*rāwī*) in several parts of the book (1996, 4/ 218, 6/ 137, 164, 7/ 302). In his book *Dumyat al-Qaṣr*, al-Bākharzī (d. 467 AH) described Abū Hilāl as a poet. After mentioning some of his poetry, he stated admiringly (1930, 101):

"فانظر كيف يحدو الكلام ويسوق".

"See how he stimulates speech and directs it."

Other examples can be found in *Asrār al-Balāgha* by al-Jurjānī (1991, 286). In his discussion of similes (*al-tashbīh*), in which he presents well-written verses by ibn al-Rūmī and explains the elements of the simile in them, he then states,

"ويُحَقُّ بِهَا فِي لُطْفِ الصَّنْعَةِ قَوْلُ أَبِي هَلَالٍ الْعَسْكَرِيِّ...".

"Similar to these [verses] in terms of the delicacy of the subtlety is the saying of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī..."

This reflects the fact that, as a critic, Abū Hilāl was able to meet the high standards of some themes of poetry (*al-aghrāḍ al-shiʿriyya*) and successfully employ them in his own poetry. He recommended these standards in *al-Ṣināʿatayn* and *Diwān al-Maʿānī*. Based on the above, it can be seen that Abū Hilāl's name was much quoted in Arabic literary works in several fields, particularly in criticism, rhetoric, poetry, poetry transmission, and lexicography. Hence, identifying Abū Hilāl's or any figure's knowledge and influence cannot be accomplished by merely reading about it in their

³³ The editor of ibn al-Athīr's (1998, 2/ 293) book stated that Qudāma ibn Jaʿfar (d. 337 AH) also called this al-Badīʿ device al-Tawshīḥ. Therefore, it is unclear whether ibn al-Athīr was unaware of Qudāma's discussion or whether he was aware of it but evoked Abū Hilāl's work due to the latter's greater importance and fame in the field.

biographies, but also by tracing contexts in which they were quoted and used as key references in different discourses.

As discussed previously, references to Abū Hilāl's work began shortly after his death and continued until very recently, as can be seen in the *Tāj al-'Arūs* dictionary of the 13th AH century. This would imply that Abū Hilāl's books contained certain features that allowed them to play a key role. One of these features is that Abū Hilāl's books were produced according to the needs of his time in terms of structure - which indicates that he "was very conscious of his role as an author of books" as stated by Gruendler (2010, 1), while the unique and original content attracted scholars and substituted for other corpora containing similar topics.

Abū Hilāl's age is known as the Golden Age³⁴ because it witnessed prosperity and flourished in different aspects of life, particularly knowledge. As Montgomery (2013, 4) stated, the "Abbasid society was swamped with a proliferation of new types of knowledge..." Against this background, Abū Hilāl was able to fill essential gaps in the existing knowledge of his time via his unique and genuine themes, as can be seen in his dictionaries *Mu'jam Baqāyā al-Ashyā'*, which concerns the names of the remaining parts of different substances, and *al-Furūq fī al-Lugha*, that was discussed previously (Kanazi, 1975). Another feature is that Abū Hilāl's books are characterised by clarity, good organisation, direct discourse, and a solid structure that make them easy to access, which could be attributed to the didactic sense³⁵ that is characteristic of his style.

This leads to the observation that books and discourses pertaining to Islamic law and other disciplines in the Arabic legacy are fundamentally correlated and overlap with lexicons and books of language and literature in an integral manner. In other words, the disciplines of Arabic culture and knowledge could not be approached or perceived independently by isolating one discipline from another.³⁶ This can be

³⁴ For more about the Abbasid golden age, see Cantarino, V. (1975, 4, 125): *Arabic Poetics in the Golden Age*.

³⁵ The didactic sense that marked Abū Hilāl's style will be discussed in separate points in the coming sections.

³⁶ This emphasises the necessity of the methodology of taste which Shākir called for, which considers the integral state of the Arabic literary heritage. This methodology is discussed in the Introduction.

attributed to the language sciences that can be considered a solid foundation of all disciplines. Therefore, since Abū Hilāl is best known for his books on language and literature, and since the disciplines in Arabic heritage are connected by the Arabic language as a common and influential factor, Abū Hilāl became one of the figures who received extensive attention in different discourses in most of the Arabic heritage's disciplines, and his books were among the essential and important sources to which scholars in different disciplines would refer. These books were not merely a list of useless titles that biographers would mention, as they contain clear, accessible, practical, and beneficial content. Abū Hilāl employed a clear and organised structure for his books, and he (1971, 10- 11) criticised *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* by al-Jāhiz for being disorganised, stating that some of the information it contains could not be found without extreme effort. As discussed previously, Abū Hilāl's books are characterised by an educational approach, as evidenced by the following:

1) The educational and didactic sense that is represented in his style and expression, and the dialogue that he often opens with the reader throughout his books.

2) The educational and didactic sense in the structure and organisation of his books. This is addressed in the next section.

In his book *al-'Awā'il* (1978, 17), Abū Hilāl emphasised these two aspects as key factors that facilitate the process of memorising knowledge.

3- Didactic Discourse and Sense that Characterises Abū Hilāl's Books such as *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'Ilm*, *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, *Faḍl-u al-'Aṭā'i 'alā al-'Ushr*, and *Mā'htakama bihi al-Khulafa' ilā al-Quḍāh*:

This section discusses the didactic sense and discourse that predominate Abū Hilāl's books, and which take different forms. This might be a reflection of Abū Hilāl's personality which prompted him to act as a teacher or tutor to his readers by approaching different topics gradually and logically via a writing style that is frequently devoid of any unnecessary complications. Abū Hilāl's book *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'Ilm wa al-'Ijtihād fī Jam'ih* is a clear example of this, as Abū Hilāl shares his invaluable experience regarding knowledge seeking and the most important aspects that students must consider. Also, it "provides the didactic underpinning of his various monographs" as noticed by Gruendler (2010, 2). In the introduction to this book, the editor, Diyāb (1998, 20), stated that Abū Hilāl's style of writing is easy, clear, and not artificial. These features might be the most important in the accessibility of any book

and attract a wide range of readers; on the other hand, they do not necessarily indicate trivial, shallow, or worthless content. In this book, the order of paragraphs and topics is logical and smooth, and paragraphs' themes are usually stated clearly and are easy to understand. At the beginning of the book, Abū Hilāl says prayers (*du'ā'*) for the readers in order to encourage and attract their attention. Another feature that reflects Abū Hilāl's didactic approach is his use of the vocative particle (ibid., 48) "أَيُّهَا الْأَخُّ" (O' brother) to ensure that the reader is paying attention and to emphasise that the discourse requires the reader's involvement and participation. Moreover, the vocative particle could be employed to ensure the continuation of dialogue in this context, which is an essential aspect of didactic discourse. The discourse in this book is supported by numerous quotations from various scholars, and Abū Hilāl relates several narrations following the standards of authentication demanded by *Ḥadīth* scholars (ibid., 48, 55).

With regard to Abū Hilāl's book *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, the didactic sense can be seen in several forms. In terms of organisation and structure, the book is divided into ten main chapters with each divided into several sections, as stated in the introduction (1971, 11). The chapters and sections include a variety of discussions related to language, rhetoric, and literary criticism. As explained previously, Abū Hilāl began his book with prayers for the reader in an attempt to build a relationship with him/her based on intimacy, which makes the reader eager to read the book. In these prayers, Abū Hilāl (ibid., 7) says:

"اعلم- علمك الله الخير، وذلك عليه، وقَيِّضَهُ لَكَ، وجعلك من أهلِهِ-..."

"Know- may God teach you goodness, guide you to it, predestine it for you and make you from the people of goodness!-...".

Another didactic feature that characterises *al-Ṣinā'atayn* is that most of the discussions are accompanied by diverse and appropriate examples from various poetic and prosaic texts. It is possible that this method of structure while composing a book indicates that the scribe was aware of the different levels and backgrounds of the readers in order to ensure that the discussions were generally understood. With regard to *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, it is largely devoted to teaching the two arts: prose and poetry, which are the two main modes of Arabic writing. Therefore, it is surprising that Abū Hilāl's personality as a teacher or tutor prevails by presenting most of his discourses to the readers in such a way as to attract their attention. It is worth noting that the discourse in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* could be seen as an example of eloquent and high-standard

style of writing in terms of clarity and linguistic virtuosity. In confirmation of this, Abū Hilāl states (1971, 15):

"وليس الغرض في هذا الكتاب سلوك مذهب المتكلمين"

"It is not the purpose of this book to follow the theologians' doctrine." This might be a reference to Qudāma ibn Ja'far and ibn Ṭabātabā, as their books on literary criticism were composed according to theologians' methodology in which logical discourses prevail; in particular, Qudāma's attempt aimed to enforce the rules of logic in poetry.

Some of the didactic features mentioned previously can be found in Abū Hilāl's book *Faḍl-u al-'Aṭā'i 'alā al-'Uṣr*, which also reflects the unique topics in his books, as mentioned above. Although the discourse in this book addresses an extremely specific topic, which is the superiority of generosity and donations despite being poor, it shares some common elements with *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'Ilm wa al-Ijtihād fī Jam'ih* in terms of the numerous high-quality literary quotations that support the book's subject, which Abū Hilāl selected thoughtfully and carefully based on his in-depth experience in this field. These quotations could also be classified as belonging to the didactic genre which reflects the essence of Abū Hilāl's teaching persona, particularly with reference to his comments or quotations in his composition. This composition reflects his use of the topic and his ability to draw parallels with other high-quality compositions; in some examples, he surpasses them (1353 AH, 49). Despite the specific nature of this book's topic, its functional role could affect the essence and productivity of individual lives because the absence of the quality of generosity and the prevalence of miserliness would prevent individuals from fulfilling their roles and deprive them of positive participation and engagement in society, particularly in those activities that would serve society's greater good. This is probably what Abū Hilāl recommended that knowledge seekers, scholars and teachers should avoid, as their mission constantly requires generosity and donations, particularly when sharing knowledge.

This is in contrast to Ghayyāḍ's (1975, 15) claims that Abū Hilāl's book *Faḍl-u al-'Aṭā'i 'alā al-'Uṣr* indicates Abū Hilāl's eagerness for money and desire to attract princes' donations. Yāqūt (1936-38, Vol: 8, 259) refuted this claim by saying that al-Abyūrdī (d. 557 AH) described Abū Hilāl selling clothes in order to avoid begging or asking people for money. Another point that could refute Ghayyāḍ's claim is that, in his book, Abū Hilāl (1353 AH, 42, 49, 50) emphasised that scarcity and plenitude of donation are not considered when identifying generosity, stating (ibid., 27):

"إِنَّ إِعْطَاءَ الْقَلِيلِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَنْعِ".

"Indeed, giving a little is better than nothing."

This notion prevails in his book and is supported by many examples. He states that rich people who donate large amounts of their money do not gain the same reputation as do poor people who donate once they could (ibid., 65). Therefore, if Abū Hilāl's intention was to collect money from princes and rich people, he would not have traded in clothes, would have given preference to large donations over small ones, and would not have undervalued the gifts of rich people. The reason that Abū Hilāl stressed this concept could be attributed to the social condition of misunderstanding the quality of generosity at that time, to the extent that people would only donate large amounts of money; otherwise, they would give nothing, which would have a negative effect on the distribution of wealth in the society.

Overall, Abū Hilāl's didactic nature and the discourse in this book can be identified in the following two ways:

- 1) Literary quotations and narrations that he included in his book, which combine both the didactic sense and the literary quality that represent the narrow meaning of the term *Adab* - a style of writing that employs a high standard of language use, and
- 2) The ethical dimension that should constantly be observed by knowledge seekers and which represents the general meaning of *Adab* that prompts individuals to improve their personal qualities.

As far as the matter of improving the quality of the society is concerned, Abū Hilāl devoted his epistle *Mā'ḥtakama bihi al-Khulafā' ilā al-Quḍāh* (epistle in what the caliphs seek judgment from judges) (edited by Tillier, 2011) to discussing the critical role of justice in the society regardless of individuals' social status. Abū Hilāl supported the topic of this epistle with numerous anecdotes and incidents where caliphs were involved in lawsuits, yet judges' verdicts were against them.

The didactic sense can be noticed in this epistle where Abū Hilāl introduced the topic gradually and in a logical order. This means that he began with a general discussion regarding the importance of justice and preserving people rights - supported with myriads of evidence from the Qur'ān, the Prophet's tradition, wise sayings, proverbs, and poetry. Then he moved to the main topic of the epistle and again concluded it with a discussion regarding justice in general. It can also be noticed that Abū Hilāl followed the standards of authentication required by *Ḥadīth* scholars

when relating narrations to the main sources, however, to a lesser extent than he did in his book *al-Ḥathth ‘alā Ṭalab al-‘Ilm*.

As a result, the didactic sense and discourse that characterise Abū Hilāl’s books could be presented as a reason for the popularity of his books and could be why his successors referred to them in different literary and linguistic discussions even though other books by his contemporaries or predecessors had addressed similar topics of discourse. The features discussed previously also apply to Abū Hilāl’s other books, such as *al-Talkhīṣ fī Ma‘rifat Asmā’ al-Ashyā’* and to his commentary on *Dīwān Abī Meḥjan*, in which his role as a critic is evident because he evaluated and refined some verses in order to improve their rhetorical status (n.d., 5, 9). Based on this commentary, it can also be seen that, as a critic and linguist, Abū Hilāl did not confine his work to the simple explanation of difficult vocabulary, but also added his perspective and literary opinion to the commentary by evaluating different uses of rhetorical devices (ibid., 20). Kittān (2017, 6739) conducted a semantic study of Abū Hilāl’s commentary and stated that the easy style and clarity of it encouraged him to embark on his own research. In the introduction to the book *al-Talkhīṣ*, Abū Hilāl (1996, 29) stated that he intended to structure the book in such a way that both beginners and advanced readers would be able to read it, which emphasises that his didactic sense would always lead him to consider the readers’ level to ensure that they would achieve a better understanding of his books’ content. In addition to didactic discourse, another phenomenon that can be observed is the employment of sarcastic expressions throughout the literary critical discourse. The next section discusses the purpose and function of these expressions in literary critical discourse, and whether or not this is at odds with his didactic sense.

4- Sarcastic Expressions that Abū Hilāl Used in his Critiques and How he Employed Them:

In *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, Abū Hilāl presents excerpts of poetry and prose by different poets as examples of different rhetorical issues and discussions, followed by his literary judgment of these examples based on his opinion of the topic being discussed. Moreover, he injects his critical discourse with some sarcastic expressions that might amuse the reader to some extent, particularly when he provides examples of poorly composed poetry or specific verses in poems. This section discusses the context of

these expressions, their purpose, function, and critical role in the discussion, and whether they contradict the didactic purpose discussed in the previous section. This is accomplished by presenting these expressions, explaining their meanings, identifying the points that Abū Hilāl intended to clarify, and discussing their functions in different contexts. This can help reconstruct Abū Hilāl's personality by analysing his writing style.

Most of these sarcastic expressions can be found in the second section of the second chapter of *al-Ṣinā'atayn* (1971, 75), which is dedicated to discussing faulty and correct meanings in poetic verses in order to be guided by the accurate meanings and to avoid the incorrect ones. Abū Hilāl (ibid., 75) states:

"فِيحْتَاجُ صَاحِبِ الْبَلَاغَةِ إِلَى إِصَابَةِ الْمَعْنَى كَحَاجَتِهِ إِلَى تَحْسِينِ اللَّفْظِ."

"A rhetorician is required to achieve accurate meaning exactly as his need to refine the wording."³⁷

Abū Hilāl justifies his presentation of verses including inaccurate meanings by drawing attention to the idea that (ibid., 76):

"وَمَنْ لَا يَعْرِفُ الْخَطَأَ كَانَ جَدِيرًا بِالْوُقُوعِ فِيهِ."

"He who is unaware of the wrong is likely to commit it."

Incorrect meanings can be found amongst both classic and modern poets and are caused by misconceptions of the topics approached by poets. In his book *Awhām Shu'arā' al-'Arab fī al-Ma'ānī* (*delusions of Arab poets in meanings*), Taymūr (1950) discusses this issue extensively in a manner not dissimilar from the present thesis. This implies that modern and classical poets were equal in the critical eye of Abū Hilāl. He did not restrict his examples to poets from a specific era and did not consider classical poets to be superior to modern ones, as *Jāhili* poets such as Umru'ulqays and al-A'shā were not excluded from this discourse. It can also be seen that Abū Hilāl used various terms and descriptions to describe incorrect meanings, such as spoiled meaning, imperfect, eccentric, disordered, contradicted, impossible, defective, deplored, and malignant. He also used examples that contain these attributes. However, it is not only verses with incorrect meanings that are presented in this section of *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, as Abū Hilāl presents other verses in which meaning is expressed

³⁷ The issue of wording and meaning in rhetoric is discussed in the chapter on Abū Hilāl's lexical intellect.

successfully in order to enable the reader to distinguish between incorrect and correct meanings.

The following lines contain verses that Abū Hilāl used as examples of incorrect meanings, accompanied by his comments in quotation marks afterwards:

١-ومن فساد المعنى قول المرقش الأصغر:
صحا قلبه عنها على أن ذكره / إذا حطرت دارت به الأرض قائما.
"وكيف صحا عنها من إذا ذكرت له دارت به الأرض".

1- Of corrupt meaning is that stated by al-Muraqqash al-Aṣghar (1971, 79):

His heart mended over her, yet [only] by the last remnants of [her] memory / when fleetingly [she is remembered], the earth would spin under him, despite him standing still.

“For how may one’s heart mend as the earth would spin from under him if his beloved were merely mentioned to him in passing(?)”

٢-قول جنادة:
من حُبها أتمنى أن يلاقيني / من نحو بلدتها ناع فيئعاها
لكي يكون فراق لا لقاء له / وتضمير النفس ياساً ثم تسلاها.
"فإذا تمنى المحب لحبيبته الموت، فما عسى أن يتمنى المُبغض لبغضته؟!"

2- In the words of Junāda (Ibid., 82):

From the love for her, I long to be met with / the bearer of news of her death delivered from her town,

So that it may be a separation after which there is no meeting / and so that the soul harbours despair and then forgets / heals over her.

“When one who loves wishes death for his beloved, what might a hateful one wish upon she whom he hates?!”

٣-ومن خطأ المعاني قول الأعشى:
وما رابها من ربيبة غير أنها / رأث لمتي شابث وشابث لِداتيا.
"وأَي ربيبة عند امرأة أعظم من الشيب؟!"

3- Erroneous is the meaning of al-A‘shā’s words (Ibid., 89):

Nothing irritated her more except than / seeing my greying sideburns and the greying of my peers.

“What is more irritating for a woman than [a man’s hair] having turned grey?!”

٤-وأعجبُ منه قَوْلُهُ أيضاً (أي الأعشى):

صَدَّتْ هُرَيْرَةٌ عَنَّا مَا تُكَلِّمُنَا / جَهْلًا بِأَمِّ خُلَيْدٍ حَبِلَ مَنْ تَصِلُ

أَنَّ رَأَتْ رَجُلًا أَعْشَى أَضَرَ بِهِ / رَبِيبُ الزَّمَانِ وَدَهْرٌ خَائِلٌ خَيْلٌ.

"وأي شيء أبغض عند النساء من العشا ينبئ به الرجل؟! وأعجب ما في هذا الكلام أنه قال: حبل من تصل هذه المرأة بعدي وأنا بهذه الصفة من العشا والفقر والشيب؟ فلا ترى كلاماً أحمق من هذا".

4- More peculiar too are the words of al-A' shā (Ibid., 90):

Hurayrah turned away from me and ceased to speak to me / due to Um Khulayd (Hurayrah) not knowing who should she be in company with.

Is it because she saw in me a man with night blindness harmed / by the events of time and a deceitful and corrupt era(?)

"Women dislike nothing more than a man unable to see well in the dark. The strangest of his words are: To whom will this woman be in company with after me, since I suffer from the characteristic of night blindness, poverty and old age? Surely you will not find more foolish words than these!"

٥-ومن اضطرابِ المعنى قولُ امرئ القيس:

أَرَاهُنَّ لَا يُحِبِّينَ مَنْ قَلَّ مَالُهُ / وَلَا مَنْ رَأَيْنَ الشَّيْبَ فِيهِ وَقَوْسًا.

"وهن يبغضنه قبل التقويس، فما معنى ذكر التقويس؟ فأما بغضهن لمن قوس فجدير وليس بديع".

5- Misplaced is the meaning of Umru' u al-Qays's words (Ibid., 90):

I see those women dislike one who has less wealth / and in who they see grey hair and a bowing back.

"Women hate him even before the back becomes bowed, so what is the point of mentioning bowing? As for their loathing of one who is hunched, it is well placed and not something out of the ordinary."

٦-ومن المحال الذي لا وَجْهَ له قولُ عبدالرحمن القس:

إِنِّي إِذَا الْمَوْتُ حَلَّ بِنَفْسِهَا / يُزَالُ بِنَفْسِي قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ فَأَقْبِرُ.

"وهذا شبيهة بقول قائل لو قال: إذا دخل زيد الدار دخلت قبله. وهذا عين المحال الذي لا يجوز كونه".

6- From impossible [meaning] which have no sense is the saying of Abdulrahman al-Qass says (Ibid., 102):

If death would seep into her soul / my soul would vanish before that and I would buried.

“This is similar to the saying of someone if he says: “If Zaid entered the house, I would enter before him”. This is at the essence of impossibility of whose occurrence is inconceivable.”

٧-وقول أبي العيال:

دَكَرْتُ أَخِي فَعَاوَدَنِي / صُدَاعُ الرَّأْسِ وَالْوَصَبُ.

"فَذَكَرُ الرَّأْسِ مَعَ الصُّدَاعِ فَضُلٌّ، لِأَنَّ الصُّدَاعَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي الرَّجْلِ وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهَا مِنَ الْأَعْضَاءِ. وَفِيهِ وَجْهٌ آخَرُ مِنَ الْعَيْبِ، وَهُوَ أَنَّ الدَّاكِرَ لِمَا قَدْ فَاتَ مِنْ مَحْبُوبٍ يوصَفُ بِأَلَمِ القَلْبِ وَاحْتِرَاقِهِ لَا بِالصُّدَاعِ".

7- And as Abū al-‘Iyyāl says (Ibid., 113):

I remembered my brother and it returned to me / the headache, in the head, and all over pain and illness.

“It is superfluous to mention ‘the head’ in relation to a headache, for one cannot suffer a headache in the leg or in any other part of the body. There is also another defect, which is that in remembering a beloved one, the pain that manifests itself would be in the heart, causing a burning sensation, and not a headache.”

٨-وكقول علقمة:

يَحْمِلُنَ أُتْرَجَةً نَضَحَ الْعَبِيرِ بِهَا / كَأَنَّ تَطْيَابَهَا فِي الْأَنْفِ مَشْمُومٌ.

"والتطياب هاهنا في غاية السّماجة، والطيب أيضاً مشموم لا محالة، فقوله: كأنه مشموم هُجْنَةٌ، وقوله: في الأنف أهجن؛ لأنّ الشّم لا يكون بالعين".

8- And as ‘Alqama says (Ibid., 115):

The women carry citron stems of overbearing scent / as though their fine aroma is sniffed through the nose.

“The notion of aroma here is extremely bland for it is inevitable that scent is smelt. Hence ‘as though their fine aroma is sniffed’ is an incorrect use of language, and ‘through the nose’ is even more so, as one cannot sniff through the eye.”

٩-وقول جميل:

فَلَوْ تَرَكَتْ قَلْبِي مَعِي مَا طَلَبْتُهَا / وَلَكِنْ طَلَبْتُهَا لِمَا فَاتَ مِنْ عَقْلِي.

"رَعِمَ أَنَّهُ يَهْوَاهَا لِذَهَابِ عَقْلِهِ، وَلَوْ كَانَ عَاقِلًا مَا هَوَيْهَا".

9- And in the words of Jamīl (Ibid., 118):

Had she left me my heart, I would not seek her love / yet I loved her when I wasn't of sound thinking.

"He claimed to love her due to the absence of his sanity, and that had he been of sound mind, he would not have loved her."

١٠- وقال أبو تَمَّام:

هِنَّ الْحَمَامُ فَإِنْ كَسَرْتَ عِيَاةً / مِنْ حَائِهِنَّ فَإِنَّهُنَّ جَمَامٌ.

"فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَجْهَلُ أَنَّ الْحَمَامَ إِذَا كُسِرَتْ حَاوُّهَا صَارَتْ جَمَامًا!"

10- And Abū Tammām says (Ibid., 124):

They are the doves, *al-ḥamām*, but when the first letter is altered slightly to *ḥimām* / the word comes to mean 'death'.

"Who could be so ignorant as to not see that in changing the pronunciation of the word 'dove', *al-ḥamām*, renders it to mean 'death', *al-ḥimām*?!"

Several observations can be made regarding these literary critical and sarcastic comments by Abū Hilāl in *al-Ṣinā' atayn*. It seems that Abū Hilāl aimed to create new critical methods that would have an evaluative function in the process of critiquing different poetic verses. Abū Hilāl would detect certain phenomena in the poetic verses that included confusion in their semantic structure, which could be due to poets' failure to deliver the meaning. He would then attempt to draw attention to the points of inaccuracy via sarcastic comments. Some of these comments resemble proverbs or wise phrases in terms of structure and content, as can be seen in examples 1, 2, and 3, above, which allows them to be applied in various similar contexts. In other words, these phrases are presented using a general formula, or expression, in order to extend their use to similar situations.

As mentioned previously, by studying the list of poets whose verses Abū Hilāl used as examples of incorrect meanings, it appears that he did not consider the period of the poets or their renown as masters of poetry, which is similar to ibn Qutayba's (1982, 62) criteria in the introduction to his book *al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'arā'*, in which he stated that he did not exalt a poet simply because he was classical, nor did he underestimate others simply because they were modern; he evaluated them equally. Abū Hilāl's criteria were the accuracy and clarity of meaning; thus, he would not accept ambiguous, defective, or even illogical meanings or wordings as in examples 6 and 7, above, when he says that "The eye has no sense of smell" and "headache does not

happen in the leg". In these two examples, Abū Hilāl indicated his preference for realism by expressing his criticism in the form of axioms to justify his dislike of the verses that he considered to exceed the bounds of probability.

As discussed previously, Abū Hilāl employed certain kinds of expressions in order to attract readers' or learners' attention by giving his blessing or by approaching different issues and discussions gradually and logically in considering the differing levels of learners. However, in the sarcastic examples presented here, Abū Hilāl deviated from his didactic discourse to a sarcastic one as an indication of his absolute dislike of such artistic defects in poetic verses, as well as to advise *Adab* seekers that these defects or wrong meanings were unacceptable in the literary craft because they undermine the value of literary works. This sarcastic style could achieve further critical purposes as it could serve as an alternative to the usual form of criticism that might not be as effective in this context as would sarcasm. Therefore, Abū Hilāl employed this discourse as a device to avoid the monotonous tone of literary criticism. Abū Hilāl's precise observations in his sarcastic and conventional criticisms indicate his sensitivity to wording and meaning, as well as the elaborate use of these two aspects.³⁸ This reflected the cultural dimension of his personality which involved observing the accurate and precise wording for each object and meaning, and would explain his lexical interests that provided accurate knowledge of the names of things. Abū Hilāl reveals this interest in his book *al-Talkhīṣ fī Ma'rifat Asmā' al-Ashyā'* (*the abridgment of knowing the names of things*) in which he aimed to equip *Adab* learners with the necessary knowledge of knowing the names of things that most of them lack, as he stated in the introduction of this book (1996, 29). Abū Hilāl emphasised that it was essential for *Adab* learners to acquire cultural knowledge that would improve their writing and prevent them from producing defective compositions.

Previously, it was mentioned that Abū Hilāl employed various expressions and descriptions of meanings and defective compositions, such as corrupted, incorrect, and disordered meaning. In this discussion, two essential terms are considered,

³⁸ This also implies that sarcasm and humour can have didactic value. This would support the discussion in the previous point regarding Abū Hilāl's didactic sense. Therefore, it can also be said that ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 597 AH) humorous book: *Akhhbār al-Ḥamqā wa al-Mughaffalīn* is partly meant to teach readers how not to act like stupid people. Ibn al-Jawzī employed humour to achieve this didactic aim.

namely: meaning and accuracy. In his book *al-Ma'nā*, Key (2018, 16) studied these two concepts in depth, particularly with regard to Eleventh AH century literature in the disciplines of logic, lexicography, theology, and literary criticism. Key translated the Arabic word 'ma'nā' as 'mental content', while he used the English word 'accuracy' as an equivalent to the Arabic word 'Ḥaqīqa'. Both terms play a vital role in rhetoric and literary criticism as they are genuine constructs that contribute to shaping discourse and how readers perceive it. However, the concepts of truth and falsity (*al-ṣidq wa al-kathib*) have been approached intensively by rhetoricians in the context of allegory. Ḥazim al-Qarṭājinnī (d. 684 AH) (1981, 63) stated that these two concepts could be found in poetry; however, they do not determine whether a certain speech is poetic or not, as it is imagination (*al-takhyīl*) that constitutes poetry. It is worth noting that Key's translation of *ma'nā* is similar to al-Qarṭājinnī's definition of the same word when he stated that (*ibid.*, 10):

"المعاني إنما تتحصّل في الأذهان عن الأمور الموجودة في الأعيان".

"Meanings verily arise in the mind regarding existing objects."

Al-Qarṭājinnī also used 'mental images' instead of 'mental content' as a description of what constitutes meaning (*ma'nā*); therefore, meanings for him are images that are processed in the mind regarding objects that are observed in the real world.

However, in his sarcastic comments, Abū Hilāl does not pass judgment on meanings in terms of truth and falsehood; instead, he examines certain deviations or confusion in meanings that decrease artistry of the given verses, thus decreasing their poetic value and ruining their artistic condition.

To clarify this, in the first example, Abū Hilāl described the meaning as being corrupted (*fāsid*) because the poet stated that he experienced two conditions which cannot be combined, which leads to a contradictory statement. The poet admitted that his heart had been released from being attached to his beloved woman; however, he would become dizzy whenever he remembered her. This caused Abū Hilāl to question the possibility of combining these two contradictory feelings, which he thought corrupted the meaning. Therefore, it could be deduced that corrupted meanings are those that are rejected on the grounds of logic, which could be considered strong evidence to support a critic's literary verdict. In terms of wording and prosody, the verse seems perfect, artistic, and highly poetic, but the elements of sense and logic are absent. One might question the possibility of considering a particular speech to be poetry when the essential element of meaning (*ma'nā*) is absent. Answering this

involves saying that poetry has two major aspects or constituent elements: one that considers aspects of craft (*jānib al-San'a*) - which includes prosody, wording, rhyme and rhythm; while the other relates to aspects of meaning and involves observing the accuracy of wording in the representation of meanings and preventing ambiguity and illogical discourses. In this regard, the example that Abū Hilāl presented could be considered poetic, yet a failure in terms of delivering logical meaning.

In example 3, Abū Hilāl confirmed that the meaning of the verse was incorrect (*min khaṭa' al-ma'ānī*). The poet used the words *rāba*, and *rība*, which are verbs and noun verbs, respectively. According to *Lisān al-'Arab* dictionary, the root of the words is ra ya ba, and the derivations are *rāba*, *yarību* and *rayb-an wa rībat-an*. Thus, the words have several meanings, but in the context of the verse, the meaning could be *al-Karāha* (hatred), *al-inzi'āj* (being annoyed or uncomfortable) or *al-istiyā'* (displeasure and hostility). The poet says that nothing annoyed or caused hatred to his beloved other than seeing his grey hair. As can be seen, in terms of grammar, the poet employed an expression called *al-nafy wa al-istithnā'* (negation and exception), which consists of two fundamental particles of negation (*mā*) and restriction (*ghayr*) (Abdul-Raof, 2006, 168). Conversely, this expression can be called *al-Qaṣr* (restriction), the pragmatic function of which is *al-tawkīd* (affirmation). Abū Hilāl's objection is based on the consideration that what could be more annoying for a woman than a man having grey hair.³⁹ The expected meaning according to the grammatical structure that the poet employed in the first part of the verse indicates that there is only one thing that annoyed this woman; according to Abū Hilāl, having grey hair would be excluded because being annoyed by age and grey hair is common for women. Abū Hilāl seems to be disappointed when, in the second part of the verse, the poet says that having grey hair annoyed the woman. For this reason, Abū Hilāl found the meaning of the verse incorrect because the poet employed a type of grammatical structure that was not completely successful in delivering the meaning, which could have been expressed using more appropriate syntax. Therefore, as discussed previously, the craft, or the artistic aspect, and the grammatical structure of the verse are absolutely correct; however, the grammatical structure failed to accurately deliver the meaning, which caused the meaning to be wrong.

³⁹ Time and cultural differences should be considered in this context.

The last example that is discussed is example 5 where Abū Hilāl described its meaning as disordered or confusing (*muḍṭarib*). This example is similar to example 3, in the hatred that is attributed to the grey-haired man. The poet says that women do not love a man whose wealth has decreased nor one whose hair is grey and whose back is bowed (*qawwas*) due to age. Abū Hilāl criticised the poet for mentioning the feature of a bowed back after mentioning the grey hair and finds no reason to mention it. He argued that “they hated him before his back was bowed, therefore, what is the point of mentioning it?!”

"وَهُنَّ يُبَغِّضُنَّهُ قَبْلَ التَّقْوِيْسِ، فَمَا مَعْنَى ذِكْرِ التَّقْوِيْسِ؟!"

This is because grey hair usually precedes a bowed back; since women hate grey hair, it would be obvious that they also hate bowed backs. For Abū Hilāl, this could be a possible reason for the confusion that occurred in the verse, as it seems that the inclusion of this word at the end of the verse implies that it conveys additional meaning, whereas it is redundant and meaningless in this context and causes confusion.

The previous sarcastic comments and objections by Abū Hilāl could reveal several sides regarding his personality and personal life.⁴⁰ It seems that Abū Hilāl suffered in his relationship with women. This can be deduced because, in his collected poetry (see Chapter Five), love poetry is scarce. Also, there is no mention of his social life such as marriage or other relationships with women in his available biographies. Finally, in the previous examples of his sarcastic comments, it can be noted that in seven examples out of ten, the sarcastic comments are made on love poetry in which poets mentioned some personal negative traits of women and how they might treat their beloved. In his comments, Abū Hilāl emphasises the negative traits of women or exaggerates them which might give a hint to his unsettled emotional life. However, even though these observations regarding Abū Hilāl’s personality are deduced from his texts, they do not necessarily reflect his personality.

Based on the previous discussion, it is evident that there is a fundamental relationship between meaning and syntax (word order) when constructing clear and coherent discourse. In other words, the accuracy of the grammar that is used to express a certain meaning makes an essential contribution to the accuracy of the meaning. The fundamental correlation between syntax and meaning has been noted

⁴⁰ More regarding Abū Hilāl’s personality and personal life is discussed in Chapter Five of the present thesis where Abū Hilāl’s poetry is studied.

since the early stages of Arabic literary production when the word: meanings '*al-ma'ānī*' was used to mean grammar analysis (*al-i'rāb*), as can be seen in two books in this genre, namely *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by al-Farrā' (d. 207 AH) and another with the same title by al-Zajjāj (d. 311 AH). The aspects of meaning and syntax are studied intensively in the following two chapters; Chapter Three will investigate Abū Hilāl's lexicography and his theory of meaning, while Chapter Four will examine the use of syntax and morphology in literary criticism and lexicography in Abū Hilāl's books.

5- Conclusion:

The previous discussion used a critical approach in an attempt to gain deep insight into a prominent figure in the 4th/11th century who contributed to the field of epistemology via major works; this figure being Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī.⁴¹

As discussed, knowledge of the author is important in order to understand her/his works, and since Abū Hilāl's biography is inadequate in terms of providing sufficient insight into his character, it is suggested that considerable knowledge regarding Abū Hilāl's personality and literacy could be acquired by detecting his influence on his successors and observing the extent of references to his works in his successors' books in different areas of knowledge. Abū Hilāl's books are among the main resources for linguistics, literature and rhetoric, lexicography, and history and

⁴¹ Therefore, the theory of 'the death of the author' by Barthes was discussed in the introduction of the present thesis since it suggests that the study of any literary work should be conducted by distancing its creator, which means that the biography of the author is not a clue to the "true meaning" of a text. However, this view was challenged since the concept of the author is an essential constituent and is reason for the existence of the work that cannot be banished. This is because language is a sensitive element that could be influenced by authorial, cultural, social, psychological and environmental factors, which makes adequate knowledge of the author necessary in order to analyse the text. It can also be said that one can use the style of language to reconstruct the author's personality. In this context, a comparison was presented between Barthes' theory and Shākir's methodology of taste whereby Shākir attempted to propose a method of how to treat a text without detecting its influence on the recipient. Shākir emphasised that knowing the author and her/his time and place contributed significantly to the understanding of a text; thus, he studied the language of the text beginning with the semantic and morphological elements, and progressed to the syntax structure and style in an attempt to obtain the clearest understanding of the author's purpose in the text.

culture; a matter which reflects the encyclopaedic knowledge that Abū Hilāl possessed and the major role that his books played in the scholastic realm. The predominance of Abū Hilāl's name in his successors' books is attributed to the fact that his books fulfilled the literary needs of his time and beyond, even though different types of knowledge flourished during his lifetime. However, Abū Hilāl identified a gap that he filled with indispensable opuses. The noticeable attention paid to Abū Hilāl's heritage is also attributed to his clear structure and style, which is devoid of complications and ambiguity, upon which he based his books, and which enabled a wide range of readers to gain access to them. Moreover, his books are characterised by a didactic sense that is reflected in the structure and language thereof, as borne out by several examples including *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, *al-Ḥathth 'alā Ṭalab al-'ilm*, *Faḍl-u al-'Aṭā' 'alā al-'Uṣr*, and *Mā'ḥtakama bihi al-Khulafā' ilā al-Quḍah*.

An observation that seems to contradict Abū Hilāl's didactic sense is the sarcastic criticism that he employed in his analyses, as can be seen in the examples above. It was noted that Abū Hilāl employed sarcasm when he considered the meaning of a given verse of poetry to be corrupted, wrong, or disordered. A close reading of the verses that Abū Hilāl presented revealed that the meaning was considered to be corrupted when it could not be mentally conceptualised. On the other hand, the meaning was described as being wrong when the poet employed a syntactical structure that did not accurately reflect the meaning, which led to a different meaning being expressed. Finally, disordered meaning was considered to occur when a poet added a lexical item that seemed to add new meaning to the verse, thus creating confusion due to the mismatch with other lexical items. Therefore, due to the strong relationship between meaning and syntax, each aspect will be discussed in the next two chapters - with Chapter Three dedicated to a discussion of Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset and his theory of meaning. Finally, Chapter Four discusses the use of morphology and syntax in literary criticism in Abū Hilāl's books.

Chapter Three

Lexical and Cultural Mentalities of Abū Hilāl and their Connection with his Theory of Meaning and Wording⁴²

This chapter presents and analyses features of Abū Hilāl's lexical intellect as evidenced throughout his dictionaries, as well as the role of his intellect in formulating his theory of wording and meaning, as he placed great importance on the former. The reason for this could be that, in the process of compiling material for his dictionaries, he acquired in-depth knowledge about the diverse meanings that each word could convey despite the fact that some lexical items might be considered synonyms. This is addressed via several points:

- 1- The concept of the word (*al-kalima*) in Arabic linguistics and how the four main branches of linguistics, namely phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics approach this concept.
- 2- A comparison between the importance and value of the word for Abū Hilāl and Shākir.
- 3- The development of a new perspective on Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning.
- 4- An overview of Abū Hilāl's dictionaries, including *Mu'jam Baqiyyat al-Ashyā'*, *al-Talkhīṣ fī al-Lughā*, *al-Frūq fī al-Lughā*, and *Jamharat al-Amthāl*.
- 5- An overview of Abū Hilāl's encyclopaedia *Jamharat al-Amthāl*.
- 6- Conclusion.

⁴² In this chapter, the words 'wording', 'meaning', 'lexical item', and 'vocal form' are used to represent the Arabic words *lafẓ* and *ma'nā* (see Van Gelder (2012)). These two Arabic words seem to be problematic when translated into English, especially for anglophones, as stated by Key (2018). To deal with this problematic issue, please refer to Key's: *Language Between God and the Poets*, and Van Gelder's: *Sound and Sense in Classical Arabic Poetry*.

1- Concept of the Word (al-kalima) in Arabic Linguistics and how the Four Main Branches of Linguistics, namely Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics, Approach this Concept.

The aim of this section is to paint a picture of the context in which Abū Hilāl was working in order to achieve a better understanding of his lexical works and how they reflect his view on the concept of *al-kalima* in light of the literary issue of wording and meaning. This concept will be referenced again at various points throughout the rest of the argument.

The realm of Arabic lexicography (*al-ma‘ājim al-‘arabiyya*) has played a significant role in Arabic heritage since the early ages of Arabic literary production. Arab scholars from al-Khalīl (d. 175 AH) to al-Zabīdī (d. 1205 AH) gave this field very special attention. This is to say that Arab lexicographers invented solid methods that served different types of dictionaries which, in general, aimed to explain Arabic lexical items and their usage with examples, as well as mapped the connections between words and their meanings (Key, 2018, 87). Thus, dictionaries in Arabic are titled as *ma‘ājim*: plural, *mu‘jam*: singular, in the passive participle form that is derived from the verb *a‘jama* (quadrilateral verb, or trilateral verb with additional hamza), and the infinitive noun is *ujma*, which means ‘ambiguity’ or ‘obscurity’. One of the morphological meanings of the form *af‘ala*, like in *a‘jama*, is to remove (Naṣṣār, 1988, 9; al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 311). Therefore, the verb *a‘jama*, in this context, would mean: to remove ambiguity. *Mu‘jam* would be a book of words’ explanations or, literally, a book in which the ambiguity is removed from the words it contains through two levels:

- 1) Showing the pronunciation and diacritical marks that a word requires as well as other necessary orthographic features.
- 2) Providing etymological and philological discussions of a word and explaining its meanings.

Modern scholars such as Key (2018), Abū al-Faraj (1966), Abū Sakīn (1981), Ya‘qūb (1985), Naṣṣār (1988), and al-Hābiṭ (1992) studied different aspects of Arabic lexicons such as the history of Arabic lexicography as well as the development, schools, content, arrangement, and methods of compiling lexicons. However, it seems that there are no studies of Abū Hilāl’s dictionaries or lexicographical mindset except for some slight references which editors of his dictionaries included in their introductions. Nonetheless, Baalbaki (2014) in his book *The Arabic Lexicographical*

Tradition briefly described the content and arrangement of Abū Hilāl's lexicons in several occasions.

Generally, Arabic lexicons reflect both the philological and the cultural sides of Arabic heritage. In addition, they could be supplied as a source indicating the sensitive role of the concept of the word (*al-kalima*) among different disciplines. However, it can be argued that most Arabic sciences revolve around *al-kalima* as a genetic component of meaning and therefore of discourse (Ullmann, 1975, 45). Phonetically, *al-kalima* is a vocal form (*lafẓ*) that combines several sounds or letters (Hilāl, 1996, 7). These sounds (*aṣwāt al-ḥurūf*) are comprehensively studied by ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH) in his book *Sirr Ṣinā'at al-l'rab*. In Arabic morphology and syntax, *al-kalima* (*al-kalim* as a plural form) is a generic noun that is defined by its constituent components (Sībawayh, 1982, Vol. 1: 12). Therefore, *al-kalima* is either a noun, verb, or particle. However, Arabic morphology deals only with declinable nouns (*al-asmā' al-mutaṣarrifa*) and fully inflected⁴³ or derivative verbs (*al-af'āl al-mushtaqqā*),⁴⁴ as explained by al-Khaṭīb (2003, 40). As for Arabic grammar, word order (*mawḍi'*⁴⁵ *al-kalima*) in discourse dominates most discussions. In other words, a word's semantic function varies considerably according to its placement in the order of the discourse. Therefore, to achieve its appropriate semantic function, the word should be elaborately situated therein. This can explain the term *i'rāb* (grammatical/functional analysis, or grammaticalisation) which means in this case not only adding final vowels to the word (adding inflection) but also identifying and describing both the order and the grammatical function of a word in a sentence. Additionally, Arabic rhetoric discusses the eloquence of lexical items, namely, what is required for a lexical item to be eloquent. As in Abdul-Raof (2006, 78), an eloquent word should be free from four major defects: Phonetic incongruity, violation of the morphological system, stylistic

⁴³ The grammatical terms are taken from Cachia's (1973) dictionary: *The Monitor*.

⁴⁴ *Al-'af'āl al-mushtaqqā* are the Arabic verbs that accept the three tenses: past, present, and imperative.

⁴⁵ The literal meaning of *mawḍi'* is 'place'. Sībawayh uses different terms such as *mawḍi'* and *mawḍi'*, as discussed by Carter (2004, 76-77). *Mawḍi'* refers to the place where words occur in a sentence regardless of their meaning or function; in other words, *mawḍi'* is concerned with how words are distributed in a speech, while *mawḍi'* is concerned with the linguistic function of a specific word in speech.

oddity, and repugnant sounds. Therefore, a lexical item should have easy pronunciation, clear semantics, and a consideration of morphological and grammatical systems to be considered eloquent. It is evident that Arabic rhetoric is concerned with the pragmatic function of the word since it considers elements of the four branches of Arabic sciences in combination: phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

In light of the discussion above, the word in other branches of Arabic sciences - such as poetry, prose, oration, and prosody - plays an essential role as well. Moreover, the discourse in these fields revolves around the word and how to employ an accurate word in an accurate discourse in order to produce successful and effective semantics. This can also be acquired from *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* (science of word order) which is one of the branches of Arabic rhetoric. It is worth signifying that *al-kalima* in certain contexts could mean speech or discourse, like when someone says:

-ألقى الخطيبُ كلمةً مؤثِّرةً.

(The orator presented an influential speech).

The literal meaning of *كلمة* is ‘word’, while in this context it means ‘speech’, and examples such as this can regularly be found in Arabic texts. Also, the plural form of *al-kalima* which is *al-kalām* could mean something more than a speech. In certain contexts, it could mean dialectical debate, conversation, or discussion. The pre-Islamic poet al-Muhalhil said in his dirge of his brother Kulaib:

تُبْنْتُ أَنْ النَّارَ بَعْدَكَ أَوْ قَدْتُ / وَاسْتَنْبَ بَعْدَكَ يَا كَلَيْبُ الْمَجْلِسُ
وَتَكَلَّمُوا فِي أَمْرِ كُلِّ عَظِيمَةٍ / لَوْ كُنْتُ حَاضِرًا أَمْرَهُمْ لَمْ يَنْبَسُوا

I was told that the stoves were lit after your death
That the tribes began to degrade one another
And they deliberated on the highest matters
Had you been here, they would not have uttered a word

It is evident from the second verse that the poet used the word (*takallam-ū*) which literally means: they spoke. However, the context shows that this action is deeper than mere speech as it is regarding a great matter (*fī ‘amr-i kulli ‘azīmat-in*). Additionally, the word “majlis” in the verses, which means the place where people assemble and discuss different matters, would emphasise that the verb *takallam-ū* does not mean merely speaking. Therefore, the context and language usage here indicate that the verb means that they discussed great topics at their assembly that they could not have discussed during the time of Kulaib’s life. This meaning of *al-kalām* is evoked here as

it seems that Key (2018, 111) considered only the direct meaning of this word when he discussed that the literal meaning of the Islamic theology (*ʿIlm al-Kalām*) is the science of speech, while “*ʿIlm al-kalām* did not contain, after all, any of the components we may expect a “science of speech” to contain in English”. Key’s explanation of this is that *ʿIlm al-Kalām* “was a discipline in which humans tried to talk accurately about both God and the world”. The confusion might have occurred because Key assumed that *al-kalām* means only a speech, while if its meaning as a discussion is considered here, key’s understanding of the name of this Islamic science would come to be more accurate. Accordingly, the literal meaning of Islamic theology would be the science or discipline of discussion, argumentation, and logical or dialectical debate.⁴⁶

Regarding Arabic lexicons, it can be noted that scholars who have compiled them considered different aspects on different levels regarding *al-kalima*. Therefore, in general, Arabic lexicons can be divided into several categories according to the content each provides. Lexicons such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* and *Tāj al-ʿArūs* are integral dictionaries that are concerned with the different meanings and common or rare usages of the word in different contexts. Ibn Fāris’s dictionary, *Maqāyīs al-Lughā*, presents an etymological discussion of the lexical item and the mutual meanings of various lexical items’ roots. As for al-Zamakhsharī’s (d. 538 AH) dictionary, *Asās al-Balāgha*, it contributes to the lexicographical field with a new perspective by presenting the metaphorical meanings and usages of the lexical item which can offer insight into the various connotations of the word (al-Sāmurrāʿī, 2016, 159).

Moreover, another specific category of the Arabic dictionary can be called *maʿājim gharīb al-lughā* (dictionaries concerning odd words). These include *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* by Abū ʿUbayda (d. 224 AH), *al-Fāʾiq fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* by al-Zamakhsharī, and *Gharīb al-Qurʾān* by ibn Qutayba (d. 276 AH). Although these books narrowed the scale of their discussion to odd words found in the Qurʾān and prophetic oration, they provided rich material regarding odd words (*gharīb al-lughā*). In this respect, the term *al-gharīb* (the odd) differs in terms of meaning and usage among linguists and rhetoricians (al-Ṭanāḥī, 2013, 283, 650). On the one hand, for rhetoricians, an odd lexical item is one that is phonetically incongruent and semantically ambiguous. On

⁴⁶ This is a linguistic discussion regarding the name of this discipline, and yet scholars of this discipline have their own specialised justifications for the reason behind this naming.

the other hand, an odd lexical item for linguists is one that is rarely used and its meaning cannot be inferred at first glance. This kind of lexical item is probably used only by eloquent people who have a high level of language mastery. For this reason, these kinds of dictionaries gain their importance as they help *Adab* and language seekers to attain a form of knowledge that can show their eloquence and high status in their field.

As for the cultural side of Arabic lexicons, they have preserved innumerable words that represent Arabic multi-cultural features of different periods of Arabic legacy. This includes the specific terms for each part of the human body; biological terms for animate parts and inanimate things such as horses, carnivores, birds, and plants; and other names for different objects and tools that have been used in different ages. Scholars of these kinds of lexicons, such as al-ʿAṣmaʿī, ibn al-Sikkīt, Abū ʿIshāq al-Zajjāj, and Thābit ibn abī Thābit, compiled rich materials in their lexicons which supplied valuable resources to other dictionaries that came later (al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d., 19). Although larger dictionaries such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* and *Tāj al-ʿArūs* comprised material sourced from most of these relatively small dictionaries, they could not replace these smaller dictionaries that are subsumed under specific categories. In addition, some roots can only be found in these small dictionaries, allowing these dictionaries to preserve their value and importance in the field of lexicography.

Later in this chapter, there is a presentation of Abū Hilāl's dictionaries together with a discussion regarding both cultural content and lexical items' roots. A point should be made here that what is meant by the discussion is *al-kalima* as it is a vocal form that has one or more meanings. Therefore, the discussion here is not about the critical literary debate of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-maʿnā*) – the latter is discussed later in this chapter. Moreover, *maʿnā* in the literary criticism debate is mental content or what is generated out of a group of words combined in a certain system and semantic structure, as expressed by Key (2018).

As far as semantics is concerned, scholars of this field consider different aspects of the concept of *al-kalima*. One of these aspects is the spontaneous and intended semantic development and transformation of the word (abd al-Tawwāb, 1997, 189; Ullmann, 1975, 45). The spontaneous development of the word involves the normal alternative meanings that a lexical item incurs, like the semantic transformation which the term *Adab* underwent as discussed in the Appendix, while intended semantic development can be seen in the science of word coinage (*ʿilm al-waḍʿ*) where scholars

of a specific field of knowledge intentionally develop terms regarding certain aspects of the given field.

In this context, there is a differentiation between semantic development and the real or allegorical usage of the word. In this regard, it seems that Kittan (2017) did not consider the differences between these linguistic usages of the word. In his semantic study of Abū Hilāl's commentary on Abū Meḥjan's *Dīwān*, Kittan quoted Abū Hilāl regarding semantic development in the noun-verb "ḥaraj". Abū Hilāl stated that *al-ḥaraj* means 'adversity' ..., and the thing is '*ḥarij*' when it becomes tight, and it is derived from *al-ḥarajah* which means 'intensively twisted plants' (2017, 6803):

(وَأَصْلُ الْحَرَجِ: الضِّيقُ ...، وَهُوَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا ضَاقَ، وَأَصْلُهُ مِنَ الْحَرَجَةِ وَهِيَ الشَّجَرُ الْمُنْتَفِ).

In Islamic tradition, this word is used to refer to 'sin'. However, this is probably an alternation between the real and allegorical usages of this word (*al-isti'māl al-ḥaqīqī wa al-majāzī*). This is because this word is used to reflect these meanings equally: Twisted plants (the real meaning), tightness, and sin (the allegorical meanings). In other words, if the word can still be used to reflect various meanings, and these meanings are derived from one origin, this cannot be called a semantic development. Rather, it shows the diverse usages of a word and these usages are connected in a relationship of resemblance. This means that the original meaning of *ḥaraj* is 'twisted plants', then the image of twisted plants is borrowed to mean tightness, adversity, and sin as the point of resemblance among these meanings is difficulty, complexity, and lack of clarity. This is what rhetoricians mean when they say a metaphor is an allegory consisting of a resemblance relationship (Ṭabāna, 1981, 202):

(الاستِعَارَةُ مَجَازٌ عِلَاقَتُهُ الْمُشَابَهَةُ).

Al-Jāḥiẓ defined allegory (*al-'isti'āra*) as naming something after something else if it could replace it⁴⁷ (al-Jāḥiẓ, 1968, 1: 153):

(تَسْمِيَةُ الشَّيْءِ بِاسْمِ غَيْرِهِ إِذَا قَامَ مَقَامَهُ).

In this regard, it can be said that language in this context acts as a supplier from which specialists of different disciplines borrow terms that are compatible with their specialised meaning. However, "the vocal form in question remains shared between two mental contents" as expressed by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī and translated by Key (2018, 107).

⁴⁷ To go beyond the original placement (*aṣl al-waḍ'*) of a vocal form, according to Key (2018, 103).

Similarly, Kittan (2017) did not differentiate between the linguistic meaning (or the lexicon meaning) (*al-ma'nā al-mu'jamī*) and the terminological meaning of a lexical item (*al-ma'nā al-iṣṭilāhī*). He considered it to be a form of semantic development as well. He considered that Abū Hilāl was referring to semantic development when he explained that *'ākif* is one that remains for a long time in his/her place, and from this *al-i'tikāf* is derived:

(عكف، وهو اللازم لمَوْضِعِهِ، ومنه الاعتكاف).

By *al-i'tikāf*, Abū Hilāl meant the Islamic term referring to the long stay used for worshipping in a mosque. In fact, the linguistic meaning and the terminological meaning of this word share the same aspects, namely remaining in a place or doing something for a long time, which probably does not allow this to be considered semantic development. Rather, the Islamic usage of this word has narrowed down the semantic meaning to refer to a specific kind of worship. Thus, one can use this word to reflect either one of these meanings, and the context would determine which is the intended meaning, for example:

(عَكَفَ الطَّالِبُ عَلَى دِرَاسَتِهِ)

(The student studied for a long time).

(اعتكف الطالب في المسجد)

(The student stayed in the mosque for a long time).

The first sentence reflects the linguistic meaning while the second reflects the Islamic terminological meaning. Therefore, it can be shown that the Islamic term is developed from the linguistic meaning of the word *i'tikāf* but it cannot be considered as semantic development as both meanings can be employed in Arabic speech.

This is unlike the term *Adab* which has undergone several semantic transformations. In the early centuries of the Islamic period, it was used to mean 'possessing knowledge and life qualities', while in current times it is used to mean 'artistic discourse' or 'politeness'. To summarise, semantic development and transformation occurs when a word moves from one specific context to a different one that reflects a different meaning, and which may partially eliminate its original meaning. However, when a word has various meanings connected to one original meaning, these would be considered the allegorical and real usages of the word, respectively. The terminological meaning of a word is that which is developed from its linguistic meaning but neither meaning eliminates the other.

Another feature that reflects the importance of the concept of the word in Arabic studies is the dictionaries that comprise of words that convey only two opposite meanings. This phenomenon, called *al-aḍḍād*, is not antonymous in which the opposite of the word is another different word. Rather, *al-aḍḍād* (pl. of *ḍidd*) is when the same word reflects two opposite or contradictory meanings as explained in Baalbaki (2014, 188). Scholars of this type of dictionary, called a dictionary of *al-aḍḍād* (*ma'ājim al-aḍḍād*), include Quṭrub (d. 206 AH), al-Aṣma'ī (d. 216 AH), and al-Anbārī⁴⁸ (d. 328 AH), and this “early interest in *al-aḍḍād* is certainly related to Qur'ānic exegesis” as asserted by Baalbaki (2014, 190). However, in the current time, certain words show biased usage towards one of their opposite meanings, a phenomenon that could be referred to as ‘semantic bias’ (*al-taḥayyuz al-dalāil*). An example of this is the word *ṭarab* which means either ‘happiness’ (*al-faraḥ*) or ‘sadness’ (*al-ḥuzn*), as in *Lisān al-‘Arab ṭrb*, but presently is only used to mean ‘happiness’ or ‘the rapture of music’ while its other meanings are hardly recognised.⁴⁹

It has been assumed that lexicons contain two constituent elements, namely words and their meanings, and the main function of lexicons is to investigate the original connection between these two elements (Key, 2018, 88; Abū al-Faraj, 1966, 9). However, this is probably too simplistic a way to describe the content of lexicons. In truth, lexicons provide words that already represent their meanings, and lexicographers’ task is to provide an explanation of meanings that are represented by specific words. An example of this could be the word *al-ṣabr* (patience). This word represents a meaning or a concept, or it can be said that this meaning or concept is represented by this word. A lexicon such as *Lisān al-‘Arab* explains this meaning as:

"الصبر ضد الجزع... هو حبس النفس عند الجزع".

(Patience is the opposite of apprehension... it is holding one’s self when there is apprehension).

According to this, the *Lisān al-‘Arab* dictionary listed the word *al-ṣabr* as a signifier of conceptual meaning, then provided an explanation of this meaning. Therefore, lexicons do not necessarily provide the meanings of words, but they do provide various ways or methods to explain or interpret meanings. These methods of explaining

⁴⁸ Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Anbārī. Also known as Ibn al-Anbārī.

⁴⁹ In Van Gelder (2012, 16) “*Ṭarab*, the key term denoting strong emotion and agitation, is evoked as an aesthetic affect above all by music and poetry, rather than by visual art.”

meanings have different forms, as mentioned by Abū al-Faraj (1966, 102). These methods include explaining meanings through:

- 1) Antonyms, as in the above example.
- 2) Synonyms.
- 3) Phrasing (explaining in more than one word), also like the above example.
- 4) The context.
- 5) Images.
- 6) Collocation.

These are some common methods on which most dictionaries rely in order to explain or interpret words or items that represent certain meanings.

Finally, the previous discussions show the practical side that demonstrates features of the essential role of *al-kalima* in Arabic heritage and how scholars approach this concept. The next point to be discussed is the theoretical side of how scholars perceive the concept of the word. This is presented through a comparison between Abū Hilāl, as he is the main feature of the present study, and Shākir, a part of whose methodology of taste is applied in this study since they share an almost similar philosophy of the concept of the word.

2- Comparison between the Importance and Value of the Word for Abū Hilāl and Shākir.

In his book, *Abāṭīl wa Asmār* (2005), Shākir set out a philosophical perspective of the concept of the word as he granted it an ontological dimension. This philosophical perspective by Shākir could be presented as justification for the reason behind Arab scholars, from different disciplines, paying considerable attention to the concept of the word as discussed previously. For Shākir, *al-kalima* is a key concept that plays a pivotal role in the realm of epistemology around which culture and knowledge revolve. Therefore, *al-kalima* is a dominant concept that determined the shape and value of Arabic culture in its various periods. Shākir narrated his journey with *al-kalima* and how he perceived this influential concept by saying (2005, 445):

"فَمُنْذُ بَدَأْتُ أَعْقِلُ بَعْضَ هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا وَأَرَى سَوَادَهَا وَبَيَاضَهَا بَعْضَ بَصِيرَةٍ، شَغَلْتَنِي "الْكَلِمَةُ" وَتَعَلَّقَ قَلْبِي بِهَا، لِأَنِّي أَدْرَكْتُ أَوَّلَ مَا أَدْرَكْتُ أَنَّ "الْكَلِمَةَ" هِيَ وَحْدَهَا الَّتِي تَنْقُلُ إِلَيَّ الْأَشْيَاءَ الَّتِي أَرَاهَا بَعْضِي، وَتَنْقُلُ إِلَيَّ بَعْضَ عِلَاقِهَا الَّتِي تَرْبِطُ بَيْنَهَا وَالَّتِي لَا أَطِيقُ أَنْ أَرَاهَا بَعْضِي".

"Since I began to comprehend parts of this world and perceive the dark and light through seeing eyes, I became engrossed by "the word", and my heart clung to it for I

realised immediately that “the word” is the only thing that conveys to me all that which I discern with my eyes; it also reveals to me some of its correlating elements that connect one to the other and which I cannot see with my eyes.”

As can be seen from this quotation, Shākir viewed *al-kalima* as a recognised and sensible ontological entity that starts when an individual becomes aware of an external existence. In other words, recognising *al-kalima* starts as an internal awareness, then branches out to the external world in order to recognise relations that connect the signifier and the signified in terms of their extant congruity and the accuracy of the representation between the two. At this stage, *al-kalima* becomes an essential concept as it performs interpretational and hermeneutical functions by which facts of the extant things can be identified. Moreover, *al-kalima* increases an individual’s recognition of the external world by clarifying various meanings that pave the way for interactive communication between individuals and the physical and metaphysical worlds, which cannot be recognised through their senses. Shākir continued to explain his journey with *al-kalima* as follows (2005, 448):

"لقد انفتحت لي الأبواب المغلقة على إحساسي القديم بخطر "الكلمة"، فإذا هي تفتح بصيرتي فتري وتبصر ما لا يدركه البصر وما لا يقع عليه الحس...، ومن يومئذ صارت "الكلمة" عندي هي الحياة نفسها، هي نفسي، هي عقلي، هي فكري، هي سرُّ وجودي ووجود مَنْ حولي".

“Doors that had closed on my eternal awareness regarding the importance of “the word” have now opened for me. They have expanded my insight that sees and comprehends that which cannot be perceived or experienced through sight or touch..., and from that day onwards, “the word” for me has become life itself; it is my soul, mind, thought, the reason for my existence and of all that surrounds me.”

The recognition of existence that *al-kalima* offers leads to significant consideration of the word’s role as a source that feeds human senses with necessary knowledge. For this reason, *al-kalima* for Shākir became an integral part of his life, soul, and intellect. That is to say, the word became life itself for him since it acts as a gateway to understanding existence and its various elements. Shākir explained that (2005, 449):

"فإن ذلك لم يمتعني أن أعرف عن طريق "الكلمة" العربية أن الحضارة كلها، والثقافة كلها بعلمها وآدابها وفلسفتها عالمة على "الكلمة"، فلولا "الكلمة" لما كان لشيء من ذلك كله وجودٌ يُعقل".

“This did not hinder me from knowing via the Arabic “word” that all civilisation, and all culture with its sciences, literature and philosophy, are dependent upon “the word”, for

if it were not for “the word”, it would be impossible to make sense of any of these concepts.”

The strong connection that Shākir could identify between *al-kalima* and existence consequently led him to believe that knowledge, with its different disciplines, cultures, philosophies, and literature, is subservient to the concept of the word and could be considered as a sign of the role and influence of the word. This is because, without *al-kalima*, none of these disciplines would have achieved their dominant existence in the forms they are found in today. Therefore, *al-kalima* is at the core of the epistemological realm and has an interactive function which provides humans with different explanations of the nature of extant things. This function contributes to achieving recognition and awareness of human existence.

Shākir’s thoughts on *al-kalima*, its influence and sensitive role in texts are evident in his analysis of one of al-Mutanabbī’s verses where he demonstrated an in-depth perception of how a single lexical item could function meaningfully in the text. Shākir explained that (2003, 298):

"يقول المتنبي:

إِنَّمَا أَنفُسُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ سِبَاغٌ / يَتَفَارَسُنَ جَهْرَةً وَاعْتِيَالاً

فَأَيُّ دِقَّةٍ وَأَيُّ هِدَايَةٍ كَانَتْ لِهَذَا الرَّجُلِ الْفَدَّ الَّذِي لَوْ اخْتَلَّتْ عَلَى بَعْضِ أَلْفَاظِهِ أَنْ تَجِدَ لَهَا بَدِيلاً فِي كَلَامِهِ لِأَفْسَدَتْ مَعْنَى الْبَيْتِ وَقُوَّتِهِ وَعِبَارَتِهِ وَبَيَانِهِ.

فَحَدُّ مَثَلًا لَفْظِ "الأنبياء" وَتَحْيِيرُ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ حُرُوفِ اللَّغَةِ وَضَعُهُ حَيْثُ وَضَعَ الْمُتَنَبِّيُّ لَفْظَهُ، وَأَفْرَأُ وَأَنْظُرُ وَتَدَبَّرُ، هَلْ يَلِيقُ أَوْ يَسُوغُ أَوْ يَلِيقُ أَوْ يَسْتَقَرُّ فِي مَكَانِهِ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ؟ ضَعُ مَكَانَهُ "الإنس" أَوْ "البشر" أَوْ "الناس" أَوْ "الأنام" أَوْ مَا شِئْتَ، سِوَاءَ اسْتِقَامِ الْوِزْنِ أَوْ لَمْ يَسْتَقِمْ، تَجِدِ الْفَرْقَ بَيْنَ الْإِخْتِيَارَيْنِ عَظِيماً وَسِعاً، فَهُوَ قَدْ اخْتَارَ اللَّفْظَ وَالْبِنَاءَ الَّذِي يَدُلُّ دَلَالَةً عَلَى الْمَوَاسِيَةِ وَالرِّقَّةِ وَالنَّطْفِ وَإِظْهَارِ الْمَوَدَّةِ وَالظَّرْفِ وَخَلَاوَةِ الشَّمَائِلِ وَلِيْنِ الطَّبَاعِ، لِيُظْهَرَ لَكَ أَنَّهَا تُخْفِي تَحْتَهَا كَلِمَةً طَبَاعاً وَخَشِيئَةً ضَارِيَةً، مُتَرَفِّقَةً حِيناً وَبَاغِيَةً أحياناً، فَمَهَّدَ لِلصُّورَةِ الَّتِي أَرَادَهَا بِاللَّفْظِ الَّذِي لَا يُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ فِي دِقَّةِ الصُّورَةِ وَحُسْنِ بَيَانِهَا".

“Al-Mutanabbī says:

“Boon companions’ inner whims are predatory / hunting openly and stealthily.

“This unique man had such precision and awareness to the extent that if you were to strive exhaustively to find an alternative to some of his words, you would corrupt the verse’s meaning, strength, expression, and clarity.

“Take for example the word “*al-anīs*” and pick whichever other letters of the language instead of that which he chose, then read, examine and contemplate this new composition. Does it fit appropriately, settling with ease into the same position within the verse? If you replace it with “mankind”, *al-ins*, “humans”, *al-bashar*, “people”, *al-nās*, or “humanity”, *al-anām*, or whatever you wish – whether it fits with the rhyme

scheme or not – you will find that the difference between the two choices is indeed vast. Al-Mutanabbī chose a word and structure that indicate, by reference, traits of companionship, tenderness, and affection that exhibit the soft nature of friendship, amiability and gentleness, in order to portray to you how underneath all of this hides a cruel, fierce disposition, at times mild, and tyrannous at others. Thus, he paved the way for the image he intended to portray through this word that is indispensable in its exactness of imagery and correct layout.”

Shākir formulated an in-depth philosophy of the function of the vocal form inclusive of its various elements, namely its phonetic, morphological, and semantic aspects. He attempted to present a methodology of how one should perceive and treat a lexical item. The exactness of the use of this word (*al-anīs*) and its precise meaning in this verse eliminate any other possible alternatives, whether or not the alternatives were compatible with the prosody of this verse, thus offering more options for anyone who attempts to replace this word with a synonym that might not function as precisely as *al-anīs* does. That is to say, the meanings of *al-anīs* qualify it to express different aspects of friendship. Moreover, the phonetic aspect of this word successfully conveys the poet’s intended metaphorical image. As for the morphological aspect of this lexical item, the word is expressed in the intensive form of the active participle (*ṣiḡhat mubālagha min `ism al-fā`il*) (*anis = fa`īl*) which emphasises the meaning of ‘intimate friendship’ or ‘companionship’ subsumed under this word. Therefore, the three aspects, namely the phonetic, morphological, and semantic aspects of *al-anīs* qualify it to play an essential role in conveying a meaning that can rarely be found in any of its alternatives. Succeeding in employing a lexical item in which all three aspects (phonetic, morphological, and semantic) contribute significantly to conveying its precise meaning is not an easy poetic requirement that all poets can fulfil. This is also most often the point at which one poet can be distinguished from another.

The previous discussion could provide a clear explanation of the influence and essential role that *al-kalima* can play. It can also be applied to most other branches of knowledge. Therefore, employing the right word in the right discourse and in the right form can make noticeable difference in the given text, as it could be argued that the word is the starting point and foundation of meaning. Although the meaning is an aspect that precedes vocal forms, they are what determine the extent to which the intended meaning is successfully expressed.

Abū Hilāl's interest in the concept of *al-kalima* is associated with the debate about *al-lafẓ wa al-ma'nā*. This is a controversial literary issue which has dominated classic critics' discussions. Classic critics are divided into three groups: *lafẓ* supporters, *ma'nā* supporters, and a third group tends to balance between wording and meaning as discussed by al-Mashāyikh (2001, 33).⁵⁰ This debate considers wording and meaning as the most important constituents of literary works, but the discussion regarding whether one constituent matters more than the other is inconclusive (Key, 2018; Abdul-Raof, 2006; Abbās, 1981). This leads to the next point where Abū Hilāl's approach to this literary issue is discussed.

3- Development of a New Perspective on Abū Hilāl's Theory of Wording, Meaning, (*al-lafẓ wa al-ma'nā*), and Synonyms.

Although alluded to in the methodology section that common literary issues of the Fourth AH century that are discussed by modern scholars will not be discussed in the present thesis, it seems that Abū Hilāl's perspective on the issue of wording and meaning is misrepresented and requires an in-depth investigation. One needs to consider a more comprehensive approach to his discourse regarding this issue. It is necessary to reread Abū Hilāl's discourse regarding the issue of wording and meaning in this chapter as it is an essential part of literary and lexical discourse since it approaches the most important constituents of speech, namely words and meanings.⁵¹

The issue of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-ma'nā*) is one of the foundational literary debates in literary criticism and it prevails in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* as Abū Hilāl repeatedly evoked these two concepts during his evaluation of different literary texts. He stressed the importance of differentiating between sophisticated and poor speech, as well as differentiating between fine and repugnant vocal form (1971, 8). Additionally, he discussed the speech of the *Qur'ān* as its meanings are perfect and its words are pure (ibid., 7). In the chapter entitled *Tamyīz al-Kalām* (recognising the

⁵⁰ For a comprehensive discussion regarding the issue of wording and meaning, see al-Āammārī (1999). *Qaḍīyyat al-Lafẓ wa al-Ma'nā wa Atharuhā fī Tadwīn al-Balāgha al-'Arabiyya*.

⁵¹ Germann and Najafi (2021) briefly approached this issue in the preface and other parts of their edited book *Philosophy and Language in the Islamic World*.

speech act), Abū Hilāl emphasised that a speech act is appropriate when it is easy, smooth, accurate in terms of word choice, and contains precise meanings (ibid., 61). In another context, Abū Hilāl discussed that (ibid., 63):

"وليس الشأن في إيراد المعنى،... وإنما هو في جودة ألفظ وصفائه، وحُسْنِه وبهائه،... مع صحّة السبّك والتركيب، والخُلُوّ من أوْدِ النّظم".

"The true matter of concern does not lie in the meaning set forth, but rather in the high quality and purity of the word, as well as its beauty and splendour ... coupled with exactness of phraseology and lexical arrangement that is void of distortion towards the overall composition."

Ṭabāna (1981, 127) deduced from this text that Abū Hilāl was among those who thought that rhetoric revolves around wording craft only, meaning that words alone determine the rhetorical level of the given text regardless of meanings. In other words, for Ṭabāna, Abū Hilāl was interested in the artistic side of the literary text and was not concerned about the accuracy of meanings in texts. Therefore, Ṭabāna (ibid., 131) thought that Abū Hilāl contradicted himself when he said (1971, 75):

"فِيحْتَاجُ صَاحِبِ الْبَلَاغَةِ إِلَى إِصَابَةِ الْمَعْنَى كحَاجَتِهِ إِلَى تَحْسِينِ اللَّفْظِ؛ لِأَنَّ الْمَدَارَ بَعْدُ عَلَى إِصَابَةِ الْمَعْنَى"

"Thus, the composer of high rhetoric needs to convey the precise meaning just as much as refining the word, because what matters the most is achieving precise meaning."⁵²

As he switched from giving wording superiority over meaning rather than the other way around.

However, Abū Hilāl did not abandon the role of accurate and sophisticated meanings in text composition. His statement (وليس الشأن في إيراد المعاني...) did not indicate that he marginalised the function of meaning nor that he underestimated its effect on the value of a given text. As discussed previously, elaborate and high-quality meaning is a core component of the craft of speech composition. What Abū Hilāl possibly meant here is that the consideration of sophisticated and valuable meaning should often be associated with suitable wording that accurately refers to the meaning, while meaning should be presented by attractive and precise wording. This is because employing

⁵² Also, in p. 160, an emphasis from Abū Hilāl on the same concept of balancing between the refinement of words and the precise meanings which should be considered is the art of writing and crafting speech.

poor wording in speech causes ambiguity and confusion, and the meaning would then be devoid of any considerable value, as Abū Hilāl stated (ibid., 140):

"فإنَّ حَقَّ المعنى الشَّرِيفُ اللَّفْظُ الشَّرِيفُ"

"Lofty meaning deserves lofty wording."

Therefore, it is evident from Abū Hilāl's words, quoted previously, that he did not give preference to either wording or meaning. Rather, for him, both concepts are essential in composing and refining speech, and they function integrally in any discourse. Moreover, the numerous attributes that Abū Hilāl granted to wording do not indicate that wording has privilege over meaning. Rather, it is probably because wording, as a presenter of the tangible side of meaning, is amenable to including more attributes than meaning can, which makes wording criteria more complicated than those of meaning. In other words, the positive attributes of lexical items could be described as eloquent, clear, congruent, morphologically acceptable, and lexically recognisable, while their negative attributes could be described as semantically ambiguous, repugnant, incongruent, odd, and inaccurate. Contrastingly, meaning is required to be devoid of ambiguity, corruption, and illogicality, as discussed in Chapter Two, which does not require a high level of literary prowess to fulfil. Yet, meaning requires at least careful and exact conception in order to be expressed sufficiently.

Considering the previous discussion, we can formulate the following: Meaning cannot function without the accurate usage of wording, while wording is useless without suitable meaning. This could be what Abū Hilāl was most concerned with; that is, the idea that meaning should be expressed with the most accurate and precise wording where it cannot be replaced with synonyms or alternatives. This is similar to Shākir's ideas regarding the word *al-anīs* in al-Mutanabbī's verse. Therefore, it is evident throughout Abū Hilāl's lexicons that he had an inclination toward exact wording which accurately and precisely represents the intended meaning. This can be supported by Abū Hilāl's introduction to his lexicon *al-Talkhīṣ* (1996, 29) as he stated that it is dedicated to knowing the names and attributes of living things and objects, and to explaining the differences among numerous kinds of tools and arts of which people of literature should be aware. Abū Hilāl mentioned people of literature in particular as he possibly believed that they deal with the craft of speech composition more often than other people, so they have to be fully aware of their usage of language. Based on this discussion, Abū Hilāl tended to construct a solid foundation

for wording that serves meaning efficiently and practically as when Key (2018, 62) said that “Abū Hilāl was committed to a lexically based theory of meaning”.

In his introduction in *al-Mu‘jam fī Baqiyat al-Ashyā’*, Abū Hilāl stated that (1997, 62):

"وَمَعْلُومٌ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ مَعْنَى لَفْظًا يُعْبَرُ بِهِ عَنْهُ، فَمَنْ جَهَلَ اللَّفْظَ بَكَمٍ عَنِ الْمَعْنَى، وَلَا شَكَّ أَنَّ مَنْ يُرِيدُ النَّظَرَ فِي عِلْمٍ مِنَ الْعُلُومِ فَتَرَكَ النَّظَرَ فِي أَلْفَاظِ أَهْلِهِ لَمْ يَصِلْ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةِ مَعَانِيهِمْ، وَلَا نَعْرِفُ الْيَوْمَ عِلْمًا جَاهِلِيًّا وَلَا إِسْلَامِيًّا إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهُ عَرَبِيُونَ أَوْ مُتَعَرِّبُونَ يَكْتُبُونَهُ بِاللَّفْظِ الْعَرَبِيِّ وَالْخَطِّ الْعَرَبِيِّ، فَوَاجِبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ فِي حُكْمِ صِنَاعَتِهِمْ أَنْ يَتَّقَدَّمُوا فِي عِلْمِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ لِتَصِحَّ عِبَارَاتُهُمْ عَنْ عُلُومِهِمْ، وَتَتَقَدَّمَ كِتَابَتُهُمْ لَهَا، وَيَسْهَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ اسْتِخْرَاجُ مَعَانِي قُدَمَائِهِمْ فِيهَا، وَمَنْ أَخْلَى مِنْهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْهَا عَدِمَ فَهْمُهُ بِحَسْبِهِ، وَمَعْلُومٌ أَنَّ مَنْ يَطْلُبُ التَّرْسُلَ وَقَرَضَ الشِّعْرَ وَعَمَلَ الْخُطْبَ كَانَ مُحْتَاجًا لَا مَحَالَةَ إِلَى التَّوَسُّعِ فِي عِلْمِ اللَّغَةِ خَاصَّةً لِتَكْتُرَ عِنْدَهُ الْأَلْفَاظُ فَيَتَصَرَّفُ فِيهَا بِحَسَبِ مُرَادِهِ، وَلَا يَضِيقُ مَجَالَهُ فِي مُرْتَادِهِ، وَلِيَعْرِفَ الْعُلُويَّ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ فَيَسْتَعْمِلُهُ، وَالْعَامِيَّ فَيَتَّقِيهِ وَيَجْتَنِبُهُ".

“It is known that every meaning corresponds to a word that expresses it, for he who does not know the word is also left mute in face of the meaning. Undoubtedly, he who wishes to study a certain discipline, but who has not delved into the wording of its writers, cannot fully understand its meanings. To this day, we do not know of a pre- or post-Islamic discipline whose writers are neither Arabs nor Arabists who write Arabic words and script. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them – as masters of their trade - to advance in the knowledge of Arabic in order for their expressions of such disciplines to be validated, and so that their writings thereof become advanced, rendering it easier for them to extract the meaning thereof from their predecessors. Whoever among them does not give a word its due meaning, will render it incomprehensible. It is also common knowledge that whoever seeks to write composition, *al-tarassul*, compose poetry, or write a speech, is undoubtedly in need of expanding his own knowledge of language in order to expand his vocabulary so that he may utilise lexical variety as he wishes, and so that he is not limited in his choice of words. It is also so that he knows the most eloquent of words to use, and thus avoid and set aside the colloquial.”

This quotation clearly explains Abū Hilāl’s perspective on the issue of wording and meaning. Although, in this quotation, Abū Hilāl indicated that he had insight into the issue of wording and meaning by explaining the integral, sophisticated, and overlapping relationship between these two concepts, I have not found any scholar among those who approached Abū Hilāl’s argument regarding this matter who referred to this discussion in his lexicon. For this reason, lexical and morphological discussions are juxtaposed in this analysis in order to understand Abū Hilāl’s perspective on this literary issue, as the overlap between these disciplines is evident.

Proceeding on the same path, the previous quotation of Abū Hilāl and the content of his lexicons explicitly indicate that he worked hard at attempting to trace the right and precise wording that expresses meaning in a way that excludes other alternatives and semantics. For this reason, it could be argued that contemporary scholars perceived this attitude as an inclination toward wording at the cost of meaning. However, his theoretical discussions in *al-Şināʿatayn* and the practical content of his lexicons show that he was fully aware of the sophisticated relationship between wording and meaning and that he did not favour one at the cost of the other. In fact, he attempted to clarify how these two concepts could congruently function to preserve the quality and cohesion of a text since a clash between them would lead to a considerably defected text. Similarly, in the first two sentences of his quotation, Abū Hilāl formulated the issue of wording and meaning in a clear and simple manner: He stated that for each meaning there is wording to express it, and whoever was unacquainted with wording would remain mute regarding its meaning. Following this, he emphasised the importance of knowing the terminology of each discipline in order to obtain adequate knowledge thereof. According to this discussion, Abū Hilāl extended the issue of wording and meaning to include other branches of knowledge and considered it an essential factor that contributes toward obtaining knowledge.

On the other hand, linguists such as ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH), al-Thamānīnī (d. 442 AH), and ibn Yaʿīsh (d. 643 AH) approached the issue of wording and meaning from morphological and syntactical perspectives. Evoking the linguistic perspectives and linguists' insights, in addition to the literary critical discussion regarding this issue, could possibly result in a more comprehensive conception of its interdisciplinary nature. Furthermore, combining discussions from other disciplines could clarify Abū Hilāl's cohesive insight of this issue and how he considered the interdisciplinary nature mentioned previously. Linguists referred to the overlapping relationship between wording and meaning and how each of these concepts sensitively affects the other. An example of this includes a section in Ibn Jinnī's book *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ* (titled "باب في قُوَّةِ" - A section on wording strength for meaning strength). Ibn Jinnī expressed a favourable opinion of this section by starting it with this sentence (1974, 3: 264): هذا فَصْلٌ مِنَ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ حَسَنٌ (This is a fine section of Arabic language). One of the examples that ibn Jinnī presented is the verb حَشَّنَ (toughened or hardened) and another verb (اِحْتَشَوَشَنَ) that is derived from the same root meaning (to lead a hard and uncomfortable life). As can be noticed, the morphological process of word derivation

changes the meaning of the root itself, which means that the word undergoes a semantic extension because of the additional letters that are added to it. Therefore, this morphological process shows that meaning is sensitive to word variation and that changing the form of Arabic words matters considerably in terms of semantics. It is worth arguing that discussions in most topics of Arabic morphology and syntax aim, in general, at organising the relationship between wording and meaning in order to achieve optimum semantics. For this reason, al-Thamānīnī, in his grammar book *al-Fawā'id wa al-Qawā'id* (2003, 390), stated that:

"والتحاة يُقَوِّمون الألفاظ كما يُقَوِّمون المعاني"

"Grammarians refine words exactly as they hone meanings."

According to al-Thamānīnī's statement, grammarians' work is not just limited to extracting meanings of sentences by analysing their components, but that they also fix vocal forms in sentences to guarantee that meanings are represented through accurate wording.

Similarly, ibn Ya'īsh discussed the issue of wording and meaning in a morphological and syntactical context, explicating the overlapping connection between wording and meaning. In his book *Sharḥ al-Mulūkī* (1973, 95), ibn Ya'īsh stated:

"اعلم أن الألفاظ أدلة المعاني وقوالب لها، وإنما اعتنوا بها وأصلحوها لتكون أدهب في الدلالة. ولما كان المعنى يكون على أحوال كثيرة، كمعنى المضى والحال والاستقبال والفاعلية والمفعولية وغيرها، وكانت الحاجة إلى الدلالة على كل حال منها ماسة، لم يكن بد من لفظ خاص يدل على ذلك المعنى بعينه، فلهذا وجب التصريف واختلاف الأبيية بالزيادة والنقص والتغيير ونحو ذلك؛ ليبدل كل لفظ على المعنى المراد"

"Know that words are the indicators of meaning and their moulds which they cared for and fixed so as to be free of connotations. Since meaning is based on many varying conditions, such as the meaning of the past, present, future condition, subject and direct object, among others, and since the need for meaning in each case is pressing, it is necessary for a particular word to indicate each specific meaning. Hence, it became a must for words to conjugate and for structures to differ by increasing, decreasing, changing letters, and via inflection, so that every word indicates its intended meaning."

In this quotation, Ibn Ya'īsh refers to the interrelated nature of wording and meaning, explaining that the derivation system of Arabic morphology is primarily employed to achieve the most accurate semantics of lexical items. For ibn Ya'īsh, the infinitude of meaning necessitates a systematic development of a specific word for

each specific meaning, and that this systematic development is acquired in Arabic morphology. This approach is compatible with Abū Hilāl's previously discussed view of the issue of wording and meaning in the introduction of his lexicon *al-Muʿjam fī Baqīyyat al-Ashyāʿ* where he emphasised the importance of accurate wording that represents precise meaning. The step that precedes that of finding the accurate wording for a specific meaning is finding the morphological form and the structure of the word itself (*al-bunya al-ṣarfīyya lilkalima*). That is to say that different forms of the same root play a key role in determining the intended meaning, which means that employing the wrong form of the word could essentially affect the accuracy of the semantics and could cause the lexical item to misrepresent the meaning. Therefore, the harmony between a lexical item and its signification starts from the accurate form of the lexical item which is supposed to represent a specific meaning. For this reason, morphology and derivation are two necessary aspects that lead to a qualitative understanding of the correlation between wording and meaning. Hence, the literary debate of this issue should involve the linguistic view as it includes essential aspects that enrich the literary discussion.

As far as Abū Hilāl's lexicographical mindset is concerned, it could be argued that his awareness of the integrative relationship between wording and meaning prompted him to compile his lexicons *al-Talkhīṣ* and *Baqāyā al-Ashyāʿ* by considering the linguistic meaning of lexical units accompanied by their cultural and social meanings. Several major lexicons were compiled before Abū Hilāl's, for example *al-ʿAyn* by al-Khalīl (d. 175 AH), *al-Jamhara* by ibn Durayd (d. 231 AH), *al-Bārīʿ* by Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī (d. 356 AH), and *al-Taḥthīb* by Abū Manṣūr al-Azharī (d. 370 AH). However, Abū Hilāl most likely meant to contribute to the lexicographical field with specialised lexicons that provided specific semantics for each lexical unit he included. This is probable as he was keen on the precision of representation between meaning and wording, the idea on which he based his theory, as discussed above. Moreover, Abū Hilāl narrowed down the readership of his lexicons to literary people, as discussed previously, since specialised lexicons would be more helpful to them as they are required to achieve relatively high accuracy in their usage of language, and this is probably what Abū Hilāl attempted to offer them. Based on this, it could be argued that reading Abū Hilāl's lexicons requires two matters:

- 1) Sufficient knowledge of the scholarly attitudes of Abū Hilāl and his ideological impulses in order to grasp his thoughts and discussions. This is applicable to any lexicon that is subjected to a study, as discussed by Ḥamzāwī (1977, 111).
- 2) Sufficient knowledge of the literary debate of wording and meaning in general, along with Abū Hilāl's insights regarding this debate, in order to understand his interest in specialised semantics.

Finally, the previous discussions were an account of Shākir's approach and Abū Hilāl's insights into the concept of *al-kalima*. The discussion of Shākir's work involved an evaluation of the concept of the word from his perspective as a critic and litterateur wherein he looked to the literal context in which the word is evoked, as well as to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantic aspects of the word and how these aspects should be considered together when composing a text. Therefore, by considering these aspects, a word in a text would be examined through two levels:

- 1) The form, structure, and semantics of the word which allow it to achieve accuracy and clearness.
- 2) The syntactical semantics of the word, i.e. its role in the sentence and how this affects the general meaning of the text being studied.

Shākir's view of the concept of the word is a consequence of a specific methodological framework that he called 'the methodology of taste'. On the other hand, Abū Hilāl's view of the concept of the word was vertical in that he investigated the specific semantics of a lexical item in order to achieve the most accurate representation of its meaning. In other words, Abū Hilāl desired to find a theory that offered an explanation of the interrelated and integral nature of the relationship between wording and meaning (*al-laḥẓ wa al-ma'nā*). As a result, Abū Hilāl presented his view of the relationship between these two concepts in a theoretical framework in his book *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, following which he put this theoretical account into practice by compiling lexicons that supported his theory. Both Abū Hilāl and Shākir had the view that word choice does not include only choosing the right word among several synonyms to represent a specific meaning; rather, it is also the form and the morphological structure of the word that play major roles in conveying the meaning accurately, while taking into account that changing the form of the word would often variate its meaning.

4- Overview of Abū Hilāl's Dictionaries: *al-Talkhīṣ fī al-Lughā*, *Muʿjam Baqiyyat al-Ashyāʿ*, and *al-Furūq fī al-Lughā*:

- *Al-Talkhīṣ fī al-Lughā*:

As explained in Chapter Two, Abū Hilāl's didactical sensitivity increased his desire to educate readers and *Adab* seekers of his time by providing the necessary information to improve their literary knowledge and refine their literary activity. Gruendler (2010, 2) stated that Abū Hilāl "offers aspiring *udabāʿ* an opportunity to shine in literary and scholarly *majālis*. Abū Hilāl expected his books to be memorised and cited in learned conversation, with the purpose of social advancement in the reigning Arabic literary culture." This educational process took different forms according to the purpose and subject of his books. For example, *al-Ṣināʿatayn* aimed to provide both theoretical and practical materials pertaining to both poetry and prose in order to explain that which makes literary texts sophisticated or poor. However, Abū Hilāl's lexicons also provided the raw material for the speech act, namely words or lexical units that constitute discourse. With regard to *al-Talkhīṣ*, it can be said that there were also some cultural motivations behind the compilation of this lexicon. These motivations were a result of both a literal and a cultural evolution, as well as developments that Abū Hilāl witnessed during that time. These involved a stream of new terms and names, both coined and borrowed. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset and his awareness of the necessity of obtaining adequate knowledge of lexical materials guided him to compile a dictionary that included words and terms that reflected the cultural aspects of his time as a step towards addressing the dramatic increase in new lexical units that were emerging. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's reasons for curating this dictionary could have been to:

- 1) Archive the cultural terms that appeared in conjunction with civil and cultural evolutions, and
- 2) Provide people working in the field of literature with the lexical knowledge that essentially feeds their literary production.

Thus, it is necessary to identify and discuss Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-maʿnā*) in order to clarify the work contained in his lexicons.

Based on the previous discussion, *al-Talkhīṣ* is not merely a dictionary that compiles vocabulary and other linguistic materials, but it could also be considered as

a living representation of the cultural and intellectual aspects of the literary production of the Fourth AH century. This means that the content of *al-Talkhīṣ* is not limited to items from pre-Islamic texts; on the contrary, it contains items from its time, which contradicts the assumption of the panel that compiled *al-Muʿjam al-Wasīṭ* (2004, 21). The latter stated that lexicographers confined themselves to an extremely narrow chronological space, thus causing many cultural elements to be absent. Worthy of noting is that there is one method of explaining meaning that cannot be found in *al-Talkhīṣ*, which is explaining the meaning by means of images or illustrations. This method is used in some modern dictionaries in order to ensure clear understanding of an item, particularly when the item in question is a tool or an animal that is difficult for some readers to identify. It follows that, since the content of *al-Talkhīṣ* consists mainly of living things, tools, instruments, food, clothes, plants, insects and substances, it would have had superior cultural importance had it provided some drawings and illustrations of these things because most of the things it mentions no longer exist.

What sets *al-Talkhīṣ* (1996, 29) apart is that Abū Hilāl specified his audience, namely *Adab* seekers who were primarily expected to benefit most from this dictionary. In addition, he described the objectives of this lexicon and the method he applied. These two points are what distinguish *al-Talkhīṣ* as they were adopted as some recommendations by the Conference of Linguists and Lexicographers that was held at Indiana University in 1960, mentioned by Abū al-Faraj (1966, 21). This could be considered an indication that Abū Hilāl's lexicographical mindset surpassed the traditional methods of his time as he attempted to avoid issues that are considered to be problematic in modern dictionaries. Similarly, Abū Hilāl mentioned some previous studies with content similar to that in his lexicon and presented critiques of them; he also mentioned his contribution in his lexicon.

Abū Hilāl's lexicographical mindset also led him to realise the importance of capturing the cultural and civil features of his time, which makes his book an important cultural archive of the Fourth AH century. Furthermore, *al-Talkhīṣ* can be read as a literary work because it includes numerous quotations from the *Qurʾān*, the Prophet's sayings, and Arabic poetry and proverbs that are provided as further explanations of words' meanings and how they should be used. The book is arranged in consecutive paragraphs, which also allows it to be read as a normal book, unlike the usual arrangement of other lexicons in which each word is explained in a separate section. The order of content in *al-Talkhīṣ* follows biological divisions as it presents the names

of human organs, words used to describe pregnancy and birth, birds, predators, plants, insects, horses, camels and cows, in addition to other words pertaining to different topics such as tools and other objects.

In *al-Talkhīṣ*, Abū Hilāl referred to authentic sources that are considered to be foundational and central sources of language transmission. The scholars on whom Abū Hilāl relied in terms of language transmission are famous for being language memorisers and poetry transmitters who developed solid methods for codifying the Arabic language in its pure form (as spoken by nomadic Arabs). The language and poetry transmitters to whom Abū Hilāl referred in *al-Talkhīṣ* are al-Khalīl (d. 175 AH), al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī (d. 178 AH), ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244 AH), al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 216 AH), Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī al-lughawī (d. 214 AH), Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī al-lughawī al-naḥwī (d. 255 AH), Abū ʿUbayda Maʿmar ibn al-Muthannā al-lughawī al-naḥwī (d. 210 AH), Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām al-lughawī (d. 224 AH), and Abū Bakr ibn Durayd (d. 321 AH). This indicates that *al-Talkhīṣ* was based on a variety of authentic lexicographic sources. Although these lexicographic sources are quite comprehensive, Abū Hilāl could contribute to the lexicographical field with *al-Talkhīṣ* because it is a lexicon that covers specialised topics.

Abū Hilāl approached certain topics related to the human body, mentioning different parts of a certain organ, followed by its attributes and possible defects. For example, he mentions the names of different parts of the human nose in one section, and in the next section, he mentions the names of different attributes of the human nose - Abū Hilāl followed this order with all other human organs he mentioned.

As discussed previously, *al-Talkhīṣ* includes materials that reflect the cultural and epistemological features of the time during which it was compiled. An example of this can be seen in some names that indicate the internal parts of the human body that cannot be known without anatomical operations, such as (1996, 38, 49):

"وَأَمَّ الدَّمَاعِ الْجِلْدَةُ الرَّقِيقَةُ الَّتِي أَلْبَسَهَا"
"الْخِيَاشِيمُ عِظَامٌ رِقَاقٌ دَاخِلَ الْأَنْفِ"

"Dura mater is the soft membrane worn by the brain."

"Nostrils, *al-khayāshīm*, are soft bones in the nose."

Mentioning these internal parts of the human body could be a reflection of the advanced medical knowledge that characterised the Fourth AH century. This is also

evident in the section in which Abū Hilāl mentions and provides intricate descriptions of the internal organs of the human abdomen (ibid., 66).

Al-Talkhīṣ contains highly detailed names for things pertaining to the human body. An example of this can be seen in the following sentence (ibid., 61):

"وَالنَّقَطُ الْبَيْضُ الَّتِي تَكُونُ عَلَى الظَّفْرِ الْوَيْشُ وَالْفُوفُ. وَالْوَسْحُ الَّذِي يَكُونُ تَحْتَ الظَّفْرِ الثَّفُّ وَالرُّفْعُ"

"The white dots on fingernails are called *al-wabsh* and *al-fūf*. The dirt under the fingernails is known as *al-tuff* and *al-ruf*."

Although these parts cannot be considered to serve literary language directly, they reflect Abū Hilāl's tendency to provide his readers with precise words that express meaning accurately, which supports the previous discussion concerning his theory of wording and meaning.

Since the main purpose of most lexicons is to provide clear explanations of different words that have specific meanings, *al-Talkhīṣ* contains different methods for explaining words in order to provide clear concepts of words and their meanings. These methods include presenting the original linguistic meaning of the root itself in order to clarify how this meaning has been adapted to express a specific condition that an individual might experience. The following is an example (ibid., 40, 41):

"وَالصَّمَمُ أَنْ لَا يَسْمَعَ شَيْئاً، وَأَصْلُهُ مِنَ الصَّمِّ وَهُوَ السَّدُّ"

"وَقِيلَ غَدِيرَةٌ لِأَنَّهَا غُوِدِرَتْ فَطَالَتْ، أَيْ تُرِكَتْ"

"The word "*ṣamam*" (deafness) is to not hear a thing, and it originates from *al-ṣamm*, which means a dam."

"The word "*ghadīra*" (a lock of hair) is called as such as it has been overlooked, *ghūdirat*, and became long in doing so; that is to say, it has been left aside/neglected."

In the second sentence, the morphological reference is evident, as Abū Hilāl indicated that the intensive form of the active participle (*ṣiḡhat mubālagha min 'ism al-fā'il*) can be used to indicate the passive participle, which is a common use of this form in Arabic morphology. Accordingly, the word *ghadīra* would mean *mughadara*; as linguists say, *fa'il bi ma'nā maf'ūl* (al-Khaṭīb, 2013, 454). Moreover, amongst the methods that Abū Hilāl applied in order to explain different lexical items in his lexicons is explaining the meaning by providing examples, which involves evoking an image of a well-known thing to provide a clearer understanding of the word, as in his explanation of the word *al-kalthama* (ibid., 45):

"الْكَلْتَمَةُ اسْتِدَارَةُ الْوَجْهِ، وَمِنْهُ سُمِّيَ الْفَيْلُ كُلُّثُومًا"

“The word *al-kalthama* means round-faced, and from it the elephant is dubbed *kulthūm* (the round-faced one).”

In an attempt to explain the word *al-kalthama*, Abū Hilāl evoked the image of an elephant, which is called *kulthūm* after a specific facial trait that applies to it, thus providing a sensory representation of the specific meaning. This allows the reader to picture the word *al-kalthama* (or any other word) clearly; in turn, this would lead to the possibility of exact and precise usage of the word in different discourses, which was one of the main literary aims of Abū Hilāl’s project, as discussed above.

Similarly, Abū Hilāl explained some words by describing the motion that a given word indicates. This includes the word *istawḍaḥa*, which Abū Hilāl explained by providing a description of the attitude to which this word refers (1996, 48):

"وَأَسْتَوَضَحْتُ الشَّيْءَ إِذَا وَضَعْتَ يَدَكَ عَلَى عَيْنِكَ فِي الشَّمْسِ وَنَظَرْتَ إِلَيْهِ"

“The meaning of “*istawḍaḥt-a*” (to have sought clarification) originates from the act of covering one’s eye when the sun is shining, with one’s hand, so as to be able to look at an object.”

One could argue that such a description is a practical method for explaining meaning, which could be effective in certain conditions when the habitual way of explaining meaning does not function as effectively as anticipated.

Finally, Abū Hilāl introduced the meaning of some words by providing a semantic justification. This can be seen when he stated the reason for *al-kaff* (the palm of the hand) being given this name (ibid., 60):

"سُمِّيَتْ كَفًّا لِأَنَّهَا تَكْفُفُ عَلَى الْأَشْيَاءِ أَي تَجْمَعُهَا"

“The palm, *al-kaff*, is named as such as it brings items together, *takuff*, meaning that it gathers them.”

Thus, the name of this part of the human body has its roots in a linguistic meaning, which was then adopted as a noun of this organ since one of its main functions, which is holding things, is compatible with the linguistic meaning.

These are some of the methods on which Abū Hilāl relied in his lexicon, *al-Talkhīṣ*, in order to fulfil his aim of providing his readers, particularly people involved in the field of literature, with adequate material to refine their usage of language and increase the precision of their word use. This leads to the next specific method used to explain words, which is the explanation of a specific word by presenting its synonyms. This is discussed in a separate point, as it is related to the literary issue of synonyms and to Abū Hilāl’s other lexicon, *al-Furūq fī al-Lughā*, which is largely dedicated to discussion

of this issue. The morphological features in *al-Talkhīṣ* will be discussed in the next chapter, which contains a discussion of morphology and syntax in Abū Hilāl's literary works.

- *Al-Furūq fī al-Lughā: Abū Hilāl's Perspective on the Issue of Synonyms:*

The scope of this lexicon covers different meanings that are subsumed under different categories. As the meanings of each category are similar, differentiating amongst them was a challenging task, as Abū Hilāl indicated in the introduction to this lexicon (1977, 9):

"الكلام في الفَرْقِ بَيْنَ مَعَانٍ تَقَارَبَتْ حَتَّى أَشْكَلَ الْفَرْقُ بَيْنَهُمَا"

"The discussion around difference in meanings of words is so close to the extent that the difference among them becomes ambiguous."

Abū Hilāl's attempt in this lexicon, as discussed several times in the present thesis, was to provide his readers with the intricate and subtle differences in terms of meaning among synonyms in various contexts. 'Synonyms' is an English word that is an equivalent of the Arabic word *al-mutarādifāt*. Based on this, several scholars had the impression that Abū Hilāl's main purpose in producing this lexicon was to prove that synonyms do not exist, as discussed by Chaudhary (1987, 250), and as mentioned in the Literature Review in this thesis. Key can be added to the scholars listed by Chaudhary, as he stated that Abū Hilāl's project "was intended to demonstrate the complete absence of synonymy in Arabic" (2018, 94). Abū Hilāl may have assumed that the title or content of his lexicon could be confusing and that some readers might presume that he denied the existence of synonyms; therefore, he explained his position regarding this issue in the first chapter of his book.

The following texts from Abū Hilāl's lexicon *al-Furūq* can be interpreted as clear evidence that he did not deny the existence of synonyms (1977, 13):

"وإذا أُشِيرَ إلى الشَّيْءِ مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَعُرِفَ فالإشارةُ إليه ثَانِيَةً وَثَالِثَةً غَيْرُ مُفِيدَةٍ. وَوَضِعُ اللَّغَةِ حَكِيمٌ لَا يَأْتِي فِيهَا بِمَا لَا يُفِيدُ... فهذا يَدُلُّ على أَنَّ كُلَّ اسْمَيْنِ يَجْرِيانِ على مَعْنَى مِنَ المَعَانِي وَعَيْنٍ مِنَ الأَعْيَانِ في لُغَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهَا يَفْتَضِي خِلافَ ما يَفْتَضِيهِ الأَخْرُ وَإِلَّا لَكَانَ الثَّانِي فَضْلَةً لَا يُحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِ... وَإِلَيْهِ أَشارَ المُبَرِّدُ في تَفْسِيرِ قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى (لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهاجًا)، قال فَعَطَفَ شِرْعَةً على مِنْهاجٍ لأنَّ الشِّرْعَةَ لِأَوَّلِ الشَّيْءِ وَالمِنْهاجَ لِمُعْظَمِهِ وَمُتَسَّعِهِ"

"If a matter has been referred to once, it is then known, and as such it is unconstructive to refer to it a second and a third time. The creator of language is wise and does not bring futile words into production... this, therefore, points to the fact that every two nouns carry two distinct meanings and essences in a single tongue, and as such, each

one requires a distinction opposite to that required by the other, or else the second is unwarranted surplus ... and *al-Mubarrid* indicated this in the interpretation of God's holy verse, (To each of you We have prescribed a law and a method), and said that He conjoined "law" to "method" because the former is for an issue's beginning, and the latter is needed for the extensive majority of it and what the issue embodies."

Whether Abū Hilāl considers an ancient wise man or God himself to be the creator of language, we can discern from this comment that he has faith in the ultimate wisdom and logic of the language that was created. Therefore, as is evident in this quotation, Abū Hilāl denied as "illogical" and "futile" the complete similarity in terms of meaning among synonyms in only two examples:

1) When the two lexical items belong to the same dialect, he said (ibid., 15):

"فَأَمَّا فِي لُغَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُحَالٌّ أَنْ يَخْتَلِفَ اللَّفْظَانِ وَالْمَعْنَى وَاحِدًا"

"And so, in a single tongue, it is impossible to find two different words with the exact same meaning."

2) When they are in the same sentence and connected to each other via a conjunction, he stated (ibid., 13)

"وَيُعْطَفُ الشَّيْءُ عَلَى الشَّيْءِ، وَإِنْ كَانَا يَرْجِعَانِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ وَاحِدٍ، إِذَا كَانَ فِي أَحَدِهِمَا خِلَافٌ لِلْآخَرِ، فَأَمَّا إِذَا أُرِيدَ بِالثَّنَائِي مَا أُرِيدَ بِالْأَوَّلِ فَعُطِفَ أَحَدُهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرِ خَطَأً"

"A thing is conjoined to another, even if they are derived from a single thing, if there is a difference between them. But if the second is intended to give the same meaning as the first, then conjoining one to the other is wrong."

Accordingly, using different names for the same thing in the same dialect is considered to be redundant. In addition, connecting two names that indicate the same thing via the use of a conjunction is considered to be wrong.⁵³ If this were not the case, it would be possible to find two different names indicating the same, signified in two or more different Arabic dialects. Abū Hilāl (ibid., 16) also stated that the existence of synonyms in Arabic does not necessarily mean that they refer to exactly the same thing, although they can be used to explain one another. As an example, one could explain the word *al-lubb* using the word *al-'aql*; however, *al-'aql* does not necessarily

⁵³ This is compatible with the discussion in Chapter Two of the present thesis regarding what Abū Hilāl considered to be 'wrong meaning'. It was deduced that, for Abū Hilāl, wrong meanings were the result of employing the incorrect grammatical structure, which caused the meaning to be confusing.

have the same semantic meaning as *al-lubb*. A contemporary of Abū Hilāl, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414 AH), had a similar perspective with regard to synonyms. For Abū Ḥayyān, synonyms did not always have to share the same meaning; rather, there could be subtle differences in the meanings. As he stated (1951, 60):

"إذا تشابهت الأسماء دَقَّ الفَرْقُ بَيْنَهُمَا"

"If names are similar, then the difference between them is extremely minute."

This discussion can also be supported by other examples from Abū Hilāl's lexicon, *al-Talkhīṣ*. Should one assume that Abū Hilāl's discussion in the introduction to *al-Furūq* could still be understood as being an attempt to deny the existence of synonyms, how then should these texts from *al-Talkhīṣ* be perceived? As Abū Hilāl said (1996, 42, 47, 48, 49, 57):

"ألوان الشَّعْر: الحُلبوب والحُلوك والغزبيب والمُسْحَنَكِ والحالك والمُخْلَوِك كُلُّ ذَلِكَ الْأَسْوَد"

"العمشُ والعَطَشُ والدَّوَشُ ضَعْفُ البَصَرِ وتَعْمِيضُهُ عِنْدَ النَّظَرِ"

"والبِرْشَمَةُ والبِرْهَمَةُ والرَّئُوتُ إِدَامَةُ النَّظَرِ"

"يُقَالُ لِلْأَنْفِ الْمَرْسِنُ وَالْمَعْطِسُ وَالْعَرْنِينُ وَالْحُرْطُومُ"

"فَصْلٌ فِي ذِكْرِ العُنُقِ: وَمِنْ أَسْمَائِهَا الجِيدُ والعُنُقُ والرَّقَبَةُ والكُرْدُ والهادي والتَّلِيلُ والعلاوة"

"In terms of hair colours: *al-ḥulbūb*, *al-ḥulkūk*, *al-ghirbīb*, *al-mushankik*, *al-ḥālik*, and *al-muḥlawlik* refer to all that is black."

"*Al-‘amash*, *al-ghaṭash*, and *al-dawash* mean weak-sighted or squinting when looking at things."

"The act of staring is defined by the words *al-barshama*, *al-barhama*, and *al-runuww*."

"The nose is also called *al-marsin*, *al-ma‘tis*, *al-‘irnīn*, and *al-khurṭūm*."

"Section on references to the neck: among its names are *al-jīd*, *al-‘unuq*, *al-raqaba*, *al-kard*, *al-hādī*, *al-talīl*, and *al-‘ilāwa*."

These texts by Abū Hilāl are clear evidence of his perspective on the issue of synonyms. It could be argued that, as Abū Hilāl provided several names for the same thing, each name indicated a specific attribute or characteristic of the item in question. An examination of the issue with reference to *al-Furūq* and *al-Talkhīṣ* indicates that, as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, studying Abū Hilāl's works comprehensively would result in a deep understanding of his works and ideas, and would raise questions about different ideas and judgments of modern scholars regarding his thoughts and opinions on various linguistic and literary issues.

With regard to *al-Furūq*, the introduction shows that Abū Hilāl was a reliable lexicographer as he presented a clear perspective on a sensitive issue, that of synonyms, and how one should approach this issue in order to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. In addition, allocating words to main categories according to their common meaning, as Abū Hilāl did in *al-Furūq*, led to the words being explained at two distinct levels:

- 1) Explaining the meaning of a given word in a phrase (explaining it using more than one word), as shown above.
- 2) Explaining a word by placing it under the umbrella of a general meaning that includes the meaning of a given word.

This method can be added to the other methods used to explain meanings of lexical items. Abū Hilāl's discussion in the introduction to *al-Furūq* brings us back to his didactical sense which prompted him to pay attention to his style of writing and the logical way of discussing different issues, as well as to pay attention to the way in which he structured this work. Abū Hilāl employed these two didactic aspects in most of his works, which made his books accessible to readers of different levels.

As discussed in point number three of this Chapter, with regard to Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning, the morphological form of the word is related to the meaning. In other words, for most Arabic words, varying the derivation of the original root would alter the meaning, which means that any letter/s added to the root would lead to a semantic extension of the word and vice versa. Abū Hilāl considered this concept in *al-Furūq*, stating (1977, 142,143):

"الْفَرْقُ خِلاَفُ الْجَمْعِ... وَالتَّفْرِيقُ جَعْلُ الشَّيْءِ مُفَارِقاً لِغَيْرِهِ حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ جَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا فَرْقاً بَعْدَ فَرْقٍ حَتَّى تَبَايَنَّا وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ التَّفْعِيلَ لِيُكَثِّرَ الْفِعْلَ"

"*Al-farq* (separation), is the opposite of *al-jam'* (joining) ... *al-tafrīq* is causing one thing to be different from other things until it is as though it has caused enough differences to distinguish between two things. Thus, the form *al-taf'īl* intensifies the verb in its action."

As can be seen, Abū Hilāl referred to the morphological discussion that involves differentiating amongst the meanings of several forms of a specific root that include extra letters (*ma'ānī ṣiyagh al-ziyāda*). Accordingly, the morphological measurement of the word *tafrīq* is *taf'īl*, which means it includes two more letters than does the noun

verb *farq*. Therefore, the word *tafrīq* has a wider semantic meaning than does the word *farq*.⁵⁴ In this example, it could be argued that the discussion of synonyms is irrelevant, and one cannot posit that Abū Hilāl denied the existence of synonyms since he made a distinction between these two words, even though they have the exact same root. This assumption could be refuted by arguing that the differentiation between these two words initially submits to a constant linguistic system that is applied to most Arabic words and is not of Abū Hilāl's invention. Alternatively, referring to this subtle meaning between *farq* and *tafrīq* is more compatible with Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning, which involves considering the precise form of the word that accurately represents the meaning.

Unlike in *al-Talkhīṣ*, examples or evidence from the *Qur'ān*, Prophetic utterances, or pre-Islamic poetry are scarce in *al-Furūq*. In addition, the source of language is not provided, as Abū Hilāl probably intended to provide the synopsis of the topic and to focus on differences among Arabic words in order not to distract beginner readers. Conversely, it could be argued that Abū Hilāl relied on secondary sources while compiling material for *al-Furūq*; as he stated in the introduction (1977, 9), nobody had previously written on this topic. In this lexicon, Abū Hilāl included words and terms from the *Qur'ān*, theology, jurisprudence and general words that people used in their conversations and discussions. This indicates that Abū Hilāl attempted to avoid repeating the material found in other dictionaries in order to fill the gap in the existing reference works. Moreover, the scope of this lexicon shows that Abū Hilāl was interested in the practical side of language, namely the language in use, which would serve his readers perfectly, particularly those involved in the field of literature, as he provided them with the kind of material that would help them recognise the deep and subtle meanings of different words. This is probably why Abū Hilāl did not include rare and archaic words; as he stated (*ibid.*, 9, 10),

"وَتَرَكْتُ الْغَرِيبَ الَّذِي يَوْلُ تَدَاوُلُهُ"

"I set aside the highly eloquent words that are not commonly used."

In this regard, one might argue that Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning that is discussed in the present thesis calls for the right word with the right morphological form in the right situation, even if it is a very rare word.

⁵⁴ The general Arabic rule for this concept is:

الزيادة في المبنى، زيادة في المعنى.

What Abū Hilāl meant by *gharīb* was strange or odd words, not rare ones, and there is a critical difference between these two kinds of words as rare words are not always odd. Also, in the beginning of this Chapter, there is differentiation between two kinds of *gharīb*, with one of them as a rhetorical term and the other as a linguistic one. It is also discussed that the rhetorical *gharīb* words are the ones which include semantic ambiguity and morphological incongruity, while linguistic *gharīb* words are the ones which are of high linguistic and semantic value that is only used by people who possess deep linguistic knowledge. Hence, it is more likely that Abū Hilāl here meant the rhetorical *gharīb* that Arabs themselves avoided to use.

Another point is that Abū Hilāl's main object in this book was to detect the subtle semantic differences between synonyms and not to compile a comprehensive dictionary, and, therefore, he avoided to include *gharīb* words as they are rarely used and one can seek them from *gharīb* specialised dictionaries.

It is worth noting that the content of Abū Hilāl's lexicons is arranged in chapters that focus on particular topics. This is unlike the usual organisation of lexicons in which words are listed according to their first or last letters. Therefore, finding a word in Abū Hilāl's lexicons involves knowing the category under which it is classified; otherwise, the reader would need to read the book from beginning till end, which might be an indication of one of Abū Hilāl's purposes in such an arrangement. This is unlike his lexicon *Baqiyyat al-Ashyā'*, in which the entries are listed alphabetically as he explained in the introduction (1997, 63). Therefore, this lexicon is the main topic of the next section.

- *Mu'jam Asmā' Baqiyyat al-Ashyā'* :

This lexicon is also a reflection of other aspects of Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset and the unique content of his lexicons and could be presented as additional proof of his theory of wording and meaning in which he emphasised the importance of using a specific word to convey an accurate meaning. This lexicon has a narrow focus because it is an attempt to present the names of the remaining parts of different substances or liquids. The utility of the content of this lexicon serves two of the recommended literary requirements:

1) It teaches succinctness. This means that instead of saying 'the remaining part of a drink', one would say *al-su`r* or *al-ṣubāba*, which convey the same meaning in fewer words.

2) It provides *Adab* seekers with precise words to express their meanings accurately, which was the aim of Abū Hilāl's project, as discussed previously.

Abū Hilāl supported his discussions with examples from the *Qur`ān*, the Prophet's Ḥadīth and with verses from pre-Islamic poetry, as these are the main sources in the Arabic language, as well as with references to language transmitters such as al-Farrā' and Abū `Ubayd. On some occasions, he mentioned seven verses from the same poem if they were related to the topic in question and followed them with an interpretation of the words⁵⁵ (ibid., 117).

The introduction to this lexicon contains a discussion on the importance of learning the Arabic language, the beauty of being eloquent and the repugnancy of committing linguistic mistakes. In addition, it includes the elevation and glorification of the Arabic language and states that knowledge seekers inevitably need Arabic in order to refine and improve their acquisition of knowledge. This is because, according to Abū Hilāl's discussion, Arabic plays a key role in most disciplines; thus, the more one masters it, the more one will master other branches of knowledge. This discussion by Abū Hilāl is supported by a large number of quotations from various scholars that he narrated with *isnād* (chain of transmitters) as a proven way of authentication, as is the case in most Arabic branches of knowledge. Presenting this topic in a serious way indicates the importance and critical status of the subject, and that one should pay it considerable attention. As an example of this discussion, Abū Hilāl said (ibid., 45):

"أَفْضَلُ الْعُلُومِ مَا كَانَ زِينَةً وَجَمَالاً لِأَهْلِهَا، وَعَوْنًا عَلَى حُسْنِ أَدَائِهَا، وَهُوَ عِلْمُ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ الْمَوْصَلُ إِلَى صَوَابِ النَّطْقِ، الْمُقِيمُ لِزَيْغِ اللِّسَانِ، الْمَوْجِبُ لِلْبَرَاغَةِ، الْمُنْهَجُ لِسَبِيلِ الْبَيَانِ بِجَوْدَةِ الْإِبْلَاحِ، الْمُوَدِّي إِلَى مَحْمُودِ الْإِفْصَاحِ، وَصِدْقِ الْعِبَارَةِ عَمَّا نُجِنَهُ النَّفُوسَ، وَيُكَيِّتُهُ الضَّمِيمُ مِنْ كَرِيمِ الْمَعَانِي وَشَرَائِفِهَا، وَمَا الْإِنْسَانُ لَوْلَا اللِّسَانُ... وَمِمَّا اخْتَصَّ بِهِ عِلْمُ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ مِنَ الْفَضِيلَةِ أَنْ كُلَّ عِلْمٍ مُفْتَقِرٌ إِلَيْهِ، وَلِهَذَا تَنَافَسَ فِيهِ جِلَّةُ الْعُلَمَاءِ، وَأَعَاظِمُ الْفُقَهَاءِ"

⁵⁵ This was the original way of interpreting words in poems; however, al-Akhfash al-Akbar Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, a student of Abū `Amr ibn al-`Alā', changed this way by inserting an interpretation under every single verse (Naṣṣār, 1988, 26). Therefore, it is evident that Abū Hilāl followed the traditional method of interpreting poetry.

“The best of all disciplines is that which embellishes and adds beauty to its people as well as assists in the disciplines’ good performance, and this is the discipline of Arabic language, which is the guide towards correct pronunciation, corrects deviations of the tongue, and is cause for craftsmanship. It is the method through which means of clarity and quality of expression are found, leading to commendable articulation, sincerity of expression about what the soul embodies and what the conscience conceals of the most gracious and honourable of meanings; for what is a human’s worth had it not been for the tongue(?) ... As far as the virtue specific to the discipline of Arabic language is concerned, it is that all domains of knowledge seek it, and hence it is the reason why the majority of scholars and grandest of jurists have competed in it.”

After his relatively long introduction, Abū Hilāl presented the material in this lexicon in alphabetical order, as stated previously. Similarly, the content of this lexicon could be used as adequate material to enable *Adab* seekers at various levels to improve their linguistic knowledge. Finally, a suggestion can be made here regarding the topic of this lexicon, based on the fact that one of Abū Hilāl’s project’s objectives was to educate *Adab* seekers with the necessary knowledge that refines their literary production and enhances their use of language. It seems that what Abū Hilāl intended to imply to his readership was that if *Adab* seekers have obtained the required knowledge that is presented in various books of literature and criticism, therefore, what remains for them is to learn words which indicate remaining parts of liquids and other objects as an essential complementary group of lexical items that might be needed in certain occasions.

5. Overview of Abū Hilāl’s Encyclopaedia of Proverbs, *Jamharat al-Amthāl*

As the present thesis aims to provide a comprehensive study of Abū Hilāl in order to reveal unknown aspects of his literary career, thoughts, insights and personal life, it is necessary to include his book *Jamharat al-Amthāl* (Encyclopaedia of Proverbs), which I refer to as *al-Jamhara* in the remainder of this section. Following the analyses and discussions in the previous chapters of this thesis, several findings and observations regarding Abū Hilāl’s literary and personal sides have been noted. It is hoped that including *al-Jamhara* in this study will serve the following purposes:

- 1) Consolidate and emphasise previous findings. In other words, it would provide a further investigation into what has been found about Abū Hilāl thus far.

- 2) Identify this encyclopaedia, which, to the best of my knowledge, has not previously been subjected to an in-depth study.

Abū Hilāl's *al-Jamhara* could be the subject of an independent monograph instead of being a chapter in a thesis; something that might be accomplished in a future project. At present, I will focus on several main aspects and observations concerning this encyclopaedia that are better suited to the content of the current thesis.

Al-Jamhara could be included under the discussion of Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset because it follows the form of the craft of lexicography in terms of arrangement and other aspects of its content, as indicated in the examples below. Although *al-Jamhara* is a monograph that is dedicated to the study of Arabic proverbs (approximately two thousand Arabic proverbs are discussed), it includes such a diversity of literary genres (a combination of poetic and prosaic arts) that one could consider it to be a comprehensive book of literature, an anthology of poetry, and a book that contains Arabic wisdom. The concept of fine literature, or 'the best of the best' as discussed by Orfali (2012), is as applicable to *al-Jamhara* as it is to Abū Hilāl's anthology *Dīwān al-Ma'ānī*, as mentioned in Section Three in the Introduction of this thesis.

Readers of *al-Jamhara* would find the didactic sense, which was discussed in Chapter Two, immediately apparent in the introduction in which Abū Hilāl stated that he intended to write the work in such a way that simple-minded readers would understand it as easily as would intelligent ones (1964, 6). With this aim in mind, Abū Hilāl chose to arrange the proverbs in alphabetical order to facilitate the process of browsing, in addition to the careful selection of texts and the clear style of writing in most of the examples. Moreover, Abū Hilāl's didactic sense is reflected in the introduction, in which he emphasised that *Adab* seekers should not neglect this genre of *Adab*, namely *al-Amthāl* (proverbs), which is as essential as are other genres of *Adab*.

The linguistic methods on which Abū Hilāl relied in order to produce his critiques, literary judgments and text evaluations in his book of literary criticism,⁵⁶ *al-Şinā'atayn*, and his methods of explaining lexical items in his lexicons, as discussed above, can all be found in *al-Jamhara*. In other words, most of the linguistic phenomena and methods that have been discussed in the present thesis with regard to different

⁵⁶ This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

linguistic and literary issues can be noted clearly and regularly in *al-Jamhara*. This consistency in the style and methods in his books reflects Abū Hilāl's rich and organised literary mindset and indicates that he considered target readers, methods and quality of how the knowledge of *Adab* was disseminated as priorities.

As discussed above, lexical and morphological discussions are often evoked in the same context due to the overlap between them, as both consider single words in terms of form and meaning. Therefore, whenever Abū Hilāl explained the constituent words of any proverb, he often engaged in morphological digression. An example of this can be seen in (1964, 113), when Abū Hilāl said:

- "والتَّوْطُّ كُلُّ مَا غُلِقَ عَلَى الْبَعِيرِ وَغَيْرِهِ، وَالْجَمْعُ الْأَنْوَاطُ، وَنَطْتُهُ نَوْطًا إِذَا عَلَّقْتَهُ، وَهُوَ مَنُوطٌ وَنَوْطٌ إِذَا سَمِيَ بِالْمَصْدَرِ. وَيُقَالُ: هُوَ مَنَاطٌ التَّرْيَا، أَي: بِحَيْثُ لَا يُدْرِكُ."

As can be seen in this quotation from *al-Jamhara*, the lexical and the morphological treatments are clearly incorporated (the lexical treatments are shown in red and the morphological ones in blue).

Abū Hilāl began by explaining the word *nawṭ* as a constituent word in the proverb subjected to the study in *al-Jamhara*, which is a lexical approach. He then referred to the plural form of this word, which is *al-anwāṭ*, and to the present form and the noun verb derived from the same root: *nuṭṭuh-u nawṭa-n*. Following this, he referred to the noun of the noun verb, *manūṭ* and *nawṭ*. Finally, he referred to the preposition of place of this root in a sentence, *huwa manāṭ al-Thurayyā*, accompanied by its meaning. Abū Hilāl alternated between the lexical and morphological treatments in order to provide as clear an explanation as possible and save the reader from being confused about the meaning. As mentioned previously, in order to teach the reader how the lexical item under study could be used effectively, Abū Hilāl presented it in a sentence and then elaborated on its meaning. This approach is pervasive in *al-Jamhara* (see 1964, 25, 86, 101, 116, 130, 143 and 155 for examples).

Abū Hilāl would resort to grammatical discussions when this was necessary to justify a particular grammatical use in a proverb that may be questioned by the reader. For example, he said (ibid., 118):

- "حَارَ الْعَيْنُ، وَلَمْ يَقُلْ حَارَتْ الْعَيْنُ؛ لِتَقَدَّمَ الْفِعْلُ عَلَى الْفَاعِلِ، وَلِأَنَّ الْاسْمَ الْمُؤَنَّثَ الَّذِي لَا عِلْمَ فِيهِ لِلتَّأْنِيثِ وَلَيْسَ تَأْنِيثُهُ حَقِيقِيًّا رَبُّمَا ذَكَرَ، مِثْلَ الْعَيْنِ، وَالْأُذُنِ، وَالسَّمَاءِ، وَالْأَرْضِ، وَقَدْ قَالَ الشَّاعِرُ: وَالْعَيْنُ بِالْإِثْمِدِ الْحَارِيِّ مَكْحُولٌ"

The Arabic language contains different linguistic forms vis-a-vis pronouns, particles and auxiliary signs depending on the gender of the subject in the sentence. Although gender is applied to both animate and inanimate objects, Arabic grammarians

differentiate between real and metaphoric genders. Thus, a grammarian would consider a real female to be one who is capable of giving birth; otherwise, the use would be metaphoric, as in al-Thamānīnī (2003, 188). An example of this can be found in Abū Hilāl's discussions above, in which the verb *ḥāra* in the proverb being studied is used without the feminine letter *tā* although the subject is an inanimate female *al-ʿayn* (metaphoric female), which means that the verb should be *ḥārat*. To avoid any confusion, Abū Hilāl provided an explanation of this grammatical phenomenon supported by a proof-text (*shāhid*) to clarify the use for readers, so as to prove that the usage was correct, and to acquaint them with this grammatical rule.

The previous discussions are clear indications that a deep understanding of and a considerable taste for literary texts cannot be accomplished effectively unless the morphological and grammatical structures of the texts being studied and their roles in delivering the elaborate meaning are fully comprehended. This is discussed in depth in the next chapter of this thesis.

Throughout *al-Jamhara*, as is the case in most of Abū Hilāl's works, it is evident that he paid specific attention to incorporating chains of transmitters into any significant narrative or linguistic information that he included in the discussion as part of a scholastic tradition that served the purpose of authentication (1964, 77, 152, 153, 157). The chains of transmitters that Abū Hilāl evoked include most of the authentic language and poetry transmitters that were mentioned earlier in this chapter. Moreover, Abū Hilāl narrated some prophetic traditions via chains of transmitters that can be traced to the Prophet Muḥammad, as can be seen in (ibid., 181, 207); which is probably to be expected because he was a famous student of the prominent encyclopaedic scholar Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī, as mentioned in Chapter Two.

Abū Hilāl was a notable admirer of Bashshār's poetry, as he repeatedly evoked his poems when they expressed an equivalent meaning to some proverbs that he explained, as in (ibid., 140, 215, 222); on occasion, Abū Hilāl remarked on Bashshār's poems using the expression *wa min ajwad ma qīl-a fī hāthā al-maʿnā qawl Bashshār*.

Abū Hilāl also employed his own poetry when it shared a similar meaning to that of a proverb; this approach preserved Abū Hilāl's poetry by enabling scholars to collect the poetry scattered across his and his successors' books as compensation for his lost *Dīwān*, as discussed in Chapter Five.

6- Conclusion:

This chapter discussed Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset, the features thereof, and its influence on the lexicons he compiled, and his encyclopaedia of proverbs *Jamharat al-Amthāl*. In addition, this chapter provided an overview of Abū Hilāl's lexicons and *al-Jamhara* by identifying his language resources, methods of explaining words, content of his dictionaries, and linguistic discussions. Abū Hilāl's contributions as a lexicographer have been neglected by most scholars who have studied him or were interested in him, despite the unique and original topics, rich content, and well-considered arrangement and presentation that characterise his lexicons. Most importantly, Abū Hilāl's lexical mindset could be considered a central feature that leads to a coherent understanding of two significant literary issues that he discussed, namely wording and meaning, and synonyms. Abū Hilāl's lexicographic approach was important in the discussion of these two literary issues as some modern scholars might not accurately perceive his discussion of these issues. Therefore, this chapter constitutes an attempt to reread Abū Hilāl's theory regarding these two literary issues and to develop new perspectives on his views by focusing on his lexicons, *al-Jamhara*, and *al-Ṣinā'atayn*. This analysis has revealed that Abū Hilāl was in pursuit of a solid foundation for managing the relationship between wording and meaning by identifying the correct and precise word to reflect meaning accurately, thus excluding any disorders, faults, or ambiguity from its semantic meaning. To achieve this purpose, as discussed in this chapter, Abū Hilāl compiled three lexicons in pursuit of this objective. In addition, based on his discussion in the introduction to *al-Furūq* and on several examples taken from *al-Talkhīṣ*, it appears that Abū Hilāl did not deny the existence of synonyms in the Arabic language. However, he discussed the non-existence of synonyms with reference to two specific scenarios - when they belong to the same dialect, and when they are connected via a conjunction. In these specific cases, each of the synonyms would indicate a specific meaning that the other does not, even if they are subsumed under one general category of meaning.

As a foundation for the previous discussion, this chapter began with a discussion of the concept of the word *al-kalima* in the Arabic literary heritage and its key role in the process of attaining and producing knowledge. The critical role of *al-kalima* has prompted scholars to compile dictionaries that approach *al-kalima* from different perspectives. These dictionaries reflect both the philological and cultural aspects of Arabic heritage as well as indicate the sensitive role of the concept of the word *al-*

kalima in different disciplines. Accordingly, *al-kalima* is a concept around which most of the sciences revolve as it constitutes the starting point that controls semantic features and leads to the accurate determination of meaning. Arabic scholars have studied several aspects related to *al-kalima*, such as the attributes and articulation of the letters, its morphological structure, its order and syntactic meaning in a sentence, its eloquence and defects, and different semantic meanings that *al-kalima* could convey in specific contexts. Therefore, it can be stated that *al-kalima* is a central concept in most sciences.

Furthermore, this chapter argued that dictionaries differ in terms of their objectives and topics as there are integral dictionaries that approach vocal items from several perspectives, while others are dedicated to a discussion of words that are grouped according to a specific category or topic. However, all these dictionaries share the function of providing explanations and interpretations of words representing specific meanings. This process involves different methods in various lexicons, including explaining meanings via:

- 1) Antonyms
- 2) Synonyms
- 3) Phrasing (explaining using more than one word)
- 4) Context
- 5) Images
- 6) Collocations

This chapter also provided a discussion of semantics. This means that a distinction amongst the following aspects was made: spontaneous and intended semantic development of the word, direct and allegorical use of the word, the lexicon and terminological meaning of the word, and semantic bias. Identifying these aspects provided a clearer concept of the semantic journey of a given lexical item; thus, the use and the context in which a given lexical item is used would be of high accuracy.

This discussion is a presentation of the practical side of how scholars have perceived and addressed the concept of *al-kalima* in different branches of Arabic heritage of knowledge. Shākir's theoretical and philosophical perspectives regarding the concept of *al-kalima* were presented with a comparison to Abū Hilāl's view, since these two perspectives constitute a comprehensive understanding of *al-kalima* from a theoretical and practical standpoint. Shākir's perspective of *al-kalima* can be considered as justification of the considerable attention that scholars have paid to *al-*

kalima, as he remarked on the pivotal role that *al-kalima* plays in the realm of epistemology. For Shākir, *al-kalima* was a dominant concept that determined the shape and value of Arabic culture in various periods, and was the starting point from which he began to recognise the internal and external world in such a way that his life revolved around it. Thus, for Shākir, *al-kalima* acted as a gateway to understanding existence and its various elements, without which, culture - including science, literature and philosophy - would have no way of making sense. This is exemplified in Shākir's analysis of a word from one of al-Mutanabbī's verses, in which the former revealed an in-depth sense of *al-kalima* and its influential functional form inclusive of its various elements, namely its phonetic, morphological, and semantic aspects. All these aspects should be considered in order to achieve a sufficient and precise semantic meaning. Following this discussion, a new perspective on Abū Hilāl's theory of wording, meaning and synonyms was developed.

As for Abū Hilāl, he compiled three lexicons as justification of his position regarding wording, meaning and synonyms. However, most of these lexicons are absent from the studies of Abū Hilāl and his works. Therefore, this chapter provided an overview of Abū Hilāl's three lexicons, *al-Talkhīṣ*, *al-Furūq* and *al-Baqāyā*, as a practical analysis of the issue of wording and meaning. Throughout the material that these lexicons present and in the introductions to *al-Talkhīṣ* and *al-Baqāyā*, Abū Hilāl's awareness of the sophisticated relationship and the overlap between wording and meaning is evident. Moreover, his discussion shows that any disorder in the use of these two concepts would cause noticeable ambiguity in the semantics of a given text. This view is supported by other prominent grammarians such as ibn Jinnī, al-Thamānīnī and ibn Ya'īsh, who explained and clarified the sensitivity of the meaning to any variation in the morphological structure of the word.

Evoking syntactical and morphological perspectives on the literary issue of wording and meaning would lead to a qualitative comprehension of this subject and provide insight into Abū Hilāl's understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of this topic.

In his *al-Jamhara*, Abū Hilāl employed similar methods to those he employed in his lexicons regarding methods of explaining the meaning of constituent lexical items of proverbs, and explaining morphological and grammatical issues that are related to the structure of proverbs that he included in this book. However, *al-Jamhara* could be considered a more comprehensive book of literature than merely one of proverbs as

Abū Hilāl included it a variety of poetic and prosaic arts that are related to proverbs in one way or another.

The major role that grammatical structure plays in the accuracy of meaning when composing poetry or prose was discussed in Chapter Two. In this chapter, it was evident that the morphological process of word derivation has direct impact on altering the meaning of a word's root as it guarantees the most accurate semantic interpretation of the word. Therefore, changing the morphological form of an Arabic word has serious implications in terms of semantics, which means that it is not only selecting the right word amongst different alternatives that matters when composing text, but also that the morphological form should be considered in order to achieve the best semantics. It is also evident that being acquainted with morphological rules that govern the derivation of words is a critical aspect that introduces to a sufficient use of Arabic lexicons.

Besides the linguistic content of Abū Hilāl's lexicons, the cultural features of the Fourth AH century are also evident. *Al-Talkhīṣ*, in particular, reflects the epistemological and industrial revolutions of the time to the extent that it could be considered an archive that preserves aspects of civilian life of the Fourth AH century.

By studying Abū Hilāl's books, it appears that he intended to supply his readers with the necessary knowledge to avoid poor compositions and mistakes, while simultaneously increasing their literary sense. Abū Hilāl also wished to provide his readers with the necessary materials to enrich the content of their compositions and to define the relationship that combines their words with their meanings, thus allowing them to achieve semantic and literary competence. In other words, Abū Hilāl included the appropriate and integral material necessary for the art of speech in his works.

In summary, Abū Hilāl's lexicons and *al-Jamhara* are practical examples of his theories of wording and meaning, and synonyms, as well as being an indication of his organisational skills and knowledge as a lexicographer. Moreover, they include rich linguistic material that is of benefit in the study of the employment of morphological and syntactic discussions in literary criticism, which is the main topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Four:

Employment of Morphological and Syntactical Discussions in the Context of Literary Criticism in Abū Hilāl's Books

Introduction:

In Chapters Two and Three, we saw that linguistic aspects from Arabic morphology, syntax, and lexicography play a key role in expressing and delivering meanings clearly and accurately in different types of compositions. This is to say that the morphological structures of the word, grammatical structures and features, and words selected from among various alternatives, are factors that dominate the art of speech and greatly determine the literary status of any text being subjected to study or criticism. Therefore, the more these factors are identified and considered in text analyses, the deeper, clearer and more attained are the insights into key internal and external elements thereof. This is because one can argue that morphology, syntax, and semantics are rules originally deduced from the way that language functions, whether theoretically or in usage, which makes discarding these rules from the process of literary criticism questionable. Although some literary verdicts by classic critics regarding meanings of poetry or prose seem not to consider these rules at first glance, by close reading and careful analysis it can be seen that these rules contribute critically to formulating literary verdicts as is shown in the analyses of the previous chapters.

Furthermore, classic linguists and critics noticed the overlapping relationship between meanings and *al-i'rāb* (grammatical or functional analysis) and how these two concepts interact and exchange roles in speech. Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH) discussed this issue in his book *al-Khaṣā'is*, in a section titled (Chapter on the interplay between meaning and declension (case endings)) (باب في تجاذب المعاني والإعراب). He stated (1974, 3/ 255):

"وذلك أنك تجد في كثير من المنثور والمنظوم الإعراب والمعنى متجاذبين، هذا يدعوك إلى أمر، وهذا يمنعك منه، فمتى اعتورا كلاماً أمسكت بعروة المعنى، وارتحت لتصحيح الإعراب."

"This owing to the fact that you find in much of prose and poetry that the declension and the meaning pull apart from one another, where one leads you to one interpretation, and the other renders that interpretation impossible. Therefore, once declension and meaning have grappled with a certain part of speech, you will be able to grasp the right meaning and be at ease in correcting the declension."

Similarly, he argued that (ibid., 1/ 283):

ألا ترى إلى فرق ما بين تقدير الإعراب وتفسير المعنى... فإن أمكنك أن يكون تقدير الإعراب على سمت تفسير المعنى، فهو ما لا غاية وراءه، وإن كان تقدير الإعراب مخالفاً لتفسير المعنى، تقبلت تفسير المعنى على ما هو عليه، وصححت طريق تقدير الإعراب.

“Do you not see a difference between *taqdīr al-i‘rāb* [the action of finding the precise grammatical verdict that fit the grammatical function of a specific word in a sentence] and the interpretation of meaning(?) ... for if it is possible for you that the estimation of the declension be guided by the interpretation of the meaning, then all will be on the right track. Yet if the estimation of the declension opposed the interpretation of the meaning, you would accept the interpretation of the meaning as-is and would correct the method of estimating the declension.”

Therefore, in his philosophical view⁵⁷, regarding the relationship between *al-i‘rāb* and meaning, ibn Jinnī suggested that the priority, in the case of the two opposing each other, should be granted to the meaning, and *al-i‘rāb* should be fixed in order to make it suit the meaning. As a result, it can be argued that different types of *i‘rāb* are accepted as long as they lead to the right meaning. As such, the meaning should not be subjected to any modifications if a certain type of *i‘rāb* is not suited to it. However, these two concepts cannot contradict each other, otherwise, the text would lose its sense. This means that grammatical rules are correct if they lead to the correct meaning, and the meaning is correct only when grammatical rules are well considered. Based on this, in his book *Majālis Tha‘lab*, Tha‘lab (d. 291 AH) stated that (1949, 310):

لا يصح الشعر ولا العريب ولا القرآن إلا بالنحو، النحو ميزان ذلك كله.

“Poetry, highly eloquent words, or the Quran cannot be correct except through correct grammar, as it is the balance of these all.”

⁵⁷ In his books *Sirr Şinā‘at al-i‘rāb* and *al-Khaṣā‘iṣ*, Ibn Jinnī provided myriad accounts of language philosophy. By using the term (philosophy), I mean scrutinising language structure and the use of language in order to extract the logic and the reason of language rules and to find out how language structure and meaning interplay. Germann and Najafi (2021), in the preface of their edited book on philosophy and language, discussed the matter of “philosophy language” and argued that “the philosophical dimension of the scholarly investigation of language has been neglected by contemporary research”. Also, Germann’s paper (2021), in the same volume, intensively discussed ibn Jinnī’s chapter on the causes of grammar.

What is meant here by *al-naḥw* (the grammar) are the rules that govern Arabic speech in all its elements and control its semantics. For this reason, *al-naḥw*, in its early stages, was known as the science of Arabic (*‘ilm al-‘Arabiyya*). Although al-Jurjānī (d. 471 AH) is known as a rhetorician, he was called Abd al-Qāhir al-naḥwī (al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d., 442) as an indication of the high status and the privilege of *al-naḥw* over other Arabic sciences.

The previous discussions show that Arabic linguistics is a fundamental element of speech evaluation. This can be observed, whether theoretically or practically, in critics' traditions of literary criticism. In other words, classic literary critics were aware of the importance of Arabic linguistics in terms of evaluating various literary compositions and could be considered leaders of this discipline of Arabic sciences, namely *al-naḥw*. Abū Muḥammad al-Khashshāb (d. 576 AH) described Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī and his teachers Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Āmidī (d. 370 AH) as ones that people follow and imitate in terms of *i‘rāb* criticism (ibid., 215). This means that *al-naḥw* was employed in literary criticism in order to refine literary compositions and ensure correct meaning. Also, al-Khashshāb's statement indicates that considering grammatical features in literary criticism is a craft of which not every critic is capable. Furthermore, al-Khashshāb looked at *al-naḥw* and literary criticism as indispensable concepts in text evaluation and implied that, to ensure solid literary judgments, they should not be separated.

Finally, the role of *al-naḥw* in the context of literary criticism should not be considered to constitute a division between what is correct and what is wrong, as discussed by Naṣīf, quoted by Abd al-Laṭīf (2000, 9). In other words, it should not turn into an obsession for achieving an ideal example of language that excludes other possible alternatives. Rather, this intrusion could be considered as a creative approach to literary texts that benefits from most important linguistic components that control meaning and that lead to attaining the best semantics.

For all these discussions, this chapter sheds light on the linguistic factors that influenced Abū Hilāl's works of lexicography and literary criticism, and on how he implemented his linguistic knowledge in his lexicographic and literary criticism discussions. In other words, this chapter asks the following questions: How did Abū Hilāl employ his knowledge of morphology and syntax in his lexicographic and literary criticism discussions, and how did his linguistic insights affect his literary judgments? The discussion in this chapter includes:

1- Examples of discourses in which Abū Hilāl prompted linguistic discussions through his lexicographical and literary criticism works, followed by an analysis and discussion of his linguistic opinions and views:

A- Morphological Discussions.

B- Syntactical Discussions.

2- Evaluation of Abū Hilāl's syntax and morphological status and an attempt to identify the grammatical school to which he belongs.

3- Discussion of the concept of poetic licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*) and its influence on the poetic tradition.

4- Assessment of how Abū Hilāl perceived poetic licence in his critiques of various poetic verses.

5- Conclusion.

1- Examples of Discourses in which Abū Hilāl Prompted Linguistic Discussions through his Lexicographical and Literary Criticism Works, Followed by an Analysis and Discussion of his Linguistic Opinions and Views:

Dealing with a language involves considering all the overlapping elements that contribute to formulating its system. In this context, language elements mean sciences that are subdivided as branches of language as a whole. Regarding Arabic, these sciences include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, rhetoric, prosody, lexicography, and poetry composition. Discussions of any element of language sciences cannot be isolated from discussions of others as they are inherently related to each other. For this reason, Abū Hilāl's lexicographical works involve morphological discussions, and his literary criticism works involve morphological and grammatical discussions. Morphology is needed more when using lexicons since they primarily deal with single words in a specific order; hence, morphology helps in identifying the structure and constituent letters of the word itself. On the other hand, grammar is needed more in literary criticism since the latter deals with specific structures or compositions that form and determine meaning. In the following lines, examples of linguistic discussions are presented for further clarification. Following the logical order, morphological discussions are approached first; syntactical discussions follow.

A- Morphological Discussions:

١- (١٩٩٦، ٣٧)

"والجُثْمَانُ والجُسْمَانُ الجِسْمُ، وكذلك الأَجْلَادُ والتَّجَالِيدُ. وليسَ للتَّجَالِيدِ واحدٌ ولا للأَجْلَادِ. ولا نَعْرِفُ للجُثْمَانِ ولا الجُسْمَانِ جَمْعاً"

(1996, 37)

"*Al-juthmān* and *al-jusmān* mean the body, as do *al-ajlād* and *al-tajālīd*. We know no singular form of *al-tajālīd* or *al-ajlād*, nor do we know a plural form for *al-juthmān* or *al-jusmān*."

As Abū Hilāl mentions various appellations for the human body, he confronts some vocal forms that require further discussion regarding their morphology, structure, and their capability to accept different forms. This further discussion is necessary as the vocal forms in question overlap with others and might cause some confusion for novice readers. For this reason, Abū Hilāl alludes that the words *al-juthmān* and *al-jusmān* are singular and that there are no plural forms for either word, while the words *buldān* (countries) and *judrān* (walls), for example, are plural forms of the singular words *balad* and *jidār*, respectively. It is worth noting that there are certain singular forms that accept this plural form, which are: *faʿl* like *baṭn* (pl. *buṭnān*), *faʿal* like *thakar* (*thukrān*) and *faʿīl* like *raghīf* (*rughfān*). Although *juthmān* and *jusmān* share the same form as *buldān* and *judrān*, they are singular and there are no plural forms allocated to them. This may be because they are already in a plural form so their morphological structure cannot accept a double plural form. Otherwise, this issue could be attributed to the concept of *al-samāʿ* and *al-istiʿmāl*, which means there is no justification and it has been heard from and always been used by Arabs in this way. Yet the words *ajlād* and *tajālīd* are real plural forms and meanings, but there are no singular forms allocated to them.⁵⁸

There could be another justification for the absence of the plural form of the two lexical items *al-jusmān* and *al-juthmān*. According to *Lisān al-ʿArab*, these items have

⁵⁸ The plural form *tafaʿīl* is applicable to any singular quinqueliteral form (of five letters) which includes a vowel before the last letter such as: *taqsīm* (*taqāsīm*), *takhrīj* (*takhārīj*) and *timthāl* (*tamāthīl*). However, the items in question here belong to a group of irregular plural forms with no identified singular forms (have not been heard spoken by Arabs), such as *taʿāyīb* and *takāthīb*.

two meanings: they are an appellation of the whole body of a living thing, or an appellation of the human organs combined. Therefore, it appears that these words can accurately represent two meanings, so they can be meant to signify a singular and a plural, and both aspects are represented in the morphological form of the two words. For this reason, finding a plural form for these words seems to be unnecessary and would bring redundant words into the language, a notion that Abū Hilāl's statement - mentioned in the previous chapter - argues against "because the creator of language", he asserts, "is wise and does not bring futile words into production".

These issues have led to lengthy discussions by morphologists, however, Abū Hilāl may have had no desire to engage with these discussions to keep the topic of the lexicon focused and accessible to a greater variety of readership. The morphological issue of the plural can be seen in the section called *jam' al-taksīr* (irregular or broken plural), which indicates the plural form with an alteration occurring in its singular form in terms of morphological structure. This alteration can include adding or omitting letters, altering diacritical marks, or a combination of these things, as discussed by al-Khaṭīb (2003, 772).

٢- (١٩٩٦، ٣٧)

"الْمَحْدُودَةُ النَّائِضَةُ فَوْقَ الْفَقَاءِ، وَالْجَمْعُ قَمَاجِدٌ وَقَمَاحِيدٌ"

(1996, 37)

"*Al-qamaḥduwa* is the protruding bone above the nape, the plural is *qamāḥid* and *qamāḥīd*."

Similarly, in this example, Abū Hilāl mentions the plural form of one of the items he included in his lexicon. The morphological measurement⁵⁹ of this plural's form is *fa'ālil* and *fa'ālīl*, which is called *muntahā al-jumū'* (the ultimate plural) and is included under the broken plural. As discussed previously, the alterations of this form include adding and omitting extra letters as well as an alteration in the diacritical marks. This form of the plural is allocated to quadrilateral and quinqueliteral forms (forms of four and five letters), like the word *safarjal* and its plural form *safārij* and *safārīj*. As was

⁵⁹ Morphologists have chosen three letters for this morphological measurement (*al-mīzān al-ṣarfī*). The letters are: Fa, 'A and La. Each of these letters represents the constituent letter of the lexical item that is being measured. The order of this measurement's letters would be changed, omitted, or repeated if the order of letters of the original lexical item is changed, omitted, or repeated.

mentioned previously, some irregular plural forms can cause the omission of some letters from the singular form. Accordingly, the *fa‘ālīl* form like in *qamāḥīd* includes an extra added vowel (*yā‘*) as compensation (*‘iwaḍ*) for the omitted letter in the singular form. Abū Hilāl mentions the ultimate plural forms (*ṣiyagh muntahā al-jumū‘*) of this lexical item as part of the various linguistic topics that a lexicon usually approaches, which include clarifying the sophisticated plural forms of uncommonly used lexical items. Yet, this lexical item can also accept the sound form of the feminine plural (*jam‘ mu‘annath sālim*), so that it would be *qamaḥduwāt*; (*qamḥada*) according to *Lisān al-‘Arab*.

٣- (١٩٩٦، ٤٠)

"والسكك صغرُها ولصوفُها بالرأس (أي الأذن)، رَجُلٌ أَسَكُّ، وامرأةٌ سَكَّاءٌ.

والعَضَفُ إقبالُها على الوجهِ، رَجُلٌ أَعْضَفُ، وامرأةٌ عَضُفَاءٌ.

والقَتْفُ عِظْمُها، رَجُلٌ أَقْتَفُ، وامرأةٌ قَتَفَاءٌ.

والماضي مِنْ جَمِيعِ ذَلِكَ فَعَلْتُ، وَالْمُسْتَقْبَلُ (تَفْعَلُ)، مِثْلُ: عَضَفْتُ تَعْضَفُ، ... وَسَكَّيْتُ يَا رَجُلُ تَسَكُّ."

(1996, 40)

"*Al-sakak* are the small ones (meaning, the ears), and pinned to the head, thus dubbing a man as *asakk* and a woman as *sakkā‘*."

"*Al-ghaḍaf* is to be close to the face, thus dubbing a man as *aghḍaf* and a woman as *ghaḍfā‘*."

"*Al-qanaf* is to have large ears, thus dubbing a man as *aqnaf* and a woman as *qanfā‘*."

"The past tense form of all of these is *fa‘ilat* and the future tense form is (*taf‘al-u*), like: *ghaḍifat taghḍaf-u*, ... *sakikt-a ya rajul-u tasakk-u*."

These lines include explanations of attributes and defects that could occur in the human ear, as well as the feminine and masculine forms of how to describe a person. The masculine *af‘al* and the feminine *fa‘lā‘* are morphological forms used to describe colours like *aḥmar* (*ḥamrā‘*), attributes like *ashhab* (*shahbā‘*), and disabilities like *a‘raj* (*arjā‘*) (al-Thamānīnī, 2003, 607; al-Khaṭīb, 2017, 1058). Therefore, as this part of the lexicon is meant to explain words that indicate defects and attributes of specific organs of the human body, Abū Hilāl explains the correct morphological forms of words used to describe female and male persons, as these words are perhaps unfamiliar to some readers.

As a complementary, yet essential, morphological approach to these nouns, Abū Hilāl draws his readers' attention to the past and present forms of verbs derived

from them. The reason for mentioning the past and present forms of the verb is to understand to which morphological group these verbs belong.⁶⁰ This can be identified by the diacritical marks of the second letter of the verb's original root which is called *'ayn al-kalima*, representing the second letter of the morphological measurement of the word. For the verbs in question here, the past morphological form is *fa'il-a*, and the present is *yaf'al-u*. The diacritical mark of the second letter of the past and the present form is an essential concept that affects both form and meaning of the verb. It is evident that Abū Hilāl was aware of this concept as, for him, the accuracy of meaning by the correct form of the word is all that matters, as discussed in the previous chapter.

This clarification is essential, especially for the last verb he mentioned, *sakikt-a*, *tasakk-u*, which is *fi'l 'aṣamm* (a solid verb) and includes two similar letters at the end of its form that lead to *idghām* (incorporation). This incorporation causes the diacritical mark of this verb to be hidden, and the apparent form to become ambiguous, yet its morphological measurement remains the same (*yaf'al-u*). For this reason, Abū Hilāl mentions the past form of this verb attached with a pronoun so that the incorporation is unnecessary and therefore the diacritical mark of the second letter is clear and the morphological group to which this verb belongs is identified. The final present form undergoes several morphological steps that lead to this final form: *taskak-u*, then *tasa(k)k-u*, and finally *tasakk-u*. As can be seen, the first form is the standard morphological one that represents the category to which this verb belongs. However, due to phonological causality, an alteration is made to the present form of the verb. The second step includes transferring the diacritical mark from the first (k) to the quiescent (s), then, the form would have two similar letters. One of them is *sākin*

⁶⁰ In Arabic morphology, trilateral verbs (of three letters) are divided into six groups according to the diacritical marks of the second letter of past and present forms of the verb (*'ayn al-kalima*). The forms that represent each group are: *fa'al-a* (past), *yaf'ul-u* (present), *fa'al-a*, *yaf'il-u*; *fa'al-a*, *yaf'al-u*; *fa'il-a*, *yaf'al-u*; *fa'ul-a*, *yaf'ul-u*; and *fa'il-a*, *yaf'il-u* (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 273; Ibn Ya'īsh, 1973, 67). Also, in Arabic morphology, there is a concept called *al-mīzān al-ṣarfī* (the morphological measure or metre) which determines the form of the word and the morphological category to which it belongs. For this morphological measure, three letters (fa, 'a, la) are used to formulate a form of three letters that represent the origin letters of each Arabic word, and any extra or omitted letters are reflected in this measure. See the previous footnote.

(quiescent) while the other contains a diacritical mark. This condition causes *idghām* (incorporation), which leads to the final form as mentioned.⁶¹

Abū Hilāl avoided these lengthy and detailed discussions yet referred to them by comprehensive examples that provide hints on the necessary morphological topics regarding the lexical items he mentioned.

(٤٠، ١٩٩٦) -٤

"يُقَالُ شَعْرٌ وَشَعْرٌ، وَبِالتَّحْرِيكِ أَجْوَد."

(1996, 40)

"Both *sha‘ar* and *sha‘r* are used for ‘hair’, but the version with an opened diacritical mark is finer."

The morphological and linguistic issue indicated in this example involves trilateral nouns in which the second letter (*‘aynuh-u*) is *ḥarf-un ḥalqīyy-un* (guttural letter).⁶² With this type of word, the second letter could be with *fath-a* (open letter) or *sukūn* (quiescence). However, Abū Hilāl used a preferable approach to the form which is with *fath-a* (open letter) and considered it to be of higher quality in terms of language. Since favouring a certain form of a word over another should not be done without evidence from *al-samā‘* (oral transmission) or *al-qiyās* (analogy), the below discussion investigates the accuracy of Abū Hilāl’s preference. According to al-Khalīl, as narrated by Sībawayh (1982, 4: 115), a vocal form is disliked by Arabs, and according to morphologists, the first two letters are phonologically heavy to articulate when they have two similar diacritical marks, so Arabs resort to *sukūn* (quiescence) in order to lighten the articulation.⁶³ However, the case with two open first letters of a vocal form is different as Arabs find it easy to articulate. Also, in a different part, Sībawayh mentioned another foundational linguistic rule which is that the second letter of a word should not be with *sukūn* (ibid., 4: 116). Based on these two principles deduced from the Arabic language, Abū Hilāl’s verdict seems to be supported by solid references and can be considered an accurate verdict.

⁶¹ For more detail about this morphological process, see *Kitāb Sībawayh* (1982, 3: 529).

⁶² There are six guttural letters in Arabic: *al-hamza*, *al-hā‘*, *al-‘ayn*, *al-ghayn*, *al-ḥā‘* and *al-khā‘*.

⁶³ "“Heaviness” and “lightness” are categories frequently applied to phonology and phonetics and, similarly to consonants, vowels, and glides” Germann and Calero (2021, 51, footnote: 10).

Lisān al-‘Arab mentions two ways of articulating the word *sha‘r/sha‘ar* without further discussion regarding the preferred way of articulation. The way of articulating the second letter of a vocal form is a linguistic and morphological problem that overlaps with phonological and phonetic considerations. In this regard, it can be noticed that the concept of *al-takhfīf* (lightening) has great impact on the way that Arabs articulate words and the way they structure letters in a single word. Accordingly, it can be noted that in any vocal form that has two ways of articulation, one of which is heavy and the other light, it is usually the light form that is preferred or is considered *faṣīḥ* (eloquent). As for Abū Hilāl’s statement, it seems that he wanted to mention the two ways of articulating the lexical item in question with a hint indicating further information about the phonological and morphological issue. The latter could lead interested readers to a broader discussion of the topic. Although Abū Hilāl’s verdict is summarised in a single word, it indicates his extensive knowledge of language sciences that the issues can be shown in such a short lexical presentation.

٥- (١٩٩٦، ٤٢)

"وَشَعْرٌ مُشَعَانٌ⁶⁴: مُنْتَقَشٌ، وَقَدْ اشْتَعَانُ اشْتَعِينَانًا."

(1996, 42)

"*Mush‘ānn-un* hair: frizzy, it has *ish‘ānn-a ish‘īnān-an*."

The adjective (*mush‘ānn*) in question here indicates a specific trait of human hair. Abū Hilāl then mentioned the sixliteral verb (*ish‘ānn*)⁶⁵ that is derived from this word and which has the morphological measurement *if‘āl*. In Arabic morphology, the noun-verb of verbs of this measurement requires the *if‘īlāl* form (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 409); therefore, the noun-verb of the verb (*ish‘ānn*) is (*ish‘īnān*). Mentioning the noun-verb in this context illustrates several aspects of its morphological structure. First, it appears that the letter *mīm* at the beginning of the adjective is an extra letter, which means that it is not an original letter of the root. Second, *hamzat al-waṣl* (the conjunctive hamza) is still needed in the noun-verb as it enables one to articulate the first *sākin* (quiescent)

⁶⁴ The editor of this lexicon wrote the last letter of this word with a nunation (tanwīn) only, while the correct orthographic form of this lexical item includes rigid *nūn* (*nūn mushaddada*) and nunation, as I stated it here. See *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Sha‘ana).

⁶⁵ This word is derived from the root *sh-a‘-na*. Therefore, any letter that is not in the original root should be considered extra and should be reflected as it is in the morphological measurement.

letter (*shīn*). Lastly, the vowel *alif* is inverted to another vowel (*yā*) to be compatible with the diacritical mark of the previous letter (*‘ayn*). Just mentioning these examples in morphology avoids lengthy discussions regarding their morphological structure. This is because each example represents a group of similar words that share the same morphological form, meaning that the same morphological process is applicable to the whole group. Beyond this, the more letters the verb includes, the heavier its noun-verb is to articulate, which means that this verb and its noun-verb would be used less, based on the concept of *al-takhfīf* (lightening) alluded to previously. For this reason, Abū Hilāl’s awareness of the importance of the correct vocal form to represent the intended meaning prompted him to refer to the verb and the noun-verb of this adjective so that one can avoid erroneous usage that might negatively influence the semantics of the context in which this word and its different forms are evoked.

٦- (١٩٩٦، ٤٣)

"فإذا لم يكن في وجهه كثير شعر فالرجل نط من قوم نط، ويطاط على غير قياس، وأجاز أبو زيد رجلاً نطاً، ولم يجره غيرُه، وهو قياسٌ."

(1996, 43)

"If a man has little facial hair, he is considered *thaṭṭ*, the plural of which is *thuṭṭ*, or *thiṭāṭ* as an irregular verb. Abu Zaid said that *athaṭṭ*, by analogy, is also permissible, but no one else concurred."

As alluded to in the previous chapter, Abū Hilāl bolsters his discussion by referring to authentic language transmitters and sources. In this context, he states that a certain form of the word in question has only been permitted by Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī al-Baṣrī (d. 215 AH). This permission by Abū Zayd is based on *al-samā*‘ (oral transmission) according to *Lisān al-‘Arab*. However, in contrast to Abū Hilāl’s claim, the *athaṭṭ* form is also narrated by Ibn al-A‘rābī, not only by Abū Zayd. Abū Hilāl usually narrates from several authentic transmitters who relayed narration from Abū Zayd (Naṣṣār, 1988, 80) such as al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 216 AH), Abū ‘Ubayd (d. 224 AH), Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn Ḥātim al-Bāhilī (d. 231 AH) and al-Māzinī (d. 247 AH), in a chain of transmission that he mentions at the beginning of any narration, as can be seen in *al-Ḥathth ‘alā Ṭalab al-‘Ilm*, *Mu‘jam al-Baqāyā*, and *Faḍl al-‘Aṭā’ ‘alā al-‘Uṣr*. However, in this statement, Abū Hilāl omits these names, perhaps because he already had Abū Zayd’s books available to him and wished to avoid lengthening his lexicon, or he might have done so to indicate that this form of the word is only mentioned by Abū Zayd

depending on *al-samāʿ* (oral transmission), which means that it is an Arabic tribal dialect that Abū Zayd had heard.

Another point Abū Hilāl refers to in this text is the morphological form *al-ṣifa al-mushabbaha bi-ism al-fāʿil* (adjective assimilated to the active participle) which is substantiated in the word *thatt* and its plural form (*thutt*). According to *Lisān al-ʿArab*, there are other plural forms of this word, like *thuttān*, *thiṭaṭah* and *thiṭāt*, which Abū Hilāl ignored - perhaps because he mainly tried to provide the meaning of the word and a summary of its standard derivation based on *al-qiyās* (analogy) as he stated at the end of the quotation.⁶⁶ This morphological form *faʿl*, like in *thatt*, indicates permanent traits in animate or inanimate things (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 495), and in this case the word indicates a permanent facial trait that is applicable to a human male. The form *faʿl* and its plural *fuʿl* are derived from *al-fiʿl al-lāzim* (the intransitive verb) *faʿul-a*, which usually indicates diseases, disabilities and *al-ḥilya* (beauty) (ibid., 497). In order to present the plural form of the word *thatt*, Abū Hilāl does not state that the form *thutt* is the plural. Instead, he employs it directly in an example so that the reader would know two things: the plural form and how to use it in speech. Hence, Abū Hilāl attempts to hint about lengthy morphological discussions as well as provide various forms of the word in question by clarifying the linguistic source of the given lexical item, whether it is *samāʿ* or *qiyās*.

(٥٣، ١٩٩٦) -٧

"وَيُقَالُ اتَّعَزَّ الصَّبِيُّ، تَقْدِيرُهُ ادَّكَرَ، إِذَا حَرَجَ مُقَدَّمُ أُسْنَانِهِ."

(1996, 53)

"A boy is said to have *ittaghar*, on the level of *iddakar*, if his front teeth are protruding."

Before Abū Hilāl explains the meaning of the verb in question here, he refers to another verb as clarification of the morphological form and measurement of the verb in question. Although the analogy might not be perceived immediately, the morphological analyses of the verbs reveal the relationship and mutual characteristics that make these two verbs similar, or that employ one of them to explain the other. The morphological form of the verb *iddakar-a*, which has the morphological measurement *iftaʿal-a* (form viii), refers to a certain section of Arabic morphology;

⁶⁶ Further below is a discussion regarding Abū Hilāl's insights on the three aspects that constitute the validity of form and content of Arabic language: *al-samāʿ* (oral transmission), *al-qiyās* (analogy), and *al-istiʿmāl* (language usage).

therefore, it is employed here as representative of that section since it is mentioned in the Qur'ān (12, 45). Subsequently, the reader should understand that the verb in question (*ittaghar-a*) belongs to the same section of the verb (*iddakar-a*), as well as undergoing the same morphological process of that verb.

Two extra letters are added to verbs to transform them to the morphological form *ifta'al-a*, *hamzat al-waṣl* and *al-tā'*. For a phonological reason, the letter *al-tā'* of this morphological form is usually changed or replaced with another letter compatible with the first letter of the given verb (Sībawayh, 1982, 4: 467). However, in the morphological measurement, the letter *al-tā'* remains as it is (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 65). For example, the verb *iddakar-a* is originally derived from the verb *dhakar-a*, then, when it is transformed into the *ifta'al-a* form, it becomes *idhtakar-a*. After this, for a phonological reason, alluded to previously, the letter *al-tā'* is changed to *al-dāl* as it is in harmony with the first letter *al-dhāl* of the verb, so it becomes *idhdakar-a*. Finally, the two letters *al-dhāl* and *al-dāl* are incorporated with each other to become a solid *dāl* and the verb becomes *iddakar-a*. However, its morphological measurement retains the original form (*ifta'al-a*).

The verb in question (*ittaghar-a*) undergoes the same morphological process as the verb *iddakar-a*. However, Abū Hilāl avoids this lengthy explanation by referring to the most famous example that represents this section of Arabic morphology. He refers to four aspects of the given verb (*ittaghar-a*), the morphological section (*bāb*), form (*ṣiġha*), change process, and measurement by only mentioning the famous verb in this section as morphologists usually do. This attitude reflects his deep experience and considerable acquaintance with the field of morphology, which is seriously needed in the field of lexicography.⁶⁷

٨- (١٩٩٦، ٥٧)

"وَيُقَالُ عُنُقٌ وَعُنُقٌ، وَلَا يُقَالُ عُنُقٌ بَفَتْحِ النُّونِ، وَهُوَ يُذَكَّرُ وَيُؤنَّثُ."

(1996, 57)

"One may say both *'unuq-un* and *'unq-un* (meaning, the neck), but *'unaq-un* with an opened diacritical mark is wrong, and the word can be made both masculine and feminine."

This quotation includes a morphological and lexicographical discussion. For the morphological discussion, Abū Hilāl explains that the second letter of this lexical item

⁶⁷ A similar point is discussed in quotation number 5.

(*‘ayn al-kalima*)⁶⁸ can be pronounced either with a diacritical mark similar to the first letter or with *sukūn* (quiescence). Quiescence is resorted to here for the phonological reason of *al-takhfif* (lightening), which means attempting to ease the articulation as discussed by Sībawayh (1982, 4: 114). Accordingly, Abū Hilāl suggests that the word *‘unaq-un*, with *al-fath* (open second letter), is not spoken. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, this form could not be heard from Arabs, which means it does not exist in the Arabic language in the first place, or, second, it could have been abandoned because of its heavy pronunciation.

As for the lexicographical discussion, Abū Hilāl states that the word *‘unuq-un* could be masculine and feminine, which affects the type of pronoun used to refer to it. It is worth mentioning that in Arabic, gender is also applied to inanimate objects and organs so that linguists or lexicographers, like in this example, would state the gender required. However, linguists and lexicographers distinguish between real and metaphorical genders, although the pronouns used for each cannot tell us whether the gender of the given word is real or metaphoric, as the pronouns are the same. Accordingly, the gender of the word *‘unuq-un* is metaphorical and it equally accepts masculine or feminine pronouns. However, al-Zabīdī in *Tāj al-‘Arūs* (the section on *‘anaqa*) stated that some scholars argue that *‘unq-un* with *sukūn* is masculine, while *‘unuq-un* with *ḍamma* is feminine.

In this respect, femininity and masculinity are key concepts in Arabic. For this reason, scholars such as al-Anbārī (d. 328 AH) considered that knowing the two should be required when learning morphology and syntax. Therefore, he dedicated an entire book, *al-Mudhakkār wa al-Mu‘annath*, to discussing the two concepts and stated in the introduction: (1978, 87):

"إِنَّ مِنْ تَمَامِ مَعْرِفَةِ النَّحْوِ وَالْإِعْرَابِ مَعْرِفَةَ الْمَذَكَّرِ وَالْمُؤَنَّثِ؛ لِأَنَّ مَنْ ذَكَرَ مُؤَنَّثًا أَوْ أَنْتَ مُذَكَّرًا كَانَ الْعَيْبُ لَازِمًا لَهُ كَلْزُومِهِ مَنْ⁶⁹ نَصَبَ مَرْفُوعًا أَوْ خَفَضَ مَنصُوبًا أَوْ نَصَبَ مَخْفُوضًا."

"The complete knowledge of syntax and declension entails knowledge of the grammatical masculine and feminine, because he who masculinises a feminine, or feminises a masculine is absolutely in the wrong, similarly to he who marks the nominative as accusative, the accusative as genitive, or the genitive as accusative."

⁶⁸ See quotation number 4.

⁶⁹ This relative pronoun *man* is the direct object of the noun verb *luzūmih-i*. This means that the noun verb *luzūm* here acted syntactically similar to its verb action *yalzam*.

This statement shows the critical role of the concepts of femininity and masculinity in the Arabic language since they are applied to both animate and inanimate objects, as discussed previously. According to al-Anbārī, organs of the human body can be divided into three categories regarding femininity and masculinity: what is only masculinised (ibid., 261), what is only feminised (ibid., 271), and what could be both masculinised and feminised (ibid., 292). This third category takes up sixteen pages in which he mentions the human neck (*ʿunuq*) from the outset, yet he ignores the possible diacritical marks that the middle letter could accept or deny as Abū Hilāl does. It stands out that Abū Hilāl was aware of the morphological and linguistic discussions regarding the items he included in his lexicon by hinting at these discussions, and he did not restrict himself to the semantic sphere of the words.

(٧٠، ١٩٩٦)-٩

"والجزء، والجمع أخرج لأن أصله جَزَحٌ."

(1996, 70)

"The plural of *ḥir-u* is *aḥrāḥ-un* because the origin of the word is *ḥirḥ-un*."

This quotation involves an important morphological discussion regarding omitting the last letters of some Arabic words, usually for phonological reasons. Abū Hilāl mentions the broken plural form (*jamʿ al-taksīr*) of this word; however, he perhaps presumes that readers would notice that an extra letter appears with the plural form that is not seen in the singular form. Therefore, he directly states that the original form of this word includes this letter, which is omitted in the singular form and brought back in the plural form. Two issues are addressed in this line: First, the first and the last letters of this word are similar, which is rare among Arabic words, as stated in *Tāj al-ʿArūs (ḥa-ra-ḥa)*. This similarity makes the articulation quite heavy, which is lightened by the omission of the last letter. Second, the broken plural form allows the original omitted letters (*al-aḥrūf al-uṣūl*) to be brought back. This is similar to the word *yad*, which means human hand, and which has the broken plural form *al-ayādī* because its original form is *yadyu-n*. In the same respect, Abū Hilāl could have mentioned the diminutive form (*al-taṣghīr*) of this word as it also allows the original omitted letters to be brought back,⁷⁰ so, the word in question here (*ḥir-un*) becomes *ḥurayḥ* as a diminutive form. As can be noticed, the last letter appears again in this form.

⁷⁰ Often, the broken plural and the diminutive forms of Arabic words are mentioned in the same context as they share almost the same features, such as changing the form of the word

"وَمِنَ الْأَلْفَاظِ مَا يُسْتَعْمَلُ رُبَاعِيَّةً وَخُمَاسِيَّةً دُونَ ثَلَاثِيَّةٍ... فَيُنَبِّغِي أَلَا تَعْدِلَ عَنْ جِهَةِ الِاسْتِعْمَالِ، وَلَا يَغْرَكَ أَنَّ أُصُولَهَا مُسْتَعْمَلَةٌ، فَالْخُرُوجُ عَنْ جِهَةِ الِاسْتِعْمَالِ وَالنَّهْجِ الْمَسْلُوكِ رَدِيءٌ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ. أَلَا تَرَى أَنَّ النَّاسَ يَسْتَعْمِلُونَ (التَّعَاطِي) فَيَكُونُ مِنْهُمْ مَقْبُولًا، وَلَوْ اسْتَعْمَلُوا (الْعَطْو) وَهُوَ أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ وَهُوَ ثَلَاثِيٌّ، وَالثَّلَاثِيُّ أَكْثَرُ اسْتِعْمَالًا، لَمَا كَانَ مَقْبُولًا وَلَا حَسَنًا مَرْضِيًّا."

(*al-Ṣinā'atayn*, 1971, 155)

"Some words are used in their quadrilateral and quinqueliteral forms instead of their trilateral form ... so one should not deviate from what is used, nor should one be misled because their original forms are used, for straying from what is used and the generally accepted norm is bad practise in any case. Do you not take notice that some use (*al-ta'āṭī*) and it is accepted from them, whereas had they used *al'atw*, which is the trilateral root, despite the fact that the trilateral root is most commonly used [for other words, in this case], it would neither be accepted nor commendable."

The key concept of this quotation is *al-isti'māl* which means the usage of language by Arabs before 150 AH⁷¹ and whose language is described to be "characterised by purity, clarity, precision and freedom from error" as stated by Baalbaki (2014, 7). Also, it is, as Carter (2004, 56) inferred from Sībawayh's *Kitāb*, to speak as Arab (Bedouins) do, "use their speech, meaning what they mean, and staying within their speech". *Al-isti'māl*, therefore, involves tracing the patterns of morphological forms and the structure of Arabic sentences in speeches. Abū Hilāl indicated that by stressing the concept of *al-isti'māl*, the eloquent lexical item is the one which is dominant, prevailing, and widely used and employed in speeches.⁷² For Abū Hilāl, deviating from *al-isti'māl*

and bringing back the omitted original letters of lexical items. See Sībawayh (1982, 4: 421, 426) and al-Khaṭīb (2003, 928).

⁷¹ Prior to 150 AH, Arabic language was considered pure, intuitive and had not yet clearly shown signs of corruption. Arabs, Bedouins (*A'rāb* - the desert-dwelling nomads) in particular, would not commit linguistic mistakes. Hence, their use of language was traced and studied by scholars of Arabic language and employed as a source of the rules of Arabic grammar. For further reading of this account, see Baalbaki's book: *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition* in the section where he discusses the speech of the Bedouins (*A'rāb*) (2014, 7). Also, see sources of data in Sībawayh's *al-Kitāb* as in Carter (2004, 39- 42).

⁷² Later in this chapter, Abū Hilāl's adherence to the concept of *al-isti'māl* could be presented as a reason why he disliked the concept of poetic licence in the context of literary criticism.

leads to poorness, even if *al-isti'māl* is in disagreement with analogy (*al-qiyās*) and with the original form of a word (*al-aṣl*). In another instances, Abū Hilāl stated that it is strictly forbidden to deviate from *al-isti'māl* (*al-Ṣinā'atayn*, 1971, 133):

"ولا يجوز مخالفة الاستعمال البتة."

"It is also absolutely impermissible to go against the common usage."

Abū Hilāl's insight on the concept of *al-isti'māl* here is compatible with grammarians' and morphologists' discussions of this concept, as Ibn Ya'īsh stated (1973, 371):

"وَعَلَبَ كَثْرَةُ الاسْتِعْمَالِ الْأَصْلَ حَتَّى هُجِرَ وَرُفِضَ."

"The predominant common usage overcame the original form to the point of the latter's abandonment and rejection."

Also, before Ibn Ya'īsh, al-Zamkharī (d. 538 AH) in his famous commentary on the Qur'ān, emphasised the importance of *al-isti'māl* and its role in replacing the fine *qiyas*. He stated in *al-Kashshāf*, (1966, 2: 375):

"الاستعمال المستفيض تتضاءل إليه القياسات."

"The abundance of common usage dwarfs analogies."

This expresses the sensitive role of *al-isti'māl* as it can replace the original and stand against the common rules of morphology and syntax. Accordingly, it appears that for *Adab* seekers, the structures and rules of Arabic morphology and syntax could not provide one with an adequate ability to produce a well-recognised literary text. Rather, they should be employed in parallel with tracing the pattern of speeches, which means understanding their usage of language so as to avoid major speech defects.

Abū Hilāl proved his opinion regarding this argument with an example that combines a morphological discussion and the concept of *al-isti'māl*. He argued that the quadrilateral and quinqueliteral forms of some words are used more than their trilateral forms, even though the trilateral form is generally considered to be more common, light in terms of articulation, and the original form (the root) of many Arabic words, including the word in question here (*al-ta'āṭī*). However, since Arabs had used *al-ta'āṭī* and ignored *al-aṭw*, one should not deviate from this usage as it is not accepted and is unsatisfying, while using *al-ta'āṭī* is, and accordingly, is more accepted. Therefore, as discussed in the previous chapter, finding the morphological form and structure of the lexical item (*al-bunya al-ṣarfiyya li al-kalima*) and the word choice among several alternatives, plays a key role in terms of determining the text's linguistic and semantic level.

It seems that Abū Hilāl's concern was that deviating from *al-isti'māl* might negatively affect the clear semantics of literary texts. As discussed in previous chapters, Abū Hilāl's theory of wording and meaning relies on the elaborate choice of lexical items that accurately represent their meanings. Therefore, resorting to an uncommon usage of language would lead to disordered or ambiguous meanings and struggle to conceptualise the semantics of the studied text. Furthermore, the morphological choice based on *al-isti'māl* (the common usage of language) could also affect, besides the meaning, the level of *al-faṣāḥa* (eloquence) of the text, as what Arabs intentionally avoid using is, in most cases, considered ineloquent. Therefore, adherence to *al-isti'māl* results in a literary text that is semantically clear and linguistically eloquent.

B- Syntactical Discussions:

As mentioned previously, *al-Ṣinā'atayn* teaches *Adab* seekers various ways of producing a considerable number of sophisticated literary texts that are devoid of poor structures, erroneous meanings, and incongruent and repugnant wording. It also draws the attention of people of literature to different rhetorical issues that serve to refine literary texts in terms of meanings and word choice. Since the structures of Arabic speech are dictated by a syntactical system that ensures meanings are delivered clearly and elaborately, Abū Hilāl, in *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, refers to various syntactical discussions that support his argument regarding various issues related to the evaluation of literary texts. This is Abū Hilāl's most important contribution as he made his literary judgments in light of syntactical knowledge which, in turn, could be considered the practical employment of Arabic syntax, and as a change in grammatical rules from being a theoretical framework to their applicable, exemplified, corrected and evaluated form in the domain of literary criticism.⁷³ In other words, "Abū Hilāl was more a perceptive practical critic than a theorist, and his merit is that of assembling the

⁷³ It is hard to determine whether Abū Hilāl was the first to put the grammatical rules into application, as examples of this could be found in his predecessors' literary critical books such as *al-Kamil* by al-Mubarrid; however, it is more vivid, consistent, and prevalent in Abū Hilāl's literary critical discourse. For a further reading regarding al-Mubarrid and his critical role in the development of Arabic linguistics, see Bernard's book: *Changing Traditions: Al-Mubarrad's Refutation of Sībawayh and the Subsequent Reception of the Kitāb*.

accepted rules and principles of literary criticism in a more coherent, detailed, and comprehensive way than ever before” as cited in Gruendler (2010, 2). Such an approach provides *Adab* seekers with justifications regarding the use and prioritisation of certain lexical items and grammatical structures over others which, if misused, might misrepresent the intended meaning or decrease the literary status of the given text. In the following lines, examples of syntactical discussions that Abū Hilāl includes in his book of literary criticism, *al-Ṣināʿatayn*, and in his lexicon, *al-Talkhīṣ*, are provided:

١- (١٩٩٦، ٥١):

"يُقَالُ هَذَا فَمُ فُلَانٍ بِالْإِضَافَةِ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَضْطَرَّ شَاعِرٌ [أَي: فَيَقْطَعُ الْإِضَافَةَ أَوْ يَحْذِفُ الْمُضَافَ إِلَيْهِ]⁷⁴، كَقَوْلِ الْعَجَّاجِ:
خَالَطَ مِنْ سَلْمَى حَيَاشِيمَ وَفَا"

(1996, 51):

“We say this is *fū fulān* (someone’s mouth) in the annexing construction, except when a poet is compelled to do otherwise [that is to say, when he omits the annex *or genitive construction*]. It is similar to al-ʿAjjāj’s saying: It swilled around Salma’s nostrils and her mouth (*fā*).”

This discussion involves both morphological and syntactical issues whereby Abū Hilāl attempts to explain the ideal use of the word *fū*. The original form of this word is *fam* (mouth); the vowel *wa* is then used as a substitute for the letter *ma* (al-Thamānīnī, 1999, 345- 7). However, according to al-Thamānīnī, there is no two-lettered Arabic word in which the second letter is a vowel. For this reason, the word given here is usually used in prefixed and post-fixed structures, as Abū Hilāl stated in this discussion. However, in poetry, and for prosodic reasons, a poet might be driven by necessity to omit the post-fixed structure, which causes the word to take on a non-existent Arabic form, as is exemplified in al-ʿAjjāj’s verse. However, morphologists such as al-Thamānīnī provided a justification for this form that involved suggesting that the post-fixed structure was intended in the verse, which means that the word *fā* is associated primarily with the post-fixed *hā*, but that this post-fixed position is implied, not articulated or written. This is a combination of morphological and grammatical discussions evoked by the necessity of a lexical presentation, which proves that Arabic language sciences fundamentally correlate. Abū Hilāl did not comment on the poetic

⁷⁴ I have added, in square brackets, my explanation that is understood from the context of Abū Hilāl’s statement in order to clarify the meaning.

licence in the verse, perhaps because this issue occurred in a lexical context, which means that his critical literary perspective would be irrelevant in this situation. This is unlike some of the following discussions in which Abū Hilāl disagreed with some poetic usages because they included poetic licence or deviated from the common use of language, as the context was literary criticism in these examples:

٢- (١٩٧١، ١٣٢):

"والخطأ الفاحش له قوله، أي أبو تَمَام:

رَضِيْتُ وَهَلْ أَرْضَى إِذَا كَانَ مُسْخَطِي / مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مَا فِيهِ رِضَا مَنْ لَهُ الْأَمْرُ
وَالْمَعْنَى: لَسْتُ أَرْضَى إِذَا كَانَ الَّذِي يُسْخِطُنِي هُوَ الَّذِي يَرْضَاهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ [أَي هُوَ السَّخَطُ الَّذِي يَرْضَاهُ اللَّهُ⁷⁵]; لِأَنَّ (هَلْ)
تَقْرِيرٌ لِفِعْلِ يَنْفِيهِ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ، كَمَا تَقُول: هَلْ يُمَكِّنُنِي الْقِيَامُ؟ وَهَلْ آتَى بِمَا تَكْرَهُ؟. وَمَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ: هَلْ أَرْضَى إِذَا كَانَ مُسْخَطِي؟
أَي لَا أَرْضَى."

(1971, 132):

"The shocking error lies in the saying of Abū Tammām:

"I was contented, and would I be so if what enraged me / of the matter is that which pleases He the Almighty?

"The meaning of: I cannot be contented if what enrages me is that which pleases God the Almighty [being the indignation itself that God is pleased by], because 'hal' is used for positive statements and would be confirmation of a matter which God states is not of His traits. It is like saying: 'hal' May I do it? May I commit that which You hate? The meaning of his words: Would I be pleased if it were something which enraged me? Meaning that I would not be pleased or contented."

Several issues can be discussed regarding this example. As stated in Chapter Two, when Abū Hilāl used this expression 'erroneous meaning', he meant that the type of grammatical rule that had been employed was not entirely successful in terms of accurately expressing the meaning. In that chapter, too, we noted that Abū Hilāl treated classical and modern poets equally and did not prioritise one over another simply due to his/her fame or the era in which s/he wrote. In other words, Abū Hilāl tended to prioritise the following three concepts over any other considerations, namely the common use of language (*al-isti'māl*), oral transmission (*al-samā'*), and analogy (*al-qiyās*). Abū Hilāl applied these in this discussion, which is an indication of the consistency that characterises his method and clear vision of insights into literary criticism and other language sciences. In fact, the morphological and syntactical

⁷⁵ I have added this explanation to clarify the sentence's meaning.

lessons seem to dominate Abū Hilāl's critical mindset as he would never accept a critique without recalling these lessons due to the deep-rooted connections between linguistics and literary criticism.

In this example, the poet attempted to deliver a specific meaning, but did not use the most accurate grammatical expression. This prompted Abū Hilāl to object to this usage since the meaning cannot be immediately comprehended. The delay in comprehending the meaning is not caused by the deep and sophisticated concepts in this verse, but rather by the complicated wording and the error that has occurred in the grammatical structure, which makes the semantics ambiguous. The poet asks a rhetorical question that indicates a positive statement, although he meant to negate the action he mentioned. As a result, there is an error in the meaning, and this grammatical structure has failed to deliver the intended meaning. Abū Hilāl's comment expressed the struggle that one would experience when attempting to understand this poetic verse. At the same time, he corrected the error in the wording and in the meaning by paraphrasing the poetic verse using a prosaic style, thus indicating the ideal grammatical way of expressing the meaning for didactical purposes, as discussed in Chapter Two.

٣-(السابق، ١٤٦):

"وقَوْلِكَ: (رَأَيْتُ الْإِبْعَارَ بِذَلِكَ) أَجْوَدُ مِنْ قَوْلِكَ: (رَأَيْتُ أَنْ أُوْعِزَ)، كَذَا وَجَدْتُ حُذَاقَ الْكُتَّابِ يَقُولُونَ. وَعَجِبْتُ مِنَ الْبُحْتُرِيِّ كَيْفَ قَالَ:

لَعَمْرُ الْعَوَانِي يَوْمَ صَحْرَاءِ أَرْبَدٍ / لَقَدْ هَيَّجَتْ وَجْدًا عَلَى ذِي تَوَجُّدٍ
ولو قال: على مُتَوَجِّدٍ، لَكَانَ أَسْهَلَ وَأَسْلَسَ وَأَحْسَنَ."

(ibid., 146):

"Your statement: (I considered commanding, *al-ṭāz*, such) is better than saying: (I considered to command, *ʿūʿiz*, and this is what I noted skilful writers saying. I was perturbed by how al-Buḥturī said:

"For the life of the beautiful women that day in the *Arbad* desert / stirring a longing in he who longs, *dhī tawajjud*.

"But had he said: Upon the longing one, *mutawajjid*, it would have been easier, smoother, and finer."

At the beginning of this discussion, Abū Hilāl compared two types of grammatical expressions that convey the same meaning. However, he favoured one over the other as he considered it to be of better quality. Abū Hilāl did not provide a justification for

his verdict; instead, he attributed it to the tradition of the ‘masters of secretaries’.⁷⁶ He stated that using the infinitive form of the verb is a better option than using the same verb with the infinitival particle *an*. Although these two modes of expression deliver the same meaning, one is better than the other, and there could be two reasons for this, i.e. one related to the wording and the other to the meaning. With regard to the meaning, it is evident that using the infinitive form has the advantage of succinctness, which means to avoid lengthening speech without adding extra meaning. Moreover, the infinitive form of the verb adds more solidity and affirmation to the meaning as it indicates that the action is permanent because the element of time is absent therefrom (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 389). On the other hand, using the verb preceded by the infinitival particle, would also be a poor way of expressing the meaning as it is longer in terms of wording than is the infinitive form.

Abū Hilāl aimed to achieve accurate, easy, smooth and refined semantics, which prompted him to criticise al-Buḥṭiry’s verse when the poet expressed the meaning by using the prefixed and post-fixed *dhī tawajjud-i* when he could have used the derivative *al-mushtaqq* or the active participle *mutawajjid*. The state of renewal and continuity that is indicated by the active participle in this example (ibid., 448) made it better in terms of wording and meaning compared to the use of the prefixed and the post-fixed *dhī tawajjud-i*. The expression *dhī tawajjud-i*, which means a man of passion, does not suit the emotional condition that the poet attempted to express because it indicates that this condition is permanent regardless of whether or not it was evoked by memories, which undermines the influence of the valuable memories meant in this verse. By contrast, the active participle *mutawajjid* indicates the unstable condition of the poet and his sensitivity to memories that are evoked because the active participle form implies the conditions of renewal and continuity. This could explain why Abū Hilāl preferred *mutawajjid* to *dhī tawajjud-i*, as the grammatical structure and the form of the word, and its role in accurately expressing the meaning, had received his sustained attention throughout his discussions of literary criticism. In general, it could be argued

⁷⁶ Perhaps he meant Sahl ibn Hārūn (d. 251 AH). This is because Abū Hilāl uses some expressions in *al-Ṣinā‘atayn* that are similar to Sahl’s style, according to a text by Sahl in al-Najjār (2002, 397). This indicates that Abū Hilāl might have been influenced by Sahl who was famous for his eloquence and linguistic dexterity.

that Abū Hilāl relied on morphological and grammatical grounds to establish his critical literary judgments, particularly with regard to wording and meaning.

As far as the issue of wording and meaning is concerned here, and as this issue is intensively discussed throughout this thesis, we would presume that each of the last three words of Abū Hilāl's critique (*ashal*, *aslas*, *aḥsan*), i.e. smoother, milder and finer, respectively, is an indication of one of the following three aspects: wording, articulation, or meaning. Accordingly, the alternative *mutawajjid* that Abū Hilāl suggested here would be *ashal* in terms of wording, *aslas* in terms of articulation, and *aḥsan* in terms of meaning. This further emphasises Abū Hilāl's consideration of the integral relationship between wording and meaning.

٤- (السابق، ١٥٥)

"ومن الألفاظ ما إذا وَقَعَ نَكْرَةٌ قُبِحَ مَوْضِعُهُ، وَحَسُنَ إِذَا وَقَعَ مَعْرِفَةٌ، مِثْلَ قَوْلِ بَعْضِهِمْ:

لَمَّا التَقَيْنَا صَاحِبَ بَيْنٍ بَيْنِنَا

فَقَوْلُهُ: صَاحِبَ بَيْنٍ بَيْنِنَا، مُتَكَلِّفٌ جِدًّا. فَلَوْ قَالَ: الْبَيْنِ، كَانَ أَقْرَبَ."

(ibid., 155):

"Words that are placed in the indefinite form are made repugnant; finer are those with the definite article, like those who say:

"When we met, a wedge, *bayn*, crept-in between us.

"His words: A wedge crept-in between us, are extremely artificial.

"Had he said: The wedge, *al-bayn*, it would have been closer to the true meaning."

Although the definite term *ma'rifa* and the indefinite term *nakira* represent grammatical categories, Abū Hilāl's discussion approaches the issue of definite and indefinite items from his literary perspective on refined and repugnant forms of words in literary texts. In other words, such a discussion is unlikely to be found in books on grammar as they discuss the rules that govern definite and indefinite words, amongst others; see, for example, the discussion in Sībawayh (1982, 2: 81). However, before *Adab* seekers can identify the perfect use of definite and indefinite words, they should be acquainted with the most important grammatical discussions regarding these two grammatical forms. Abū Hilāl's literary judgment following the example he presented begins with his general verdict, perhaps in order to make a judgment on the more reasonable and persuasive verse. He did not restrict himself to merely locating the erroneous part that he disliked in the verse; instead, he offered an alternative that he thought might elevate the verse's artistic level. Abū Hilāl's attitude could be attributed

to his didactical sense (discussed in Chapter Two), as he tended to present his literary criticism in a clear and logical way that allowed his readers to understand his discussions without difficulty.

Another aspect of Abū Hilāl's judgment could be related to the meaning that is affected by the use of two grammatical aspects, namely definite and indefinite forms. Defining the undefined word *bayn* could have enhanced the meaning of the verse which, in turn, would have affected the meaning, as the indefinite form of this word expresses an extremely general meaning that does not successfully reflect the image. By contrast, the functionality of the definite form of this word, *al-bayn*, is appropriate from both the perspective of word form chosen as well as the verse's meaning. In other words, the definite form of this word might be more compatible with the verse's tone and may add accuracy to the meaning due to the additional definite particle. Abū Hilāl also described the indefinite form of the word, which he disliked because he felt it was artificial (*mutakallaf*). The reason for this judgment could be that this form had not been used by Arabs as it was usually used in a definite form as a noun that meant two opposite things, i.e. connection or separation, according to *Lisān al-'Arab* dictionary.⁷⁷ Abū Hilāl's verdict seems to be compatible with his insight into the common usage of language since he disagreed with deviating from the commonly used forms and structures in literary texts, even if such deviation was permissible.

Accordingly, Abū Hilāl aimed to establish his theory of wording and meaning, as discussed in the previous chapter, by means of morphological and syntactical discourses in his literary criticism. This shows how meaning could be fundamentally sensitive to the correct choice of the form of words in a text, and to the ideal grammatical structure that affected the clarity of semantics therein.

٥- (السابق: ١٥٨):

"تَرْفُلُ فِي الدَّارِ لَهَا وَفَرَةٌ / كَوْفَرَةَ الْمَلْطِ الْخَلِيعِ الْغُلَامِ

كان ينبغي أن يقول: كَوْفَرَةَ الْغُلَامِ الْمَلْطِ الْخَلِيعِ، أو الْغُلَامِ الْخَلِيعِ الْمَلْطِ، فَأَمَّا تَقْدِيمُ الصِّفَةِ عَلَى الْمُوصُوفِ فَرَدِيَّةٌ فِي صَنْعَةِ الْكَلَامِ جِدًّا."

(ibid., 158):

"The chubby woman strutted around the house / like the chubbiness of the lewd, beardless slave boy.

⁷⁷ These kinds of Arabic words are called *al-'aḍḍād* and are discussed in Chapter Three.

“He should have said: Like the chubby, lewd, beardless slave boy, or the beardless lewd slave boy. Hence, advancing the adjective before the described noun is extremely defective in the formation of speech.”

The central point around which Abū Hilāl’s discussion revolves in this regard is the necessity for clear semantics in the given text by employing the most correct word order. Moreover, Abū Hilāl attempted to prompt *Adab* seekers to avoid complicated structures and difficult word choices which complicate the process of understanding the text, thus decreasing its literary and artistic level. Accordingly, he emphasised (ibid., 159):

"وَيُنْبَغِي أَنْ يَتَجَنَّبَ مَا يُغْسِبُ الْكَلَامَ تَعْمِيَةً، فَيُرْتَّبَ أَلْفَاظُهُ تَرْتِيباً صَاحِبِهَا"

“One must also avoid that which adds ambiguity to speech, and words need to be arranged in the correct order.”

Therefore, the correct grammatical order of the words in a sentence is a technique that *Adab* seekers should consider to ensure the semantics are clear and void of ambiguity. For Abū Hilāl, clear semantics require the consideration of the following three elements: precise word choice in the correct form, accurate grammatical structure that delivers the meaning successfully, and correct grammatical order of words in a sentence. For this reason, he noted (ibid., 167):

"وَحُسْنُ التَّأْلِيفِ يَزِيدُ الْمَعْنَى وَضُوحاً وَشَرْحاً، وَسُوءُ التَّأْلِيفِ وَرَدَاءَةُ الرَّصْنِ وَالتَّرْكِيبِ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ التَّعْمِيَةِ"

“Correct formation of words enhances the clarity and explanation of meaning; whereas poorness of construction and word arrangement are ingredients for ambiguity.”

This could imply that the most accurate order of words in a sentence should be ensured by adhering to Arabic grammar and syntactical rules that concern the elements constructing a sentence in an order that clarifies and delivers meaning. This supports the point made in the introduction to this section which is that Abū Hilāl employed Arabic syntax practically and transferred grammatical rules from their theoretical framework to their applicable, exemplified, corrected and evaluated forms in order to ensure the appropriateness of both wording and meaning in a literary text.

The example that Abū Hilāl discussed in this extract can be seen as proof of the previous discussion. Abū Hilāl mentioned the extremely poor structure of this verse that included foregrounding the description and the background of that which was described, which led to confusion in terms of meaning. It should be noted that Abū Hilāl did not say the grammatical structure in this verse was incorrect or not permitted. He did, however, describe it as a very poor structure in terms of speech crafting (*ṣanʿat*

al-kalām).⁷⁸ It appears that it was neither correct nor incorrect grammar that concerned Abū Hilāl, but rather the perfect use and the application of grammatical rules that would elevate the value of the literary text, as well as enhance the clarity of its semantics. Another reason that Abū Hilāl considered the grammatical structure in this verse to be poor was that this structure contradicts the common usage in language, which Abū Hilāl strictly rejected due to the semantic reasons discussed above. As Key stated, “According to al-Jurjānī, the poetic mechanisms that create effect are fundamentally grammatical and syntactical” (2018, 197). If this was the case for al-Jurjānī, it could be argued that the outlines of this discussion might have begun with Abū Hilāl’s syntactical discourses throughout *al-Šināʿatayn*, which is mainly a book of literary criticism.

٦-(السابق، ١٧٥):

"فلا الجارةُ الدّنيا لها تَلْحَيْتُهَا / ولا الضّيْفُ فيها إنْ أُنَاخَ مُحَوَّلٌ

فالنّصفُ الأوّلُ مُخْتَلٌ؛ لأنّه خالف فيه وَجَةَ الاستعمال، وَوَجْهُهُ أَنْ يَقُولَ: فَهِيَ لا تَلْحَى الجارةُ الدّنيا، أي القريبة."

(ibid., 175):

“She does not curse her nearby female neighbour / nor is her guest expelled if he chooses to stay.

“The first part is erroneous because it goes against the common usage of language, and the correct expression of the sentence should be: For she does not curse her close neighbour, that is to say, the nearby neighbour.”

As discussed previously, Abū Hilāl described the first part of this verse as disorderly because it opposed the common use of grammatical order. The disorder is the result of the negation particle being separated from the negated verb. It is also due to the pronoun (*lahā*) being placed in the wrong order in the sentence. As in example 2, Abū Hilāl provided the reader with the ideal grammatical order that the poet should have followed to avoid the disorder generated by deviation from common usage of grammatical structure, which caused semantic confusion.

Another deviation that can be detected in this verse is that the corroborating or affirming *al-tawkīd* accompanies the present tense, *talḥayanna-hā*. According to al-Ghalāyīnī (1993, 1: 88) and al-Khaṭīb (2003, 199), the present tense cannot accompany the affirming *nūn* unless it is preceded by an oath, a negation or a

⁷⁸ It is nonetheless impermissible grammatical usage; see Ibn Yaʿīsh (2014, 2:10).

requisition, and the tense should indicate the future. This explains why Abū Hilāl's corrective example omitted the affirming *nūn* from the verb. Although there are several examples showing that Arabs used the present verb with the affirming *nūn* and grammarians provided justifications for this use, Abū Hilāl did not refer to these justifications. This was because, as discussed below, Abū Hilāl was interested in the common use and the ideal form of the grammatical structures that served the meaning perfectly and which aligned with his theory of wording and meaning. For Abū Hilāl, such deviations from the grammatical tradition decreased the literary and artistic levels of a given text. He considered that a well-regarded literary text should include the ideal form of grammatical structure and accurate word choice to deliver meaning successfully and to gain a high-quality literary level.

2- Evaluation of Abū Hilāl's Syntax and Morphological Status, and an Attempt to Identify the School to which he Belongs:

This is a summary of the various morphological and syntactical observations inferred from Abū Hilāl's discussions regarding different linguistic issues based on the analyses in the previous two sections. Noteworthy is that the previous morphological and syntactical discussions are situated in the context of literary criticism. This would support the main argument of this chapter and the one before it, that literary criticism is an integral process that combines language sciences in a single realm in order to achieve high-quality assessment and in-depth understanding of literary texts in the study. Moreover, based on the morphological and syntactical aspects that were discussed in the previous two sections, it was possible to identify strong and weak points of literary texts in the study, as well as key elements that would either elevate or diminish the value of the given literary texts. In addition, linguistic and semantic analyses of the literary texts are useful in determining whether or not the author succeeded in employing elaborate forms of constituent lexical items of the text to accurately represent meaning. Moreover, taking a linguistic approach to literary texts enables one to re-examine types of grammatical or syntactic structures and the extent of their role in delivering accurate meaning and refined semantics. Based on the analyses in the previous two sections, we can draw the following conclusions:

- 1- Abū Hilāl argued for an adherence to the most accurate grammatical and morphological structures regardless of author. He ensured that he mentioned

the source of the grammatical rule or the lexical item, whether oral transmission *al-samā'* or analogy *al-qiyās*, in order to authenticate his judgments.

- 2- Abū Hilāl believed that following the common usage of language received from Arabs or from masters of the language was essential. This means that Abū Hilāl left no room for the development of new linguistic structures that would deviate from grammatical tradition or the tradition of the masters of language. It could be argued that Abū Hilāl showed a greater preference for *al-isti'māl* than for *al-qiyās*, perhaps because *al-qiyās* could be refuted or rejected if it contradicted the prevailing usage (*al-isti'māl al-mustafīḍ*), as discussed in example 10 in the discussion of morphology.
- 3- Lexical presentation in Abū Hilāl's lexicons involves morphological discussions that he employed to address lexical items in the study. This was to ensure that the lexical items in the study were understood at two levels, namely constituent morphological elements and form, and semantics. In this process, Abū Hilāl referred to reliable and authentic language transmitters and sources.
- 4- Morphological discussions in Abū Hilāl's lexicons include identifying the following aspects of the lexical item in the study: singular and plural, gender, derivation, and infinitive and morphological section of the trilateral verb (which can be identified from the diacritical marks in the second letter *'ayn al-fi'l*).
- 5- Abū Hilāl did not engage in morphological or syntactical issues discursively. Rather, he refers to famous examples of these issues, or would mention part of the discussion and advise the reader to seek details in authentic sources. In general, what he mentioned would be adequate for understanding the essence of the discussion.
- 6- From the morphological discussions, it appears that Abū Hilāl tended to provide more explanations of morphological form and the several derivations of lexical items in a study when they were rare or when some of his target audience might not be familiar with the form or meaning.
- 7- Abū Hilāl injected his critical literary discourse with lexical, morphological and grammatical discussions, as these three disciplines could be considered the key constituent elements on which the process of literary production relies.
- 8- Abū Hilāl did not confine himself to mentioning the points of weakness in literary texts in the study, but also suggested alternatives to refine the given texts and provide material that *Adab* seekers would employ to improve their literary

production (as in examples 2 and 6 in the syntactical discussions). This is attributed to his didactical sense, which was discussed in Chapter Two, and which prompted him to consider the various levels of his readers.

Based on the syntactical and grammatical discussions, it appears that Abū Hilāl was in line with the grammatical principles of the grammatical school of *al-Baṣra*.⁷⁹ It is worth mentioning that determining Abū Hilāl's affiliation with *al-Baṣra* grammatical school provides justification for some of the literary critical verdicts that he made on literary texts. Also, by knowing his affiliation, it would lead to a better understanding of the nature of his discussions whether they are based on his personal opinion or represent an adherence to his school of grammar. In other words, independence and originality in Abū Hilāl's literary and linguistic discussions can be clearly identified when his school of grammar is known as it can be seen in his discussion regarding poetic licence.

Abū Hilāl's affiliation to *al-Baṣra* school of grammar can be seen by the way he highlights principles and sources of the language on which he relied, such as the prevailing use of language (*al-isti'māl al-mustafīḍ*), oral transmission (*al-samā'*), and analogy (*al-qiyās*). These principles can be found in several key figures of the *al-Baṣra* grammatical school, such as Sībawayh and al-Khalīl, as stated by Ḍīf (1979, 46, 80). In the case of *al-samā'*, unlike the *al-Kūfa* grammatical school (ibid., 159), the *al-Baṣra* school defined strict criteria for the kinds of sources from which language would be accepted, which Abū Hilāl strictly adhered to, as discussed in the previous two sections. Moreover, with regard to some grammatical issues such as separating the prefixed and the post-fixed forms using a preposition (al-Anbārī, 2002, 347), Abū Hilāl exhibited a tendency towards the *al-Baṣra* grammatical school, which only permitted such use in poetry as a poetic licence. Nonetheless, Abū Hilāl considered it to be an inferior literary device. As far as poetic licence is concerned, the next section provides an account of this concept, as it details Abū Hilāl's and other scholars' insights.

⁷⁹ *Al-Kūfa* and *al-Baṣra* grammatical schools represent different methods, perspectives, and principles of how to deduce rules out of Arabs' speeches before 150 AH based on the texts that were received from that period. For more details, see Ḍīf's book: *al-Madāris al-Naḥwiyya*.

3- Discussion of the Concept of Poetic Licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*) from Abū Hilāl's Perspective and its Influence on the Poetic Tradition:

In the previous sections, we noted Abū Hilāl's and other scholars' emphasis on the critical role of the concept of *al-isti'māl* in Arabic speech, and on how one should not deviate from the common usage of language. However, adherence to the common usage of language in poetry has been less strict due to particular patterns of poetry in terms of meter and language. Poetry offers limited room for word choice, morphological forms, and syntax due to the limitations of rhyme, rhythm, and prosody. This explains the need for the concept of *al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya* (poetic licence) in the art of poetry composition and why this concept is not required in the art of prose. It should be noted that poetic licence does not mean permission to make linguistic mistakes or to act against a grammatical consensus (as is often understood), simply to increase language options or to adhere to the rules governing the prosody. In this regard, al-Shāṭibī⁸⁰ (d. 790 AH), as quoted in al-Khaṭīb, (2017, 955), stated:

"وَمُخَالَفَةُ الْعَرَبِ وَالنَّحْوِيِّينَ جَمِيعاً خَطَأٌ"

"Contradicting both Arabs and grammarians is wrong."

In fact, poetic licence means following certain techniques in order to fulfil the requirements of poetry. These techniques involve resorting to the less commonly used forms of words, structures and grammar, using abandoned origins of some expressions or structures, or creating a morphological form or a structure based on other commonly used forms and structures. This was also expressed by al-Thamānīnī (2003, 117):

"الشَّاعِرُ لَا يَجُورُ أَنْ يَلْحَنَ، وَلَكِنْ يَجُورُ لَهُ أَنْ يَرُدَّ إِلَى أَصْلِ مُهْمَلٍ أَوْ يَحْمِلَ عَلَى نَظِيرٍ مُسْتَعْمَلٍ"

"A poet is not permitted to commit grammatical errors; however, he may return to a neglected original usage or adopt an equally common one."

In this respect, it can be seen that *al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya* generally means deviating from *al-isti'māl* (common usage), and not committing mistakes, which Abū Hilāl said leads to producing writing of poor quality. Abū Hilāl's perspective on poetic licence is discussed in more detail, below, where different insights into it are presented to achieve a better understanding of this concept in the thought of Abū Hilāl, and its role in the art of poetry.

⁸⁰ Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī.

Poetic licence is part of the classical tradition and is an entirely Arabic initiative that Arabs developed and to which they would resort since poetry occupied a high status in Arabic society and dominated most of the arts of speech. This brought about poetic licence as a technique to suit poetic language and facilitate the process of composing whenever necessary.⁸¹ Since this was the case for Arabs, ibn Jinnī added the ethnic dimension to this concept in his book *al-Khaṣā'is*, where he argued (1974, 1: 329):

"فإذا جاز هذا للعَرَبِ عَنْ غَيْرِ حَصْرِ وَلَا ضَرُورَةٍ قَوْلٍ، كَانَ اسْتِعْمَالُ الضَّرُورَةِ فِي الشِّعْرِ لِلْمَوْلَدِينَ أَسْهَلًا، وَهُمْ فِيهِ أَعْدَرٌ"
"When this is permitted for Arabs without limitation or necessity of saying, the usage of poetic licence of those learning from Arabs should be easier, and they would be more excused to utilise it than would others."

Accordingly, for ibn Jinnī, poetic licence provided non-natives who lived among Arabs in Islamic lands more room and opportunities to contribute to the art of poetry without being restricted by certain linguistic rules. However, the extensive use of some grammatical structures in poetry does not necessarily mean that the structures are highly eloquent, as it could be considered to be poor practice, and is only allowed in poetry. As al-Murādī (d. 749 AH) states in the context of explaining the grammatical rule of employing a conjunction to refer to a hidden pronoun (1975, 3: 229):

"وَهُوَ كَثِيرٌ فِي الشِّعْرِ، وَمَعَ كَثْرَتِهِ فَهُوَ ضَعِيفٌ"

"Its occurrence in poetry is abundant, and yet despite this, it is weak."

It was for this reason that grammarians such as Sibawayh, ibn Jinnī, al-Thamānīnī, al-Murādī, and ibn Mālik often engaged with the concept of poetic licence during their discussions of different grammatical topics, particularly when a certain grammatical rule had a specific implication in poetry. An example of this can be seen in al-Thamānīnī's discussion on the omission of the vocative particle before the indicating noun that is permitted in poetry, where he argued (2003, 444):

"فَإِنْ اضْطُرَّ شَاعِرٌ إِلَى إِسْقَاطِ حَرْفِ النَّدَاءِ مِنْ هَذَا النَّوْعِ جَازَ لَهُ فِي الضَّرُورَةِ"

"If a poet is compelled to drop this type of vocative particle, he may do so as a poetic licence."

⁸¹ Western scholars have often argued that rhyme and metre in texts are too restrictive, as stated by Van Gelder (2012, 9).

Poetic licence can be included under the wider umbrella of poetic language (*lughat al-shi'r*). This involves using language or expressions that are not normally used in other types of speech. In other words, poetry has a special nature and an identifiable pattern that is different from that of prose. Thus, Arabs allowed a broader range of language to be used in poetry. According to ibn 'Uṣfūr (d. 669 AH), as quoted by al-Ṭanāḥī (n.d., 217):

"اعلم أنّ الشّعْرَ لَمَّا كَانَ كَلَامًا مُؤَزَّوْنًا... أَجَازَتْ فِيهِ الْعَرَبُ مَا لَا يَجُوزُ فِي الْكَلَامِ، اضْطَرَّوْا إِلَى ذَلِكَ أَوْ لَمْ يَضْطَرُّوْا إِلَيْهِ"

"Note that as poetry consists of metred and rhyming words ... Arabs allowed in it that which is impermissible in speech, whether they are forced to do so or not."

Therefore, it is not only poetic necessity that leads to deviation from common grammatical tradition. Instead, poetic language plays a key role in this regard. Before ibn 'Uṣfūr, Sībawayh highlighted the concept of poetic language that allows for special kinds of language or expressions that are not used in prose. In the section of باب ما يحتمل الشعر (chapter on what is permissible in poetry), Sībawayh argued (1982, 1: 26):

"اعلم أنه يجوز في الشعر ما لا يجوز في غيره"

"Note that poetry allows to exist within it that which is impermissible elsewhere."

As discussed previously, poetic language and poetic licence do not mean contradicting the general linguistic system of Arabic and should not be presented as an excuse for linguistic chaos. This is because any disorder in the application of the linguistic system would lead to semantic confusion, which dramatically undermines the quality of literary texts. Thus, when explaining Sībawayh's argument regarding poetic licence, al-Sīrāfī (d. 368 AH) stated that (2008, 2: 95):

"وليس في شيء من ذلك رفع منصوب، ولا نصب مخفوض، ولا لفظ يكون المتكلم فيه لاجناً، ومتى وجد هذا في الشعر كان ساقطاً مطرحةً، ولم يدخل في ضرورة الشعر"

"Not included in any of this is marking the accusative as nominative, or the genitive as accusative, nor an utterance that the speaker causes to be ungrammatical. Whenever such is found in poetry, it is deemed erroneous and does not fall under poetic licence."

Al-Sīrāfī then enumerated seven types of poetic licence (ibid., 2: 96):

"وضرورة الشعر على سبعة أوجه، وهي: الزيادة، والنقصان، والحذف، والتقديم، والتأخير والإبدال، وتغيير وجه من الإعراب إلى وجه آخر على طريق التشبيه، وتانيث المدكر وتذكير المؤنث"

“Poetic licence has seven forms, which are: addition, apocopation, omission, foregrounding, backgrounding and phonetic change, altering the marking declension by way of a simile, and feminising the masculine and masculinising the feminine.”

It is worth noting that al-Sīrāfī did not mention some of the other types of poetic licence that are mentioned in *al-Khaṣā'is* (1974, 1: 327), such as the abbreviation of the long *alif* or the lengthening of the abbreviated one, opening the incorporated letters (*fakk al-idghām*), and smoothening the *hamza* or altering the smooth vowel to *hamza*. It could be argued that al-Sīrāfī considered these types of poetic licence that were mentioned by ibn Jinnī to be part of the categories of *al-ziyāda* and *al-nuqṣān*. Most are only permitted in poetry and there is no grammatical excuse for their use in prose. One point that should be clear in this context is that poetic licence and eloquence are not necessarily correlated. This means that poetic licence could occur and be highly eloquent but, since it is only permitted in poetry, it is still considered to be poetic licence.

Based on the previous discussion, it could be argued there are fewer forms of poetry that deviate from the common use of some grammatical rules compared to those that adhere to the grammatical tradition. Moreover, whatever was found to include a complete deviation from the grammatical tradition or a linguistic mistake was completely rejected. This is because the linguistic system and the grammatical tradition were intuitively and spontaneously used by Arabs before the second AH century, who were recognised as being people of high speech, eloquence, and rhetoric.

Moreover, it appears that there is a general concept regarding poetry, which is that poetic language includes permission to use specific kinds of language and expressions that are not used in normal speech. Subdivision of poetic licence can be made of the deviations from the common grammatical use that are still considered to be part of the general linguistic system of the Arabic language. Poetic language and poetic licence reflect the special nature of poetry and are indicative of the exception Arabs granted to this mode of speech in order to meet requirements of the poetic system. As discussed previously, poetic licence is entirely an Arabic initiative and has in fact been present since poetry appeared. On the other hand, it can be argued that Arabs invented it for poetic purposes, not for non-natives who might have found composing poetry in Arabic quite challenging due to its strict grammar rules.

It seems that Abū Hilāl adds a different angle to the discussion of poetic licence. He argued that Arabs' use of poetic licence was not a valid reason for the poets of his time. This is stated explicitly in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* (1971, 171), after mentioning several examples of poetic licence:

"وليس للمُحدث أن يجعل هذه الأبيات حجةً ويبنى عليها، فإنه لا يُعذرُ في شيءٍ منها"

"A modern poet may not designate these verses as proof and build upon them; and he is not excused in using any such constructions."

Abū Hilāl's statement is in clear contrast to grammarians' perspectives on poetic licence. On different occasions, he emphasised the same idea, directing his readers (*Adab* seekers) and advising them against poetic licence, saying (ibid., 156):

"ويُنَبِّغي أن تجتنب ارتكاب الصّورات، وإن جاءت فيها رخصةٌ من أهل العرَبية، فإنها قبيحةٌ تشينُ الكلام"

"You must also avoid utilising poetic licences, even if such licences were given by Arabic specialists, as they are aberrations that disgrace words."

In the above quotation, it seems that Abū Hilāl abandoned his syntactical approach and did not agree with the general ideas of grammarians, which reflects his independent personality as a linguist and critic. Rather, he approached poetic licence from the viewpoint of a literary critic who had resorted to his own taste on which to base his own judgment in the absence of external influences. For Abū Hilāl, although poetic licence was permitted by the populace and by scholars of Arabic, it did not match the criteria for a sophisticated literary text, perhaps because some features of poetic licence are not used commonly, which makes them appear incompatible with poetic rhythm and therefore difficult to accept as the meaning would not be immediately understood. The following quotation from Abū Hilāl might offer justification of and an explanation why he adopted this perspective; as he argued (ibid., 171):

"والمُنظومُ الجيّد ما حَرَجَ مَحْرَجَ المُنثورِ في سلاستِهِ وسهُولتِهِ واستِوائِهِ وقِلّةِ صرورائِهِ"

"Good poetry is that akin to prose in all its simplicity, ease, levelness, and lack of poetic licences."

It appears that Abū Hilāl tended to value poetry that resembled prose in terms of the ease of structure and the absence of artificiality. Moreover, Abū Hilāl did not evaluate poetic licence in terms of truthfulness or falsehood; instead, it appears that he saw it in terms of taste and judged whether it was unacceptable or unbearable upon hearing it. In terms of meaning, Abū Hilāl felt that poetic licence might cause confusion

and ambiguity, particularly due to the omission of some grammatical words for prosodic purposes, or because of the separation of prefixed and post-fixed words (*al-faṣl bayn al-muḍāf wa al-muḍāf ilayh*), which was completely contrary to his theory of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-ma'mā*). This called for clarity and accuracy in language use, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Finally, although Abū Hilāl discouraged the use of poetic licence, his phrase *وقلة ضروراته* could be understood as an allowance or an indication that poetic licence cannot be completely avoided, as it is a fundamental constituent of poetic language's structure.

The next section provides further analyses of why Abū Hilāl did not encourage *Adab* seekers to resort to poetic licence in their literary productions.

4- Assessment of How Abū Hilāl Perceived Poetic Licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*) in his Critiques of Various Poetic Verses:

It is clear that Abū Hilāl was not in favour of any poetry that included 'poetic licence' (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*) as he considered poetry to be an elevated craft that required in-depth knowledge and solid linguistic background. The latter was intended to enable a poet to produce texts that combined elaborate word choices that accurately represented meanings; sophisticated syntactical structures that met the requirements of both semantics and eloquence; and to write in a style that is devoid of artificiality. Therefore, according to Abū Hilāl, these qualities should not compel *Adab* seekers to engage in the use of poetic licence which undermines and decreases literary and artistic levels of the poetic text.⁸² As discussed previously, Abū Hilāl evaluated poetic licence from the perspective of literary criticism, which led him to consider poetic licence to be a kind of poetic defect that undermined harmony in the structure and eloquence of speech.

It can also be noted that Abū Hilāl rejected certain types of poetic licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*), considering that they led to ambiguity and confusion in meaning and prevented the delivery of clear and precise semantics. Although poetic licence offers greater room and more options for composers of poetry to use a wider range of

⁸² Poetic licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*) differs from prosodic licence (*al-zihāf*). Poetic licence concerns the grammatical structure, while prosodic licence concerns the prosodic structure and the rhythm of each type of prosody.

expressions and linguistic structures, it could have a negative effect on the meaning in some instances - which is further evidence on the correlation between meaning and syntactical structure. In other words, there are specific forms of poetic licence that involve the uncommon use of language, including anastrophe (*al-taqdīm wa al-ta'khīr*) of the described and the description (*al-ṣifa wa al-mawṣūf*). According to Abū Hilāl, the aforementioned structure was permitted in language but caused confusion in meaning, which was in contrast to his project and theory of wording and meaning. Moreover, he felt that it undermined the craft of poetry composition.

Abū Hilāl's adherence to the concepts of oral transmission (*al-samā'*) and the common usage of language (*al-isti'māl*) led him to undermine the literary value of texts that included any deviation from the common use of Arabic and its general linguistic system. In his view, literary creativity did not entail contravening the general linguistic structure that was seen in Arabs' use of the language. In general, Abū Hilāl considered that genuine poetic competence and virtuosity, combined with in-depth knowledge of the language, would be adequate to enable composers of poetry to produce texts that were devoid of any form of poetic licence, and it was this in-depth knowledge and linguistic competence that he attempted to provide to *Adab* seekers through his books that discuss various disciplines of language. In other words, the material that he presented in his books constitute adequate examples of sophisticated and approved literary texts.

One point should be clear from the previous discussions: deviating from grammatical rules does not necessarily mean deviating from the Arabic language. This is because Arabic grammatical rules are deduced and constructed according to language that is commonly used by Arabs. Therefore, one grammatical rule cannot include all examples taken from Arabs' speech; if this were the case, there would be endless grammatical rules. However, as Arabic grammar includes the majority of examples of speech and that which is in common use, then what remains could still be considered Arabic, although it is known via oral transmission (*al-samā'*), not by analogy (*al-qiyās*). What is known from Arabic via *al-samā'*, which includes deviations from some grammatical rules, still constitutes a major part of Arabic. For this reason, Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745 AH), as in al-Khaṭīb (*Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 2014, 2: 171, footnote 1), argued that:

"إنما نَبْنِي المَقاييس العَرَبِيَّةَ على وُجود الكَثْرَةِ"

"We construct Arabic grammar upon the usage of that which is widespread."

Accordingly, it can be argued that the vast number of instances create a pattern that constitutes a rule; however, no pattern or rule can be derived from single examples. Therefore, these single examples continue to be included in the domain of the language despite having various levels of quality and eloquence.

5- Conclusion:

This chapter examined the use of linguistic discourse (morphology, syntax and semantics) in the context of lexicography and literary criticism in Abū Hilāl's books. It re-examined the morphological and syntactical discussions that Abū Hilāl raised in his lexical presentation and literary critiques in order to outline his criteria for identifying sophisticated versus poor literary texts. Moreover, the present chapter measured the extent to which Abū Hilāl's literary judgments were influenced by his linguistic insights, namely the influence of morphology and syntax on his perspective concerning the literary issues of wording and meaning. This involved locating contexts in which Abū Hilāl initiated morphological and syntactical discussions, particularly in his lexicons and *al-Ṣinā'atayn*. These instances were then submitted to a close reading and in-depth analysis to identify the correlation between linguistic discourse and literary criticism - how they interact integrally to produce a literary text that is considered exemplary.

The analyses of the linguistic discourse in the context of literary criticism revealed that Abū Hilāl highlighted the importance of considering three key grammatical principles in the process of composing literary texts: (i) adherence to analogy (*al-qiyās*), (ii) oral transmission (*al-samā'*) and the (iii) prevailing common usage of the language by Arabs and by the masters of language and eloquence (*al-isti'māl*). Thus, for Abū Hilāl, observing these principles would ensure the production of a literary text that combined both high literary quality and clear semantics. Conversely, deviation from these principles would have a negative effect on the meaning of a given text, as deviation from the common usage of language and oral transmission often led to confusion and ambiguity in terms of semantics. In addition, Abū Hilāl's linguistic discourse showed how the grammatical structure played a key role in accurately delivering the meaning, and that any disorder in the grammatical structure would result in an erroneous meaning. Accordingly, Abū Hilāl advised *Adab* seekers to adhere to the common use of language and to the most accurate grammatical structures that would represent and deliver meaning successfully. To accomplish this, Abū Hilāl

provided his readers with examples that involved the amendment of weak poetic verses by paraphrasing them into prose while taking into account the ideal grammatical structure to elaborate on the meaning.

Accordingly, Abū Hilāl's focus was not on correct or incorrect grammar; instead, he attempted to employ the most appropriate grammatical structures to elevate the texts' literary quality. In other words, correct grammatical structures vary in terms of eloquence and in their ability to reflect poetic meaning. Therefore, what grammarians consider to be correct grammar does not always meet the requirements for eloquence and rhetoric of sophisticated literary texts. *Adab* seekers should therefore study texts by the masters of language and emulate their use of language in order to produce eloquent and rhetorical texts.

Abū Hilāl's linguistic discourse shows his tendency to apply the grammatical principles and methods of language transmission of the *al-Baṣra* school of grammar. These principles are analogy (*al-qiyās*), oral transmission (*al-samā'*) and the prevailing common usage of Arabs and the masters of language and eloquence (*al-isti'māl*).

Although Abū Hilāl's taste as a man of literature and criticism prompted him to largely reject the use of poetic licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shi'riyya*), he did not deny that it existed as a concept. Instead, he admitted that grammarians permitted a certain degree of deviation from some grammatical rules by referring to other uncommon or rare rules in order to fulfil certain poetic requirements, such as prosody and rhyme. He was, however, of the opinion that poetic licence undermined the quality of literary texts because it caused confusion and ambiguity in the semantics thereof. Although poetic licence includes grammatical structure and rules that are permitted by grammarians, Abū Hilāl advised his readers not to rely on them if they wished to produce superior literature.

As for the morphological discourse in Abū Hilāl's lexicons, it was evident that he showed considerable knowledge and ability in how to deal with different morphological issues throughout his lexical presentation. However, one side of his morphological approach was difficult to identify - the arrangement of lexical items in his lexicons - as his arrangement was either according to the themes of words in study, or to the normal alphabetical order. These two ways of arrangement seem to be easier and more accessible for a wider range of readership, yet do not allow us to know how Abū Hilāl

would have dealt with the etymological root of some challenging lexical items such as those with abbreviated or lengthened *alif*, or items that include *hamza* as an original constituent letter. Lexicographers disagreed over these kinds of lexical items as their original constituent letters are not immediately identified. As a result, the placement of these lexical items differs in Arabic lexicons according to how each lexicographer conceives them. Therefore, it could be argued that classifying the lexical material is one of the clear proofs of morphological and etymological skills of lexicographers. Yet, in Abū Hilāl's case, it could be his didactical sense that prompted him to avoid the sophisticated methods of lexical arrangement so that his lexicons remained more accessible.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated how Abū Hilāl could include morphological and syntactical rules in the realm of literature, thus producing literary verdicts regarding morphological forms of constituent vocal forms, and grammatical structures of literary texts. As a result, by employing linguistic methods in critical literary discourse, it was possible to identify both Abū Hilāl's grammatical school and his literary theory of wording and meaning. It is noted that scholars who have studied Abū Hilāl, as discussed in the Literature Review, have neglected the study of the linguistic methods that Abū Hilāl implemented in the context of literary criticism, which made their findings regarding his theory of wording and meaning not entirely convincing. This emphasises the need for a multidisciplinary approach to Abū Hilāl's literary heritage as such an approach could provide deeper insight into various literary issues that have not yet been studied in depth.

Chapter Five

Studying Abū Hilāl's Poetry

Introduction:

The previous chapters contained a discussion of various aspects that characterise Abū Hilāl's literary works. These aspects included Abū Hilāl's insights, methods, literary and linguistic theories, and how he reflected on all of these aspects in his works of lexicography and literary criticism. This chapter discusses Abū Hilāl's poetry in order to gain deeper insight into the linguistic, literary and psychological traits that characterised his poetry and personality. The reason for this is that Abū Hilāl's poetry could constitute a rich field and the best documentation archive to enable us to gain a better understanding of the poet's several dimensions, such as his view of life in general and the purposes for which he composed poetry, as well as his linguistic, literary and poetic styles, use of language, and how he employed poetry in his literary productions.

It is worth mentioning that this chapter does not study Abū Hilāl's theoretical and critical approach to different issues of literary criticism in comparison with how he applied these views in his poetry, as Ghayyād (1975) did when he compiled Abū Hilāl's poetry. This chapter avoids this comparison as it could be argued that composing poetry and criticising it are entirely different processes. In other words, good critics do not necessarily make good poets, and vice versa. This does not mean that Abū Hilāl's poetry does not include some sophisticated verses that are of high literary and artistic level, as al-Jurgānī discussed in *Asrār al-Balāgha* (see Chapter Two). Nonetheless, this chapter is an attempt to gain deeper understanding of Abū Hilāl's life via his poetry, separate from the views he expressed in his literary criticism. This is intended to reveal unknown areas of his personality as a poet and litterateur, to identify how he approached this genre of Arabic writing, and the poetic themes that he addressed.

As far as Abū Hilāl's poetry is concerned, it should be noted that his relationship with poetry consisted of three dimensions, which makes this relationship integral, original, and worth studying. These dimensions are:

- 1) He was a poet himself, which means that he was familiar with the experience.
- 2) He was a poetry transmitter (*rāwī*), as al-Bākhazī (d. 467 AH) described him in his book *Dumyat al-Qaṣr* (1996), and as discussed in Chapter Two of the present thesis. This means that Abū Hilāl was well acquainted with the poetry of different eras. As

such, his understanding of this genre of Arabic writing is to be taken seriously. In addition, as poetry is clearly connected to language, Abū Hilāl's knowledge of poetry, as a poetry transmitter, provided him with adequate lexical material that enabled him to curate to the three lexicons that are discussed in Chapter Three.

3) As Abū Hilāl was a literary critic, it is assumed that he had the necessary key materials, knowledge and skills to identify various degrees of poor and sophisticated poetry in particular, and of Arabic discourses in general.

It could be argued that these dimensions differed in terms of their influence on Abū Hilāl's views, yet combined, they contributed to forming his personality, literary views and theory, and his approach to literary criticism.

The previous theoretical framework is applied in this chapter by selecting some of Abū Hilāl's poetic verses which are then analysed and studied in terms of syntax, morphology, semantics, and rhetoric. The selection is the present author's personal choice, since there is no official *dīwān*. This chapter discusses several points relating to Abū Hilāl's poetry, such as:

1- Overview of Abū Hilāl's poetry and general comments.

2- The categorisation of Abū Hilāl's poetry:

- Indecent and obscene verses.
- Widely renowned verses (*abiāt sā'ira*).
- Wisdom and proverbs (*shi'r al-ḥikma wa al-amthāl*).
- Verses that include borrowed meanings, with reference to the originals.
- Verses that include morphological features.
- Verses that include grammatical features.
- Verses that include rhetorical features.

3- Conclusion:

- Factors that make Abū Hilāl's poetry strong or weak.

1- General Comments about and an Evaluation of Abū Hilāl's Poetry:

Despite the fact that we do not have Abū Hilāl's complete *Dīwān*, what has remained shows that Abū Hilāl had considerable poetic competence because he composed poetry employing various kinds of metres and rhymes but did not use four letters, namely: *al-thā'*, *al-dhāl*, *al-shīn* and *al-ṣād*. However, it is difficult to decide

whether he avoided rhymes involving these letters or if they have been lost with the rest of his *Dīwān*. He also covered a variety of themes, as mentioned below.

Abū Hilāl's poetry is preserved in two kinds of sources, the first being his books: *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, *Dīwān al-Ma'ānī* and *Jamharat al-Amthāl*. He presented most of his poetic verses as part of his exemplification of sophisticated or poor compositions, or cited them when they shared similar themes or meanings with the verses of other poets. The second source of Abū Hilāl's poetry is books by his successors, who mentioned some of his poetry as examples of different rhetorical and literary devices.

As mentioned in the Literature Review, Ghayyāḍ (1975) was able to compile all of Abū Hilāl's available poetry in one book; he also provided a brief study of the poetry in the introduction. In this study, Ghayyāḍ briefly mentioned several aspects and issues of Abū Hilāl's poetry, such as meanings that Abū Hilāl borrowed from other poets, wording and meaning, Abū Hilāl's insights into the craft of poetry in general, poetic themes and artistry in his poetry, and how he adhered to his literary critical principles in his poetry. Ghayyāḍ based most of his study of Abū Hilāl's ideas on *al-Ṣinā'atayn*. In this section, some points in Ghayyāḍ's study are discussed from different perspectives, and some other observations regarding Abū Hilāl's poetry are provided.

Ghayyāḍ (1975) could be considered amongst the scholars who believed that Abū Hilāl's discussions of the issues of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-ma'nā*) lacked order, and that Abū Hilāl did not provide a conclusive opinion regarding whether wording or meaning was more important. In this regard, the reader is referred to Chapter Three of this thesis in which the issue of wording and meaning is discussed extensively, and in which Abū Hilāl's position is justified and explained.

In his compiled work, Ghayyāḍ (1975, 33) discussed Abū Hilāl's opinion of plagiarism in literature (*al-sariqā al-adabiyya*) and stated that Abū Hilāl did not see it as problematic because he borrowed many of the meanings in his poetry from different sources, such as the poetry of his predecessors and some Arabic proverbs. However, Ghayyāḍ's discussion ended at this point and he did not provide a further explanation of the nature or context of the poetry from which Abū Hilāl borrowed meaning. This issue is discussed later in this section. Abū Hilāl referred to the issue of Plagiarism in detail in *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, where he claimed that meanings were shared amongst poets and writers and were not exclusive to a specific group of composers. Therefore, it

could be argued that Abū Hilāl legitimised the concept of literary plagiarism by classifying it according to three types. The first is borrowing a meaning using the exact wording, which is the most unacceptable type of plagiarism. The second type is borrowing the meaning by semi-paraphrasing, which might alter the original meaning or suggest the opposite idea to some extent. The last type is borrowing the meaning and giving it a completely new form of wording that is more elaborate; in this case, the new expression would have priority over the old one and would belong to the new creator, *al-Ṣinā'atayn* (1971, 202).⁸³

Detecting plagiarism or borrowed meanings in Abū Hilāl's poetry would be almost impossible without considerable knowledge of the Arabic poetry that predated his work. While reading Abū Hilāl's poetry, I identified approximately sixteen verses in which he had borrowed meanings from other poets. However, I also noticed an important factor, which was that the vast majority of these borrowed verses were from prooftexts (*shawāhid*) on grammatical and morphological issues that are common in books of grammar and morphology. Therefore, as suggested in the previous paragraph, the nature and context of most of the borrowed meanings are linguistic. This means that linguists used these particular verses as evidence of specific linguistic issues. This could be justified by the discussion of syntax and morphology in Abū Hilāl's literary criticism in Chapter Four of this thesis. Thus, it could be argued that Abū Hilāl's adherence to grammarians' and morphologists' traditions had a noticeable influence on his poetry, were a source of an inspiration for him, and that prooftexts constituted a major part of the Arabic poetry he memorised.

Abū Hilāl's poetry was not, however, limited to meanings borrowed from verses employed as prooftexts for grammatical and morphological discussions, as he employed various topics, meanings and themes in his poetry. The themes in Abū Hilāl's poetry can be subdivided into the two main categories of Traditional and Modern. Traditional themes refer to those that have been known since classical Arabic poetry, while modern themes refer to those in which Abū Hilāl included motifs and cultural features that did not exist in the classical era of Arabic poetry. Accordingly, traditional themes include companionship, horses, camels, satire, gazelles,

⁸³ This was also discussed in my MA dissertation which was submitted to the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter in September 2017.

descriptions, wisdom, eulogies, self-pity, condolences, grey hair, elegies, blame, complaints, and stars. Included in the modern themes are descriptions of public facilities such as bathrooms, flowers in gardens, calligraphy and the various qualities of writing tools, books, riddles, cultural features such as papers for monetary transactions (called *safātij*), chess, and hairdressing.

Similarly, reading Abū Hilāl's poetry reveals that he had a profound awareness and sense of life and things around him, which caused him to notice precise details in nature and the living things he encountered. This is particularly aligned with several features that characterise the artistic side of pre-Islamic poetry mentioned by al-Bahbītī (1950, 67). Therefore, in Abū Hilāl's poetry, one finds him discussing grasshoppers, ants, spiders, scorpions, snakes, monkeys, lizards (*ḍabb*), antelopes, birds, donkeys, falcons, and fish. Moreover, one finds mention of different human traits, of clothing, food, fruits, vegetables, colours, crafts, books, writing, and public facilities. Accordingly, it appears that Abū Hilāl's poetry could be considered a reflection of his literacy as an *Adīb*, a linguist, a lexicographer and a critic, as he contributed one or more books to each of these fields. In addition, his poetry can be considered an archive that documents cultural and social features of the Fourth AH century.

With regard to his style, Abū Hilāl's poetry alternates between imitating that of classical poetry and the modern style. These two styles include differences in terms of language usage, terms, phrases, and structure. It can be seen that the style of his poetry varied according to the poetic theme involved. In other words, when the poetic theme was classical, such as panegyrics, elegies or satires, one notes that the poem is classical in form in terms of language usage, structure and tone, whereas the style is modern when the poetic theme is the same. The tremendous variety in Abū Hilāl's poetry in terms of styles and themes might be the reason for Abū Hilāl using his poetry as examples of various motifs and linguistic discussions in his books. This indicates his profound interaction with his poetry, as he might have considered it to be an indispensable part of the culture and knowledge he possessed. Thus, Abū Hilāl's poetry constitutes rich epistemological material for conducting an integral study as it includes various phenomena that are strongly connected to other books on language sciences and culture.

Also, it could be noted that the literary, linguistic, and eloquent levels of Abū Hilāl's poetry vary according to theme and content factors. The influential relationship

between the literary level and the theme is addressed by al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 216 AH) as reported by al-Marzubānī (1965, p.85). Al-Aṣmaʿī stated that when the theme of 'the good' is approached in poetry, it would soften the poetry, while other themes would make it literary and sophisticated". Therefore, it could be argued that some verses from Abū Hilāl's poetry seem, to some extent, weak and artificial, as their themes do not allow high poetic performance. Accordingly, Abū Hilāl's poetry could undergo further study of sound and sense in order to gain insight into what meanings of metre, rhyme, and other phonetic aspects could convey and how they function in poems and closely interact, as well as to discover how sophisticated linguistic meaning could be critically influenced by linguistic form and theme, as is investigated in Van Gelder (2012).

This thesis had suggested that despite the profusion of literary production in various fields of knowledge in Abū Hilāl's time, Abū Hilāl found gaps in language, history, lexicography, literary criticism and literature that he succeeded in filling. This is also reflected in his poetry; after mentioning ten different lines of his poetry, he commented that, to the best of his knowledge, the meanings and themes in these lines had not been broached previously, as cited in (Ghayyād, 1975, 90, 97, 104, 123, 125, 130, 143, 148, 157, 166). Abū Hilāl's statement should be taken seriously because he was renowned for being a poetry transmitter who possessed profound knowledge of poetry. This is also an indication of his on-going desire to achieve originality and to address topics and themes that were rarely discussed. In the next section, Abū Hilāl's poetry is divided into several categories to provide a better understanding of the nature thereof.

2- Categorising Abū Hilāl's Poetry:

In order to gain a clearer image of and deeper insight into Abū Hilāl's poetry, the following discussion approaches his poetic works by classifying them according to the following categories:

- 1- Indecent and obscene verses.
- 2- Widely renowned verses (*abyāt sā'ira*).
- 3- Wisdom and proverbs (*shī'r al-ḥikma wa al-amthāl*).
- 4- Verses that include borrowed meanings with references to the originals.
- 5- Verses that include morphological features.
- 6- Verses that include grammatical features.

7- Verses that include rhetorical features.

Categories 1, 2, 3 and 4, above, are related to meaning, while the last three are related to linguistic discussions. However, these seven categories share a common function, which is to reveal the nature of Abū Hilāl's poetry in terms of form and content, and the categories clarify the important elements that constitute his poetry. In addition, these categories were determined based on the prevalence of verses in Abū Hilāl's poetry that could be included under each category. In other words, each category was created when there was a noticeable number of verses that matched the topic in a particular category. The next section presents each category with the verses included therein, followed by a brief analysis.

1- Indecent and Obscene Verses:

The literature review in Chapter One of the present thesis mentioned that al-Ṭanāḥī (n.d., 175) discussed the issue of transmitting indecent and obscene poetry in Abū Hilāl's book *Dīwān al-Ma'ānī*, while here we see Abū Hilāl himself composing poetry of this kind.

The first example concerns his erection (1975, 67):

لِي دَكَرٌ لَا يَزَالُ يُفْضِحُنِي / كَأَنِّي مِنْهُ فَوْقَ إِرْزَبَةٍ
عَادَ قَمِيصِي بِهِ فَلَنَسُوهُ / وَأَصْبَحْتُ جُبَّتِي بِهِ قُبَّةً
فَإِنْ تَكُنْ كُرْبَةً تُكَابِدُهَا / فَلَا تَخَفْ فَهُوَ كَاشِفُ الْكُرْبَةِ

(I have a cock that keeps me embarrassed,

It is like I am straddling an iron rod.

It is like my shirt is a conical cap,

And my robe is domed and cupolaed.

But if this pain is yours as well,

Fear not, it casts the pain abroad.)⁸⁴

The second example (ibid., 79):

-وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَى مَا تَزْعُمُونَ أَكَارِمٌ / فَأَيُّرِي فِي أَسْتِ الْأَكَارِمِ وَالْجُ

(you are the ones who claim to be noble,

My cock in the ass of the nobles is lodged.)

⁸⁴ The English translation of the Arabic verses and the cartoon illustrating the meaning of these verses (see Appendix 3 in the appendix section) were accomplished by Doctor Emily Selove.

The third example (ibid., 111):

-فَلَوْ كُنْتَ رِيحاً كُنْتَ فَسْوَةً مُنْخَمٍ / وَلَوْ كُنْتَ عُضْوً كُنْتَ أَيَّرَ جِمَارٍ

(Were you a smell, you would be a sickly fart,

Were you an organ, the penis of a donkey.)

Finally, he describes an aubergine (ibid., 147):

-مُدَوَّرَةٌ سُودُ الْمُتُونِ كَأَنَّهَا / خُصَى الرَّئِجِ لَاحِثٌ تَحْتَ فَيْشِ قَوَائِمِ

(The aubergines are round like black men's balls

Shining 'neath the heads of standing cocks.)

The previous poetic lines show the sarcastic aspect of Abū Hilāl's personality, as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Amongst the various themes in his poetry, Abū Hilāl included some verses on the theme of general complaints from his time and from people of his time in particular. As he stated (ibid., 78):

-وأكثرُ حالاتِ الزَّمانِ يَعْمَنِي / وليسَ لِعَمِّ العارِفِينَ مُفَرِّجُ

(I am grieved by most of time's vicissitudes

For those who know, there's no escaping grief.)

This might have prompted Abū Hilāl to discuss indecent matters in his poetry openly as an expression of the anger⁸⁵ he felt towards the period in which he lived. It could also be deduced that discussing indecent matters was particularly acceptable in poetry; thus, scholars did not avoid such matters when transmitting poetry. In addition, the high status and 'special' nature of poetry in Arabic culture allowed people to feel comfortable when considering indecent matters in this genre; that is, poetry became a space in which human thoughts and feelings were reflected. This emphasises the importance of poetry's role in documenting and portraying several aspects of different eras in Arabic culture and society, in addition to the lexical heritage that such poetry might provide.

It is worth mentioning that the second and the third examples of the indecent poetry, above, seem to be directed toward a particular person Abū Hilāl is satirising.

⁸⁵ Sarcasm could be introduced as a sign of anger or as an expression thereof. A similar condition can be found in Abū Hilāl's contemporary: Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 415 AH) and his book: *Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn* which reflects his psychological condition of anger, sarcasm, and melancholy. This could help us to complete the image of Abū Hilāl's personality that the present thesis attempts to draw.

Although al-Bākhazī (1996) mentioned the third example, he did not mention who Abū Hilāl meant and what gave rise to this satire. This is probably the case with most of his verses as the context is often unknown. Therefore, one should add further speculations about the various contexts of his verses, otherwise, the absence of the contexts would possibly result in a short analysis. For this reason, it could be claimed that satire in general represents a condition of dissatisfaction, the source of which is internal or external. The internal source could possibly be seen reflected in other verses where Abū Hilāl expresses disappointed at his time and people in general. This internal feeling of dissatisfaction might turn, in particular occasions, into an anger because of the feeling of being unappreciated by an external element (people or a specific person) which might have prompted Abū Hilāl to release his anger employing strong indecent satire verses.

2- Widely Renowned Verses (*abyāt sā'ira*):

Several verses of Abū Hilāl's poetry were so widely known that scholars who wrote about his biography always mentioned them. This means that Abū Hilāl succeeded in composing poetry that included meanings that expressed people's thoughts and needs. Such verses were mentioned by the editor of *al-Awā'il* in his introduction (1987, 10):

فَدَّ تَخَطَّكَ شَبَابُ / وَتَعَثَّكَ مَشِيْبُ
فَأْتَى مَا لَيْسَ يَمْضِي / وَمَضَى مَا لَا يُؤُوبُ
فَتَأْهَبُ لِسَقَامٍ / لَيْسَ يَشْفِيهِ طَبِيبُ
لَا تَوَهَّمُهُ بَعِيداً / إِنَّمَا الْآتِي قَرِيبُ

(Youth has passed you by,
Age has overwhelmed you
So, what never leaves has come,
And what never comes has left.
So be prepared for a sickness,
That cannot be cured by a doctor.
Do not think it is far away,
What will come is close.)

The theme of these verses could be included in the theme of self-pity, in which Abū Hilāl mourned the end of his youth and described the beginning of the period of growing old where he considered old age to be a disease with no cure. He concluded

these verses with a wise saying, the second part of which could be considered a proverb.

Other famous verses that are evoked whenever Abū Hilāl's biography is discussed pertain to his complaints about his miserable condition while worthless people were enjoying high social status. As he said (1975, 84):

-جُلُوسِي فِي سَوْقٍ أبيعُ وَأشْتَرِي / دَلِيلٌ عَلَى أَنَّ الْأَنَامَ قُرُودُ
وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي قَوْمٍ تُدَلُّ كِرَامُهُمْ / وَيَعْتَظُمُ فِيهِمْ نَدْلُهُمْ وَيَسُودُ

(That I am sitting in a marketplace buying and selling

Is proof that people are apes.

What good is a crowd who debases the nobles
and honours and follows the base?)

These verses are clear proof that Abū Hilāl had a difficult life because he did not receive the appreciation he believed he deserved. In Chapter Two, we stated that Yāqūt (1936-38, Vol: 8, 259) said that al-Abyūrdī (d. 557 AH) described Abū Hilāl selling clothes in order to avoid begging or asking people for money. It is also mentioned in al-Bākharzī (1996) that Abū Hilāl was a cloth merchant and earned his living through hard work.

A category concerning Abū Hilāl's wisdom poetry is included in the following section. Although the verse belongs to the category of wisdom poetry, it is mentioned here because it is famous in its own right. Abū Hilāl said (ibid., 96):

-إِذَا أَدْبَرَ الْمَطْلُوبُ عَنْكَ فَخَلَّهُ / فَإِنَّ عَنَاءَ أَنْ تُحَاوَلَ مُدْبِرًا

(If what you seek has gone then leave it,

It is exhausting to get back what has gone.)

This could also be classified as a verse of asceticism (*shi'r al-zuhd*)⁸⁶ because it emphasises the importance of contentment; thus, one should not spend most of his/her time attempting to resurrect the past as this would cause disappointment. The Arabic poetic theme of *al-zuhd* is considered to be the Islamic version of a specific kind of wisdom poetry *shi'r al-ḥikma*, as discussed by Sperl (1989, 73), and which is discussed in the next section.

⁸⁶ The poem that approaches such theme is called *Zuhdiyya*. Sperl (1989) in his book: *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry* discussed the *Zuhdiyya* canon and analysed one of Abū al-'Atāhiya's *Zuhdiyya* poems.

Similarly, Abū Hilāl wrote a famous poem consisting of sixteen verses in which he expressed preference for winter nights when the wind is cool and the water cold. He also liked long winter nights because he then had sufficient time to enjoy his companionship with those with whom he studied jurisprudence, grammar and poetry, which indicates that he “seems to have been most assiduous in acquiring knowledge”, as stated by Azarnoosh (2015, 2).

Finally, Abū Hilāl said (ibid., 153):

-وَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي فِي النَّاسِ يُبْصِرُ حَالَتِي / فَلَا يَلْعَنُ الْقِرْطَاسَ وَالْحَبْرَ وَالْقَلَمَ

(Who, among people, will see my condition without cursing papers, ink, and the pen?)

This line reflects one of the hard psychological conditions Abū Hilāl experienced, as discussed above. He bemoaned his poverty and lack of appreciation while worthless people were enjoying relatively good lives. Abū Hilāl mentioned three elements that he considered to be the source of his misery, namely paper, ink and pens. These elements are essential writing tools that scholars and writers would always have. Therefore, since he was constantly busy writing and producing knowledge, and because he felt that this led to a miserable life, he felt that people should curse the tools used to produce knowledge because no one would want to live in conditions similar to those in which Abū Hilāl found himself. In other words, his job as an *Adīb* and his craft as a poet and a literary critic were worthless; thus, people should abandon these jobs and crafts because people in these occupations were not appreciated.

3- Wisdom and Proverbs (*shi‘r al-ḥikma wa al-amthāl*):

Abū Hilāl’s poetry included a multitude of verses in which the theme could be subsumed under the poetic kind of wisdom (*shi‘r al-ḥikma*) which had previously been classified under the classical themes of Arabic poetry, while other verses took the form of proverbs that could eventually be included under the theme of wisdom. Some of his verses concerning wisdom are mentioned in the next section, which discusses the borrowed meanings in Abū Hilāl’s poetry. An example of a verse concerning wisdom and proverbs is the following (ibid., 65):

-وَلَا أَهَابُ عَظِيمًا حِينَ يَذْهَمُنِي / وَلَيْسَ تَغْلِبُ شَيْئًا أَنْتَ هَانِبُهُ

(I am never afraid of a danger when it assaults me,

You will never defeat anything as long as you are afraid of it.)

It is not always the case that wisdom is mentioned in the entire verse, as it occurs in the second half of the verse in this example. In this case, the first half of the verse paves the way for the section on wisdom to make it more convincing and to mentally prepare the addressee to receive it. Another point is that differentiating between wisdom and proverbs is a matter of structure and style. This means that both wisdom and proverbs are generally solid statements that can be applied in several situations under the same conditions. Moreover, both wisdom and proverbs are the result of the author's particular experience; thus she/he concludes with a statement that takes the form of a wise saying or a proverb. However, wisdom has a purely conceptual meaning that is the result of prolonged experience and meditation, whereas proverbs rely on the surrounding environment to convey the experience in the form of an illustrative example. Thus, it is common for proverbs to contain some rhetorical devices, such as allegories, similes and metaphors, which clarify the meaning of the idea (al-Najjār, 2002, 38).

Abū Hilāl's wisdom poetry may comprise an entire poem and not simply be restricted to one or two lines. The following lines are taken from a poem of seven lines in a copy of his remaining *Dīwān*; thus, it is possible that this poem was longer than the section we currently have available. Abū Hilāl said (1975, 82):

-وَلِلْحَالَاتِ ضَيْقٌ وَاتِّسَاعٌ / وَلِلدُّنْيَا انْفِخَالٌ وَانْفِتَاحٌ
فَلَا تَجْزَعْ لَهَا وَاصْبِرْ عَلَيْهَا / فَإِنَّ الصَّبْرَ عُقْبَاهُ النَّجَاحُ
وَكُلُّ الْحَادِثَاتِ إِذَا تَنَاهَتْ / فَمَقْرُونٌ بِهَا الْفَرَجُ الْمُتَاحُ

(Life can be easy or hard,
And the world can be open or closed
So, don't worry and be patient,
The fruit of patience is success.
When adversities reach a climax,
Relief and ease come with them.)

Although Abū Hilāl suffered regularly from poverty, misery and a lack of appreciation, these verses reflect the other side of his psychological condition, which is his certainty and optimism that his situation would improve. Thus, in these verses, he emphasised the importance of being patient in the most difficult of situations, as they would eventually subside.

In some examples of Abū Hilāl's wisdom poetry, it is evident that he employed some common natural elements of the agricultural environment of his time to deliver his message. He said (ibid., 108):

-إِذَا الْمَرْءُ أَلْفَى فِي السَّبَاخِ بُدُورَهُ / أَضَاعَ فَلَمْ تَرْجِعْ بِرَزَعٍ وَلَا بَدْرٍ

(When a man plants his seeds in swamps,
They are lost, and he will neither gain plantation nor crops.)

The agricultural image in this line clarifies the conceptual meaning that Abū Hilāl intended to deliver. In addition, in terms of language, using the conditional particle *idhā* contributed to the structure and form of the wisdom; as this particle is usually used for affirmative statements - a matter which is compatible with wisdom. This use ensures that the wisdom offered is influential and that the addressee is more likely persuaded by the concept and worth of this wisdom.

Finally, Abū Hilāl employed almost the same technique in the previous wisdom verse as, here, he benefited from an image of a natural object, as in this verse (ibid., 119):

-وَفِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حِينَ تَخْبُرُ أَمْرَهُ / مَعَايِبٌ، حَتَّى الْبَدْرُ أَكْلَفُ أَسْفَعُ

(Everything has defects when you look at it closely,
Even the moon has some black stains.)

The idea that Abū Hilāl attempted to express here was that the concept of perfection rarely exists or is achieved; even the moon, which is a symbol of light and beauty for Arabs, has some defects. In other words, one should not seek absolute perfection as it is impossible, overwhelming and never attainable. In addition, one who seeks ultimate perfection would exist in an endless state of dissatisfaction, and thus misery. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's wisdom verse in this case asks people to accept the idea of defects that are integral parts of human beings and objects.

4- Verses that Include Borrowed Meanings with References to the Originals:

As discussed previously, the meanings of some verses in Abū Hilāl's poetry have been borrowed from the works of other poets who preceded him. In this section, these verses are presented with the original verses in order for the processes and techniques of literary plagiarism to be better understood, and the ways in which Abū Hilāl employed his knowledge of Arabic sciences to be identified. The first example can be seen in the following verse (ibid., 56):

-وتَرَى السَّرْوَ كَالْمَنَابِرِ تَرْهَى / وَتَرَى الطَّيْرَ فَوْقَهَا خُطْبَاءَ

(You see cypresses like minbars adorned,
And you see birds standing on them like orators.)

A similar image was suggested by an *a' rābī* (a nomadic man), as al-Jāhīz discussed in *al-Bayān wa al-Tabayīn* (2003, 2:183); however, with regard to a locust, the nomadic man said:

-مَرَّ الْجَرَادُ عَلَى زَرْعِي فَقُلْتُ لَهُ / أَلْزَمَ طَرِيقَكَ لَا تُؤَلِّغْ بِأَفْسَادِ
فَقَالَ مِنْهُمْ خَطِيبٌ فَوْقَ سُنْبُلَةٍ / إِنَّا عَلَى سَفَرٍ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ زَادِ

(When locusts passed over my crops,
I said, "Keep going and don't ravage them!"
An orator among them on top of a spike said:
We are traveling, we need supplies.)

The common image is that an animal on a flower is portrayed as an orator on a stage. In Chapter Two of this thesis, we discussed that Abū Hilāl was acquainted with the material in al-Jāhīz's book *al-Bayān wa Tabayīn*. Therefore, it is likely that Abū Hilāl was influenced and inspired by some of the literary texts therein, and this verse is an example of such influence.

Another example can be found in the following verse (ibid., 61):

-وَلَقَدْ جَلَا حُزْنِي وَفَرَّجَ كُرْبَتِي / أَنْ اللَّئِيمَ لِرُؤْيَتِي مَكْرُوبِ

(That which has relieved my sorrow and driven away my anguish,
Is the anguish of that vile man when he saw me.)

This has a similar meaning to al-Ṭirimmāḥ's verses:

-لَقَدْ زَادَنِي حُبًّا لِنَفْسِي أَنَّنِي / بَغِيضٌ إِلَى كُلِّ أَمْرٍ غَيْرِ طَائِلِ
وَأَنِّي شَقِيٌّ بِاللِّئَامِ وَلَنْ تَرَى / شَقِيًّا بِهِمْ إِلَّا كَرِيمَ الشَّمَائِلِ

(What makes me love myself more is that
I am hated by every meaningless person
And I am grieved by vile people,
For only nobles are grieved by such as them.)

As discussed previously in this chapter, most of the verses that have borrowed meanings in Abū Hilāl's poetry were borrowed from verses used as examples or prooftexts (*shawāhid*) of linguistic rules by morphologists and grammarians. Al-Ṭirimmāḥ's verse is usually evoked as an example of the active participle of the verb *Ṭāla*, which is *Ṭā'il* (al-Thamānīnī, 1999, 444). This is because *Ṭā'il* means a powerful, wealthy and high-status person. However, the active participle of the verb *Ṭāla* (to

become tall), which is the opposite of the verb *qaṣura* (to become short), does not take the form of *fā'il*, but rather that of *fa'il*: ṭawīl. The influence of this kind of poetry on Abū Hilāl can be attributed to his prolonged study of Arabic sciences, including morphology, grammar, and rhetoric. He mentioned this himself in his relatively long poem at the end of his unofficial *Dīwān* (1975, 168), in which he stated that he would spend the long winter nights studying grammar, poetry, and jurisprudence.

Some of Abū Hilāl's verses can be seen to have similar meanings to more than two or three other verses by different poets. This could be attributed to the theme or the meaning itself, as it is commonly discussed by poets. Abū Hilāl said (ibid., 62):

-فَأَزْدَادُ فِي جُنْحِ الظَّلَامِ صَبَابَةً / فَلَا صَعْبَ إِلَّا وَهُوَ بِاللَّيْلِ أَصْعَبُ

(My longing increases in the middle of the night,
Difficult matters become even more difficult at night.)

The long difficult times at night and how one would suffer from several things such as the agony of love, unpleasant memories, and illness are frequent themes for poets. A similar meaning can be seen in Imru'ū al-Qays's verse:

-وَلَيْلٍ كَمَوْجِ الْبَحْرِ أَرْخَى سُدُولَهُ / عَلَيَّ بِأَنْوَاعِ الْهُمُومِ لِيَبْتَلِي

(A night like the waves of the sea, pouring varieties of grief on me to my torment.)

Al-Muraqqash's verse states:

-وَلَيْلَةٌ بِنُهَا مُسْهَرَةٌ / قَدْ كَرَّرَتْهَا عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي الْهُمُومِ

(A night in which I stayed awake,
Has been made long by grief.)

Finally, al-Nabigha's verse says:

-كَلِّبْنِي لَهُمْ يَا أُمَيْمَةَ نَاصِبٍ / وَلَيْلٍ أَقَاسِيهِ بَطِيءِ الْكَوَائِبِ

(Leave me, O' *Umayma-ta*, with a tiring grief,
And with a night that passes slowly like the movement of planets.)

Although the first two lines can be presented as examples of some grammatical or rhetorical rules, al-Nabigha's verse is evoked in grammatical and morphological contexts as an example of the additional *tā'* at the end of the noun *Umayma*, which is an indication of *al-tarkhīm* (elision) (Ibn Ya'īsh, 1973, 390; al-Thamānīnī, 2003, 479).

Concerning the theme of brotherhood and the *Adab* of companionship, Abū Hilāl composed two poetic lines that had similar meanings to al-Nabigha al-Thubyānī's verse. Abū Hilāl said (1975, 62):

-لَا تَعْتَمِدْ نَشْرَ الْعُيُوبِ وَبَنِّهَا / يَسْتَلِمُ لَكَ الْإِخْوَانُ وَالْأَصْحَابُ
وَاشْتَدُّ يَدَيْكَ بِمَا يَقُولُ مَعَابَهُ / مَا فِيهِمْ مَنْ لَيْسَ فِيهِ مَعَابُ

(If you do not strive to publish and expose flaws,
You will retain your brothers and companions,
And hold close friends that have few flaws,
For no friends are without any flaws at all.)

Abū Hilāl advised that one should seek companions who have fewer defects, as it was unlikely that a companion with no defects could be found. On the same topic, al-Nabigha said:

-وَأَسْتَبِيحُ بِمُسْتَبِيحٍ أَحَاً لَا تَلَمَّهُ / عَلَى شَعَثِ أَيِّ الرَّجَالِ الْمُهْدَبِ!

(You will not find a friend devoid of flaws,
Or a man who is completely courteous!)

Another example of Abū Hilāl's poetry that can be seen to share similar meanings with more than two verses by other poets is this verse (ibid., 63):

-وَسَاهِرُ اللَّيْلِ فِي الْحَاجَاتِ نَائِمُهُ / وَذَاهِبُ الْمَالِ عِنْدَ الْمَجْدِ كَاسِبُهُ

(He who stays awake at night fulfilling people's needs is actually sleeping,
And he who spends money in the sake of glory is actually gaining it.)

The general concept in this verse is that spending time or money on a glorious or noble matter is never considered to be a waste or an extravagance. It also means that one who looks forward to achieving great things would not consider how difficult this is and what one would spend on it. Similar meanings are expressed by Abū Sa'd al-Makhzūmī, (al-Qazwīnī, 1980, 3: 223):

-وَأَسْتَبِيحُ بِنَظَارٍ إِلَى جَانِبِ الْغِنَى / إِذَا كَانَتْ الْعُلْيَاءُ فِي جَانِبِ الْفَقْرِ

(I don't look in the direction of wealth
If lofty deeds are on the side of poverty.)

A similar sentiment was expressed in a verse by a contemporary of Abū Hilāl's, the poet ibn Nubāta al-Sa'dī (d. 405 AH):

-إِذَا شَامَ الْفَتَى بَرَقَ الْمَعَالِي / فَأَهْوُونَ فَائِتِ طَيْبِ الرُّقَادِ

(If a man was watching out for lofty things,
Good sleep would be the easiest thing to miss.)

Finally, a similar meaning was expressed by al-Namr ibn Tawlab, who said, as cited by (Ibn Ya'īsh, 2014, 2: 101):

-لَا تَجَزَّ عِي إِنْ مُنْفَسَا أَهْلَكْتُهُ / وَإِذَا هَلَكْتُ فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ فَاجَزَّ عِي

(Don't be grieved if my wealth is gone,
When I myself am gone, then you may grieve!)

This verse is one of the grammatical prooftexts (*shawāhid*) on the grammatical position of the noun after the conditional particle *in* and the diacritical mark that it requires. The diacritical mark for this noun is determined based on the word that is likely to have been omitted before it. For scholars of the *al-Baṣra* school, the word after the conditional particle should be *munfis-an* as the object of an omitted verb; thus, the original sentence was *in ahlaktu munfis-an ahlakt-u-h-u*. However, scholars of the *al-Kūfa* school estimated an omitted verb in such a way that the noun after the conditional particle would be the subject of that verb and should therefore be written as *munfis-un*. The original sentence would then have been *in halaka munfis-un ahlakt-u-h-u*.

Similarly, another of Abū Hilāl's verses is similar in meaning to Abū Nuwās's verse. Abū Hilāl said (1975, 66):

إِذَا زِدْتُهَا نَظْرًا زِدْتَنِي / جَمَالًا بَدِيعًا وَشَكْلًا غَرِيبًا

(The more I look at them,
The more marvellous their beauty and striking their form.)

We compare this to Abū Nuwās as cited in (al-Qazwīnī, 1980, 1: 97):

يَزِيدُكَ وَجْهُهُ حُسْنًا / إِذَا مَا زِدْتَهُ نَظْرًا

(His beauty increased,
The more I looked at it.)

The two verses share the same concept and almost identical wording.

In one verse in Abū Hilāl's book *Jamharat al-Amthāl*, he created the opposite meaning of Zuhair's verse, where he said (1964, 1: 102):

تَرَاهُ إِذَا مَا جِئْتَهُ مُنْهَلًا / كَأَنَّكَ تُعْطِيهِ الَّذِي أَنْتَ سَائِلُهُ

(You can see him shining when you approach him
So pleased to give, it is like he is receiving.)

Abū Hilāl presented the opposite image by saying (ibid., 1:102; 1975 67):

تَرَاهُ إِذَا مَا جِئْتَهُ مُنْعَبَسًا / كَأَنَّكَ بِالْمِنْقَاشِ تَنْتِفُ شَارِبَهُ

(You can see him frowning when you approach him,
It is as if you are pulling out his moustache with tweezers.)

Finally, as Abū Hilāl borrowed some of his meanings from several poets and various prooftexts, the following verse by Abū Hilāl includes his response to al-Khansā's elegy for her brother, where she said:

وَإِنَّ صَخْرًا لَتَأْتُمُّ الْهُدَاةُ بِهِ / كَأَنَّهُ عَلَمٌ فِي رَأْسِهِ نَارٌ

(The righteous would look up at *Ṣakhr*,
He guides like a flame on top of a mountain.)

Abū Hilāl attempted to enhance this meaning by including an alternative to the resembled-to *‘alam* (mountain) and inserted *shams* (sun) instead, which he believed was a better and more concrete choice for the simile, image, and point of resemblance. Abū Hilāl said (1975, 94):

-مُنْبَهُ الذِّكْرِ مَعْرُوفٌ طَرَانُهُ / كَالشَّمْسِ لَا عِلْمَ فِي رَأْسِهِ نَارُ

(Methods of the renowned man are fully clear,
More like the sun than like a flame on top of a mountain.)

This is Abū Hilāl’s clear opposition to the simile that al-Khansā’ attempted to use to praise her dead brother. Instead of writing a critique of al-Kansā’’s verse, Abū Hilāl wrote a poetic verse that explained his opinion of the simile in her poetic line.

The previous discussions included examples of meanings that Abū Hilāl borrowed in his poetry. He borrowed meanings from various poets from different periods, as well as some of the meanings from prooftexts of linguistic rules, which has been attributed, as discussed previously, to the nature of his career as a literary critic, *Adīb*, lexicographer, morphologist, grammarian, and rhetorician. He also attempted to contrast, contradict, and enhance other poets’ meanings, as can be seen in the last two examples, above.

Furthermore, just as Abū Hilāl borrowed some of his meanings from prooftexts of linguistic rules, his poetry included some linguistic features that were extensively discussed in books on Arabic linguistics, particularly morphology, grammar and rhetoric. Therefore, the next three points include discussions of these features and an attempt to attribute each feature to its location in books of linguistics, as well as to identify the topic and discussion to which it belongs.

5- Verses that Include Morphological Features:

Under the section on *Tā’* rhyme, Abū Hilāl said (1975, 77):

-كَانَتْ سَرَاةُ النَّاسِ تَحْتَ أَظْلِهِ / فَعَدَّتْ سَرَاةُ النَّاسِ فَوْقَ سَرَاتِهِ

(Nobles were under his shadow

Then, nobles surpassed his nobility.)

The word: (shadow) is a pun that represents bounties and protection, so, the patron meant here had distributed his wealth till he had nothing left.

The point of illustration in this verse is the word *azull-i-hi*. This vocal form represents the morphological structure of the plural form, which is called plural of paucity *jam‘ al-qilla*. The morphological measurement of this plural form is *af‘ul= azlul*; thus, the

morphological procedure in this case requires transferring the diacritical mark from the first *lām* in this word to the previous letter *zā*. This means that the *lām* is quiescent, which allows it to be incorporated into the second *lām* in the word because this is easier in terms of articulation. This plural form indicates littleness and paucity (al-Kaṭīb, 2003, 774), which seems unsuited to the intention of praise in this verse. Abū Hilāl's use this plural form could be considered unsuccessful, particularly as the other plural form, *zilāli-hi*, which indicates the plural of multitude *jam' al-kathra*, is an available option that does not have a negative effect on the prosody of this verse.

Therefore, it could be argued that Abū Hilāl, in his usage of the word (*aḏull-i-hi*), did not represent his insights on the theory of wording and meaning (*al-lafz wa al-ma'nā*) which involves employing wording that accurately represent the meaning. Abū Hilāl's opposing, in his poetry, of his insights of literary criticism has several examples. Another example can be seen in the next verse, while in the discussion of the word (*yūnis-u*) in last verse of this section, it can be noted that Abū Hilāl considered the precise choice of his wording.⁸⁷

Abū Hilāl used another form of *jam' al-taqīl* in the section on *ḥā* rhyme, as exemplified in the following verse (1975, 82):

مُضْطَرِّمُ الْغُدُوِّ وَالرَّوَا حِ / تَخَالُهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْمَاحِ

(Blazing in its departure and return,
You would think it is walking on spears.)

This is a single verse in Abū Hilāl's unofficial *Dīwān* that might have been taken from a longer poem. In this verse, it seems that Abū Hilāl is describing the rapid movement of a person or an animal (which could be a horse). He describes the creature as if it were walking on spears (*armāḥ= af'āl*) – jumping as if to avoid sharp points. Again,

⁸⁷ Since the diacritical mark of the letter *z* in the word *'aḏull* in the verse is unclear even in *al-Ṣinā'atayn* (1971, 230), the word *aḏull* could be alternatively read as *'aḏall* and therefore the verse would be interpreted differently. *Aḏall* means, according to *Tāj al-'Arūs*, the bottom of a camel's foot, and the word *sarāt* in the second part of the verse, which is interpreted as nobles, would accordingly mean a high place as Abū Hilāl himself interpreted it in his commentary on *Dīwān Abī Mihjan* (n.d., 4). Yet, the theme of this verse would remain the same, which is praising a specific patron; while the verse would mean that this patron treated humiliated nobles (*taḥta aḏall-i-hi*) generously and respectfully so that they feel as if they are of a similar or higher status.

the implication of 'littleness' associated with this plural form might not be suitable for the description in this verse; however, Abū Hilāl may have used it in the absence of alternative forms that suited the verse's prosody.

Moreover, Abū Hilāl used the same rhyme when describing a snake (ibid, 83):

تَرْضَى مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بظِلِّ صُخَيْرَةٍ / وَمِنَ الْمَعَايِشِ بِاشْتِمَامِ رَوَائِحِ

(A shade of a small rock satisfies it (a snake),

And the smell of the food alone would satisfy it.)

Two of the words in this verse represent specific aspects of Arabic morphology. The first is *ṣukhayra* (a small rock), which represents the morphological structure called *al-taṣghīr*. This morphological structure requires certain changes, such as changing the diacritical mark on the first letter from *fathā* to *ḍammah* and adding the vowel *yā'* before the last letter of the word. These changes in the morphological structure of the word have a semantic function, as the meaning differs according to the form of the used word. In other words, the original word is *ṣakhra*, which means a rock, but the *al-taṣghīr* form contributes an additional semantic dimension to the word; as this dimension is the size of the signified, *ṣukhayra*, which means a small rock.

The second word is *ma'āyish*, which is the plural of *ma'īsha*. In this morphological form, the vowel is usually changed to *hamza*, as in *katība* = *katā'ib*, in order to avoid the existence of two adjacent vowels in the same word, namely the vowel that is added to form the plural and the vowel that is the original letter of the word. Morphologists differentiate between two kinds of these forms, although they seem similar at first glance. The vowel *yā'* in the first kind, as in *katība*, is added to the original root of the word, *kataba*. Therefore, according to morphological rules, the additional vowel should be transformed into *hamza* in the plural form that includes *alif* as a constituent letter of it. The morphological measurement of this word is *katība* = *fa'īla*, *katā'ib* = *fa'ā'il*. However, in the word *ma'īsha* = *ma'āyish*, the vowel is an original letter in the root of the word, which is *'ayasha*. In this case, the vowel should remain as it is in the plural form but should have the diacritical mark *kasra*. The morphological measurement of this word is *ma'īsha* = *maf'ila*, *ma'āyish* = *mafā'il*. Hence, the morphological measurement shows the original vowel in this word (al-Khaṭīb, 2000, 3: 8; 2003, 1119; al-Thamānīnī, 1999, 466).

The last example of morphological features can be seen in Abū Hilāl's verse (1975, 85):

وَقَدْ يُونِسُ الزَّوَارَ مِنْكَ إِذَا التَّقَوَّا / سَخَاءٌ عَلَيْهِ لِلطَّلَاقَةِ شَاهِدُ

(Visitors would feel your affability,
Because of your generosity which shows your kindness.)

The morphological item that is affected in this verse is the verb *yūnis-u*. The verb here has undergone phonological and morphological changes that include transforming the *hamza* into a vowel that is suitable to the diacritical mark of the previous letter, which is *ḍamma* in this case; thus, *hamza* is changed to *wāw*. In Arabic phonology and morphology, this phenomenon is called *ibdāl* (al-Khaṭīb, 2003, 1096). *Ibdāl* is usually used to facilitate articulation (*al-takhfīf*), as *hamza* is considered to be difficult to articulate. This way of articulating *hamza* originated in the *Higāz* dialect and in others that followed it, as ibn Yaʿīsh wrote (1973, 228):

"اعْلَمْ أَنَّ الهمزة حَرْفٌ مُسْتَقَلٌّ؛ لِأَنَّهُ نَبْرَةٌ فِي الصَّنَدِ، وَهُوَ أَدْخَلَ حُرُوفَ الحَلْقِ، وَإِخْرَاجَهُ كَالْتَهْوِجِ، وَلِذَلِكَ مَالُ أَهْلِ الجِزَارِ وَمَنْ وَاقَفَهُمْ إِلَى تَخْفِيفِهَا..."

Although this phenomenon was originally a feature of the *Higāzī* dialect, employing it remains optional in Arabic in order to make articulation easier. In this verse, it seems Abū Hilāl intended to use *hamza* in this way, as it is aligned with the theme of this verse, which is praising generosity and jubilation; thus, it would be suitable to employ an easily articulated word to portray the ease and smoothness that reflect generosity.

Although it is clarified at the outset that this chapter would not compare Abū Hilāl's literary critical perspectives and rulings to his poetry, Abū Hilāl's elaborate usage of the word *yūnis-u* reminds us of the discussion in Chapter Three regarding his theory of wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-maʿnā*) in which he emphasised the key role of elaborate word choice in delivering accurate meaning.

6- Verses that Include Grammatical Features:

The grammatical features discussed here are specific and notable structures that are rarely employed in Arabic speech and are discussed by grammarians in various sections of grammar books. Moreover, these grammatical structures are supported by prooftexts (*shawāhid*) of classical poetry. As discussed previously, Abū Hilāl might have been influenced and inspired by these grammatical discussions and prooftexts during his career as a literary critic and *Adīb* since linguistics can be considered essential material for literary criticism. The first example taken from Abū Hilāl's poetry can be found in this verse (1975, 60):

-عَذِيرِي مِنْ دَهْرِ مُوَارٍ مُوَارِبٍ / لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ كُلُّهُنَّ ذُنُوبٌ

(Who would make excuses for a shaky deceitful time,
All of whose goodness are sins.)

The grammatical point that is illustrated is the structure of the word *'adhīri-ya*. 'Amr ibn Ma'diykarib's verse is usually evoked as evidence of this structure. As quoted in *Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal* by ibn Ya'īsh (2014, 2: 74), 'Amr ibn Ma'diykarib said:

-أُرِيدُ جِبَاءَهُ وَيُرِيدُ قَتْلِي / عَذِيرَكَ مِنْ خَلِيلِكَ مِنْ مُرَادٍ

(I want to favour him, but he wants to kill me,
You must excuse your companion.)

'*Adhīr* means *'udhr* (an excuse) which is a noun verb (Abū Hilāl, 1964, 162), and grammarians have analysed this structure in two ways. Firstly, this grammatical item could be the subject of a nominal sentence and the predicate *khābar* is omitted, so that the sentence was originally *'adhīri-ya maṭlūb-un*. Secondly, it could be the object of an omitted subject and verb; in this case, the original sentence would have been *hāti 'adhīra-ka*. As can be seen, Abū Hilāl borrowed this grammatical structure and employed it in his verse, which reflects his grammatical knowledge of various detailed grammatical discussions and his incorporation of various levels of Arabic structures. In addition, Abū Hilāl intended to employ this grammatical structure to motivate *Adab* seekers to keep such rare grammatical structures in use in order for Arabic expressions to remain rich and available whenever they are needed.

The other illustrious grammatical feature can be found in the following verse by Abū Hilāl (1975, 87):

-وَذُقْتُ مَهْوَى النَّجْمِ رَيْقاً خَصِيراً / لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ نَاجِدٍ خَمْرٍ مَا عَدَا

(As the star was setting. I tasted his sweet kiss
It is as if it was taken from a jar of wine.)

The grammatical structure here is the noun verb *mahwā al-najm* that is employed as an adverb of time. This kind of adverb of time has specific discussions in grammar books as it has a notable form that is unusual compared to other kinds of adverbs of time in the Arabic language. Sībawayh (1982, 1:222) discussed this grammatical rule in a separate section in his book. For Sībawayh, the purpose of using the noun verb as a preposition is to achieve succinctness in terms of wording and to widen the scale of language usage by increasing options of expressions. This indicates that Abū Hilāl's grammatical knowledge might have prompted him to consider even some rare expressions that are not frequently seen employed especially in modern poetry.

Finally, Abū Hilāl said (1975, 123):

-تَتَاوَلَ وَحَظَّ الشَّيْبُ أَطْرَافَ عَارِضِي / فَأَصْبَحَ لَيْلًا بِالصَّبَاحِ مُشْتَفَا

(The grey hair encroached on the edges of my face,
like the dawn of morning at the end of night.)

The grammatical structure used here can be seen in the first part of the verse and is called *al-tanāzu* (al-Khaṭīb, 2017, 488). This means that the object *aṭrāf* is preceded by two transitive verbs, which are *tanāwala* and *khaṭṭa*. The *al-Baṣra* and the *al-Kūfa* schools have two different opinions on the grammatical (or functional) analysis of this structure. For the *al-Baṣra* school, the subject of the object *aṭrāf* is in the second verb *khaṭṭa* as it is closer to the object than is the first verb, and the object of the first verb is a hidden pronoun, which means that it should be *tanāwala-h-u*. However, for the *al-Kūfa* school, the subject of the object *aṭrāf* is in the verb *tanāwala* since it comes first, while the object of the second verb is the hidden pronoun *khaṭṭa-h-u*.

7- Verses that Include Rhetorical Features:

Rhetoric can be considered an essential tool that literary critics employ to evaluate literary texts. In Abū Hilāl's *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, rhetorical discussions dominate, as is evident when Abū Hilāl starts his book with a prolonged discussion regarding the different definitions of rhetoric. Accordingly, it is expected that poetry written by a literary critic such as Abū Hilāl would include various rhetorical devices such as antithesis, paronomasia, and allegory, that reflect his insights on how to accurately and effectively employ rhetorical devices in literary texts. It is also expected that Abū Hilāl does not always succeed in the ways he employs rhetorical devices; rather, in some examples he opposes the rhetorical advice he provides to his readership in order to enhance their literary texts, as Ghayyāḍ (1975, 37) states. This could highlight the idea stated earlier that literary criticism and poetry production are two separate careers where expertise in one area does not necessarily imply the same in the other.

This point is an attempt to present how Abū Hilāl employs rhetorical devices in his poetry as a complement to the morphology and grammar therein. Verses that include similes are excluded from this analysis as they dominate Abū Hilāl's poetry to such an extent that they deserve a study dedicated to them alone.

In the verse in which he describes a relic, Abū Hilāl says (ibid., 53):

-لَمْ يَبْقَ فِيهَا غَيْرَ مَا يُذَكِّي الْجَوَى / وَيَصْرِفُ النَّوْمَ وَيَبْعَثُ الْبُكَى

(Nothing has remained but what breeds longing,

forbids sleep and brings about tears.)

The rhetorical device employed here could be subsumed under the marvel device *ṣihhāt al-taqṣīm*, as Abū Hilāl named it in *al-Ṣināʿatayn* (1971, 341), or be considered *al-jamʿ maʿa al-tafrīq wa al-taqṣīm*, to which al-Sakkākī (1983, 426) refers. This device involves dividing sentences into equal phrases, the meanings of which cover most aspects of the subject matter so that all dimensions of the subject are known. In Abū Hilāl's verse, he describes formerly bustling dwellings that have fallen into ruin after their inhabitants abandoned them. Abū Hilāl describes what remains in these places in short sentences in which he covers all of the aspects he intended to mention. This rhetorical device aims to provide the addressee with a complete perspective on the topic the narrator approaches.

In another example, Abū Hilāl says (*ibid.*, 69):

-فَأَفْصَحَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْعُجُومَةِ مَادِحِي / وَأَعْجَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَصَاحَةِ عَائِبِي

(He who praised me became eloquent after ambiguity,
And who satirised me became ambiguous after eloquence.)

This verse includes the rhetorical device called *al-muqābala*. This device includes combining two or more antithetical meanings, according to al-Sakkākī (1983, 424). The first part of this verse has a completely opposite meaning to the second part. In other words, each of the three words in the first part of the verse has a corresponding word that opposes it in the second part of the verse. This constitutes the following binaries: *afṣaḥa* x *aʿjama*, *al-ʿujūma* x *al-faṣāḥa*, and *mādiḥī* x *ʿāʾibī*. The pragmatic function of this *Badīʿ* device is to embellish the language of the text in order to entertain the audience and prevent dullness. Another function is that such a device could challenge addressees' minds, as it prompts them to consider the antithetical binaries the verse establishes.

Also, Abū Hilāl says in his verse (1975, 142):

-وَلَا عَيْبَ فِيهِ غَيْرَ أَنَّ دَوِي النَّدَى / خَسَّاسٌ إِذَا قَبِسُوا بِهِ وَلِنَامٌ

(His only defect is that generous people are dishonourable and mean compared to his generosity.)

Abū Hilāl employs the rhetorical device called *al-madh bi-mā yushbih al-dhamm*. This means, at first glance, that the addressee might assume that the topic of the verse is satire; however, it is in fact a eulogy. Thus, the addressee must carefully reconsider the meaning so that s/he perceives it accurately.

Accordingly, the rhetorical devices illustrated in the previous verses could be subsumed under Arabic rhetoric's *al-Badī'* (the marvel) section. Most rhetorical devices in this section of Arabic rhetoric refine and embellish language to serve the meaning, wording, and style of the given speech. In other words, *al-Badī'* includes "appreciating the linguistic features that give discourse decorative elegance and acceptability . . . mechanisms of beautifying the discourse" (Abdul-Raof, 2006, 239). Furthermore, the rhetorical devices of *al-Badī'* draw-in the audience's attention and examine their cognitive abilities by exposing them to linguistic and stylistic challenges, for example in the antithesis, scholastic approach, and anagram. Employing such rhetorical devices can make literary texts more appreciated, memorable, interesting, and convincing as they contribute to delivering meaning in a more presentable way.

3- Conclusion:

This chapter studies Abū Hilāl's poetry, which Ghayyāḍ (1975) collected, in order to achieve a better understanding of Abū Hilāl's character and obtain clearer insights into his personality and literacy. However, as discussed at the outset, this chapter does not study topics that Ghayyāḍ has already studied except for the section regarding plagiarism in Abū Hilāl's poetry. This chapter provides examples of this claim with references to the origins that Ghayyāḍ does not provide.

Abū Hilāl's journey in poetry has several dimensions, as he was a poet, poetry transmitter, and literary critic, which makes his treatment and understanding of this mode of Arabic writing rich and valid. Abū Hilāl's poetry consists of a great number of sophisticated and well-crafted verses due to his deep knowledge of several disciplines in Arabic sciences, but his ability as a literary critic might surpass his ability as a poet, which leads to the notion that good literary critics do not necessarily make good poets. Composing poetry and critiquing it are entirely different processes!

Throughout this study, it is notable that Abū Hilāl's poetry consists of rich material that reflects his time in terms of both cultural and social domains. In addition, the style of his poetry varies between the classical and the modern according to the theme he approaches. When the theme approached is classical, his style and use of language become similar to classical poetry. When his theme is modern, his style and use of language are closer to the modern poetry of his time.

Furthermore, Abū Hilāl's poetry consists of myriad themes and topics including people, animals, insects, objects, and civil features of his time, which reflects his

profound awareness and sense of life. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's poetry could be considered representative of his style, knowledge, and literacy. Perhaps most importantly, his poetry is a clear reflection of his personality, social insights, and psychological condition. In other words, his poetry has an expressive capacity that reveals several dimensions of his personality that his other works do not reveal as clearly.

In this chapter, several verses of Abū Hilāl's poetry are selected to represent different categories that are prevalent therein. These categories include indecent and obscene verses, famous verses (*abiāt sā'ira*), wisdom and proverbs (*al-ḥikma wa al-amthāl*), and verses that include borrowed meanings, with references to the original verses from which Abū Hilāl might have borrowed the meanings. It was noted that some verses appear to refer to morphological, grammatical, and rhetorical formulations that were inspired by his knowledge and discussions of topics relating to these three Arabic disciplines in his critical discourse. This is clear in the verses that borrowed meanings from other poets; most of which were borrowed from prooftexts (*shawāhid*) of morphological and grammatical rules which reflects the fact that Abū Hilāl's mind was occupied with linguistic topics and discussions.

In terms of content, Abū Hilāl's poetry is strong in its craft due to the diversity of themes, topics, poetic kinds (*al-funūn al-shi'riyya*), and types of poetry (*ḍurūb al-shi'r*) approached. This factor increases the value and credibility of Abū Hilāl's poetry to the extent that it could be used as an archive of life during his time. In terms of form, Abū Hilāl successfully employs several kinds of prosody, rhyme, and rhythm. The influential relationship between content and form most often determines the linguistic, literary, and eloquent levels of his odes. The influence of the theme on eloquence and literary level of poetry is reminiscent of the division al-Aṣma'ī (d. 216 AH) makes between poetry and themes of 'the good'. Similarly, al-Marzubānī (1965, p. 85) reports that some themes soften poetry while others make it more sophisticated and literary. Therefore, it could be argued that the factors that determine the literary level of Abū Hilāl's poetry are basically related to the content and themes that are approached. For this reason, some verses from Abū Hilāl's poetry seem, to some extent, weak and artificial as their themes do not allow high poetic performance.

Finally, relying on some topics and themes of Abū Hilāl's poems, it was partially possible to formulate an image about his personal and psychological life. However, there is a possibility that Abū Hilāl was just copying themes of classical poets as part

of his career as literary critic, poet, and litterateur. In other words, as a critic and litterateur, Abū Hilāl shares the responsibility, with other scholars like him, of preserving the classical poetic tradition and to keep it going, which required him to compose verses that include classical themes. Moreover, the creation of *Adab* in this cultural context included not only the authorship of new work but the compiling and arrangement of quotations from one's predecessors. Therefore, these themes and topics do not necessarily reflect his personal life and psychological condition as much as they are merely topics that poets would employ as part of a poetic tradition.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This concludes my investigation of the complete works of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī as a poet, litterateur, literary critic, linguist, and lexicographer who contributed extensively to the Arabic literary heritage by producing different works in various fields. I have covered several topics regarding Abū Hilāl’s personal and literary aspects and included an attempt to present a new reading of his discussions of several literary critical issues such as wording and meaning (*al-lafẓ wa al-ma‘nā*) and synonyms (*al-mutarādifāt*). The new reading of these issues is the result of an inclusive and comprehensive reading of Abū Hilāl’s published works, as most of the studies of his works were based on only one of his works, namely *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*. *Al-Ṣinā‘atayn* is essentially a work of literary criticism that aimed to address the essential features that refine and enhance one’s style of composition, as well as to draw one’s attention to the mistakes that lead to erroneous, disordered, and illogical meanings. However, it should be noted that Abū Hilāl’s other works, to which most scholars did not refer, could provide a better understanding of his discussions of literary critical issues that are found in *al-Ṣinā‘atayn*.

With regard to how Abū Hilāl’s works are read, the methodology of *taste* by Shākir, and the theory of (the death of the author) by Barthes, have together illuminated the work and personality of this scholar. On one hand, Shākir’s methodology focused on analysing the structure of texts by identifying the linguistic features that lead the reader to an in-depth reading and understanding of the works of a certain author, which would, in turn, provide adequate knowledge of the author, which assists in reconstructing his/her biography. Therefore, for Shākir, in order to achieve a proper understanding of an author’s work, a thorough knowledge of Arabic was essential. This framework was used because Abū Hilāl’s biography seems to be scarce and does not provide a clear picture of his personal and literary life, although his works had tremendous influence on his successors, as is evident in Chapter Two of the present thesis.

By contrast, Barthes’s theory of (the death of the author) states that the interpretation of any text should not be an attempt to deduce what the author meant or tried to convey because the reader is the source of meaning and should not be confined within the author’s semantic circle. Therefore, for Barthes, the author was a

'scripter' and the text was a 'tissue of citation'; thus, the text is left open to a new reading by each reader. This approach extended the range of the present study by allowing for a reading of Abū Hilāl's texts from the present author's point of view by seeking evidence of Abū Hilāl's psychological condition, as well as the didactic, sarcastic, personal, and social sides of his character in his texts.

It is hoped that adopting these two frameworks has allowed for two levels of reading. Shākir's methodology requires reading a text from the inside (first level) by analysing the constituent elements of the speech, beginning with phonology, morphology, syntax and rhetoric, and ending with semantics. Barthes's theory states that the reader's interpretation should be preceded by distancing oneself from the author, which can be considered as a way of understanding a text from the outside (second level). In addition, it can be said that the genre in which Abū Hilāl composed required him to construct his texts from an unlimited number of citations, which eventually made his works a 'tissue of citation', as Barthes defined the text. Therefore, looking at these frameworks from this point of view reconciles them. This reconciliation gave the present thesis more room in which to achieve an integral and productive reading of Abū Hilāl's works.

As stated earlier, Abū Hilāl's biography is relatively incomplete, and several aspects of his life are completely unknown or are absent from the literary scene; the present thesis is an attempt to reveal the aspects that most scholars who studied Abū Hilāl did not consider. To achieve this, Chapter Two is dedicated to presenting a critical biography of Abū Hilāl. It does not simply provide available information about him, but also investigates some fundamental features that characterised his mindset and works, which allows one to obtain a clearer insight into what guided his career. This included an attempt to detect the influence of Abū Hilāl's works on his successors by tracing the discussions, fields, and topics in which Abū Hilāl's name was evoked, and in which his works were referenced as evidence of various literary and linguistic issues, which is a reflection of his encyclopaedic knowledge. It should be noted that Abū Hilāl was referred to in books covering several fields, such as Qur'ān commentary, prophetic tradition, history, biography, linguistics, and literature.

The reason for the prevalence of Abū Hilāl's books, according to the analysis in Chapter Two, is the didactical sense that can be seen reflected in the structure, arrangement, and style of language that he employed consistently, which succeeded in improving the accessibility of his books. Abū Hilāl aimed to present his books in

such a way that made them easy for both beginners and advanced readers to comprehend. Moreover, the dialogue in which he attempted to engage his readers played a significant role in drawing their attention and encouraging them to interact actively with the issues he discussed.

Abū Hilāl developed sarcasm as a didactic strategy in literary criticism in the second chapter of *al-Ṣināʿatayn*, in which he discussed incorrect and correct meanings in speech. Abū Hilāl employed sarcasm as a tool that drew *Adab* seekers' attention to particular structures that might negatively affect meanings. On one hand, by presenting sarcastic criticism, Abū Hilāl indirectly advised *Adab* seekers not to commit mistakes that would ruin the literary value of the speech. On the other hand, Abū Hilāl evoked examples of fine poetry as models for *Adab* seekers to follow.

Abū Hilāl differentiated amongst three kinds of meanings, namely erroneous, corrupted, and disordered, and provided an example on each. Firstly, an erroneous meaning could be described as failure to employ a grammatical structure that would produce an accurate meaning. Secondly, a corrupted meaning is one that includes a logical problem that makes it difficult to conceptualise. Finally, a disordered meaning occurs when the poet infuses the text with lexical items that cause confusion because they are not a perfect match with other lexical items therein.

Accordingly, it is evident that word choice and grammar play a critical role in the structure of a text, have notable influence on the clarity of meaning, and determine a text's literary level. These linguistic aspects could be considered guidelines that directed Abū Hilāl's methods of literary criticism as they played a key role in formulating his perspective of the theory of wording, meaning, and synonyms (*al-mutarādifāt*). The following two chapters in the present thesis provided an investigation into this matter. In particular, Chapter Three provides an examination of Abū Hilāl's lexicographical mindset, and how this related to his perspective on the theory of wording and meaning and synonyms (*al-mutarādifāt*); while Chapter Four discusses the use of morphological and grammatical discussions in the process of evaluating and critiquing literary texts in Abū Hilāl's works.

Chapter Three, in which Abū Hilāl's lexical 'mindset' is studied, begins by discussing the concept of the word *al-kalima* in Arabic culture and the significant role it plays. The constituent role of *al-kalima* can be clearly seen in Arabic language sciences such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Arabic lexicons could be considered as indication of scholars' concerns and endeavours to address

al-kalima in detail, obtaining a multi-dimensional acquaintance with Arabic words in terms of their roots, origins, morphological structures and categories, as well as different methods to explain the meaning that each word represents.

The important role of *al-kalima* is discussed from Shākir's philosophical point of view as he added an ontological dimension to this concept. For Shākir, *al-kalima* was a gateway through which one could attain awareness of one's existence and of the world's, as it is the key concept that leads to knowledge. For this reason, Shākir admitted that *al-kalima* became an integral part of his life, soul, and intellect. Moreover, Shākir emphasised that if it was not for *al-kalima*, then culture, with all its elements, could not have been conceptualised.

As a literary critic, Abū Hilāl was concerned with the best use of lexical items in texts in order for the meaning to be conveyed clearly and accurately. This view could be seen as a characteristic of his theory of wording and meaning which, as is attempted in the present thesis, had not been accurately perceived by scholars who studied him previously, such as Ṭabāna (1981), who stated that Abū Hilāl was more interested in wording than in meaning. However, after studying his book *al-Ṣinā'atayn*, and his lexicons, it appears that Abū Hilāl sought the correct words to accurately represent meaning, and that this accuracy could not be obtained by simply selecting the correct word, but also required the selection of the correct morphological form and structure of the given word, which plays a significant role in determining accurate meaning. This can be seen in the types and topics of the lexicons that Abū Hilāl compiled, in which he intended to provide his readership, particularly *Adab* seekers, with words listed under various categories that would assist them to enhance their word choice in any composition. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's interest in wording is inseparable from his interest in accurate and clear meanings.

In his lexicon *al-Furūq fī al-Lughā*, Abū Hilāl discussed the issue of synonyms, or *al-mutarādifāt*. His aim in this lexicon was to explain the subtle differences in meanings of *al-mutarādifat*; an attempt that was perceived as denying the existence of this concept in Arabic. However, Abū Hilāl explained his point of view concerning this issue in the introduction to his lexicon. He noted that synonyms would have different meanings when they were connected to each other via a conjunction in one sentence, or if the two synonyms were used by one Arabic tribe, as allocating two lexical items to one meaning is redundant. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's aim was to shed light

on the subtle meaning that each word in the synonyms (*al-mutarādifāt*) conveyed, and not to state the absence of this phenomenon in the Arabic language.

Achieving accuracy in meaning by choosing the right word with the correct morphological form and category cannot be attained without a certain level of knowledge of Arabic linguistics. In other words, a particular text could not be comprehended easily unless its linguistic components were considered in detail. The more these components were considered, the higher the literary level that the text would attain. Considering the linguistic components involves a thoughtful choice of the constituent elements of speech, including word choice, morphological form of words, and framing speech using grammatical structure that accurately and successfully conveys the intended meaning. This overlapping relationship amongst linguistics, literature and literary criticism was the impetus for studying how Abū Hilāl employed linguistic discourses as a tool to evaluate literary texts and determine the literary level of certain poems by analysing their linguistic components and language usage. This takes us to Chapter Four which studies the incorporation of linguistic discussions, morphology, and grammar in Abū Hilāl's lexicons and book of literary criticism.

It is evident that a vast number of Abū Hilāl's criteria for sophisticated and poor compositions, and a great deal of his treatment of the lexical items in his lexicons, were based on linguistic considerations. In other words, Abū Hilāl examined how successful a writer or a poet was in terms of employing accurate linguistic structures in his/her composition, and he based most of his literary verdicts on this aspect. The reason for Abū Hilāl's interest in the inclusion of linguistic considerations when evaluating literary texts was that linguistics (particularly grammar) play a key role in refining different compositions and ensuring correct semantics. This is because the meaning of a word, phrase or text in Arabic is extremely sensitive and variable, to the extent that one extra letter in the morphological structure of a word could alter its meaning. In addition, grammatical order could produce several meanings simply by foregrounding and backgrounding (*al-taqdīm wa al-ta'khīr*). Accordingly, it could be argued that the tremendous influence of the linguistic structures of words and syntax on the literary level of a text makes the incorporation of the linguistic perspective in the context of literary criticism impossible to ignore.

Based on this, it could be argued that Abū Hilāl's most important contribution to the field of literary criticism was that he viewed literary texts from a linguistic point of view, and provided linguistic justifications for his various literary verdicts - a method

that can be considered as the practical employment of theoretical linguistic rules. Abū Hilāl's adoption of this method supports the main argument in Chapter Four, which is that literary criticism is an integral process that combines language sciences in one realm in order to achieve high-quality assessment and in-depth understanding of the literary texts being studied.

It could be inferred that examining literary texts by employing linguistic tools is an important method of literary criticism that provides the critic with a clear idea of whether a poet succeeded in his/her use of the constituent linguistic elements to convey an accurate meaning and clear semantics. Abū Hilāl's linguistic assessments of literary texts show that he was inclined to promote the use of the most accurate morphological structure and grammar based on authentic sources of language, such as oral transmission (*al-samā`*), usage (*al-isti`māl*) and analogy (*al-qiyās*), although his discussions show that, on some occasions, he favoured *al-isti`māl* over *al-qiyās*.

Most of the morphological discussions can be found in Abū Hilāl's lexicons since lexicons are concerned with single lexical units. He ensured that lexical items were explained and understood on two levels, namely morphologically and semantically. On both levels, Abū Hilāl referred to reliable and authentic sources of language. He did not discuss morphological issues discursively, although he provided the most obvious example of the issue being studied, or advised the reader to seek more details in more specialised books. However, Abū Hilāl provided a detailed explanation of the item in a given study if it was a rare one of which novice readers would not have had in-depth knowledge.

Throughout his linguistic assessment of literary texts, Abū Hilāl not only revealed defects or erroneous usages of language, but also provided an accurate alternative that he believed would enhance, refine or adjust the linguistic structure to produce a more presentable, accurate or literary form of use. This is attributed to his didactic sense, as discussed in Chapter Two.

When studying Abū Hilāl's linguistic discussions in his critiques of different literary texts, it is evident that he leaned towards the *al-Baṣra* grammatical school. This is inferred from the grammatical aspects on which Abū Hilāl focused in his evaluation of several literary texts. These grammatical aspects were the prevailing usage of language (*al-isti`māl al-mustafīḍ*), oral transmission (*al-samā`*) and analogy (*al-qiyās*). The *al-Baṣra* grammatical school approved of these aspects as tools that led to the most correct form of language that one should carefully consider in a

composition. Therefore, any composition that included words or structures that contravened one of these grammatical aspects would be considered to have deviated from the correct usage of language; if this caused disorder or ambiguity in the meaning of the text, the text would be deemed invalid as a literary work. Accordingly, the use of poetic licence (*al-ḍarūra al-shiʿriyya*) was discussed because it allows for some systematic deviation from the common usage of language (*al-istiʿmāl*), which could be mistaken as permission to make mistakes in the use of language.

Since poetry is governed by rhyme and metre, which offer a limited choice of words and structures, poetic licence gives a wider space in order to facilitate that process of composing whenever needed in situations in which a poet might be hindered by the limited linguistic options that suit the rhyme or the metre of the poem in question. However, as a constituent component of poetic language, poetic licence could be employed even when it was not needed; this consideration did not apply to prose.

Although poetic licence is an acceptable poetic practice, literary critics such as Abū Hilāl regarded it as a weak poetic technique that would ruin the craft of poetry. This was because, in his critiques, Abū Hilāl advocated the strict adherence to regular grammatical rules and traditions (particularly *al-samāʿ* and *al-qiyās*) and, since some of the examples of poetic licence involve deviation from the common use of language, and that this deviation might well cause confusion or ambiguity in the meaning, Abū Hilāl advised his *Adab* seekers to avoid using poetic licence even if it had been used previously by pre-Islamic Arabs. Abū Hilāl's greatest concern was the clear and accurate meaning that is achieved by correct morphological and grammatical structures that poetic licence might fail to provide, which explains his rejection thereof.

Abū Hilāl's implementation of linguistic methods in the field of literary criticism allowed him to produce literary verdicts that were based on a persuasive and solid foundation. The validity of this foundation stems from the systematic nature of linguistic rules that constitute a well-functioning, practical and adaptable measurement for distinguishing between sophisticated and poor texts. Therefore, it could be argued that assessing a literary text by implementing linguistic tools might assist in avoiding subjectivity to a considerable extent, which leads to trustworthy literary criticisms that could be applied to the vast majority of literary texts.

Complementary to this study, Chapter Five is dedicated to studying Abū Hilāl's surviving poetry that was compiled by Ghayyaḍ (1975) to discover different

dimensions regarding his intellect and personal traits that cannot be inferred from his other works. This is because poetry offers more room to express one's insights and personal thoughts, which improves understanding of the personal, social and literary sides of poets' lives. Considering that Abū Hilāl was a poet, a transmitter of poetry, and a literary critic makes the experience of studying his poetry richer and worthy of special attention, as each of these three aspects has a certain influence and reflects on his poetry at various levels.

Abū Hilāl's poetry has not been subjected to lengthy study that reveals its different dimensions and peculiarities, as was attempted in Chapter Five of this thesis. The aim of studying Abū Hilāl's poetry in that chapter was to present a clear picture of his poetry's content and structure, and to identify how he expressed himself, his knowledge, and his views about his time and society through his poems.

Based on Abū Hilāl surviving poems, we notice that he had admirable poetic competence and literary sense, which are reflected in both the content and form of his poetry. With regard to content, Abū Hilāl adopted a variety of classical and modern poetic themes that involved personal, social, cultural and biological topics. These various themes could be considered a clear indication of his sensitivity to life and that which surrounded him as well as his sharp observations. In addition, since Abū Hilāl approached various classical and modern themes and topics, and since he himself was a transmitter of poetry, it was natural to detect verses that shared similar meanings to those in the poetry of his predecessors. I detected sixteen verses that shared similar meanings with one or more verses of other poets and, interestingly, most of these verses shared similar meanings with verses that were mainly employed as prooftexts (*shawāhid*) of linguistic issues.

With regard to the style of Abū Hilāl's poetry, it is clear that there is a significant connection between it and the themes he addressed. This means that Abū Hilāl tended to employ a classical use of language when the theme was classical, while this use differed in terms of structures, wording, phrasing, eloquence, and sophistication when the theme was modern.

The breadth of Abū Hilāl's poetry offers valuable insight into his life and personality. One does not need a very thorough study of his poetry to determine that Abū Hilāl did not find himself living in the society of which he dreamed; a circumstance that made him embittered most of the time. This bitterness was a consequence of the lack of appreciation for himself and for his work. As we see in some of his verses, it

led him to curse his career as a scholar and a man of letters. The hard financial circumstances he found himself in was also another factor that led him to hate his society and think that people who allowed someone like him to struggle with his finances were inhumane.

However, his poetry shows that he enjoyed a sensitive awareness of the environment and his powers of observation made him notice things around him in detail, such as people's habits, animals, insects, fruits, tools, and public facilities. In fact, this particular side of his personality might have contributed to his most distinguished verses which often included similes that relied on being keenly aware of the link among objects in nature. The present thesis did not, however, study the simile in Abū Hilāl's poetry as it requires an entire study in itself.

It is hoped that the suggested way of studying Abū Hilāl's poetry and the general comments on it in Chapter Five will contribute to better understanding and deeper insight into the personal and literary aspects of Abū Hilāl's life.

Overall, following the previous discussions of different aspects of Abū Hilāl's personal and intellectual life, it could be argued that, in the modern scholastic tradition, Abū Hilāl is mainly studied from a very narrow perspective. In other words, most studies of Abū Hilāl, whether regarding him as a case study or as part of a larger study that includes several figures, have focused heavily on his *al-Ṣinā'atayn* or simply on some aspects of literary criticism such as synonyms, wording, and meaning. However, the present thesis demonstrates that studying Abū Hilāl in an integrated way by including most of his available books could result in a more solid and qualitative understanding of his ideas and views on literary criticism, and on language in general. This is because the present thesis has investigated and examined Abū Hilāl's discussions, and the manner in which he applied his theoretical framework, from different linguistic and literary perspectives, and has taken into account his works of literary criticism, lexicography, and literature. The previously mentioned methods allowed this scholar to reread his arguments regarding synonyms, wording and meaning, and to identify the didactic and sarcastic senses and style of writing that he adopted in most of his monographs.

Although Abū Hilāl's biography is inadequate and does not provide a clear image of his intellectual and personal life, the present thesis could overcome this deficiency to some extent by tracing the impact he had on his successors and how they referred to him in several fields of knowledge. In addition, the methods employed

in this thesis could contribute towards identifying several aspects regarding Abū Hilāl that cannot be inferred from his available biography, and which could provide a clearer picture of him as an author and a person.

It could be argued that Abū Hilāl's theoretical approach to literary criticism pertaining to issues of wording and meaning and synonyms cannot be understood completely by relegating his monographs to the field of lexicography. That is to say, the two issues in literary criticism, mentioned previously, are essentially concerned with a single lexical item and its lexical and semantic meanings. Therefore, it can be said that there are deep-rooted connections between Abū Hilāl's discussions of these issues in literary criticism and his various works on lexicography, and the methods in which he was interested in achieving accuracy by selecting the correct word with the correct meaning, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Abū Hilāl's expertise in Arabic linguistics is reflected in the context of literary criticism in which his evaluation of various poems incorporated linguistic, grammatical, and morphological discussions. It cannot be denied that, on several occasions, Abū Hilāl based his literary evaluation of a number of poems on a linguistic foundation. This is because the erroneous or disordered use of grammatical and morphological structures in literary texts could significantly decrease the literary level of the text; rather, the erroneous and disordered use of linguistic rules often threatens the clear semantics of a text. Therefore, when a text includes the misuse of specific linguistic structures, critics cannot ignore this and embark on a literary evaluation of the text, as a well-crafted literary text would stipulate the correct and elaborate use of language and linguistic structures. Therefore, when Abū Hilāl was confronted with a poetic verse that included a linguistic error, he would first locate the error, explain how it affected the meaning, and then suggest the correct alternative. In this process, Abū Hilāl employed his knowledge of morphology and grammar to explain the correct use of these structures as a method to teach *Adab* seekers how to avoid literary weaknesses and how to write sophisticated literary texts.

In addition to the previous investigation into Abū Hilāl's literary tradition and intellectual personality, as well as how this investigation contributes to providing detailed knowledge about various aspects of his life, Abū Hilāl's poetry provides us with different insights into his personality and life. The views that he included in his poetry concerning life in general, the environment which surrounded him, and the people who did not provide him with the appreciation that he expected, could constitute

a clear reflection of his personality and psychological condition - a matter that cannot be inferred from his other works. Therefore, Abū Hilāl's poetry is essential material to draw on if one wants to reveal unknown sides of his life. This does not mean that Abū Hilāl's poetry cannot be studied and evaluated as literature. In numerous instances, he demonstrated a high degree of poetic competence and an ability to produce well-crafted and admirably artistic poetry.

Ultimately, it could be argued that there are still various aspects of Abū Hilāl's literary heritage that could not be covered in the present thesis, but which could be studied in other monographs. That is to say, the present thesis focuses on the structural features of Abū Hilāl's works. These structural features are concerned with how linguistic elements and rules are employed in a particular text and how they affect the semantics of that text. By contrast, most of the texts that are studied in terms of their linguistic structure could be studied from a pragmatic perspective, which is generally concerned with 'language in use'. A good case study of this would be Abū Hilāl's *al-Jamhara*, as it includes various Arabic proverbs that could be studied from a pragmatic point of view, which might enrich Arabic studies in general and studies of Abū Hilāl's legacy in particular.

Finally, in line with the discussions, arguments and investigations tackled in the present thesis, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

It could be argued that Abū Hilāl performed his role as an *Adīb* and a scholar actively, successfully, and comprehensively. This role involved the production of works and materials according to the epistemological needs of his time, whereby he could fill the gaps that were left in the works of his predecessors. Similarly, the role that Abū Hilāl performed was accompanied by a didactic, teacherly sense that involved the fine structuring of his books, as well as a clear and eloquent style of writing that was devoid of ambiguity and complications. This enabled him to reach a wide range of readers who had different levels of education, and guaranteed the continuation and proliferation of his works, which began shortly after his death.

It is evident that Abū Hilāl was a distinguished scholar with diverse, rich and deep knowledge, which is reflected in his books; a matter which conferred high epistemological status for them. Similarly, his books could be considered the main gateway to his knowledge, particularly the diverse cultural conditions of his time, and to Arabic culture and heritage in general.

In several chapters of the present thesis, it can be clearly seen that the various Arabic language sciences have played a pivotal role in the process of evaluating, analysing, and critiquing literary discourses. This has made language an essential tool that determines the extent of success of relationships amongst the elements of communication, which are the author, the reader, the text, and the psychological and social context within which the text appeared, all of which combined contribute to formulating the semantics of the text and determining the range of the shared influence among them.

Appendix:

1- Brief Biography of Shākir (1909- 1997):

As a key figure whose methodology of taste and analysis is applied in the present dissertation, it is necessary to introduce Shākir's biography in order to provide a better understanding of his thoughts and views. Shākir was a prominent Islamic and literary scholar and litterateur whose ideas and books influenced numerous generations and students. These have contributed greatly to the fields of Arabic and Islamic studies. His thoughts, methodology and comments in the books he edited could be considered intrinsic landmarks in the cultural, linguistic and literary studies in the Arabic intellectual field. Shākir dedicated his life to preserving the Arabic legacy of knowledge which caused him to launch several campaigns, and to declare war on any scholar or writer who would describe this legacy negatively; his book *Abāṭil wa Asmār* is the best example of such literary battles. Shākir gave particular regard to *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*⁸⁸ and provided important critiques of several key figures in the Arabic tradition, such as al-Jāhiz, al-Marzūqī, al-Tabrīzī (d. 502 AH), Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī and al-Mu'tazila.⁸⁹ However, he criticised himself harshly when he realised that he had misunderstood or misinterpreted ideas during his long career as an editor (al-Ṭanāḥī, 2013, 620). This means that he advocated serious criticisms that contributed positively to the Arabic legacy of knowledge.

Shākir's devoted student, al-Ṭanāḥī, wrote seven articles about his teacher, which are collected in *Maqālāt al-'Allāma al-Doctūr Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī* (2013). These articles discuss various aspects and dimensions of Shākir's literary life, and one of them includes a refutation of Shākir's opponents. Al-Ṭanāḥī listed the books

⁸⁸ "A [controversial linguistic] theological concept denotes the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and its Divine source. The translation of *i'jāz* is given as "inimitability" since it is related to the notion that no one can imitate what God makes." The argument concerning the notion of *i'jāz* is whether it is attributed to the Qur'ān's eloquence or to its ordered system (Abdul-Raof, 2006, 57- 60).

⁸⁹ Al-Mu'tazila is an Islamic theological creed that appeared at the beginning of the 2nd AH century and was founded by Abū Ḥudhayfa Wāṣil ibn 'Atā' al-Baṣrī. Their theological method is fundamentally based on reason. They were called *Mu'tazila* (isolationists) because when the founder, Wāṣil, withdrew from his teacher al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's session following disagreeing with him, his teacher said: '*I'tazalanā Waṣil*' (Waṣil had isolated himself from us) (al-Murtaḍā, 2) (al-Ḥafzī, 13).

that were edited by Shākir, namely *Jami' l-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* and *Tahdhīb al-Āthār* by al-Ṭabarī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu'arā'* by ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and *Asrār al-Balāgha* by Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *al-Mukāfa'a wa Ḥusn al-'Uqbā* by ibn al-Dāya al-Kātib, *Faḍl al-'Aṭā' 'alā al-'Uṣr* by Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (Kanazi, 1975, 66)⁹⁰, *Imtā' al-'Asmā' bimā lil-Rasūl mina al-Abnā' wa al-Amwāl wa al-Ḥafadati wa al-Matā'* by al-Maqrīzī, *al-Wahshiyyāt* by Abū Tammām, and *Jamharat-u Nasab-i Quraysh wa Akhbārihā* by al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (al-Ṭanāḥī, 2013, 617). This is in addition to other books and studies under the following titles: *al-Mutanabbī*, *al-Mutanabbī laytanī mā 'Araftuhu*, *Resāla fī al-Ṭarīq Ilā Thaḳāfatinā*, *Abāṭil wa Asmār*, *Barnāmij Fuḥūl al-Shu'arā'*, *Namaṭ-un Mukhīf wa Namaṭ-un Ṣa'b* and *al-Qaws al-'Adhrā'*. These edited books and studies show Shākir's encyclopaedic mindset, wide acquaintance, and qualitative and original understanding of Arabic literary heritage. According to al-Ṭanāḥī's (ibid., 435) discussion, the entire library (corpus) of Arabic literature is a single book for Shākir; thus he has the ability to read al-Bukhārī's book as he read *al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, and could read Sībawayh's book as he read *al-Muwāfaqāt* by al-'Aḍud al-Ījī. This could mean that Shākir had a cognitive ability that enabled him to perceive and recognise the content of books in Arabic legacy in different disciplines equally, with deep understanding, and that he had no difficulty with the diverse content of each discipline. He was also able to scrutinise the Islamic tradition efficiently, as can be seen in his edited version of al-Ṭabarī's book *Tahthīb al-Āthār*, in which he demonstrated his extensive ability to trace Prophet Muhammad's orations in terms of authenticating the chains of transmitters. This is in addition to his highly eloquent, pure, and influential rhetorical style of writing that resulted from his wide acquaintance with and expertise in intellectual Arabic terminology and original Arabic linguistic and rhetorical traditions that are devoid of coding and ambiguity.⁹¹ Shākir's rhetorical and eloquent style can be seen in the quotations included in the present study in the section "Discussing the Methodology", in which Shākir explains his methodology and reveals his original style of writing.

⁹⁰ It is an advantage for the present dissertation to have a book by al-'Askarī, the object of study in this dissertation, edited by Shākir, whose methodology is applied here.

⁹¹ See Shākir's discussion regarding linguistic coding and the employment of symbolism, as well as how he distinguishes these aspects from metonymy and allegory in his book *Abāṭil wa Asmār* (346).

Shākir admitted that, in the early stage of his life, he lived a spoiled literary life with perplexity, as he expressed in his *Risāla* (2006, 6). This led him to exhaustively reread Arabic poetry or whatever he could find; he described this journey as long, far, exhausting, but interesting. He read Arabic poetry carefully and devoted all his senses and knowledge to achieving a deep and original understanding of the core of Arabic poetry and the way in which it is expressed. After gaining wide and in-depth experience of Arabic poets and poetry, he developed a new perspective and point of view. This perspective considered that, since poetry is speech that expresses man's being, each discourse by man, whether poetic or prosaic, could be analysed via the application of his methodology of taste⁹² "وكلُّ ما هو صادرٌ عن الإنسانِ إبانةٌ عن نفسه وجماعته"⁹² "and whatever is produced by man is reference to themselves or their people"⁹³ (ibid., 23). He thus embarked on another journey to read and study Arabic books of renown in many fields, such as Qur'ān commentaries and exegeses, Qur'ān sciences, Prophet Muhammad's tradition and utterance books and their commentaries, Islamic jurisprudence, the principle of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, history, mathematics, books of doctrines, astronomy, geography, falconry, veterinary medicine, and pharmacology. He read these books not to master these sciences, but to identify how the Arabic language was used to express and trace different Arabic expressions. This vast regime of reading resulted in his gradual rediscovery of Arabic literary heritage.

Shākir's extremely intensive epistemological activity can be dated to 1926 till 1935 following the publication of Margoliouth's⁹⁴ 1925 article, *The origins of Arabic poetry*, in which the author adopted a sceptical point of view of pre-Islamic Arabic

⁹² A comprehensive account of this methodology is given in the section entitled "Discussing the Methodology".

⁹³ This is in contrast with the approach of some modern Western disciplines that tend to be vertical, which means that the focus is on one theme, aspect, or topic when studies are conducted.

⁹⁴ Professor David Samuel Margoliouth (1858-1940) was a leading Arabic scholar in England. "He was regarded in the international circle of orientalists as the chief representative of Oriental Studies in Great Britain" (Gibb, 1940, 392). His three books, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, *Mohammedanism* and *the Early Development of Mohammedanism* "had a substantial success and have stood for a generation as the standard English works on their subjects" (ibid., 393). He also had other articles and essays in different encyclopaedias.

poetry, as discussed in (Gibb, 1940, 393), and claimed that this poetry was composed by post-Islamic poetry transmitters (Margoliouth, 1925, 419)⁹⁵ (el-Shamsy, 2020, 200). Shākir's passion for pre-Islamic poetry began in his childhood, which caused him to refute Margoliouth's claim and prompted his close rereading of the Arabic intellectual and epistemological legacy using his unique methodology of taste. This methodology enabled him to deduce the date of some poems and to prove their time of composition chronologically, as he did with the works of Imru'ul-Qays, al-Nābigha, Zuhayr and al-A'shā (al-Ṭanāḥī, n.d., 212). In 1936, Shākir published his book *al-Mutanabbī*, in which he clearly applied his methodology⁹⁶ and in more detail to al-Mutanabbī's poetry. When Shākir was at college, he met his teacher Ṭāha Ḥusayn (1889 - 1973), who raised the issue of *intihāl al-shi'r al-jāhiliyy* (the fabrication of pre-Islamic poetry), which infers that "portions of the corpus of pre-Islamic poetry appear to date from the Islamic period and thus to be fake" (Allen, 2005, 398; Wahba, 1989, 189). Shākir found himself confronting a situation in which his teacher was committing plagiarism since the idea of *intihāl al-shi'r* was originally stated by Margoliouth. What aroused Shākir's ire was not merely the plagiarism, but also his awareness that the idea of *intihāl al-shi'r* was intended to eliminate the Arabic heritage that was the starting point of his journey into pre-Islamic poetry and the Arabic legacy of knowledge, as mentioned above. When examining Shākir's conflict with Ṭāha Ḥusayn, it seems that Shākir was acquainted with Western literature pertaining to the Arabic and Islamic legacy of knowledge, and his suspicious view of foreign interpretations of the Islamic world is clear throughout his writings. However, his main concern was probably Arabic writers⁹⁷ who incorrectly adopted Western approaches and methods and included a tincture of pejorative tone in their studies of Arabic and Islamic culture due to their lack of knowledge in this field. Therefore, Shākir aimed to impugn their judgment on different topics in his book *Abāṭil wa Asmār*.

⁹⁵ Hadāra (1985) refuted Margoliouth's claims about the fabrication of pre-Islamic poetry in an article published in the edited book *Manāhij al-Mustashriqīn fī al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyya al-Islāmiyyah*.

⁹⁶ This is the methodology that is applied in the present dissertation and which is discussed in the section entitled "Discussing the Methodology".

⁹⁷ Examples are Luis 'Awaḍ, Salāma Mūsā, Muḥammad Mandūr, Sāmī Dāwūd and Muḥammad 'Ūda. These names are scattered throughout Shākir's book *Abāṭil wa Asmār*.

Thereafter, Shākir (2006, 163) quoted Ṭāha Ḥusayn in his *Risāla* and considered the quotation to be Ṭāha's declaration of a switch from his first opinion about pre-Islamic poetry to a new view that called for a rereading of this poetry and benefiting from its cultural values. Ṭāha ended this testimony after he realised the danger of his scepticism of pre-Islamic poetry, as this had spiralled out of control, particularly when the new generation, which was influenced by his ideas, began to entirely reject and abandon pre-Islamic poetry. Ṭāha explained his new view of the old poetry in a sequence of articles, the first of which was entitled *Athnā' Qirā'at al-Shi'r al-Qadīm* (*while reading the old poetry*). He began this article with a dialogue with a friend questioning the literal benefits or the value of studying old poetry, followed by an elucidation of the cultural demand to preserve and benefit from old poetry. Ṭāha's revised opinion does not seem to be as widely known as the previous one, perhaps because he did not state it explicitly throughout his articles. However, in *Risāla*, Shākir stated that Ṭāha admitted it to him clearly. This prompted Shākir to comment that the problem with prominent teachers is that they commit mistakes in public but correct their mistakes silently. It could also be said that problematic or challenging ideas that undergo lengthy discussions seem to be more memorable than normal ones.

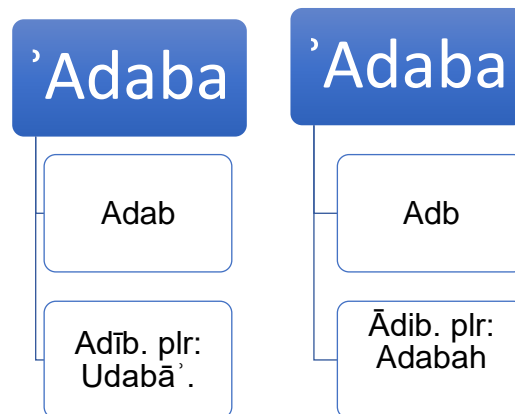
There are other sides and motifs related to Shākir's rich literary life such as his ideas about orientalism, colonialism and missionary campaigns, as discussed in his book *Risāla fī al-Ṭarīq ilā Thaḳāfatīnā*. However, as these topics are slightly irrelevant to the present thesis, they have not been addressed here.

2- Definition of Adab⁹⁸:

The methodology of 'taste' is mainly applied to a certain type of writing called *Adab* (al-ʿamal al-adabī). *Adab* is an essential concept and a dominant term in Arabic literature in general and in the medieval literary heritage in particular. It underwent several semantic transformations and therefore has different meanings according to the context and time in which it is used (Allen, 2005, 220). The term could refer to the artistic way of writing which equates to one of the meanings of the English term "literature". It could also mean good manners, ethics, ethos, discipline and

⁹⁸ Part of the discussion in this section was developed based on an essay I wrote about the various meanings of the term *Adab* in Islamic education, which was submitted for the module ARAM102 "Islam in practice" on 22nd March, 2017.

“commendable deeds”. In his dictionary *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Ibn Manẓūr revealed an interrelationship between the two meanings of *Adab* when he argued that the meaning of the term was considered to reflect the material that it consists of, which is promoting good manners and preventing bad deeds. This term may have been misinterpreted by Murata and Chittick (1994, 298, 9. 306), who suggested that the primary meaning of the root of the term *Adab* (*adaba*) is ‘to invite, to gather together for a banquet’.⁹⁹ In fact, the two terms have separate meanings although they share the same root. This is apparent in the nomen verbi (*maṣḍar*) of the primary meaning of *Adab*; according to Murata and Chittick, *Adb* means ‘to invite’ and the active participle is *Ādīb*, while the nomen verbi of *Adaba*, which represents the meaning of both ethics and good manners and literature, is *Adab* and the active participle is *Adīb*, as illustrated in the following table:



As mentioned above, *Adab*, as a term, experienced several semantic transformations, which is evident from the different contexts in which it is used. The earlier usages tend to employ the general meaning of this term, which could be one possessing several types of knowledge revealed in their speech and writing in addition to good manners and a high quality of life. This general meaning can be understood from the usage of the term by renowned Persian litterateur ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 142 AH/ 757) in his book *al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr wa al-Adab al-Kabīr*. In the section *al-‘adabu yunammī al-‘aqla* (*adab* develops the mind), he stated that it is only via *Adab*

⁹⁹ Food and *Adab* have been strongly connected in Arabic literature. For further details, see Van Gelder’s book: *God’s Banquet: Food in Classical Arabic Literature* (2000), where he discusses the “multi-faceted connection between food and *Adab*” and the “representation of food in Arabic writing” as reviewed by Omri (2001).

that minds can develop and thrive, and that minds cannot be fruitful without *Adab*. Ibn al-Muqaffa' related the mind to *Adab*, which indicates that, in this context, *Adab* may mean knowledge because the mind's development and growth is aimed at seeking knowledge. This meaning is clearly stated by ibn al-Muqaffa' in another part of his book - the section of *Yā Ṭāliba al-'Adabi (O' Adab seeker)*, in which he says: "*Yā ṭāliba al-adabi in kunta naw'a al-'ilmi turīd fa'rif al-uṣūla wa al-fuṣūl*" (*O' Adab seeker, if the quality of knowledge is what you seek, then know the principles and the divisions*). Therefore, according to ibn al-Muqaffa', *Adab* is the equivalent of knowledge, and *Adab* seekers are those who seek knowledge (ibn al-Muqaffa', 12, 65).

Similarly, in the Third AH century, ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296 AH/ 909) related the quality of the mind to *Adab* in his book *al-Ādāb*. In the first sentence, he stated "*al-Adabu ṣūratu al-'aqlī*" (*Adab is the image of the mind*) (1972, 56); therefore, *Adab* represents that which can be reflected in the mind, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, through one's speech and writing by noting the extent of knowledge they contain.

In the Ninth AH century, ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH) added a different dimension to the meaning of *Adab* by combining the early perspective on *Adab*, which is possessing knowledge and acquiring good manners, and the later perspective, which is possessing knowledge of Arab poetry and prose. He referred to philologists who defined the discipline of *Adab* (1980, Vol. 3, 340) as follows: "Literature is expert knowledge of poetry and history of the Arabs as well as the possession of some knowledge regarding every science"; "they meant (knowledge) of linguistic sciences and the religious sciences, but only the content (of the latter) – that is, Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth". Ibn Khaldūn added the content (*mutūn*) of religious sciences to the field of *Adab* and considered it capable of being read as literary texts, which resembles the discussion in "Discussing the Methodology" in Chapter One with regard to al-Jurjanī's methodology of applying 'taste' to all texts in Arabic literary heritage. The general meaning that ibn Khaldūn suggested was the result of attributing no object (*mawḍū'*) to *Adab*; as he stated at the beginning of his chapter on 'the science of literature' (ibid., Vol. 3, 339), "This science has no object, the accident of which may be studied and thus be affirmed or denied". However, in his book *al-Naqd al-Adabī; Uṣūluhu wa Manāhijuhu*, Quṭub (1980, 7) narrowed the scale of *Adab* greatly, since he limited it to a specific subject, i.e. a literary work. From his perspective, the definition of a literary work is:

(the expression of an emotional experience via an inspiring image). Based on Quṭub's definition, there are two elements, or conditions, necessary for a text to be considered a literary work, namely:

- (1) an emotional experience, and
- (2) an inspiring image, which excludes any type of writing that is devoid of these elements or conditions combined.

As a result, it seems that what is considered the subject of *Adab* plays an essential role in determining how it is defined.

On the other hand, several modern critics have opposed Quṭub's definition of *Adab* by expanding the scale to include any artistic or rhetorical expression, even in pure science - a matter that supports the idea of this study and is in harmony with al-Jurjānī's perspective on the object of literary taste. In his book *Uṣūl al-Naqd al-Adabī*, al-Shāyib (1994, 1-30) discusses the semantic development of the term *Adab* chronologically and provides several definitions that alternate between the general meaning of *Adab* and the specific, without indicating a tendency towards any particular definition. Nonetheless, he asserted that the element of emotion may not be able to produce literary works in isolation without the aid of valuable thoughts (ibid., 29). For al-Shāyib, emotions were an indirect influential element, and the main constituents of *Adab* are the types of thoughts employed in texts. Therefore, the involvement of thoughts in this discourse might imply the general meaning of *Adab* which includes any human knowledge; this means that any text containing aesthetic or artistic expressions could be considered as literature.

Although 'literature', as an English term, and *Adab*, as an Arabic term, have developed in different circumstances, it seems that they are quite similar in terms of the limitations of their definitions. In other words, the term 'literature' has a variety of definitions that include general meanings, which prompted Winchester (1899, 2) to assert that "the subject must be much more narrowly defined". However, Winchester's call to narrow the definition of literature might be attributed to his aim of establishing specific principles for literary criticism by identifying particular elements of literary works to facilitate the process of criticism, which he defined as (ibid, 1) "the intelligent appreciation of any work of art, and by consequence the just estimate of its value and rank". Similar to al-Shāyib, Winchester's book contains a chapter on the definition of literature in which he refers to Emerson's definition of literature (ibid., 36) as "A record

of the best thoughts". Emerson's definition does not limit literature to the dimensions of emotion or imagery, which widens the scale of subjects that could be included in the field of literature. Winchester's comment on such a general definition of literature was that "[t]he attempt to be compact in the definition of literature ends in something rather meagre, partial, starved, and unsatisfactory" (ibid., 36). It is notable that neither Emerson nor Winchester discussed the style of writing in terms of eloquence and the employment of rhetorical devices in texts, although these - in addition to passion and thoughts - are essential constituents for any text to be considered a literary work.

Despite all these considerations, it is evident that the conflict surrounding the definition of *Adab* or literature is inconclusive, and this provides the field of literature studies with diversity and a space in which to approach subjects of literature from different perspectives. Orfali (2012, 31) touched on this point in his discussion, saying that "the concept of *Adab* itself does allow room for the inclusion of works that are not based on the concept of drawing on 'the best of the best'¹⁰⁰ among which are *rasā'il*, *khuṭab*, *maqāmāt*, mirrors for princes, biographical dictionaries, commentaries, works of *sariqāt*, *amālī*...". This allows this study to apply the 'methodology of taste' to al-'Askarī's works of criticism and other works by considering the general definition of *Adab* which serves the idea of this methodology as it entails the extraction of knowledge from literary texts as far as possible using language as a bridge between literature and knowledge. Finally, based on these discussions, it can be concluded that *Adab* has several meanings in different contexts; these meanings are: (1) ethics and good morals, (2) eloquent, rhetorical and embellished discourse, (3) an expression of an emotional experience, (4) the content of the sciences, particularly when this has been expressed eloquently, and (5) the possession of several types of knowledge. There are other meanings of *Adab* that pertain to Islamic religious education, such as *Adab* with God, *Adab* with the Prophet, *Adab* of worship, *Adab* of brotherhood and *Adab* of visiting, each of which has a specific meaning in its context. However, these meanings are excluded from the discussion since they do not relate directly to the topic of this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ By this, he means anthologies that are based on a selection of poems or the best parts of poems compiled by a man of literature.

3-Illustration:

The following image represents a response to one of Abū Hilāl's poems that is discussed in Chapter Five of the present thesis:



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